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Creations of Mystics and Philosophers: The White Man's Perceptions of Northwest Coast Indian Art from the 1930s to the Present

ALDONA JONAITIS

The stone hammer illustrated in plate 1 represents a bird with a whale in its mouth. If an Italian artist had carved this piece in a Florentine shop during the sixteenth century, a contemporary scholar could analyze its formal and iconographic significance with relative ease. Both the modern scholar and the Italian sculptor are part of a common Western tradition which facilitates the former's understanding of the latter's creations. However the individual who made this hammer was not part of this Western tradition, since he was a Haida Indian living on the Queen Charlotte Islands during the nineteenth century. Because of this, it is exceedingly difficult for the White scholar to analyze it with any real objectivity. The difficulty lies in the nature of White scholarship: since the interpreter of Indian art cannot shed all of his or her own

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1. Haida hafted hammer of thunderbird or hawk
with whale in its mouth. Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands.
Collected by I.W. Powell in 1879. National Museum of
Man, Ottawa VII-B-924. 8" long. Duff 1975, fig. 90.

Western cultural values (and at present, most such interpreters are heirs to the Western tradition), much of what he or she ultimately writes on Native American art actually reflects those values. Thus, the scholar who attempts to discover the underlying esthetic, philosophical, social or religious meanings of Northwest Coast art is actually going to concentrate on those elements in the art that appear to coincide most closely with elements in White society.

Since with time, social values change, the interpretations of Native American art which reflect those values are also bound to change. This is certainly true of interpretations of Northwest Coast art, for what scholars would have said about this Haida stone hammer in the 1920s is significantly different from what they would have said about it in the thirties, forties, and up to the present. For example, before the thirties, an anthropologist would have informed us about its use and social meaning, while in the 1940s, an artist would have praised its esthetic merit. In less than a generation, the definition of this and other Northwest Coast pieces had changed from "ethnographic specimen" to "fine art."

What scholars said about the meaning of this hammer would also have changed. The early anthropologist would have discussed the piece's social function; during the thirties and forties, some writers, believing a purely functional analysis of the hammer to be inadequate, would have discussed it in deeply mystical and psychological terms. For them, such a "totemic" article expressed universal mythic concerns and reflected an early stage in the development of human consciousness. The scholars of the fifties and sixties would have retreated back from these heavy speculations on the hammer's meaning and instead would have presented a more anthropologically-oriented functional description of it.

Then, in the mid-sixties and throughout the seventies, this piece would again be subjected to in-depth analysis, this time, from two divergent perspectives. One view would assert that since the hammer represents a bird, it is clearly associated with shamanism, since shamans are known to experience the sensation of bird-like flight. The other view would state that the relationship between the bird and whale signifies an extraordinary rationality on the part of the artist and reflects a deeply philosophical speculation on the meaning of life.

As we shall see, these varied interpretations of the same piece actually tell us more about the Whites who wrote those interpretations than about the artwork itself. The writers of the thirties, forties, fifties, sixties and seventies were all subject to different

social forces that affected their interpretations of Northwest Coast art. This essay will be a study, to paraphrase Robert Berkhofer, of "The White Man's Northwest Coast Indian Art" from its first acceptance as "art" in the 1930s to the shamanic and structural interpretations of more recent years.

Before the Depression years, most Whites regarded Native American art as heathenistic, fetishistic, and above all, extremely ugly. Only the anthropologists took it seriously, but they treated it as "ethnographic specimens," not "fine art."¹ As Edmund Carpenter (1975, p. 11) points out, in New York City, Indian art was exhibited at the Museum of Natural History, not at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: "Far more than Central Park separated these collections. Part of the gap derived from the anthropologists' insistence that ethnological specimens had meaning solely in terms of the social matrices from which they came." And the other part of the gap came from the generally unappreciative attitude of the museum-going public.

This attitude changed only after the presentation of Native American art—as "art"—at two major exhibitions, one in 1939 at the San Francisco International Exposition, the other in 1941 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Frederic Douglas, Curator of Indian Art at the Denver Art Museum, and René d'Harnoncourt, General Manager of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the United States Department of the Interior both organized these shows and wrote the catalog for the New York exhibition, *Indian Art in the United States* (1941). As Norman Feder (1962, p. 1) writes, this book and the two shows "firmly established for American Indian art a place in the art museums of this country." Others, such as Robert Davis (1949, p. 4), Robert Inverarity (1950, p. vii) and R. Altman (in the introduction to Gunther 1966, p. viii) agree that these events had a tremendous influence on the public's interest in an appreciation of Native American art.²

This new-found interest on the part of the public in Indian art is all the more intriguing when one realizes that just a few years prior to this time, it was disdained. In order to understand this change in appreciation, it is necessary to review those factors which, before the thirties, prevented the public from accepting and admiring this art.

Marcel Evrard, Commissioner of the exhibition *Masterworks of Indian and Eskimo Art of Canada* (Musée de l'Homme 1969) suggests two reasons for the retarded appreciation of Native American art. He points out that European artists, historically the ones to

"discover" non-western art forms (like African and Pacific art which had been accepted earlier in the twentieth century³) owned little Indian art and thus could not have admired it. Although this may have been a partial factor, Evrard's second suggestion is probably more to the point. He proposes that the image of the "brave on the warpath" interfered with the White believing that the Native American was capable of producing fine art. This suggestion does not convey sufficiently the nineteenth century White American's negative attitude towards the Indian, an attitude that lasted several decades into the twentieth century, and which militated against appreciation of his artistic products.

Many shared in the anti-Indian sentiments. Missionaries fought well up until the 1920s to make Native religious practices illegal. Homesteaders, ranchers, railroad builders and other bringers of civilization fought for the expansion of the United States at the Indian's expense in a well-known saga of wars, broken treaties, and racist laws. To justify these inequities, many Whites embraced the notion that the Indian's type of communal tribalism was at odds with the underlying values of American society—democracy, liberalism, individualism. The movement to stifle tribalism by quick assimilation of Indians into White culture culminated in 1887 with the passage of the General Allotment Act which Theodore Roosevelt referred to as a "mighty pulverizing engine to break up the tribal mass" (Berkhofer, 1978, p. 175).

Since Native American art is often sacred and/or associated with communal activities, it would not, under the circumstances described above, be esthetically appreciated or even characterized as art. To call it art would imply a level of cultural achievement and a quality of humanism on the part of the producers which would contradict the general attitudes towards the Indian. It would appear that in the United States, the combination of missionary zeal, anti-tribalism and expansionist goals served to delay the public's acceptance of Native American cultural products.

The general change in attitude towards the Indian came about in the twenties and thirties, as Washington reassessed its policy towards Native Americans. People such as John Collier, who became Commissioner of Indian Affairs between 1933-45, urged Congress to pass laws preventing interference with native religious practices and encouraging tribalism (Philp 1977).

Part of Collier's "Indian New Deal" was the encouragement of Native Art; he helped sponsor both the 1939 show in San Francisco and the 1941 show in New York, and helped with the publication

of Douglas and d'Harnoncourt's catalog (Philp 1977, pp. 184-85). The involvement of politicians and the influence of political events becomes evident on reading the introductions to the catalog. In her forward, Eleanor Roosevelt (p. 8) states that:

In appraising the Indian's past and present achievements we realize not only that his heritage constitutes part of the artistic and spiritual wealth of this country, but also that the Indian people of today have a contribution to make toward the America of the future.

In their own introduction, Douglas and d'Harnoncourt (p. 9) discuss how the Indians were once thought of as "backward," how their traditions were considered "obstacles to progress," how Whites misunderstood them. They specifically praise Congress for having passed more liberal legislation on the Indian and for having realized that the earlier assimilationist policy was "not merely a violation of intrinsic human rights, but was actually destroying values which could never be replaced."⁴

This introductory text details the goals of Washington to elevate the status of the Indian by accepting and appreciating his art. Thus, these "major" exhibitions which scholars agree had profound effects on the public perception of Indian art were as much motivated by the political concerns of the United States government during the thirties and forties as they were by a sudden awareness of an intrinsic esthetic merit in the art itself.

Indeed, Douglas and d'Harnoncourt seem to be unsure as to whether they can convince their audience about that very esthetic merit; they argue for its artistic validity in tones that can be described as mildly apologetic. For example, they assert that Northwest Coast art is not meant to be "grotesque" or "sinister," assuming that the White viewer would find it to be so (1941, p. 11). They illustrate a drawing of a Haida design (pl. 2) in which both halves of an animal split down the backbone are portrayed. They assert that this is not meant to "represent a mythical monster" but instead, since both sides of a singular animal are illustrated, this rendition exhibits "a tendency towards realism... The Northwest Coast people always considered all aspects of their model, and used this device to give a complete rendering of their subject when they portrayed it on a two-dimensional plane" (1941, pp. 11-12).⁵ Their use of the word "realism" to describe this image is significant, since one could as easily call it "abstract." It appears that Douglas and d'Harnoncourt are trying to compare this work with the traditional



2. Haida design of killerwhale.
Douglas and d'Harnoncourt 1941, fig. 3, p. 13.

and realistic art of the West, and by doing so, to prove its value.

Their concern with pleasing an audience at the Museum of Modern Art is even more evident in the objects Douglas and d'Harnoncourt chose to illustrate, many of which are the more unusual and unique examples of Northwest Coast art. Whereas most two-dimensional heraldic art is rigidly symmetrical, they illustrate a Nootka screen (pl. 3), an unusually asymmetric painting. Helmets too, tend normally to be bilaterally symmetrical as well as conventionalized; the Tlingit war helmet of a man with a distorted face (pl. 4) is neither. They also included articles that are expressive: an unusually naturalistic Haida mask (pl. 5) projects a sense of pathos, while the Haida Bear Mother (pl. 6) communicates great pain and emotional anguish. These artworks, appealing as they may have been to the audience at the Museum of Modern Art, are not characteristic of the majority of Northwest Coast pieces, most of which are less naturalistic, more symmetrical, and, aside from certain Kwakiutl objects, distinctly unemotional.⁶ Although Douglas and d'Harnoncourt do illustrate some pieces, like boxes and spoons, done in standard Northwest Coast style, they clearly emphasize those works that would more readily appeal to Western tastes.

The first serious analytic literature on Northwest Coast art written after these shows also reflects the interests of those Whites who wrote it, a group of Surrealists and their friends. During the late 1930s, several Surrealists, such as Max Ernst, André Breton, Kurt Seligmann, and scholars sympathetic to Surrealism, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss,⁷ emigrated to the United States from Europe to escape Hitler. These refugees, along with several American artists, like Adolph Gottlieb and Barnett Newman, who shared many of their ideas about art, found the work of the Northwest Coast Indian absolutely fascinating. Why they found it fascinating, and what they ultimately wrote about it, is based, however, much more on the principles of Surrealism and Abstract Art than on any intrinsic qualities of the art itself.⁸

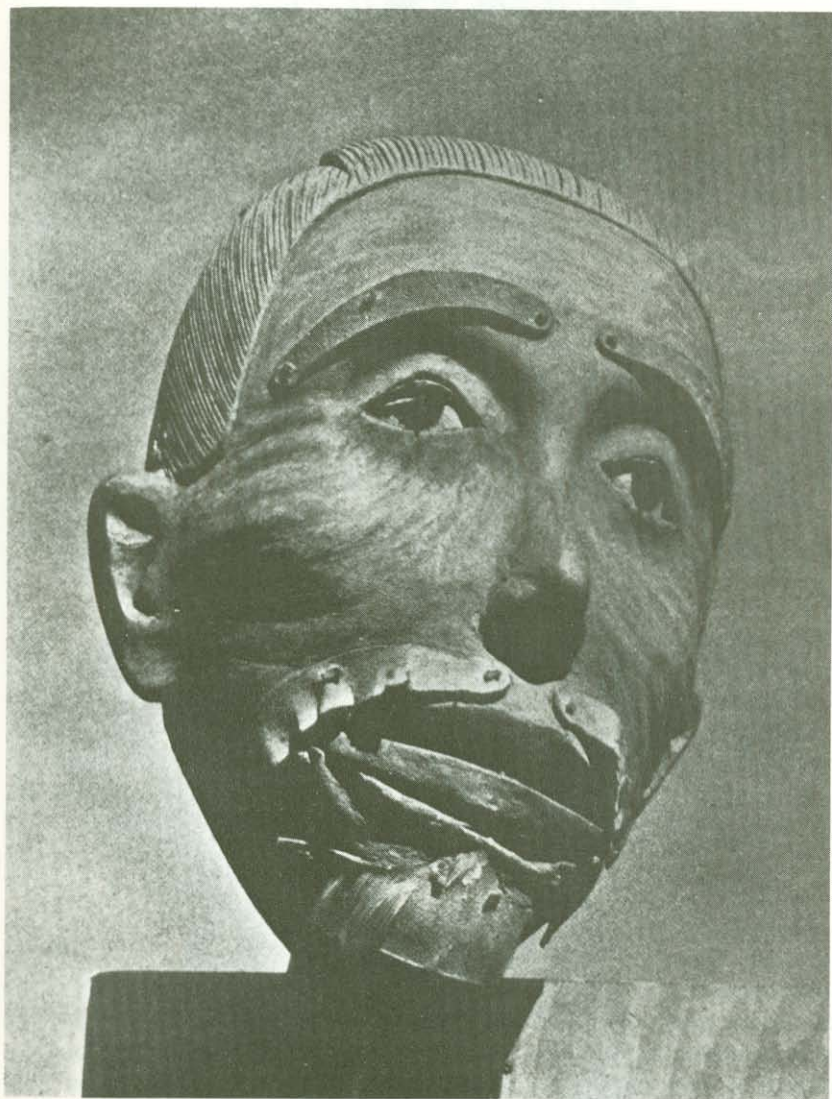
The Surrealists had several specific criteria on what art should be; Northwest Coast art satisfied those criteria. They believed that art should explore the worlds behind the facade of the flesh, the worlds of the subconscious that had been revealed to Westerners by psychoanalysts like Freud and Jung; they felt that Northwest Coast art did just that kind of exploration. The Surrealists craved to participate in a universal and collective mythology that modern man had lost, but which the Indian still retained, and which he



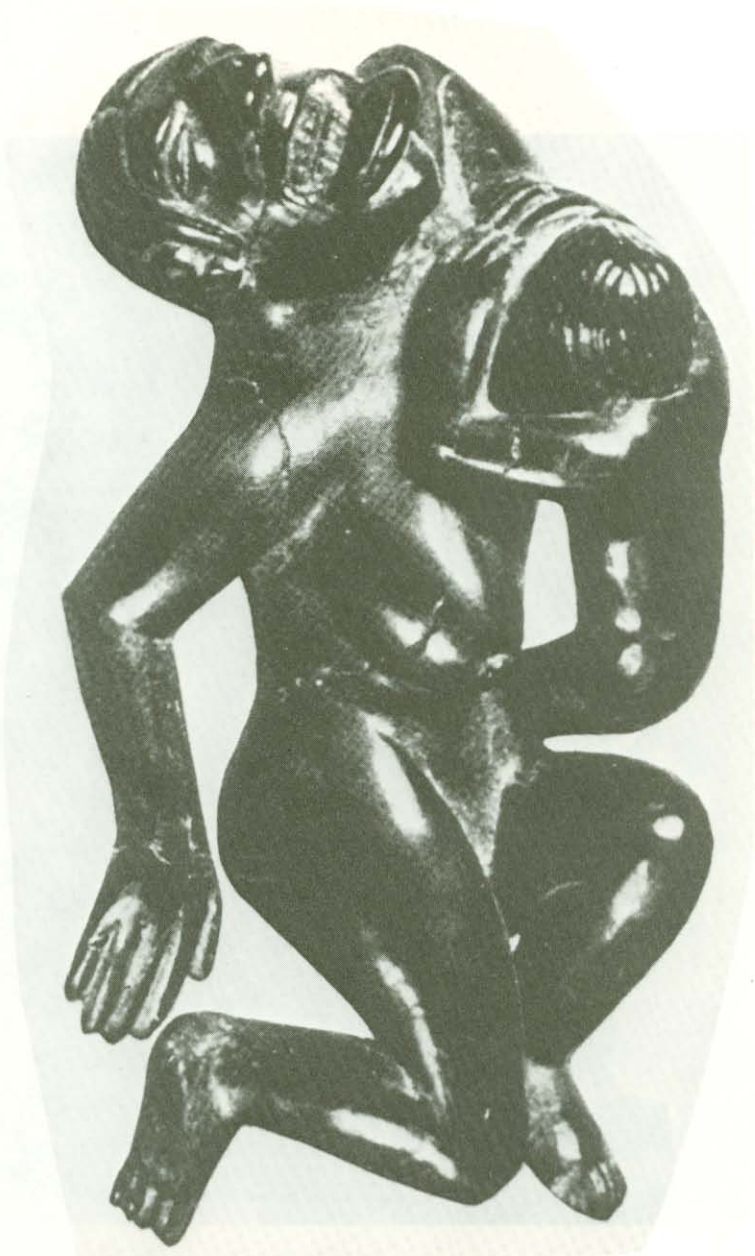
3. Nootka painted screen of snake, wolf, thunderbird and whale. Vancouver Island, Carved c. 1850. Collected by G. T. Emmons c. 1927. American Museum of Natural History 16.1/1892A. 118" long. Douglas and d'Harnoncourt 1941, p. 159.



4. Tlingit war helmet of man with distorted face.
Chilkoot, Alaska. Collected by G. T. Emmons c. 1885.
American Museum of Natural History E/453. 12" high.
Douglas and d'Harnoncourt 1941, p. 152.



5. Haida mask of human.
University of California at Berkeley 2-15550. 10" high.
Douglas and d'Harnoncourt 1941, p. 154.



6. Haida argillite carving of "The Bear Mother". Queen Charlotte Islands. Made in 1883 by Skaowskeay and Kit-Elswa. Collected by J. G. Swan in 1883. United States National Museum, Washington, D. C. 73117. 5½" long. Douglas and d'Harnoncourt 1941, p. 151.

expressed in his art. They regretted that art and life in the West were separate, and envied those primitive societies in which all people were artists and where art and life were integrally connected. Finally, they wanted to shatter all the dualisms that structure modern consciousness. As André Breton said in the *Second Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924, the Surrealists wanted to find and fix "that certain point of the mind in which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the uncommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictory" (Cowling 1978, pp. 497-98). According to the Surrealists, the Indians had never conceptualized these dualisms, and thus, created an art in which such dualisms do not exist.

Since the Native American was so clearly superior to Western man, it is not surprising that the Surrealists, unlike Douglas and d'Hannoncourt, are unqualifiedly enthusiastic about the esthetic merits of Northwest Coast art. Wolfgang Paalen (1943, p. 6), a major spokesperson for the group, asserts that "Northwest Coast art has an expressive power which is second to none" and that "many of the achievements of their art and crafts that cannot be enumerated here have not been surpassed by any other culture" (p. 13). For Barnett Newman (1946), Northwest Coast art is "a valid tradition that is one of the richest of human experience." And Claude Lévi-Strauss, departing from the cool objectivity one usually associates with the anthropologist, compares Northwest Coast art to Picasso, saying, "it is not futile to emphasise that the daring ventures of a single man which have left us breathless for thirty years were known and practiced during one hundred and fifty years by an entirely indigenous culture" (1943, p. 175). He ends his passionate essay on Northwest Coast art with a comparison of a Tlingit myth with a similar story from ancient Greece: "when one compares the clumsy legend of Pygmalion with this sensitive and modest tale, filled with an exquisite reserve and such moving poetry, is it not the Greeks who seem to play the barbarians and the poor savages of Alaska who may pretend to reach to the purer understanding of beauty?" (p. 182). To place Indian culture above that of the ancestor of all Western culture is to praise it highly indeed!

How these writers interpret Northwest Coast art reveals their Surrealist bias. For Lévi-Strauss, much of Northwest Coast art unites—synthesises—disparate or even opposite qualities, often by the means of transformation or metamorphosis. He contends that the "dithyrambic gift of synthesis, the almost monstrous faculty to

perceive as similar what all other men have conceived of as different undoubtedly constitutes the exceptional feature of the art of British Columbia" (1943, p. 180). Thus, boxes that are both containers and images of animals, doors that are also open mouths, statues that represent men turning into land otters all express the fundamental concept of synthesis. This type of unification of all the component parts of the universe into a meaningful whole is a Surrealist desire; Lévi-Strauss is using Northwest Coast art as a vehicle for expressing this desire.

The most profound exploration of the meaning of Northwest Coast art was done by Wolfgang Paalen, another refugee who visited the area in 1939 and formed a small but excellent collection of art. His admiration for Native American art led him to dedicate, in 1943, a double issue of his Mexico City-based Surrealist journal, *Dyn*, to the art of the "Amerindian." Paalen's attitude towards this art is clear in his introductory statement to that issue (1943, p.2):

This is the moment to integrate the enormous treasure of Amerindian forms into the consciousness of modern art. . . such an effort at integration prefigures nothing less than a vision that today only the most audacious dare to entertain: the abolition of the barriers that separate man from his own best faculties, the abolition of the interior frontiers without which no exterior frontiers can be definitely abolished.

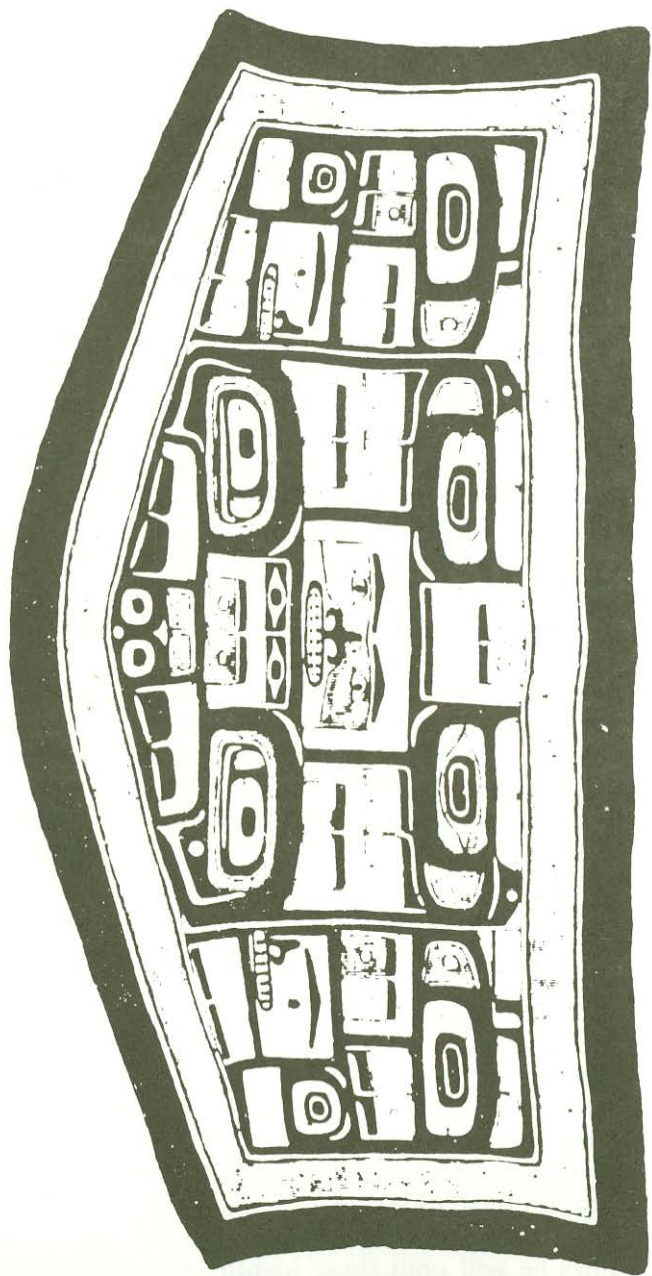
Paalen expresses his views on Northwest Coast art in his essay entitled "Totem Art" (1943, pp. 7-39). One of his major points is that the deep psychological significance of this art may be understood by observing children, since Indians and children share a perception of reality that is emotional, non-individual, and magically-oriented. As Paalen says (1943, pp. 18-20):

We can find in everyone's childhood an attitude toward the world similar to that of the totemic mind. For man felt before he reasoned . . . So long as action is determined by emotional reactions rather than by rational premeditation, all communication is *communion*. Thus, all pre-individualistic mentalities, not distinguishing between subjective and objective, identify themselves emotionally with the enviroing world. And it is this affective identification which creates the *magic climate* in which the totemic world is to be found. . . Through dances, sacrifices, cannibal repasts, orgies and divinatory and incantory rites the great communion is accomplished—in a frenetic choreographic action is conjured the power of the ancestor, of the beast-demon.

Such child-like communion with the world results in the type of spiritual integration craved by the Surrealists. Paalen points out that all kinds of dualities: life/death, man/animal, natural/supernatural, reality/dream, are all destroyed in totem art (1943, pp. 22, 26). He even suggests that the male/female duality is reconciled in the totem pole, since "by its very erection it expresses the male principle, and by its material (wood symbolizing the maternal element), the female principle" (1943, p. 28).⁹

The European emigres were not the only intellectuals intrigued by Northwest Coast art in the forties. Three American artists—Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb and Barnett Newman—felt an affinity to primitive art similar to that of the Surrealists. They admired its timelessness, primeval mythic roots, and psychological complexity (Lubar 1980, pp. 2-3).¹⁰ When, in 1946, several members of the Surrealist group assembled an exhibition of two-dimensional Northwest Coast art and presented it at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York City, Barnett Newman wrote the catalog for the show. Newman's sympathy for Surrealism is apparent in his comment that the Northwest Coast artist's "concern was not with the symmetry but with the nature of the organism, the metaphysical pattern of life" (Newman 1946).¹¹

In addition to these psychological and mystical leanings, Newman was himself an abstract artist. It is therefore not surprising that he would favor the kind of two-dimensional work presented at the Betty Parsons Gallery, since Northwest Coast painting, textiles and low reliefs are far more abstract than three-dimensional carvings. Compare, for example, the Chilkat blanket (pl. 7), similar to one exhibited in the Parsons Gallery show, to the Haida mask from Douglas and d'Harnoncourt (pl. 5). While the volumetric mask is almost uncannily human and strikingly naturalistic, the imagery on the blanket, with all its dismembered eyes, frontal and profile schematized faces, ovoid and other geometric forms, is next to impossible to decipher. Indeed, the Chilkat blanket is probably the most abstract art made on the Northwest Coast, since it represents a single animal illustrated both from the front—in the center panel—and from the side—on the two flanking panels. The artist takes great liberties in deciding what parts of either frontal or profile representation he shall include; sometimes he will include feet, ears, wings, feathers, fins (depending on the creature illustrated), and sometimes he will omit those identifying characteristics. As Franz Boas (1927, p. 212) says, "the uncertainty of interpretation becomes the greater the more fragmentary the figure"; often, un-



7. Tlingit Chilkat blanket.
United States National Museum. Boas, 1927, fig. 271, a.

less one acquires a Chilkat blanket directly from the Indian who made it, one cannot with any certainty identify the species of animal illustrated on it, much less any of that animal's details.

Although Newman clearly admires Northwest Coast art (see p. 10, above), he uses this two-dimensional work to promote the merits of his own, modern, White art:

Here, then, among a group of several peoples, the dominant esthetic tradition was abstract. They depicted their mythological gods and totemic monsters in abstract symbols, using organic shapes, without regard to contours of appearance. . . . There is an answer in these works to all those who assume that modern abstract art is the esoteric exercise of a snobbish elite, for among these simple people, abstract art was the normal, well-understood, dominant tradition. Shall we say that modern man has lost the ability to think on so high a level? (Newman 1946).

Newman here is making a case for his own art by asserting that if this sophisticated art could be understood by Indians, then similar abstract art should be understood by Whites.¹²

It is highly unlikely that the Northwest Coast artist created his art to express a certain level of conscious development or to experiment with the esthetic of abstraction. As valuable for scholarship and interesting for contemplation as these ideas presented by the writers of the forties may be, they clearly portray the Indian through the eyes of the Surrealist or Abstract painter.

The American public, in the 1950s and early 1960s, did not seem at all interested in these philosophical speculations on Northwest Coast art. For example, the first major book on Northwest Coast art published after the Museum of Modern Art show, Robert Inverarity's *Art of the Northwest Coast Indian* (1950), has no mention of Lévi-Strauss, Paalen, or Newman in the bibliography. Many of the other books written during this period also do not cite the Surrealists but instead, refer to the standard ethnographic sources by Franz Boas, John Swanton, George Emmons, and others.¹³ The writers of this time, singularly uninterested in theoretical issues, wrote books in standard anthropological-functional format which were essentially extensions of those turn-of-the-century ethnographies on which they drew.¹⁴ The typical organization of one of these books consisted of a general discussion of the environment of the Northwest Coast, the social structure and religion of the Indians who lived there, and the materials, techniques, and identification of images of the art from that area. Per-

haps the basic conservatism of this literature is a reflection of the general social conservatism and anti-intellectualism characteristic of America in the fifties; the literature on the Northwest Coast during this period presented general but straightforward, hard facts about Indian art, not esoteric interpretations of it.

Only in the mid-1960s did several authors begin to abandon these generalities and start to concentrate on one specific aspect of Indian art, namely, its supposedly integral relationship to the spiritual world. This "discovery" of the sacred nature of Native American art went along with new analyses of its meaning; thus, a corpus of theoretical literature appeared in the late sixties and throughout the seventies.

Northwest Coast art as a manifestation of the sacred is apparent in Christian Zervos' introduction to *Masterworks of Indian and Eskimo Art from Canada* (Musée de l'Homme 1969):

The chief characteristics of Northwest Coast art derive from their association with the hopes and wishes of men frequently beset by evil spirits. . . . All (artworks) are instruments for arousing mysterious and compelling them to appear. The call of the unknown and the supernatural vibrates in these objects. . . . Each time we succeed in deciphering the language, we perceive the part played by the shaman in putting defined natural forms at the service of his concepts of magic and his method of casting spells, and in leading believers along esoteric paths, by overturning and often distorting reality in order to transform it and give it new meaning for them.

In this passage, Zervos mentions the shaman, an individual who will become extremely important in American Indian art studies in the late sixties and seventies. During the anthropological-functional period, scholars did not single out shamanism as a significant phenomenon on the Northwest Coast: in 1950, Inverarity (pp. 30-31) had two paragraphs on shamanism, in 1962, Feder and Malin (p. 15) gave it one paragraph, and in 1955, Philip Drucker (pp. 159-61 in 1963 edition) needed only two pages to give all the necessary facts about shamanism in a ten-page chapter on Northwest Coast religion. Drucker's evaluation of the shaman as a lower-caste individual who achieves higher status as a result of his practice no longer finds favor among the majority of scholars, most of whom seem to regard the shaman as a sincerely spiritual holyperson who has little regard for material concerns.

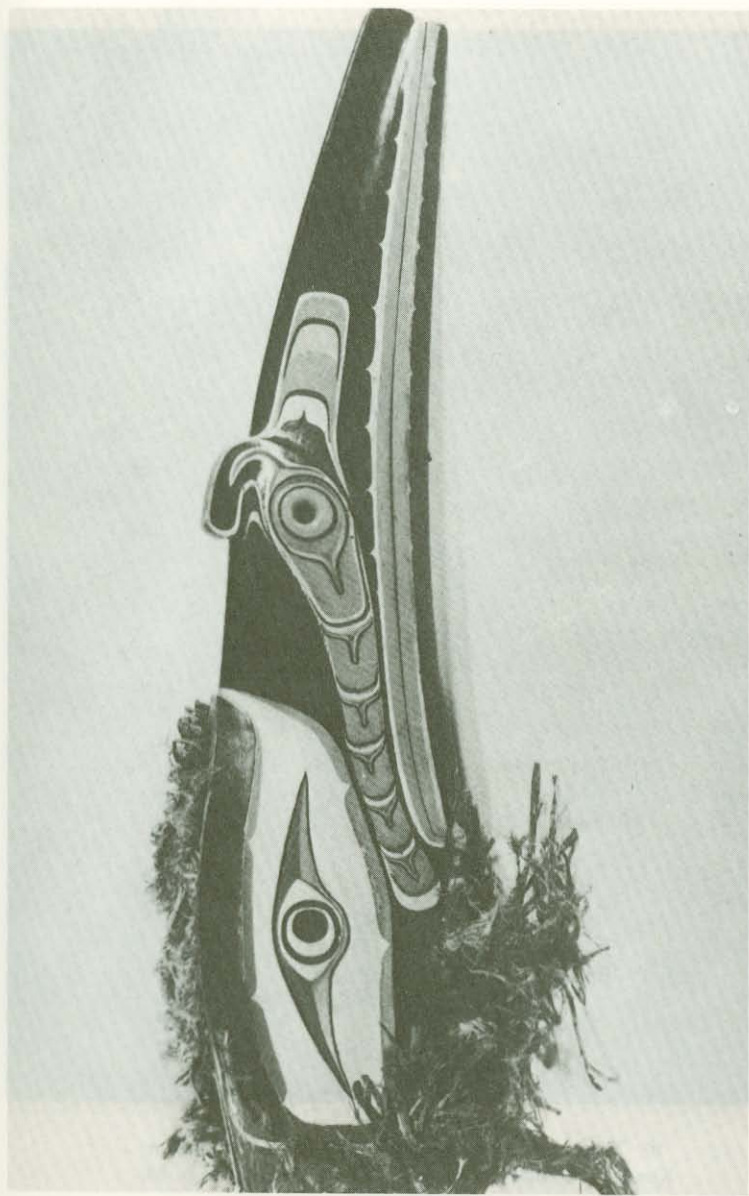
In a dramatic change from the disinterested attitude displayed in the fifties and early sixties towards the shaman, scholars from the

mid-sixties on treated shamanism as an extremely important factor in the production of Northwest Coast art. Erna Gunther, for example, in her *Art in the Life of the Northwest Coast Indian* (1966, pp. 147-64) has a seventeen page chapter on shamanism that is set apart from another, general discussion of religion. In 1973, several works on shamanism appeared: *The Far North* (Collins, et al. p. 227) has an essay on "Tlingit Shamans" by Frederica de Laguna which although short, is set apart from the main essay on Tlingit art by Peter Stone (pp. 165-69); *The Art of the Shaman* (Johnson 1973) is the catalog of a show of Northwest Coast shamanic art presented at the University of Iowa Museum of Art; *Stones, Bones and Skin* is a special issue of the journal *Arts Canada* entirely dedicated to the shamanic art of the Native American.

Stones, Bones and Skin uses photography especially effective to convey the mysteriousness and otherworldliness of shamanism. In his article on "Kwakiutl Winter Dances" (pp. 94-118), Peter MacNair suggests that the illustrated artworks "function primarily to make the supernatural world a real and visible one" in a ceremony which has at its "core" an "expression of a deep spiritual experience" (MacNair 1973, p. 94). This spiritualism is visually conveyed by Eberhard Otto's dramatic photographs. The Sea Monster mask (pl. 8), strikingly lit to create harsh contrasts between dark and light, disturbingly cut off by the edge of the photograph, appears to be moving in a diagonal direction towards the viewer, ready to overwhelm him or her with terrifying, super-human force. Compare this mask to another Winter Ceremony mask of a Cannibal Bird (pl. 9) illustrated in *People of the Potlatch* in 1956. Placed horizontally on the backdrop and uniformly lit, this mask does not communicate any sense of the dramatic or spiritual; it could as easily be a secular potlatch mask in terms of how it is photographed. We can also compare two raven rattles, one published in 1973 (plate 10, Obomswin 1973), the other in 1956 (plate 11, Hawthorn 1956). The former emerges brilliantly from a black background which is replete with a close-up detail and creates an hallucinatory sensation; the latter stands dull and lifeless on its white page. What is interesting about these photographs is that the raven rattle, while sometimes associated with shamanism, is much more often used by laypersons in secular ceremonies. Thus, we have in plate 10, a highly spiritual photograph of an item that was usually displayed during mundane rituals. The difference between these two raven rattles has nothing to do with their function but instead reflects the interests of their White photographers.



8. Kwakiutl sea monster (*lakim*) mask. British Columbia
Provincial Museum, Victoria. MacNair 1973, p. 107.



9. Kwakiutl bird mask. Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia. 5' long. Hawthorn 1956, pl. 72.



10. Tlingit raven rattle. Museum voor Land en Volken
Kunde, Rotterdam. 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long. Obomsawin 1973, p. 83.



11. Kwakiutl raven rattle, Provincial Museum,
Victoria, B.C., 14" long. Hawthorn 1956, pl. 84.

For some scholars, shamanism is the originator of art forms and iconographic motifs. For example, Deborah Waite (1966) proposes that the Kwakiutl transformational mask—which snaps open and shut to reveal different mythic beings—is an artistic elaboration of the shamanic experience of transformation. Joan Vastokas (1973) suggests that the totem pole, an object used to exhibit social rank, is descended from the shamanic tree of life. And Peter Furst (1973) believes that images of skeletons, horns, and animal/human transformation were originally visual manifestations of shamanic power. Although these motifs do appear on Northwest Coast shamanic art, they also appear on secular art, like house posts, crest hats, and feast spoons. Both Furst and Vastokas propose that the origin of much Northwest Coast art—even that art used in secular contexts and illustrating beings that do not relate at all to shamanism—is founded in the shamanic experience.¹⁵

The fascination with shamanism was by no means limited to scholarly articles. Northwest Coast shamanism entered into the sphere of the eastern elite when, in 1965, several pieces of shamanic paraphernalia appeared in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* as illustrations of Donald Baird's article, "Tlingit Treasures; How an Important Collection Came to Princeton." Nobody had paid any attention to this "treasure" that had been contained in dusty, hidden cabinets in Princeton for over fifty years. Now, however, this collection was brought out and displayed as one of the major attractions of an Ivy League college reunion. In his article, Baird not only gives a lengthy description of a Tlingit shaman (pp. 11, 17), but illustrates the contents of a shaman's grave (pl. 12) that includes masks, rattles, necklaces, charms, a baton, a drum, and the owner's skull. This kind of publicity, along with extensive coverage in popular books on the Northwest Coast, such as Bancroft-Hunt and Foreman's *People of the Totem* (1979) suggests that the topic of shamanism appeals to a broad spectrum of people, not just the scholars of Northwest Coast cultures.

Indeed, in the United States during the late sixties and into the seventies, interest in shamanism flourished. Whereas European writers had been analysing the phenomenon for years, literature on shamanism proliferated in the United States only during this period.¹⁶ Mircea Eliade's encyclopedic survey of world shamanism appeared in French in 1951; it did not come out in English until 1964, when there was presumably enough interest in this country to warrant its translation and publication. The interest in other-worldly experiences extended far beyond shamanism at this time,



12. Tlingit shaman's paraphernalia and skull. Yakutat.
Collected by W. Libbey in 1886. Princeton University
Museum of Natural History. Baird 1965, p. 11.

for theologians and poets studied Eastern mysticism, botanists, chemists, psychologists and psychiatrists wrote on mind-altering drugs, and European historians began writing on witchcraft.¹⁷

During the late 1960s and through part of the 1970s, there was a tremendous receptivity to studies of the irrational, the other-worldly, and the occult in the scholarly field.

The general public too, was fascinated with all types of shamanic and occult phenomena. What else could explain the great popularity of Carlos Castaneda's *Teachings of Don Juan* (1968) or John Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (1972). Neihardt's book has a revealing history: when it first appeared in 1932, it received favorable reviews but did not sell. Reissued in 1961, it sold more briskly. Finally, in 1971, the book, in the author's words, "exploded in surprising popularity" after he appeared on the Dick Cavett show (Neihardt 1972, p. xiii).

It would appear that several factors went into creating an atmosphere in which the significance of shamanism could become greater than it had ever been; these factors are all related to the meaning of shamanism to the White. Two scholars have discussed this significance from two different perspectives, Stephen Larsen and Theodore Roszak. By reviewing some of their ideas on this topic, the reasons for the "shamanic renaissance" may be better understood.

In his book, *The Shaman's Doorway* (1976), Stephen Larsen points out that a segment of the American population has embraced something like shamanism as a way of life; these would be the "sidewalk shamans" and "witches who haunt the streets of San Francisco" (p. 1). According to Larsen (pp. 3-8), our scientific, industrialized, and technologized age has "robbed us of a myth by which to live" and has caused a "ravenous spiritual hunger" seeking "satiation in esoteric practices." He proposes that a "Meaningful place within the universe" can be rediscovered in the archetypal experiences of visionaries such as Black Elk and Rasmussen's Eskimo shaman (pp. 84-147). Thus, the shaman is actually the model for this book, "a simple instructional manual for owning and operating a mythic imagination" (p. 8). Larsen and the seekers he describes concern themselves with shamanism for reasons that are personal and, in a Jungian sense, psychological.¹⁸

A trend of the sort we are discussing—this rather romantic fascination with shamanism—has another, more sociological explanation, such as that proposed by Theodore Roszak in his *Making of a Counterculture* (1969). Roszak points out how, during the sixties,

many people, particularly the youth, reacted against poverty, racism, the war in Viet Nam, the raping of the environment, the military/industrial complex, capitalism, and a personal sense of anonymity by actively rebelling against their own society and consciously seeking alternative lifestyles. The "sidewalk shaman," immersed in drugs, mysticism and the occult, was actually a revolutionary displaying his opposition to "technocratic society." What Larsen interprets as a personal quest, Roszak identifies as a form of revolution. Even though Larsen and Roszak look at shamanism from decidedly different perspectives, they apparently agree that dissatisfaction with contemporary society during the 1960s produced greater receptivity to subjects such as shamanism. It was in a climate such as this that studies on the shamanic significance of Northwest Coast art could flourish.

As Robert Berkhofer (1978, pp. 108-11) points out, one result of the countercultural movement was an elevation of the Indian in the eyes of many White Americans. By virtue of his connection to tradition and community—so romantically appealing to the alienated; his ability to transcend ordinary reality—so important to the drug-oriented; and his apparent union with the environment—so significant to the ecology-minded, the Native American acquired an even higher status than he had previously enjoyed. Manifestations of this new status appeared in popular culture, as, for example, the Indian as Hero in the books and movies *Little Big Man* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Madison Avenue also used the Indian in magazines and on television in advertisements for anti-pollution campaigns as well as for margarine. Perhaps as a result of this general elevation of the Native American's status, his art is now being treated as an esthetically mature cultural product.

In the thirties and forties, the writers on Northwest Coast style were either apologetic or hyperbolic in their praise; both approaches to the art reflected an uncertainty as to whether the public will agree with the judgments of those writers. By the late sixties, however, with the Native American's newfound status, few voiced the opinion that their art is not worthy of esthetic consideration. Freed thus from arguing its merits, writers could seriously criticize Northwest Coast artworks.

The major names in this critical literature are Bill Holm, whose *Northwest Coast Indian Art; An Analysis of Form* (1965) remains the most significant and valuable formal analysis of two-dimensional Northwest Coast art, and Bill Reid, whose essay, "The Art—An Appreciation," in the *Arts of the Raven* catalog (1967) and

book, *Out of the Silence* (1971) are the most profoundly poetic and sensitive reactions to Northwest Coast art. Part of the reason that these particular men have dealt with Northwest Coast esthetics so remarkably is that both are artists deeply involved with Indian culture; Holm has strong ties with the Kwakiutl, Reid is a Haida. In 1975, both men collaborated on the very important *Form and Freedom*, a book which provides much-needed esthetic evaluations of specific art objects.

Holm and Reid seem to be reacting to the tendency to accept uncritically all Northwest Coast art, whether well-carved or not. In the "dialogues" that make up this book, Holm and Reid discuss the merits of individual pieces, usually agreeing, sometimes disagreeing, in their evaluations. They both feel that a horn spoon (pl. 13) is a "classic example of the most classic of all Northwest Coast forms" (Reid, p. 84) and point out how the carving style, eye forms, elegant shape, and meticulous formline patterns serve to make this work a masterpiece. They disagree, however, on the merits of a pipe (pl. 14), even though both consent that it is simple and crude. While Holm (p. 42) says that it is "a pretty exciting thing", Reid, who finds it neither exciting nor pleasant, says, "I don't know that there's any point in talking about it much." This type of evaluation signifies the maturation of the appreciation of Northwest Coast art; this art is not a style that needs apology or hyperbole, it is a style which, along with other major and accepted styles, can easily be subjected to serious critical evaluation.

Analogous to this type of evaluation would be the efforts of scholars like Holm (1974) and Audrey Hawthorn (1964, 1967) to identify the works of individual artists such as Willie Seaweed and Mungo Martin. To identify the professional artist as an individual removes him from the category "anonymous" and places him in the category "fine artist." The higher status this gives to the Northwest Coast artists can be gleaned from Evrard's comment (Museum de l'Homme 1969) that because they are trained professionals, their artworks are "perhaps closer in spirit to the Renaissance than to so-called 'primitive' societies." Thus is shattered the old stereotype of the Native American, so totally integrated into a group that he lacks any individualism or creativity.

This body of scholarship, by some of the most talented students of Northwest Coast art, with its concern for esthetic evaluation and identification of artists, is in the best and most serious tradition of art historical research. It clearly culminates the pursuits of many scholars to elevate Northwest Coast art's status to the level it



13. Haida (probably) spoon. DeMenil collection.
13 $\frac{5}{8}$ " long. Holm and Reid 1975, pl. 23, p. 84.



14. Pipe. DeMenil collection. $4\frac{7}{8}$ " long.
Holm and Reid 1975, pl. 5, p. 42.

deserves; these pursuits parallel the increasing status of the Native American himself in the eyes of White Americans. This literature, however, can serve a purpose outside the scholarly sphere of which its authors may not even have been aware: to define the good and bad, valuable and non-valuable art for the collector.

Like Western art, the buying and selling of Northwest Coast art is now "big business." Contemporary authors comment on a fact that any visit to a gallery will prove: that the prices of Northwest Coast art, which not long ago were quite reasonable, have now gone beyond the reach of all but the very rich. In this regard, Edward Malin (1978, pp. 78-79) suggests interesting parallels with potlatching in his statement that:

As more interest was shown, prices of masks rose, eventually rocketing out of sight. The cycle was completed when men of wealth, now representing Western culture, rather than tribal culture, began competing for ownership of coveted examples, or strove to be benefactors of museums with bestowal of gifts. Art museums began contending for ownership of outstanding examples of this art.

As a phenomenon of the 1970s, the soaring prices of art is not restricted to articles from the Northwest Coast; significant, however, is the fact that some pieces of Northwest Coast art cost as much as Impressionist paintings.¹⁹

The relationship between the elevated status of Northwest Coast art and collecting is suggested by Ralph Coe (1977, p.10) in his comment that the increased market value and lively trade in Native American art "signifies the advancement of American Indian art to the status it deserves." An art that was originally created to declare status in a hierarchical society has achieved another type of status in White society and is now displayed on the walls of White mans' houses to declare their wealth and position. These collectors who spend enormous amounts of money on Northwest Coast art must know the difference between a good and bad investment; thus, the literature on esthetic evaluation and identification of artist serves another purpose: to inform the marketplace.

Thus far, we have seen how Whites came to regard the Native American more highly as a result of the countercultural movement, and how that higher regard was reflected, on the one hand, in the serious critical and classificatory literature, and on the other hand, in the high prices Northwest Coast art obtained in the marketplace. This elevated status also had an effect on the interpretive literature.

As we have pointed out, some of that interpretive literature focussed admiringly on the shaman; the words one must necessarily use to describe a shaman, however, are "non-rational," "non-logical," and "mystical." For some scholars more deeply immersed in traditional modes of interpreting thought processes, these words just quoted have not nearly the same value as "rational," "logical" and "philosophical." These scholars use what they would consider to be a high-status vocabulary to describe the high status of Northwest Coast art, and concentrate not on the other-worldly and spiritual side of the artists, but instead, on their intellectual side. These scholars have been clearly influenced by Lévi-Straussian structuralism which, among many other things, describes primitive man as the intellectual equal of Western man; such intellectual equality implies an elevation of the primitive man from his supposedly low status of intellectual inferiority (Lévi-Strauss 1966).

As was pointed out in the section on the Surrealists, Lévi-Strauss himself had always been interested in Northwest Coast art; his 1943 article exhibits an appreciative passion unequalled by most other writers. However, he also wrote seriously about this art, always trying to point out how it reflected the Indian's intellectual equality with Western man. For example, in 1944/45, Lévi-Strauss took issue with those diffusionists who argued that the motif of split representation, in which both the profile and frontal view of a single animal is illustrated (pl. 15), came to the Northwest Coast from China, where it appears on ancient bronzes. Lévi-Strauss took the position that the motif was independently invented on the Northwest Coast. This debate, with one side asserting that a motif went from a "high" to a "low" culture, and the other side stating that the motif evolved in each culture for reasons having to do with the structure of each society, is, in reality, a debate about the respective levels of different cultures. If a "low" culture must borrow from a "higher" one, then it is certainly inferior. However, if that "low" culture shares with the "higher" one a similar societal structure which causes the creation of a similar artistic motif, then the two cultures are equal. This debate, with the diffusionists on one side and the independent inventionists on the other, has continued.²⁰

In several other of his works, Lévi-Strauss touches on issues relevant to the study of Northwest Coast art. In 1949, for instance, he wrote two essays on the more scientific aspects of shamanism: "The Sorcerer and His Magic," and "The Effectiveness of Symbols." In *The Savage Mind*, printed in French in 1962, Lévi-Strauss en-



15. Haida painting of bear, illustrating split representation.
After Boas 1927, fig. 222. Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 243, fig. 17.

gages on a philosophical speculation on the meaning of art in primitive societies, using a Tlingit fish club as an example:

Everything about this implement—which is also a superb work of art—seems to be a matter of structure: its mythical symbolism as well as its practical function. More accurately, the object, its function and its symbolism seem to be inextricably bound up with each other and to form a closed system in which there is no place for events. The monster's position, appearance and expression owe nothing to the historical circumstances in which the artist saw it, in the flesh or in a dream, or conceived the idea of it. It is rather as if its immutable being were finally fixed in the wood whose fine grain allows the reproduction of all its aspects and in the use for which its empirical form seems to pre-determine it (Levi-Strauss 1966, p. 26).

In these two examples, Lévi-Strauss is proposing rather different interpretations of Indian culture than what was current at the times they were written: the Indian shaman is not a mystic venturer into the spiritual universe, but instead, an individual whose practice is based on a good deal of what we might call scientific knowledge; the Northwest Coast artist creates works of great philosophical complexity.

As was the case with Lévi-Strauss' 1943 article on Northwest Coast art, these other works did not seem to have caused a great impact on the scholarship until the mid-1960s. His essays on split representation and shamanism were translated in 1962, appearing as chapters in *Structural Anthropology*; his book on the thought processes of primitive peoples—*The Savage Mind*—was translated in 1966. Another indication of the high regard Lévi-Strauss has achieved among scholars in this country in recent years would be the large number of books which purport to interpret his ideas.²¹ It is, then, only in the last fifteen years, that scholars favor a Lévi-Straussian perception of the "Rational Indian."

Several scholars, including Lévi-Strauss himself (1979), have approached Northwest Coast art from such a perspective. George MacDonald (in press) analyses both the phenomenon of shamanism and visual symbols of wealth from a structural point of view. In his introduction to *The Native American Heritage* (1977, p. 3), Evan Maurer states that an important aim of that exhibition is to "establish the relationships between the Indian's artistic, historic, and *philosophical* traditions" (italics mine). The collection of essays in *Boxes and Bowls* (Renwick Gallery 1974) also reflects a concern with the intellectual faculties of Northwest Coast natives. Whereas

decorated containers had previously been discussed either as functional objects or as fields for two-dimensional decoration,²² William Sturtevant, in his introductory essay points out that boxes and bowls "were not limited to practical uses. For the Tlingit, for example, they were conceptually very important; they were primary culture symbols. Indeed, these objects are at least as apposite in this regard as are the carved totem poles one usually associates with the cultures of the Northwest Coast" (pp. 11-12). Sturtevant goes on to discuss how the structuring principles of Tlingit society and central concepts of Tlingit thought are reflected in these containers.

For Lévi-Strauss, the human mind is structured in a dualistic fashion, and much of human culture is an attempt to both express that dualism and mediate between its numerous manifestations (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 66). Joshua Taylor's essay in *Boxes and Bowls*, entitled "Form and Spirit" points to how Northwest Coast decoration functioned in a mediatory capacity: "To the Indian carver, decoration had meaning, not by virtue of its historical or sociological reference, although traditional mythological inferences were doubtless important, but because it effectively blurred precisely that difference between object and mind, the outer and inner, which has been so dear to the tradition of Western thought" (p. 9). And Ira Jacknis, in his essay, "Functions of the Containers," asserts that "Boxes and bowls played a key role of mediation between the natural, biological act of eating and the human, cultural act of feasting" (p. 19).

The most direct statement of the Northwest Coast Indian's rationality appears in Wilson Duff's *Images Stone B.C.* (1975). Duff uses Northwest Coast stone sculpture as a vehicle for urging Whites to "begin to grant (the Northwest Coast) artist-philosophers credence as people of intellect and mature wisdom" (p. 25). Duff, acknowledging Lévi-Strauss, suggests that the philosophical issues pondered by these Indians centered around the paradoxes of dualities: life/death, male/female, man/animal. Throughout the book, he points out how artworks, such as the stone hammer discussed at the beginning of this essay (pl.1) reconcile these dualities, usually by visual images of transformation. On that hammer, transformation is suggested both in the bird eating a whale—both are joining in the process of becoming a third being—and in the hawk/thunderbird itself—which Duff proposes is "the symbol of a process: the act of intertransformation, shown as between bird and man" (p. 104). The Indian studying this piece would speculate first on the fundamental dualities joined on the work of art, and then pon-

der some of the questions it raises, like: is the whale a part of the whole, or is it a separate entity distinct from that whole? Is the bird devouring the whale, or is the whale emerging from its mouth? (p. 14).

The extent to which the "Rational Indian" concept has flourished can be discerned from Duff's statement (p. 14):

The great French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss has shown that the "savage mind" is really a scientific mind that uses natural images rather than abstract symbols to create what he calls a "science of the concrete." I would say that the artist-thinkers of the Northwest Coast had created a sort of "mathematics of the concrete" which by the time the white man arrived had become an "advanced mathematics." Northwest coast art, in addition to its previously-recognized functions of representation and decoration, had come to be an arena for abstract thinking. . .

In this computerized age, to compare an Indian to a mathematician is high praise indeed!

There are striking similarities between the perceptions of Northwest Coast art put forth by the Surrealists and their friends and by the writers of the late sixties and seventies. All consider this art to be of the highest esthetic merit. The Surrealists and shamanists envy the closeness of the art to the supernatural world; the Surrealists and structuralists praise its philosophical and intellectual complexity. What connects all these groups of scholars is a positive, almost romantic attitude towards Northwest Coast art. These "Noble Savage" perceptions are in dramatic contrast to the more restrained attitudes of those who wrote on Northwest Coast art before the thirties, as well as during the fifties and early sixties.

Berkhofer has shown us that the image of the Native American does not remain static, that "White interest in the American Indian surges and ebbs with the tides of history" (1978, p. xiii); we have seen here how the perception of Northwest Coast art has similarly not remained static. The literature on this topic written over the last fifty years seems to have fluctuated between the poles of purported scientific objectivity and intense *Einfühling* (empathetic understanding). These attitudes towards the Indian art are actually projections of events, circumstances, and movements in White society; at certain periods, Whites seem to need to express a strong emotional attachment to the art, while at other times, it is more appropriate to be cool and removed from it.

Whereas the late sixties and seventies was a time in which scholars approached Northwest Coast art from an involved perspective, there seems to be a trend, apparent in the very late seventies, towards a more detached attitude. This attitude expresses itself in an interest in Northwest Coast art made for Whites. Ever since the nineteenth century, when Haida artists made argillite (a type of carbonaceous shale) carvings for sale to Whites, there has been something of a tradition on the Northwest Coast of art made for use outside the Indian community. This tradition continues today with an active group of Northwest Coast carvers and printmakers who create art meant primarily for White consumption. In the past, some of the more romantically-oriented scholars objected to discussing this type of art; Wolfgang Paalen, for example, explained that he omitted any consideration of Haida argillite carvings in his article on Northwest Coast art because since these pieces were made for Whites, they represent "the decadent stage at which a great art loses its *raison d'être* and degenerates into trifles" (1943, p. 18). For Paalen and many others who shared his opinions, any Northwest Coast art that was not fully "traditional," that did not completely integrate into the Indian society, that was not uniquely and purely Native, was not worthy of extensive discussion.²³

There has been in recent years, however, a growing interest in just the kind of art Paalen discarded. In a major exhibition of Northwest Coast art presented in Hamburg in 1979, a large number of contemporary prints and carvings, as well as argillite sculptures, were displayed alongside the more traditional masks, charms, and clan hats (Haberland, 1979). Hilary Stewart's most recent book, *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast* (1979), deals almost exclusively with modern silkscreen printmaking. And Robin Wright, in her article, "Haida Argillite Ship Pipes" (1979), investigates the White sources of a type of Native carving.

Wright is interested in one kind of interaction between the Indian and the White man on the Northwest Coast. Another scholar, Margaret Blackman, argues in her article, "Creativity in Acculturation: Art, Architecture and Ceremony form the Northwest Coast" (1976), that there was much that was good in these interactions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The idea that the White man's influence was as much positive as it was negative is clear in Blackman's summarizing comment (p. 410):

This is not to deny that the culture of the Northwest Coast experienced severe strain in recent phases of acculturation; many aspects of the traditional cultures were disrupted; social disorganization did occur. But equally important, internal creativity was abundantly in evidence. The turn-of-the-century cultures of the Pacific Northwest, in their fascinating and complex blend of native and Euro-American elements, were viable socio-cultural systems in their own right, systems which have continued during recent years to adapt to the changing external world through the processes of internal innovation.

Haberland, Stewart, Wright and Blackman are helping to change the definition of "Northwest Coast art." Each scholar, in his or her own way, presents—and praises the merit of—art that is in effect half-way between "traditional" Indian art and White art. Perhaps the pendulum which reflects White perceptions of Northwest Coast art is swinging away from the image of a Noble Savage who lives in an integrated cosmos and creates enviably meaningful art, and towards the image of a Native American who has a reciprocal relationship with White society and creates an art which mediates between Native and White. It will be for the future intellectual historian to interpret what appears to be a growing conservatism in Northwest Coast art studies and to explain how this pendulum swing reflects the values of White American society of the 1980s.

NOTES

1. For an annotated bibliography of the standard ethnographies, as well as more esoteric books and articles written up to the late sixties, see Wardell 1970.

2. Some may argue that the 1931 Exposition of Indian Tribal Art in New York was the first major exhibition of this sort. It has not been so considered here for two reasons. First, and most important, later writers do not credit it as having been influential or important; thus, it is not historically important. Second, the writers of the catalogue, *Introduction to American Indian Art* (1931), John Sloan and Oliver LaFarge, make it clear that they are very concerned with promoting contemporary Native American art as a means for the Indian to "earn a congenial and lucrative living through his art" (p. 53). While Sloan and LaFarge do mention the esthetic merit of Indian art, they do not concentrate on that artistic aspect of it as much as on its economic importance.

3. Robert Goldwater, in his *Primitivism in Modern Art*, first published in 1938, dealt solely with African and Oceanic art as they related to modern art. His omission of any reference to Native American art in this context is significant, suggesting strongly that when he was researching the book in the early thirties, interest in Native American art on the part of artists was not very strong. We will see, however, that there was some interest on the part of the Surrealists at this

time (see fn. 8 below); this interest was apparently not great enough for Goldwater to mention it.

4. Douglas and d'Harnoncourt are here referring to the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act.

5. This explanation of imagery is taken from Boas (1927).

6. Although subsequent literature illustrated a more comprehensive selection of Northwest Coast art, some authors persisted in using Western terms to describe it. For example, in 1950, Robert Inverarity (pp. 36-37) compared Northwest Coast art to the works of Rouault, Rousseau, beginning art students and children.

7. Elizabeth Cowling (1978, p. 499) comments that Lévi-Strauss' writings of the 1940s "express the orthodox Surrealist view . . . clearly."

8. Cowling (1978, p. 482) points out the little-known fact that the Surrealists were indeed intrigued by Northwest Coast art before they emigrated. When they came to America, they experienced "the broadening and deepening . . . (of their) knowledge and understanding of American tribal art."

9. Paalen (1943, p. 30) actually goes much further with these speculations. Desiring to spiritually unify the traditions of both Old and New Worlds, he points out how ancestor posts, similar to totem poles, were erected in ancient Greece and were also bisexual or hermaphroditic. These posts were associated later with the "totemic" deities Hermes and Thoth (from Egypt): "Thus is indicated the relationship between the pre-deistic dawn of the Ancient and of the New World, between our ancestor posts and the totem poles."

10. Northwest Coast art actually influenced the creations of these artists only minimally. Few of the Surrealists made paintings that display Northwest Coast designs or motifs; only Max Ernst, who included "tall structures" in his works which Cowling (1978, pp. 496-97) feels refer to totem poles, apparently integrated Indian art formally into his art. As for the New York artists, Robert Lubar (1980, pp. 20-24) suggests that Adolph Gottlieb, who owned a Chilkat blanket, integrated some Northwest Coast imagery into his works, but that Barnett Newman did not. Lubar stresses that these artists were far more interested in the mythic aspects of Native American art than its formal qualities.

11. Another, very romantic view of the Northwest Coast artist was professed by Newman in another catalogue he wrote for the Ideographic Picture Show in 1947, also at the Betty Parsons Gallery:

The Kwakiutl artist painting on a hide did not concern himself with the inconsequentialities that made up the opulent social rivalries of the Northwest Coast Indian scene, nor did he, in the name of a higher purity, renounce the living world for the meaningless materialism of design.

All indications point to the fact that the Kwakiutl artist did indeed concern himself with "social rivalries," since these were the reasons for the manufacture of a great deal of art; Newman is ignoring that which does not fit into his notion of what Northwest Coast art is all about.

12. Another possible explanation for the New York artists' fascination with Indian art could lie in the fact that it was a clearly "American" art style. Discontented with the debt that American artists had to European masters, many of these painters, like Newman (1948), Rothko (1949) and Still (1952) declared themselves creators of a new, distinctly "American" art. Such an attitude would make these artists particularly receptive to Native American art.

13. Garfield and Forrest (1948), for example, in a book specifically about totem poles, makes no mention of Paalen's article. Hawthorn (1956) provides no

bibliography at all. Although Garfield and Wingert (1951) do include Paalen and Lévi-Strauss in their bibliography, they do not discuss either scholar's theories in their text.

14. These books include: Inverarity (1950), Hawthorn (1956), Feder and Malin (1962), Gunther (1962), Siebert and Foreman (1962), Wardwell (1964) and Harner (1965). An important scholar of this period was Paul Wingert (1949, 1951) who uses the traditional art historical methodology of formal analysis to distinguish tribal styles. This literature is especially valuable since it clearly demonstrates that all Northwest Coast art is not the same. Such a formal approach to the material will be later expanded upon by Bill Holm (1965, 1972).

15. In 1975, Esther Pasztory cautioned against calling all art with trees, skeletons, and transformational images "shamanic," since much Northwest Coast art containing such motifs is secular and has nothing whatever to do with shamanism. In my own research (Jonaitis 1977), I have discovered that many of these motifs on Tlingit art can be interpreted from a social, rather than spiritual perspective.

16. For the earlier European literature in shamanism, see: Czaplicka 1914, Harva 1922, 1938, Ohlmark 1939, Nioradze 1925, Shirokogoroff 1935, Boutiller 1950, Findeisen 1957. For the more recent American literature on shamanism, see LaBarre 1970, Harner 1976, Larsen 1976, Myerhoff 1976, Berrin 1978, Halifax 1979.

17. For interest in mysticism on the part of writers and theologians like Ginsberg and Merton, see Roszak (1969, pp. 124-54). For bibliography on hallucinogenic drugs, see Furst 1978. For studies by historians of witchcraft, see Forbes 1966, Russell 1972, Cohn 1975.

18. Larsen's ideas are strikingly similar to many professed by the Surrealists, perhaps partially because he and these scholars and artists were strongly influenced by Jungian psychology.

19. Some prices recently paid for Northwest Coast art are: \$27,000 for a Kwakiutl Hamatsa mask and \$18,000 for a Haida chief's chair, sold in London, Nov. 8, 1977 (Johnson 1978, p. 10), \$41,400 for a Haida rattle, and \$31,050 for a Tlingit mask sold in Paris, Oct. 25-26, 1978 (Johnson 1979, p. 28). The interest in collecting may be partially responsible for some of the more recent literature on collecting, such as Carpenter's analysis of the personalities of some early collectors (1975) and Wardwell's discussion of the formation of the collection at the American Museum of Natural History (1978).

20. See, for example, Lévi-Strauss' newest book (1979), an in-depth structural analysis of several Northwest Coast masks and compare its approach to Coe (1972) and Fraser (1968), both works which profess a diffusionist bias.

21. Several books on Lévi-Strauss and structuralism are: Ehrmann 1966, Leach 1967 and 1970, Hayes and Hayes 1970, Paz 1970, Rossi 1974.

22. For example, Erna Gunther (1966, pp. 16-22) discusses the construction of the box, its function and the elements of its design from a Boasian perspective.

23. The interest in argillite is certainly not new: the Haida Bear Mother discussed on p. 8 is of argillite; illustrations of argillite sculptures appear in many books on Northwest Coast art. It is clear, however, that *more* attention is being paid now to such White-related art than in the past.

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