A Cannibal in the Archive: Performance, Materiality, and (In)Visibility in Unpublished Edward Curtis Photographs of the Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa

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The frequently published photographs of Native Americans taken by Edward S. Curtis in the early 20th century have come to embody the proud, sorrowful, and romantic Indian in the American imaginary. In this article, I explore two alternate venues for the circulation of his images: the 1911 lantern slide ''picture opera'' and the photographic archive. In particular, I examine a series of unpublished photographs that Curtis took of George Hunt—Curtis's and Franz Boas's longtime collaborator—posed as a Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa (''Cannibal Dancer''). The photographs allowed Curtis to visualize an outdated, rumored-about, and previously secret ritual, while his recontextualization of them in the picture opera momentarily publicized and spectacularized them before they were relegated to the archive. This article critically examines ethnographic photographs as they both construct and obscure cultural realities based on their unique materialities and paths of circulation. It also explores the relationship of performance to such photographs at various moments and suggests that recognition of indigenous agency in the creation of ethnographic images has implications for their later modes of interpretation, especially by Native people themselves. [Key words: Edward Curtis, Hamat'sa, indigenous agency, Kwakwaka'wakw, photography]
Disclaimer: This essay includes photographs depicting human remains.

On November 10, 1912, the Seattle *Times* reported a visit to the local studio of Edward S. Curtis, who was already a famous photographer and one of the country's most recognized popular authorities on American Indians.[1] Curtis was known for romantic and highly aestheticized depictions of Native Americans, and one can almost sense the trepidation with which the *Times* reporter described what he found in Curtis's studio: ''On the floor was a chest half filled with ghastly human skulls and containing also a mummified leg and foot. Asked of what use were the grewsome [sic] relics, Mr. Curtis explained that they were part of the paraphernalia he had to have as a member of one of the many Indian secret orders'' (reprinted in Gidley 1994:206). Although he also claimed to be a member of the Hopi Snake Priesthood, these particular items were of the sort once used by Hamat'sa—or ''cannibal dance''—initiates among the Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl) of British Columbia, with whom Curtis was working at the time (Figure 1).[2] Like so many others who went West in the waning years of the 19th century to reimagine themselves, Curtis actively participated in his own mythologization, in part to help sell his monumental book series, *The North American Indian*, which he considered the major work of his life. Always one to exaggerate his heroism and ethnographic bona fides, Curtis reveled in the sensational. The casual strewing of human remains around his studio was likely calculated to impress as well as horrify, and to prompt his telling of initiatory yarns (see note 13). As we shall see, these ''grewsome relics'' were really photographic props that Curtis procured to help him and his subjects stage scenes of ritual life that had been abandoned for some time already under Canadian assimilation policy and strict colonial surveillance.

While the photography auction and private gallery scenes glory in the revelation of the previously unknown image, most scholarship and popular publishing on Curtis has by and large focused on his well-known and often reprinted pictures. In this essay, I explore two

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FIGURE 1. "Costume of a Kominaka—Kwakiutl" c. 1910 (AGA 78.12.113).

alternative—and in some ways opposing—venues for the circulation of his images: his 1911 lantern slide "picture opera" and the photographic archive. In particular, I examine a series of remarkable but largely unpublished photos that Curtis took of George Hunt—both his and Boas's longtime collector and collaborator—posed as a Hamat'sa initiate with props made from human remains. A recovery of the context of these photographs' production provides a means of not only evaluating their ethnographic veracity but also recognizing their essentially collaborative nature. Without the active and willful participation of Hunt as a model and culture broker, these photographs likely could never have been made.

The series of images allowed Curtis to visualize an outdated, rumored-about, and previously secret feature of the Hamat'sa ritual, while his recontextualization of them in the picture opera momentarily publicized and spectacularized them. Yet their ultimate relegation to the archive—and their controversial recent reappearances—helped ensure that the Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa would be known only through other, more iconic images. Here, I critically examine ethnographic photographs as they both construct and obscure cultural realities based on their performative conditions of production, unique materialities, and modes of circulation. By escaping the reiterative exposure that turns images into icons with overdetermined meanings, uncirculated pictures may show certain promise for revealing the agency of Curtis's photographic models. Thus, I also suggest that by approaching certain archival images as collaborative, we can recognize and facilitate their added potential for recuperation by their indigenous subjects.

Preservation and Performance, Archive and Agency

For most people, Curtis's sepia-toned photographs of Native North Americans have come to embody the proud, sorrowful, and romantic Indian in the American imaginary. While adamant about the scientific value of his salvage-oriented images, Curtis freely engaged in theatrical staging and historical reconstruction to frame his subjects. Although he has come under considerable—and in many cases, warranted—criticism in recent decades for such practice, evidence of heavy-handed manipulation and imposition of ethnographically inappropriate clothing is statistically rare given his enormous photographic output (see Holm 1983). Moreover, practices such as supplying props or costumes, carefully composing models and scenes, and retouching negatives or prints in the darkroom were hardly unusual in photography of the era. While such techniques were standard for art or portrait photography, they were also common among more journalistically minded photographers as well as anthropologists engaged in a kind of ethnographic documentation that promoted the erasure of signs of modernity in order to picture previous modes of life—"for the record," as they say.[3]

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Nonetheless, the production of many romanticized, nostalgic, and generic images surely contributed to the promotion of certain visual stereotypes about indigenous peoples within ''the whole field of representation and representational activity'' (Mitchell 1994:6), which in turn bolstered often politically motivated assumptions about the imminence of their demise. Debates about the cultural authenticity of his images aside, Curtis clearly aimed to provide a detailed visual record of the societies that he himself helped constitute as the ''vanishing races.'' Yet the normative picture of Native America painted in Curtis's photographic *publications* was highly selective and tended to stick closely to the mandates of romantic pictorialism. It was also constrained in part by the perspectives of his powerful patrons, including Theodore Roosevelt, J. P. Morgan, and Frederick Hodge, who may have been invested in promoting a certain image of the noble and interesting, if safely moribund, American aborigine (Gidley 2003:13–15). Indeed, the endless reproduction of certain Curtis images—in his own day, but especially since the so-called Curtis revival of the 1960s and 1970s—in myriad coffee table books, posters, calendars, and screen savers, has contributed to the creation of fully frozen, decontextualized, and iconic fragments of Native American identity, history, and visual culture.

As a representational technology, photography is inherently ''preservationist''; that is, the taking or making of a picture presumes that its subject matter has been deemed worthy of visual survival through time (Sontag 1977). However, specific printing methods betray variable interest in the *permanence* of these records—from fragile glass lantern slides that project ephemeral images, to the stability and luster of gold-toned prints, to permanent enshrinement in books and catalogues (to mention just three of the media with which Curtis proved innovative). Different formats and modes of presentation convey unique materialities, paths of circulation, economic values, and amenability to public performance (Edwards and Hart 2004b). For instance, photographs take on and suggest various kinds of significance depending on whether they are presented via book plates, postcards, albums, T-shirts, posters, gallery walls, projected slides, or the Internet. Despite photography's popular reputation for unmediated indexicality (that is, assumptions about its capacity for direct technological reproduction of reality), a photograph is subject to editorial sensibility and variable power over its representational authority at every stage of its visual biography and political economy. Although it may seem self-evident, images that are highly publicized have the greatest chance of circulating widely, of achieving the status of visual emblems or stereotypes. As James Faris (1996, 2003:90–95) has argued, selected photographs become ''effective'' through publication and circulation in a way that unpublished ones do not; not only are they made visually accessible in the first place, a particular value is further construed by means of their recurrent selection and reuse.

An understanding of the way in which Edward Curtis's most famous images have become effective through repeated publication is informed by a consideration of those images that have not. This is illustrated most dramatically in the case of similar photos where one has been publicized and the other lost to the archive. In Figure 2, we see two images of a crouching Hamat'sa from the Gusgimaxw Band of Quatsino Sound: on the left is one of Curtis's most famous images of the Hamat'sa, frequently published in coffee table books; on the right, a field cyanotype from the same session that has never been published (Figure 2). Clearly the one on the left is in visual dialogue with many other images of the possessed initiate that became widely known through reiterative book illustrations, museum life groups, photographs, and film footage—crouching low to the ground, arms raised with open palms, lips pursed, eyes rolled back and ''wild'' (Glass 2006). The image on the right, however, portrays a man acknowledging the camera (and thus both the photographer and the viewer) as well as revealing the posed nature of the photographic encounter. Despite the presence of rings on the man's pinkie fingers and trousers on his legs (both of which betray the modernity of the model, but neither of which call attention to themselves in this dramatic image), the first picture is meant to be read—through its caption as well as its original context in Curtis's volume on the ''Kwakiutl''—as illustrating a timeless ritual moment; the second picture simply gives the game away. Yet the unpublished picture also suggests a much more complex social and historical encounter, as well as the active intention, agency, and engagement of the model.

The dominant strain of criticism of Curtis over the past 25 years has maintained variably that he staged his scenes, posed his models and dressed them in inappropriate clothing, manipulated images in the darkroom, and variously conspired to deny the modernity of his subjects by constructing a highly selective and romantic picture of Native Americans as they had once lived and looked (e.g., Lyman 1982 and the countless others who quite uncritically reiterate his few examples). While aspects of this critique are certainly merited, it has tended to grant Curtis sole authorship and control, completely ignoring the active participation and possibly strategic agency of the indigenous people who chose to sit and pose and dress up for him (or other photographers for that matter). Although some writers have long main-

FIGURE 2. Left: "Hamatsa Emerging from the Woods—Koskimo" 1915 (NAI); Right: Untitled [a Gusgimaxw Hamat'sa] c. 1910 (GRH).

tained that Curtis's images are best approached as truly collaborative (e.g., Coleman 1972; Davis 1985:79), it has only been more recently that scholars and photographers—both Native and non—have started to produce a critical discourse surrounding the intentionality of Curtis's photographic models, subjects, and partners (Lippard 1992 and *passim*; Coleman 1998a:152; Horse Capture 1993; Northern and Brown 1993; Trachtenberg 2004:203–204; Zamir 2007). Rather than assume that all Native American models were manipulated into posing, and consequently exploited as a result of photographic encounters, detailed historical research as well as oral histories in indigenous communities suggest that in many cases they may have had both their own reasons for participating and the means and motivation to directly influence the nature of the resulting pictures (see also Brown and Peers 2006; Johnson 1998; Sandweiss 2002:270). As Edwards (2001: ch. 7) has suggested, viewing ethnographic photography—both as a social practice and a material product—as *performative* implies the self-conscious agency of both photographer and indigenous subject, the creative nature of the image-making process, and the constitutive power of the resulting pictures (see also Iverson 2007).

Often the key to an image's meaning is provided by the discursive contexts in which it is produced, circulated, and viewed, as well as the interpretive sensibilities of those involved in each of these processes. Following Barthes, we can recognize the ways in which private, unpublished, or archival images tend to escape the iconizing process; to live free from historic captions, encapsulations, and contexts; to remain less overdetermined and more open to countermemory; to stay even more amenable to resignification than are images with a robust public biography (see Edwards 2001; Edwards and Hart 2004a). Archival photos are thus ripe for excavation and analysis as visual evidence of the "hidden histories" of intercultural encounter and negotiation (Edwards 1992:12) as well as authorial intent and manipulation. Given the fact that Curtis's published imagery adhered to fairly strict conventions of genre and a marked selectivity of style, it is important to examine his unpublished images as both counter-examples and—especially for the descendants of his indigenous models—counterhistories. The previously passive and presumably "vanished" Indian reemerges as an active player on the photographic frontier of colonial modernity.

The Kwakwaka'wakw, the Hamat'sa, and George Hunt

Intrigued by the growing ethnographic fame of the Kwakwaka'wakw, and by exposure to Boas's work in both books and museum exhibits, Curtis spent a couple of summers among the group between 1910 and 1914 preparing photographs and text for Volume Ten of his book series and shooting footage for his feature film, *In the Land of the Head Hunters*. Other than the Hopi, the so-called "Kwakiutl" were the only tribe to receive a dedicated volume, one of the longest in the series.[4] In fundraising letters to his patrons, Curtis drew on long-held assumptions about the Kwakwaka'wakw, describing

them as highly resistant to assimilation and closer to their "pre-contact" state than any other Native North Americans (Gidley 2003:99, 105); the introduction to Volume Ten suggested "theirs are the only villages where primitive life can still be observed" (Curtis 1915a:xi). Curtis hoped that their historical proximity to and maintenance of (at least aspects of) a "traditional" lifestyle would lend itself to his larger project of historical reconstruction and salvage.

On the one hand, Curtis had anthropological aspirations and he both cultivated relationships with institutionalized scholars and appealed to his fieldwork adventures in public presentations. On the other hand, unlike more scientifically oriented photographers, Curtis was influenced by the Pictorialist movement, which promoted aesthetic interventions by the artist's eye and hand (Jacknis 1984:12). Although some professional anthropologists supported his salvage efforts, it was surely his aesthetic faculties that appealed to the majority of his commercial clients and financial patrons, many of whom were industrialists and politicians deeply invested in the demographic reality of vanishing Indians (Trachtenberg 2004). So while he was concerned with accurately depicting many aspects of indigenous life, Curtis also played up the melodramatic and the picturesque—and among the Kwakwaka'wakw at least, the grotesque—in his photography and film as well as more popular endeavors, as we shall see.

It is hardly surprising that the inherent sensationalism of the Hamat'sa appealed to Curtis. The Kwakwaka'wakw were already well known for their theatrical performances and vigorous art forms, and the aura of cannibalism hung over the ritual like a neon marquee. In the Hamat'sa, an initiate becomes possessed by the man-eating spirit Baxbaxwalanuxsiwae', which causes him to crave human flesh. After a period of isolation in the woods (rare today), in which he is held to encounter the spirit, he dances in front of witnesses to purge the violating spirit and to validate his hereditary privilege to the dance. During the taming ritual, other dancers wearing dramatic bird masks (called *hamsamł*) appear on the floor as an indication of the initiate's encounter with Baxbaxwalanuxsiwae', whose attendants are typically great supernatural birds.[5] During the 19th century, in some cases theatrical props or actual human corpses were used to "feed" the initiate, although there is considerable debate as to the historic practice of cannibalism and to the line between actual anthropophagy and simulation or symbolism (e.g., Archer 1980). Furthermore, Kwakwaka'wakw preservation of the dance through the turn of the 20th century—when it was outlawed, along with the potlatch, under Canadian legislation—conferred onto it the added value of colonial transgression, if not authentic aboriginality, at a time when total assimilation was forecast.[6]

By the time Curtis arrived in British Columbia, the use of dead bodies or body parts in the ritual was waning, but images of the Hamat'sa initiate and the *hamsamł*-wearing dancers were common in ethnographic contexts—such as Boas publications and museum displays—that Curtis was surely familiar with.[7] In fact, the Hamat'sa's ethnographic ubiquity was marked by recursivity in its public depiction across media, from photos and book illustrations to museum dioramas, films, and world's fair performances. Susan Sontag (1977:176, 180) notes that part of the social "force" of photographs lies in their material reality; through recycling, images of things get mixed up with images of images and become in the process a kind of meta-cliché. As I have argued elsewhere, the reiteration of standard views of the Hamat'sa decontextualized it and helped construct it as emblematic for both the Kwakwaka'wakw and the whole Northwest Coast region (Glass 2004b, 2006, in press). In Piercean terms, the *indexical* value of the photographic image gave way to the *iconic*, and some of Curtis's own published images later contributed to the growing intertextual web of clichéd imagery both for the crouching initiate himself and for the masked bird dancers.

For all of his Kwakwaka'wakw work, Curtis relied heavily on George Hunt to translate, arrange models, and collect or create props (Gidley 1994; Holm and Quimby 1980). George Hunt, the son of an English Hudson's Bay Company factor and an Alaskan Tlingit mother, had been raised at Fort Rupert, was fluent in Kwak'wala, and was married into Kwakwaka'wakw families. He had already established himself as a considerable collector and ethnographer through his work with Franz Boas and others (Berman in press; Jacknis 1991, 1992). In addition, George and his second wife, Francine (a 'Nak'waxda'xw from Blunden Harbour), posed for Curtis's camera and are featured throughout Volumes Ten and Eleven, although neither of the models is identified by name (Figure 3).[8] Both Hunts also posed for many of Curtis's sensational photographs depicting various dancers that once used regalia made from human remains, although none of these were published at the time (Figure 4). In fact, Curtis reports that George and Francine helped him procure the skulls and mummified female corpse for these and the Hamat'sa images (in Graybill and Boesen 1986:65–67).[9] By 1910 most such props featured carved wooden skulls, and the Kwakwaka'wakw likely felt pressure to eliminate even theatrical depictions of cannibalism in both their public performances and underground ceremonies given the terms of the potlatch ban as well as missionary influence. Perhaps Hunt—a professional culture broker his whole life

FIGURE 3. George and Francine Hunt, Fort Rupert, 1930. Photo by J. B. Scott (courtesy American Museum of Natural History: #32734).

—was among the only people willing to engage in such staged re-creations, accustomed as he was to recording past practices for Boas and other ethnographers.

Given Hunt's proclivities toward salvage ethnography (he had been recording texts and collecting objects for decades), photography (he took his own pictures for Boas), and public performance (he had coordinated a troupe of Kwakwaka'wakw who attended the 1893 Chicago World's Fair), it is reasonable to assume that he was genuinely committed to promoting and recording Kwakwaka'wakw culture in whatever media were at hand. He may also have seen his activities as a culture broker as a means of consolidating his own cultural authority and position within his adoptive communities and nuptial networks. Both George and Francine had some training as shamanic healers (*paxala*), which may have involved engagement with human remains, perhaps explaining their comfort with handling the photographic props. Although Curtis did not identify the Hunts by name as photographic models, he did give George credit in Volume Ten for having facilitated the fieldwork. In a likely effort to help authenticate his own images and text, Curtis later claimed that Hunt would have been killed for revealing what he did, had he been alive when the book was published in 1915 (in Gidley 2003:103). In fact, Hunt lived until 1930, and *had* occasionally been challenged in the Kwakwaka'wakw communities for his work with ethnographers (Glass 2006:306; see also Stocking 1974:125–27), not to mention arrested in 1900 for participating in a Hamat'sa (Glass 2006:437; see also Cole and Chaikin 1990:73–75). Thus, Hunt was likely all too aware of the stakes involved in his collaborating with Curtis to stage sensational images, and we might imagine that he balanced his desire for cultural recording (in addition to gainful employment) with his wariness about transgressing local ceremonial protocol or aggravating colonial authorities. Perhaps his blackened or concealed face in the Hamat'sa images, although ethnographically accurate for the ritual, was a means to hide his identity should they ever be circulated within the community.[10]

Although we may never know his true motivations, we do know that around 1910 Hunt posed for Curtis for a remarkable series of 15 images of a Hamat'sa initiate

FIGURE 4. Left: "Ghost Dancer" [likely George or Francine Hunt] c. 1910 (AGA 78.12.121); Right: "Kominaka Dancer" [Francine Hunt] c. 1910 (AGA 78.12.123).

preparing and handling a corpse during his ritual seclusion in the woods before dancing in the village. For the sake of clarity, I have divided the series into four "sets" based on the sequence of initiation procedures they depict, though there is no indication that Curtis made them, or intended to present them, in this specific order. The largest set of prints shows Hunt in a makeshift hut tending to the corpse, which changes position on the smoking rack as if Hunt had been rotating it for even curing (Figure 5).[11] Hunt had earlier described such a procedure to Boas (1897:441), as he would again to anthropologist Samuel Barrett in 1915 (in Ritzenthaler and Parsons 1966:92–93), and Curtis was no doubt familiar with Boas's 1897 published account. Whether or not Curtis initiated the photo shoot, it was surely Hunt who directed its realization by most likely building the hut, securing the cedar bark regalia, procuring the corpse, and suggesting the poses. While Curtis took many other images of ceremonial activity among the Kwakwaka'wakw and other Native groups, this set is unusual in its comprehensive treatment of the sequences involved. Despite his clear and characteristic attention to composition and dramatic lighting, the existing prints from this series do not feature many of Curtis's famous pictorialist effects, such as shallow depth of field, modeling of the figure, and intentional blurring. Rather, they give the

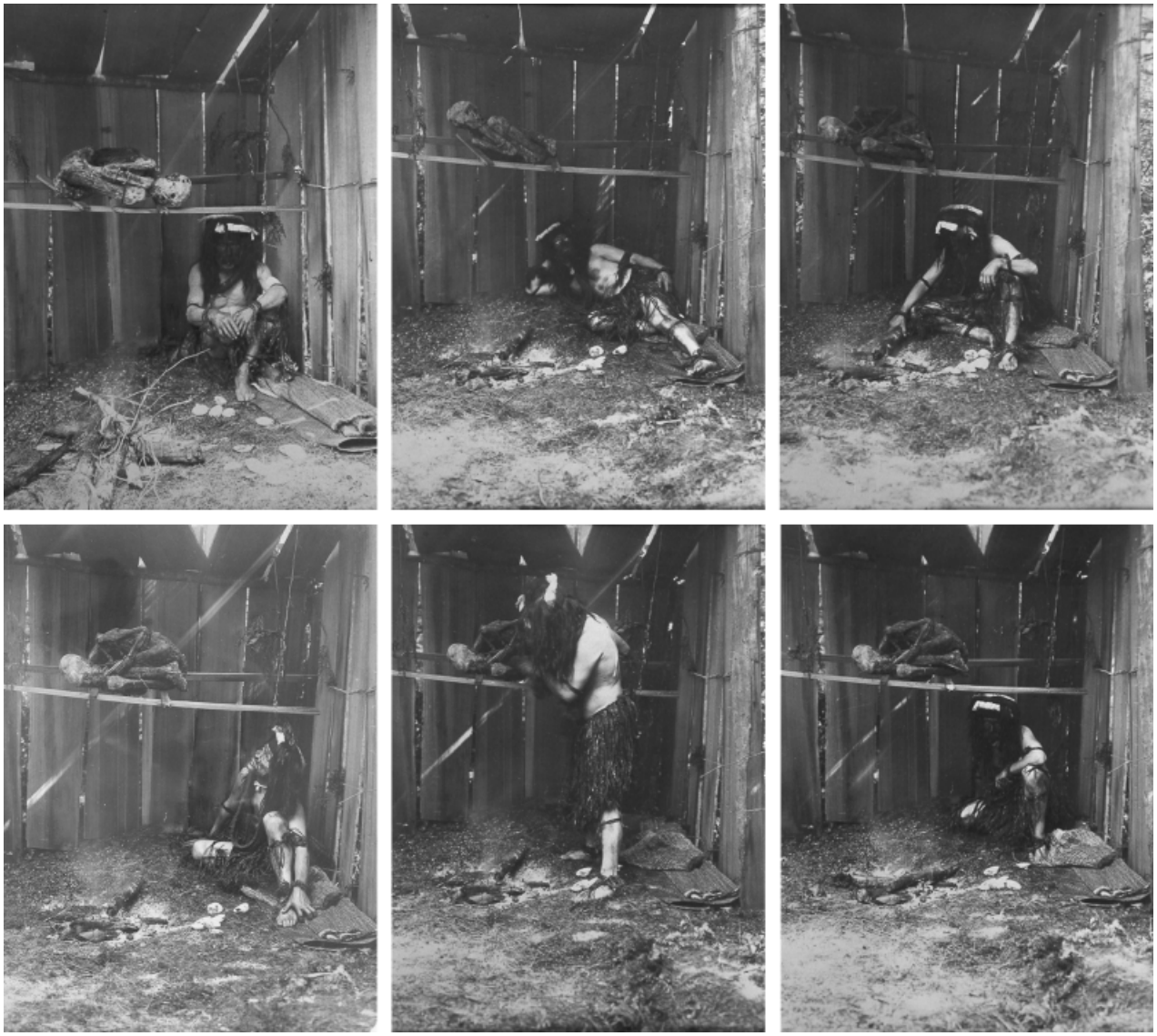

FIGURE 5. George Hunt as a Hamat'sa, c. 1910. Top Left: Untitled (AGA 78.12.114); Top Middle: Untitled (AGA 78.12.115); Top Right: Untitled (GRH); Bottom Left: "The Drying Mummy" (LOC LC-USZ62-101256); Bottom Middle: Untitled (GRH); Bottom Right: "Hamatsa Initiate in his Hut—Kwakiutl" (AGA 78.12.107).

impression of having been made for more "documentary" purposes—that is to say, to create a visual record of the whole ritual procedure preliminary to a Hamat'sa dance, rather than to create singular images for aesthetic impact.[12]

In some of these first pictures, Hunt is active; in others, deep in repose. He is dressed in cedar bark skirt and ornaments (head, neck, wrist, and ankle rings), the main regalia of the Hamat'sa. A folded cedar bark mat sits at his side, the only comfort provided during a period of initiatory isolation. Clamshells litter the ground, remnants of the only food allowed to the initiate, who was to return to the village hungry and emaciated. It is daytime, and sunlight beams dramatically through the loosely shingled slats of the roof. The first group of six images—read syntagmatically, *as a set* (Pinney 1992:87, 90)—suggests the long passage of time needed to fully cure the body, as if Curtis intended to reproduce the pictures serially to approximate the frames of a motion picture time lapse. As mentioned, Hunt's face is barely visible in the images, either hidden in the shadows or concealed beneath the charcoal that was used to blacken initiates' faces. In a single print from the Library of Congress (Figure 5, bottom left), Curtis (or a darkroom assistant) further obscured Hunt's face through retouching of the print, though it is not clear whether this was to shield his identity or simply to clarify the image for potential publication.

The next set of four images shows Hunt removing the corpse, contemplating it rather lovingly, and holding a solitary skull, perhaps as an object of his abject culinary desires (Figure 6). One cannot help but invoke Hamlet in the way Hunt gazes directly at the head in his hands. By some accounts (Boas 1897:441), the corpse used by the late 19th-century Hamat'sa initiate was to be that of a recently deceased relative, which may explain the tender attitude Hunt evinces toward the body he cradles. In none of the images is Hunt made to appear as if he is actually eating the mummified flesh (which the initiate would not have done in the woods anyway). Although clearly staged for the camera, Curtis later suggested that he had stumbled upon the initiate and bribed him into allowing these photographs under the threat of alerting the authorities to the illegal and transgressive ceremony. Along with framing Hunt in certain terms in the text of Volume Ten and elsewhere, this was yet another way of retroactively and discursively performing the authenticity of the images.[13]

The third set of three pictures depicts Hunt carrying the corpse through the woods, presumably back to the village where he would reappear to be ceremonially tamed at the close of his isolation period (Figure 7). Although Hunt told Barrett that the body was returned wrapped in a hemlock mat (in Ritzenthaler and Parsons 1966:92–93), here he holds it exposed, like a baby.[14] He appears to be on an established footpath, although initiates were more likely to be sequestered in extremely isolated and undisclosed locations far from the village and the prying eyes of the uninitiated. Two additional pictures show the initiate as he would have appeared in the early stages of the dance, first covered in hemlock boughs (as he would be dressed upon first entering the ceremonial bighouse) and then dressed in elaborate cedar bark rings, gesturing as a possessed Hamat'sa with arms extended, hands trembling, eyes rolled back, and lips pursed (Figure 8). The image on the right in Figure 8 is the only one of this set that comes close to resembling other photographs of the Hamat'sa that were taken around the turn of the last century.

In her discussion of reenactment in early anthropological photography, Edwards (2001: ch. 7) suggests that the salvage/ethnographic impulse to picture the past may have routinely coincided with an indigenous interest in preserving or reviving forms of ceremonial activity that may have been threatened by the forces of colonial assimilation and modernity (see also Zamir 2007:638). In the work of Curtis and Hunt (not to mention other ethnographers and their Native models and culture brokers), two different philosophical and practical approaches to "preservation" were brought into articulation: a Western tendency toward embalming, here manifested in the filmic inscription of practices presumed to be vanishing; and an indigenous strategy of maintaining cultural practices through embodied—if recontextualized—performance. In other words, Curtis's ethnographic drive toward photographic recording provided one kind of context for (at least certain) Kwakwaka'wakw to enact, and thus preserve through practice, ceremonial and material culture.[15]

To the extent that many Northwest Coast rituals are themselves a performative reenactment of past (ancestral or recent) initiatory encounters with supernatural beings, the restaging of them for the camera merely adds one more generation of representation, albeit with different audiences and purposes in mind. For instance, all Hamat'sa dances are *already* second-order simulations of the initiatory encounter with Baxbaxwalanuxsiwae' in the woods, which is itself the contemporary reiteration of ancestral encounters that resulted in the founding of the specific hereditary privilege in the first place. Also, like ritual performances, the photographs make visible that which was multiply *invisible* at the time, both to other villagers (who were not privy to the ceremonial preparations of any dance societies) and to non-Kwakwaka'wakw (who were generally not to be exposed to such outlawed practices lest they alert the authorities). With these images, Hunt helped

FIGURE 6. George Hunt as a Hamat'sa, c. 1910. Top Left: Untitled (GRH); Top Right: Untitled (GRH); Bottom Left: Untitled (AGA 78.12.119); Bottom Right: "The Mummy Feast—Kwakiutl" (AGA 78.12.120).

Curtis enact a plausible reconstruction of a ritual activity that the community at large would not normally have seen, part of the "secret" procedures that distinguished the Hamat'sa society and that had been discontinued for some time by 1910. As an ethnographer himself, Hunt literally unearthed the past and prepared it for consumption in the present and, through Curtis's photography, the future. For both men, practices of performance, visualization, and preservation were at play in the making and subsequent framing of these images. Emergent Kwakwaka'wakw forms of modernity—wage labor, engagement with technologies of mechanical reproduction, and an eminently modern self-consciousness about cultural objectification—are as evident in the photographs as Curtis's own.

Although Curtis did obtain copyright on two of the Hamat'sa images through the Library of Congress, the photographs were never included in any Curtis publication during his lifetime. His son-in-law once suggested that the images may have been rejected by J. P. Morgan or some other editorial advisor as too sensationalistic, too grisly, too genuinely "savage" for a project dedicated to the romantic nobility of the picturesque (and safely passé) American Indian.[16] Varley proposed that it

FIGURE 7. George Hunt as a Hamat'sa, c. 1910. Left: "Hamatsa Initiate Entering the House" (AGA 78.12.116); Middle: Untitled (GRH); Right: "Preparing to Eat the Mummy" (LOC LC-USZ62-112275).

was either because Curtis "thought the macabre subject matter might be too offensive, or because he distrusted the Indian's accounts of these initiation practices" (1979:4). One might speculate that Curtis may have been trying to protect the Kwakwaka'wakw from government prosecution by not publishing such incriminating images (an extension, perhaps, of protecting Hunt by blackening his face), but this does not accord with the unflattering portrait of the Kwakwaka'wakw character he paints in Volume Ten, nor with his illustration of other outlawed dances or his use of the ethnographic present in describing the potlatch and cannibalistic practice (Curtis 1915a:243).[17] Given Curtis's proclivity for the sensational, the considerable effort he likely took to make these pictures, and his extensive publication of graphic textual descriptions for which these images were dramatic illustration, the fact that he never published them is noteworthy, if ultimately inexplicable.

This is not to say, however, that he never *publicized* them.

FIGURE 8. George Hunt as a Hamat'sa, c. 1910. Left: "Hamatsa Initiate Emerging from the Forest—Kwakiutl" (AGA 78.12.14); Right: "Hamatsa Dancing—Kwakiutl" (AGA 78.12.105).

The Picture Opera

Over the winters of 1911 and 1912, Curtis hoped to fill the book-series coffers by extensively touring what he called a ''musicale'' or ''picture opera,'' usually entitled ''A Vanishing Race'' (Gidley 1998: ch. 7; Glass 2006:364–368). Using dissolving views of hand-colored lantern slides, special lighting effects, a live orchestra playing music by Henry Gilbert (based on Curtis's field recordings), and stage sets (which included real trees and teepees borrowed from museums), he molded the presentation of his popular lectures and single-frame photographs into a more theatrical and cinematic format. Curtis's narration blended ethnographic facts, anthropological generalizations, personal fieldwork narratives, and romantic invocations of the American Indian. Most programs were divided into presentations focusing on the Indians of the Southwest and Northwest Coast, with short thematic segments—many featuring Native dances—accompanied by specific pieces of music purportedly based on the indigenous tunes of that area.[18]

Although most featured little Northwest Coast ceremonialism, some of the musicales included a segment entitled ''The Mummy Feast.'' In fact, during one 1911 performance, the ''grewsome mummy ceremony'' stood in for all the Northwest Coast tribes, collectively dubbed ''The Whaling Indians'' (in Gidley 1998:218). Although there is no direct evidence, we can be almost certain that the photographs of Hunt posing as a Hamat'sa were used to illustrate these passages. Shown dissolving one into another, the sequentially shot series would indeed simulate moving images, as suggested above. Although Volume Ten, published in 1915, later made clear that Curtis understood the Hamat'sa rites to a certain degree, in the 1911 picture opera he conflated the ritual with those of the neighboring Nuu-chah-nulth. Lecture notes for one musicale reveal how Curtis erroneously and hyperbolically recontextualized the images:

> These tribes [can be called] ancestor worshippers, and in practically all of their ceremonies we see used as a part of the paraphernalia a mummy. In fact, no medicine-man's equipment is complete without such a grewsome object, and probably a number of skulls. The use of the mummy in this ceremony is seemingly based on or accounted for by the traditions of the first whaler. This man was taught through visions how to kill whales, and later through the jealousy of his tribal chief was murdered. Some years later, the son of the original whaler had a vision instructing him to capture whales, and in a second vision he was told to secure the dried body of his father and keep it by him while ceremonially preparing for the whaling expedition. And so, briefly, was established the practice of using the mummy in their ceremonies.[19]

It is possible that after his first couple of field seasons among the Kwakwaka'wakw, Curtis simply misunderstood the use of the corpse. If one believes Curtis's (rather dubious) claim that he was privy to the secrets of the Hamat'sa society, perhaps he was purposely concealing its details by casting its imagery in foreign terms, borrowing the frame of the neighboring Nuu-chah-nulth whaling rites in order to keep the dramatic corpse pictures free from any cannibalistic explanation.[20] In any case, by generalizing the Hamat'sa to the whole coast and reframing it as a whaling rite, Curtis severed these images from their ethnographic referents, inscribing his own version of Northwest Coast cultures. What we have here is a multiply recursive performance of, by, and through photographs (cf. Edwards 2001:16–20): Curtis's live narration of his projected and carefully circumscribed photographs of Hunt's reenactment of a ceremonial dance and its discontinued ritual preparation. Any sense of ethnographic indexicality is thoroughly compromised by the posed and staged nature of the initial photographic encounter, the nested frames of representation, and the various levels of cultural and material (mis)translation.

Curiously, one picture opera playbill, for a performance at Carnegie Hall on November 15, 1911, declares that the lecture on the Northwest Coast Indians included ''as one of its many striking features, the only motion pictures ever made of the strange Mummy Dance and the Dance of the Skulls, performed by the British Columbia tribes.'' Inside, the scene listing for the ''tribes of British Columbia'' reads, in full:

> Their remarkable ceremonial life. Motion pictures of the mummy dance, with accompanying music. ''Bringing in the Mummy,'' a changing musical effect of three slides. ''The Kominaka Dance,'' or dance of the skulls. Motion pictures, ''Dance of the Mummy.'' The Whaler. The Whale Ceremony. Some of the pictures in this British Columbia series are among the most remarkable ever taken of the secret rites of Indians.[21]

Accordingly, this sequence was presented as the climax of the evening. As for the images, a couple of possibilities present themselves. Curtis may have shot film footage of someone, likely George Hunt, dancing with a corpse during his first or second field season in Fort Rupert—possibly at the same time the stills were

taken—but there is neither record of this activity nor any extant footage as far as I know.

Likewise, it is possible that some of the dancing footage which ultimately got edited into *In the Land of the Head Hunters* was actually filmed a couple of years earlier and shown during the musicale as a solitary segment. Although one original treatment for his feature film included a Hamat'sa sequence, the final version released in 1914 had none. While Hamat'sa-style dancing is present in a few scenes, it is always recontextualized within other types of ceremonies: the initiate's dance is used as a stand-in for the seeking of supernatural power on a vision quest; and the hamsamł is pictured as simply one type of mask among many. In fact, a newly restored print of the film clearly reveals the presence of a corpse in a scene where Motana (played by Stanley Hunt, George's youngest son) dances like a Hamat'sa, wearing a neck-ring adorned with human skulls, during his ritual preparation for whaling in a re-created Nuu-chah-nulth whaler's shrine (Figure 9).[22] In addition, Curtis published a detailed if additionally dramatized description of this activity in his novelization of the film (Curtis 1915b). As Jonaitis discusses (1999:38–41), the film and book scenes both interweave accurate Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa ritual (the gestures and regalia of the dancer) with aspects of Nuu-chah-nulth whaling practices (which Hunt had collected extensive narratives about), much like the earlier picture opera script had. While it is difficult to determine if the corpse and neck-ring in the film are the same ones that were used in the 1910 photo shoot, the resemblances are striking.[23] Gidley (1998:236) reasonably suggests that the 1910 photography (and possibly film) shoot featuring George may have been a dry run for the 1913 film scene starring Stanley that ended up—even further recontextualized—in *Head Hunters*. It is also possible that the ethnographic errors in both the picture opera and film—presenting the Hamat'sa as if it were a neighboring whaling rite—may have actually facilitated the initial participation of the Hunts. That is to say, they may have been willing to show certain ritual behavior *out of context* or *improperly* as a means of releasing them from protocol restrictions on otherwise performing such actions in public, and there are other recorded examples of Curtis's subjects engaging in such tactical inaccuracy (see Lyman 1982:67–69). In cases such as these, latent "inauthenticity" in the photographs might be attributed to indigenous decisions rather than Curtis's manipulation or error.

FIGURE 9. Still from Edward Curtis's 1914 film *In the Land of the Head Hunters*. Stanley Hunt dances as a Hamat'sa; a human corpse is visible on the ground between the two large carved figures on the left (courtesy Milestone Film and Video).

In any case, the illustrated picture opera would be the only time Curtis publicly presented the Hamat'sa images he took of George Hunt. In these musicales, Curtis considered the entertainment value of spectacle—especially surrounding rites and images familiar from books, museum displays, and world's fair exhibits, such as the Hamat'sa and the Hopi Snake Dance—at the same time as he overtly disavowed the commercial nature of the enterprise in his earnest, ethnological narration of the spectacular pictures. Curtis's techniques of representation were lauded as accurate if not truly indexical, no doubt based in part on his own self-reports to the effect; the New York *Evening Sun* claimed that Curtis "set before his audience almost exactly what he himself had seen and heard" (in Gidley 1998:216). The musicale was consistently praised for its ethnographic as well as aesthetic merits, yet Curtis worried that his spectacle, while clearly a popular entertainment, might undermine the scientific aspirations of his larger salvage project. He wrote to his editor, Frederick Hodge, in 1911, "I have carefully watched all printed matter bearing on our tour, and have tried in every case to weed out anything that might be offensive to the critical [audience]. . . . Publicity is absolutely necessary, but I aim to make it dignified" (in Graybill and Boesen 1986:74). The following year, he wrote to G. B. Gordon, from the University of Pennsylvania, promising that he would tone down the presentation for educational audiences and school groups: "I will gladly omit the mummies, as I am not particularly fond of 'sweet food' at the best" (in Gidley 1998:242).[24] Perhaps criticism over the sensationalism of the Mummy Feast episode convinced Curtis—or his series editor or patrons—to omit such images from subsequent musicales and from Volume Ten, although similar scenes remained in his popular film and novel. Volume Ten included many iconic images and detailed

accounts of the Hamat'sa, and Curtis promoted it to subscribers in part for its textual treatment of ceremonial cannibalism (about the reality of which he was quite equivocal). Yet he refrained from publishing the most sensational—and most literal—depictions anyone ever took of the initiatory ritual itself.[25]

Rather, the two Hamat'sa images that he included in the large format, photogravure folio published with Volume Ten feature only the associated *Ḥamsamala* or masked bird dancers, and not the Hamat'sa himself (Figure 10). With the circulation of these two highly aestheticized and decontextualized images, Curtis directly contributed to a wholesale shift in the public representation of the Hamat'sa away from depiction of the crouching dancer, which was common in the early 20th century (and which illustrated his text volume), to display of the distinctive bird masks, which remain the most emblematic images of the ritual today. In fact, "Masked Dancers—Qagyuhl" is perhaps the single most reproduced image in the entire corpus of Northwest Coast photography, despite the fact that it *does not* depict an actual ceremony, simply an imaginary mélange of Kwakwaka'wakw dancers forming a particularly dramatic tableaux. Its endless reiteration in books and museum exhibits has constructed it—as a second-order performance, after its initial staging—as a visual signifier for a Northwest Coast First Nations culture that remains somewhat imaginary. Thus, it was not the fact that Hunt *posed for the camera* that ultimately denied the "documentary" value of Curtis's Hamat'sa images (most photography of the era was carefully posed); instead, it was their specific sequence of de- and recontextualization. Rather than capturing a vanishing ritual—much less an actual, possessed Hamat'sa initiate—the photographs capture an intercultural encounter in which Hunt and Curtis collaborated to re-create and reframe a faded cultural practice for the sake of its filmic and ethnographic preservation. However, in the end, these visual indices of their encounter failed to become cultural icons through the denial of circulation—through their relegation to the archive.

FIGURE 10. Top: "Kotsuis and Hohhuq—Nakoaktok" 1915 (NAI); Bottom: "Masked Dancers—Qagyuhl" 1915 (NAI).

Out from the Shadows

In the mid-1970s, at the dawn of the "Curtis revival," a curious thing happened: the photos—like the corpse they depicted—were exhumed. Curtis's son-in-law sold a large set of unpublished silver prints, photogravures, and cyanotypes to a photography dealer in Los Angeles, who in 1976 organized a small exhibition with a limited-edition catalogue (Rice 1976). The catalogue, which featured the bone-prop image (Figure 1 above) on its cover, treats the Hamat'sa pictures in terms of staged re-creation and Curtis's penchant for romantic pictorialism, even though these specific photos were considerably more naturalistic than his well-known, published work. In fact, Rice celebrates these unpublished images for escaping some of the aestheticization of much of Curtis's oeuvre, even as he analyzes the visual impact of their light and composition:

> The purely visual strength of these pictures both individually and collectively, acting as sequence, embodies qualities of being documents of tableaux vivants. They wonderfully combine anecdotal elements with a constant pictorial compositional attitude that acts to elevate the work to a theatrical appearance. The image takes on a special existence, it becomes an aesthetic object as much as it is a source of genuine information about the activity of the subject. [Rice 1976:5–6].

Rice draws a parallel between the staging of Kwakwaka'wakw ceremony and the staging of Curtis's images; as I argued above, both are self-consciously theatrical performances meant to call into being—or to

objectify—deeper spiritual worlds in the former case, and aesthetic compositions in the latter. Thus, the Hamat'sa, more literally and gruesomely depicted than ever before, became an object of artistic contemplation, at least for the small photographic audience for this exhibit. This was the first time, to my knowledge, that many if not all of these corpse images appeared in public since the picture opera.

The dealer then sold the collection of photographs to the Edmonton Art Gallery (now the Art Gallery of Alberta), which in turn mounted a cross-Canada exhibit tour of select images accompanied by a partial catalogue (Varley 1979). This exhibit and catalogue were less aestheticizing and more reflexive about non-Native representation of Native people than were their American predecessors. They framed the interest of the pictures in terms of what they revealed about historical attitudes toward Canadian First Nations as much as about Curtis's artistic sensibility. Rather than rely on Curtis's interpretations, Varley's catalogue essay quotes Boas (1897) to help contextualize the "macabre subject matter" of the "Mummy Ceremony," though Varley did not place as much emphasis on it as Rice had. When the exhibit finally reached Ottawa in 1981, a debate arose at the National Museum of Man—the tour's only explicitly ethnological venue—over whether or not to display the Hamat'sa photos. A. McFadyen Clark, the Chief of the Canadian Ethnology Service, addressed concerns to Sylvie Morel-Hall, the Acting Chief of the National Programmes Division, about the inclusion of the images of "esoteric aspects of the hamatsa [sic] society ritual which are explicitly concerned with the handling (and consumption) of corpses" and requested that the images not be displayed.[26] Specifically, Clark took into consideration the "sensibilities of Kwakiutl people who are now living" and worried that the exhibit, which focused "only on certain, sensational, aspects of the ritual, can lead only to misunderstanding on the part of the people who see it. In fact, the title 'Mummy Ceremony' and the general tenor of the catalogue introduction indicates that it was not well understood by the Edmonton Art Gallery."[27]

The National Museum leadership shared this view, but Varley urged that the pictures be included as "an integral part of Curtis's work and of this show," and he suggested the inclusion of his catalogue essay—and the Boas references—to help explain them. In the end, the museum deleted the Hamat'sa images from their version of the exhibit, citing their responsibility to a (largely presumed) Kwakwaka'wakw sensibility, as well as to Curtis's (likewise presumed) decision not to publish them in the first place. The museum was concerned that a general audience not yet familiar enough with Curtis's oeuvre would misinterpret the pictures and project an unwarranted sense of savagery upon the Kwakwaka'wakw. The most interesting aspect of this exchange is the clear debate surrounding the ethnological and/or aesthetic value of the Hamat'sa images, especially given the shifting political climate in museums around 1980 in which repatriation requests and indigenous rights movements were beginning to force a renegotiation of relations with and responsibilities toward Native communities. In this venue at least—a federally operated museum of ethnology as well as national cultural history—scientific and political caution won out over the potential benefits of archival recuperation or aesthetic contemplation.

At the same time, there was much presumption on the part of the Canadian Ethnology Service as to how the Kwakwaka'wakw would react to the graphic Hamat'sa images. At one level, it was assumed that because *some* indigenous people objected to the picturing of dead bodies or any representation of spiritual practices, then *all* would. For instance, I have had one Cree respondent tell me that he could not view images of the dead after nightfall (hence, in part, my initial disclaimer at the start of this essay). In my experience, however, the Kwakwaka'wakw have not voiced these particular cultural protocols or sensitivities, nor have they objected to the public circulation of these images. On the contrary, they are generally eager to retrieve archival pictures of their ancestors, even if these spur local debate. My own work in Kwakwaka'wakw communities suggests that their legacy of engaging with ethnographic projects in various media has predisposed them toward reading anthropological and archival representations through a certain lens; specifically, they proudly acknowledge having directly contributed to the production of these representations in the first place (Glass 2006). Perhaps an overt lack of objection to Curtis's tendency toward spectacle is part of a larger discursive maintenance of their ancestors' agency as performers in control over their self-presentation to a significant—if not quite comprehensive—degree.

This has certainly been my recent experience in traveling with a group of Kwakwaka'wakw as they perform ceremonial songs and dances following the screening of a newly restored version of Curtis's film, *In the Land of the Head Hunters* (see http://www.curtisfilm.rutgers.edu). While some audience members understandably object to the staged savagery and cultural inaccuracies in Curtis's work, most Kwakwaka'wakw among the performers and in the audience instead voice their kinship with the film actors and models (many of whom circulated tales of working with Curtis well into the 1990s), their inheritance of the cultural

prerogatives pictured in the images, and the satisfaction of having a visual record—even if manufactured and manipulated—of their past modes of dress, material culture, and ritual. Seeing previously unavailable or unpublished pictures, regardless of their specific content, gives today's generation of young Kwakwaka'wakw more visual and material evidence of their ancestor's decisions, adaptations, and performances—both ceremonial and intercultural.

I have shown these Curtis/Hunt Hamat'sa images and many others to hundreds of Kwakwaka'wakw during my research visits and have engaged in various, complicated dialogues about them. I included one such conversation in my 2004 documentary film, *In Search of the Hamat'sa: A Tale of Headhunting* (Glass 2004b), which is about the legacy of Kwakwaka'wakw cooperation in the production of ethnographic knowledge. The scene involves a slide presentation I gave to a group of local elders in Alert Bay in 2003, in which we tried to identify objects, people, and houses in archival photographs. The set of Hamat'sa images with the corpse elicited a range of responses consistent with those I have received on other occasions. There was no single reaction, but a mixture of debate, nervous laughter, and outrage (one woman snapped, "That's sick"). One old woman chuckled about having long been called cannibals by white folks, and she suggested that her ancestors may indeed have been, "in the *early* years, I guess." While I expected more rejection of Curtis's colonial gaze and racist misrepresentations, what I heard instead was vigorous debate about George Hunt's decisions to participate with Curtis, as this is seen as a direct precedent for current intercultural performances and projects. Much of these local debates break down along lines of kinship, so that descendants of Hunt and other such culture brokers are more likely to defend his (or any) cooperation with ethnologists (both past and present), as well as the material products of those relationships. Hunt's own grandson loved the corpse images as evidence of his ancestor's ethnographic knowledge, commitment to salvage recording, dramatic flare, and bravery in the face of potential community scrutiny; others condemned him for exposing religious secrets and promoting a cannibalistic reputation. Some young people, especially, overlook the contrived circumstance of the photo shoot in order to take the pictures at face value, as apparent proof that an authentic aboriginality—one uncompromised by Christian and Canadian assimilation projects—survived well into the 20th century. While such potential reaction is precisely what many postcolonial critics of Curtis worry about (i.e., such images stoking the maintenance of racist associations by non-Natives), few such critics inquire into the dynamic of indigenous perspectives on the matter. The point is that rather than condemning Curtis for manipulating his models, many Kwakwaka'wakw read his images as visual evidence of *their own* cultural history, both in terms of the ritual activity or material culture pictured and in terms of the intercultural encounter that provided the conditions for picturing. Archival photographs, free from the iconic status often resulting from overcirculation, may be particularly amenable to such Kwakwaka'wakw recuperation. These photographs are *theirs* as much as they are Curtis's.[28]

On the other hand, I have found in showing my film to public audiences, especially in British Columbia, that a number of white viewers—not First Nations—question *my* decision to show the images to the Kwakwaka'wakw in the first place. Some have found this insensitive of me, as if I knew the images would upset the elders and yet chose to confront them with the pictures as a provocation; or worse, as if I were perpetuating denigrating stereotypes by circulating the shocking pictures at all. It seems to me that this stance assumes—as did the National Museum of Man 25 years ago—that because many non-Native viewers find the images horrific, so too will First Nations people. This attitude projects the revulsion at the corpse both onto the Kwakwaka'wakw and back into time, so that both Curtis and I are held to perpetuate cultural insensitivity by making or showing the pictures, respectively. In fact, I have not found many Kwakwaka'wakw to be culturally squeamish about the human remains in these images, nor have I heard them voice the opinion that viewing the images is intrinsically inappropriate, although other historical relations signaled by the pictures are open to emotional debate. This is not offered as an excuse for or exculpation of Curtis for having produced these sensationalized images—or, for that matter, of me for now circulating them in Native communities and academic venues. Rather, it is an ethnographic observation about the kind of currency they retain within Kwakwaka'wakw visual economies. What interests me are the cultural and political dynamics of decision making—who debates whose decisions about what kinds of images to make and to show, to whom, and in what contexts.

Conclusion: Consuming Curtis—Biting Back

There is one further unpublished Hamat'sa image, although it does not clearly feature George Hunt. Rather, it stars an unnamed Gusgimaxw man (also seen in Figure 2 above) biting the pale forearm skin of a shirtless man whose face remains bracketed by the picture frame, as if pushed out of the photograph by the extended arm of the

FIGURE 11. "Hamatsa Biting—Koskimo" c. 1910 (AGA 78.12.87).

Hamat'sa (Figure 11). The model addresses his gaze to the camera and does not appear to be vigorously performing the "wild" possession characteristic of the initiate, as he does in the famous image from Figure 2. Both men wear modern trousers, which contrast with the fir branches wrapped around the Hamat'sa's forehead, waist, and wrists.[29] This is the only ethnographic image—photographic or otherwise—that I know of where the culinary habit of the Hamat'sa is literalized. While no actual consumption of dead bodies occurred at the time, if it ever had, the practice of biting audience members lasted well into the early years of the 20th century, and the Hamat'sa's victims bore their scars with pride. The Kwakwaka'wakw elders featured in my film got a particular kick out of this image, especially when I suggested that it may in fact be Curtis himself getting bitten.[30] Their lack of outrage at the sensational—some might say racist—picture suggests in part the potential for resignification that old photographs have, especially archival images that have not yet been thoroughly digested.

As visual records of historical encounters, such photos are open to reexamination, to reappraisal, and to reevaluation of the power relations they encode. If the predatory and projectile metaphors of photography expounded by Susan Sontag (1977:64) are reversed, then contemporary modes of reclamation might productively be seen as "shooting back," both by imagining the agency involved in the initial photographic encounter and by interpreting the potential meanings of images accordingly. For example, after seeing the picture in Figure 11, a young Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa and artist asked me for a copy so that he could put it on a T-shirt that would read: "The other white meat." Here, the cannibalistic reputation that got the Hamat'sa outlawed in the 19th century is humorously reclaimed as a badge of Kwakwaka'wakw pride and indigenous alterity, if not outright oppositional politics. Likewise, the dancers accompanying the current Curtis film project are planning to produce "*Head Hunters* World Tour 2008" T-shirts featuring an original 1914 film poster that itself recontextualized and spectacularized the Hamat'sa for the sake of the movie's initial promotion. This is consistent with a legacy of indigenous artistic interventions that translate traditional ritual images and practices into modern formats and venues for consumption within, as well as outside of, First Nations communities (Glass 2008). To take only one thematically relevant example, consider the limited-edition BBQ apron designed and sold by Kwagu'ł artist Richard Hunt (a Hamat'sa himself, and a direct descendant of George Hunt), which features, according to Hunt, a Hamat'sa "slave killer" bringing a recently removed head to a barbecue (Figure 12). Here, the stereotypically savage past is tamed and domesticated for indigenous consumption in the present.

For decades now, Curtis's romantic photos of Native Americans have adorned everything from fridge magnets to mouse pads, the sepia-toned "vanishing races" reduced to disposable consumer culture in a typical (neo)colonial move that threatens to reinscribe the problematic presumptions of salvage ethnography. Within Kwakwaka'wakw communities, however, Curtis images are often appropriated and—significantly—transformed in order to make them useful for current expressive practices. For example, the famous image of the two Hamsamala dancers (Figure 10, top) has been cropped, edited, and applied to a 2004 compact disc featuring contemporary performances of traditional songs for sale through the U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay. The Centre also sells Curtis postcards with the addition of modern captions providing more accurate cultural information (in some cases, identification of the models) than Curtis himself provided (cf. Clifford 1991:230–232). One of the most powerful methods of incorporating Curtis is the production of graphite or charcoal renderings based on his famous images, and I have seen many such pictures hanging in family houses

FIGURE 12. Hamat'sa "slave killer" BBQ apron by Richard Hunt (courtesy Judith Ostrowitz).

as ancestor portraits or adapted to award certificates for use in local organizations. The dance group in the current *Head Hunters* project went a step further: using old photographs and copies of the film, carvers created modern versions of the masks and regalia pictured by Curtis almost a century ago to be brought back to life in theatrical performance. Beyond mere mimicry, the continuity in mask forms—like the maintenance of dance and song traditions—bespeaks the transmission of cultural knowledge and practice, even if occasionally mediated by ethnographic artifacts such as texts, films, and photographs. Aside from interest in the visual information provided in filmic records, the *material* translations involved in these examples add a secondary level of physical, artistic, and cultural incorporation; the images are reclaimed and resignified not only through selection but also transformation.

In these potent examples, the unique materialities—of handmade drawings and newly carved masks, of T-shirts and aprons and compact discs—reframe dramatic ethnographic images (photographic or otherwise), transposing the consumption equation and, in Hamat'sa-related cases, the image of anthropophagous consumption itself. Recognizing active indigenous participation in the creation of ethnographic images encourages later interpretation of them as complex documents of intercultural encounter, dialogue, and articulation rather than simply colonial exploitation. Archival photographs, like other kinds, have dual value as visual evidence of historic relations and as material resources for current cultural production. The mining of archives for *unpublicized* images provides a specific means for scientific and indigenous reclamation of early ethnographic photos that may have only peripheral connections to established literatures and to iconic pictures. I have argued that we ought to identify both ethnographers and First Nations as participants—if not equal then at least equally invested—in the production, circulation, and reception of anthropological photography, and in the negotiation of power relations through which pictures come to have meanings and values. The recuperations of historical imagery discussed above are instances of what Christopher Pinney (2003) calls "visual decolonization" and what Diné/Seminole/Muskogee artist and scholar Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie (2003) terms "photographic sovereignty," and they suggest active First Nations participation in the various visual economies of unique and ever-emergent indigenous modernities.

Notes

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[2] The term *Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw* (pronounced KWA-kwuh-kyuh [glottal stop] wahkw) means "Those who speak Kwak'wala" and is used to describe 18 independent bands, each with their own local terms of address (some of which are used in this article). This term is increasingly used to replace the famous misnomer "Kwakiutl," an Anglicized form of *Kwagu'ɬ*, the band living at Fort Rupert with whom Franz Boas and Edward Curtis did most of their work.

[3] This is not the place to engage in a thorough survey or critique of the growing literature surrounding Curtis and the veracity or politics of his images. For some entry into this debate, see Lyman (1982), Holm (1983), Northern and Brown (1993), Gidley (1998), Coleman (1998a), Trachten-

berg (2004), Scherer (2008), and Glass (2009). For more on the use of manipulation in anthropological photography, see Banta and Hinsley (1986) and Edwards (1992, 2001); in art photography, see Coleman (1979) and Pauli (2006); and in journalism see Coleman (1998b) and Lucaites and Hariman (2007). From my perspective, much of the criticism of Curtis based on the supposed inaccuracy or inauthenticity of his images commits a crucial category error: it assumes that the primary mode in which Curtis worked was ''documentary''—that is, a conscious intention to create images meant to reproduce reality with minimal intervention or overt manipulation. Instead, Curtis practiced somewhere along the realist/pictorialist continuum between the documentary mode and what A. D. Coleman (1979) calls the ''directorial mode,'' a concerted effort by the photographer to manipulate, interpret, and comment upon reality by creating images that viewers (ideally) recognize as staged. One fruitful channel of criticism might suggest Curtis's *slippage* between these two modes, or between Curtis's generation and our own, which tends to project backward in time our current presumptions about the criteria for ethnographic documentary. A related position might suggest that even viewers at the time may have *misread* his images as ''truth'' when he intended them as personal creative statements. Finally, one might argue that *regardless* of Curtis's scientific or creative intention, his images still participate in a larger, politicized visual field of stereotypical representation that largely denies the modernity of his Native subjects, models, and collaborators. But whichever of these stances one adopts, it behooves its holder to identify the theoretical and ideological position behind it and the evidence marshaled to argue the evaluative claim, and ''authenticity'' tends not to be a productive criterion in any of these cases.

[4] Curtis was forced to use thinner paper for Volume Ten in order to maintain a relatively standard thickness in spines across volumes (Curtis 1915a, 1915b:xi).

[5] I write in the present tense when describing aspects of cultural practice that still occur, while qualifying past practices accordingly. The term *Hamat'sa* is properly used to refer to the initiate/dancer, the dance itself, the accompanying songs, and the hereditary privilege and associated names or titles. It is also frequently used to describe the *ḥamsamł* as ''Hamat'sa masks,'' although this is a bit of a misnomer (the initiate never wears the masks himself, and the dance of the masks is called the *Ḥamsamala*).

[6] In 1884, the revised Indian Act of Canada outlawed the potlatch and the performance of dances that engaged in real or simulated acts of mutilation. This law remained in effect until 1951 and resulted in numerous arrests and regalia confiscations, especially after 1914. Nonetheless, the Kwakwaka'wakw maintained their potlatching and dancing traditions, often through the strategic transformation and de-ceremonialization of the practices (Cole and Chaikin 1990; Glass 2004a).

[7] Curtis carried Boas's 1897 publication with him in the field, acknowledging his reliance on it in the preface to Volume Ten (Curtis 1915a:xii); see also Gidley (1998:139).

[8] In Volume Ten, George Hunt is visible as the model in ''The Octopus Catcher (Qagyuhl)''; Francine Hunt is in ''Preparing Cedar Bark (Nakoaktok)''; and Francine and likely George are both featured in ''Twin Child Healer (a) and (b) (Koskimo).'' In Portfolio Ten, Francine is in ''Chief's Daughter (Nakoaktok),'' ''Nakoaktok's Chief's Daughter,'' ''Painting a Hat (Nakoaktok),'' and (likely) ''Gathering Abalones (Nakoaktok)'' and ''On the Beach (Nakoaktok).'' In Volume Eleven, George is posing as a Nuu-chah-nulth in ''The Shores of Nootka,'' (likely) ''Boston Cove,'' and (possibly) ''Ready to Throw the Harpoon.'' In Portfolio Eleven, George is the model in ''Nootka Method of Spearing,'' ''Shores of Nootka Sound,'' and ''At Nootka.'' In addition, the two may be featured in further images within groups or under masks, but their identity may be impossible to ascertain for certain. Both George and Francine are present in numerous unpublished images taken between 1910 and 1914, aside from those discussed in this essay.

[9] The identification of the corpse as female is based on the presence of copper bangles around its wrists as well as its artificially elongated head—a practice common to the noble women of 19th-century villages around Quatsino Sound, which is near Fort Rupert. Many Kwagu'ł from Fort Rupert were married to women from the Quatsino area, perhaps explaining the mummy's presence in or near Fort Rupert, where the photos were likely taken.

[10] There is little evidence that Curtis left any of his photographs with their Kwakwaka'wakw subjects (e.g., families have not passed them down, as far as I know). I have found only one indication that Hunt himself may have retained copies. Boas (1930:110) relates a narrative collected by Hunt that describes a Ghost Dancer's regalia as a cedar bark ring with real or carved human skulls and leg bones. In the same text, Hunt describes the similar ceremonial dress of other figures while referring specifically to faded photographs that were most likely Curtis's (ibid:112).

[11] I have suggested a temporal, narrative sequence here—reading left to right and top to bottom in Figure 5—based on three main components that recur throughout the set, attempting to keep similar visual features adjacent in sequential images: the position of the corpse on the rack; the presence of a triangle of light on the roof; and the state of the fire. Note that my sequence differs somewhat from that suggested by Rice (1976), who seemed to privilege the fire alone or the pose of Hunt.

[12] In fact, this may be the most complete sequential series of photographs of a single ritual ever made on the Northwest Coast before 1930. Boas (with John Grabill) had taken a series of photographs of staged dancing during the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and then (with O. C. Hastings) of an initiation and potlatch in Fort Rupert in 1894, but neither follows a single ritual sequence through such a wide variety of images. Many of the ethnologists associated with the subsequent Jesup North Pacific Expedition also

photographed coastal ritual in series, but few with such coverage (see Kendall et al. 1997). In the early 1920s, Harlan Smith made sequential sets of images of dancing demonstrations in Bella Coola (Tepper 1992), but none as large as Curtis's Hamat'sa series.

13 Years later, Curtis would narrate the photo session as if he followed a real initiate into the woods and, once discovered with his camera, confronted the man: "At last saw him sitting before fire with mummy drying on racks above . . . argued with him—Canadian gov't forbid ceremony and by suggesting that etc. got him to permit pictures being taken. ESC [Curtis] was initiated into ceremony later" (from a handwritten note dated February 15, 1921, MS.647, #9, Southwest Museum, Los Angeles). Perhaps this is a draft for a lecture or publication, as it is consistent with the exaggerated adventure stories Curtis repeatedly used to publicize his work.

14 Hamat'sa dancers—like other kinds—are still taught that when certain words are uttered in a song (for instance, *K'uminawaga* "the Wealthy Woman," who in legends supplies Baxwbakwalanuxwsiwe' with corpses to eat), the dancers should hold out their arms as if carrying a body. In general, such choreographic hand gestures are cued by song lyrics, and are often unique to particular, hereditary Hamat'sa privileges.

15 This discussion of contradictory or complementary strategies of "preservation" has emerged out of running conversations with Brad Evans.

16 Personal communication, G. Ray Hawkins. Most Curtis scholars agree, however, that Morgan himself had little editorial input into the final publication content.

17 However, Franz Boas simultaneously defended the potlatch in written briefs to the Canadian government *and* published in the "ethnographic present" about outlawed potlatching and Hamat'sa dances, so such contradictory behavior has precedents. It has always been curious to me that nowhere in Curtis's 1914 film, *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, were the film's subjects identified as Kwakwaka'wakw, nor its location as Canada. While I am tempted to suggest that Curtis may have been protecting the Kwakwaka'wakw from Canadian harassment by keeping them anonymous, I think it is more likely that he simply wanted to generalize the ethnographic scope of the project for narrative and marketing purposes (especially since the film, in fact, does include cultural practices—such as Nuuchah-nulth whaling rites—from other Northwest Coast societies).

18 There has been one attempt that I know of to reproduce the picture opera based on archival records and copies of Gilbert's musical scores, but the research is poor, the musical orchestration inadequate, and the whole production shot through with contemporary, "new-age" framing; this is available on DVD by mail order via the Internet. A 2002 University of Virginia website includes musical samples from the picture operas in a more scholarly context: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma02/daniels/curtis/musicale.html (accessed March 25, 2009).

19 "Lecture 2: Spirit of Indian Life," Box 1, Folder 5, Curtis Papers (Catalogue #850111), Getty Research Institute Special Collections Library, Los Angeles.

20 Copies of Gilbert's musical numbers for the picture opera that I have consulted do not include pieces clearly intended to accompany these "Mummy Feast" pictures. Since many of Curtis's original 1910 wax cylinder field recordings—upon which Gilbert apparently based his musicale score—exist today in the Archive of Traditional Music at Indiana University, Bloomington, it may be possible to ascertain whether Hamat'sa songs were used as a basis for the accompanying music, should the appropriate Gilbert compositions ever be identified. Gilbert scores for the picture opera are available in special collections of the Getty Research Institute Library and in the Yale University Music Library.

21 Program in Curtis Papers (Accession #847-3), Box 2, Folder 31, Special Collections Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

22 George Hunt photographed and then collected in 1905 such a shrine from Yuquot, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, for Boas and the American Museum of Natural History (Jonaitis 1999). It was surely Hunt's knowledge of this ritual enclosure—with its carved wooden humanoid figures and human skulls—that allowed him to re-create it for the set of *Head Hunters*. For information on the newly restored print of Curtis's film, see http://www.curtisfilm.rutgers.edu (accessed March 25, 2009).

23 An account book belonging to George Hunt lists purchases he made or expenses he accrued while working for Curtis in 1913 on the film. While it lists many masks and other items of ceremonial regalia that Curtis purchased or commissioned, it does not include any mention of the neckring with skulls or a human corpse. While there may be many obvious reasons for this omission, it is possible that Curtis already owned these items from his 1910 fieldwork, which would also explain their presence in his Seattle studio at the time of the 1912 article cited above. My thanks to Bill Holm for providing access to Hunt's account book.

24 Gordon (1913) soon published his own article about the Kwakwaka'wakw that featured extensive talk of cannibalism as well as iconic images of the Hamat'sa by Benjamin Leeson, a photographer at Quatsino Sound.

25 It should be pointed out here that much if not all of the ethnographic research for and actual writing of Volume Ten (as with many others) were conducted not by Curtis himself but by his assistant William Myers (see Gidley 1998, 2003). Myers was much more circumspect about claiming the reality of Kwakwaka'wakw cannibalism in print, and his influence may have tempered Curtis's tendencies toward textual exaggeration. In fact, archival manuscript drafts for Volume Ten include much more sensational language than made it into the published version (Curtis Collection #1134, Box 10, File 10, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History). Myers likely had no role in the development of the picture opera script, however, which may help further explain the marked difference in tone,

framing, and implication between the musicale and book (my thanks to Mick Gidley for suggesting this). An anonymous reviewer for this journal likewise suggested the possible editorial hand of Frederick Hodge in censoring the final published volume, although I have found no direct evidence of this.

[26] This and all following material surrounding the Curtis exhibit are in the Corporate Records file "Traveling Exhibit—Edward Curtis, correspondence 1981," Box 4125, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, Quebec.

[27] Apparently, Clark consulted Gloria Cranmer Webster, a Kwakwaka'wakw curator and then director of the U'mista Cultural Centre, for insight into the Kwakwaka'wakw perspective on the matter, but there is no record of her response.

[28] In my experience in showing photographs or museum documents to Kwakwaka'wakw, one of the first questions often asked of me is "what do they say about this picture?" or "what do they know about this object?" Having some prior interpretation or caption is often desired as a means of initiating a new commentary, typically either confirmation or contradiction of the existing information. Archival images that lack any prior interpretive frame leave the viewer open to provide information that is unprompted. While the result may be silence, the indeterminacy can also allow for a greater degree of personal engagement.

[29] Whereas most Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa appear in the house—in their "wild" state—adorned with hemlock boughs, the bands around Quatsino Sound historically used fir branches instead. As a point of interest, Curtis used the same gnarled tree stump as the photogenic background in other pictures that he took in Quatsino Sound and that are published in Volume and Portfolio Ten.

[30] G. Ray Hawkins, the Los Angeles photography dealer who owned these images in the 1970s, suggested Curtis's presence in Figure 11 to me, perhaps based on stories that Curtis's son-in-law had told him at the time of their sale. Bill Holm (personal communication) questions the identification and suggests it was another assistant or bystander, possibly George Hunt (although the model appears to lack Hunt's arm musculature, apparent in other photos from the Hamat'sa series).

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