Analysing the Eye with a View to the Past:

Exploring Image and Imagination in 19th Century North-west Coast Diaries

by

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Abstract

This paper explores how “History” is represented within the diaries of the 19th century Northwest Coast translator Arthur Wellington Clah. Through exploring and deconstructing the language used to compose the diaries, this paper demonstrates how a new methodology can be employed for the purpose of understanding how a representation of the world can be reconstructed. Through understanding the “grammar of experience” this work attempts to uncover the structuring principles used to give order to the world. This analysis shows how representation can be translated into the visual field, with events within the written text being decomposed into images whose “meaning” and structure can be described in terms of elements within an artistic composition. This work looks at how an indigenous diarist of the Tsimshian people in British Columbia develops and represents his own sense of what “History” is, through hybridising two systems of ordering reality. This paper shall explore the ways in which different structuring principles interact and shape the vision of the world and go on to shape the represented world within the text.
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1: Introduction

The overriding question of this thesis is: how do we use language to construct and represent the past? This question emerged through my work transcribing the diaries of Tsimshian diarist Arthur Wellington Clah, who lived in what is now British Columbia from 1831-1916. The diaries, which he kept daily for over 50 years, provide insight into a rapidly changing society in dialogue with a dominant colonial power. Unlike most colonial literature from the time they give the perspective of the colonised. They are a means through which Clah attempts to understand and come to terms with the world he is now a part of. However the diaries are not simply passive descriptions of the world-as-it-is, rather they are constructed visions of reality which attempt to understand the world in order to change it: the diaries thus, in the language used, the events described and the ways in which the text is composed, articulate a voice of power Clah tries, through the diaries, to provide a moral commentary upon the injustices he sees around him, they attempt to effect change, but they do so through utilising the ideological apparatus of the dominant colonial other. The diaries thus are unique in the fact that they resist classification into any one genre. Their chronotopic contour (see Bakhtin 1981) is heterogeneous in its realisation – and it is such heterogeneity in generic structures which I will argue is an idiosyncratic product of Clah’s unique, syncretic representational apparatus.

An analysis of the language within the diaries reveals the underlying logic which unites the elements into a complex whole. This logic, or rather these organising principles, are structuring devices developed through hybridisation of different visions of the world (English, colonial
society and Indigenous, Tsimshian societies). These “visions” of “reality” are informed by complex strata of, for example, cultural, historical, political, social and linguistic contexts – these contexts inform and transform one another, and thus are difficult to study in isolation. To translate one private vision of the world completely is, therefore, impossible for the simple reason that the total context is lost (Steiner 1975); rather the task of this paper is to provide a means of conveying a sense of “how” a vision of the world is built, not necessarily of “what” it is comprised of specifically. This mode of understanding and translating the past is one of reconstruction – it is called an “archaeology” of representation for this reason. This term “archaeology” recognises the partial nature of the contextual remains; it recognises the hermeneutic gap between text and interpretation, and it takes advantage of this by calling the process contingent and multiple in its realisation. There is therefore not one vision of the world that can be built from the diaries, but also not an infinite number either. Rather such visions of the world are built from the data and express categories which have emerged from the base materials of the data itself.

I am arguing in this paper that, through using this mode of analysis, we can gain access to a way of understanding how the world is experienced and represented textually. This mode of representation, I argue, can best be understood as communicating “visual” or experiential data

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2 Foucault’s term archaeology also relates to the field of “discourse” and the opposition to an historical approach to studying the past. Foucault’s 1974 term however is “archaeological” in the sense that it adopts a positivist approach to the study of statements (based upon what Foucault understood to be the archaeological method at the time), looking only to the surface of words to discover how speaking constructs social reality. An historical mode of analysis cannot escape the burden of prior discourse on history and the social valuations already accumulated around the term and therefore historical analysis artificially orders the past in a way which promotes coherence, masking contradictions. Archaeological methods however do not seek the meaning behind the word, rather they seek the meaning latent on the surface of the word and take the statement at face-value as a reflection of the “Episteme” within which the statement was constructed and interpreted.

3 Multiple interpretations therefore do exist, but their multiplicity is defined and determined by the social contour of the landscape of contemporary action.
about lived experience within the social and physical world. The text therefore utilises very palpable, physical imagery which allows the reader to re-experience the events depicted (Errington 1979). The mode of analysing the data therefore attempts to replicate this process of “imaging” the past through translating textual, that is to say linguistic data, into a visual, “pictorial” form. This process bears similarities to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s picture theory of logic (1921), however this methodology is different for a number of reasons.4

The Mechanics of Vision attempts to develop a way to analyse texts such as diaries as a series of images which are composed of relations between elements. These “elements” are comprised of a number of hierarchical linguistic and conceptual structures, which interact to varying degrees within a “text”. However, it is the arrangement of such elements (the ordering in terms of categories and their geometric relations) which can be used to understand how reality is experienced, remembered and represented within a textual medium.

By exploring such compositions of images we gain access to the imagination of the author, and an understanding of how the “Eye”, that is to say the conceptual and linguistic apparatus for constructing the world, structures the chaotic flux of experience into something that is meaningful. By analysing the mode of representation in these diaries we gain access to a way of understanding – envisioning – the past. I am thus attempting to distance myself from writing an historical account of Clah the diarist, this has already been done by Dr Peggy Brock (2011). What I aim to do is to construct a vision of the world as Clah would have seen it. I will attempt

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4 I will explain this theory and methodology in more detail in a separate paper concerning the development and applications of this method of linguistic analysis.
to reconstruct Clah’s own categories, and *excavate* the various layers of contexts which shape his representation of the world.

I will show the practical applications of this methodology by means of an analysis of certain segments of the Clah diaries. The following is thus not a comprehensive analysis of Clah’s representation of the world, but rather a partial, contingent starting point from which to begin the process of *translation*. We shall see in the process of translating and excavating the text how Clah constructs an alternative representation of History and an alternative mode of envisioning and experiencing the past. The purpose of such a reimagining of the past is not only to give order and meaning to a rapidly changing social world, but equally to provide a tool for controlling the world, understanding it, and effecting change within it. Clah is not simply writing a history of his life and that of the Tsimshian people, he is also actively engaging with his world and, unknowingly, writing a new world into existence – constructing a new, hybrid *discourse*\(^5\) in the process.

**1.1: Background**

Why, we might wonder, did Arthur Wellington Clah continue to write a daily diary for over 50 years of his life? What were his motivations, what did he record, and what did he use the diaries for? Peggy Brock (2011) provides many of the answers to these questions (2000a, 2000b, 2003; 2011). Her work assimilates him into the wider narrative of contact and cultural change during European Colonisation, exploring a range of different “histories” from the

\(^5\) By which I mean a way of speaking about the world based around a different perceptual/ conceptual/ linguistic or cultural knowledge-structures (or Epistemes to use Foucault’s 1974 term) which serve to shape resulting representations of that world.
perspectives of Indigenous peoples. Arthur Wellington Clah, often referred to as “Saddle” Clah, belonged to the *Gispuwada (Killerwhale) clan* of the Tsimshian people (bearing the names *Hlax (la’ax)* and *T’amks*[^6]) who lived along the North-west Coast of British Columbia, along the Nass and Skeena rivers. Clah was of fairly high status amongst the *Gispaxlo’ots*, mainly through his links to the head chief of the Tribe, *Ligeex* (- Legeex is a member of the eagle clan & Gispaxlo’ots) who controlled trade between the coast and Interior BC via the Skeena River between about 1830 and 1880 and through his marriage to a high ranking Nisga’a woman by the name of *Dataks* (later Christianised to Dorcas). The strong trading and social links that kin and affine relations created helped establish Clah as an important person within his Tsimshian community later in life (Brock 2011:19).

Clah is a complex personality. His life is dominated by constant travelling, between Vancouver, Victoria and Fort Simpson, up and down the Skeena and Nass rivers to interior BC, and as far as Alaska and the Queen Charlotte islands. Whether in his canoe or travelling by steamship Clah is in motion, a figure well described as being “in *transition* or *translation*”. Perhaps this state of “translation” makes Clah such an interesting figure. He exploits any opportunity that presents itself to him, and this is very much reflected in the different roles Clah adopted during his life: a fisher, trapper, trader, prospector, preacher, ferryman, law-enforcer and navigator, to name but some. This condition was, in many respects, a product of the particular time in which he lived, while also a part of the Tsimshian tradition of movement between summer camps and winter villages.

[^6]: His full name being *Sgala’axl Xsgiigl*, which translates as “the eagle holding the salmon in its mouth by biting across it” (Brock 2011:19).
Clah began to learn English while he was employed at Fort Simpson, he returned to the Fort in 1857 after moving to Victoria, it was at this time that Clah first encountered the Missionary William Duncan (Ibid:31). Clah asked to participate in English language classes that Duncan had been organising for school children, and through some persuasion Duncan agreed. The friendship that followed was strained at times, but in the end it lasted for the next 60 years up until Clah’s death in 1916. In the intervening period, from 1859 (two years after his instruction from Duncan) up until 1909, Clah wrote his diaries. They were first simply a means of practicing his English and a way of understanding more about the world, but over time their purpose changed –the diaries became a means of understanding himself, of documenting a changing world and ultimately of judging the moral decay of colonial society. They became a mode of appropriating a colonial vision of the world and also a way of reimagining this world. It is this syncretic vision of the world, presented as a “History” which will be the focus of this paper.

1.2: An idea of History

In the process of writing his diaries Clah develops the idea that he is writing a “History of the Tsimshian people” indeed he labels the start of many entries:

“North west Coast, history, saint Clah, Clah Callams January 3. 1901” (Clah Diary 54: 8)

An entry at the start of Diary 54, in a different hand, reads as follows: “[M]emories of The life of one of Christianity’s first converts on the north West Coast Kept with a view to the production of a history of the same region” (Ibid:2). The problem is: in what way do the diaries represent a

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7 A reference to R.G. Collingwood’s book of the same title(1946). This book explores the philosophical underpinnings to the concept of “History”.

8 Clah’s knowledge of the colonial world and its modes of social and epistemic production thus seem to evolve and mature through time, enough for him to develop a sense of what a “History” comprised of.
“history” of the Northwest coast or the Tsimshian people? What does Clah mean when he describes his diaries as a “history”? To begin answering these questions we must first understand what our western, intellectual conception of history is actually comprised of.

This idea of “History” is something which has become naturalised and made unproblematic but its implicit character masks its socially constructed origins. History creates a structure of continuity, linking past to present, and it is through that continuum of social consciousness into the past that an awareness of a community and “society” is created within the present. But, as Hill (1988) writes: “Structure...is not a timeless, abstract entity but a flexible, negotiated set of relations that is embodied in the social activity of constructing shared understandings, and that serves as a program for orienting social action” (Hill 1988:6). The social structures and the historical consciousness which help perpetuate them are continuously in the process of construction, as the present-day society re-shapes and re-values events in the past to better reflect its current visage. The past is thus always an imagined past, a past given relevance and coherence from very specific stand points. But it is the degree to which the stories we write of the past serve to explain the status quo, that legitimacy is given to their accounts: the degree to which History reflects “reality”, that is to say the lived reality of the present, is a determination of its Truthfulness, as White (1980) writes: “The authority of the historical narrative is the authority of reality itself; the historical account endows this reality with form and thereby makes it desirable, imposing upon its processes the formal coherency that only stories possess” (White 1980:23).
But this idea of History as being a product of its time, as a post hoc justification of the present, is an over simplification. History is dialectical in its “imagination”, historical narratives have the ability to “act back” against the structure of the present, presenting critiques of the present based on past precedent. History thus gives us the ability to “learn from our mistakes”, but also in many respects the romanticized notions of the past can often lead to such imagined histories being relived in the present. We see such examples with the Nazi Regime imitating the ceremonies of Ancient Rome, or reinventions of the Classical world in art and architecture during the Renaissance or the later Gothic revival during the 19th century in Europe.

Establishing continuity with the past necessitates the reordering of the Historical-continuum, thus “History” becomes not something which is finished at the end of the narrative – rather it is part of a process of rethinking and reliving the past. Marshall Sahlins (1981) once wrote: “The great challenge to an historical anthropology is not merely to know how events are ordered by culture, but how, in that process, the culture is reordered. How does the reproduction of a structure become its transformation?” (Sahlins 1981:8 in Gow 2001:24). The illusion of the timeless order of the past, the illusion of the inevitability of the present, is something which we have invented to give stability and order to the society of the present.

The problem, however, is that culture itself is not an isolated whole, nor an homogeneous entity. Rather “culture” and its “social structure” are idealizations of primarily “fuzzy categories”, at the very least they are statistical fictions based upon constructions of what a “dominant” system of thought should be, within a given social group. Under the umbrella of “a culture” is a whole ecology of “sub-cultures” which further sub-divide into individuals who hold contradictory, or at least inconsistent, beliefs about aspects of reality. Each of these sub-
domains of “culture” possess their own unique principles for ordering reality and giving meaning to lived experience – the concept of a “collective consciousness” is thus something which is an invention of theoretical thinkers, and not something experienced in praxis. But it is this hybridity in structures which has the consequence of producing different, multiple versions of history – as a result of this there is no “correct” ordering of the past – there is no inherent Truth to “History”.

The idea of “History”, if we mean by history a description of “What really happened in the past”, is a pervasive fiction in the western imaginaries. History as it has been written and narrated becomes naturalized as Fact; the process of a shift in perspective is then due to refuting the history presented through a presentation of another equally constructed account of events. R.G Collingwood highlights this process in the following: “Because the historical past, unlike the natural past, is a living past, kept alive by the act of historical thinking itself, the historical change from one way of thinking to another is not the death of the first, but its survival integrated in a new context involving the development and criticism of its own ideas” (Collingwood 1946:226). The ways in which we order the past are thus not changed fundamentally, the structuring principles seem to persist, what changes are the valuations of the contents of the “stories” being told. The concept of History as a system of knowing the world therefore goes unchallenged, what changes are the “facts” of history and the stories being told within this genre.

This raises the question then of what are we actually doing when we are “thinking historically”? What are we doing when we construct a “History”? The question was most lucidly discussed by
R.G Collingwood (1946) in his classic work *The idea of History*, here is his brief description of the different modes of thinking about the past:

“The philosopher is concerned with these events not as things in themselves but as things known to the historian, and to ask, not what kind of events they were and when and where they took place, but what it is about them that makes it possible for the historians to know them...Thus the philosopher has to think about the historian’s mind, but in doing so he is not duplicating the work of the psychologist, for to him the historian’s thought is not a complex of mental phenomena but a system of knowledge. He also thinks about the past, but not in such a way as to duplicate the work of the historian: for the past, to him, is not a series of events but a system of things known” (1946:3).

The question of how we understand the past can thus be broken down into three major categories, or questions (which have been simplified for the purpose of this paper):

1. What happened in the past and how do we interpret it? This is a question addressed by the “historian”

2. How do we construct / think about the past? This is the left to the realm of psychological investigation.

3. Why and how do we construct knowledge of the past into a system of thought? What links thought, logic, truth and reality with regards to the past? This is a question left to philosophers.

“History”, as a concept, is thus a category which exists at many different levels simultaneously – it is an assemblage of material and conceptual apparatuses for understanding and speaking about, as well as experiencing, the past. Collingwood however goes one step further and
presents “History” as possessing a practical purpose. History is something which attempts to assimilate the individual into the wider systems of understanding, a means of giving meaning to everyday action through assimilating the chaotic flux of the present into a larger structure of continuity. History, Collingwood argued, was ultimately for the purpose of self-knowledge – as a means of providing meaning to action in the world, he writes the following: “My answer is that history is “for” human self-knowledge. It is generally thought to be of importance to man that he should know himself: where knowing himself means knowing not his merely personal peculiarities, the things that distinguish him from other men, but his nature as man….The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is” (Pp9).

The question then arises: What role does Anthropology or Sociology play here? History is, as Collingwood writes, a system of knowledge – but it is one among many systems of knowledge about the past. Western traditions in history therefore cannot provide a monopoly on ways of experiencing the past, or ways of understanding the human condition. The questions that Anthropology can contribute to this study of the past are thus to ask:

- Do other ways of experiencing and ordering reality exist?
- If they do exist how are they different to our own concepts?
- How then are such different perspectives represented and communicated?

The author takes the position that the idea of History can be approached from an anthropological perspective, which is distinct from the other modes of enquiry outlined. The rest of this paper will be dedicated to outlining how a conception of the past is constructed through the diaries of Arthur Wellington Clah. The mode of analysis I will outline below will not
attempt to look at such data in terms of how it can be synthesised into what we recognise as a “History”, but rather as a means of reconstructing a vision of the world as it is imagined and represented by the author of the “History”. The methodology is thus not so much a History of the “real”, but rather an “archaeology” of the imagination.

1.3: Clah and the Chronotope: Defining Genre in the Diaries

Clah describes his diaries as “Histories of the NW coast.” Today we would not share the same classificatory system. Clah’s system of ordering the past, his conception of history, is based around a personal history; its ordering principles are based around a phenomenological witnessing of the past as it unfolded. This personal narrative is also-already the narrative of the society and the places he lives within – Clah embodies the geo-social structures of his surroundings by means of the names he possesses, which link him to the land and society. Clah forms a complex simultaneity with the world through these names and, through the process of learning English and living within colonial society, he adopts new names, forming new relations with the world, society and also with “History”. In the following we shall see how Clah’s hybrid representations of the past become reflected in his way of speaking about the past. Through an exploration of the chronotopic structure of the discourse he adopts the complexities which exist within the representation of lived reality, and discover how this blending of genres crafts a different way of envisaging the past. The diaries are not just a descriptive account of past action, but are also a prescriptive guide to shaping future events. Clah’s idea of history is thus not something totally linear and progressive, instead it is something which moves back and forward in time anchored only by its relationship to place and names (See Harkin 1988).
2: Methodology

The data presented in this paper was collected in December 2012 at the Welcome Library in London, UK. With the permission of the archive I was able to gain access to the Diaries of Arthur Wellington Clah and obtain digital reproductions of 14 of the 72 written items belonging to Clah.\textsuperscript{10} With the help of Dr Peggy Brock\textsuperscript{11} and brief discussion with Dr Robert Galois, I was able to begin transcription of a large proportion of the digital reproductions of the diaries I had obtained from the Welcome Archive. Due to the focus on primarily linguistic features within the diaries I elected to adopt a “complete” transcription of the written material, by which I mean I included the actual layout of the text, grammatical and spelling errors, as well as emendations made by the author – this method, although requiring a greater time investment, in terms of transcription, delivers a translation which is “closer” to the original text (by which I mean the thought processes and structuring of the text can more easily be seen)\textsuperscript{12}.

\textsuperscript{10} Archival reference: WMS/Amer.140

\textsuperscript{11} Dr Peggy Brock provided incredibly detailed transcriptions from the diaries which aided me in understanding Clah’s writing and allowed me to produce my own transcriptions and interpretations of the diaries. I have not however produced exhaustive transcriptions of all the diaries, but what transcriptions I have will be made freely available to any party that desires them.

\textsuperscript{12} Despite trying to reduce my own interference with the text, the task of transcription and interpretation inevitably leads to a certain amount of transformation of the text. Understanding the nuances of the author’s writing style and penmanship are the first problems to be overcome – this style naturally evolves through time, in the case of Clah it radically deteriorates in the later diaries, as Clah begins losing his sight. The process of interpretation and transcription becomes doubly difficult at this point, but an understanding of the entire corpus of writing helps. The next problems I encountered were because of grammatical and spelling differences. Clah uses commas and full stops, but inconsistently. The writing is not broken down into sentences as we would understand them, rather the events are depicted sharply juxtaposed with one another. Sometimes full-stops are even used after every single word, making the writing appear punctuated and telegraphic in style.

Due to the fact that Clah was learning English, the spelling of many words and names are incorrect, from a prescriptive perspective, however Clah often spells words phonetically. This phonetic spelling is evident in many of the Sm’algyax words, for example the names of places and people Clah describes, as well the lack of distinction between “P” and “B” as well as “M” and “N”. The last problem encountered was the lack of context for the names and events depicted. Names of people and places are a major pre-occupation for Clah, but the full context of the
2.1: Developing a Methodology

For the purpose of analysing the Clah diaries I developed two methodological apparatuses which form visual mechanisms for simplifying and interpreting textual data they are called:

1. Mechanics of Vision
2. Archaeology\textsuperscript{13} of Representation

These are two distinct, but interrelated modes of analysis. They are both based on translating primarily linguistic data into a visual medium, in order to present data in a way that is more readily accessible to secondary forms of analysis such as discourse analysis. Both these methods study the means by which representations of reality are created, but they do so in different ways.

The Mechanics of Vision\textsuperscript{14} attempts to translate primarily textual data, in the form of diaries, narratives, or transcribed interviews, into a visual medium.\textsuperscript{15} This process is designed to

relationship Clah has with such people and places can only be fully understood by looking outside of the diaries, to genealogical, geographical, and archival data. My own sense of what was being transcribed thus depended upon at least a partial education in context before a sense of significance of these names became apparent. One surprise I did encounter whilst reading and transcribing the diaries was the lack of Sm’algyax within them. What Sm’algyax there is concerns names of people, places, and quoted speech (although most notably one paragraph of Sm’algyax was written by someone else in Diary 54).

\textsuperscript{13} Foucault, M. (1972) in \textit{The Archaeology of Knowledge} discusses an archaeological method for studying ways of knowing the world. Although this method bears a family resemblance to Foucault’s work, it is a resemblance only – the methodology used in this constructs relations based on translating text into visual representations and then studying how ways of speaking about the world (discourse) shape the representation and the construction of that world.

\textsuperscript{14} In the process of developing this methodology I came across two theorists: Christian Leborg [ Leborg, C. (2006). \textit{Visual grammar}. Princeton Architectural Press] who works in the area of Design and Ronald Langacker [Langacker, R. W. (1987). \textit{Foundations of cognitive grammar: Theoretical prerequisites} (Vol. 1). Stanford University Press] who works in the field of cognitive linguistics. I will explore these two theorists in greater detail in another paper, but the following methodology was developed independently, possessing a much different genealogy than the above works – the methods I employ are also very different to Leborg’s and Langacker’s and thus this work bears only a superficial resemblance to their ideas.
deconstruct the linguistic elements of a text and transform them into spatial relations present within an image. Once this has been accomplished the composition of the representation can be studied, in order to understand the sets of relations and experiences trying to be conveyed. Through this mode of analysis we can discover how an author is viewing the world, and attempt to understand the ordering principles and categories of relevance by which reality itself is linguistically constructed.

The archaeology of representation uses the mechanics of vision to produce a “natural history” of representations. The archaeological approach is comparative in nature, tracing out the genetic links between representations in attempts to chart the genealogy of a way of seeing the world. The typological charts created try to demonstrate how certain elements from a text evolve through time, identifying the origins of ideas and then highlighting how such initial schemas continue to structure and constrain the representations which follow. The value of these visualisation methods lies in the fact that they make relations, patterns and implicit meanings more readily apprehensible and open to analysis.

15 The best comparison for this type of transformation comes from computer science with the translation of programming languages in the form of “Code” into Graphical User Interfaces.
3: Analysis

Let us begin with deconstructing some of the text by means of the Mechanics of Vision:

1. Transform the raw text into transcribed text:

The following fragment (see Figure 1 in Appendix) has been selected because it provides the overarching intension behind the diary:

“Number by every years and counting. every months. and every week. and. Days and nights. and coun[ting] what ~~~ Doing wrong) and do right But Some of men Doing Right an Some of doing wrong of Tsimshian. Sometimes We do better. and Sometimes We do wrong, In every years and in this world, but Clah Doing Right Sometimes and Sometimes doing wrong, My heart, happy Sometimes and sometimes Sorry” (Clah 1860:1)

Here Clah describes his purpose as being to recount the life of himself and the Tsimshian, and also to account for his and his people’s sins before God. The diary thus is conceived as an evaluation of lived experience as well as an acceptance of the frailty of human nature. This paragraph provides the “meta-frame” which unites the text into an assemblage and establishes our expectations as a reader. This quote attempts to place the diaries into a genre, setting the Chronotopic contour and encapsulating the text within a moralising and religious frame of reference (See Bakhtin 1981).
2. **Break down text into elements** *(See Table 1.)*

In breaking down the passage into elements and events we can better see the relationships that exist between units. This very simple analysis breaks the sentences down into nominals, verbs and adverbs, highlighting these units using varying colours. In colour-coding the sentence structure becomes more apparent. When we move out of the context frame we see immediately the Verb-Subject-Object structure of the sentences – this verb-fronting is a distinctive feature of Sm’algyax syntactical structure, and demonstrates this idea of syntactical devices bleeding through into the English text. Nouns such as “week” are rarely found on their own, rather they are linked with adverbs which add specificity to the temporal descriptors – this specificity in lexical structures is another feature of Sm’algyax which modifies nouns and verbs usually through enclitics\(^\text{16}\) (e.g. aspect proclitics such as *Adigul-* are added to words such as *adigult’aa* (*endure*)) to determine if an event is continuous; likewise *Huk-* determines the habitual aspect when added to a lexical item such as in *hukalaays* (*always lazy, a lazy person*) – the over-use of “sometimes” and “every” thus becomes understandable.\(^\text{17}\) We see then that both lexical and syntactic structures merge with the structures present in English to form a hybrid text. Later in the text-fragment we see how this VSO structure reverts back to the English SVO with: “*Some of men doing right...*” – this shows how these ordering principles are fluid within the text, and thus emerge naturally depending on the context and purpose of the sentence.

\(^\text{16}\) Sm’algyax being a poly-synthetic language.

\(^\text{17}\) See: Dunn, J. A. (1995)
3. **Perform Aspect Representation Analysis (See Figure 2.)**

Visual Aspect Analysis (also called Aspect Representation Analysis) reveals the means by which the author is thinking about events and ordering his thoughts. The above fragment reveals a bias towards recounting events in the present aspect. There is a natural rhythm to the aspect representation, moving between simple present to the present progressive (For example: “do” moves to “doing”). Such a way of writing makes the diaries much more immediate in their impact, they are written as if Clah is addressing an audience and recounting the events, in a confessional manner.

The chronotopic landscape gives a sense of the diaries being written at once for an immediate, private audience of Clah himself, and also for a more abstract, timeless purpose of being a public document. There is hence a contradiction at the outset, as the diaries seem to aim to describe events which have happened and which are about to happen and yet to present these events as a prescriptive, ex-post facto guide to what should have happened (as if the outcome of events is already known and hence the author does not wish to be judged too harshly). The diaries are at once future oriented in so far as they expect the days to be filled (“Number and count every days”) and yet this future action is framed in the present tense. The subject of the diary is also ambiguous at this point as Clah states that this is an account of the Tsimshian as well as his own.

4. **Perform “Frame” analysis (See Figure 3)**

Frame analysis attempts to describe how certain elements within sentences can be linked together within an assemblage – the categories are artificial constructions by the researcher
but their intension is to show how a representation follows a certain ordering principle. In the case above, 4 main categories (or Frames) have been identified. The size and placement of these frames determine the degree of social and psychological salience that the information within the frames holds. In the above we can see a context frame provides a brief description of what the text is, but this is a separate entity from the rest of the text which is surrounded by an “Intentional Frame”. This frame determines the overall purpose of the text; within it are the arguments that Clah presents as to why he is writing the diary. These arguments can be categorised as “moral” in their orientation – they are primarily focused on accounting for sins and offering judgement on the world in which the author lives. Three specific frames are then nestled within this moral frame, these narrow down the lens to look first at the group, followed by “Clah” (in the third person), and finally by a personal view (through use the possessive of “my”). The overall pattern in the representation within this segment of text is that of movement from a general context to a more specific focus on the self.

5. **Perform Nested Sphere Analysis (To reveal framing relations).**

By transforming this frame analysis into a diagram of nested spheres we are clearly able to see this hierarchy in frame structures. Here (See Figure 4) we see the starting context-frame forms the periphery of the composition, relegated to a narrow strip at the edges of the sphere. The intentional and moral frames form the bulk of the visual sphere, creating three focal points at the centre. These personal framings present three discrete structures which demonstrate three clear arguments being articulated. These three arguments focus mainly on narrowing the objective lens to show, first of all, a collective value, followed by an individual value and ending
with a personal value sphere. We thus travel from the general to the specific, from the community to the individual and, in doing so, I think Clah is trying to demonstrate how his own personal history is intimately related to that of the community. The structures in this vision are given equal standing because they are reflections of one another – they demonstrate how Clah’s sense of self is informed by that of the community which he is part of.

A consequence of these visualising techniques is that we are able to give a concrete demonstration of how time and space are conceptualised within the diary. Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of the chronotope thus becomes more readily apprehendable when we transform the text into geometrical and chromatic structures. This technique thus allows us to visualise and map a way of writing the world, and a way of discovering how Clah is moving between different genres in order to construct his history. As we have seen above this representation of history is all encompassing, attempting to provide a moral framework for future action as well as a descriptive account of events that have occurred at societal and personal levels.

3.1: From Vision to Voice: Returning to the Text

The abstractions which this mode of analysis creates allow us all too easily to fetishize the linguistic data and lose sight of the very subject of our analysis, which in this case is the life of Clah. The Mechanics of Vision therefore must always return to the voice of the author who unites the diary entries into a coherent whole. In deconstructing language to discover the meaning hidden behind the words, we therefore often cannot see what lies upon the surface of the word, whose purpose is often simply to communicate experience. However that is not to say that such academic interest in language is useless, on the contrary it provides a greater
appreciation of the written word. In returning to the text a more dialectical approach to
discourse analysis can be presented whose purpose is to keep analysis grounded and concrete.

The questions which therefore are necessary to keep in mind throughout such analysis are:
What do the diaries tell us about the historical figure of the diarist, the context of his writing
and his historically-specific mode of thinking? An understanding of the representation of the
past is after all not just dependent upon how a vision is constructed, but equally the
motivations which give us the “whys” behind its creation. Let me briefly give some examples
which give us some insights into Clah’s preoccupations with the “moral” and “religious” value
spheres.

At the start of Diary 1 Clah gives us a brief biography, most prevalent in this introduction is the
theme of Death: “And when Fort Simpson. Staying in 3. years. and It {am in Clquahlahim } Small
Pox. came in September 1836. and when Clah 6 years Old an Small Pox came in September
{1836} and another time. when I am 8. years Old, And my Father has been Shoot him Die in the
Summer But he is Brother killing Him…” (Clah Diary 1: 5). From this passage we witness the
trauma that Clah experiences on a regular basis, from widespread death during epidemics to
fratricide. Clah is looking back and reflecting on these traumas and constructs this biographical
account a while after beginning his diaries proper, possibly returning to journals he had written
in 1860 and rewriting them to include this introduction.\footnote{This is speculation at the moment, based upon handwriting analysis of the first two diaries as well as my experience of the diaries which proceed this date.}
This early childhood trauma makes Clah’s often contradictory and roguish actions more comprehensible. The experience of death and violence play a role in Clah turning to God. But his early sins seem to hang heavy upon him; he is preoccupied with the idea of redemption, of being judged, and proving himself in the eyes of God. For such a reason he seeks to understand the white man, attempting to emulate them and also become their equals, he writes: “God. made whit men to living. and God Made indians to living. And Our Great Father in heaven Made us to living together. In this world. and It was God [always] looking upon us, and If any body do Right. But God Please with them. and If any Body do wrong and It was Great Father in heaven angry with them. I have forgot all about fighting about long age. My uncle. Die for shot My Father Die for shot My Brothers Die for shot” (Ibid:13-4). In the repetition at the end we are given a sense of Clah’s regret for the past, and a move towards renouncing the history of violence that his forebears had lived by and through.

The diaries in many respects are written as a confession, as if he were speaking directly to God, documenting his weaknesses and successes. His model of the ideal Christian is also taken from the missionary William Duncan and for such a reason Clah attempts to emulate Duncan through preaching, he writes: “But thee all listent to me. because I speaking few good words. of up God...how thee all heard what I said in Tsimshem language. I Speaking truely to them. But Some saying. yes we believe Our Great Father. In Heaven. Some Dark heart. thee nothing to speak” (Ibid: 125-6). Clah we find is seeking equality with the White man, and yet often times

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19 Duncan sends a letter to the constable on June 28th 1861 accusing Clah of the murder of another man. Clah was also said to have shot dead an old woman before Duncan met Clah, an action he justified by calling the woman a witch.
20 Which explains their simultaneous private and public voice.
this desire is thwarted by the very injustices, hypocrisies and contradictions that are built into the colonial system.

In the following quote we see these frustrations: “[H]ave coucilled on the island about. stop using. whit law an stop Just [?] peace stops the agent. But make law to ourselfs. and use our God a law. and keep his commantments Because english governement dont give us. citizens to be whit mens ways. 28. Plewing harme? For calling council, to make law about our land. Council make laws to all the council swear the Bible of God/ to making break the promise. wantem Just the Peace. Hall and Priest thomas Crosby to witness, before the people. to not let the land go to english government” (Diary 35: 1886:25-6). This search for moral equality thus brings into focus the social inequalities within colonial society – the injustices within the law system come to preoccupy Clah in the later diaries. He documents such injustices as a means of pointing out the fact that the White man is not as “morally upstanding” as was first believed, and Christianity provides the teachings from which Clah can critique and resist those in power.

Throughout the diaries is an underlying tension between embracing the modern and maintaining one’s identity. Clah manages to negotiate a balance between these two socio-political realms, but interspersed throughout the diaries are periods of disjunction when Clah is confronted with the value-systems of what has become an alien culture. In Diary 35, he writes: “24. Wednesday. the same way. fair weather. in the morning. But I shew. 2. person hide[d/] himselfs among Snow. Hee called haalight. woman an man. 2. of them eating {raw} Dogs meat. one man put on bear skin on is body He called bear. and another put blanket on. thee called lion. an thee walk all round houses and every body afraid with them. But thee told me to fraid.
thee Ask me so Clah why don.t. you [fraidning] fraidenot for the haalight thee Said and I toll.t. them. why not. If you dont care for that. perhaps you Die thee said my wife almost Died on Wednesday night. very [nearly/] her lost her live. an now Came [it] down on that night” (Ibid:130). Clah emulates many western writers at the time by describing the “Haalight” shamans as if they were uncultured and savage.21 He begins the confrontation unafraid, and yet in the description of his wife almost dying we have a sense of how such traditions still have the power to make Clah wary. Indeed an awareness of the supernatural and an appreciation of the powers of nature persist throughout the diaries, documented in the “strange” winds and weather conditions associated with salient events as well as in prophetic dreams and “acts of God” Clah witnesses. Clah doesn’t discard his belief in the naxnox (spirit world/ being) – wariness persists but in many respects the old traditions become integrated within the new belief system of Christianity.

Clah’s consciousness of the colonial world is something which is difficult to characterise because of the multiple contexts which go into shaping its conceptual contour. These excerpts however do give us insight into some aspects of social reality which shaped Clah’s vision of the world. Through returning to the text and listening to Clah’s voice we are better able to ground this methodology and understand the concept of representation of the past in a holistic fashion. By returning to the text we are brought back to an understanding of the past as something which is lived and an understanding of history as part of socially valued experience. The past we find is given order and invested with meaning by individuals who experience and represent it. Analysis of such representations reveals to us the meanings latent within the texts

21 See Henry Welcome’s account in The Story of Metlakahtla (1887)
which reflect not only events of psychological salience, but of social relevance as well. Clah’s hybrid writing, concepts and world-view thus reflect a dialectic between social and psychological realities, and later, as we shall discover, between modes of historical thinking as well.

3.2: Employing Archaeology of Representation (AR)

Let us return to the linguistic analysis of the diaries and explore how representations and the mechanics of representation change through time. This next stage thus requires a comparison between different modes of representation and necessitates the employment of AR.

1. Let us begin with variation within diary 1 (1860-4).

This sample of (excavated) data, attempts to chart the biography of a mode of representation through time. It shows how certain aspects of reality change in their social and psychological salience by demonstrating how different “themes” become the focus of each entry in the diary.

The nested-sphere theme-space analysis reveals some interesting features of the diaries. In order to detect such features, the data must first be classified into a number of categories, the table below shows the ordering principles which have been detected within the text and the sub divisions present within the major theme-categories visualised in the diagrams (See Figure 5, appendix).

A cursory examination of these diagrams reveals a diversity of forms, with varying degrees of structural complexity. We see first of all that the entries in the diaries never concern a single topic, rather they move around quite fluidly according to the events which occurred during the
day, and the selections of events Clah deems noteworthy. Each entry we can see is usually framed by a particular overriding theme; themes within this contextualising theme-space are oriented in relation to this framework.

Usually there is some sort of general “Context” frame which is used to supply information such as the spatial and temporal locations of events – it thus sets the scene for the entry. Many of the entries follow the same pattern, which begins by describing the date, weather and location as follows:

“6. Tuesday to the same way, north? [now?] to east wind. cloudem an Snow that day. I arrived. home. bring (?) full for fire wood” (Clah 1864: 183)

Most entries follow the same formula, similar to many Hudson’s bay trade journals from the same time. Such a literary trope in diary writing was common in 19th century Victorian society. The need to record the weather became of an increasing concern with the rise of new measuring devices, the keeping of almanacs and the emulation of a scientific elite. Clah thus adopts these Victorian sensibilities as he religiously records the weather with each entry – however, oftentimes his reports of the weather bear with them the folk-beliefs and cultural associations carried over from both Victorian and Tsimshian sources25.

Most salient in the representations from pages 4 to 71 is the focus on the historical and biographical themes. Clah attempts to contextualise his life in relation to occurrences within the area in which he lives. Clah focuses on his kin relations, and travels back to the events

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25 The weather is often talked about in terms of bearing “ill winds” and direction of the wind often is associated with events happening through the day such as the west wind’s association with death. Golinski (2003) discusses this Victorian obsession in more detail.
which resulted in the death of his father. This focal theme of “Death” is shown through the central Black circles at the heart of two of the diagrams, which then becomes the frame through which biographical information is represented in the diagram in the top right-hand corner (Figure 6).

“ But in the morning. on Sunday. burned. gentleman his body. who. died. on the first. December. 1865 before the people. burning. died body. But thee doing. had with younger man his bely. Cutting young man is bely. an Open But thee. putting. old shot pistole inside bely. full of gun powder. an burned with large fire. all burning away. an keep watching. and. burned about one hour. but {was}. Great fired inside [death/] body. But there was [??] all. younger man is flesh. flying of. because. thee think if anybody. Doing. bad with. younger man. an thee wants to Seen if anybody. doing bad. burned all pieces” (Clah 1864:36).

In the above quote we have an example of the preoccupation with death and a sense of the prophetic rites still practiced – we see for example how the young man attempts to discover the cause of his grandfather’s death by putting a loaded pistol into the stomach of the deceased in order for the shot to reveal the real killer. The event is described in great detail, in the present aspect and offers just one example of the many interesting vignettes that Clah describes. Clah studies the event as an outsider, maintaining a detachment and yet understanding the motivations for the young man’s actions – he hence presents himself simultaneously as the participant and the observer – at once reliving his past actions and at the same time stepping back and holding them up to scrutiny. There hence exists a duality in Clah’s representation of himself and his own world.
The top 3 diagrams (See Figure 5) represent an extended entry within Diary one which explores Clah’s history, these Spheres can hence be compressed into one image of quite high complexity, but the overall diagram shows how Clah’s imagination oscillates between focus on the general and the specific. We move from the environment to biography, to history, to genealogy – by the far right diagram we see how biographical data becomes the primary focus.

As we move through the diaries we see how certain frames become drawn into the field of vision. We see for instance how religion slowly emerges as a key theme during page 119 and how preaching (indicated by the communication sphere) becomes more salient. Indeed diagram 7 in Figure 5 shows how the diaries seem to become not so much a charting of a life-history, as they begin with, but rather transform into something which possesses an intension – and that intension is to educate and persuade the audience into adopting a certain vision of the world (based on Clah’s system of morals). Diagram 9 however shows how the diary ends with a recapitulation of themes present at the beginning, namely a focus on history and biography – but then we have a return to the private world of the everyday as Clah brings us back to the narrated “present”.

The complexity of structures in the “Frame/ Theme-space” is also quite striking. The representation of the imagined, recounted, world within the diary is built up through three main operations:

1. Encompassment
2. Parataxis
3. Intersection
We see how themes may set the “mood” for the representation by orienting action through means of encompassing other themed events within them. But in the case of Diagram 8 and 9 in Figure 5 we can see how events (which are grouped into themes) can be piled up on top of each other paratactically to create stacked structures which stand as separate images within the overall thematic space of say “Discourse about religion”. Intersection is only briefly demonstrated by Diagram 8 in Figure 5 by the “context” sphere crossing between “conflict” and “moral” spheres. This relation of intersection thus serves to provide a common thread or argument between events situated within different themed spaces. The underlying logic behind Clah’s mode of representation thus appears to be towards creating an overall frame for the diary entry (which is anchored around a specific event) and then stacking up events which occurred throughout the day as images within this frame. There are thus anchor points within the text, around which other images orbit – this is most prevalent in Diagrams 3 and 5 with the theme of Death. But let us now provide some comparisons between other regions of the diaries.

2. Amalgamation of diagrams into typological chart

From the Chart (Figure 6) we can see more clearly the sheer diversity of forms present within the diaries. On reading the diaries these forms do not seem apparent, indeed the diary entries are characterised by their repetition, with the weather, date and position within the environment taking centre stage at the start of each entry. This emphasis on physical setting is demonstrated by the Pink context frame which 70% of the diagrams in Figure 6 share in common. But it is within this context frame that diversity becomes manifested. From the Key
which lists different themes we see there are 13 main focal points in this cross section, but this list is by no means exhaustive. From these 13 themes a number of combinations can be derived depending on the events which Clah experiences and chooses to represent.

The representation begins quite simply, with a focus on a few themes nestled within one another; we see added complexity by diagram 8 and continuing through Diary 2 in diagrams 10-12. Complexity, measured in terms of number of themes depicted, then culminates in diagram 17 in Diary 36, which shows very intricate patterns of theme-space constructions.

As point of comparison, observe the two types of discourse Clah oscillates between:

**Simple**: “But we never heard that. Our old Grand father. Knowing God. Some bad people not lik light. Thee like Darkness. [?] to want to leave all bad ways. many men. and women. children. going in church. in every Sunday. to listen with me But. Some nothing people laugh with them” (Clah 1863:119)

**Complex**: “I tild them about Jesus, Christ, that he give me Swords. to I clear the Devil, wash. all kind damnese and all potlatche, Swash Doctor. to walk right to Jesus. and Believe, God. and to know Better, about Him. to love Jesus. and only almighty Gods. Commandment and [Belie] Beleive, His laws one time. My people. have council to council about my life, hundred hundred. people. making law. About how to killing me. to smash all my flesh. Smash my bone. with axes an hammer, to cit my head. threw in the Deep water.(Clah 1888: 44).

This chronological chart (Figure 6) shows how different modes of representation emerge through time – the archaeological approach demonstrates that there is a progression from a preoccupation with personal history to a focus with the present, changing world, and the role of the author in helping shape that world to match his vision of it. Thus we move from
description to persuasion and projection of a viewpoint – we move from the historical to present action, through a process of dialogical encounter. This reorientation in the focus of representation is demonstrated by the emergence of themes such as law, conflict with tradition, and moral commentary, which attempt to articulate Clah’s opinions on the hypocrisy present within colonial society at the time. Clah sees the contradictions in the religious teachings and their implementation by the colonial government and attempts to communicate these disparities in ideology to the Colonial powers (in the form of lawyers, Indian agents and government officials) and also to his own people. The diaries that he writes thus gradually become a means through which Clah attempts to document his own effect upon the world – he attempts to project his vision out into the world, and not necessarily write a history of the Tsimshian people, so much as make a history for the Tsimshian people. The project that he undertakes is to change the world by envisioning and trying to represent a new one, rather than simply documenting the present world of inequality.

The diary entries follow certain rhythms which correspond to Clah’s actions and his responses to events within the world. An analysis of the chronotopic structure reveals that most of the diaries are comprised of repetition and routine as the everyday often is, but every so often an action in the world is extracted out of the ordinary and becomes more socially and psychologically salient – such periods are represented by the increased complexity present within the entries, as time suddenly expands and events follow in quick succession, one piled on top of the other. Often, in the act of recounting, we do not simply list events as they unfold, rather events are often revisited, they hold a trace which anchors the vision of the world and presents to us an image of the past which is informed by such “traces”.
4: Discussion

Our knowledge of the past is something which is constructed through the traces of past action which come to us in the form of textual artefacts such as the Clah diaries – because of the partial nature of the historical remnants our vision of the past is necessarily incomplete. That incompleteness necessitates the act of translation of the past, and this form of interpretation requires us to be creative and attempt to understand how diarists such as Clah talk about the world they live within. How is reality constructed and represented within these textual artefacts, and how can it give us access to a view of the world? This methodology has attempted to build up a vision of the world by reconstructing the linguistic machines which produce representations of that world. The Mechanics of Vision and the Archaeology of Representation try to discover the structuring principles and categories of thought which writers use to order the world around them. These methods attempt to build a vision of the past from the bottom up, using the base units which describe that world, from the perspective of a person who lived within that life-world. The historical “Past” (by which I mean something which is not accessible to living humans) is not just another Time, it is also another world, and that world is only comprehended by speaking the languages of that world. To understand such languages we must translate, and to translate we must have knowledge of the lexicon and the syntax by which the world is constructed (Steiner 1975). In this idea of “theme-space” we have the rudiments of these salient categories and thus we are given a rough understanding of some of the categories which orient praxis and shape perception and experience.
Such diagrams of themed space are abstractions that are designed to uncover certain relationships existing within a given text, and translate them in terms of a visual medium. They are thus representations of representations – reproductions whose intension is not to replicate content, but rather to explicate context – to strip away the complexity and focus on a sense of what is trying to be conveyed. Once this sense is achieved, and the intension of the speech-act is understood, then a return to the actual content allows us to more accurately represent the “what”, “how” and “why” of a given communicative act. By grouping individual fragments into “Themes” we thus are able to reduce the processing load and compare textual fragments more easily. But of course such a course of action has its problems, and the problems are those which plague any form of discourse analysis, namely: “how can we overcome the hermeneutic gap?” (Ricoeur 1973). The problem is: how do we know that our interpretations are based on truth-conditions shared by the author/ speaker of a communicative act? How can we be sure that we are not inducting or projecting our own concepts onto the author? Such problems cannot be completely addressed by this methodology, but in recognising the palimpsest nature of a communicative act, and attempting to understand the textual-artefact from the base upwards, we get a more holistic view of the overall structure of the representation and hence we are given a trace of the lens by which the author saw the world. We must move from the base materials of language through to the mechanisms which produce a vision of the world, and then watch as this representational machine changes through time.

But to return to the questions which began this paper:

1. How does Clah represent the past?
2. What is his idea of “History”? 

This mode of analysis argues that question 2 is dependent upon question 1. We have seen that the past is always a past that has been lived, and thus it is something which is phenomenologically real and experienced by the individual, but it is ideologically constructed as History for a society as a whole (See Figure 7). There thus exists a duality between the psychological and social experiences of time. However this does not mean that the two concepts are diametrically opposed to each other, rather they are both relative positions along a continuum of consciousness: they are positionings within a wider system of knowledge which we define as “cultural”. The social and psychological spheres thus inform one another through a dialectical relationship with the individual consciousness feeding into the wider collective consciousness. This collective consciousness is then related back to a wider field of consciousness from the past and forms what we call the “Historical consciousness” which constitutes the totality of a “Remembered community” of the present.

Historical consciousness thus acts to orient the “cultural” collective consciousness,²⁷ providing reference points by which to give meaning to human interactions. These higher level structuring principles then exert a force which transforms the structures existing at the social and individual level, which then attempt to act-back or inform, through feedback loops, the relations with the super-structure. The Base, by which I mean the relationships existing between physical resources present within the world, has simultaneous existence from the perspective of the individual whose relationship with the physical world shapes their

²⁷ This is an awkward term which is different to that of the Social collective consciousness for the simple reason that it attempts to encompass the wider field of practices, traditions, and material assemblages within which social interactions takes place.
consciousness. But the system of knowledge as a whole is built up through wider reaching and
longer-lasting relationships with the environment (yet the individual ultimately is responsible
for the transformation of the Base itself, as it is the only consciousness grounded in physical
reality – the other levels are purely abstractions, existing in higher dimensional space and thus
are divorced from interactions with the Base – except at a distance – by which I mean through
the individual actors).

Historical consciousness, according to this theoretical view, is deeply implicated in the current
field of consciousness possessed by individual actors within the life-world. The way in which we
imagine the past has consequences in how we view and act within the present. We can thus
think about how the vision of the world is constructed in terms of the interactions between
different perceptual lenses (See Figure 8).

In the case of constructing histories there are two very important distinctions which are based
around the above opposition between social and lived reality. “Social” reality constructs a
collective vision of the imagined past and “lived” reality constructs a phenomenological vision
of the experienced past. In representing the past through “History” a translational process is
involved which serves to shape the vision of the world by subordinating the personal “lived”
sphere of reality within a socially valued collective vision. Clah however does something quite
different. Instead of subordinating his experiences of the past to a larger social-history he
instead builds a personal narrative within which events within the world revolve. Clah’s “North-
west coast history” is thus a personal history of his own interactions, achievements,
interpretations and transformations of the changing world around him (See Figure 9).
The “Histories” he writes, in the form of diary entries attempt to show his own agency within the world. Yet there is a sense in which Clah is projecting his vision of the world out much more widely, not only to encompass Tsimshian society, but to actually become a personification of certain ideals within the society – Clah thus becomes an avatar of the Tsimshian and his life experiences are extrapolated to the entirety of his community. Clah’s multiple existence is demonstrated by the names that he refers to himself by: “Duke Wellington” and “Saint Clah” (names which carry with them their own associated histories and connections within the ideology of Christianity and British culture at the time) – these names reflect Clah transforming himself into a more mythic figure. He is no longer just a man, nor a figure within history; he presents himself to us as a symbol for a changing, syncretic society. Thus what seemed like a personal history actually becomes an embodied history of society itself (See Figure 10).

History, for Clah, is a hybrid concept idiosyncratic both to Tsimshian and Western traditions of thought. As I stated at the beginning of this paper there are no absolutes when it comes to personal beliefs – the structures we use to shape reality are not imported wholesale from some prototypical “cultural source”, rather these frameworks are adopted in unique ways by each individual. In the case of Clah, history appears to be something which is lived in the present – it is based upon a repetition in which events are continuously cycled back round. This linear unfolding of time within a cyclical framework demonstrates how change becomes assimilated into continuity. The past and present we find are folded into one another, and since “History” is

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28 Dr Menzies disagrees with this interpretation, arguing that Clah is naturally adopting these English names which are common epithets within Sm’algyax.

30 This idea of cyclical time is reflected in the following quote from Menzies (2013) “The Gitxaala view of the world incorporates a notion of movement and change that is linked to a cyclical understanding of time. This sense of history and time is one that embodies change at the self-same moment as it is underscored by a deep sense of continuity” (Pp.22).
conceived of as being immanent in the present, an account of the present in a diary is automatically an “Historical account”.

However, we must be careful here in this concept of the cyclical nature of the past as well as change and continuity in Tsimshian societies. According to Menzies (2013) the historical personage is recognised in Gitxaala – despite names being recycled in each generation the experiences of the current holders of such names are qualitatively different from that of the past recipients of names. To quote Menzies:

“This conflict or tension between the historical presence and legacy of a name and the present behaviour and actions of the individual name holder lies at the root of a Gitxaala notion of social change and transformation. That is the names, as they are tied to historical actions in the adaawk, provide a context within which a contemporary name holder can act. Even though there is a strong sense that the name holder is in some way the reincarnated previous name holder, it is recognized that they are ‘different’ with each birth” (Pp.23). The holder of the name is thus not re-experiencing the past, rather the holder is continuing the narrative where the previous holder left off.

Clah’s experience of History, according to my analysis of the diaries, is something which is comprised of a number of borrowings from a range of sources – it is a hybrid of different concepts. Like Levi Straus’ bricoleur, Clah is crafting a vision of the world from whatever material is ready at hand. The world does not automatically present itself and make sense as a coherent and logically consistent “vision”, rather it is something which requires translation and constant negotiation. History is characterised by its presentness, by which I mean that Time
appears somewhat compressed into the sphere of personal memory. Time is always relative to personal experience and “remembered” events (as well as relative in the sense that personal action is oriented in relation to relations of consanguinity and affinity), \(^{31}\) rather than in relation to “abstract” history of events which form the realm of the collectively remembered past. Clah’s “History” is taken from the narrated present – it is something which is positioned, something which is inherent to the individual and it is not something which the individual is encompassed by. History on the contrary is always, already a personal history, and thus the idea of an historical consciousness is also, already a personal consciousness.

The origins of this idiosyncratic historical ontology lies perhaps in Tsimshian belief systems where persons of chiefly rank come to represent and embody the entirety of their people. In this situation a personal narrative (biography) can also, already be seen as a social narrative. “Histories” are literally re-membered – by which I mean they are embodied within individuals in the present community, their meanings are transmitted via names. The context of transmission is within the ancient stories told within the oral tradition of the Adawx (oral records which are comprised of cultural epics specific to each corporate lineage). The Adawx contains stories not only about personages within a lineage but also mythological as well as supernatural beings – within this world “human and spirit realms interpenetrate” (Marsden 2002:104). The elements within the Adawx articulate alliances between human and spiritual beings (naxnox) demonstrating not only power relations in the present, but also an enduring ownership of the land. Although the Adawx are specific to each lineage they also form part of the wider collective

\(^{31}\) Charles Menzies (2013) characterises Gitxaala model of society as being based upon maintenance of social relations (WulE’isk) through the principle of interconnections (syt güülm goot –being of one heart) and the idea of continuity (nabelgo -reincarnation) (pp.15)– the Tsimshian worldview thus is preoccupied by one’s kin and the continuity of these relations through space and time.
imaginary, as Susan Marsden (2002) writes: “[Adawx are] formally acknowledged by the society as a whole and collectively represent the authorized history of the nation” (Pp.103). It is through chiefs throughout the nation coming together and recounting their lineage’s Adawx during feasts that such a collective imaginary is created, and rights over the land are reaffirmed (Ibid.).

The diaries of Arthur Wellington Clah in many ways parallel the Adawx in their composition and content in so far as they deal with death, loss, land rights, and the law as well as the relationship that people have with each other and the land. In the very visual nature through which events are communicated, there are homologies with the Adawx, as Susan Marsden (2002) writes: “Adawx also contain limxooy, ancient songs expressing loss endured during times of hardship, and give rise to visual images - ayuks, or crests, represented on poles and on ceremonial regalia” (Ibid:103). In this paper the visual character of the diary entries have been rendered through the transformation of the text into primarily “visual quotations”. Such visual quotations, in the form of nested sphere diagrams, attempt to mirror the mode by which Clah imagines and represents the past.

However, although Clah does adopt certain structural elements from the Adawx, the representations within the diaries themselves and the “Histories” he writes are hybrid constructions – combining features from Sm’algyax and English as well as from Tsimshian and Colonial societies. When Clah adopts the epithets “Saint Clah and Duke Wellington” he is attempting to bring these names and the histories they carry into his own system of knowledge. More than just using these names as glosses for Sm’algyax titles, I argue that Clah is claiming these names as his own, consuming these titles and embodying their characters in the present
– he is in a sense exerting authority by internalising the History of the coloniser and structuring their histories in terms of his own. But again this idea of History that Clah holds is not the same as that of the historian of the present, nor that of the coloniser of the past. “History” is not something that happened in the past, it is something which is experienced in the present – “History” is always a recounting and accounting to one-self, it is a living, embodied manifestation of a “life-world”.

The natural rhythms and repetitions in the diaries, the focus on personal biography, death, and transformation as well as the themes of law and land-rights become more readily understandable when looked at through the existing mechanics of vision. Through naming the landscape and through showing his movements and relationship within it, Clah builds for us a world which has been lived in, which he is reclaiming for himself and his people. Clah is using these diaries as textual apparatus which capture the image of a changing world. He is framing reality within this textual space in order to build a vision of the world in his own terms, in order for the changing world to be assimilated into continuity. The structuring principles of the Adawx are hence translated into a textual form through the diaries, and through that act of translation so that vision of the world is transformed. The diaries are not Adawx, neither are they

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32 As Dr Patrick Moore points out, Clah is actually doing something quiet strange when he adopts these titles. The Tsimshian naming system is closed and only a limited pool of titles are available for circulation among the members of Tsimshian society at any given time. Clah is bringing outside entities into the system and producing new persons – not just any persons, but persons that already possess distinguished histories in the popular colonial imagination. By adopting Field Martial Arthur Wellesley’s title as the 1st Duke of Wellington (1769-1852) Clah seems to be adopting this mythic persona of a hero, revered in British society at the time for defeating Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. This may fit into Clah’s idea of himself as a soldier of God fighting against the paganism within Tsimshian societies at the time, but it also points to a radical break in how Clah understands his place within the social world. Clah it appears has opened up the bounds of sociality to encompass the Coloniser; in adopting this title he is simultaneously adopting a new way of being in the world, as the adoption of a name implies the adoption of a state of being associated with that name. Clah thus attempts to understand the new Colonial society not only through adopting a new vision of the world through learning English and becoming Christian, but also through literally embodying the history of mythic figures who inhabit the popular British imagination.
“Histories” or autobiographies – the visions created are comprised of complex mechanics which combine elements from all of these genres. The changing chronotopic contour of the diaries, in their defiance of genre, can thus be explained by Clah’s place at the intersection between different cultures and social networks. The diaries become reflections of his own ambiguous character as they literally come to form part of his personage through carrying his name.

Clah’s representations of his past are composed of a series of images or ayuks piled on top of each other paratactically, which move fluidly through different structuring frameworks. Clah is not simply recounting and remembering the social world he lives in, he is also trying to construct new relationships within the new world he now is a part of. His histories of the North-west coast are thus the means through which change becomes continuity and the structure is perpetuated through being transformed. The idea of history becomes a way of making sense of a changed context, assimilating this change into an existing system of knowledge and also of writing a new world into existence.

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33 As Menzies notes this idea of transformation is fundamental to the adawx in so far as they deal with changing relationships within society. Adawx give structure to the transforming social, physical and spiritual worlds and I argue that they show how, despite radical change, certain structuring principles through which we interpret the world remain the same.
5: Conclusion

Unlike the historical narrative which often takes a detached standpoint and which seeks an explication of a given set of events by establishing relations of cause and effect between series’ of events, Clah’s diaries alternate between first and third person and remember the past as it unfolds – they also have no specific beginning or conclusion. They begin somewhere in the middle of the story and then end abruptly – they thus are incomplete: fragments of a life lived and not the conceptual whole that Historical narratives provide. But it is such incompleteness which makes the Clah diaries a useful counter-part to our own representations of the past. The past, as represented in the Clah diaries, becomes messy, complicated and difficult to comprehend – we are placed within “the thick” of events and from this perspective we are unable to see the “bigger picture”, but it is through this immersion that an “authentic environment” is conveyed (Becker 1995). We move deeper into the text and begin the process of excavating; we try to uncover the intension of the author through engaging with the very language Clah is using to communicate his experiences of the past. Through studying his vision of the world, and attempting to envision the representations through diagrams, we are in many respects emulating the processes which Clah used to construct his diaries.

But the question still remains as to how successful this method is in uncovering a vision of the world and understanding the structuring principles which shape that vision. Does the Mechanics of Vision allow us to get inside the mind of the author? Does it allow us to experience history as a system of thought rather than as a system of things known? And does it give us the ability to understand different ontologies of historicising? The purpose of this paper
is not to exhaustively describe events in the past, the purpose is to provide a starting point, from which we can begin translating the past. This paper is crafted from figments and fragments of reality and thus it cannot hope for total explication. Rather it seeks a “sense” of how the past is experienced – it seeks a dialogue with Clah, in order to understand and build an authentic vision of the world as he saw and represented it. This is not a project which seeks to create a History of Clah or his world; this is a project which seeks to uncover other ideas of history: it seeks to explore other ontologies and other epistemologies through developing new methodologies by which to construct the past. For such a reason this an archaeology of representation and imagination – it is based on constructing knowledge through traces of what has been left behind.

This Archaeology of Representation has attempted to analyse the “eye” of the author, it has tried to discover how representations of reality are constructed and change through time and how an historical ideology can shift through time; through this act of visual discovery so have our own eyes become educated, allowing us a view to the past as Clah witnessed it. We cannot see into the mind of the author, but we can attempt to see through his eyes, through the visions he presents us with – we cannot relive the past, but we can reimagine it, and this has been my intension. In this hybrid text Clah has created a means of understanding the changing world around him: through merging different categories of thought and structuring principles in language. He has attempted to understand the system of thought of the colonial other, through adopting the very apparatuses of vision through which those worlds are witnessed and imagined. Clah’s diaries are not necessarily a mirror to the world, but rather are a window to an imagined world.
The diary is a means through which Clah turns in upon himself and thinks about the changing world around him. Like all diaries Clah’s writings are introspective accounts of a way of life – they serve as means for Clah to know himself and understand his place within the world. But like this paper the diaries are attempts at coming to terms with another system of knowledge by which the world can be experienced. This paper reflects the same intension that Clah possessed, which was to try and learn more about the world, and the language by which it was comprehended. But these worlds that we see are always, already constructions of the imagination, because of the fact that we are translating, transforming and transcribing these “realities” into representations or impressions upon a page.

We thus never deal in “realities”, only “impressions”, taken from certain standpoints – the interpretations we produce are only ever pictures of a larger en-framing totality. Like a series of impressionist paintings the world of Clah can only ever be accessed through the skills of the artist. Through the base materials of language Clah paints for us a picture of his life; he does not capture everything, but selects a certain standpoint and limits our vision to this frame. Through stepping closer we see the layers of language and themes which create the shapes and figures of the world; but in stepping back we are able to see the picture, the vision, in its totality. We get an impression of a world and not the world itself. But this world that Clah has created contains within itself an amalgam of different structures which shapes the vision of reality presented. This vision of the world, as this analysis has shown, changes through time as the intensions behind each representation (between diary entries) evolves.
Clah’s history of the Northwest coast is therefore not what we expect a “History” to look like. Clah’s history is simultaneously a personal account of change and also a tool for effecting social change: in short it is as much a moral guide for action in the future as a document of what happened in the past. Indeed the diaries themselves continue this tradition of the Adawx within a textual medium, in so far as they summon forth a past life-world into the realm of present action. As we read the diaries so Clah’s name is circulated in the society of the present. Like the immortal personages of the Tsimshian lineage system Clah, in his names and deeds, is carried forward into the future – through grasping and then transforming the idea of history Clah writes himself and his people into our history. But it is through our acts of intellectually grasping and reimagining this “History” that our own conceptions of the past are questioned and transformed. We gain a new insight into the structuring principles which shape our systems of knowledge and, through understanding the mechanics by which a vision of the world is crafted, we are better able to understand what this idea of History actually is.

Through studying the means by which representations of the past are ordered and constructed we have seen how visions of lived reality have been reproduced. But in Clah’s hybrid text we have witnessed how different systems of knowledge come together and transform one another to produce “hybrid histories”. In our analysis of the eye we are given a glimpse of a past, lived world – but it is through excavating such representations of reality that we begin a creative, archaeological process of interpretation, translation and re-imagination. In ending then I have shown that we should not seek to produce a History of the real: Truth with a capital T does not exist - what we aim to understand are other visions of the world, other ways of witnessing and representing reality, produced from archaeologies of the imagination.
Bibliography


Appendix

Lists of Figures and Tables Described

Figure 1: Demonstration of Transcription Technique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Text</th>
<th>Transcribed Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsimshian and Fort Simpson.</td>
<td>Tsimshian and Fort Simpson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the journal of Clark, or Damels</td>
<td>the journal of Clark, or Damels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number by every years, and country, every months, and every week, and</td>
<td>Number by every years, and country, every months, and every week, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>days and nights, and country what the wrong and do right (in text above)</td>
<td>days and nights, and country what the wrong and do right (in text above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But Some of men Doing Right</td>
<td>But Some of men Doing Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on some of doing wrong</td>
<td>on some of doing wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of (un-)crossed out Tsimshian</td>
<td>of (un-)crossed out Tsimshian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes, We do better, and sometimes We do worse.</td>
<td>Sometimes, We do better, and sometimes We do worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In every years and in this world,</td>
<td>In every years and in this world,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but Clark Doing Right. Sometimes and sometimes doing wrong.</td>
<td>but Clark Doing Right. Sometimes and sometimes doing wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My heart, happy, Sometimes and sometimes Sorry.</td>
<td>My heart, happy, Sometimes and sometimes Sorry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcription follows same layout as original maintaining emendations and spelling conventions.
This technique allows the researcher to witness changes in the perspective that the author is experiencing when constructing a given sentence. We are able to see how the contour of speech moves between different temporal perspectives and thus we gain some insight into how time is being constructed within a given representation.
This attempts to highlight areas of the text which share a common theme. The relations between different themes determines the intension behind a given diary entry.

This represents the relative positions of different themes within an overall “Theme-space”. Such a diagram is a visual representation of the underlying structuring principles which shape the vision of the diarist. The relations within this theme-space reflect certain intensions held by the diarist and their positions in the diagram represent their overall importance in theme-space.
This chart amalgamates a number of textual fragments which have been analysed to reveal their “Theme-space” structures. The chart shows how different representations emerge through time and reveals the changing structures which shape Clah’s vision of the world.
Figure 6: Combined Typological Chart Showing Theme-space Relations
This shows the structural relationships which influence an individual’s perception and conception of the world.

Analysing the eye through demonstrating how certain structuring principles act as filters to the perceptual lens. When representing the past social and lived reality compete for space in the vision that is represented in “Histories”.

Figure 7: Representation of the Continuum of Consciousness

Figure 8: Representation of Perceptual Lenses
This diagram demonstrates the degree to which individual experiences take precedence over experiences which are seen to affect the society as a whole when constructing histories. In Clah’s construction the societal sphere of valued experience is subordinated to the personal sphere.

Demonstration of a transformation of a vision of the past through Clah’s eyes. Social and Individual “realities” are merged into one category as Clah comes to embody the Tsimshian as a whole.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation in Theme-space/ Frame-structure</th>
<th>Text Fragment</th>
<th>Description of Fragment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene-setting/ Context Frame</td>
<td>Tsimshian and Fort Simpson the journal of Clah. or Damaks</td>
<td>Description of place, author, object of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intension Frame/ Accounting Frame</td>
<td>Number by every years and counting every months and every week and Days and nights and counting what ~~~ Doing wrong and do right</td>
<td>Establishes purpose – Counting the days and accounts for sins Verb-fronting – e.g. VSO – Numbering, counting – Present progressive to present simple (“doing” to “do”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Frame/ (General) Accounting Frame</td>
<td>But Some of men Doing Right an Some of doing wrong of Tsimshian Sometimes We do better and Sometimes We do</td>
<td>Change to SVO ordering Present progressive to simple Collective identifier “we” moves to general vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation in Theme-space/ Frame-structure</td>
<td>Text Fragment</td>
<td>Description of Fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Frame/ (personal)</td>
<td>but <strong>Clah Doing Right</strong> Sometimes and sometimes <strong>doing wrong</strong>,</td>
<td>Moves to specific. (personal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confessional Frame</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-described in 3rd person: “Clah”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ambiguity expressed in adverb “sometimes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>My heart, happy Sometimes</strong> and sometimes <strong>Sorry</strong></td>
<td>Specific possessive pronoun, move to first person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exclusion of verb – replacement by adverb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:

- **Yellow**: Nouns, Pronouns
- **Green**: Verbs
- **Purple**: Verb Modifiers
  (Adverbs)

Demonstration of technique called “Mechanics of Vision”: This shows how sentences can be deconstructed into their constituent nouns, verbs, and modifiers. This allows us to see the basic syntactical structures which organise the lexical items in a given text.