

### III. Style and Anthropology

3.1 And what, on the whole, has been the attitude of anthropologists to art? One will search largely in vain for any kind of general theory of art provided in the early works of the founding fathers of anthropology. Morgan and Tylor and their contemporaries were more directly concerned with problems of origin, diffusion, evolution, and other historical questions than they were in social and cultural systems.

When anthropologists did become more directly concerned with the arts, it was largely the result of "museum" comparisons. Here the concern was still with questions of origin, more specifically, the origin of certain kinds of styles. These styles, classed together as conventional design, were hypothesized by F. W. Putnam and A. C. Haddon to result from modifications of attempts at realistic art. Counter-proposals tracing the origins of conventional art in technique were made by W. H. Holmes among others. This whole problem has relatively little interest for modern anthropologists who generally respond to any discussion of change in art styles with an almost Pavlovian citation of Boas' "Decorative Designs of Alaskan Needlecases" (originally 1908 reprinted in 1940:564-592) which, as discussed below, is often taken to show something slightly different than Boas intended. In any case, interesting as this whole problem may be historically, it can now scarcely be considered sufficient for a general theory of artistic change. It is for this reason, rather than any innate lack of value in these early studies, that they call for little discussion here.

3.2 Of more direct interest is what may be called the

"Boasian" or "American" school of studies of art in anthropology. I prefer the latter term, however, both because of the wide range of participation in the concepts of this school and because of the real difficulty in assessing the exact extent to which Boas was responsible for these concepts. In any case, the first indications of intensive interest in particular styles occurs around the beginning of the 20th century. The "school" more or less ends in the late 1930's with the increasing interest in typology. As already indicated, Franz Boas was one of the important figures in this school, but here, as in so many other cases, it is dangerous to assess Boas merely by his published works.

For example, Boas' direct influence may be detected in the extensive study of Salish basketry by Haeberlin, Teit, and Roberts "under the direction of Franz Boas" (1928). Although it is difficult to assess the exact contribution of any one of the persons involved because of the deaths of Haeberlin and Teit, this study is perhaps one of the most detailed ever made of any style in aboriginal North America. Much of the study is devoted to technical aspects of the basketry, but it is important to note the degree to which this assists in the discussion of formal and structural features. Insofar as one unfamiliar with the material can judge, this study presents the observed primary data correctly and thus achieves at least "observational adequacy" and goes beyond this to approach "descriptive adequacy" in providing generalizations (see section 4.7 below and Chomsky 1964:28-29). Of particular interest are those sections dealing with "errors" and how they are treated,

Earlier studies which are less detailed but otherwise along much the same lines include those of Emmons (1903, 1907) and

others, not the least of whom is A. L. Kroeber, discussed below. Emmons' book on Tlingit basketry (1903) concentrates primarily on basketry technique with a list of motifs with Tlingit names. The later The Chilkat Blanket (1907) is also largely a treatment of technical and ethnographic aspects. To this, Boas added a section nearly twice the length of Lieutenant Emmons' on the designs of these blankets.

In many respects, perhaps the most important publication to result from Boas' interests in art was Ruth Bunzel's The Pueblo Potter (1929). The circumstances of Bunzel's undertaking this project are outlined in a communication from her to Margaret Mead which is presented in Mead's "Apprenticeship under Boas" (1959:33-35). The importance which Boas placed on this study and the role of Haeberlin, Teit, and Roberts (1928) as a guide are clear. The result is one of the finest works in any field on the relationship of the artist to his work. In addition, this work, while perhaps less exhaustive than Haeberlin et al. (1928), approaches very near to descriptive adequacy in its treatment. Both structure and form are treated; though problems of completeness with regard to possibilities of combination and the like are not totally solved.

A study by Gladys Reichard of certain aspects of Melanesian design (1933), which has its dedication to Franz Boas, is also of interest. Reichard has been able to determine many of the principles underlying selected wood and tortoise shell carvings in a few distinct localities distinguished by their own styles. One of the problems presented by Reichard's study is the aspect of selection, however. Although in practice this probably does not affect the reliability of the

principles determined, it does give rise to the question of whether these principles apply generally or hold only for a part of the styles. Another aspect which is disturbing is the use of metrical analysis. Though it is unquestionable that in certain cases this has led to discoveries of rules of proportion and the like, it seems that there is a real danger here of leaving the art work completely and comparing mere numbers or indices. Although Reichard herself is not guilty of this, I have heard this paper referred to as justification, in part, for a purely metrical treatment of some styles in sculpture (Benko 1965). Since I have heard only a preliminary version of this so-called "statistical" treatment of art, it would be improper to discuss it at length. All that I can say is that I believe a more fruitful approach is direct consideration of formal and structural principles.

Boas' main work on art was his Primitive Art (1927). His hand has already been evident, at least in part, in those aspects of the works discussed above concerned with technique. For one of Boas' principle theses was the close relationship of technique and art. To modern eyes, much of Boas' treatment of technique seems overdeveloped in relation to other parts of his own discussion. This often leads to subtle differences of meaning between Boas' words and the same words as used in modern aesthetics. Thus Boas' discussion of "formal" elements ranges all the way from technique to considerations of structure while Boas refers to structure as "rhythmic complexity", "symmetry", and the like. A. L. Kroeber in the 1943 memorial to Boas stated of Primitive Art, "Every aspect of art including style is treated - except stylistic values" (1943:25). It is perhaps truer to say that Boas discusses these topics but

does not call them by their usual name. It is clear that Boas' "style" is something different from a generative concept, "The general formal elements of which we spoke before, namely symmetry, rhythm, and emphasis or delimitation of form, do not describe adequately a specific style, for they underlie all forms of ornamental arts" (1927:144). This quotation demonstrates that Boas did not conceive of a style as a system since although these "formal elements" do not define a style by their presence or absence, these particular structural and formal principles within a system do describe a style. Boas certainly does not clarify why he feels these factors are less important than techniques. Presumably historical tradition is part of his answer, but this is an explanation of origin, not a treatment of how a style works.

There are many negative features of Primitive Art, and not the least of these is a tendency toward ex cathedra pronouncements. In refutation of the degeneration theory of geometric design, Boas says, "Slovenly work does not occur in an untouched primitive culture" (1927:352). Unless "untouched" means only by European contact, the sentence is meaningless; and, in any case, the statement is patently false and is really meaningful only in the context of refutation of the "degeneration" theory (in fact, Putnam, one of the first proponents of this theory, saw the process as advance rather than "degeneration"). In denying one erroneous theory, Boas nearly backs into another. Despite this, there are few other works dealing with art in anthropology which approach the high level of Boas' book. Lévi-Strauss and others have come to recognize that Boas was an outstanding pioneer in structuralism. But as Jacobs has pointed out (1959:127), he often seemed to have been

unaware of the deeper implications of a structural approach and did not apply these methods generally.

Boas, despite his reputation as a particularizer, is the source of many generalizations about art. Though not all of these can be accepted with as much assurance as Boas put them forth, the value of his work is high. He was among the first to point out that a variety of styles can exist side by side in the same society through multiple factors of technique and specialization (1927:355). Boas demonstrated that meaning and style are not necessarily conterminous (1903, reprinted 1940:558). He clearly laid to rest the idea of necessary evolutionary sequence from realistic to geometric (1908, reprinted 1940:589).

This last paper, the famous "Alaskan Needlecases", is perhaps one of Boas' most quoted. Most mis-quoted in part, for it is often cited to show that the direction of development in a particular sequence can never be determined from stylistic analysis. In fact, it is primarily an argument only against a priori sequences. Boas' basis for the sequence is an a posteriori judgment of the characteristics of the artifacts since Boas had no evidence for the direction of this particular development other than that implicit in the material.

3.3 Alfred L. Kroeber made substantial contributions in the study of styles and deserves separate comment. Beginning in 1900 with a paper on the symbolism of the Arapaho, Kroeber's bibliography shows constant interest throughout his career in the problems of art and style. It is significant that it was he who reviewed Boas' Primitive Art for the American Anthropologist and who wrote the section on primitive art for the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences.

Kroeber's dissertation (published in 1901) was also on Arapaho art so the depth of his concern is apparent. This probably stems in part from his early interest in literature and his cultural background. Kroeber was one of Boas' earliest students, but the degree to which this influenced his outlook toward art is obscure. In any case, Kroeber's concept of style is different in many ways from that of Boas.

For Kroeber, 'style' always remained largely a concept dealing with selection of form, a fact which is perhaps nowhere clearer than in his "Toward Definition of the Nazca Style" (1956). Structural analysis is largely lacking, and in its place is found a detailed listing of features. The principles of selection of particular forms are not directly treated as a part of style so that what results is primarily a list having about the same relationship to a "style" as treated here, as does a word list to a grammar in linguistics. As will be seen, this largely formal treatment of style has been shared by others in anthropological studies of art.

Kroeber's major work on style is Style and Civilizations (1957). Here Kroeber indicates clearly his emphasis on form:

Let us then . . . return to the construal of style as something concerned essentially with form, and possessing some consistency of the forms operated with; plus a coherence of these into a set of related larger patterns. (1957:26)

Later, Kroeber sees three ingredients of style in "representational fine arts": first is what is called "theme" here, second, concept and/or form, and, third, the specific, technical form given the work of art by the artist in his execution of it . . . ." (1957:30). Leaving aside the question of theme as an element of style, there is no need to further document the form

orientation of Kroeber's "style". The third ingredient of execution is seen as cardinal by Kroeber (1957:32), a fact which immediately calls Boas' chapter on style in Primitive Art to mind. This leads Kroeber to a definition of "historical style" as "a co-ordinated pattern of interrelations of individual expressions or executions in the same medium of art"(1957:32).

Kroeber's "historical style" seems fairly close to the concept of "style" developed here insofar as it concerns pattern. Yet, the differences soon become apparent; Kroeber's commitment to super-organic process leads to a rather naive picture of the development of styles. He makes much, for example, of the necessity of influence of predecessors upon successors (1957:32). But, by saying that this influence can be negative and thereby serve as a stimulant, Kroeber unintentionally exposes this argument as a truism. In direct opposition to Kroeber's suggestion that the influence of predecessors has "again and again been overlooked"(1957:32), I should rather say that this has seldom been overlooked by scholars of art history and aesthetics, as indeed the examination of any summary history of aesthetic research will soon demonstrate. Another possible example of Kroeber's bias may be seen in his adherence to the "exhaustion" theory of stylistic change. As Hauser has pointed out (1959, see discussion above), it seems more profitable to consider "exhaustion" as a secondary factor which in turn is related to other more direct factors. Kroeber recognizes this implicitly in his attempt to deal with one of the more obvious exceptions to any simple theory of exhaustion - that of ancient Egyptian styles (1957:37). Nonetheless, Kroeber persists in treating exhaustion as a primary factor.



The major concern of Kroeber in Style and Civilizations, however, is with a larger concept than the single medium historical styles. This broader unit, that of "total-culture style", shows clearly the differences between a style made up of distinctive features or "forms", in the broadest sense, and style considered as a generative system. On the one hand, we have a "style" of a culture; on the other, a concept which merges, perhaps, with each "level" of culture. In Kroeber's terms, a "style" certainly can be distinguished for the broad abstraction of culture; the only question is whether it can be useful or meaningful. In generative terms, whether a total cultural "style" (which would be the same as culture) can be achieved is a question, or an aim, as yet unanswered. Kroeber, of course, recognized this uncertainty and even uses an example from linguistic grammar to demonstrate the potentiality of a total style (1957: 106), yet even here the non-generative character of his model is clear.

3.4 Before proceeding to the next section on the "re-introduction" of stylistic studies into the United States, it is necessary to note in passing that there are areas such as the Southwest and Mesoamerica where style in one form or another continued to be used as a methodological tool. Shepard's (1963:255-305) discussion under the heading of "Design" perhaps comes closest to being a general statement of this methodology, at least, as applied to ceramics. Here once again we find confirmation of the relationship of technique and style (1963:304), but the over-extension of this relationship seen in Boas' work has been corrected.

Shepard's discussion of structure is largely concerned with what will be termed "surface structure" below, rather than with the

structure of derivation and relation, but this by no means lessens the importance of this work. Many of the questions which arise in relation to Shepard's analytical method will be dealt with below and discussion here would be premature. Nonetheless, in Shepard's methodology can be seen at once a continuity from the turn of the century and an important further development.

3.5                   Despite a continuity in the Southwest and in certain Mesoamerican studies, the indication of real revival of style as a theoretical issue may be seen in a treatment of archaeological methodology and theory by J. H. Rowe (1959). It is interesting that when this revival began, its inspiration was not in the combination of typological and stylistic analysis of the Southwestern or Mesoamerican archaeologists, but rather in the success of classical archaeologists in dealing with dating. This is essentially a new emphasis for the style concept in North America since previous treatments were not primarily interested in problems of dating but rather problems of relationship, distribution, and process.

Rowe's starting point is the inefficiency of typological or evolutionary seriation for dating (1959:319, 1961:327). One of Rowe's more telling points is that this approach "renders useless the best archaeological evidence for dating" - especially the use of grave lot associations (1959:320). From this base, Rowe suggests the use of "significant features" for dating (1959:320). For Rowe's interest, significance refers to usefulness for making chronological distinctions; but he is not unaware of the need for "synchronic" analysis (1959:323). He also points out that the significant features for synchronic analysis

are not necessarily the same as those for dating.

Rowe has discussed the problems of stylistic dating in a number of articles (1959, 1961, 1962). The first of these is concerned with more general questions while the others are more directly concerned with methodology. All of these are important as background for particular studies discussed below, and the comments generally hold true for the entire "school".

The question of the relationship of this "Berkeley school" to the theories of A. L. Kroeber is still open. Generally speaking, there is little direct relation. Yet, in certain ways, there are similarities which are probably not totally fortuitous, especially in light of the fact that much of the work undertaken by Rowe and his students and associates is centered on Peru, the area of some of Kroeber's detailed treatment of particular styles (e.g. Kroeber 1956).

One of these similarities is the emphasis on form or "feature" with less interest in problems of structure. Rowe's concept of style appears to be based primarily on theme and feature in close agreement with this part of Kroeber's theory (Kroeber 1957:30, Rowe 1959: 320). At the same time, Rowe's treatment of "synchronic" analysis is very close to a "generative" or "systemic" concept (1959:323). As Rowe says, "The object is to write a sort of grammar of the style at a given moment in time" (1959:323). However, this "grammar" is apparently possible only for style phases in his terminology and not for the total style. The essentially formal character of the "style" is apparent in Rowe's recognition that, "The rules of patterning may be quite different in successive phases of the same tradition" (1959:323). Thus, what Rowe calls a "style" is what I would call a thematic or formal tradition, and his

style phase is very close in some ways to my "style". I do not feel that this is a mere matter of terminology, however. A style is a tradition, but this is by no means the most important or interesting aspect of style.

I have already discussed in the introduction the fact that lack of knowledge of the system of a style can lead to substantial problems in dealing with "spatial" and temporal variation. "Spatial" variation means much more than merely regional differences, however, and can occur on levels which can cause problems even with grave lot associations. This will be discussed in greater length in the next chapter, but for the time being let us substitute the term "social" variation for "spatial". Thus, in Rowe's "similiary" seriation based on the similarity of thematic treatments (1961:328-9), real problems exist of isolating social from temporal variation. This is why knowledge of the system and arrangement into temporal phases are interlocked.

A point which Rowe brings out clearly is that inferences about social relations can be made with stylistic analysis on both diachronic and synchronic levels. For example, inferences may include the isolation of subgroups within a larger society, some insights into the micro-styles of household units, and so on. Such inferences about social relations are certainly not the least of the contributions which stylistic analysis can make to archaeology.

3.6                    Among the particular analyses of this so-called "Berkeley" school, the study of a local style, Ocucaje, of the Ica Valley in Paracas times by Menzel, Rowe, and Dawson (1964) has more than the regional interest which might be deduced from its title. It is

certainly one of the more generally known of the stylistic studies done at Berkeley and has influenced similar studies of material far outside of its area (e.g. Munson 1965), although to date, few of these studies have appeared in print.

Essentially, the Ica study is one of design features. Although the first line of the report states that it is stylistic analysis (which, of course, it is in part) its main interest lies in distinguishing what Rowe (1959) has called "significant features", that is, features which are useful for the making of chronological distinctions. Certainly no archaeologist can ignore the tremendous importance of chronology, but it may be asked whether such significant features exhaust the possibilities of the material in terms of "stylistic analysis". Of the structural aspects of these styles, we find very little trace in the Ica study. In a sense, although Menzel, Rowe, and Dawson have dealt with one aspect of style in their study, they have not, in fact, analyzed the style so much as they have analyzed the temporal significance of some features of the style. Tables 1 and 2 in the study are extremely valuable guides to the placing of new specimens into relative chronological position, but from this treatment a style is a class or set of objects which have a certain configuration of attributes rather than a system. In a word, this is a "laundry-list" definition of style which fails to deal with structural organization to any marked degree. It is true that some of the features are structural in character, but most are formal and thematic.

This study, therefore, really only achieves the first part of Rowe's objective; and the cautionary remarks made with regard to this type of analysis apply here. One real question, of course, in this type of

study is whether the archaeological data are detailed enough to allow the establishment of these style phases; and it is precisely this data that an outsider cannot competently judge.

Another of the outstanding studies of style done by the "Berkeley school" is that of Richard Roark in his "From Monumental to Proliferous in Nasca Pottery" (1965).

Going beyond the treatment of design elements Roark has established rules governing the organization of the design field of the Nasca 5 and 6 style phases. By the "generative" definition of style developed here, I might suspect that Nasca 3-4 and 6-7 are actually separate styles participating in a common tradition with 6-7 developing out of the early style. This merely re-emphasizes that the "style" concept developed for purpose of this study seems rather different than the concept as utilized by Roark who recognizes 6-7 and 3-4 as separate substyles with phase 5 as a transition.

Regardless of the terminology used, Roark's substyles are very close to the concept of style as expressed here, and his study is one of the few not only to deal with design and theme but also to deal with the structural ordering of his material.

Yet, the rules which Roark has developed are not precisely equivalents to those developed herein. What Roark has done is to analyze the relation (stated as rules) of the series of bands to the surrounding design field. Thus each rule is stated in the form:

1.  $b/--:1b$  The structural unit band is realized visually (my emphasis) in all positions as a line above a band,
2.  $b/--:b$  The structural unit black band is realized visually in all positions as a black band,
3.  $p\#/\underline{b}--:p$  The bottom panel, when it occurs below a black band, is realized visually as an unpainted panel.

The first figure before the diagonal, s/ ... (e.g. b/..., b/..., p#/...), is the structural unit. The context of the rule follows the dash, .../C ...; and the "visual realization" follows the colon. Thus the rule is of the general form s/C:V. Essentially such rules are context-sensitive rewrite rules similar to those of linguistics. These rules can be used to convert Roark's structural analyses into the real appearance of the object (i.e. "visual realization").

What Roark is doing, then, is to list the rules which allow the reduction of several classes of design layout to a smaller number of structural units. In this sense, his rules are like morpho-phonemic rules (with their own transformations) which allow conversion of a terminal string (that is, the end-product of a generative statement) into the "visual realization".

What Roark has not done is to state the rules which establish these structural statements. In linguistic terms, he has not developed possible "phrase markers" which describe the derivations and relationships of his terminal strings.

Although I do not intend to get into a discussion of the Nasca style(s), an example may assist in clarifying this point. Two Nasca 5 vases are 4-8399 and 4-8401:

	visual realization	structural analysis
4-8399	1P1b1b1b1P1bp	PbbbPbP
4-8401	1P <u>b</u> p	P <u>b</u> P

What I would like to see are the structural rules which "generate" both

of these examples. Without the slightest knowledge of Nasca pottery, it seems that this would be possible. In fact, the patterning is very like that of the artificial styles described in the next chapter for illustrative purposes, and the writing of rules for the placements of these bands should not be difficult. Of course, as Roark has implicitly recognized, the structural treatment of non-linear, i.e. non-sequentially ordered, data is more difficult than the treatment of sequentially ordered themes. Thus Roark's "structure" relates primarily to the organization of design field bands and not to the other parts of the structure. Further, his study applies to the surface structure of this aspect and does not delineate the underlying structure of derivation, the "deep" structure (see, for example, Chomsky 1965). Roark's study also differs from that undertaken here in that it deals with a sequence which is pretty clearly blocked out. To a large degree, specialists in this area feel that they are able to "control" variation in time. As will be seen, the present study has no such tight control; and structural and stylistic patterns are analyzed partly as means to discovering such patterning in both time and space.

Mention should also be made of yet another of the "Berkeley" style analyses, Pattern and Process in the Early Intermediate Pottery of the Central Coast of Peru by Thomas Patterson (MS, in press). Although, like Menzel et al (1964), one of the primary purposes of this study is the setting up of chronological units for dating, it represents an important revision of some aspects of Rowe's methodology. I refer especially to the fact that Patterson analyzed his material synchronically and then compared units diachronically to determine the nature of change from one unit to the next. Thus Patterson, though



defining temporal units by similiary seriation and stratification, allowed the necessary feedback between synchronic and diachronic studies. So it is that after

The pottery of each phase is described and analyzed, the units are aligned or arranged in chronological sequence. It is then possible to analyze which features of design persist and which are modified with the passage of time. (Patterson MS:5, emphasis mine.)

In other respects, Patterson's concerns do differ from those of Roark and the present paper in the kind of analysis of a particular level. For example, Patterson's analysis is similar to that of Menzel et al (1964) in the emphasis on features rather than on structural rules. The goals which Patterson has set forth are different, however, in that he has aimed for a synthesis of the archaeology in his area as well as a delineation of the changes.

3.7           The development of stylistic analysis in anthropology has been halting. Only recently have explicit goals for the analysis of art been put forward in our field. Early interests were closely related to evolutionary and general historical problems. In Americanist studies, Franz Boas and his associates were responsible for an incipient structuralism combined with close attention to technical influences upon style. In addition, Boas and others also clearly showed the advantages of close analysis of forms.

Kroeber also had a great interest in styles, if anything, beyond that of Boas. At the same time, Kroeber's treatment of style did not include attention to structure. Many of Kroeber's concerns were with broader problems of total culture styles and are therefore on a somewhat different level of discussion than the usual analysis of style.

In some areas, there seems to have been less tendency to abandon the technique of style analysis which contributed so much to studies in the late 1930's. Perhaps one of the clearest and most useful methodological guides for analysis may be found in Shepard's Ceramics for the Archaeologist.

The characteristics of the "Berkeley" school of style studies are in some respects allied to Kroeber's emphasis on form. In part, this may be seen in the use of "features" of usually formal or thematic nature for the definition of styles and style phases. Though different in terminology in certain important respects from the generative theory of style, the basic outlook is not so much incompatible as concerned with different aspects. Two studies, one by Roark (1965) and the other by Patterson (MS.), serve to indicate that though immediate goals and theory may differ, the ultimate interest is the same.