constituted social relationships of less significance than contrasting elaborate areas. For the purposes of this paper, I am assuming equal significance of all social relationships vis-à-vis ego; however, in social areas where I find descriptive kin terms, I assume a broad range of status and role heterogeneity. This is in contrast with social areas where I find classificatory kin terms; here, I assume a high degree of status and role homogeneity.

I am further assuming that the terminology is a fair reflection of the system as a whole and not a highly idiosyncratic view. Based on this, I am operating above the level of individual variation and manipulation of the system. Consequently, I am proposing an ideal speaker-hearer relationship with respect to the terminology, its use and socio-cultural importance.

It is my hypothesis that social areas elaborated with descriptive kin terms indicate a higher degree of political, economic, and ceremonial involvement vis-à-vis ego than classificatory social areas.

The analysis of the kin terminological system shows that:

(1) there are three social areas structured into the terminological system;
(2) the three social areas are complementary and hierarchical; and
(3) the residence group was characterized by linguistically marked boundaries between individuals of different degrees of social relatedness.

The kinship analysis points to structural-operational themes in a wide social sphere. The themes are a step above the data and constitute aspects of a Hesquiat(-Nootkan) world view model. The themes are on two levels: (1) structural; and (2) symbolic. For example, the theme of lineality structures descent lines into discrete social units and is symbolically expressed in spatial designations within a residence group.

A methodological remark should be made with regard to this type of analysis. On the Pacific Northwest Coast, today, as in other areas of native North America, aboriginal culture is quickly disappearing. In the present case with Hesquiat, very little ethnographic data have been recorded through the decades. Often the only data for a group that cultural anthropologists and linguists have are lexical items and/or some textual material. The value of the type of analysis I am doing here – that is, a social anthropological analysis of kin terms – comes in terms of formulating socio-cultural hypotheses from limited data.

Fortunately, in the case of Nootkan culture in general, we do have Philip Drucker's excellent ethnography (1951). Thus, hypotheses such as those I am proposing can be expanded and tested in other areas.

## 2. Ethnographic Sketch

The traditional home of the Hesquiat people is Hesquiat (British Columbia) on the western shore of Vancouver Island, south of Nootka Sound. According to Drucker's 1951 cultural classification they are the northern-most of the central Nootkan tribes. Hesquiat is a dialect of Nootkan proper.

Since there is so little Hesquiat ethnographic data, the ethnographic sketch pertains to Nootkan culture and society in general. There is no reason to assume that Hesquiat is significantly different from any of the other Nootkan tribes in the categories I have selected to discuss.

The residence group was the focal point for the operation of descent and kinship mechanisms. This social unit occupied a plank house often as large as 40′ × 100′.

Nootkan society was socially stratified into noblemen and commoners. The concept of property ownership was elaborate and placed all material and nonmaterial property in the hands of noblemen. A person of commoner class could gain membership in a chief's house on the basis of kinship affiliation. The flexibility of residence in a number of houses, each defined along a different kinship line, points out the ambilateral nature of the system. Drucker writes: "A man might spend a year or two in his mother's house, the next in his wife's father's, then live with his father's mother's group, and later go to live awhile with his son-in-law. One receives the impression that there was a continual stream of people, mostly of low rank, pouring in and out of the houses" (1951: 279).

Associations through kinship lines gave a person entrance to a chief's house. While residing in a particular house the person functioned as a house member in all respects. Drucker notes: "With whatever group a man happened to be living, he identified himself completely. For the time being, he centered all his interests and loyalties in that group, and participated in all its activities. He tended the chief's fish traps, contributed food and property for feasts and potlatches, danced and enjoyed himself at the festivities. Only rarely were conflicts aroused by this temporary sublimation of other bonds, for he was really a member of the group through kinship" (*ibid.*).

Thus, a person was potentially a member of a series of house groups; residence and active participation were the operational conditions of membership. Kinship affiliations were networks into the economic, political and ceremonial spheres of Hesquiat-Nootkan social life.

At the core of the kinship system of a house group was a family of chiefs, around whom activities centered. The chief's family was a corporate group owning ceremonial and nonceremonial territorial rights, houses, and privileges. "... 'privilege' is applied to all real and nonmaterial property: territories, ceremonial offices, dances, songs, names, etc., capable of being owned in Nootkan culture" (Drucker 1951: 220).

Each residence group had four ranked chiefs. Chiefs were most frequently brothers or close patrilateral kinsmen. The chiefs and their families resided in the four corners of the house. Their respective residence areas were determined by relative rank. The highest ranking chief and his family occupied the right rear corner, facing the door from the interior. The second ranking chief and family assumed the left rear position; the third chief was in the front left and the fourth occupied the front right corner.

The chieftainship was inherited through primogeniture. The residence areas were inherited property. The central areas along the side walls were inherited living spaces for the chiefs' close relatives, e. g., "aunts/uncles." The area between