Contributions of Marius Barbeau to West Coast Ethnology

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RÉSUMÉ

Le grand folkloriste Marius Barbeau a accompli une œuvre unique en rassemblant au Musée National (Ottawa), une vaste collection de matériaux ethnographiques sur les Tsimshians et les tribus voisines. Il a également le grand mérite d'avoir fait connaître ces populations au grand public par ses publications. Tous ces matériaux amassés continuent de fournir de nouveaux éléments à l'Ethnographie de ces régions.

Toutefois l'Auteur pense que l'interprétation historico-culturelle qu'en tire monsieur Barbeau reste ouverte à la critique. Par exemple, là où M. Barbeau croit avoir trouvé l'évidence d'une émigration des Tsimshians à partir de la Sibérie, à travers les Iles Aléoutes, jusqu'à la côte du Pacifique, l'Auteur ne voit que des indices de déplacements locaux. L'Auteur ne partage pas non plus les vues de M. Barbeau qui considère les sociétés secrètes, l'exogamie des phratries, et le système totémique, comme des innovations récentes dans la région en question. Il n'accepte pas d'avantage que les poteaux totémiques avec leur style particulier soient le résultat de la traite des fourrures avec les pays d'outre mer. En somme M. Barbeau est d'avis qu'il ne s'est opéré aucun développement culturel sur la côte du Nord-Ouest au temps préhistoriques. En étudiant attentivement les mêmes données l'Auteur au contraire prétend arriver à des conclusions différentes: à savoir que la culture de la côte du Nord-Ouest dans tous ses traits essentiels constitue un développement indigène qui s'est accompli sur place.

Of all writers on Northwest Coast Indian ethnology, none (with the sole possible exception of the late Franz Boas) has produced more publications than Marius Barbeau. And certainly, because of his commendable practice of writing for a popular as well as a professional audience, none has succeeded in reaching a greater number of readers. On several topics of general interest including totem poles, argillite sculpture and native folklore he has come to be recognized as the outstanding authority. His books and articles have been eagerly received, for they have been timely and welcome answers to an insistent demand for authoritative information. And more is still to come; his published

works have not by any means exhausted the fund of knowledge accumulated during a long and productive career.

In future publications I shall have the privilege of presenting much of this additional information. In the present paper, however, I have two other purposes. The first is to convey some impression of the wealth of material which still remains on file, and confirm still further Dr. Barbeau's monumental contribution as a collector of ethnographic information. That by itself, however, would not provide a balanced assessment of his contributions to Northwest Coast ethnology. Over the years, in the course of presenting and interpreting his materials, he has developed a number of hypotheses dealing with the history of the coast tribes and the development of their distinctive culture. It has to be pointed out that some of these interpretations are open to serious question. In particular one might question his assertion that the traditions of some of the Tsimshian lineages provide direct evidence of a recent migration of Siberian nomads to America by way of the Aleutian Islands, and of persistent migrations southward along the coast in protohistoric times. One might also question his belief that many distinctive elements of Northwest Coast culture, including the crest system, totem poles, exogamy and secret societies, are of no real antiquity but are recent innovations brought by the Siberian nomads or resulting from contacts with Europeans. The second purpose of this paper is therefore to examine these questions, and to show that Dr. Barbeau's interpretations do not seem to be warranted by the materials themselves and should not be uncritically accepted as the final explanations of the culture history of the Northwest Coast.

The "Tsimshian File"

All of us familiar with the Northwest Coast have known for a long time of Dr. Barbeau's "Tsimshian file", the vast body of information on the social organization and traditional history of the Tsimshian and their neighbours which he has assembled at the National Museum of Canada. In 1958, with the aid of a Canada Council Senior Fellowship, I arranged to spend a year in Ottawa working with these materials. The Museum placed its

facilities freely at my disposal, and Dr. Barbeau received me as a collaborator in the most open and friendly manner. Although he had been "retired" since 1948 he still continued an active writing schedule, and I was able to assist with some of the routine work involved in preparing his manuscripts for publication. My main contribution, eventually, will be a complete description of the social structure of the Tsimshian tribes. My purpose here is to summarize the materials in the file and give a few examples of the new insights they will provide when published.

The greater part of the Tsimshian file is the result of Dr. Barbeau's own field work during eight seasons on the coast (1914-15, 1920-21, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1939 and 1947). The remainder is the contribution of the late William Beynon, Dr. Barbeau's Tsimshian field associate, who sent to Ottawa dozens of notebooks filled with the results of his own enquiries between 1916 and his death in 1957. It was at Port Simpson in 1915 that Dr. Barbeau met Beynon and gave him his first training as an interpreter and ethnographer. Judging from the field notes and publications which resulted (Barbeau: 1917a, 1917b), that must have been one of the most productive field seasons in the history of American anthropology. The same effective partnership was renewed for each of the subsequent seasons.

The subject matter in the file may be described under two headings: first, the "narratives", and second, the notes on social organization. The narratives consist in part of the semi-mythical histories which the Tsimshian lineages own and tell to explain their origins and validate their rights to crests and territories. The Tsimshian call these *ada'ox*.[1] In addition to these and merging imperceptibly with them are an even larger number of stories and anecdotes about personalities and events of the remembered past. The latter do not shed much light on the remote origins of the Tsimshian but they do reveal a great deal about the workings of the culture. It is from the narratives that Dr. Barbeau has drawn most of the material for his recent publications (*e.g.*, 1953, 1958, 1961), and it might be added that he has completed four more large manuscripts which finish

[1] In my phonetic spellings of Tsimshian words, *x* represents the sound *ch* (as in German "ich"). Dr. Barbeau uses *rh* for this sound.

the job of presenting the narratives along with his final word on their interpretation.

It is with the notes on social organization that I am more directly concerned. When Dr. Barbeau has on occasion referred to the census-like completeness of these notes he has not at all exaggerated. He spent time in virtually all of the Tsimshian villages, working with several dozens of informants, and systematically gathering information on each of the topics in which he was interested. Tsimshian-speaking tribes fall into three territorial and dialect divisions: the Tsimshian proper on the coast and lower Skeena River (15 tribes), the Gitksan on the upper Skeena (7 tribes), and the Niska on the Nass River (4 tribes). For each of the 26 tribes he obtained the following information:

1. Structure. The basic kinship units are the "houses" (segments of matrilineal lineages occupying separate dwellings; the same term is also used for the lineages themselves). The tribes consisted of from 13 to 46 "houses" (households) in a fixed order of rank.

2. Personal names. Each "house" (lineage) owned a stock of names for its members. About 5 000 of these have been listed and translated, providing material for an analysis of the complex naming system.

3. Crests. Each lineage also owned the right to use a number of crests, which they displayed in a variety of ways. These have been listed and described.

4. Villages and territories. The territories and village sites owned by each of the tribes, and the resource areas owned by each of the "houses" have been listed and mapped.

5. Traditions of origin. To the extent that it was possible, Dr. Barbeau obtained the *ada'ox* of each of the "houses". These make up a large proportion of the narratives mentioned above.

All of this material has been transferred to files of my own, and will form the basis for future publications.

The very completeness of these notes on social organization permits us to use them, for certain purposes and with proper caution, as a census of the late 19th century Tsimshian. I do not mean to say that they provide accurate figures on population, but I do think they reveal such information as the relative sizes of the various tribes, phratries and social classes. For example, a

preliminary listing of the fifteen tribes of Tsimshian proper gives a total of 334 households. One would rather expect them to be divided fairly evenly among the four phratries, but that is found not to be the case:

Gispuwadwa'da	(Killer Whale, Grizzly Bear)	122
Ganha'da	(Raven)	96
Laxski'k	(Eagle)	74
Laxkibu'	(Wolf)	42

This information has a bearing on our speculations about how the phratries evolved to their present condition. The figures lend support to the suggestions, which can be made on quite different grounds, that the *Gispuwadwa'da* should be regarded as an amalgamation of two phratries, and that the Wolf phratry is a relatively recent accretion to Tsimshian society. In a similar sense it is significant for the study of the class structure to learn that 72 of the 334 households claim membership in the highest social stratum, the so-called "royal" class.

In working with these rich materials one becomes aware of a number of features of Tsimshian culture which have not been adequately described. Two peculiarities of the naming system might be mentioned as examples. One type of personal name, used most commonly for children, exhibits a feature which Dr. Barbeau terms "cross-phratric naming" (1954:105). A child's name was chosen from the stock of names owned by his lineage, that is to say, the lineage of his mother. It was a matter of common knowledge that certain names belonged to certain lineages, so that once the child's name was known there was seldom any doubt as to which lineage he and his mother belonged. This particular type of name, however, also identified the phratry, and often the specific lineage, to which the child's father belonged. To give an example, the name *ni'gamks* is well known as a girl's name belonging to one of the *Ganha'da* (Frog-Raven) "houses" at Kitsegukla. It means in literal translation "on-sunshine", which by itself fails to make very much sense, because it lacks the required reference to the father's phratry. If the father was a member of the Fireweed phratry, which owns as one of its main crests the Killer Whale, the complete name might be "on-sunshine (on the) dorsal fin (of the) Killer Whale", or in free translation "sunshine glinting on the wet dorsal fin of the

emerging Killer Whale". The same name might be used for a girl whose father belonged to the Eagle phratry, or any other, by modifying it to refer to an appropriate crest; for example, "sunshine glinting on the white head of the Eagle".

It was after I had copied and transcribed a large number of these names that I became conscious of another quality which they possess. Each of them conjures up a striking image of the crest animal: "misty spout of the Killer Whale", "Raven flying out to sea cawing in the early morning", "Grouse making a robe for itself with its tail feathers". Each conveys its image by means of a clever and economical use of language, and each (I am sure, although I am not a speaker of Tsimshian) rolls pleasingly off the tongue. In short each may be described as a sort of one-line poem, and consequently this type of name may be considered as one of the art forms of the Tsimshian.

Another type of name sheds light upon a complex of Tsimshian ceremonials which has not yet been properly described. These may be called the *naxno'x* or spirit names. They are assumed exclusively by adults, and are somewhat more common among the Gitksan than the other divisions. These names translate into such terms as "liar", "person of long ago", "always sleeping", "troublemaker", "propped up", "always begging", conceited woman". When the name is assumed, and on other occasions when the "house" wants to entertain guests with a display of some of its prerogatives, members of the lineage stage a performance which in some way dramatizes the name, or more exactly, the supposedly supernatural being to which the name refers. These performances make use of a great variety of masks and tricks of stagecraft. Once assumed, the name is not reserved for ceremonial occasions but is used as an everyday secular name. These *naxno'x* performances form a distinct class of ceremonials of considerable interest. They are not a part of the Kwakiutl "secret society" complex, which the Tsimshian were in the process of borrowing. Neither are they displays of crests; the Tsimshian distinguish clearly between *naxno'xs* and crests, and display them in different ways and at different times. They are a separate blend of semi-sacred family-owned ceremonies, in which elements of the guardian spirit complex are reworked into conformity with

the rigid rules of kinship and the passion for pageantry which characterize the northern Northwest Coast.

Dr. Barbeau's Interpretations

Having gained an idea of the richness of the materials assembled by Dr. Barbeau, we may now turn to some of his interpretations of Northwest Coast culture history and the manner in which he has used his basic materials to support them. It will be helpful to begin by summarizing, with the help of representative statements of his own, what his conceptions are. The following, as I understand it, is what he believes.

For some centuries before the arrival of Russians or other Europeans in the north Pacific region, nomads from Siberia were filtering across the Aleutian chain and down the coast of Alaska and British Columbia. Driven from their homes in Asia, they still retained memories of the pleasant land they had left behind, and were in constant search for a better land ahead.

> A racial inferiority complex prevailed among the Paleosiberians; it was the result of repeated invasions and defeats suffered at the hands of the ever expanding Mongolians and Tartars. The crucial period for them had been during the depredations of the Tartar, Genghis Khan, in the early thirteenth century. This famous conqueror, ...overwhelmed them and chased their remnants away from the center to the edges of the continent in the northeast toward Kamchatka and the Arctic. Some of the Fugitives of Alaska were an offshoot, one of the most recent, of the same primitive stock, then broken up into isolated bands and cast adrift close to the Bering Sea.
>
> The fears of the Fugitives... were everywhere coupled with the haunting dream of a golden age now lost and a longing for the bountiful land to the south. This land of promise for Genghis Khan (much nearer the source) was the Celestial Empire of China, whereas for the Na'as and the Laranows, closer to us, it was Leesems, down the seacoast.
>
> Salmon-Eater and his band, sailing out of the ocean onto a coast inhabited by the Grizzly Bear tribe, were among the latest to leave Asia for America, not long before the Russians invaded eastern Siberia in force. (1947:72-73)[2]

[2] The Na'as were to become part of the Eagle clan of the Tsimshian, and the Laranows part of the Wolf clan. Leesems is the Nass River.

This most recent wave of Asiatic migrants (he believes) can still be identified among the families of the Tsimshian and their neighbours, and in fact it is the traditions of these families which reveal the story of the migration. Their route to America was along the chain of the Aleutian Islands.

> Six canoeloads of people sailed out of the bitter seas, once long ago... Famished and weary from a long perilous trek, they at last spied a wild wooded coast in the calm waters ahead. It looked unlike anything they had ever known, and it happened to be Kodiak Island in Alaska... (1953:9)

> This migration of the Salmon-Eater tribe to America via the Aleutians must be considered here only an example, probably the most recent of many. (1945:425)

All the people of the coast were in restless movement, and the movement was persistently southward, down the coast. The newcomers brought with them and established cultural features which had not previously existed here, including a clan or moiety structure, exogamy, and secret societies.

> ...a wave of newcomers travelling in canoes from the northwest forced itself in, introduced cultural novelties and a clear-cut social organization, including clans, exogamy, and secret societies in the Mongolian style. (1954:110)

> Within the last two centuries or so, a fairly complete change in population and in culture has taken place. Not so long ago there were no totem pole culture, no exogamic groups whose law was to marry outside the phratry, no totemic emblems, in the very districts where these features are now the most typical. The change has occurred through the continued migration of northern families. (1934:2779)

These same Asiatic migrants (he says) also introduced the totemic or crest system on the coast. This was not something they had brought with them from Asia, but a concept borrowed from the Russian and English fur trading companies, which by that time had arrived on the scene. This was "the beginning of the crests on the North Pacific coast, also of their social corollary, the clan system, symbolized by painted or carved totems" (1945: 441).

> The Eagle and Thunderbird crests, according to the Indians' own admission, were the first of their kind in their country, and their initiators were the Salmon-Eater folk who had come out of the mist — that is, the sea...

> The Eagle and the double-headed Eagle plainly are replicas of the Russian Imperial crest and badge of the Russian American Company...
>
> The Raven, the Killer-Whale, the Grizzly Bear, the Wolf, and other totems among the three northern nations came into existence as crests less than a hundred years ago... After 1833, the Beaver became the highest crest for all the Tsimsyan and the Haida, because the leading Eagle chiefs adopting it were the native patrons of the Hudson's Bay Company. ...just as the Na'as had borrowed the Eagle from the Russian traders, the later Eagles were taking on the Beaver badge of the Canadian company...
>
> From non-totemic, as it had been to that date, the social organization over a wide area assumed the form of phratries and clans with crests... (1954:117-119)
>
> Only very recently, ...have clan totems come into existence. They are as recent as the impressive crop of detached totem poles, which do not date back much beyond 1860. Indeed, both speedily developed together... (1945:432)

Southward Migrations

While it is the case that many Tsimshian traditions tell of movements of people south from Alaska (or more accurately, movements southeast and east from the end of the Alaskan panhandle), Dr. Barbeau has overstated the case, both as to the predominantly southward trend of these movements and as to the distances involved. He went beyond the evidence, for example, in one of his earliest formulations of the hypothesis of southward migrations, "How Asia Used to Drip at the Spout into America" (1933). "It would be easy to show", he wrote, "how the Eagles, the Wolves, and the Ravens, filtered into the Tsimsyan system from the north... A single instance will suffice, of the Legyarh group in the Eagle phratry" (1933:167). We may let the general assertion pass for the moment, in order to consider the example which he chose to support it. This is the tradition of the famous *Lege'x,* and how he rose to power and maintained his supremacy over the other chiefs. The question we must ask is how much of the story has any bearing on southward migrations. As I understand it, it has as much to do with the spread of Bella Bella influence north as it does with the spread of Tlingit or Asiatic influence south.

It is true, if we grant for the moment that the narratives are historically true, that the remote maternal ancestors of *Lege'x* were Tlingits who came out second-best in a feud and fled down the coast to Metlakatla, where they became Tsimshian. If a few families of fugitives fleeing a hundred miles constitute a migration, this was a migration. But we have not yet come to *Lege'x's* part of the story, which does not support the hypothesis even that well. Some time later, according to the narratives, one woman of this group was kidnapped and taken south to Bella Bella, where she became a wife of one of the chiefs. They had a son, to whom they gave the (Bella Bella) name *Lege'x*. After he grew up he moved north to live with his Tsimshian relatives, and eventually he succeeded to the position of chief. Dr Barbeau has treated this sequence of events as a southward migration of Eagles. "A few of its members proceeded farther south to the country of the Bella-Bella (northern Kwakiutl), and settled there, on the coast" (1933:167). In a later version this became "...an offshoot of this most recent Siberian horde journeyed as far south as Vancouver Island, palming itself off as of royal blood. Stone-Cliff (Legyarh) and his henchmen belonged to this venturesome band" (1947:81). Such a phrasing seems somewhat extreme for a "migration" whose two southward steps had been taken by a group of fugitives and one kidnapped woman, respectively.

Dr. Barbeau considered *Lege'x's* success to have been in some way a result of his supposed Asiatic extraction. More logically it might be considered a result of his knowledge of Bella Bella culture. For example, some of the narratives credit him with the introduction of secret societies to the Tsimshian. Dr. Barbeau puts it this way: "When Stone-Cliff was checked in his rapid progress southward..., he resorted to a device familiar to his sophisticated Oriental ancestors. To bolster up his power, he founded secret societies..." (1950:64). But when it is recalled that Bella Bella is the acknowledged center of development of secret societies on the Northwest Coast, it seems reasonable to suggest that *Lege'x* was more indebted to his own Bella Bella father than to his "sophisticated Oriental ancestors" for this item of culture.

Continuing his 1933 article, Dr. Barbeau suggested that he could "...extend this brief outline of southward migrations at

every point north and east of the Tsimsyan country" (1933:169). In other words he believes that the surrounding tribes were drifting south in the same way. He made no mention of the well known evidence of northward movements among neighbouring tribes. The Kaigani of Prince of Wales Island, for example, are Haida who moved north from the Queen Charlotte Islands. And the Tlingit, who in Dr. Barbeau's view supplied the personnel for most of the southward migrations into Tsimshian territory, return the compliment nicely by claiming that they themselves came mostly from the south. In Swanton's words, they "...quite uniformly trace the origin of nearly all their clans to ...the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Skeena River" (Swanton 1908: 407). It is not my purpose to demolish the hypothesis of a southward and coastward drift of population in the Tsimshian area, because I believe that to be basically true. I only want to localize and modify Dr. Barbeau's statement of it to fit the actual evidence, and show that it cannot be applied as though it were a natural law to the neighbouring tribes, or extrapolated all the way back to Siberia.

The Aleutian Route of Salmon-Eater

I do not know whether there was a protohistoric flow of Asiatics into America by way of the Aleutians or not. From my understanding of the current consensus of informed opinion, it hardly seems likely. However at the moment I am not so much concerned with the hypothesis itself as with the manner in which Dr. Barbeau brings the Tsimshian traditions to its support. He has given the impression that a considerable body of these traditions provide evidence of such a migration.[3] In hard fact, however, his case rests almost entirely upon his interpretation of one single narrative, the so-called Salmon-Eater tradition. This story, he says, "...provides us with evidence of a recent ancestral migration along a route that could have been no other than the Aleutian Islands" (1945:425).

[3] For example his recent biographer Nansi Swayze writes: "He quotes Indian myths reciting the story of a great movement of clans from a vast land to the west, across the sea and southward along the Pacific Coast." (SWAYZE 1960:123)

> The migration of the Gitrhawn or Salmon-Eater tribe encompassed, in one consecutive story, the passage of a seafaring tribe from some island off the Siberian coast across the sea ("the Foam" as it is called) to Kodiak Island or another point on the coast adjacent to the Aleutian Islands, then to the Queen Charlotte Islands, then to the Nass River in northern British Columbia, and still farther south, to Gitamat, on the frontier of the Kwakiutl territories. (1950:57)

The narrative which he habitually uses is the *ada'ox* of the Nass River Eagle chief *Gitxo'n* (Gitrhawn). Dr. Barbeau recorded the tradition at Kincolith in 1927, not from *Gitxo'n* himself (who had been dead for many years) but from Mountain, a chief of a different Eagle lineage. The interviews with this proud old chief, the owner of the tallest totem pole on the Nass, made a deep impression on Dr. Barbeau, and he has written about them several times.[4] Mountain narrated first the *ada'ox* of his own lineage, then at a later sitting the *ada'ox* of *Gitxo'n*.

It is necessary to pause at this point and fill in, from the original field notes, a section of both of these histories which has not yet appeared in any of the published versions; namely, their very beginning. As Mountain told them, they had the same beginning:

> Our ancestors were at Leesems (Nass River) in the beginning. The flood came and they drifted away... There were six canoes tied up together in the foam, it was not water. These were the canoes of *Gitxo'n* and his friends. *Gitxo'n* and his family drifted away...

At this point Mountain began the story of his own lineage:

> Six canoes of our ancestors drifted outside Klawak... They tried to find their way back to Leesems... (the story continues as published in 1950:25-29)

Later, at another sitting, he returned to the story of *Gitxo'n's* lineage:

> During the great excitement, out of the foam of the flood, came there the six canoes of ours and the six canoes of *Gitxo'n's* tribe. They parted from each other, although they were related before that... (the story continues as published in 1950:16-21).

[4] For example, 1955:177, where he commented "His tribe under the leadership of Githawn, Salmon-Eater, had travelled in six boat-loads across Bering Sea from Siberia to Alaska".

It is here, with *Gitxo'n's* six canoes sailing out of the foam of the flood, that Dr. Barbeau has started all his published versions of the tradition (e.g., 1945:426-429; 1947:66ff.; 1950: 16-21; 1953:9ff.). Instead of considering them as people who have been dispersed by the flood and are trying to find their way home again (a common theme in Tsimshian traditions), he considers them as Asiatic migrants, "seekers of a warmer clime and a promised land", who have just sailed the length of the Aleutian Islands. They sighted land and settled there with its occupants, the Grizzly Bear people. The land, states Dr Barbeau, "happened to be Kodiak Island in Alaska" (1953:9).

Old Chief Mountain would have been astounded at such a statement, for in his mind the story was very clearly localized a thousand miles closer to home, to the southwest rather than the northwest, on the Queen Charlotte Islands. He specifically identified the Grizzly Bear people as Haidas (see 1950 version). Their village, he said, was called *"Qona"*, their chief was *"Ka-it"*. If we turn to Swanton's "Ethnology of the Haida" we learn that the village known to the white man as Skedans was commonly called "Grizzly Bear Town", although its proper name was *"Q!o'na"*. One of its Raven chiefs was *"Q!a-it"*. Its Eagle chief was none other than *"Gitku'n"*, and he, like his Nass River namesake, listed among his crests the Cormorant and the Frog (Swanton 1905:79, 120, 272, 273, 279). That Mountain obviously meant Skedans is confirmed later in the story when canoes appear and these are identified as belonging to the Kitkatla (the Tsimshian tribe directly across Hecate Strait from Skedans).

Mountain's version tells how *Dzelaxu'ns,* the niece of *Gitxo'n,* married the nephew of *Ka-it,* of how the two groups eventually fought each other, and of how *Dzelaxu'ns* was transformed into a stone statue at the source of a stream. Later, the son of *Gitxo'n* went fishing wearing his father's Cormorant headdress (a misuse of the crest since a son does not belong to his father's lineage), he killed a frog by throwing it into the fire, and *Dzelaxu'ns* (now Frog Woman or Volcano Woman) took revenge by burning the entire village. One girl survived, and was taken to Kitkatla where she married a chief. Her progeny extended the lineage to the Nass, and also back to the Queen Charlottes, where

they found their old village inhabited by ghosts. Turning to Swanton again, we find that the Haida tell the same story, with greater geographical precision and more circumstantial detail, localizing it at Djigua-Town on Cumshewa Inlet, near Skedans. It is "one of the most popular Haida stories" (Swanton, 1905: 94-96). What we evidently have here is a pair of lineages, one Tsimshian and one Haida, which are in some way related. They present us with an opportunity to test the degree to which a similarity of names, traditions and crests can reveal actual historical relationships on this part of the Northwest Coast. But that enquiry has been unnecessarily complicated by Dr. Barbeau's change of the locale to Kodiak Island.

The narrative itself therefore lends the idea of an Aleutian migration no explicit support. However Dr. Barbeau attempts to analyse it in such a way as to lend the hypothesis implicit support. The tradition, he says,

> ...is obviously colored with native interpretation. Yet its contents convey a capital story to those who can strip it of its imagery and mysticism. (1945:429).

His analysis might be called a culture trait comparison, that is, he selects traits mentioned in the narrative and compares them with similar traits in Asia. His conclusion is that:

> All the evidence points in one direction: to the same Asiatic source, and to the Aleutian Islands as the shortest route into prehistoric America, for such cultural importations at a fairly recent date. (1950:62)

The frog mentioned in the story is "a concept of Chinese origin"; the sea otter garments of *Dzelaxu'ns* "reveal what seems originally to have been an east-Asiatic complex"; her labret "seems to have come to her from the Aleutian Islands" (1950: 59-60). Boards laid across two canoes to form a platform are reminiscent of double canoes, "a common device in coastal navigation on the Asiatic side of the Pacific Ocean as far south as the tropical seas" (1947, 74).

> The twin canoes, the sail of matting, the cap of cormorant, the sea otter, the volcano, copper, divine river, and frog themes, the Buddhistic dirges, the Chinese-like hats woven of split spruce roots,

> the dentalium shells, the preference for "a little whale blubber" along with the dried halibut, in the Selarhkons narrative, are one and all like pointers in the sole direction of the balmy Asiatic coast within the periphery of an ancient Chinese culture. (1947:76)

I find it difficult to see why most of these elements, appearing in a Tsimshian tradition, should be considered to point in the sole direction of Asia. Many of them are by their nature quite at home on the Northwest Coast. It was the abundance here of sea otters that attracted the maritime fur traders to the area. Dentalium shell ornaments may in a sense "belong typically to the Bering Sea culture and extend even beyond, on the Asiatic sea-coast" (1950:60), but that does not alter the fact that the Northwest Coast was rich enough in this commodity to supply most of the western part of the continent. And the Aleutians, granted, are famous for their volcanoes, however that does not make them the only source for such an element in a Tsimshian tradition. The entire coast is volcanic, and the Tsimshian well remember one eruption on the Nass River within their own territory. Nor does the cormorant headdress have to be considered an exotic element; there are cormorants in abundance on the Northwest Coast. However Dr. Barbeau doubts that *Gitxo'n's* hat represented the local species, thinking it more likely to have been the more spectacular Spectacled Cormorant of Bering Island, near the western end of the Aleutians:

> If Salmon-Eater... sojourned on Bering Island, he would have been impressed by the great cormorant, so much so that he would have kept it as a token of his passage there. And in time it became an emblem sacred to his posterity, even to his latest descendants on the lower Nass. (1950:60; see also 1947:78; 1945:433-436)

And consider, as another example, "frogs". Dr. Barbeau is convinced that frogs are absent from the Northwest Coast, ("The frog itself is unknown on the Pacific Coast of America north of Vancouver Island..." 1945:433), and therefore the "frogs" which are so prominent in the traditions and so often displayed on totem poles cannot have been copied from anything in the local fauna but must represent ancestral memories from Asia. "The prevalence of the Frog in the art and mythology of the Haida and Northwest Coast nations is due solely to a die-hard Mongolian tradition,..." (1953:12). This poses something of a problem,

for he can find no evidence of frogs in Siberia either, except in the form of carved amulets from farther south in Asia. He considers these, but concludes that "...the ancestors of the Salmon-Eater clan are more likely to have acquired this frog concept nearer its sources, on the sea-coast of Japan or China" (1947:75). The biological facts of the matter are that two species of true frogs do occur along the mainland but not on the Queen Charlotte Islands, and the toad is abundant over the entire area, including the Queen Charlotte Islands (Logier and Toner 1961; also Carl 1959). The Haida and Tsimshian do not distinguish between frogs and toads, and in speaking English use the term "frog" for both. As far as they are concerned there are plenty of "frogs" all over the area. Then where is the need to import the concept as "part of the cultural endowment carried by emigrants from eastern Asia"? (1945:433)

Other traits on Dr. Barbeau's list, while not in the same sense indigenous, were well established on the coast, with every appearance of some reasonable antiquity. The labret, worn by women of the Tsimshian and surrounding tribes, has a long archaeological record on the southern Northwest Coast and elsewhere in America; it is not necessary to assume that it came from the Aleutians. Laying planks across two canoes was a common practice, probably as old as the presence of dugouts and planks on the coast, and is after all not quite the same thing as the Asiatic double-hulled canoe. "A little whale blubber" was welcome among most coast tribes, though usually from stranded whales as only the Nootkan groups actually hunted them. The "Chinese-like" conical hat was used all along the coast; I cannot prove that it has a long antiquity here, but how does Dr. Barbeau know that it has not?

Part of his argument, purporting to show that Salmon Eater *did* come by way of the Aleutian Islands, is actually concerned with nothing more than proving that he did *not* come by way of Bering Strait. It is carefully made clear that if he had come across that bleak and cold strait his people would not have had sea otter robes, dentalium ornaments, torches, cormorant headdresses. They would not have known about double canoes, mat sails, volcanoes. Their princess would not have worn a labret. The

occupants of the country would not have been the Grizzly Bear tribe, but would have been hunters of polar bear or caribou instead (1947:78-79). A third alternative, that he did not come by either route, finds no place in the discussion.

Northwest Coast Indian songs and Asiatic songs are said by Dr. Barbeau to be surprisingly similar. In the "dirge songs" of the Tsimshian he recognizes survivals of Asiatic music and Buddhist rituals ("The expansion of Buddhist rituals and funeral rites into northwestern America may seem a surprising development. Yet... it can hardly be doubted" 1945:438). In 1933 he played a selection of about twenty Indian songs for Professor Kiang Kang-hu of McGill University, evoking a somewhat astonishing response. One, he was told, was like a Buddhist chant at a funeral service of the nomads of Mongolia and actually retained Chinese words. Another sounded like a Pekin night watchman's song; still others, like a Chinese girl's tea harvest song, a Chinese shepherd song, a Chinese street tune, and a Japanese lullaby (1934:2782-2783). Further, Dr. Barbeau finds "a surprising identity in several types of songs, ...between the Chukchee of north-eastern Siberia and the Salish of southern British Columbia" (*op. cit.*:2787). I have no competence to judge the musicological evidence and am unable to assess the meaning of these apparent similarities, but I cannot help feeling that Dr. Barbeau has let himself be drawn into some sort of logical trap when he proceeds to draw the conclusion that "The Salish, on these if on no other grounds, must be related to the Chukchees" (*loc. cit.*). At any rate, the matter goes beyond what could be explained by his hypothesis of a recent migration across the Aleutian Islands.

There are undoubtedly many culture traits which have an unbroken distribution between northeastern Asia and northwestern North America, and an analysis of these would no doubt reveal some sort of historical relationships between the two areas. But such an analysis would have to consider each trait on its own merits, with due regard for its total distribution and its known archaeological history. It would have to take into account the possibility that traits may be similar because they have a common remote origin and have developed in parallel

fashion, and the likelihood that traits may have spread by diffusion (in either direction) as well as by migration. To say that the traits listed by Dr. Barbeau are one and all recent importations by migration across the Aleutian Islands is too simple an explanation to be true.

Before leaving *Gitxo'n,* we should pause again briefly to examine the nature of what Dr. Barbeau calls "the Salmon-Eater or Gitrhawn clan of the Tsimsyans, Haidas, and Tlingits" (1950: 15). The Indians were aware that certain families in these three tribes used the personal name *Gitxo'n* and had similarities in their crests and traditions which indicated that they were in some way related. They did not however distinguish these families with a collective name, or otherwise conceive of them as a "clan". If Dr. Barbeau had confined his term to these families only, it might have had some degree of validity. However he extended it far beyond these indications of relationship. Chief Mountain, it will be recalled, did not belong to *Gitxo'n's* lineage, yet Dr. Barbeau called him "an octogenarian of the Salmon-Eater group" (1945: 426). He also referred to *Lege'x* as being "of the same extraction" and "as legendary a figure as his ancestor Salmon-Eater" (1945: 442), yet *Lege'x's* ancestors are said by the Tsimshian to have joined the tribe before *Gitxo'n* arrived on the scene (1953:26). In fact "most of the Eagle clan are descended from the Salmon-Eater faction of the salt waters" (1945:438). Among the Haida "the leading exponents of the arts... included more than one craftsman of the Salmon-Eater or Eagle clan, foremost among them the two Edensaws..." (*op. cit.*:442). Yet the Edenshaw lineage was not one of those which used the name *Gitxo'n.* The only thing all these families had in common was that they belonged to the Eagle phratry. Beyond that they were not related, and did not in any real sense constitute a clan.

To sum up: if there was a migration across the Aleutian Islands, neither the *Gitxo'n* narrative nor Dr. Barbeau's analysis of it provides any convincing evidence to confirm it. None of the Tsimshian traditions, as I read them, refers to events any farther away than the Stikine River. The movements they reveal are local movements (and not all in the same direction) on the Northwest Coast.

Secret Societies, Exogamy, and Crests

The question of migrations aside, there is still to be considered Dr. Barbeau's view that several distinctive features of Northwest Coast culture, including secret societies, phratric exogamy, and the totemic or crest system, are relatively recent innovations. These items, be it noted, are not simple or fad-like traits, but important and firmly-integrated complexes shared by many tribes over wide areas. While that does not necessarily prove that they have great antiquity, we should perhaps assume until shown otherwise that they are the end products of a reasonably long period of development in the area. Evidence which purports to show that they are recent should be scrutinized with some care.

On the introduction of secret societies to the coast, Dr. Barbeau's case could scarcely be more clear and specific. He names the man who introduced them and tells exactly why:

> When Stone-Cliff *[Lege'x]* was checked in his rapid progress southward, ...he resorted to a device familiar to his sophisticated Oriental ancestors. To bolster up his power, he founded secret societies — the Gitsontk, the Hamatsa, and the Luhlim...
>
> Masks, totem poles, *narhnoqs* or spirits, and winter performances were, directly or indirectly, Stone-Cliff's own work or that of his imitators and rivals. (1945:443)

Winter ceremonials of the types usually called secret societies were deeply-rooted and highly elaborate complexes along the coast as far south as the Coast Salish area. The acknowledged centre of their elaboration and dispersal was among the northern Kwakiutl. The Tsimshian, Tlingit and Haida were on the northern fringe of this development, and in early historic times were in the process of borrowing a number of the dance orders or societies from the south. They were well aware of the source of these ceremonials and in some cases retained the Kwakiutl names for them. The Hamatsa and Luhlim mentioned in the quotation above were of this type (*cf.* Boas 1897:651; Drucker 1955:155). The Gitsontk was not a secret society in the same sense; the word was applied to the groups of specialists in stagecraft retained by the important Tsimshian chiefs to stage their ceremonials. In addition to the introduced "secret society" dances,

the Tsimshian had an older and more characteristic type of ceremonial, the spirit or *naxno'x* performance, which has been described briefly above (p. 68-69). It is much too simple an explanation to say that all of these types were introduced by one man, especially one Tsimshian man. However in fairness, we should not discount entirely the role of the first *Lege'x*. As has been said, he was born and grew up a northern Kwakiutl, and is probably to be given some of the credit for introducing secret society dances to the Tsimshian, even if these were not "in the Mongolian style".

Phratric exogamy, the extension of the incest taboo to forbid marriage between members of the same phratry or moiety, was observed by all Northwest Coast tribes with matrilineal kinship groupings: the Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Haisla, and the inland neighbours of all of these. Dr. Barbeau has included this as one of the traits which were absent "not so long ago", and has said as evidence that "some of the older tribes of the Tsimshian still remember a time when their ancestors... did not observe the rule of exogamic marriage..." (1940:495).

His most extended discussion of exogamy is found in the article on "totemic atmosphere" (1954:104-108). Here he has described the known cases of violation of the rule of exogamy by the Tsimshian. During his detailed study of all the Tsimshian lineages he discovered little more than half a dozen instances of this type of incestuous relationship. A couple of these were plainly the result of a breakdown of the old system and the adoption of the white man's way. Another one or two occurred at the edge of the area of distribution of the custom. Another did not involve marriage at all, but was the story of an illicit love affair and the dire consequences that followed. Still another of the cases, the incestuous marriage of Weegyet of Kitsegukla, seems to me to reveal more than anything else how very strong the rule was. Weegyet "was bold enough to disregard the rule", and as soon as it became known, "the sinful couple were driven out". She went home to her parents, and he moved to another tribe where he was adopted into a different phratry (1954:106).

The case which Dr. Barbeau described at greatest length, and which presumably provided the basis for his comment about

the older Tsimshian tribes, was that of a marriage between two individuals of the Raven phratry in one of the tribes of the lower Skeena Tsimshian. The names of the children, not being of the cross-phratric type (described above, p. 67-68), revealed the incestuous nature of the marriage. When the informant was questioned further, she broke down and terminated the interview. Other informants later explained that a group of low-ranking families in the tribe "was tainted with the shame that came to a native Tsimsyan people who have failed to live up to the *lugyin* rule of exogamy and have lapsed into a *latz* marriage or incest (1954: 105). These families, it was said, once belonged to an old independent tribe up the river, which Dr. Barbeau seems to suggest was not exogamic.

My own appraisal of these lapses from exogamy would have to be that they are the exceptions which prove the rule, rather than throwbacks to an earlier non-exogamic condition. They do not form convincing evidence for the recent introduction of exogamy.

Crests or "totems" are emblems, usually representing animal forms, which were owned and displayed by the kinship groups of all the coast tribes from the Tlingit to the Kwakiutl. They were the visible symbols that set the various kin groups apart, and were exhibited on all manner of belongings: costumes, feast dishes, house fronts, and most prominently of all, on totem poles. Dr. Barbeau's explanation of how they were introduced, it will be recalled, is similar to that for secret societies. First the "Salmon-Eater clan" borrowed the Eagle emblem of the Russian American Company, then *Lege'x* borrowed the Beaver of the Hudson's Bay Company, and then the other families, in imitation, adopted emblems of their own. The development of crests was paralleled by the growth of totem poles. Clan totems "are as recent as the impressive crop of detached totem poles, which do not date back much beyond 1860" (1945:432). As was the case with the secret societies, however, this is too facile an explanation, and does not prove the case merely by stating it. The crest system is too widespread and too firmly integrated to have originated so recently. On one basic point I would agree: that the crest system and the totem pole complex probably did develop side by side. It would be difficult to imagine the totem pole

complex evolving without the motivation provided by the desire to display family crests. If totem poles could be shown to be ancient, that would be convincing evidence that the crest system is ancient too.

The Antiquity of the Totem Pole

Dr. Barbeau's views on the age of the totem pole complex are widely misunderstood, even among his colleagues. What he is generally held to believe, and what in a sense he does believe, is that the custom of carving totem poles is a post-contact development. Totem poles, he says, "were a unique growth of native art, which happened almost under our eyes as it were, after the coming of the white man on the Pacific Coast, within the past hundred years" (1939:304). The reader has only to run his eye down the list of titles in the bibliography to get the same point: "How Totem Poles Originated" (1939), "The Modern Growth of the Totem Pole..." (1940), "Totem Poles, a Recent Native Art..." (1930), "Totem Poles, a By-product of the Fur Trade" (1942). The idea has been accepted at face value and repeated; for example, the author of one of the standard general text-books on anthropology saw it as a neat example of a culture change documented by historical research. Ethnologists had assumed, he wrote, that totem poles represented an ancient pattern, until "research established that the totem pole ...is a development of the first part of the nineteenth century!" (Herskovits 1949:480).

That is what Dr. Barbeau means, but only in a very special sense. He does not mean to say that totem poles in general are that recent. What he does mean to say is that one particular type, the "totem pole proper" or detached memorial pole, is recent. By his definition carved houseposts, house frontal poles, mortuary poles and the other miscellaneous types are not really "totem poles".[5] This is evident from statements like the following: (italics mine)

[5] A detailed discussion of totem pole types here would involve too lengthy a diversion. In brief, however, "houseposts" and "house frontal poles" (also called portal poles or entrance poles, originated and were conceived as parts of the house structure and were erected at the time the house was built. "Mortuary poles" were repositories for the remains of the dead or

> There were carved house poles, grave posts, and *totem poles proper, detached,* that stood in front of the houses, and others that served as house front entrances... Housefront paintings, carved house-posts and graveyard structures were more ancient than detached poles. The detached poles as a fashion were fairly recent... (1939:308; 1940:492)

> The earliest drawing of a carved pole is that of a house frontal or entrance pole *(not a real totem pole)* of the Haidas; and it is found in Bartlett's Journal, 1790 (1950:8).

> The custom of carving and erecting *tall mortuary columns in front of the houses in the villages to honour the dead* is comparatively modern, and was probably unknown before the beginning of the nineteenth century. (1950:9)

One must keep this narrow definition of "totem pole" in mind when reading statements like the following. Even with it they are questionable, but without it they would be absurd:

> There is no evidence of totem poles among the Haidas antedating 1840 or 1850, though a few earlier and traditional ones may have served to introduce the fashion. (1950:13)

> It is only after 1830, more precisely after 1850, that totem poles became a feature of the villages of the Haidas, the Tsimsyan and the southern Tlingit... (1942:507)

Leaving aside for a moment the question of whether Dr. Barbeau's "totem pole proper" was in fact a distinct type and did not exist before 1830, one might ask what justification he had for appropriating the generic term and applying it to a single one of the several types. Such a usage causes confusion because it is contrary to that of other writers and of the general public. One might also point out that in other contexts he has not been constrained by his own narrow definition. His two-volume work entitled "Totem Poles" (1950) includes all the types: houseposts, frontal poles, mortuary and memorial poles, without distinction. Indeed they are all products of the same level of technology, they

grave markers to commemorate the dead, and were usually erected at the burial places in the course of the funeral ceremonies. "Memorial poles" were erected in front of the houses, ostensibly to honour the dead, but also to stand as prominent displays of the lineage crests. They were "detached", that is, free of the house structure. The "mortuary" and "memorial" types tend to merge or overlap each other, and writers have sometimes used the two terms interchangeably.

all exhibit the same art styles, and they all display the same kinds of crests. It is difficult to understand why some are to be considered "totem poles" and others are not. As Philip Drucker has said: "The only reasonable solution is that *all* are" (1955: 182).

We should not, however, permit this confusion in terminology to obscure the fact that there is a great deal of agreement between Dr. Barbeau's views on the history and development of the totem pole and those of other authorities. It is generally agreed, for example, that the entire complex of carved columns enjoyed a tremendous development during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Totem poles of all types became more numerous, larger, and more elaborate. Their use spread among the peripheral tribes to the north, south, and inland. The memorial pole, whether it originated at this time or not, enjoyed a special vogue, becoming the most prominent type in the Tsimshian and Tlingit villages. This great elaboration of the totem pole complex within historic times is not a matter of argument.

Nonetheless, Dr. Barbeau's publications have left a number of questions in need of clarification. What did the first European visitors to the coast actually see in the way of totem poles, and what can they be expected to have seen under the circumstances? Did they see any memorial poles? Granted that some types of carved poles were already in existence, what can be said about their age and origin? Finally, what are the implications with regard to the development of Northwest Coast culture in general?

The most decisive evidence on the age of the totem pole is to be found in the journals of the earliest explorers and maritime fur traders. This evidence has been used to support two opposite points of view. Dr. Barbeau has chosen to stress the failure of some of the early seamen to describe totem poles in their journals. He usually means "totem poles proper", but his phrasings apply to other types as well. For example: (italics mine)

> ...the early mariners often visited the villages of the Tlingits, the Haidas, the Tsimsyans, the Kwakiutls, and the Nootkas. The descriptions and sketches in some of their relations *fail to give us any hint of the presence of tall carvings, still less of their actual appearance.* For instance, Dixon examined several of the Haida villages on the Queen

> Charlotte Islands, but fails to mention totem or even house poles; yet he minutely described small carved trays and spoons, and left some illustrations. (1950:8)

Drucker's appraisal of the same historical evidence is quite different:

> ...it seems fairly clear that in the 1790's when the traders first began to comb the coast, and visited the winter villages, there were not only elaborately carved portal or entry poles in Haida territory (and at Clayoquot), but there were also mortuary and memorial poles standing at the Haida villages and among the northern Tlingit. (1948:394)

Newcombe (1931) and Drucker (1948) have both published critical discussions of Dr. Barbeau's handling of the historical materials, and both have pointed out that the failure of some of the early navigators to mention totem poles does not necessarily mean that none existed at the time. The carved columns usually stood in the winter villages, while the traders travelled along the coast in the summer, meeting the natives at their summer locations or in some convenient anchorage where the Indians had to come to them, or standing off and trading under sail. Even when they anchored in the vicinity of a winter village they might not actually see it, because they seldom ventured far from the safety of their ships. The number of places they could go, or chose to go, in their sailing vessels was limited. None of them, for example, got anywhere near the Tsimshian villages on the Nass and Skeena rivers.

To take the example chosen by Dr. Barbeau in the statement above, Dixon never did actually come to anchor on the Queen Charlottes, but traded under sail, and it is most unlikely that he was ever within sight of any Haida winter village. Even when he tacked his vessel into Cloak Bay on that rewarding day of July 2, 1787 when he gave the bay its name, he would not have been able to see Dadens and Kiusta, the two principal villages of the area, which were just around headlands in Parry Passage. The trays and spoons described in the journal were of course brought out to the ship by the Indians. Similarly, La Perouse, who according to Dr. Barbeau "explored the same coast... but failed to mention large wooden carvings" (1950:803), made no stops on the Queen Charlottes. And Caamano, who "had ample opportunity to visit Haida villages" and "described native houses

without a mention of totem or carved poles" (1940:495), actually saw only one Haida village, Kiusta, and the houses he was describing in the passage cited by Dr. Barbeau were those of a southern Tsimshian village.

When the traders actually did visit the winter villages, what did they see? For present purposes it will be sufficient to consider a few of the Haida villages. The two most frequently visited in the earliest years of the trade were Dadens and Kiusta, at the north end of the Queen Charlottes. Dadens, on the Langara Island (north) side of Parry Passage, consisted of two large old houses with elaborate frontal poles about forty feet high. The village was near a sheltered cove where many of the vessels anchored; from the anchorage, as Captain Douglas of the *Iphigenia* recorded in 1789, "the great wooden images of Tartanee bore East, one quarter North..." (in Meares 1791:225). It was one of these houses with its frontal pole which John Bartlett sketched in 1791, the earliest known drawing of a Haida totem pole. During the same summer Joseph Ingraham, master of the *Hope*, examined the village in the company of its chief and wrote this description:

> I went in a boat accompanied by Cow to view 2 pillars which were situated in front of a village about a quarter of a mile distant from our vessell on the north shore, they were about 40 feet in height carved in a very curious manner indeed — representing Men, Toads, etc. the whole of which I tho't did great credit to the natural genius of these people, in one of the Houses of this village the door was through the mouth of one of the before-mentioned Images, in another was a large square pit with seats all around it... (Ingraham, ms:107)

Later the same summer, boat crews from Marchand's vessel *Solide* examined the same two houses. The published account describes one of the poles (and elsewhere refers to it as a "superb portal in sculpture"). The entrance to the house was an elliptical hole near the foot of the pole. The opening

> imitates the form of a gaping human mouth, or rather that of a beast, and it is surmounted by a hooked nose, about two feet in length, ... Over the door, is seen the figure of a man carved, in the attitude of a child in the womb, ...and above this figure, rises a gigantic statue of a man erect, which terminates the sculpture...; the head of this statue is dressed with a cap in the form of a sugar-loaf, the height of which is almost equal to that of the figure itself. On the parts of the

> surface which are not occupied by the capital subjects, are interspersed carved figures of frogs and toads, lizards and other animals... (Fleurieu 1801:270)

The house is described as having "two stories", a reference to the central excavation which was a common feature of the large winter houses, but the description is somewhat unusual in that it indicates that the excavation was planked over at ground level.[6]

The presence of memorial or mortuary figures at Dadens in 1799 is indicated by the following passage from the journal of the *Eliza* (quoted in Drucker 1948:394):

> I rose at daybreak having taken a sketch of the two houses, ...and seen two images that were at a short distance from them which Altatsee told me were intended to represent two Chiefs, that were his relatives (or rather they were his ancestors for they looked as if they were upwards of a hundred years of age) that had been killed in battle...

Kiusta, across Parry Passage on the Graham Island (south) side, was also visited and described by the early traders. Known also as "Cunneah's Village", it consisted of eight houses. There were no frontal poles, but near two of the houses were memorial poles, and at the end of the village were a number of carved mortuary poles. The mortuaries were described in the journal of the *Eliza* in 1799:

[6] Dr. Barbeau made use of all of these references, without, however, discovering that they all applied to the same two poles, and without learning their location.

From Ingraham's description above, which he quoted several times, he somehow gained the impression that these were "detached" poles. In 1939:309 he termed it "the only known record of detached carved pillars...", and began the quotation "I went to view two detached pillars...". In 1940:496 he quoted it again, beginning (still incorrectly) "I went to view two pillars...", and suggested that these "already were of the detached type, standing away from the house front". In 1950:806 he quoted it twice more on the same page, in one case wrongly attributing it to Hoskins.

The Bartlett sketch was reproduced by him in 1950:804, incorrectly captioned Kiusta. In one reference to the sketch he termed the pole "a house frontal or entrance pole (not a real totem pole)..." (1950:8). In another he termed "the two large posts observed among the Haidas by Bartlett and Marchand... house portals." (1950:13)

The Marchand account above is quoted at some length in 1929:17, 200-205 and 1950 (804-805) without the village being identified. In his 1929 work Barbeau suggests, on the basis of the reference to the "two-story house", that the Haida had already begun to imitate European architecture! (1929:21)

> At the right hand side of the village as you go to it were a number of wooden structures ...some a solid square piece of timber about 15 feet high on which were carved the figures of men and children... *(loc. cit.)*

One of the two memorial poles was erected in 1794 beside the house of Chief Cunneah, with the assistance of the crew of the *Jefferson.*[7] At the chief's request, they planed smooth a tall pillar and erected it, using ship's tackle. About three weeks later they helped to place a large carved figure of a bear, generously inlaid with abalone shell, on top of the pillar. A sketch of the village made by the writer of the journal of the *Eliza* in 1799 (reproduced in Drucker, 1948:393 and Barbeau, 1950:815) shows it to be about thirty feet tall and massive in proportion. That it was a memorial pole is clear from an entry in the journal of the *Jefferson,* which refers to "the father of the infant to whose memory the monument was erected" (quoted in Wike, 1951:88). The same type of memorial pole, a plain shaft with the figure of a bear on top, stood in later years at Masset as a memorial to Chief A.E. Edenshaw who was a successor of Cunneah. Similar poles stood at Skidegate, Kasaan, the nearby Tlingit villages of Tongass and Wrangell, and the Tsimshian village of Port Simpson (see illustrations in Barbeau, 1950:212, 104, 573, 603, 179, 457).

Dadens and Kiusta happen to be the best-known Haida villages for that early period, but they are not examples which one might otherwise choose as typical Haida winter villages. Both were small. The people of Dadens were in the process of shifting their residence to Kaigani on the Alaskan side of Dixon Entrance, in what were the last steps of the migration which produced the Alaskan offshoot of the Haida. A great deal of commuting back and forth was still going on, and it is by no means clear whether Dadens and Kiusta were winter or summer villages, or both, at the time.

That other larger Haida winter villages also had carved poles in that period is confirmed by the descriptions recorded in

[7] This event has been discussed and portions of the ship's journal have been quoted by Drucker (1948:391) and Wike (1951:87-89). Drucker wrongly located the village on North (Langara) Island. Keithahn (1945:27) referred to the incident but wrongly located it at Kaigani.

the early journals. In 1791 Hoskins, after having visited Dadens, Masset, Ninstints and Skedans, wrote of the Haida in general:

> ...their head villages are neatly and regularly built the houses end with pitched roofs in front is a large post reaching above the roof neatly carved but with the most distorted figures at the bottom is an oval or round hole which is either the mouth or belly of some deformed object this serves for a door way... (*in* Howay, 1941: 233)

Skedans was seen by Bishop in 1795, who recorded:

> ...on the Point there are some High Images, intended to represent Human figures there are several monuments erected with some degree of order and I understand this is the place where they bury their dead. (Bishop, ms.:81)

The first description of the totem poles at Masset was by Roquefeuil in 1817:

> There is something picturesque in the whole appearance of this large village; it is particularly remarkable for the monstrous and colossal figures which decorate the houses of the principal inhabitants, and the wide gaping mouths of which serve as a door. (Roquefeuil, 1823:88)

Skidegate was described by Jonathon Green as it appeared from a vessel at anchor in 1829:

> To me the prospect is almost enchanting, and, more than anything I had seen, reminded me of a civilized country. The houses, of which there are thirty or forty, appeared tolerably good, and before the door of many of them stood a large mast carved in the form of the human countenance, of the dog, wolf, etc., neatly painted. (Green, 1915:84)

Evidently the house frontal pole was the largest and most impressive type at the time (as it continued to be in the Haida villages). However it hardly seems justified in view of the general nature of the descriptions of these villages to state that they contained no detached memorial poles, when we know from the example at Kiusta if nothing more that the type was in use in the area. My appraisal of the evidence agrees with Drucker's, that frontal poles, mortuary poles and memorial poles were present in the Haida villages of the time, and that totem poles were therefore a well established feature of the precontact culture of the Northwest Coast.

Dr. Barbeau concedes that some types of carved poles were in existence at the time the first traders visited the coast, but

seems reluctant to accept them as a *bona fide* aboriginal accomplishment, considering them instead as an earlier response to indirect influences of the fur trade:

> ...carved house front poles and house corner posts were introduced many years before the first detached columns appeared (1950:6).
>
> Even the simple poles of the Nootkas as described by Cook may not represent the art of prehistory free of foreign influences. Iron and copper tools at that date [1778] were already available on the coast... The North Pacific Coast people, mostly because of the fur trade, had been under foreign influence at least indirectly for more than two hundred years. (1950:9)

What these indirect influences were, and how they would operate to introduce a carving complex where none had existed before, he does not make clear. Iron tools undoubtedly made the job of carving the wooden columns easier, and helped bring the art style to its ultimate perfection. But the first iron tools were not introduced through the fur trade. The earliest explorers found iron in habitual use along most of the coast. Drucker and Wike have both examined this intriguing problem of pre-contact iron, and both have concluded that it must have been traded along aboriginal trade routes from Asia in prehistoric times, as was the iron used as long as a thousand years ago by the western Eskimo. Drucker concluded that:

> ...even if such carving was dependent on the use of iron (as of course can not be conclusively proved), it seems most probable that the tribes of the Northwest Coast obtained their iron from some Asiatic source long before the entry of Europeans or Russians into the North Pacific. (Drucker, 1948:397)

A related question is the antiquity of the art style itself, and on this matter Dr. Barbeau seems to be of two minds. In 1930 he expressed the view that it was a prehistoric development on the coast:

> This art itself seems much more ancient in some of its smaller forms than in its larger ones. Its origin on the northwest coast is remote. It goes back to prehistoric times. It was already in existence and fully mature and quite as conventionalized as it is today at the time of the early Spanish, English, and French explorers... (1930:261)

A very similar view is held by Drucker (1948:397). Furthermore, a recent study of my own shows that the prehistoric stone sculpture of the Gulf of Georgia and Fraser Valley shares stylistic

similarities with the recent art of the Northwest Coast, and indicates that the style has deep roots in this general region (Duff 1956). In 1940, however, in the course of a discussion of the growth of the crest system, Dr. Barbeau questioned whether the art was really prehistoric and aboriginal:

> The growth of heraldry on the North Pacific coast coincides with that of the art which served it as a vehicle. On the whole it can hardly be said to be very ancient or prehistoric...
>
> ...it is clear that the typical stylization of west coast art already existed... Was this stylization aboriginal or derivative? It had every chance of being derivative. Yet it is difficult to say whence it would have been derived, for the lack of sufficient comparative data. Advanced stylization can be the result only of intense cultural development, such as never had happened on the North Pacific coast in prehistoric times. (1940:494-496)

That last sentence holds the key to Dr. Barbeau's overall view of Northwest Coast culture: no intense cultural development occurred in prehistoric times. In his view the development of the totem pole complex had to await technological, social, and artistic developments which did not come until historic times. "The lack of suitable tools, wealth, and leisure in the prehistoric period precluded elaborate structures and displays" (1950:5). Using the same evidence I have come to the opposite view. The two old Haida houses at Dadens with their large frontal poles had required essentially as highly-developed a technology, social system and art style to bring them into existence as anything that came later. Their very presence at the opening of the historic period carries with it the proof of intensive cultural development in prehistoric times.

A number of such differences of interpretation, in their cumulative effect, can add up to fundamentally different conclusions on questions of basic importance. Do the Tsimshian traditions really tell about recent Asiatic immigrants and persistent southward migrations, as Dr. Barbeau says, or do they only tell of local movements of Indians on the Northwest Coast? Are secret societies, exogamous clans and other characteristic features of Northwest Coast culture actually recent importations from Asia, or are they products of a long period of development within the area? Did the early European contacts really cause

fundamental changes in native social organization, technology and art, or did they result only in elaborations and modifications of pre-existing patterns? In total, is the highly distinctive culture of the Northwest Coast tribes to be considered predominantly a result of recent importations from Asia and responses to European contact? Or is it, as I believe, to be credited to the American Indians as essentially an indigenous and aboriginal accomplishment?

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