RED SALMON AND RED CEDAR BARK:

Another Look at the Nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw Winter Ceremonial

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It is we who are coming ashore, the salmon,
coming ashore to you, post holding up the center of heaven.

It is we who are dancing ashore, the salmon.
dancing in your house for you, on the right-hand side of heaven.

Towering over all, skins bright as abalone, the salmon.

("Song of Salmon [1]," Boas 1897, 709)[1]

INTRODUCTION

FRANZ BOAS'S EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION of the 1894-5 winter dances in Fort Rupert, British Columbia, made the nineteenth-century form of the Kwakwaka'wakw winter ceremonial widely known in the anthropological literature (Boas 1897).[2] For many observers, however, this spectacular complex of dance, drama, art, potlatching, and community interaction with the spirit Otherworld has remained as opaque as it is intriguing. Re-interpretations are offered with regularity, each generation of scholars revisiting Boas's materials with new theoretical and interpretive perspectives (Locher 1932;

[1] The translation is my own; this song has also been discussed by Dell Hymes (1981, 55). The interpretations of winter ceremonial songs, such as this one, are in some cases quite uncertain. The language used is quite different from everyday Kwak'wala: words and grammatical forms are borrowed from neighbouring languages, extra syllables and suffixes are added, and often there is considerable vagueness of grammatical structure.

[2] Boas (1897, 544-5; 1966, 179) states that the winter ceremonial he observed occurred in 1895-6. His letters home from the field (Rohner 1969, 176 et seq.), subsequent correspondence with Hunt and others, and his own list of field expenses (Franz Boas Professional Correspondence [hereafter BPC], George Hunt Accession Records [hereafter HAR]) show that this date is erroneous.

Müller 1955; S. Reid 1974; Goldman 1975; Dundes 1979; Kobrinsky 1979; Fleisher 1981; M. Reid 1981; Walens 1981; Guédon 1984; Sanday 1986; Allen 1997).

His substantial monograph notwithstanding, Boas was among those for whom the purpose and meaning of the ceremonial remained elusive. "The whole ceremonial is so difficult to understand," he complained to George Hunt, the part-Tlingit man who was a lifelong resident of Fort Rupert and Boas's collaborator for forty-five years (BPC, FB/GH 5/6/1927). The pair's most intensive study of the institution, begun decades after the ceremonial described in Boas's monograph, was set in motion after Hunt began to fret "about the Book." "[T]here are so many mistakes ... that I think should Be Put to Rights Befor [sic] one of us Die," he wrote Boas (BPC, GH/FB 6/7/1920). From 1920 until his death in 1933, Hunt, with Boas's encouragement and input, produced hundreds of manuscript pages of corrections, elaborations, and additions to their existing record on the winter ceremonial (*Kwakiutl Materials* [hereafter *KM*]; Berman forthcoming b). Although Boas published little of this material, he read it carefully. His final thoughts on the ceremonial, however, appearing posthumously, suggest that Hunt's new data did not greatly add to his insight. Boas still found it "difficult to understand [the winter ceremonial's] fundamental meaning." He concluded that the ceremonial was "essentially religious in character" but that it was "difficult to assess its religious value" (Boas 1966, 172).

The secondary literature since Boas has failed to penetrate much more deeply into the "fundamental meaning" and the "religious value" of the ceremonial. Such attempts as have been made (most extensively in Goldman 1975 and Walens 1981) have been marred by, among other significant faults, lack of understanding of the collaborative nature of the Boas-Hunt corpus (Berman 1996), fatal errors with Kwak'wala terms and phrases (Holm n.d.), and a focus on "cannibalism" and "orality" that entirely misses the religious concerns addressed in the ceremonial.

The task of analysis is made all the more problematic by characteristics of the source material. I have elsewhere examined some of the difficulties inherent in interpreting the Boas-Hunt corpus (Berman 1992, 1994, 1996, forthcoming a). The issues most relevant here include Hunt's propensity to focus on procedural details rather than on underlying significance; substantial diversity of opinion and practice among the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw; layers of historical accretion in the winter ceremonial that help to obscure its essential core; and the

elaboration of metaphor and imagery that pervades nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw religious discourse. Moreover, neither Boas nor Hunt supplied the necessary context for many important texts, including the versions of the winter ceremonial's charter myth. Boas believed that no "systematic interpretation" of Kwakwaka'wakw mythology or ritual was possible (Boas 1940 [1933], 447), and his editing and publishing practices helped to ensure this would remain true.

This article is one more attempt to understand the winter ceremonial. It will argue that the discussion should begin with another set of cultural practices entirely: the words, deeds, and notions through which nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw expressed their material and spiritual relationship to fish, especially salmon. The spiritual ecology of fish, as understood by the nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw, supplied the reference point for larger notions of life, death, and resurrection. The imagery and ideology of the winter ceremonial were founded upon these notions and cannot be understood without reference to them. A second crucial piece that has been missing from the discussion is the winter ceremonial's charter myth, "Mink and the Wolves." The relationship between fishers and fish was just one piece of a system of ecological beliefs in which the confrontation between hunter and game, predator and prey, had the potential to create a fundamental imbalance for human society. Examination of "Mink and the Wolves" reveals it was this imbalance the winter ceremonial worked to address.

Before proceeding, a few caveats are in order. Since the early descriptions by Boas and Hunt, external suppression as well as internal cultural change have combined to alter the form of the winter ceremonial radically (Cole 1991; Suttles 1991; Webster 1991). The argument presented here is intended only to apply to the institution in the late nineteenth century, probably the time of its greatest elaboration. Further, a fair proportion of the material upon which this analysis depends originated with George Hunt's in-laws, friends, and acquaintances at Fort Rupert. Although similar patterns are visible in material from other Kwakwaka'wakw communities, there was substantial variation in the form and content of the ceremonial, and it is unlikely that this analysis will apply in all details to those other communities. Finally, there is a great deal more to be said about the nineteenth-century ceremonial than can possibly be covered here. This article attempts only to identify the central themes.

SUMMER AND WINTER

For the nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw, the solar year was divided fundamentally into summer and winter. The Kwak'wala terms for these time periods were hi-ʔənx̌, deriving from hi- ("summer"), and -!ənx̌ ("time of, for something"), and c̓əw̓ənx̌, possibly deriving from the stem c̓uɣ̌- ("to wash [i.e., to purify?]")" and the same suffix -!ənx̌ (*Kwakiutl Dictionary* [hereafter *KWD*], 225).[3] The Kwakwaka'wakw of this era did not count the solar year as the unit of measurement, as Europeans did. According to George Hunt, "there [sic] way of counting one [solar] year is one for summer and one for winter" (BPC, GH/FB II/19/1911).

While summer on the central BC coast is not precisely the season of uninterrupted sunshine and warmth, winter is certainly the season of unpleasant weather. Kwakwaka'wakw country lies north of the fiftieth parallel, and the difference in day-length between winter and summer is not inconsiderable. Further, most of the region receives over eighty inches of rain, with well over 100 falling on some parts. While the average winter temperature does not descend below freezing in most of the area, the sky can be heavily overcast for weeks on end, rain pours down, and the wind often blows at gale force. Such sunny weather as there is comes mostly between June and August.

In the nineteenth-century Kwak'wala usage of the Boas-Hunt texts, the term hiʔənx̌ ("summer") refers not just to a cyclically recurring segment of the solar year, but also, more generally, to a state of the world. "Summer" stands in opposition to stormy weather regardless of the calendar. This can be seen, for example, in prayers for good weather. A supplicant would beg the salmon,[4] considered to have power over weather, Wɛgaxux̌ hiʔənx̌əsχu n̓alɛqus mimɛsili ("Let your world become summer, Fish Makers!") (Boas 1921, 635). Those overtaken by storms at sea prayed to the Sun or to a being named Summer Woman (Hiʔənx̌əyuɣ̌a) to "press down" the waves and hiligəʔaχiχus

[3] Several orthographies are used here to transcribe Kwak'wala words. In quotes from Boas or Hunt, words are spelled as they wrote them. Commonly used names of social groups, such as "Kwakwaka'wakw," are given in the orthography of the U'mista Cultural Centre of Alert Bay, British Columbia. All other words are spelled in an orthography that is essentially the same as that used in Lincoln and Rath (1980), with, however, the retention of non-phonemic schwa (ə) for ease of reading. Whenever possible, I have based my spellings upon Boas's transcription of words in his unpublished dictionary (*KWD*) and posthumous grammar (1947). All English translations from Boas or Hunt Kwak'wala texts are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

[4] The "salmon" so prayed to were human twins, believed to be salmon who had chosen to incarnate among humans.

ṅalɛqus ("set the world right") (Boas 1930 1, 178; see also Boas and Hunt 1905, 353). "World" in these Kwak'wala phrases is ṅala-, from ṅa-, a root with a semantic range that includes the senses of "sky, weather, day, daylight" along with "world" (*KWD*, 241). The second of these prayers contains another Kwak'wala stem, hił- ("to heal, set right"), to which we will frequently refer. In these prayers, winter storm is a state from which sky, weather, and world need to be healed and restored to their summer state; the salmon, along with other beings linked to summer, have the power to bring this about.

As a season of the calendar, summer was the time of intensive food-gathering, while winter was devoted primarily to ceremonial and social activities. The most important activity of the summer season was, of course, catching fish and preserving them. This began in February or March with the arrival of the oolichan, fish "so fat, that they melt over the fire" (Boas 1910, 454; Boas and Hunt 1905, 101). The most substantial oolichan run in Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw country was in the Klinaklini River at the head of Knight Inlet, which, in Kwak'wala, is called Zawadi ("Having Oolichan"). Boas (1966, 301) reports that "in olden times, only the Knight and Kingcome Inlet tribes [ʔəẇəʔiχəla, Dəṅaxdaʔχ̣, and Zawadəʔinuχ̣ divisions of the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw] had the privilege" of oolichan fishing. By the nineteenth century, only the ʔəẇəʔiχəla and Dəṅaxdaʔχ̣ divisions dwelt inside Zawadi year-round, but the rich oolichan fishery was utilized by ṅałṅəmimut (descent groups) from as many as nine tribes (Boas 1934, Map 22). The Zawadi fishery was sufficiently important to other divisions that, at Fort Rupert, for instance, the month approximately corresponding to March was known as ṁaẇəʔiχənx̣, or ṁaẇəʔiχənx̣ lax̣ Zawadi ("time of moving one's belongings to Knight Inlet") (*KWD*, 146; Boas 1921, 509; Boas 1909, 413).

Elsewhere in Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw country, the lean months ended later in spring with the arrival of herring, which come into shore to spawn in shallow salt water. Some king salmon runs take place as early as April. Halibut was fished until the appearance of sockeye in June or July (see Boas 1943, 111). Then come the king salmon in other locations and, after that, runs of the other three species of Pacific salmon: coho, humpback, and dog. While varying along the coast, the last three occur, roughly, in September, October, and November, respectively.

Caught in huge numbers by spear, trap, dipnet, and hook and line, these eight species of fish formed the bulk of the coastal diet, the indispensable year-round food staple. With fish runs highly localized in time and space, concentrated labour by all active members of society was necessary to maximize the take and to preserve stores of dried or

smoked fish that would last during the less bountiful but more leisurely winter months. During autumn and early winter, men set out individually or in small groups to hunt on land or sea, using harpoon or bow and arrow. By late winter, however, many land animals, including deer and elk, are so lean that humans can starve to death even when consuming plenty of meat (Speth and Spielmann 1983). Late winter was in fact called pol?ənx̣ ("time of hunger") (Boas 1921, 198). Without good salmon runs in summer and adequate preservation, a hard winter and delayed spring could mean serious privation (cf. Krause 1993 [1881-2], 151, 161).

When the dog salmon, last to spawn, had been dried, "at the onset of winter" (c̓əwənx̣ən̓aʟ̓ʷəla) – in the European month of November – the Kwakwaka'wakw began the three-month winter ceremonial period (Boas 1930, 1:57; 1966, 172; Ford 1941, 110). People purified themselves "so that the smell of the secular [baʟ̓ʷəs] season would come off" (Boas 1930, 1,87). A village-wide assembly marked the formal opening of the ceremonial period, at which red-dyed cedar bark (x̌agəʟ̓ʷ) was distributed (Boas 1930, 1:57-71; Boas 1966, 257). At that time all initiates and officials of the ceremonial stopped using their summertime baʟ̓ʷəs ("secular") names and began using a completely different set of c̓ic̓ɛqa ("winter ceremonial") names. Everyone wore his or her cedar-bark head- and neckrings until the winter ceremonial spirits had departed, and the red-dyed cedar bark was formally "danced off" at the conclusion of the ceremonial (Boas 1930 1:71; Boas 1966, 278). During the secular summer period, society was organized into internally ranked corporate descent groups (n̓əm̓imut, pl. n̓ałn̓əm̓imut). Now it was divided according to "ceremonial procedure" (Boas 1966, 173). Secular, uninitiated commoners formed the audience for the public segments of the proceedings. The active participants in the ceremonial fell into two main groups: "Seals," high-ranking initiates of all descent groups under the influence of the spirits, and "Sparrows," the hereditary officials and the managers who conducted the proceedings.

Changing names and roles, and donning the red ornaments, coincided with the arrival of certain spirit beings who were thought to have travelled from their homes in distant lands to human villages. Although all causes of unhappiness were supposed to be forgotten, and good feelings were urged, the spirits who brought the ceremonial were portrayed in rather horrific terms. An early chief patron of the ceremonial, whose presence in it evidently predates the nineteenth century, was Winalagəlis ("Waging war throughout the world"). Winalagəlis travelled around the world in his invisible canoe slaying

humans. Baxʷbakʷalanuxʷsiwiʔ, the patron who dominated by the end of the nineteenth century, possessed an insatiable appetite for human flesh. His name, originally a Heiltsuk/Oowekyala word, was reinterpreted by Kwak'wala speakers to mean "eating humans at the river-mouth" (Hilton and Rath 1982; Boas 1966, 172-3). These predatory spirits made their presence known in the village by abducting men and women of the tribe, who then "passed through" the spirit house and returned home in a wild and inhuman state. The goal of the initiation ceremonies, which included dramatic public performances filled with illusion and special effects, was to "tame" novices, making them fully human once more.

Boas (1966, 173) wrote:

> The need for the ceremonial in the proper functioning of tribal life is felt so strongly that every year some member of the tribe must be found who will promise to provide a novice to be taken away by the spirits in the beginning of the following sacred season. He must "keep the sacred cedar bark," the symbol of the ceremonial for the following year.

The winter ceremonial was less a single institution than a complex of feasts, potlatches, marriage transactions, and events belonging to the winter ceremonial proper. All these events were "held together by being fitted into the great, impressive ceremony of sanctifying the tribe." Yet Boas (1966, 173) noted "the intensity of feeling for the contrast between the secular and sacred seasons." The opposition between summer and winter was not just that between fair weather and stormy weather. Added to this was another opposition, that between the baxʷəs (secular) and c̓ic̓ɛqa (winter ceremonial) principles. The relationship between these sets of oppositions – summer and winter, fair and stormy weather, baxʷəs and c̓ic̓ɛqa – did not, in origin, constitute a simple correspondence. As we will see, this correspondence arose out of world transformations accomplished in the primordial era. The root of it, however, lies in the fact that in summer humans fished for salmon, while in winter predatory spirits hunted for humans.

FISH CEREMONIALISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The baxʷəs, or summer season, had its own ceremonialism. It was much less dramatic than that of winter but far more transparent in its nature and purpose. I am speaking here not of the dances that some

Kwakwaka'wakw considered to be "secular" (e.g., the nunłəm and χasəla [Boas 1966, 174-5; Boas 1897, 621]) but, rather, to the rituals and taboos surrounding the catching, cleaning, and eating of fish.[5]

The nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw acknowledged their dependence on fish through prayer and reverential treatment. At Zawadi, the myth-derived privilege to greet the first oolichan belonged to the chief of the Q̓əmq̓əmtalał descent group of the Dəna̓xda?χ̣ division of the Kwakwaka'wakw. At the exact spot on the river where the founding ancestor of his descent group had first positioned his canoe, the chief ritually filled his dipnet with oolichan and prayed to the fish he had thus captured: "Welcome, Fish Makers [mimɛ?isila] ... for you were trying to come to me." Only after he filled his dipnet and emptied the catch into his canoe four times did other fishermen begin, each man addressing his first netful of oolichan with such prayers as, "Thank you, grandchildren, for coming to me to make me rich as you always do ... thank you for not disdaining to come to me, Spirit Powers" (Boas 1930, 1:198-9; George Hunt Manuscript [hereafter HCU] 14:3919-23; see also Boas and Hunt 1905, 100-3).

This first run of the year seems to have been the only one for which greeting the first fish was a hereditary prerogative. In the case of other runs, prayers and greetings were conducted by fishermen and their wives as individuals, and the prayers belonged not to the descent group but to those men and women (Boas 1921, 1318-9). For example, when a fisherman speared his first sockeye of the season, he would squeak, as though speaking in the salmon's voice, and then club it once to stun rather than kill it, explaining, "I do not wish to club your soul, so you will be able to return to the place you came from." After pulling out his spear, he held the fish in two hands and prayed: "Do not feel badly about what I have done to you, friend Swimmer, you came so I could spear you, so you could enter my mouth [as food], you Spirit Power" (Boas 1930, 1:201). Fishermen similarly greeted the first-caught of other fish species with the recurring theme, "You came to be our food" (Boas 1921, 609, 610-2, 1319-27; see also Boas 1909, 476, 478; HCU 14:3924-33).

Fishermen and their wives treated their take reverentially in other ways as well. As noted above, the fisherman would club a salmon only once. After praying to it, he would lay the salmon on clean gravel by

[5] This type of fish ceremonialism is by no means exclusive to the Kwakwaka'wakw but is found widely along the Coast (Gunther 1926; see also de Laguna 1972, 362, 384, 400; Drucker 1951, 175-7).

the riverside rather than in the dirt (Boas 1930, 1:199-200). Upon bringing the first-caught of a run into the house, the fisherman or his wife would place the salmon on a clean, new food mat. The woman would pray again to the fish before cutting into it (Boas 1930, 1:200, 201; Boas 1921, 609-10). With some, perhaps all, of these species, the first fish were also eaten ceremonially. The first four coho a man caught were served immediately. The highest-ranking man present would pray once more over the fish, espousing sentiments similar to those in other prayers (Boas 1921, 348, 611-2). The purpose of this swift consumption was to show thankfulness for the gift of food. Hunt comments that the fish "know of the gratitude" of those who do this (Boas 1921, 247).

Regardless of the species of fish addressed, the various prayers recorded by George Hunt show an overall similarity. A common theme in all these prayers is that the fish are offering their flesh as a gift: they have come in order to be killed so that humans may eat. Another commonly expressed notion is that the fish have positive powers to affect human well-being; they can protect humans from harm, grant long life, make them wealthy, "set them right" (hił-). As the salmon, the Sun, or Summer Woman can "set right" the stormy winter world, salmon can heal and restore hungry humans. As one prayer states: "You have come to set me right (hiłiłɛla) again as you always do. Now I pray that you remove my sickness and take it back to your Land of Wealth [across the ocean] at the far side of the world (χ̓asudalalis)." (Boas 1930, 1:179, see also 201).

Other practices included not keeping roasted salmon eyes in the house overnight. Nor, after eating the first-caught coho, did one wash or wipe the fat from one's hands (Boas 1921, 610, 612). Fish should be spoken of with respect, as is indicated in the story in which Raven (ʔumiʔɛł), after cursing at a salmon bone, loses his Salmon bride and all her kin whom she had called to come feed him (Boas and Hunt 1905, 322-30). There seem also to have been restrictions on what parts of the salmon could be properly consumed: in another myth, eating a salmon belly (its intestines?) causes a boy to disappear underground, evidently to the land of the Ghosts, where he becomes crazed (Boas 1910, 477).

Menstruating women did not eat fresh-caught fish, nor were these fish cooked in a dwelling where any such woman lived; if this were to occur, the woman's male relatives would łalawułʔid ("get into difficulties"). Dogs were also prevented from eating any part of the first-caught fish. If either of these events occurred, the fish "would Right away desappear" from the river (HCU 14:4359-61; see also Boas 1921, 1324).

The purpose of all such treatment was to ensure that the salmon would return each year. In English, George Hunt referred to these practices in their entirety as "treating clean." This is his translation of the Kwak'wala term ʔaʔikila, which derives from a plural form of ʔik- ("good, well, lucky, clean, clear, bright") and, probably, the suffix -[g]ila ("to make, cause") (Boas 1947, 354; *KWD*, 223; Boas 1905, 303-4).

According to Hunt, only six kinds of fish received this special treatment: oolichan, halibut, and four species of salmon (sockeye, king, coho, and dog). Missing from this list are herring and humpback salmon. Elsewhere, humpbacks are associated with weakness (wayaċola ["to be weak (= fail inside)"]) (Boas and Hunt 1905, 303), while the relative uncleanness of herring is hinted at in a narrative in which the chief of the sockeye jokingly compares herring roe to diarrhea (ċidəm). The sockeye chief states that he will go "set right the bodies" (hiłita) of the humans who ate herring "diarrhea" (Boas 1943, 114).

One of the most important parts of "treating clean" was proper treatment of fish remains. This embraced, first of all, the refuse generated through cleaning the fish. "As soon as they finish cutting up the speared salmon, the woman gathers everything that came from the salmon [the offal] and puts it into a basket, and pours it in to the water at the mouth of the river" (Boas 1921, 609, see also 308, 612). Moreover, any refuse left after eating had to be similarly gathered up and disposed of:[6]

> The woman watches to make sure all the guests throw on the mat all the bones [and refuse] left after eating ... After they have finished eating ... and gone home ... the woman scrapes off ... the rest of her guests' food, and puts it on the mat ... and she carries it down to the beach and shakes it out into the salt water. (Boas 1921, 246; see also HCU 14, 4359-61)

In their totality, activities related to the maintenance of bountiful fish runs must have been the most pervasive and fundamental form of ritual, carried out daily by women in every household and, during the fishing season, quite frequently by men as well. While during the winter ceremonial commoners by and large acted only as members of the audience, everyone who caught or cleaned fish must have participated in the summertime ritual.

[6] Fish bones could also be burned in the hearth fire (Boas and Hunt 1905, 326); perhaps, in this case, these were not the first-caught of the season.

RESURRECTION AND THE WATER OF LIFE

The powers of salmon were fundamental in other ways. One reason for disposing of fish remains in salt water was to prevent dogs from eating them and, thus, driving away the offended fish. Even more important, however, this practice ensured the reincarnation of the salmon's spirit and its return the next year. "It is said that the various kinds of salmon come alive when the offal is put into the water at the mouths of the rivers" (laxa ʔuxsiwayasa wiwa; Boas 1921, 609; see also Boas and Hunt 1905, 317).

The complete life cycle of salmon, as imagined by nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw, is depicted in myths, prayers, and other materials recorded by George Hunt. One of the more interesting stories in this regard concerns a war between the creatures of earth and the birds of the upper world. This narrative belongs to a sub-genre of Kwakwaka'wakw myth called nuxnimis (*KM* 3:4624). The stories in this ethnoliterary category are set in the first part of the myth age, the primordial era in which the major world transformations took place. In these stories the eponymous nuxnimis – the animals, plants, monsters, and other spirit beings to whom Hunt usually refers in English as the "Historie People" – are the central characters. During the nuxnimis era, the History People live in beach-front houses (like those future humans will build) on village sites later occupied by humans. The History People are often found in human form, and "they can talk to Each other and understand Each other" (*KM* 6:4969). They keep their animal shapes close by, which they can put on and take off as though they were clothing. In Kwak'wala these shapes are called "masks" (-gəmɬ) and "blankets" (-sgəm).

The particular nuxnimis story of interest concerns a chief of the History People, a flicker named Fiery, and his beautiful wife of great spirit power, Thrush Woman.[7] When Thrush Woman is abducted by the chief of the Thunderbirds, a wise counsellor advises Fiery to borrow "salmon masks of all the salmon species" (ƙukutəlagəmɬasa naxa ƙutəla) from the chief of the Salmon.[8]

[7] Boas calls Fiery a generic "Woodpecker" in the text, although he elsewhere identifies the character as the red-shafted flicker, *Colaptes cafer*, which is "salmon-red" under its wings and tail (Boas 1910, 147; Peterson 1961, 140). Fiery's name, the Kwak'wala term for "flicker," is Ğəldəm, literally "fiery one."

[8] The Kwak'wala term ƙutəla, which derives from the root ƙut- ("flat object on edge"), includes not just its most common referent, the five salmon species, but, at a higher order of contrast, seems to distinguish fish that swim upright from flatfish such as halibut and flounder (note paʔis ["flounder"] from pa- ["flat horizontal object"] [*KWD*, 123]).

The Salmon chief keeps all the salmon masks in a single box; the "masks" look like whole salmon, and, once released from the box, they jump and swim just like live fish. Fiery and his warriors "dress" (q̓uχ̓cu; q̓uχ- ["to be dressed"] and -c̓u ["to be or go inside hollow object"]) in the masks. As salmon, they swim past the Thunderbirds' watchmen and into the Thunderbird chief's salmon trap. The war party of salmon is clubbed, killed, and cleaned.

> Thrush Woman cut open the four king salmon [the four bravest warriors who had gone first into the trap] and the little jack coho[9] [her husband Fiery]. Then she put the king salmon and jack coho on spits ... [and] placed the five salmon by the fire. She gathered the backbones, fins, and the blood ... and put them into an old mat. She ... walked down to the beach ... [and] into the sea. When the water reached her knees, the beautiful woman poured the contents of the old mat into the water. As soon as the bones, intestines, and blood went into the water ... all the salmon came to life ... the [five?] salmon came to life again, and all the [other?] salmon jumped down to the beach. Thrush Woman disappeared, because she was taken away by her husband. All the salmon returned home. (Boas and Hunt 1905, 306-7).

This myth contains several points of interest to the present discussion. First, it emphasizes the importance of how the first-caught salmon are treated. When the first salmon are placed in the salt water, *all* the salmon come back to life and return to the ocean.

Another point of interest is how the storyteller depicts the salmon masks (-g̓əmɬ). These are not carved and painted art objects but the very form and flesh of living salmon, and they even possess a type of animacy. Upon dressing in a borrowed mask, the borrower will assume the form, flesh, and habits of the salmon regardless of his or her own nature. The mask, in other words, is both the thing that transforms and the end result of the transformation (Berman 1991, 91-2; Berman 1992).

Moreover, the mask has an existence beyond that of the visible salmon, which appears to be only a transitory manifestation of the mask's power. In the story, Thrush Woman guts, cleans, and spits the salmon shapes of her husband and his warriors, and readies them for cooking. The key seems to be how the core of their being – their bones, intestines, blood, and so on – are treated. When she puts this essential

[9] For the identification of zazum as "jack coho" (i.e., a coho that reaches maturity a year early), I am indebted to Nile Thompson. Note that the first salmon into the trap are the king salmon, in some areas the first salmon species to run.

"substance" into the ocean, they come back to life – *in salmon form*. The mask is not just salmon "clothing," it is, beyond that, a durable transformative principle that is immortal so long as the remains of its transitory manifestation are treated properly.

A final, crucial point of interest is the intimate relationship between water and salmon substance. When placed in salt or fresh water, fish remains will reconstitute into living fish. This important notion is elaborated in a number of other places. I have elsewhere discussed the fish women appearing in Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw myth, women of spirit power whose skin creates multitudes of fish (Berman 1992). One of these is a Salmon woman named Fish Maker (Mɛʔisila) whom Raven (ʔumiʔɛɫ) marries with the hope of obtaining salmon. Fish Maker, significantly, is one of the titles by which fishermen greet the first fish of the run (e.g., Boas 1930, 1:201). When Fish Maker puts her little finger in her mouth and then in a cooking box full of water, a large king salmon appears in the box. When she places her feet in a river, salmon fill it; if she were to immerse herself entirely, she warns, the river would dry up from the huge mass of fish that this would create (Boas and Hunt 1905, 322-30).

Another such being is Zazax̌ʷitəlaga, Oolichan Woman, whose name literally means "woman whose body has oolichan all over its surface." In one story, Oolichan Woman possesses a robe in which she hoards all the fish in the world. When the robe is dipped into water, the fish are released and populate the ocean and rivers (Boas 1895, 319). In a related story, Oolichan Woman squats in salt water to urinate; the immersion of her genitalia in water creates a multitude of spawning herring (Boas 1910, 190-1). Oolichan Woman's name allows some ambiguity as to whether the fish on her body are attached to her skin or are merely covering it, as they would be if she wore the robe full of fish. These conditions can, of course, be essentially the same for the History People, who possess masks/blankets that transform them from their human shape. In the case of these fish-women, their spirit shapes do not consist of a mask of a single fish, but a covering of many fish. This echoes the image of the Salmon chief keeping all the masks of every salmon species in a single box.

Many other beings with the power of resurrection appear in myth. These other beings, however, nearly always depend upon a special substance, q̓ʷəlaʔsta ẇap ("water of life"), which is sprinkled upon the remains of the deceased. The powerful resurrecting liquid of myth is sometimes identified as urine (Furst 1989), a substance used in real life for purification and curing and, together with alder bark, to dye cedar

bark red for the winter ceremonial (Boas 1910, 329; Turner 1979, 192). As Water of Life, however, it is always the urine of a spirit being, for example that of the chief of the Ghosts (Boas 1910, 321). More commonly, the exact nature of Water of Life is not specified (Boas 1935a, 109-10).

In nearly all cases in myth, Water of Life is used by its supernatural owner to resurrect or heal a mortal hero, or it is given to the hero, who will use it on other mortals upon returning home. Although beings as diverse as wolves, seals, a toad, human ancestors, and Raven are mentioned as possessing Water of Life, salmon never own it. Indeed, it would be redundant for them to do so. For fish, the miracle of resurrection dwells in their very skin and substance, to be activated by ordinary water. With Water of Life, the power inheres in the liquid rather than in the skin upon which it is sprinkled. Water of Life can be seen, then, as derivative of – in a sense imitative of – the salmon's innate power.

THE ORIGIN OF SALMON

Despite their power of resurrection and immortality, salmon do suffer when caught and killed, a point acknowledged by the fisherman who, at the moment when his spear penetrates the salmon's flesh, squeaks as if in the salmon's voice (Boas 1930, 1:201). Salmon come each year to the rivermouths out of "pity" (wo-) for hungry humans (Boas 1910, 212-3), but the generous gift of flesh is also a sacrifice. There is the constant danger that the salmon will withdraw their favour. The covenant between humans and salmon, which sustains human life, is maintained only by careful and reverential treatment.

How did this remarkable gift come to be available in the first place? There are a number of stories in the Boas-Hunt corpus that address this question. These stories take place during the long process by which the primordial world was transformed into the secular (baẍəs), human age.

In the beginning the world was dark, empty of food, and so stormy that even the great sea monsters had "no rest, because of being always rolled about by the swells" (Boas and Hunt 1906, 99). All kinds of permutations of form might occur: women might store their genitalia in a box or transform them into fish (Boas and Hunt 1905, 125; Boas 1910, 190-1), a fart could cause a gale (Boas and Hunt 1905, 352). A variety of spirit beings hoarded many essential goods, including good weather, tides, daylight, and the salmon.

There was no single transformer who changed this dark, wintry cosmos into the relatively safe and bountiful landscape of the secular

age. The characters who played the most important role varied from community to community, descent group to descent group, even from story to story. Among the most important transformers, however, are Raven, known by various names, including ʔumiʔɛɬ or ʔumʔɛɬ and k̓ʷik̓ʷaxawaʔi ("Great Deviser");[10] and Mink, the illegitimate son of the Sun known as ƛisəlagiɬa ("Born to be the Sun") and sometimes said to be Raven's younger brother. The world transformers, while each possessing his or her own form of power, nevertheless had to compel other beings – through force, stratagem, theft, or appeal to pity – to render up the wealth or other goods that they had hoarded.

For example, the world is without fresh water until Raven tricks the mysterious "Childless Woman" into yielding it to him (Boas 1910, 166-9, 224-7). Drinking it all down, Raven flies around the world urinating to create the rivers. Or, again, the world is without light until Raven releases the sun from the box in which Daylight-Box Woman has kept it hidden away (Boas and Hunt 1905, 391-7; Boas 1910, 232-5). In another set of stories, Raven (or Mink) and his people are hungry because the tide at their village is always high. Raven (or Mink) manages to extort a universal ebb tide from the Wolves, who alone possessed the power to lower the tide and, thereby, obtain shellfish (Boas and Hunt 1905, 278-82; Boas and Hunt 1906, 88-94, 94-8; Boas 1910, 229-33). In yet another instance, Mink, Raven, and their village are hungry because the storm wind blows constantly. They lead a war expedition to the house of the Owner of the Southeast Wind and, defeating him, force an agreement that the storm wind will blow for only four days at a time (Boas and Hunt 1906, 98-103). Alternatively, they force him to yield an entire season of good weather – summer (Boas 1910, 226-9).

Stories about the acquisition of salmon runs follow a similar pattern. While salmon runs in the secular age are portrayed as a generous gift, the original covenant is nearly always established through force, trickery, or theft. We have already mentioned the narrative in which Raven marries Fish Maker to obtain the salmon runs (Boas and Hunt 1905, 322-30; Boas 1943, 11-2). At first Fish Maker refuses to make salmon for Raven, but eventually he compels her to fill the river with salmon. Raven becomes rich and well-fed, but he also grows proud from his new wealth, insults a salmon bone, then speaks angrily to his wife. She calls "her tribe, the dried salmon," to return home; they

[10] In the texts collected by Boas and Hunt, "It is seldom expressly stated that ... K!wek!waxawiᵋ and Omᵋäɬ are the raven, but in discussions [with Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw] about the tales the identification has been made repeatedly (Boas 1935a, 151).

all go into the sea. Once immersed in salt water, they resuscitate and swim away.

This story depicts the problems both of the origin and of the maintenance of the covenant with the salmon. Raven solves the first problem by marrying a Salmon woman. He thereby creates a relationship with the fish people so that they will supply him with salmon flesh, but he fails in the second task because he does not treat salmon remains properly.

After his disastrous marriage, Raven voyages to the land on the "ocean side of the world" to try again to obtain the salmon runs (Boas and Hunt 1905, 346; Boas 1910, 168-75; see also Boas and Hunt 1905, 390-2, 346-9). In these texts, Raven and his younger brothers have nothing to eat, so Raven decides to "wage war ... so that salmon would again come" to the "forest [side of the] world" (aƛ̓ix̣ awiṅaǧisa). They launch Raven's war canoe and paddle across the ocean to the town where the salmon live. The chief of the Salmon, in human form, invites the visitors into his house.

> [F]our boys ... were clubbed by the attendants [of the Salmon chief]. They were cut open. They immediately became salmon upon dying. The four salmon were cut into pieces and steamed ... When [Raven and his younger brothers] had finished [eating] the salmon, the attendants picked up the bones and went to throw them into the sea. At once [they became] four [live] salmon. (Boas and Hunt 1905, 347)

Raven's attempt to steal a salmon bone is thwarted; instead, he kidnaps four children and flees homeward. The Salmon People pursue in their canoes, overtaking Raven and his war party just in sight of the forested mountains. Raven's most redoubtable warrior, Deer, capsizes the Salmon People's canoes. Once in the water, the Salmon People helplessly transform into fish. On the forest side of the world, Raven apparently has power over them, for he orders the salmon into the rivers, to which they will return ever after (Boas and Hunt 1905, 322-30).

An important point emphasized in many of the transformation stories is that what the world transformer obtains is not abundance so much as cycles (Berman 1991, 683-5). In the battles with those who keep the tide from ebbing, the storm from abating, and the sun from shining, the victory of Raven and his cohorts is, in a moral sense, eternal and absolute. But the prize acquired is never the polar opposite of the state previously imposed by their rivals. Raven does not, for example, replace a world of eternal dark with one of eternal light.

Consider the negotiations between Raven and the chief of the Wolves over the low tide:

> Wolf-At-The-Headwaters spoke. He said, "Ya, friend, go to our friend Great Deviser [Raven] and say that it will get dry between the islands ..." Born-To-Be-The-Sun [Mink] ... said, "Don't... We don't want it to become too much. Our friend [Great Deviser] wishes only that the eel-grass will be rolled together." ... [T]he tide fell to [that] certain point. At once Great Deviser sent Land Otter to return the wolf tail to Wolf-At-The-Headwaters. (Boas and Hunt 1905, 280-2).

Or again, in negotiations over the weather:

> The Owner of the Southeast Wind ... said, "Ya, ʔumiʔɛɬ [Raven], why are you doing this to me?" At once ʔumiʔɛɬ said, "Ya, Owner of the Southeast Wind, this is why I am doing it: because it is always bad weather." The Owner of the Southeast Wind ... said, "There will be one good day and one bad day each." At once ʔumiʔɛɬ said, "Go on, kill him, what good is one [good] day to us?" Then the Owner of the Southeast Wind spoke again, and said, "There will be two good days and two bad days each." At once ʔumiʔɛɬ said, "I don't want that, either. Go on, just kill him." The Owner of the Southeast Wind said "It will [always] be summer in your world." ʔumiʔɛɬ said, "That is too much; four days of good weather [and four days of bad] is right (hiɬalazo). (Boas and Hunt 1905, 352-3).

In another version of the story, when the Owner of the Southeast Wind offers eternal summer, Raven refuses, commenting that there should be a season of winter so that "future men will from time to time go hungry" (Boas 1910, 228-9).

In these stories, imposing the polar opposite would be "too much" (χənχəla); instead, the victories of Raven and company establish the "right" amount (hiɬalazo, from hiɬ- ["to set right, heal"]) of periodicity in the world, an appropriate *balance* between opposing states. When Raven obtains the ebb tide, the ocean will rise and fall in both his village and that of the Wolves. Similarly, when Raven releases the Sun into the world, day begins to alternate with night, light with darkness. When Raven turns the Salmon People into salmon, he initiates the first salmon run and implicitly establishes its seasonal recurrence. Salmon runs will alternate with salmon absences. There should be winter so that people "will from time to time go hungry."

One of the most important goods that Raven and Mink acquire in the course of their work is the winter ceremonial. They steal it from the Wolves, who were its original possessors. Seen within the context of these other stories, it is clear that the acquisition of the ceremonial is another milestone in establishing appropriate balance in the world. While the identity of the opposing states is never mentioned explicitly, it is the key to the purpose and meaning of the ceremonial.

WOLVES AND WINTERTIME

Boas published five versions of the charter myth of the winter ceremonial, four complete and one fragmentary (Boas and Hunt 1906, 103-13; Boas 1897, 538-9, 725-8; Boas 1930, 1:57-86, 86-92; Boas 1943, 22). This myth, Boas (1966, 258) wrote, was "always given as the origin of the ceremonial." I will refer to the story as "Mink and the Wolves," after the title given the earliest of the texts.

Of the four complete texts of "Mink and the Wolves," George Hunt wrote down the longest and most detailed in 1926 (Boas 1930, 1:57-86). Hunt told Boas that this version

> was told to me by Labet [χabid] of the laᵋElaxsᵋEndayo nEmemot [Laʔəlaxsʔəndayu descent group of Fort Rupert]. this man Labet who took Hoɬeledes Place after he Died now Hoɬeledes [Huχilid] kept this story strickly secret [about] the winter Dance given By aɬolenox [the Wolves] ... So we only go[t] Part of the story [before this] (BPC, GH/FB 6/15/1926).[11]

The elements in this account that hitherto had been "strickly secret" seem to be details of the ritual duties of the ceremonial's eighteen hereditary officials. The overall sequence of events is largely similar to that recorded in the other published versions.

Like the other acquisition stories we have been considering, "Mink and the Wolves" belongs to the nuχnimʷis sub-genre and takes place in the very first era of the world. The action in this myth originates in the long-standing enmity between the Wolves (on the one side) and Raven and his younger brothers (on the other side). Despite living in beach-side villages in close proximity, "Wolf-At-The-Headwaters

[11] The man Huχilid to whom Hunt refers had been the head chief of the Laʔəlaxsʔəndayu descent group and the incumbent of an important hereditary winter ceremonial office. His title, Head Shaman (pəχəmiʔ), had descended to him, according to the myth, from his founding ancestor (Boas 1930, 1:84; GH/FB 10/7/1926). Huχilid's place among the eighteen officials of the ceremonial among the Ğitəla was taken after his death by χabid, who was evidently his nephew (Boas 1930 1:98; see also GH/FB 12/17/1926, 5/5/1927).

[chief of the Wolves] and Great Deviser [Raven] and his younger brothers hated each other [from the time] when long ago daylight came into our world ... and they never met" (Boas 1930 1:57).[12]

One episode in the ongoing conflict, in which the Wolves hoard the ebb tide so that they alone have shellfish, has already been noted. Raven pretends to die. Since the Wolves always try to get corpses to eat (Boas 1910, 139, 493; Boas 1935, 140-3), they come to his coffin, but Raven tricks the Wolf chief by stealing his tail. Raven refuses to return it until the Wolves share the tides more equitably (Boas and Hunt 1905, 278-82; Boas 1910, 229-33, 493-4; see also Boas 1906, 88-94).

In another story (Boas 1910, 161-7), Wolves waylay Deer and his son as the latter two paddle homeward through autumn fogs. The Wolves take Deer prisoner and prepare to butcher and cook him, but Deer sings them to sleep, cuts the throats of the Wolf chiefs, and escapes with his son. Then the Wolves pay the celestial hunter ʔaliwəzoʔi (the constellation Orion, or one of the stars thereof) to open his fog box so that it again becomes foggy. Deer loses his way. When he comes to shore once more, the Wolves are waiting and eventually catch and eat him (see also Boas and Hunt 1906, 145).

Yet another conflict, sometimes told as a separate episode and sometimes included as part of the winter ceremonial acquisition story, occurs when Mink falls asleep after catching a salmon. The children of the Wolves eat Mink's salmon, smear his mouth with fish excrement (məngədiq), and abscond with Mink's musk bag, perhaps a form of revenge for the earlier theft of their father's wolf tail. These nasty jokes produce an interesting effect: when Mink wakes and tries to move, his anus (məngas) moves ahead of the rest of his body, making it difficult to walk. He discovers the Wolf children playing with his musk bag. Through his spirit power, Mink manages to call his musk bag to him and restore it to its original position. But, outraged, he threatens the Wolf children with harm, and, as a result, "Mink and the children of Wolf-At-The-Headwaters truly hated each other" (Boas 1930 1:58-9; Boas 1910, 143-71).

The events of the winter ceremonial's acquisition are the climax of this conflict. The story opens with Wolf-At-The-Headwaters, who, depressed at the approach of winter, decides to hold a winter dance. His retainers praise this decision, saying, "now we are going to be happy." Wolf women dye red a great deal of shredded cedar bark,

[12] There is one story in which the History People are grouped into separate descent groups of birds, sea mammals, land mammals, and so on; here, Wolf and Mink belong to the same descent group (Boas and Hunt 1906, 147).

which the Wolves put on at the opening assembly of the ceremonial. The Wolf officials warn each other to keep their secret meetings hidden from Raven and his younger brothers, "for they are secular [baχʷəs]" (Boas 1930 1:57, 60). Raven nevertheless eavesdrops without being discovered.

The four sons of Wolf-At-The-Headwaters, who are to be initiated, "disappear" to a secluded hut in the forest. George Hunt's source, χabid, here inserts the episode of Mink's stolen musk bag, while other versions merely have the Wolf children stealing from Mink's salmon trap. Next, in every version of the story, Mink kills the Wolf children, cuts off at least one of the heads, and hides the body or bodies. Mink proceeds to trap, in sequence, every kind of fish in the world, until finally a sisəyuχ (a spirit creature with two serpent heads and a human head in the center) swims into his weir. Mink brings the sisəyuχ home in his canoe and asks his mother to carry up his "salmon" from the beach. But when her gaze falls upon it, her body contorts, and Mink has to straighten her out (in one version, she dies; Boas 1930 1:88).

Meanwhile the Wolves discover the absence of the four children but, in spite of this, proceed with the "ceremonial of bringing back" the novices from their seclusion (see Boas 1897, 520-8). Here the texts diverge as to the precise means by which Raven, Mink, and their party come together with the Wolves. Regardless, at the climax of the story, Mink dances in front of the Wolves. First he reveals the double-headed serpent on his head, singing, "Kɛx [Mink's winter name] wears the middle face of Nułiłaʟʷ [Deer's winter name][13] as a mask." And then Mink displays the head of Wolf-At-The-Headwaters's eldest son, singing, "Kɛx wears the dead prince of the Wolf People as a mask" (Boas 1930, 1:81, 91).

The Wolves try to kill Mink, but the sight of the double-headed serpent contorts their bodies, disabling them (or killing them) (Boas and Hunt 1906, 110, 112). Once recovered, the Wolves disperse into the woods out of shame and become true wolves forever. Raven and his party institute the practice of holding the ceremonial in winter ever after, "following all that was done by Wolf-At-The-Headwaters" (Boas 1930, 1:86).

[13] Nułiłaʟʷ means "Born-to-be-a-Fool-[Dancer?]." According to Boas (1897, 479), the term naqəmaẏi means "middle of face" and refers to the Fool Dancer's nose. Deer is a Fool Dancer, the first one, and Fool Dancers are notoriously sensitive about their noses, becoming enraged when the organ is mocked. When this song was sung in the real-life nineteenth-century ceremonial, the name of the human Fool Dancer was inserted. I believe it is possible, however, that naqəmaẏi may also be interpreted as "face in the middle"; that is, the central, human face of the sisəyuχ.

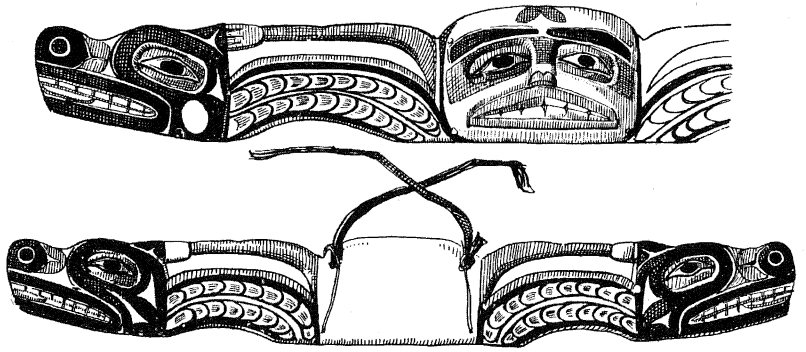

Plate 1: A sisəyuχ, or double-headed serpent, in the form of a carving made to be tied around the waist (from Boas 1897, 370)

The outcome of these events is not solely the acquisition of the valuable ceremonial. Though George Hunt does not elaborate here, the point is clearly stated in other places. The theft of the ceremonial, or sometimes a subsequent ceremonial performed by Raven and his party, brought about the permanent separation between humans and animals.

There are several versions of how this transformation came about, the divergence arising, at least in part, from the inherent ambiguity of the History People and the degree to which they are judged human or animal in their aboriginal state. For example, in one story, the History People begin in human form but paint themselves and put on masks for the winter ceremonial. This is the animal form they ultimately take (Boas 1910, 186-95). In another place the narrator states that the History People, though evidently in human form before and during the ceremonial, "ceased being human beings after this [the events of "Mink and the Wolves"]. Some [became] four-footed animals, others [became] birds, on account of what was done by [Mink]" (Boas 1930 1:92). In a third version, the History People begin in animal form, and

> all the animals and birds took their skins off, hung them up, and became men and women [for the duration of the ceremonial] ... When they finished the winter dance, some of the myth people [History People] put their blankets on, while others staid behind and retained the shape of men. (Boas and Hunt 1905, 488-9; see also Boas 1966, 258; *KM* 6:5024; Boas 1897, 728; Boas 1910, 289)

This last viewpoint is echoed in several stories that take place during the second half of the myth age. In these stories, a human hero surprises

animals holding the winter dances in human form (Boas and Hunt 1905, 7-25; Boas 1935, 140-3; Boas 1943, 189-202).

In all versions, however, participants dress or undress in masks for the winter ceremonial – that is, they put on or take off animal form and nature. And in every case, at the end, Raven and his younger brothers become or remain the fully human beings – descent-group ancestors, in fact – while others of the History People retain their spirit masks and scatter (Boas 1930 1:82-6; Boas 1943, 15-21). It seems to be the acquisition of the winter ceremonial, and *how* Raven and Mink acquire it, that enables (or causes) them to become fully human.

A crucial aspect of "Mink and the Wolves" is the nature of the antagonists of Mink and his brothers: the Wolves, who are the first owners of the winter ceremonial – the ones who first dressed in red-dyed cedar bark (Boas 1930 1:65). The association of the Wolves with the winter ceremonial is not peculiar to this story. In myth, wolves are nearly always portrayed as having shamanic powers or conducting the winter ceremonial (Boas and Hunt 1905, 32-3; Boas and Hunt 1906, 29; Boas 1910, 108-12; Boas 1921, 742-9; Boas 1935, 140-3; Boas 1943, 22).

The association of wolves with the winter ceremonial would seem to arise first from the association of wolves with winter and predation. We have already noted the connection between winter and storm, summer and fair weather; we have also discussed summer as the season during which humans are offered the bounty of salmon, and winter as, correspondingly, the season of hunger. As Raven promised in the myth, humans will go hungry in winter, at least without sufficient stores of food.

In one text of "Mink and the Wolves," Mink's motivation for building a salmon trap at the onset of winter is that "he was hungry because he had no food in winter" (Boas 1906, 103). Meanwhile, during the initial phase of the ceremonial, the Wolves continually feast each other (Boas 1930 1:72). The narrator does not point out the obvious: it is only Mink's spirit power that enables him to catch sockeye salmon, which ordinarily run at the onset of summer, during the opposite season of the year. The Wolves, on the other hand, perhaps have the capacity to feast each other because they have laid by sufficient stores of food or, more likely, because they, as shown elsewhere, are successful hunters. Regarding the enmity of Mink and his companions and the Wolves, one text notes wolves preying on minks (Boas 1910, 176-9). Another has the Wolves deliberately hunting down Deer (Boas 1910, 161-7). Both of these are rooted in observations of nature.

Note that, in the story of Deer's death, the Wolves are not portrayed simply as hungry autumn hunters of deer but also as a kind of roving war party. It is relevant that the early patron of the winter ceremonial was the warrior spirit Winalagəlis, "waging war throughout the cosmos," and in the days of inter-village raiding, warriors assumed their winter ceremonial names and dance personae for the duration of the raid, regardless of the season (Boas 1921, 1364-5, 1371, 1374). Like initiates during the ceremonial, warriors wore red-dyed cedar bark and blackened their faces with charcoal (Boas 1930 1:62; Boas 1966, 108), and, during the ceremonial, the Hamat'sa (Cannibal) dancers reportedly wore upon their blankets the scalps of men they had killed in war (Ford 1941, 220-1).

The pattern that contrasts summer as the season of fair weather, plenty, and well-being with winter as the season of storm, hunger, war, predation, and death is pervasive and can be seen in many other contexts. For example, consider the images expressed in the summer and winter hereditary names owned by the aristocracy. Secular (baẋʷəs) summer names are limited to themes of wealth and celestial light. "Wealth" names include, among others, "property" names such as Yaquλas ("Place of obtaining property"); "mountain of wealth" names,[14] such as Nəgɛ ("Mountain"), Ləkəmx̣ud ("[Stones, i.e., property] pounding down"), and K̓ik̓əsẋən ("Overhanging cliff"); and "copper" names such as ẋ̓aq̓agila ("Copper maker") and ẋ̓aq̓agidiẋ ("Copper body") (Boas and Hunt 1905, 84, 191, 194, 212, 276, 381; Boas 1897, 388). Examples of "celestial light" (i.e., fair weather) names include ʔixc̓əmalagəlis ("Abalone [shining, i.e., the Sun mask] going around the world"), ẋ̓ix̣ẋ̓ix̣ogəm ("Red sky [of the morning] face"), Səpax̣alis ("Throwing down [sunbeams] in the world"), N̓in̓ɛyuzəmg̣a ("Woman always being the means by which daylight is made"), and Təlc̓aʔas ("Place of heat") (Boas 1905, 51, 53, 124, 184, 389).

Similarly, winter names of c̓ic̓ɛqa initiates are limited to themes of predation, enormous hunger, or stormy weather. Examples of "predator" names include Ẇalas Nan ("Great Grizzly Bear") and G̣amutay̓alis ("Wolf howling on top"). Examples of "hunger" names are Ẇilq̓əsəlagiləs ("Eating up everything going through the world") and Hamac̓ax̣is ("Greedy one coming down to the beach [?]") (Boas 1905, 51, 110, 191, 276; Boas 1897, 388). Finally, "storm" names include thunderbird names such as K̓aẋʷənẋ̓balisəla ("Thundering from one end of the world to

[14] The mountain, according to George Hunt (GH/FB 9/28/1918), is, within such contexts, a metaphor for a huge source of property.

the other") and Kʷənwatələgilizəm ("Cause of thunder going through the world") (Boas 1905, 216, 248; Boas 1897, 415; for a much larger sample of winter and summer names, see Berman 1991, 650-2).[15]

Yet another place in which these opposing sets of associations appear is within the very structure of myth. The ethnoliterary category referred to in Kwak'wala as nuyəm ("myth"), of which the History People stories form one sub-genre, is characterized by the recurrence of a few basic plot structures and a diversity of thematic elements that, when examined systematically, resolve into a limited number of patterns (Boas 1932, vi-x; Boas 1966, 317; Berman 1991, 128-33). For example, there is no "storm god" whose attributes and identity are consistent over a wide range of stories, but, rather, there are a number of beings with "storm" attributes who will appear in myths in a generally predictable way.

In the sub-genre of myth that belongs to the second half of the myth age, the most common plot type features a hero who, for one reason or another, travels into the forest or out on the ocean and there encounters a spirit being who ultimately grants him a treasure. The hero in this plot type may undergo as many as three transformations on his journey: he can be injured or killed; he can be restored to life or health; and he can be granted a treasure.

The character who attempts to kill the hero falls into three basic categories. Firstly, he or she can have attributes of an animal predator such as a Grizzly Bear, Killer Whale, Shark, or Wolf, or secondly, of an anthropomorphic hunter with spirit powers (Boas and Hunt 1905:30-2, 337-43, 351-5, 356, 362; Boas 1910, 478-9; Boas 1897:372). Thirdly, this character can be a dangerous storm owner, the most common being a Thunderbird (e.g., Boas and Hunt 1905, 102-3, 299). Another example of a storm owner is the Owner of the Southeast Wind (Boas and Hunt 1905, 350-3).

On the other hand, the being who grants the hero a treasure nearly always falls into one of three corresponding categories: (1) a game animal such as a Mountain Goat, Seal, Whale, or Salmon (Boas and Hunt 1905, 17-8, 24, 125, 328, 391-2; Boas 1943, 196-7); (2) an anthropomorphic wealth owner or the owner of copper, the ultimate symbol of wealth (Boas and Hunt 1905, 73-6, 82-3, 391); or (3) a celestial body (i.e., visible only in fair weather) such as the Sun, the Moon, or the

[15] Names belonging to the fabulous predatory "birds of heaven" may belong with "storm" names or with "predator" names; thunderbirds are only the most prominent of the dangerous birds who live "at the upper edge of the clouds" (Boas 1930 1:175-6; see also Boas and Hunt 1905, 295-317).

Dawn (Boas and Hunt 1905, 50-1, 376, 382, 384-5). We also find cases with a mix of attributes, such as, for instance, the stars of Orion, a celestial body portrayed as a sea hunter with his crew (Boas and Hunt 1905, 383-4).

What the patterns found in myth characters and in names indicate is that hunger is not merely the state of humans in winter; it is also a defining characteristic of a set of predatory beings who are linked to winter and who stand in opposition to the bountiful game animals, especially salmon. Humans only have the names of predators and wealth owners because ancestors acquired them from the spirits to whom the names originally belonged. The model for this pattern may arise from the economic fact that humans tend to be satiated in summer and hungry in winter, but the pattern itself indicates that the divisions in the spirit world were conceived of as primary. Summer and winter, satiety and hunger, alternate as they do because Raven and his fellow transformers altered the primordial relationships with what we can, in shorthand, refer to as the summer and winter beings: salmon (summer), the storm owners (winter), and so on.

Wolves are hunters and warriors – winter beings – but they play a dual role in the History People stories and, indeed, in the totality of the Boas-Hunt myth texts. Three transforming roles were mentioned above: the character who harms the hero (the hunter, or winter being), the character who grants the hero a treasure (the wealth owner, or summer being), and the character who restores the hero after the winter being has killed or otherwise harmed him/her. The third transforming character in myth always possesses the attributes of a shaman, attributes connected to the winter ceremonial, attributes of a Wolf, or some combination of the three (Boas and Hunt 1905, 32, 105-6, 362; Boas 1935b, 140-3; Boas 1943, 196-7).

Wolves are both predators *and* shamans. That death-dealers are healers might at first glance seem incongruous. The specific association of wolves with shamanism may arise from the observable behaviour of wolves in the wild. First, as the texts note, wolves seek out dead animals, including human corpses, to scavenge. One narrative suggests that this was a reason for the nineteenth-century practice of placing coffins on islands or in trees (Boas 1910, 139, 493; Boas 1935, 140-3; Boas and Hunt 1905, 278). Wolves also regurgitate food for their young, behaviour perhaps echoed in those myth narratives in which Wolves see that the dead hero is vomited up so that the pieces of his/her body can be sprinkled with Water of Life (Boas and Hunt 1905, 32-3, 362;

Boas 1921, 747-8). In one real-life shaman's vision, wolves saved him from smallpox by vomiting foam over his body (Boas 1930 1:45-6).

Regardless of the roots of this association, it seems to have been a strong one for the nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw. In materials on shamanism amassed by George Hunt, who, in his early adulthood, had been initiated and had practised as a Kwakwaka'wakw shaman, there is a consistent link between wolves, shamanism, and death followed by resurrection. In myths, the ability to be killed and come back to life is often portrayed as a general characteristic of shamans (e.g., Boas and Hunt 1905, 165-70). The visionary initiation experiences of a number of real-life shamans occurred upon the threshold of death, where they encountered a being who restored them to life and well-being and then granted them shamanic powers. The wolf is the animal who most frequently bestows these gifts (Boas 1966, 129-31, 135; Boas 1930 1:43-4, 46-7, 54-5; Boas 1925, 28-9). As salmon "set right" (hił-) the humans who pray to them, shamans similarly hiłika ("set right, heal") their patients – from the same stem hił- (e.g., Boas 1921, 729-31). It is a curious point that salmon, the healing beings whose natural cycle is to die and come back every year, are not the shamans of myth or ritual. That this role belongs to the Wolves suggests that, in some sense, these predators from the winter side of the world were seen as corresponding to or contrasting with the salmon.

A last factor linking Wolves to both shamanism and the winter ceremonial seems to have been the way in which real shamanism was used as an analogy for the ceremonial. The ceremonial's managers were called "shamans" (pəχəla), although these were considered only metaphoric or "make-believe shamans" (c̓ɛqa pəχəla) (Boas 1966, 172). The managers did, however, play a quasi-shamanic role in "bringing back" the abducted novice and restoring him or her to a human state. There were also close parallels between descriptions of the initiation experiences of both shamans and the ceremonial's initiates (Boas 1966, 135). The discussion so far suggests where the roots of this analogy may lie: the winter ceremonial stands between game and predator, summer wealth and winter hunger, just as the resurrecting shaman stands between life and death, and is able to move dynamically from one state to the other and back again.

We will return to this notion shortly. It is first necessary, however, to examine the status of Raven, Mink, and their party in a world in which the categories *game* and *predator*, *summer* and *winter*, seemingly embrace and divide all inhabitants. Let us consider natural history

again for a moment. While the membership of Raven's party changes from narrative to narrative, there is a more or less constant core that includes the chief, Raven (under various names); Deer; Mink; Raccoon and Young Raccoon; and Land Otter. With the exception of Deer, all of these animals are carnivores (but small-time carnivores), and they are also scavengers, omnivores, and lovers of human refuse. One text refers to the propensity of minks to steal clams that humans have dug for their own consumption (Boas and Hunt 1906, 145). The young of these animals are easy prey for a dog or, perhaps more significantly, a wolf. The deer, while herbivorous and a significant game animal, is portrayed in the stories as the beserker warrior of Raven's people, the first Fool Dancer, an image that no doubt derives from autumn battles between antlered bucks. If these animals are game, they are hardly the peaceful, bountiful salmon; and if they are predators, they are hardly the terrifying grizzly bear or the immense Thunderbird who hunts whales as his "salmon."

In myth, the summer or winter attributes of these characters – the extent to which they are portrayed as possessing wealth or being hungry or harmful – are similarly ambiguous. Unrestrained greediness and sexual appetite are important, even defining, characteristics of Raven and Mink, but the action that results is always comic and often comically disgusting or horrifying (Boas and Hunt 1905, 287-91; Boas 1906, 113-47; Boas 1910, 122-61, 235-7; Boas 1935b, 16-7). Raven's uncontrollable flatulence and diarrhea upon consuming too much oil contrasts sharply with the solemn and terrible events that result when true predators indulge their appetites: a hero is rent to bloody bits and consumed or split open like a fish and hung up to dry (Boas and Hunt 1905, 46-7, 362).

The ability of these characters to produce wealth in food is correspondingly limited. Mink's salmon trap in "Mink and the Wolves" is a great achievement for him; elsewhere, the powers of he and Raven to catch or generate food are pathetic when compared to those of other animals. The embarrassments of Mink and/or Raven when they attempt to imitate the feasts of other History People exemplify this. For example, when Thrush Woman holds a feast, she sings her song four times and fills four boxes with salmonberries. Mink attempts the same but, to the disgust of his waiting guests, produces only a single berry (Boas 1906, 147-60; also Boas 1910, 151-7, 236-41).[16]

[16] Raven and Mink also seem to possess the power of resurrection, but the use they make of it is often less than awe-inspiring. Mink, in particular, has a tendency to die and come

Raven, Mink, and company are similarly situated with regard to cosmography. Fish and other sea creatures are portrayed as living in a country far across the ocean, located at ƛasudalalis ("the ocean side of the world"). This country is sometimes, as in the prayers quoted above, called the "Land of Wealth" (q̓umxdəm̓ʔs). The ocean itself is portrayed as a World River flowing roughly northward and westward, with a vast Rivermouth (-[x]siu) somewhere out beyond the open seas of the Pacific. The Land of Wealth is located near or beyond the World Rivermouth, which empties out of "our world" into some vaster, unknown cosmic ocean at g̱ʷabalis, the "downriver end of the world" (from g̱ʷa- ["downriver"] and -ba ["end of horizontal long object"]) (Boas 1921, 837; Berman 1991, 543, 591, 593).

At the opposite end of the World River are its headwaters in the forested mountains, at ʔaƛudalalis ("the forest side of the world"). Wolves are linked to deep forest; in fact, the common words for "wolf" and "wolf tribe" derive from the stem ʔaƛ- ("inland, forest, into the forest"). A "wolf" is ʔaƛanəm, literally "forest one," while "wolf tribe" (ʔaƛulinuχ̣ʷ) is literally "forest people." Note the name of the Wolf chief in "Mink and the Wolves," Nungɛχ̣toy̓i ("Wolf-At-The-Headwaters").[17] This name could be understood as referring to the River's world-spanning Headwaters at the end opposite the World Rivermouth.

Raven and his younger brothers are situated in the middle, between the forest-dwelling wolves and the ocean-going salmon. They are creatures often found near shore. In Kwakwaka̲'wakw country, a region of dense forest, many islands and inlets, and a great deal of shoreline, these animals all make heavy use of the intertidal zone. Minks, raccoons, and land otters make their homes near the beach, like humans, and come down to the beach at low tide for shellfish. Ravens scavenge the beach at low tide, and deer – whom we might at first think of as a typically "forest" animal – can frequently be seen on beaches browsing on brush that grows at the edge of the forest canopy. The beach at low tide is a roadway for these animals as well. Forcing the Wolves to yield exclusive ownership of the ebb tide is particularly significant in this light.

back to life after doing something foolish. "Mink and the Wolves" is, in fact, one of the minority of the Mink texts published by Boas that does *not* end with Mink's embarrassed, self-conscious resurrection.

[17] From nun- ("wolf [myth name]") and -gɛq ("rim of hollow object, along riverbank") plus -[x̣]to ("tip of vertical long object"). In Kwak'wala rivers are classified as long objects; note the comparable form ʔug̱ɛx̣toy̓i ("headwaters") from ʔu- ("empty root") plus these suffixes (e.g., Boas 1930 1:60). Boas's translation of the name is "First Wolf," or "Head Wolf."

It would seem that these mediating characteristics are a key aspect of how Raven and his party create appropriate (hiłalazo) balance in the world. It may also be why they are antagonists of the shamanic Wolves. In a sense, in obtaining the winter ceremonial, Raven and Mink have inserted themselves into the Wolves' mediating role between summer and winter, life and death. This is not inappropriate, given the nature of their other world transformations. But, as with the others, the acquisition of the winter ceremonial requires force, trickery, and theft.

CONVECTION

Let us examine more closely what the Wolf ceremonial was intended to accomplish. After Wolf-At-The-Headwaters decides to hold a winter ceremonial, the Wolf villagers meet secretly ʔax̌i ("inland, in the forest") behind their town. The children go to a hut ʔuw̌ɛx̣toy̓i ("at the headwaters") of the river that flows into the ocean at their village site, a location that calls to mind their father's name, Wolf-At-The-Headwaters (Nungɛx̣toy̓i) (Boas 1930 1:60).

If the winter ceremonial had proceeded as planned, the Wolf chief's four sons would have returned from seclusion to complete their initiation into their father's Ẇalasax̣aʔakʷ ("Great [Dance] from Above") (Boas 1930 1:57). In this dance, as performed in real life in the nineteenth century, "all the men of the tribe dress in blankets and headdresses representing the wolf" and dance in imitation of "the motions of wolves" (Boas 1897, 477). It would seem that the Wolf children were supposed to come back and dance in Wolf form, having acquired the full spirit power of Wolves. They would have undergone a rite of passage that would have matured them into spirit beings like their father.[18]

Hunt's comments on the cosmogonical distinctions between different categories of dances support this interpretation. According to him, the earliest category of winter dances, which includes the Wolf dance, descends directly from the era of the History People (*KM* 6:4969; *KM* 3:4624). The dancer dresses up in the costume of his or her animal ancestor: "what Ever kind of Bird a man Belongs to his Dance will Be as he was Befor he turned into a man. and [for those who were] the animals [it is] the same" (*KM* 6:4969). This suggests that we are indeed

[18] This last point is not entirely certain, since there is, as noted above, a range of viewpoints concerning exactly how the History People dress or undress when they dance in the winter ceremonial.

Plate 2: The Wolves' Winter Dance, called Walasaχa?aƛ̓ ("Great [Dance] from Above,") as performed in the late nineteenth century (from Boas 1897, plate 36).

supposed to understand the Wolf novices' initiation as their personal acquisition of Wolf nature, which will include dressing in a Wolf mask – in their animal form and nature – and obtaining Wolf spirit power. And, perhaps, the final stage of their initiation would consist of being "tamed" and restored to a secular (human) state by the managers of the winter ceremonial.

The initiation does not go as planned, however. After all the Wolves have danced in the proper order, and the novices still have not appeared on the roof of the house as expected, the Wolves ask Raven to "change places" with them (χaẏuǧ̓əliɬ) in the ceremonial of bringing back, in case Raven and his younger brothers can succeed where the Wolves have failed (Boas 1930 1:77). This Raven indeed does, though the "novice" who appears is Mink. This is when Mink displays the two headdresses, the sisəyuχ, and the dead Wolf child's severed head.[19]

It is Mink, that small person who speaks like a child (Boas 1930 1:81, 91), who until now has always behaved with incredible irresponsibility – a case of arrested development if there ever was one – who undergoes the rite of passage to empowered adulthood. It is stated elsewhere that by killing the Wolf children and assuming the head of one of them as a mask, Mink acquires Wolf spirit power. He afterwards uses "Wolf"

[19] The novices are properly supposed to appear on the roof of the house and to jump down inside. When the ceremonial's participants try to surround and hold them, they disappear again. This procedure is repeated a number of times until the novices are finally tamed through songs and dances (Boas 1897, 520-37).

(Nun) as his initiate's name (Boas 1897, 478). Mink has indeed "changed places" with the Wolf children. It is he who is initiated into Wolf-dom.

This "changing places" appears to be the critical deed performed by Mink. Exactly what it accomplishes – the outcome of the acquisition of the winter ceremonial – is symbolized by the two headdresses he displays at the climax of "Mink and the Wolves." First Mink shows the double-headed serpent with the "middle face of" Deer, one of his brothers; then he wears "as a mask" "the dead prince of the Wolf People," one of his mortal enemies. These are two views of Mink's great world transformation.

Consider the secular, human era as it would be without the winter ceremonial. Raven did establish the summer salmon runs, which sustain and heal, "set right," the grateful human beneficiaries. The ceremonialism of the summer season – the reverential treatment of the salmon – is directed towards maintaining the yearly bounty from the Land of Wealth.

In sharp contrast, the creatures of winter, of the primeval age of the world – who had, until Raven compelled them to share, hoarded many life-sustaining goods (including celestial light, fair weather, fresh water, and the tides) – remain highly dangerous to humans. Grizzlies devour them; stormy weather brings hunger or death by drowning. In winter, humans are game and the winter beings predators. Wolves are among these winter creatures: they are autumn warriors; hunters; eaters of mink, deer, and human corpses.

While Raven has so far established balance and periodicity with respect to many aspects of the world, there is, as yet, prior to the acquisition of the winter ceremonial, no balance or periodicity in the *ecological* dynamic – no true reciprocity. The relationship in both seasons only goes one way. Wolves eat humans, who eat salmon. Whether in winter or summer, the mouths, as it were – the vectors of predation – all face downriver. It is as though all wealth ultimately originates in the Salmon world, Q̓umxdeḿ?s ("the Land of Wealth"). Moreover, humans have no control over this dynamic. In summer they are dependent upon the pity of the wealthy; in winter they are hapless victims of the hungry. Humans can neither effectively return the feast to the summer beings nor retaliate in war against the creatures of winter. To create balance, humans must be able to reverse the vectors – to become the prey of Salmon or to become active predators of Salmon and/or Wolves. Acquisition of the winter ceremonial by Raven and his younger brothers, ancestors of and proxies for human beings, establishes this kind of ecological balance.

In the first part of "Mink and the Wolves," we see, in effect, the two "natural" ecological relationships of the initial unidirectional world ecology: salmon swim into Mink's salmon trap and Mink is tormented by Wolves. But then Mink acquires the double-headed serpent, which swims into his salmon trap after every other kind of fish in the world has done so and been rejected. Mink calls the sisəyuχ his "salmon" (ḵutəla), but it is a strange sort of salmon indeed. Now two reversed, or inverted, relationships come into being: his mother is harmed by a salmon and Mink defeats the Wolves for all time. It is the sisəyuχ that makes the reversals possible. And, a key point, Mink is able to trap the sisəyuχ because he was first able to catch salmon outside of their ordinary season of generosity, changing himself from a passive recipient of their wealth into an active predator of them.

While all five relationships appear in "Mink and the Wolves," the two desirable, empowered ones are given bigger play: the power to obtain salmon and the power to defeat the Wolves. In these two relationships, active power is now directed in opposite directions from humanity – towards the ocean-going salmon on the one hand and towards the wolves of the forest on the other. Mink is now a predator in both directions. The sisəyuχ can be read as a diagram of these new, transformed, and active relationships: the human head (called the face of Mink's brother, Deer) in the middle, a serpent head facing in each direction.

Let us consider the themes of inversion and reversal a little further. In the course of "Mink and the Wolves," many things become their opposite. The onset of winter becomes sockeye season, and a mink (in some versions assisted by a deer) kills wolves. The "salmon's" effects on the Wolves and, earlier, on Mink's unfortunate mother contrast sharply with the beneficent "setting right" that genuine salmon are supposed to accomplish. In fact, in some versions of "Mink and the Wolves," the narrators emphasize that, upon seeing the sisəyuχ, the head of Mink's mother "twists" (səlq̓̆əmiʔsta): her head "faces backward" (la ʔaχəg̱əmaχis xum̓sdi) and her body "turns over" (ləxʔid) (Boas and Hunt 1906, 107; Boas 1897, 726).[20] She is that way, Mink

[20] "Head turned backward" is Boas's published gloss for what he writes (converted into the orthography used here) as laʔaχəg̱əmaχis xum̓sti. This transcription dates from his earliest work both with George Hunt and with the Kwak'wala language. It is difficult to analyze and probably incorrect. The phrase, perhaps, should be three words – la ʔaχəgəmałis xum̓sdi – where the stem of the verbal (second) form would be ʔaχəgəmała ("facing [turned] inland"). The entire phrase would mean something like "head [which has changed state] is turned facing inland." In the story, Mink's mother has just gone down to the beach and glanced into his canoe, so she would have been facing seaward before spotting the sisəyuχ.

tells a bystander, because she is "grateful" (muməlq̓a) for the salmon he brought her (Boas 1930 1:76) – a statement that, most likely, is the opposite of the truth. Mink causes the Wolves' bodies to become "twisted" as well.

Second, because of Mink, the Wolves' ceremonial itself undergoes a kind of reversal. This time, the secular (baX̌əs) Raven and his younger brother, who are ordinarily excluded from Wolf ceremonials, "change places" with the Wolves. The disappearance and restoration of the Wolf children becomes, through Mink's interference, their real and irreversible death, while it is the baX̌əs (secular) killers, Mink and his party, who end up dancing as though they are the returned, initiated novices. The end result is the defeat and banishment of the Wolves into the forest for all time.

The Wolf children had tried to impose a backward, reversed state on Mink himself when they stole his musk bag and he was forced to proceed hind-end first. When Mink wears the wolf head "as a mask," he is not merely wearing a rather nastily decorative headdress. As discussed above, the true mask of a History Person is a powerful transformative principle that is both the thing that transforms and the end result of the transformation. When Mink puts on a Wolf "mask," he is seizing the Wolf spirit power, which, ordinarily, would have gone to the Wolf child. He is more generally portraying a reversal of natural history: the ability to move from one role to the other, from prey to predator.[21] Through his actions, Mink has transformed himself into his opposite. Like the Wolves, he is now a winter warrior who can obtain plenty in the season of hunger.

Both the sisəyuƛ and Wolf headdresses thus represent achievement of balance through reversal, or inversion, of predator-game relationships. The sisəyuƛ headdress refers to the transformation of world ecological vectors – changing human ancestors from passive recipients of food or victims of predation into active predators of both their game and their own former predators. Mink's Wolf mask refers more specifically to the ability of human ancestors to become their opposite – here, again, prey becoming predator.

After Mink's victory, empowered human ancestors can potentially "change places" with, and transform into, their opposites. In a world of static, cyclic opposing states – light and dark, high and low tide,

[21] The text states that Mink puts a Wolf head on the "top of his head" (ʔuχλεy̓i – a word that also means "name"). As noted above, Mink is said to have thereafter used Nun ("Wolf") as his initiate's name.

storm and fair weather, summer and winter, predator and game – the changes that Mink's actions have initiated could perhaps be described as the achievement of dynamic balance through *convection*.

If this is, indeed, the correct reading of "Mink and the Wolves," and if, as the sources state, "what was done" by Mink was the thing that divided the History People into human and animals for good, then we must conclude that this changeability is the essence of true humanness. Those who become their opposites and change back (Mink and his party) become human; those who do not become animals. Yet another reading of the sisəyuχ headdress is that humanness (the human head in the centre) is achieved through being able to act in both ecological directions (the two serpent heads) – both upriver and downriver.

Lack of space prevents full consideration of an important aspect of the form of the winter ceremonial that Raven and Mink bequeathed to humankind – the reason the Kwak'wala term for "winter ceremonial" (c̓ic̓ɛqa) literally translates as "false, fraudulent, make-believe" (Boas 1966, 172). The "falseness" of the secular-age ceremonial may well connect to the notion of "imitation" of chiefs and ancestors, in a positive moral sense, which I have discussed elsewhere (Berman 1991, 84-7; 1992, 154-5). But it also seems likely to connect to the very nature of what Mink has done. Note that in the story of Fiery and the Thunderbirds, Mink was one of the warriors who donned a salmon mask and became a (real) king salmon. In "Mink and the Wolves," Mink does not seize a Wolf's real spirit mask; he only affixes a Wolf head upon his own head and calls it a mask. It may be that the establishment of convection and true changeability prohibits dressing in any real spirit mask – one through which one would *become* that animal, assuming its full nature as one's own.

PASSING THROUGH THE HOUSE OF BAX̌ BAK̓ ALANUX̌ SIWI?

By the late nineteenth century, the Bax̌baḵ̓alanux̌siwi? (the so-called "Cannibal spirit") and the dancers this spirit initiates had come to occupy the most prominent position in the winter ceremonial. In "Mink and the Wolves," Bax̌baḵ̓alanux̌siwi? is entirely absent and the Wolves are given the central role. Boas noted that the form of the ceremonial, as described in "Mink and the Wolves," "seems to be closest to the Wolf ceremonial" of the neighbouring Nuu-chah-nulth peoples. He cited oral history and other data to conclude that "the older form of the ceremonial has nothing to do with the Cannibal

ceremonial, but refers to the wolves and to WínagElis, the Warrior-of-the-World" (Boas 1966, 258-9).

George Hunt viewed the winter ceremonial of late nineteenth-century Fort Rupert as the product of a series of accretions. The first group of dances dated to the time when some of the nuχ̣nim̓is (the History People) turned into "true men." Thereafter, those human beings "dance[d] according to what kind of animal" they had been, and "the Father give his Dance to his son from that Day to this Present Day" (*KM* 6:5024). This group of dances includes the nułmał, or Fool Dance (Deer's Dance); the Grizzly Bear Dance; and the dances of Wolf, Mink, Land Otter, Thunderbird, Raven, and Eagle, among others (*KM* 6:4969).

In the second half of the myth age, after the separation of humans and animals, children and grandchildren of the first fully human men and women ventured into the deep forest or out to sea, where they encountered powerful spirit beings. "[T]hese spirits appears to the first man of each one clan or nEmemot and tells him what to Do. what kind of Dances he will use. [But] that is after the myth [History] People Past" (*KM* 6:4969).

The stories of these encounters belong to the ethno-literary category referred to as nuyəmił or nəwiləm. These stories describe, among other things, the acquisition of another group of dances, which includes the Tuχ̣ʔid (War Dance) and the Həmhəmc̓əs (an earlier "Cannibal" dance) (*KM* 6:4969). While in myth a diverse set of beings initially granted the dances to human ancestors, in real life many of these dancers were said to have been initiated by the warrior spirit Winalagəlis ("waging war throughout the world"), the chief spirit patron of the winter ceremonial before Baχ̣baq̓alanuχ̣siwiʔ (Boas 1966, 173).

The final set of accretions to the winter ceremonial, according to Hunt, occurred in the historic period, with the acquisition of the Hamat'sa complex (the so-called "Cannibal" dances) through marriage and war from the northern neighbours of the Kwakwaka'wakw – the Heiltsuk and Oowekeeno peoples.[22] The patron spirit of these newest dances, which superseded the others in status and importance, was Baχ̣baq̓alanuχ̣siwiʔ, a being with an unassuageable appetite for human flesh. Formally, the initiation stories are very similar to those of the

[22] Hunt was aware of variation and elaboration in this developmental sequence among various divisions of the Kwakwaka'wakw, but he was most concerned with the four Kaguł divisions of Fort Rupert.

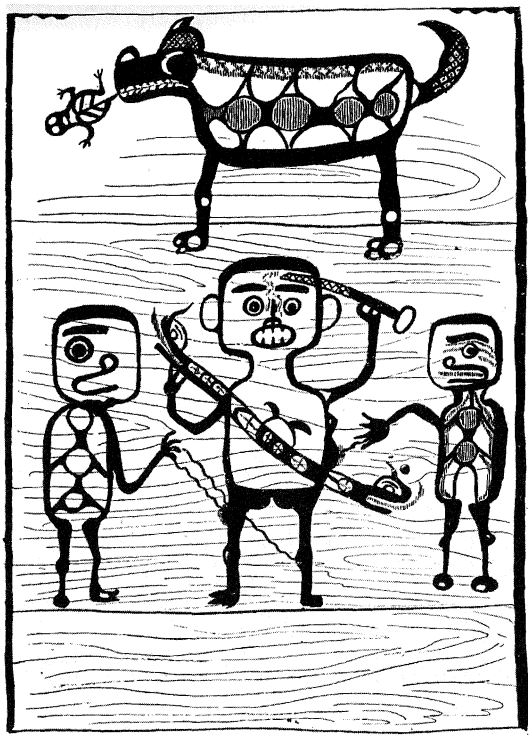

Plate 3: Top: a wolf swallowing a man. Bottom: a winter dancer wearing a sisəyuχ belt, flanked by his assistants. Painting from an interior wall of a house (from Boas 1896, plate 40, fig. 1).

Tuχ̣ʷʔid and Həmhəmc̓əs dances. They uniformly take place during the second half of the myth age and involve fully human descent-group ancestors. These latter two categories of dances might appear, on the face of it, to differ considerably from the first, and the nature of their link to the themes of "Mink and the Wolves" might at first seem obscure. It is important to note, however, that Hunt collected the "strickly secret" version of "Mink and the Wolves" in 1926. Ninety-nine years after the introduction of the first Hamat'sa dance among the Fort Rupert descent groups (GH/FB 11/19/11), "Mink and the Wolves" was still offered as the framework within which the entire winter ceremonial, including the Cannibal dances, had meaning.

Let us examine the initiation stories of the latter two categories of dances a little more closely. These stories, which are set in the second half of the myth age, have already been briefly described above. They quite often feature an adolescent hero who is hurt or killed, restored to life, and to whom spiritual wealth is granted before his or her triumphant return home. As an example, there is the adventure of four sisters who stray deep into the forest and come upon a house, where they seek shelter (Boas and Hunt 1906, 45-60). It proves to be inhabited by a fat, beaked woman who kills the two younger girls, guts them, splits them open, and hangs them up to dry by the fire. A handsome young man takes pity on the two living girls and resurrects their dead sisters with Water of Life. He marries the oldest and takes

all four to his father, the Sun, who grants them wealth of all kinds along with various dances. Eventually, the girls return home and hold a winter ceremonial, displaying their dances.

While the hero does not die in every one of these acquisition stories, and sometimes it is the spirit being who dies instead, the theme of death and resurrection often figures prominently. Here, the specific connections between the salmon's power of resurrection, shamanism, and the winter ceremonial become more obvious. Tellingly, in real life, the initiate of these dances was, in his or her first year as a dancer, called ċiχ̣əɬala (ʔ)("gutted salmon") and later xəlk̓ʷ ("dried meat or fish") (Curtis 1915, 155-9; GH/FB 1/28/1918). These terms recall the fate of the two dead sisters whom the beaked woman filleted and hung up to dry, and they also indicate a link to death and resurrection.

It would appear that, while in "Mink and the Wolves" the prey (Mink) changes places with the predator (the Wolves), here the predators (human beings) are represented as symbolically becoming their game (salmon). While true salmon are dependent upon humans returning their remains to the water, the human hero is dependent upon a pitying spirit to apply Water of Life. The end result is similar, though: the dead will come to life and return home.

The crucial difference between the initiate of Baχ̣baqʷalanuχ̣siwiʔ and the true salmon, however, is the further inversion in his or her nature that the initiate undergoes. The novice who becomes the "gutted salmon" and then the "dried fish" of Baχ̣baqʷalanuχ̣siwiʔ *returns home a predator of human beings.* Until tamed and made human again by the winter ceremonial's managers, the Hamat'sa, or Cannibal dancer, is supposed to be possessed of an insatiable appetite for human flesh. The human predator of summer (the fisherman) becomes the prey of winter spirits (a symbolic salmon); the salmon dies and comes back to life as a dangerous winter predator (a proxy of Baχ̣baqʷalanuχ̣siwiʔ). The eater becomes the eaten, who becomes the eater again.

This pattern of ecological convection is more radical than that created in "Mink and the Wolves." It is as though Mink had been killed and eaten by the Wolves, had been resurrected by them, and then had returned home as a Wolf and tried to eat his own kin until tamed and brought back to himself. Instead of placing humans in the middle, as the predator in two directions, this pattern conflates the two conditions (either being predator or being prey) into a single dynamically changing opposition within human nature and between humans and the spirit world as a whole.

The essence of this type of convection is illustrated starkly in one initiation story involving BaX̌baK̓alanuX̌siwi?:

> Quick-moving Woman [the Mouse] spoke, "Go on, watch me closely, for when I come down [from the tree] I will take you and swallow you whole. You will go straight [through] to my other end, [and] remain alive ... You will also do the same to me ..." As soon as she came to the ground she took Yaxsťał and swallowed him whole. As soon as she had him entirely inside, Yaxsťał came right through, out the anus of Quick-moving Woman ... Yaxsťał ... took Quick-moving Woman and swallowed her whole. As soon as he had her entirely inside, she went right through, out of Yaxsťał's anus. Quick-moving woman spoke. She said, "Oh, friend, now you have correctly imitated [nəx̣c̓o] BaX̌baK̓alanuX̌siwi?." (Boas 1910, 428-31).

All of this sheds new light on the meaning of the name BaX̌baK̓alanuX̌siwi?, which has never been satisfactorily explained in relation to the winter ceremonial. The name, like the dances with which it is associated, comes from the neighbouring Heiltsuk and Oowekeeno peoples, whose language is a relative of Kwak'wala. In Heiltsuk/Oowekyala, BaX̌baK̓alanuX̌siwi? derives from a stem baX̌baK̓ala- ("becoming increasingly human") and the suffix -X̌siu ("passing through an aperture") (Hilton and Rath 1982). This suffix is equivalent to the Kwak'wala suffix -xso, which, among its other meanings, is used in reference to the process of initiation, as in laxso, the high-ranking initiates who have "passed through" the house of BaX̌baK̓alanuX̌siwi? (Boas 1966, 174). One suspects that the meaning of the winter ceremonial was the same for the Heiltsuk and the Oowekeeno as it was for the Kwakwaka'wakw: through the constant exchange of roles – from wealthy, generous game to grateful, hungry recipient, from hapless prey to ravening, violent predator – the primordial single-natured animal becomes a fully changeable human and the noble child becomes a chiefly adult. And it is the being BaX̌baK̓alanuX̌siwi? ("becoming increasingly human") who sponsors this transformation.

The Kwakwaka'wakw did not, however, interpret the name in this way. As the stem baX̌baK̓ala- in Kwak'wala can mean "eating humans" and the suffix -X̌siu means "rivermouth," Kwak'wala speakers understood the name to mean "Eater of human flesh at the rivermouth" (Boas 1966, 173; Curtis 1915, 160). If the name follows the pattern of other spirit names that refer to rivermouths, then it would denote the World Rivermouth at the far side of the ocean near the land where

the salmon make their homes.[23] In Kwakwaka'wakw stories about Baxʷbakʷalanuxʷsiwi?, however, he is always encountered deep in the inland forests at the opposite end of the world.

It seems likely that the Kwakwaka'wakw interpretation of Baxʷbakʷalanuxʷsiwi?'s name refers to the human initiates' symbolic transformation into salmon. Note that the World Rivermouth is said to be the door through which salmon come into our world (Boas and Hunt 1905, 171; Boas 1921, 714), while the wall beyond the forest side of the world has a door through which humans come into the world to be born into human wombs (Boas and Hunt 1905, 77). Baxʷbakʷalanuxʷsiwi?'s Rivermouth would, then, be the metaphorical, inverted Rivermouth (another reversal!) of a river of land into which human salmon swim.

Ordinary rivermouths, where fresh water meets salt, and currents and tides mix, were, as noted above, connected to the ability of salmon to resuscitate (Boas 1921, 609). We can speculate that the World Rivermouth – the place where salmon "came through" (are born) into our world – also fulfilled a magical resuscitating function, or perhaps represented the function performed by all the lesser rivermouths. Baxʷbakʷalanuxʷsiwi?'s "Rivermouth" would refer to the place where humans, consumed by predatory spirits, are then restored to life.

And here we return once more to dyed cedar bark, the primary symbol of the winter ceremonial. The word for red-dyed cedar bark is ʔaġəkʷ, derived from the root ʔaq̓- ("red, copper") and a passive participle suffix =kʷ. The term means, literally, "made red" or "made copper."[24] We can speculate that dressing in the red-dyed cedar bark ornaments is another way in which winter ceremonial participants become (like) salmon. Salmon are, of course, red fish: their flesh is very red when raw and remains pink when fresh-cooked; smoked or dried salmon can be particularly coppery in colour. Perhaps just as significantly, most species of Pacific salmon *become* red in summer. Silvery during the rest of their life cycle, salmon grow reddish as they enter the spawning stage. Sockeye in particular, both male and female, become a bright orange-red over most of their bodies. The sockeye run occurs in June or July, at the onset of the sunniest weather, so that

[23] The erroneous belief that, in Kwak'wala, "rivermouth" refers to a mouth has helped to fuel discussions about Kwakwaka'wakw "orality." In nineteenth-century Kwak'wala, a river was classified grammatically as a long object (like a branch or pole), while a "mouth" was the opening to a bag, bottle, house, room, or entrance to a bay – the opening to a hollow object. Thus the locative noun ʔuǧɛxtoy̓i, which I have here translated "headwaters," is literally "riverbank at tip of vertical long object" (Berman 1990).

[24] There is a great deal more that could be said regarding the symbolism of copper and redness and the connection of this to salmon (see, for example, Berman 1991, 661-3).

the reddest are most closely linked to summer. Sockeye, we may recall, was the species of salmon that Mink magically trapped at the onset of winter and that the Wolf children then stole from him.

When Mink and Raven acquired the winter ceremonial, they changed the world and themselves as well. By establishing ecological convection (transforming predator into prey and vice versa) and putting themselves at the centre of these transformations, they created true humanness – a mutable, empowered humanness that participates in all possible ecological roles and relationships vis-à-vis the spirit world.

This view of human nature is expressed within a number of contexts in the secular age. Let us note just one instance of how "convection" was lived in real life: the roles of host and guest. In the Boas-Hunt myth texts, the being who grants a treasure is a wealth owner, a generous game animal, who in some cases offers his people or even his own flesh to the hero as food. The salmon, again, is the prototype of this figure. The names a human chief used when he gave certain kinds of feasts echo the notion of the host as game animal: Mənlas ("place of satiation [with fat or oil]"), Pənpənχəlas ("place of growing fat"), χ̓ənkəlas ("place of getting a full belly"), and so on (Boas and Hunt 1905, 381). Generosity is one of the prime attributes of a good host.

The nineteenth-century potlatch oratory recorded by Hunt, however, reverses the roles of host and guest. The host is the fisherman (the predator). Guests are his "salmon" (k̓utəla, mɛʔ), many guests are a "school" (wayoq̓axiwiʔ) caught in his "salmon weir" (λawayu) (i.e., his house) (Boas 1925, 152, 172-4). Giving away property is "swallowing the guests" (Boas 1897, 559). The vector is reversed. Generosity, in these images, becomes predation, aggression.

And, further, in an economic and political system based on reciprocity, the guest always has to return the feast. So the "salmon" guests become, in turn, the fishermen, and the former owner of the fishing weir becomes a salmon. Roles are always changing and are always reflective of the larger relationships between human and spirit worlds – the dynamic world that Raven and Mink brought into being.

This article has attempted to uncover at least some of what Boas referred to as the "fundamental meaning" and "religious value" of the nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw winter ceremonial. It examined the broader context of the ceremonial, beginning with the conceptual divide between summer (season of fair weather) and winter (season of storm). In the yearly cycle of the nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw,

summer was devoted to fishing while winter was given up to the great winter ceremonial. The summer season, however, possessed its own ceremonialism, which was devoted to the maintenance of salmon runs. Both summer and winter ritual portrayed humans as, at least in part, passive or powerless with respect to the spirit world. In the prayer and ritual of the summer season, humans appeared as grateful recipients of the salmon's generosity; in the imagery of the winter ceremonial, humans were the hapless prey of the ceremonial's spirit patrons.

Within this context, I further considered the world transformations of the myth age, during which Raven, Mink, and their younger brothers obtained many important goods, including the salmon runs and the winter ceremonial. In these transformations, Raven and Mink establish an appropriate balance between opposing states such as summer and winter, or light and darkness. In the case of the winter ceremonial acquisition myth, "Mink and the Wolves," the opposing states are (1) the condition of being game or prey and (2) the condition of being predator. The initial situation of Raven and his party – passively dependent on the generosity of the Salmon, on the one hand, and potential victims of the Wolves, on the other – mirrors the two kinds of real-life human relationship with the spirit world that were portrayed in summer ritual and winter ritual, respectively. In the story, by first actively trapping the healing salmon and the harmful double-headed serpent, and then by killing the Wolf children and "changing places" with them in the Wolves' winter ceremonial, Mink reverses the original ecological vectors, turning himself into an empowered predator acting in both directions. Mink's actions ultimately transform Raven and his party into true human beings and bring about the permanent separation of humans and animals. The achievement of this changeability – to be able to act as both game and predator – appears as a central goal of real-life initiates during the late nineteenth century. The novice similarly passes, in symbolic fashion, from one ecological role to the other. He or she begins as the prey of the abducting spirit, and like a salmon, dies and comes back to life. The resurrected novice, however, becomes a dangerous predator of humans until finally "tamed."

GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

The characters used here to write Kwak'wala denote sounds both familiar and unfamiliar to English speakers. Generally, /i/ is pronounced as in North American *beet,* /ε/ as in *bet,* /a/ as in *pot,* /ə/ as in *but,* /o/ as in *bought,* and /u/ as in *boot.* The consonants are somewhat more complex. The diacritic /'/ and the character /ʔ/ represent glottalization (the catch in the throat at the beginning of vowels in *I ate eight eggs*); thus the difference between /m/ and /m̓/. The barred /ł/, a lateral fricative, is similar to Welsh ll (English speakers often hear it as lth). The lambda (/λ/) is affricated, somewhat like the effect of pronouncing a *d* and an *l* simultaneously; the barred lambda (/ƛ/) is like *tl.* The character /x/ represents a velar fricative sound similar to Russian *x* or the German *ch* in *ich.* /K/, /k̓/, /g/ and /x/ are always pronounced as if an /i/ or /y/ followed; thus k̓ʷaguł sounds approximately like *kwagyulth.* The sounds of the corresponding "uvular" series, /q/, /q̓/, /g̱/, and /x̣/, are not so palatalized but are otherwised pronounced similarly, from a position further back in the throat. /C/ is like English *ts* and /z/ like English *dz.*

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