Structuralism and "The Story of Asdiwal"

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A Re-analysis of a Tsimshian Myth

by

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Abstract

This thesis shows that the criticisms of Lévi-Strauss' analysis, entitled "The Story of Asdiwal", arise out of the careless application of structuralist principles on the part of Lévi-Strauss. They are not due to problems inherent in structuralism itself. To further this point, the story of *Asdiwal* is re-analyzed using a rigourous application of structuralism which avoids the mistakes made by Lévi-Strauss. That is, it takes all the versions into account, considers the ethnographic material in detail, and uses those ethnographic sources with attention to focus and method of collection. The result is an analysis which shows the theme of the story of *Asdiwal* to be rivalry while the basic binary opposition is between competition and cooperation and not between the matriline and the patriline as Lévi-Strauss supposed.

Acknowledgements

Note on Orthography

Since there does not seem to be a consensus on the transcription of the dialects of the Tsimshian language, I have followed the example of John Cove (1987). In his words, "claiming no linguistic competence, and taking the coward's way out, I decided to avoid contributing to the confusion as much as possible. In quoting from written sources, I generally used their orthographies" but I omitted most diacritical marks, particularly those not found on a conventional keyboard.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"The Story of Asdiwal" is a narrative of the Tsimshian people—a Native American people of the northwest coast of what is now British Columbia. It is also the title of Lévi-Strauss' influential and controversial analysis of the Tsimshian narrative. This analysis continues to be one of the few widely-read examples of Lévi-Strauss' method. Yet, it has already been criticized from two perspectives: John Adams (1974) and Alice Kasakoff (1974) have pointed to the discrepancies between the conclusions about Tsimshian culture which Lévi-Strauss draws from the myth and the reality of Tsimshian society; and, Thomas, Kronenfeld, and Kronenfeld (1976) object to the internal inconsistencies in Lévi-Strauss' analysis. These problems are not inherent in structural analysis but rather they arose out of a limited and careless application of structuralist principles.

In ethnographic sources, there are three versions of the story of *Asdiwal* collected by Franz Boas and one collected by William Beynon. In addition, Boas and Beynon each collected one version of the story of *Waux*, son of *Asdiwal*, an extension of the story of *Asdiwal* which Lévi-Strauss incorporates into his analysis. Boas collected one version of the story of *Asdiwal* in the Nass River area and this version will be referred to as Boas 1902, according to the year it was published. He collected his other two versions of this story in the Skeena River area and these two will be referred to as Boas 1895 and Boas 1912, again according to the years they were published. Boas' version of the story of *Waux* will likewise be referred to as 1916-*Waux*. The story of *Asdiwal* was collected by Beynon in the Nass River area and the story of *Waux* he collected in the Skeena River area. These two will be referred to as Beynon-*Asdiwal* and Beynon-*Waux*. There is not sufficient space within a single chapter to summarize all of these versions, but summaries have been supplied in the appendix.

Since Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the story of *Asdiwal* will be the subject of much of the following paper, it will be useful to briefly review the content of that analysis. First of all, six versions of the narrative have been used here, but Lévi-Strauss used only the four versions Boas collected (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 147). Of these four, he depended primarily on Boas 1912 "to define the essential points of [the story's] structure" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 152). He determined that the story of *Asdiwal* had four distinct aspects: physical and political geography, economic life, social and family organizations, and cosmology (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 152). Within these aspects Lévi-Strauss found what he considered to be the structure of the narrative. He suggests that the oppositions high/low, land/water, mountain hunting/sea hunting, and peak/valley are all found in the story and represent, in order, a gradual lessening of the degree of opposition between the terms (1976: 163). These particular oppositions are drawn from the geographical and cosmological aspects of the narrative and indicate horizontal and vertical movement. Next, Lévi-Strauss suggests that there is in Boas 1912 a sociological schema in which the narrative moves from patrilocal residence through a mother and daughter only arrangement to matrilocal residence, and from there to patrilocal residence and finally to a father and son only arrangement (1976: 164). To this, he adds a techno-economic schema in which the story apparently moves from famine to candlefish to salmon and finally to a successful hunt (1976: 164). His final set of oppositions, then, consists of female/male, east-west/high-low, famine/repletion, and movement/immobility (1976: 164).

At this point, in Lévi-Strauss' own words, "having separated out the codes, we have analyzed the structure of the message. It now remains to decipher the meaning" (1976: 165). To do this, he relies on 1916-*Waux*, suggesting that the schemata in this version are homologous to and more explicit than those in Boas 1912 (1976: 165). He suggests that *Waux's* death in immobility and that of his wife in repletion close the sequence begun in the

story of *Asdiwal* in which the two sisters are set in motion by starvation (1976: 167). However, Lévi-Strauss argues (1976: 167), "the most important transformation is that represented by the marriage of Waux." It should be noted that Lévi-Strauss considers this marriage to be a matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in which *Waux* marries his mother's brother's daughter. He claims that,

> all the paradoxes conceived by the native [Tsimshian] mind, on the most diverse planes—geographic, economic, sociological, and even cosmological—are, when all is said and done, assimilated to that less obvious yet so real paradox, the dilemma which marriage with the matrilateral cousin attempts but fails to resolve. But the failure is *admitted* in our myths, and there precisely lies their function (1976: 170).

Unfortunately, Lévi-Strauss does not actually say what this dilemma is, but he does say that marriage with the matrilateral cross-cousin ought to overcome the conflict "between the patrilineal and matrilineal tendencies of Tsimshian society" (1976: 168). Later, using the example of "The Princess Who Rejected Her Cousin" (Boas 1916: 185-191), Lévi-Strauss suggests that, for the tribes of the Pacific Northwest Coast, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage fails to resolve the conflict between the respective matrilines of the prospective husband and wife (1976: 170). Presumably, he sees this failure from the perspective of the children of that union as one concerning conflict between their matrilineal and patrilineal relatives. As a further example of how the myth deals with this supposed conflict, Lévi-Strauss notes that *Waux* inherits his father's hunting grounds even while staying with his maternal kin. That is, *Waux* "managed to inherit in both the maternal and paternal lines at the same time" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 172). Presumably, Lévi-Strauss sees the death of *Waux* and his wife as a negative valuation of this arrangement, but he does not say. In addition, he suggests that conflict between matrilineal and patrilineal filiation and matrilateral marriage are related schematically to a conflict between matrilocal and patrilocal residence. For the purposes of this thesis, matrilocal residence is defined as resi-

dence with one's mother's people, one's own matrilineal relatives. This may or may not include one's mother. Patrilocal residence is defined as residence with one's father's people, one's own patrilineal relatives. It should be noted that, since the Tsimshian are a matrilineal society, one's father's people are father's mother's people. Such a residence arrangement may or may not include one's father. It should also be noted that Lévi-Strauss is probably not using the terms in this way, but he does not define them. Nonetheless, he claims that patrilocal residence is the Tsimshian norm (1976: 173) and implies that it is opposed to matrilocal residence in much the same way that matrilineal is opposed to patrilineal (1976: 168, 171-173).

From this, Lévi-Strauss turns to an explanation of the differences between the Nass (Boas 1902) and Skeena (Boas 1912) versions. The former, he claims, is a "very poor" version (1976: 176) and "a weakening of the Skeena version" (1976: 177). Specifically, he wants to show that "in passing from the Skeena to the Nass, the myth becomes distorted in two ways, which are structurally connected. First, it is reduced and, second, it is reversed" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 183). The reason for this is, he suggests, that

> when a mythical schema is transmitted from one population to another, and there exist differences of language, social organization, or way of life that make the myth difficult to communicate, it begins to become impoverished and confused. But one can find a limiting situation in which, instead of being finally obliterated by losing all its outlines, the myth is inverted and regains part of its precision (1976: 184).

By implication, the Nass (Boas 1902) version is an example of just such a 'limiting situation'.

Finally, fifteen years after the original publication of "The Story of Asdiwal", Lévi-Strauss added a postscript which dealt with the Boas 1895 version. He found that this version supported his analysis and allowed him to augment it, adding one more set of

oppositions. That is, he found that indiscretion (excess communication with others) is opposed to misunderstanding (lack of communication with others) and nostalgia (excess communication with oneself) is opposed to forgetfulness (lack of communication with oneself). He claimed that "forgetfulness would appear as a true category of mythical thought" and not just as a "gimmick" (1976: 191). However, he did not show how it is related to the meaning of the story, or to what the story is trying to communicate.

As noted above, this particular structural analysis has received its share of criticism. As I will show in the following chapter, to suggest, as has commonly been the tendency, that the problems of this analysis are inherent in structuralism is unjustified. However, this is not to suggest that structuralism itself is without its problems. As Ortner (1984: 144) has noted, the present movement in anthropology toward action and agent is at least in part a "direct reaction to structuralism." The reaction arose from the fact that structuralism insists on synchronic, as opposed to diachronic, analysis and that it tends to "disregard everything except the tale text" (Dundes 1976: 80; see also Eagleton 1983: 109). These aspects of structuralism implied "two interrelated features—the denial of the relevance of an intentional subject in the social and cultural process, and the denial of any significant impact of history or 'event' upon structure—[which] were felt to be particularly problematic, not to say unacceptable" (Ortner 1984: 137-138). Eagleton (1983: 113) puts it somewhat more forcefully saying: "To say that structuralism has a problem with the individual subject is to put it mildly: that subject was effectively liquidated, reduced to the function of an impersonal structure."

Rabinow and Sullivan make the related point that any objectivity achieved by structuralism is at the cost of subject and action, the life in meaningful discourse (1979: 11). They state that:

> The emphasis on mutually determining relationships is the powerful central insight of cybernetic and structuralist thinking. However, it is crucial that these relations are conceived as reducible to specific operations that can be defined without reference to the particular context of human action. Although this position is an advance in sophistication, it remains an effort to integrate the sciences of man within a natural scientific paradigm....the problem of the concrete, practical subject remains unresolved (1979: 4).

In other words, in the attempt to be objective, structuralism has had to reduce the focus of its investigation to those aspects which lend themselves to 'scientific'-type laws and has thus eliminated the possibility of including human action and actors. In the opinion of Rabinow and Sullivan, it would be better to "return to this human world in all its lack of clarity, its alienation, and its depth, as an alternative to the continuing search for a formal deductive paradigm in the social sciences" (1979: 8).

Sherry Ortner (1984) notes a similar preference in anthropology which she terms practice anthropology. As with the interpretive social science of Rabinow and Sullivan, the emphasis is on including the human subject as actor in interpretive theory. Ortner notes that structuralism "established the reality of the thinglike nature of society, but...failed to ask, in any systematic way, where the thing comes from and how it might change" (1984: 159). In contrast, practice anthropology works on the premise that: "society is a system, that the system is powerfully constraining, and yet that the system can be made and unmade through human action and interaction (Ortner 1984: 159). This, then, includes the premise upon which structuralism operates and also goes beyond it. The problems which structuralism tries to address have been neither overcome nor side-stepped but integrated into the new approach. In fact, Ortner notes that "the relationship between structure and 'agency' [is] one of the central problems of modern social theory" (1984: 145).

As a result, although structuralism no longer has any chance of becoming *the* interpretive paradigm, that does not necessarily mean that it is of no value. As Dundes points

out, "the point which is crucial is that structural analysis is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end, that end being a better understanding of the nature of man, or at least of a particular society of men" (1976: 86). Structuralism can still be a useful tool for determining of what the structure of a given system consists while still recognizing that such a determination is insufficient for complete understanding.

As noted previously, this thesis will begin by showing that Lévi-Strauss' structural analysis of the story of *Asdiwal* is subject to criticism because he did not adhere to the principles of structuralism. This suggests that a valid and useful structural analysis of the story is possible, but has not been done. Therefore, a re-analysis of the story of *Asdiwal* will be attempted in chapter four while chapter three will outline the cultural background necessary to the analysis. Overall, the intention is to show that the relative merits of structuralism cannot necessarily be judged by the analyses of Lévi-Strauss in general or by "The Story of Asdiwal" in particular.

Chapter Two: The What and the Why

Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the story of *Asdiwal* has been criticized repeatedly, and justifiably, for its many inconsistencies. Seldom do the critics ask what these inconsistencies consist of or why they might have occurred. It is usually presumed that the structural method is to blame and left at that. This would seem to be a safe presumption in that structuralism in anthropology is Lévi-Strauss' method. As Sherry Ortner has put it, structuralism is "the more-or-less single-handed invention of Claude Lévi-Strauss" (Ortner 1984: 135). However, just because he defined it, the assumption that he used it appropriately cannot be made. It will be shown that, in "The Story of Asdiwal," Lévi-Strauss was not consistent in applying his own method and that he even disregarded it on occasion. As a result, it will be seen that the blame for the shortcomings of the analysis, "The Story of Asdiwal," lies not with the method but with Lévi-Strauss' misuse of it.

Lévi-Strauss' method works with a set of base assumptions and principles which can be disentangled from his examples and analogies. These principles are most clear in "The Structural Study of Myth." Lévi-Strauss says much about how myth should be analyzed, about the parts of which myth is composed, and about what myth does. However, the closest he ever comes to defining myth is to say that "myth *is* language: to be known, myth has to be told; it is a part of human speech....it is both the same thing as language, and also something different from it" (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 209). By this, he means to say that myth is a type of communication, but this is not very far from saying what a myth does and it certainly does not separate it from other forms of oral narrative—unless, of course, Lévi-Strauss intended to suggest that folktales and legends were not means of communication, but this is not clear. Regardless, he continues on to say that the substance of a myth "does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the *story* which it tells" (Lévi-

Strauss 1963: 210). By this it is meant that the significance of myth is not in the shape which it takes but rather in the underlying meaning, the "story," which it conveys. Yet again, since Lévi-Strauss does not point to any specific type of underlying meaning, myth cannot be distinguished from other types of narrative folklore. Conversely, Lévi-Stauss' designation of any given story as a 'myth' does not necessarily relate it to any given category of folklore, either etic or emic.

This tendency to ignore both emic and etic definitions and ideas of meaning is significant in that a certain sub-set of Tsimshian creation myths have such a clear, conscious purpose in Tsimshian culture, that an interpretation of them is hardly necessary. These myths are identified within the culture as *adaox*, or True Tradition, a category which corresponds most closely to a myth-history including as it does events from mythic time right up to the near present (see Miller 1984b: 39; Halpin 1984b: 60; Seguin 1984: 117; and Cove 1984: 11-12, 15).[1] They are owned by House groups and refer specifically to the members of that House and to the bearers of important names and not to Tsimshian society at large. As such, they serve to justify the claims of the name and the House to rights and privileges to hunting and fishing territories, crests, songs, and dances (Halpin 1984a: 19-20). In serving to justify 'reality,' they could hardly be said to invert it, as Lévi-Strauss claims is the case in the story of *Asdiwal* (1976: 172). Therefore, from the point of view of Lévi-Strauss' intention—to uncover the meaning which the story of *Asdiwal* has had for the Tsimshian people—it is important to know whether or not this story was considered to be *adaox*.

Unfortunately, Lévi-Strauss' own method, being one of analysis rather than of collection, is not designed to provide such information about ethnic genres and his source, Franz Boas, did not recognize it as significant. Although Boas collected hundreds, even thousands,

of pages of text, he did not necessarily do it all that well. First of all, he collected all texts in the same manner, no matter what type of texts they were. He copied each one down word for word, phonetically, as it was dictated to him by a native informant. He then made an interlinear translation of the text into English with the help of the informant and using Chinook, English, or a translator to communicate between them.[2] Since Boas himself never learned the Tsimshian language, the possibilities of misunderstanding in this process were enormous. In a sense, then, it is quite remarkable that Boas was able to do anything at all with his data. However, data was about all he managed to get. He did not get, nor it could be argued did he intend to get, a record of a living culture. Boas "was not interested in obtaining a large sample, much less the whole of an oral literature. He was concerned with supplying linguistic materials which were sufficiently varied to document the study of the language" (Jacobs 1959: 120). In 1886 Boas wrote "The Bella Coolas tell me the most beautiful stories in their own language. The stories themselves are not worth much, but on the other hand the language is very worthwhile" (Boas in Rohner and Parker 1969: 50). To be fair, Boas was interested in the content of the myth as much as the language of the myth. In fact, he often sought out specific types, such as origin myths or the Raven myths (see Boas in Rohner and Parker 1969: 27, 38, 57; and Maud 1989: 161). Yet, even so, it was still data he was interested in, in this case to determine to what extent and in what directions diffusion might have taken place (Boas in Rohner and Parker 1969: 25, 29, 38, 54, 55, 63, etc.). As a result, it can be expected that Boas accurately recorded the details of the stories he collected as far as he was able, but he did not record their context, their presentation, their importance with respect to the culture in which he found them, or what genre they were classified as by the tellers.

Boas did almost no interpretation of the myths he collected, preferring to present them as data as he did with *Tsimshian Texts (1902)*. However, as Lévi-Strauss has noted

(1976: 172), Boas broke with this pattern and attempted a major piece of analysis in *Tsimshian Mythology* (1916). He did this based on the assumption that

> in the tales of a people those incidents of the everyday life that are of importance to them will appear either incidentally or as the basis of a plot. Most of the references to the mode of life of the people will be an accurate reflection of their habits. The development of the plot of the story, furthermore, will, on the whole, exhibit clearly what is considered right and what wrong....[Myths] present in a way an autobiography of the tribe (Boas 1970: 393).

Again, Boas treated myth as a set of data about the culture rather than as an expression of the culture, let alone as an expression of religious or spiritual beliefs. As a result of this over-arching attitude, Boas' collections of myth are very one-dimensional. He has the facts straight, but he left out the vitality of the presentation, the cultural context, and the significance of the myths to the people who told them.

Consequently, it is not possible to tell for certain whether the story of *Asdiwal* is *adaox* or not. John Adams has suggested that it is of this tradition and that, therefore, Lévi-Strauss' analysis is redundant (Adams 1974: 175, 177). His evidence is convincing; yet, it relies more on content than on form. That is, Adams very clearly shows that the Skeena (Boas, 1912) version of the story of *Asdiwal* contains elements of *adaox*, such as encounters with supernatural beings, power manifest in superior hunting ability, and potlatching for the purpose of taking a new name. However, he does not show that the story was linked to a specific name or even a lineage, nor does he show that it was told at feasts or "legitimized rights to names and crests" (Cove 1982, 11), as *adaox* did. Granted that it may now be impossible to recover information of this sort, it would seem that Adams has overlooked one vital piece of information that was readily available: the number of versions of the story of *Asdiwal* and their point of collection. Cove has noted that *adaox*, "although known by non-House members, could only be narrated by those of the House" (1982: 11;

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see also Garfield 1951: 23) to which they belonged. So, the question which arises is, how is it that the story was collected in at least three different places from at least three different people?[3] It is possible that the informants were all from the same lineage but it is unlikely. It is much more likely that the story is of another type. Furthermore, potlatching for the purpose of taking a name occurs only in the Skeena (Boas, 1912) version and not in the others. The other elements which Adams seems to think suggest that the story is of the *adaox* type are, in my impression, also present in the majority of Tsimshian stories and so are not particularly indicative of genre. Thus, while Adams is correct in saying that "the life of Asdiwal is a really possible life among Tsimshians" (Adams 1974: 177),[4] it is unlikely that he is correct in identifying the story as *adaox*. Consequently, the question of why the story was told remains open.

The next point to be raised concerning the structuralist method relates to technique. According to Lévi-Strauss, analyzing a myth involves breaking it down "into the shortest possible sentences, and writing each sentence on an index card bearing a number corresponding to the unfolding of the story" (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 211). Each card will contain a relation between a subject and a function and will thus form a *gross constituent unit*. These units can then be grouped together in bundles of relations so as to produce a two-dimensional chart showing both the diachronic progression of the story and the synchronic meaning referents (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 211-212). Furthermore, if

> a myth is made up of all its variants, structural analysis should take all of them into account....We shall then have several two-dimensional charts, each dealing with a variant, to be organized in a three-dimensional order...so that three different readings become possible: left to right, top to bottom, front to back (or vice versa). All of these charts cannot be expected to be identical; but experience shows that any difference to be observed may be correlated with other differences, so that a logical treatment of the whole will allow simplifications, the final outcome being the structural law of the myth (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 217).

The point is so important to the method that Lévi-Strauss repeats it again further down saying: "it cannot be too strongly emphasized that all available variants should be taken into account" (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 218). Yet, this is a point which he did not himself follow when he analyzed the story of *Asdiwal.* Granted, he considered four versions in total; but, even in his own words, he kept "provisionally to this version [1912] alone in order to attempt to define the essential points of its structure" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 152). What this means is that he created a two-dimensional chart with the 1912 version of the story of *Asdiwal* and, from this, determined which levels and schemata were operative. This goes against the basic premise of his own method, namely that an examination of the variants will reveal the logical structure. By implication, it is the bundles of relations which are common across multiple variants which should "define the essential points of its structure" and not relations drawn from one variant only. Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss takes only those relations which he feels are the most important from the 1912 variant and then he proceeds to find them in the story of Waux (1916), the 1902 variant, and the 1895 variant.

In their article, "Asdiwal crumbles," Thomas, Kronenfeld, and Kronenfeld point to many difficulties with Lévi-Strauss' *Asdiwal* analysis but chief among them is the problem of arbitrariness. As they put it,

> the looseness of Lévi-Strauss' procedure is such that it would be perfectly conceivable for him to link the same "basic tension" with a different set of oppositions, or a different "basic tension" with the same set of oppositions; or to find in one version of the myth the schematic oppositions asserted for the other and vice versa (Thomas, et. al. 1976: 170).

This is precisely the sort of problem to be expected from divorcing the determination of the relations from consideration of all the variants. It is repetition of the themes consistently throughout the variants which lends weight to their choice as the basis of the structure. In

Lévi-Strauss' own words (1963: 229), "the function of repetition is to render the structure of the myth apparent." It could be argued that Lévi-Strauss has shown that the themes he chose on the basis of one variant did turn out to be in the others as well. Thomas, Kronenfeld, and Kronenfeld have argued otherwise, but even setting their arguments aside, the fact remains that this analysis appears arbitrary and loose without the formal relating of all variants for which Lévi-Strauss himself argues so strongly. He left himself open to such a criticism unnecessarily and against his own better judgement.

Another problem which Thomas, Kronenfeld and Kronenfeld, as well as Alice Kasakoff, point to is the lack of correspondence between the oppositions recognized in the story of *Asdiwal* by Lévi-Strauss and ethnographic reports of Tsimshian culture. Generally, this is a more intricate problem since it is not obvious in Lévi-Strauss' writing that he is even at all concerned with cultural context. He says, for instance, that "the mythical value of the myth is preserved even through the worst translation. Whatever our ignorance of the language and the culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader anywhere in the world" (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 210). At first reading, this seems to give solid support to his rejection of the relevance of native culture to the interpretation of myth. However, he does not say that a myth can be *interpreted* despite ignorance of the culture. He merely says that a myth can be recognized, felt, as such regardless of its context. So, it might be concluded that Lévi-Strauss does, by implication, maintain that knowledge of the cultural context is essential for the interpretation of myth. Yet, this is negative evidence and can hardly support the supposition that he actually advocated consideration of cultural factors in myth analysis.

A second source of evidence suggesting that Lévi-Strauss was interested in cultural context is his opinion of Jung's treatment of myth, of the idea that "a given mythological

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pattern—the so-called archetype—possesses a certain meaning." This, he states, "is comparable to the long-supported error that a sound may possess a certain affinity with a meaning..."(Lévi-Strauss 1963: 208). Lévi-Strauss may be a universalist, but he certainly does not agree with the opinion of Jung, among others, that symbols have universal meaning. Clearly, he thinks that this is an error. Therefore, by implication, the idea that he acknowledges the need for cultural relevance in myth analysis becomes more plausible. After all, if symbols have meaning specific to the culture in which they are used, what other way is there to determine that meaning besides attention to that particular culture? Furthermore, he states that "in the matter of oral tradition the morphology is sterile unless direct or indirect ethnographic observation comes to render it fertile" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 141). This is positive affirmation that he felt cultural data was necessary to myth analysis.

A final source of evidence indicating that Lévi-Strauss was interested in including cultural data in myth analysis is an examination of his analysis of the story of *Asdiwal*. This is a risky endeavour since, as was already observed, Lévi-Strauss does not necessarily do what he says or say as he does. However, in view of the evidence presented so far, his statement in "The Story of Asdiwal" that he "shall begin by calling attention to certain facts which must be known if the myth is to be understood" (1976: 147) and his subsequent continual reference to ethnographies strongly indicate that he does, indeed, believe cultural data is relevant in myth analysis.

Yet, the problem not only remains, it is intensified: why is there such a poor correspondence between Lévi-Strauss' analysis and the ethnographic reports of Tsimshian culture? One explanation is that the ethnographies he refers to simply did not have the detail and depth of understanding that is presently available. This is essentially Kasakoff's point, that facts which have only recently been understood do not agree with and even directly

contradict the information that Lévi-Strauss had available to him. There is no way that Lévi-Strauss could have anticipated such developments and, thus, it is unfair to criticize him on that basis. However, Thomas, Kronenfeld and Kronenfeld take a slightly different tack. They ask (1976: 148): "is there sufficiently unambiguous evidence on the nature of Tsimshian society and its areas of conflict in Lévi-Strauss' sources, and are his interpretations of these sources credible?"

These two questions together point to an alternate explanation for the poorness of correspondence. That is, Lévi-Strauss' sources did not all agree on the nature of Tsimshian society and, where they were ambiguous, he selected data to support his own interpretations. This is a strong accusation to make, but it is one which is solidly supported by Thomas, Kronenfeld and Kronenfeld (1976: 154-163). For example, in discussing residence patterns, they refer to Lévi-Strauss' suggestion that "the children moved over to their maternal uncle's house at a certain point in their lives, rather than that they moved freely between their father's and mother's brother's houses." They note that "this point is not supported by ethnography, although it might have been attractive insofar as it strengthened the idea that the 'matrilineal' and 'patrilineal' tendencies of Tsimshian society were in conflict" (Thomas, et. al. 1976: 157).

One example which Thomas, Kronenfeld, and Kronenfeld do not mention is striking for what it lacks. In his discussion of Tsimshian rules of inheritance, Lévi-Strauss says, "other texts—as well as eyewitness observation—reveal that a man's property, including his hunting grounds, went to his sister's son, that is, from man to man in the maternal line" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 172). The footnote which accompanies this bit of information, however, states: "See Boas's hesitation (1916, pp. 401, 411-412). Even Garfield, who gave the problem much attention cannot bring herself to admit to the existence of succession in the

paternal line (Garfield, Wingert, and Barbeau, 1951, p. 17)" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 196, fn. 20). There is no support in this footnote for Lévi-Strauss' assertion of uncle-to-nephew inheritance such as one would expect, there is only the evidence of his two main ethnographers suggesting that there may be other possibilities. Furthermore, rather than admit that this is the case, Lévi-Strauss has concentrated on the unwillingness of Garfield to assert the possibility of patrilineal inheritance as his 'proof' that inheritance must be matrilineal. Unfortunately, the wording is such that the unwary reader would probably not even notice the reversal, if indeed the footnote were even checked. Thus, his use of ethnographic material was selective at best and misleading at worst. This unnecessarily weakens his credibility and does not even so much as further his argument.

Significantly, as Thomas, Kronenfeld and Kronenfeld note, it is most often Garfield who provides the alternate view or raises the ambiguity; yet, it is most often Boas that Lévi-Strauss follows. In fact, of some seventy-three ethnographic references, thirty-four are to *Tsimshian Mythology* and only nine are to Garfield's works. This is especially surprising in view of the fact that he refers to Boas' use of mythology as a culture-reflector as "rash" (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 172). As Thomas, Kronenfeld and Kronenfeld put it: "he does not in any sense explain why his own explicit use of *Boas*...to establish the 'real' situation...constitutes an exception to such rashness" (Thomas, et. al. 1976: 156).

Furthermore, the type of ethnography that Boas produced simply could not support the kind of analysis that Lévi-Strauss wanted to do. First of all, from 1886 to 1914 Boas was actually on the coast of British Columbia only six times: in 1886, 1888, 1889, 1894, 1897 and 1900. However, out of these six trips, he was only in the Tsimshian tribal area (Nass and Skeena Rivers; Port Essington and Kincolith) three times for a total of about seven and a half weeks. In 1888, he was in Port Essington on the Skeena River from June

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19th to June 25th; in 1894, he was in Kincolith on the Nass River from October 11th to November 9th; and, in 1897, he was in Port Essington again from August 10th to August 25th (see Boas in Rohner and Parker 1969: 92-93, 155-173, 222-230). Thus, the longest period of time which Boas spent with the Tsimshian was a month and this he did while "everyone was away hunting" (Boas in Rohner and Parker 1969: 155). Furthermore, he divided his time at Kincolith between studying the Nass River Indians (a Tsimshian tribe) and the Tinneh Indians (an Athapaskan tribe), a few representatives of which were still in the village. As a result, even this, the longest of his stays, was not sufficient to allow Boas to become fluent in the language or to learn Tsimshian customs in intimate detail. Consequently, it is surprising that he produced any kind of an ethnography.

The reason that Boas did allow himself to comment on Tsimshian culture comes from his attitude toward language in general and myth in particular. He could not have learned all he needed to know about the Tsimshian, but only all he would need to write his report for the British Association for the Advancement of Science, his sponsor. In other words, he learned enough of the language to be able to place the Tsimshian in a "general synopsis of the ethnology of the whole of British Columbia, according to the linguistic stocks" (Rohner and Parker 1969: 81). Thus, the first thing Boas would have to learn with each native group he encountered would be the language. Since he was not in a position to do this, he never got past recording "linguistic stocks" to doing a "general synopsis of the ethnology of the whole of British Columbia." From the instructions Boas was given in 1889, to keep "the linguistic portion of [his] work strictly within the limits prescribed" (Rohner and Parker 1969: 82), it is apparent that his work in 1888 included a great deal of linguistics and not a lot of ethnology or anything else. His instructions focused him on language but, for Boas, the purpose of ethnology was not so much to understand the culture under investigation as to understand the process by which that culture was created. He was interested in diffusion.

Therefore, he determined that language is as effective an indicator of historical process as any other cultural trait (Rohner and Parker 1969: xxi) and he proceeded to concentrate on it.

As Rohner notes:

> comparative linguistics and comparative mythology [were] important to [Boas] because here one can find a clear expression of primitive thought. Furthermore, myths can furnish clues to the religious ideas of a people, and Boas believed that a careful investigation of mythological elements in tales reveals customs missed by other methods of observation (Rohner and Parker 1969: xxii).

Thus, in *Tsimshian Mythology*, Boas presented "a description of the life, social organization, and religious ideas and practices, of the people...as it appears from their mythology" (Boas 1970: 32). He did not have any other source upon which to draw for such a description: his short time among the Tsimshian was spent collecting texts and not in observing or even talking about cultural traits and patterns. Boas described the culture based on the mythology and then Lévi-Strauss analyzed the mythology based on the culture as described by Boas. This is clearly a circular approach and results only in an analysis of the mythology based on the mythology. It does not result in a relation of the analysis to the general cultural context and, as a result, the analysis is left virtually without verification from cultural data. This was not Lévi-Strauss' intention, as was seen above, and yet he was not careful enough in using his sources to prevent it.

On one level, this is simply inadequate scholarship. At another level, it points to the possibility that, without Boas, Lévi-Strauss could not make his case. Further to this point, it can be noted that, of the nine references to Garfield, four are neutral with respect to the analysis (concerning etymology and rank), two are positive (concerning geographical location of villages named), one is ambiguous (concerning inheritance), and one is negative (ex-

pressing doubt concerning preference for the matrilateral cross-cousin, or mother's brother's daughter (MBD), in Tsimshian marriage). It is significant that the weight of Lévi-Strauss' analysis falls on a point which he does not even reference Garfield on, namely patrilocality, and on a point which even Garfield referenced Boas on, namely the prevalence of an MBD marriage pattern (Garfield 1939: 231-232; Garfield 1951: 23). Thomas, Kronenfeld and Kronenfeld have noted the same tendency and add that Boas, and only Boas, is used to establish patrilocality while Garfield seems to support a view of residence as avunculocal (Thomas, et. al. 1976: 156). Since avunculocal residence can also be considered patrilocal in the sense that the wife resides with her husband's people, it is the case that, "ignoring the general consensus [of anthropologists], Lévi-Strauss takes advantage of the vagueness of the [residence] terms" (Thomas. et. al. 1976: 155). Consequently, it is difficult to say whether he is correct or not since it is also difficult to say just precisely what he means when he uses the words 'patrilocal' and 'matrilocal'. Again, this lack of precision was unnecessary and only furthered the impression, held by many of structuralism's critics, that this method in general is imprecise.

Yet, although there are many problems with Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the story of *Asdiwal*, this thesis argues that they are not inherently a product of structuralism as a method. Rather, they can be attributed primarily to Lévi-Strauss' own inconsistency and lack of rigour in applying his method. Moreover, since he used only one version to supply his schemata, the problems are indeed a product of a disregard for his method. These deficiencies are entirely unnecessary, unless of course it is presumed that a structural analysis of the *Asdiwal* story is not possible. In actuality, no one has tried. Lévi-Strauss' analysis does more harm to structuralism by association than good. It is not the method which is responsible for the problems in his analysis; yet, more often than not, the method takes the blame. "The Story of Asdiwal" may very well be one of "the most successful of Lévi-

Strauss' encounters with myth" (Thomas, et. al. 1976: 147), but this should not be confused with, nor equated to, a successful encounter between structuralism and myth. Certainly as far as "The Story of Asdiwal" is concerned, structuralism and the accomplishments of Lévi-Strauss should be separated.

Notes

[1] See also, Shane 1984: 164-165 for an account almost identical to that given by Seguin which is not called *adaox* but which would appear to be such.

[2] This process is described piecemeal throughout Boas' letters and diaries.

[3] The versions are: Boas 1902 Kincolith, from Chief Mountain; Boas 1912 Port Simpson, from Henry Tate; Beynon 1954 Gitlaxdamks, from Emma Wright; and Boas 1895. It is unclear as to where and from whom Boas collected his 1895 version.

[4] This will be discussed in detail below.

Chapter Three: The Who and the How

Before any structural analysis can be attempted, the cultural data relevant to the myth must be known and understood as far as possible. Given the nature of myth, this can mean that the researcher must be familiar with every aspect of the culture. In practice, however, this is not always possible and so certain 'key' aspects are chosen for priority. In "The Story of Asdiwal," Lévi-Strauss chose to concentrate on certain elements from the geographical, economic, sociological, and cosmological sectors of Tsimshian life. These included places, towns, and other physical landmarks, seasonal hunting and fishing migrations, marriage, and the 'otherworld' (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 152). Later on in the analysis, Lévi-Strauss also selected residence and inheritance patterns as significant foci of concern. This discussion will re-examine these elements of traditional Tsimshian culture, including recent ethnographic information that was unavailable to Lévi-Strauss. In addition, it will include naming conventions, the role of a child's patrilineage, adoption, and considerations of status—all of which will be seen to have a bearing on the interpretation of the story of *Asdiwal.*

To begin with, it will be helpful to review some of the more general characteristics of Tsimshian culture, starting with some geography. The Tsimshian people live on the northwesternmost coast of what is now British Columbia. Inland, they traditionally occupied the territory between the Nass and Skeena Rivers as far east as their headwaters. On the coast, they occupied the shore and the coastal islands from the Nass delta in the north to Swindle Island in the south. Within this area there were four main language divisions which "were similar in grammatical structure and semantic categories and shared large portions of their vocabulary" (Seguin 1984: x). They were: *Nishga,* inland along the Nass River and its estuaries; Coast Tsimshian, along the shore and on the coastal islands

from the Nass River to the north end of Princess Royal Island as well as inland along the Skeena River and its estuaries almost as far as Kitselas; South Tsimshian, along the shore and on the coastal islands south to Swindle Island; and *Gitksan*, inland mostly along the Skeena River but extending across to the Nass (see Appendix for map). The Coast Tsimshian was the largest of these groups and had contact with all three of the others as well as with the neighbouring Haida and Tlingit peoples. The land-locked *Gitksan* were distinctly Tsimshian and yet showed evidence of influence from their Athapaskan neighbours. Likewise, the South Tsimshian, being in contact with only one other Tsimshian group, showed evidence of influence from their Kwakiutl neighbours (Garfield 1951: 6). As Seguin has noted, the "major subdivisions of the Tsimshian rarely functioned as political or economic units....In general, each village was an independent territorial, economic, and political unit" (Seguin 1984: x). Within a village, territories belonged to "the local segments of each matrilineal *phratry*" (Seguin 1984: x).

Unlike the Haida and the Tlingit who each had two clans, or phratries, there were four clans among the Tsimshian which were considered to be equivalent across the language groups.

> The Coast Tsimshian terms for the four [clans] are: *Gispudwada* (the term is not fully analyzeable, but the principal crests are the blackfish [killer whale] and grizzly bear); *Ganhada* (also unanalyzeable, principal crests raven and frog); *Laxsgiik* ('on the eagle', principal crests eagle and beaver); and *Laxgibuu* ('on the wolf', principal crests wolf and bear) (Seguin 1984: 4—see Table 1).

The Fireweed clan found among the *Nishga* (*Gisgaast*) and the *Gitksan* (*Gigaast*) corresponds to the Coast Tsimshian *Gispudwada* clan (Cove 1987: 79). In addition, the Tsimshian clan system was differentiated from other Northwest Coast systems in that it had a vertical axis expressing rank as well as a horizontal axis expressing descent group membership (Halpin

1984a: 24-25—see Table 3). So, within the *Ganhada* clan, for instance, there are the crests of Prince of Ravens, Supernatural Raven, and White Raven, among others (Halpin 1984a: 28-29). In this case, the particularized crests are derived from one of the two primary crest animals, namely Raven, but other natural species (both plant and animal) as well as "natural phenomena, artifacts, humans, and monsters" (Halpin 1984a: 27) could also appear in this capacity. As Halpin points out, the "general rule...was that only chiefly or high-ranking houses could own particularized crests" (1984a: 31). The information is not available to allow precise ranking of each crest (or sub-clan) in relation to the others; however, Halpin does note that the Prince crests (e.g. Prince of Cormorants, Prince of Wolves) and the White crests (e.g. White Owl, White Bear) were "consistently claimed by houses of high rank (I to IV)" (1984a: 32) and may have carried more prestige than most. Since the principal centre of allegiance was the clan and not the sub-clan, the two primary crest animals of each clan could be displayed by all clan members whether nobles or commoners.

As was common on the northwest coast, the Tsimshian clans were not only matrilineal but also exogamous. That is, marriages were made only between people from different clans since intra-clan marriages were considered to be incestuous. This was the strongest of the marriage rules and just about the only one on which anthropologists can generally agree. In "The Story of Asdiwal," Lévi-Strauss has made the claim that "there was a preference for marriage with the mother's brother's daughter among the Tsimshian, especially in the noble classes" (1976: 168). However, this claim has been debated ever since it was first made by Boas in *Tsimshian Mythology*. As it provides the basis for Lévi-Strauss' analysis, it requires a thorough examination. To begin, John Cove notes that "the Tsimshian have variously been described as having matrilateral cross-cousin marriage [by Lévi-Strauss and Rosman and Rubel], patrilateral cross-cousin marriage [by Ackerman and Campbell] and marriage inconsistent with either form of exchange [by Adams and

Kasakoff]" (1976: 153). Cove's own view could be described as 'all of the above'. Yet, for all the disagreement, there are only two sources of dissent: varying emphasis on and interpretation of 'rules' of social exchange, and the use of real versus ideal marriages as data. Adams and Kasakoff contribute some useful statements of marriage preference but rely in their analyses on the statistical data presented by actual Tsimshian (*Gitksan*) marriages (Adams 1974: 171, and Cove 1976: 164; Kasakoff 1974: 147ff). As a result, they cannot find sufficient evidence to support any particular marriage model and so support none. Since the present discussion is concerned with Tsimshian perceptions of the ideal marriage, actual marriages and the data derived from them are of secondary importance and will not be considered further.

Cove (1976) does a very thorough job of examining all possible rules relating to marriage, including terminology, statements of preference, inheritance, and naming relations, as well as mythology. Since these are all important aspects of Tsimshian culture, it will be worthwhile to review the 'rules'. The basic assumption being made in Cove's article and in the following discussion is that Tsimshian marriage preferences belong to one of the following categories: marriage to a matrilateral cross-cousin [MBD—mother's brother's daughter], marriage to a patrilateral cross-cousin [FZD—father's sister's daughter], marriage to either cousin type (that is, a bilateral cross-cousin), or to neither cousin type. Through a process of elimination and by looking for the line of best fit, an attempt will be made to determine which, if any, of these categories was in fact preferred.

First of all, Cove discusses terminology where two basic principles are at work. One, "although the Tsimshian do separate mother's side *(wilnadal)* from father's *(wulaisx)*, their cross-cousin term *(txaa)* does not..." (Cove 1976: 160). Two, the terms for father's father (FaFa) and mother's mother's brother (MMB) are the same *(niye'e)*. It is the case that, "if

just these two features of Tsimshian kinship terminology are used, the most probable system is bilateral cross-cousin marriage" (Cove 1976: 160). It is also the case that any reference to a grandfather *(niye'e)* can mean either FaFa or MMB, or both. It can also refer to mother's father (MFa) and father's mother's brother (FaMB), and to any older man in the speaker's own clan since all these may be called *niye'e* (Kasakoff 1984: 95).

Besides kinship terminology, there are also statements of preference to consider; Cove discusses four. The first and most common preference is for "marriage to a cousin....The possible inference that *either* cross-cousin is acceptable is born out by informants" (Cove 1976: 161).[1] A second preference is for "the marriage of persons whose maternal grandparents were brother and sister....one set of grandparents could be siblings under either [MBD or FZD] system" (Cove 1976: 162). Yet a third statement indicates preference for "marriage to a grandfather, who Kasakoff claims would be someone of mother's father's or father's father's phratry" (Cove 1976: 163). Given the sex of the grandfather, it is probable that a female ego is intended. According to Cove (1976: 164), this means that the statement supports an MBD model. However, from his own diagram it appears that 'marriage to a grandfather' is also possible in an FZD system. Finally, the fourth statement is "that a husband's father and wife's father should be of the same phratry....[This] would only make sense if the fathers married differently, which could only occur if the system were FZD" (Cove 1976: 164). Thus, of the four statements of preference, three support either model and one supports an FZD model.

Next, Cove turns to patterns of inheritance and succession. As Garfield points out, the normal pattern of inheritance was such that a nephew would inherit from his maternal uncle (his mother's brother); but, "a brother has legal precedence over a nephew if he wishes to claim the name" (Garfield 1939: 179). This is logical insofar as the brother, as nephew,

stands in the line of succession before his own (and his brother's) nephews and may claim the right to inherit if he chooses. Given possible age differences and the fact that the heir must be appropriate with respect to character and experience (see Seguin 1984: xiii; Miller 1984b: 31; Halpin 1984b: 60, 63; and Garfield 1939: 180, 226-230), a younger brother was often the preferred inheritor. Furthermore, if an appropriate heir was not available, one could always be brought in through adoption (see Miller 1984b: 39; and Halpin 1984b: 62-64). That is, a woman (most often a daughter) could be adopted as a sister so that her sons would be nephews, or a man (often a son) could be adopted outright as a nephew.[2] Inheritance patterns are significant for marriage preference because of one statement made by Boas (1916: 412):

> It is true that in the case of cousin marriage, as was customary among chiefly families, a man's property would eventually be inherited by his son's son.

As Cove has noted (1976: 166), it is not clear that Boas applied the term *niye'e* to all grandfathers, as is appropriate, or whether he restricted it to mean father's father the way he restricted *txaa* to mean the matrilateral cross-cousin. If he made the mistake of restricting the term's usage, then the grandfather involved in the statement could be either father's father or mother's mother's brother. The grandson could inherit from the grandfather, *niye'e*, (through his uncle) in either system. In an MBD system, the grandfather would be the MMB, and in an FZD system, the grandfather would be both the FaFa and the MMB. However, a second statement was made by one of John Dunn's informants, Kathleen Vickers, who explained to him that, concerning inheritance, "the own [blood] grandchildren don't get anything, it comes back to them in the next generation" (1971 in Dunn 1984a: 50). This, in effect, is the same thing that Boas said, but it clearly indicates that the grandfather in question is the father's father. Thus, for this to be true, the system must be an FZD system.

Another set of social 'rules' which Cove examines are the naming relations. There are two main categories of names in Tsimshian culture: the first consists of the real-names which were collected during one's lifetime, and the second consists of the names which were given at birth. There were also *naxnoq*, or spirit, names, but these were very similar to real-names (Cove 1982: 10). The real-names were, and still are, incredibly important in Tsimshian society since it is these "names, not the people who hold them, that control property and privilege, and only names...traditionally permitted people to participate in the wealth transfers of the potlatch" (Halpin 1984b: 60). This 'property and privilege' included "food producing areas such as halibut and codfish bands, stretches of beach and sections of streams, hunting territories, berry grounds, and dwellings...totem poles, ceremonial para-phernalia and other carved and painted objects...legends or historical accounts of the experiences and exploits of ancestors...[and] house and personal names" (Garfield 1951: 23). Furthermore, as was seen above, real-names were not simply inherited but had to be earned, the inheritor had to be worthy of the name to continue and increase its honour. Finally, as all this implies, real-names were held to be eternal (Miller 1984b: 33; Cove 1982: 11). In terms of marriage systems, a child who inherited his grandfather's material pos-sessions would, by definition, also inherit his real-name(s) so the 'rules' are the same as those for inheritance.

The second category of names, the birth names, have their own set of three 'rules' (see Figures 2 and 3). First, "although names given to children belong to their matriline, they may contain references to their father's phratry" (Cove 1976: 169). However, the best that this rule can do by itself is to indicate a "rule of exogamy since each phratry owns names referring to every other phratry" (Cove 1976: 170). The second naming relation, from Boas (1916: 507) and confirmed by Henry Tate, states that:

ordinarily a boy would be given the name of his mother's mother's brother...a girl that of her maternal grandmother...

While Campbell (1975: 89-90) uses this as support for an FZD system, Cove (1976: 170) points out that both relations together could be true in either system. The third naming relation refers to marriage preferences directly and states that:

> it is good for a chief to marry a woman who holds the same name as his predecessor's wife, that is, the names A and B should be linked down through the generations (McNeary in Cove 1976: 170).

The first part of the statement holds true for either an MBD system or an FZD system. But, "if the generational linkage is taken to mean *every* generation, then the system must be that of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage" (Cove 1976: 170). If the 'predecessor' is the chief's uncle (MB), then the generational linkage must be in every generation. However, this is not clear in the statement and it can be argued that the predecessor is, in fact, a grandfather. This would mean that the names A and B would be linked in every other generation and so the preference could be realized in either type of system.

There are three reasons for supposing that the predecessor is a grandfather and not the mother's brother. First, the second naming relation would be redundant if the names A and B were linked in every generation since it would be equally true that a boy would have the same name as his mother's brother and a girl that of her mother. There would be no reason to specify that the name is that of the grandparent. Second, there is the ethnographic evidence given by Marjorie Halpin (1984b: 61-62) which shows "three instances of a man's English first name passed on to his grandson." Thus, in one *patriline*, the great-grandfather's name was Louis, his son's name was Heber, his grandson's name was Louis, and his great-grandson's name was Heber. The names reappeared in alternate

generations. Third, the Tsimshian have believed that a child is the reincarnation of his/her maternal grandparent (Cove 1982: 7; Cove 1987: 127; Seguin 1984: 111, 120-123; and Halpin 1984b: 61-62). In light of the second naming relation above, it seems logical that a boy would be the reincarnation of his mother's mother's brother and a girl would be the reincarnation of her mother's mother. This effectively re-creates the marriage pair every other generation in either an MBD or an FZD marriage system. In addition, this fits in very well with inheritance by the grandson from the grandfather. Cove (1982: 7) notes that:

> with respect to aquired powers [ie. real-names], the recipient would embody them in different incarnations. Since, in theory, there was a *generational skip* in which the soul of the deceased lived in the realm of the dead; a designated House member would be required to hold those powers and give them existence during that period [emphasis added].

The implication is that the grandfather *(niye'e)* is the predecessor of the child and that the child, as the grandfather, would inherit his real-names and the property and privileges that attend them. Therefore, the mother's mother's brother, for whom the child is named, and the father's father, from whom he inherits, must be the same person and this is only possible under an FZD system (see Figures 2 and 3).

Finally, there are some miscellaneous indicators of possible marriage preference. By an examination of "the consequences following from a marriage" in the mythology, Cove (1976: 174) comes to the conclusion that "there is no clear pattern" and that, therefore, no further conclusions can be drawn. From a consideration of "access to resources and control over labour," Cove (1976: 175) suggests that:

> Village exogamy for chiefs has the consequence of expanding alliances and access to resources, while village endogamy for others is restrictive. Similarly, status endogamy maintains that differential access and inhibits changes in alligiance [sic]. If cross-cousin marriage is thought of in the same terms, then bilateral and

matrilateral would be closer to endogamy in consequence; while patrilateral is more like exogamy...MBD marriage would therefore be appropriate to those of non-chiefly rank, while bilateral and patrilateral would be consistent with those of chiefly status. Bilateral cross-cousin marriage would apply to those families of the highest rank interested in restricting access to their resources, and patrilateral to those families concerned with increasing their positions.

Cove makes this suggestion in the belief that MBD marriage is an ideal expressed in at least some of the stated preferences and 'rules'. While this discussion has not found this to be the case, it is nonetheless true that, where it was found that either system was appropriate, the matrilateral cross-cousin is an open option as a marriage choice. Repeated exercising of this option would result in an MBD pattern, complete with the effect of restricting access to resources.

Dunn (1984a: 54) suggests that there are also possible motives for MBD and FZD marriage preferences based on consideration of access to resources and status. He states:

A possible economic motivation for matrilateral marriage finally becomes apparent: it will result in maximum retention of personal possessions within the house, and it will result in an absolutely equitable distribution of possessions to the four village divisions [at the mortuary potlatch].[3]

This supports Cove in the suggestion that MBD marriage is closest to being resource endogamous, but it does not address the question of status.

Dunn continues to state that:

a double motive for patrilateral marriage also becomes apparent: it will result in a greater distribution to the village quarter totally unrelated by tribe or house to the deceased and will thus in the logic of the potlatch accord him even greater prestige. Finally, this last quarter (unrelated, outside) contains the children of his own house.

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This supports Cove in the suggestion that FZD marriage is closest to being resource exogamous and it further suggests that it can help to increase the status of the real-name (which continues, although the bearer is deceased) as well as benefit the children of the deceased, if only indirectly. Consequently, MBD marriage can be seen to be a highly conservative option while FZD marriage is for the upwardly mobile. In a society where rank and status are so obviously important as they were to the Tsimshian, it could be argued that the FZD marriage is preferable. Also, given that MBD marriage was not found to be stated as a preference or indicated by the 'rules' of marriage, inheritance, and naming, and given that FZD marriage alone was found to be consistent with both inheritance and naming relations, it would appear that there was a distinct *preference* for FZD marriage. However, this cannot be stated as a rule and it must be remembered that many marriage preference statements and 'rules' are valid in either an MBD or an FZD marriage pattern, thus leaving the option open.

While marriage is certainly the most complex and the most significant of the sociological factors which Lévi-Strauss discusses, there are others to be considered. One of these is residence. Of this, Lévi-Strauss (1976: 172) states:

> In real life, the children grew up in the patrilocal home. Then they went to finish their education at their maternal uncle's home. After marrying, they returned to live with their parents, bringing their wives with them, and they settled in their uncle's village only when they were called upon to succeed him.

All his evidence for this is from Boas (1916) and, although there are many supportive references in the myths, each instance is static and thus gives the impression of a set pattern. Garfield, on the other hand, suggests a much more flexible view of residence. She states that "although children were raised in their father's house, they spent much time in the houses of their mother's brothers. This was especially so for boys..." (1951: 23; also see

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Garfield 1939: 277, 324). This implies that all children moved fairly freely between the house of their father and those of their uncles rather than spending a certain number of years with one and then moving to live with the other. In the case of a girl, it is agreed that "a married woman lived with her husband" (Garfield 1951: 23; also see Garfield 1939: 324). However, there is disagreement as to where the young couple lived. Garfield (1951: 24) suggests that it was with the man's mother's brother:

> Following the wedding day the couple set up housekeeping. The young wife was under the supervision of her husband's uncle's wife. The groom continued his participation in the affairs of the household under his uncle's guidance. The fathers of the couple had little [formal] part in the premarital or postmarital proceedings.

This contrasts with Boas' assertion that the couple lived with the man's parents, that is in his father's house. A simple resolution is that a man would go to live permanently with his uncle at about the same time as he married—when he was acknowledged to be an adult. Either event (moving or marriage) could take place first. Lévi-Strauss' statement that men "settled in their uncle's village only when they were called upon to succeed him" simply is not supported anywhere. According to Garfield (1939: 277), "in the winter dwelling lived the head, his mother if she were a widow, his wife and small children, his widowed or divorced sisters and their small children, also his younger brothers and cousins (mother's sisters' sons) and his grown nephews with their wives and children." This is unambiguous. A man would live in the house of his lineage while his uncle, from whom he might inherit, was still alive. Thus, when speaking of an adult male, residence is avunculocal. For a child, residence is patrilocal in the sense that sleeping hours are spent in the father's house. For a woman, residence is patrilocal until she marries at which point it is virilocal (with husband).

Another aspect of Tsimshian social relations which is important here is the role of the father's lineage, the patriline, in a child's life. Lévi-Strauss (1976: 168) states that a matrilineal cross-cousin marriage "made it possible to overcome another conflict: that between the patrilineal and matrilineal tendencies of Tsimshian society, which...is very deeply conscious of the two lines." There is very little doubt that the latter part of this statement is true. "For any individual, the main link to a phratry other than one's own is through one's father. It is along this social structural line that the services and phratry interactions of the potlatch take place" (Vaughan 1984: 64). However, while the two lines certainly existed and were consciously known and acknowledged, it is not at all certain that they were in conflict with one another. The relations between the two lineages are never referred to in the ethnographies as tense or conflicting. On the contrary, it is said that: "the tie between an individual and his father's lineage is a close and affectionate one" (Vaughan 1984: 64; also see Garfield 1939: 326); "as the child grew, its father and its mother's brother were equally concerned about its welfare" (Garfield 1951: 25); "a man who was planning a potlatch *honored* his father's lineage by requesting assistance from them" (Garfield 1939: 326, emphasis added); and "death again called forth the reciprocity of kinship groups, whose duties and obligations were well defined" (Garfield 1951: 26). Furthermore, there was no room for jealousy or conflict between the two lines. Both the father's and the mother's lineages took an active part in every major aspect of a child's life. Every life event from birth through puberty to marriage and death would be marked by a potlatch given by the matriline and supported by the patriline (in terms of services provided). Cooperation is the over-riding tone of the relations, not conflict.

There is one area where conflict might arise, especially on the part of the father; that is, in decisions concerning the child's future. All decisions concerning marriage partners and training for succession would be made by the child's matriline, at least formally (see Garfield

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1951: 24). However, it is not as though the father has no such role to play since he is in

the matrilineage of his nephews and would be just as involved with their futures as his son's

uncles would be with theirs. Consequently, it is difficult to say just where jealousy and

conflict would come in to the relations between the matrilineage and the patrilineage.

Furthermore, it is not as if the ethnographers simply did not take any notice of conflict.

Garfield (1939: 233) notes that, when she was doing her fieldwork, there was "conflict be-

tween young people and their relatives over their marriages." This example is unrelated to

the issue of traditional conflicts, but Garfield (1939: 327) also notes that, traditionally:

> between brothers and male parallel cousins there was often rivalry and jealousy over
> coveted names and positions. The senior among them had the prior right to an
> important name, but sometimes a younger man was favored, thus causing ill-feeling.
> (See also Adams 1974: 172; and Garfield 1939: 179.)

This instance of jealousy and conflict—significantly between people of the same

matriclan—is not simply a conjectural statement, but an observation. In addition, there is

a motive for the conflict. Even Lévi-Strauss can give no motive for the supposed conflict

between parent lineages. As a result, it is doubtful that it even existed.

Continuing to follow Lévi-Strauss' categories, the next set of factors to be discussed

are the economic ones. In traditional Tsimshian society, economic life was fairly straight-

forward. As was already noted, each village was an independent unit which was further

divided into Houses which were headed by chiefs. As Cove (1982: 6) notes, "the

ethnographic record tends to support that Houses were the principle territorial unit." Seguin

(1984: xii) explains further that:

> The territories belonging to a local segment of a phratry [a House] were admin-
> istered by the chiefs....A chief had the right to control access to his territory, and to
> manage the resources taken there. Generally each phratry represented in a village

had control over sites for each of the available types of resources, such as salmon fishing sites, hunting grounds, and berry patches; but one local lineage segment often held the highest-ranked names and controlled a larger territory.

The control exerted by the chief meant that he could, and generally did, grant access to 'his' territory to members of his household who were not members of his lineage, or House (Cove 1982: 6). These people would include his own children and his wife as well as the children and wives of his brothers. A sister's husband might also be granted access on occasion since he is said to be "feeding one's nephews and nieces" (Adams 1974: 172). Garfield (1951: 17) states specifically that:

> the privilege of using areas belonging to a man were extended to his sons during his lifetime. A son could hunt, fish, trap or take anything he desired from any area where his father had hereditary rights. After his father's death a man discontinued the practice or asked permission of his father's successor; permission which was seldom denied."

Thus, although a son did not usually inherit his father's territory, he maintained the right to use it throughout most of his life.

As far as actual economic activity goes, "the seasonal runs of salmon, herring and olachen set the pattern for the yearly cycle of economic activities" (Garfield 1951: 15). More specifically,

> Salmon was the decisive food resource of the Tsimshian....Olachen, a variety of candlefish with high oil content, was second in importance among the basic seafood resources....Herring were also caught and dried or rendered into oil. Deep sea fishing for cod and halibut off Dundas, Porcher and Banks Islands was another important activity of the Coast Tsimshian. Hair seals and sea lions were hunted on these islands as well as on more protected islands, and seals were also taken along the lower courses of the Nass and Skeena Rivers. Bear and deer hunting on the islands and mainland, and mountain-goat hunting on the mainland, furnished both food and skins. Berries grow in many varieties and great profusion in most of the Tsimshian territory. Shellfish and seaweed, collected by the women, were important barter and food items (Garfield 1951: 13).

The yearly season started with the olachen runs in February "at the mouth of the Nass" (Garfield 1951: 13) at which time the Coast Tsimshian and the *Nishga* would move to their olachen fishing grounds. Beginning in May or early June, the salmon would run and "families scattered to salmon streams belonging to lineages of the men" (Garfield 1951: 16). "Fall hunting ended the seasonal activities for most families" (Garfield 1951: 16). The implication in this is that economic activities were not done simultaneously throughout the spring and summer months but were done one at a time in a cycle timed to the natural cycle of the olachen and the salmon. Since the salmon would continue to run all the way into October, "a spawning stream can be seen as the territorial locus" (Cove 1982: 5). From there, land-hunting activities could be carried out when the pace of the run had slowed. Gathering, too, could be done from the salmon grounds while the men were hunting. Similarly, sea-hunting and deep-sea fishing could be done from the olachen fishing grounds just as soon as the men could be spared and could continue until the move to the salmon grounds. So, olachen fishing would come first, followed by sea-hunting and deep-sea fishing, then salmon fishing, followed by hunting and gathering while salmon fishing continued at a reduced rate.

Three final points need to be made before going on to cosmology. First, the territory belonging to any one lineage would not necessarily all be adjacent. A family could have rights to a specific sea-lion rock on the coast, to fishing grounds on the Nass River, and to salmon fishing grounds on the Skeena River, or one of its estuaries. As was noted above, though, land- (mountain-) hunting territories would likely be adjacent to the salmon grounds. Second, given the vast systems of river valleys and estuaries between the Nass and Skeena Rivers, it was not necessary to travel all the way down the Skeena, and then along the coast to the Nass River and the olachen grounds. Allaire (1984: 90) mentions the people of the village of Kitsumgalum specifically as having "a direct overland access to that essential

early spring resource." Unfortunately, it is not clear whether this route could be taken by anyone or whether it was exclusive to the Kitsumgalum. However, Allaire (1984: 90-93) does mention various other instances of movement down valleys, as opposed to along the coast, for the purposes of permanent migration and trade. Furthermore, a map of trading trails given by George MacDonald (1984: 75) indicates that the river valleys were used extensively for trade and that there were at least two main overland routes between the Nass and the Skeena Rivers. Third, as Cove (1982: 8) notes,

> a House had a special and exclusive relationship not only to its lands but to everything in or on them. A territory was a House's sacred space which it shared with other beings fundamentally no different in kind from humans; all having similar underlying form, consciousness, and varying degrees of power. Relations to them were not seen as unilateral and exploitative, but rather reciprocal and moral.

The attitude expressed in the above quote is a function of the Tsimshian worldview, or cosmology as Lévi-Strauss terms it. As Cove (1982: 14) puts it, the Tsimshian "concept of proprietory rights can be seen as an extension of a cosmology which defined the acquisition of supernatural powers as central to human, if not cosmic, existence."

However, this was a reciprocal system and humans did not simply take powers from the non-human. "The animals and the spirits, like all non-human beings, have powers that are not readily available to humans. Humans have powers that are not possessed by or not available to animals and spirits. All are part of the same invisible network which affect any being" (Guédon 1984b: 142). This network is one in which point of view is everything. For instance,

> if one were to go and become an animal, a salmon...one would discover that salmon people are to themselves as human beings are to us, and that to them, we human beings, would look like *naxnoq* [spirits], or perhaps bears feeding on their salmon. Such translation goes through several levels. For instance, the leaves of the cotton

tree falling in the Skeena River are the salmon of the salmon people. I do not know what the salmon would be for the leaf, but I would guess they appear what we look like to the salmon—unless they looked like bears (Guédon 1984b: 141-142).

This is a good illustration of the web-nature of the Tsimshian universe. There are no levels or 'otherworlds' such as a European system has, only many different perspectives on the same thing. "Transformation then is not so much a process as a quality corresponding to multiple identities or to multiple points of view or realities focused on one entity" (Guédon 1984b: 142). Thus, spirits *(naxnoq)*, animals, material objects, humans, and even ghosts are all part of the one world. "The consequences of actions in one domain could be observed in the others" (Seguin 1984: 111). Seguin suggests that the Tsimshian viewed these domains as villages which were parallel to human villages and agrees with Guédon that "from within any particular world the view of each of the others was different" (1984: 119). It is the position of Real People (those with real-names) and other, parallel Real Beings to communicate between the villages, both human and otherwise (Seguin 1984: 117, 119).

Although this is only a brief examination of Tsimshian culture, and certainly does not cover all aspects of it, it should be sufficient to allow an informed reading of the story of *Asdiwal.* At the very least, it should give enough background to provide starting points and indicators for the further investigation and re-analysis of the story to be undertaken in the chapter to follow.

Notes

¹ The cross-cousin would be a child of the mother's brother or the father's sister. The children of the mother's sister and the father's brother would be called by sibling terms (Kasakoff 1984: 91-92).

² In this way, a man's children could become members of his clan. The practice is very common at present and "though evidence for adoptions during the pre-contact period is unavailable, there is evidence for adoptions of this sort during the nineteenth century by Tsimshian who were fully cognizant of traditional practices" (Seguin 1984: 114).

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³ The four village divisions are: (1) ego's own clan, own house; (2) other clan, ego's own house; (3) ego's own clan, other house; and (4) other clan, other house. The term house designates both a dwelling and an economic unit consisting of a man, his children (as children), his nephews (as adults), his wife, and his brothers.

Chapter Four: Sons and Rivals

As was noted above, John Adams (1974) has suggested that the story of *Asdiwal*
needs no elaborate analysis since *Asdiwal* led a life which was, in fact, possible among the
Tsimshian. At this level, the story would likely have been recognized as being 'about' the
aquisition and retention of supernatural help or power. *Asdiwal*, and his mother, gain this
power at the beginning of the story, he uses it throughout, and loses it in the end. Thus, this
interpretation also carries with it the implicit injuction, or moral, to obey your supernatural
helpers or lose them. However, it is only one interpretation at only one level. There are
others, and one of these can be revealed by a thorough application of structuralism. Before
beginning this re-analysis of the story of *Asdiwal*, it should be noted that every episode in
each of the six versions used here represents a choice which any Tsimshian man might have
made—except one. It is not possible that any Tsimshian man would have lived with his
wife, her father, and her brothers. Whether with his uncles or with his father, a man al-
ways lived with his own relatives and not with those of his wife, as shown above. This
provides a clue with which to begin the analysis.

First, as noted, six versions were used in analyzing the story. They include four
versions of the story of *Asdiwal* and two of the story of *Waux* and will be referred to as:
Beynon-*Asdiwal*, Boas 1902, Boas 1895, Boas 1912, Beynon-*Waux*, and 1916-*Waux*. The
Beynon versions have been added to increase the size of the sample and as an attempt to
balance the Boas materials, and all these versions were considered equally in determining
the operative oppositions. It was assumed that the primary opposition(s), the most basic
schemata, were indispensable and would thus appear in all versions in some form. Omis-
sions were more difficult to appraise since they could indicate that an episode was insignif-
icant, secondary, or made a point by its absence as well as by its presence. Generally,

majority ruled and an omission of an event in a single version was not deemed to be signif-icant, but within the bounds of the license of the narrator. For the purposes of analysis, the *Asdiwal* and *Waux* stories were treated as variants of the same theme. The reason for this included the similarities between them but was primarily based on the Beynon-*Waux* version which begins in precisely the same way as all the versions of the story of *Asdiwal* with all the male characters shifted up one generation. That is, *Asdiwal* is the supernatural being who appears to the two starving women and *Waux* is the son of one of them by *Asdiwal*. This effectively equates the two men. It might also equate *Asdiwal* and his father, *Hatsenas* (or *Houx* or *Hô*) but without a preceding story (as the story of *Waux* follows) this is not clear. Finally, every version used was taken to be 'complete' in the sense that, while a narrator may lengthen or shorten a story, it seems reasonable to believe that s/he would not deliberately leave out or mangle its essence.

In actual fact, the relative shortness of the Beynon-*Asdiwal* version facilitated the analysis since it helped greatly in narrowing down the list of possible oppositions. However, before this was even attempted, two previous analyses were considered. One, that of Lévi-Strauss, has already been discussed and was rejected for reasons already given. The other was done by Charles Ackerman (1975) but was not a full analysis as much as an inves-tigation into the apparent differences between the endings in Boas 1895 and Boas 1912. Ackerman suggests that the story is one "of *violation* and *usurpation*: by patrifiliation Asdiwal violates Tsimshian custom and usurps the territorial rights of his wife's brothers" (Ackerman 1975: 80). While certain aspects of his analysis are interesting and influenced this analysis, there are logical inconsistencies and omissions which render it inadequate. First, in using only three versions (he included 1916-*Waux* as well), he could not recognize that the Beynon-*Asdiwal* and the Boas 1902 versions do not contain a sea/land opposition as such and do not end in *Asdiwal's* death. While the former makes no reference to the sea

or sea-hunting and ends simply with a move to Tsimshian territory, the latter ends happily-ever-after at the sea—implying the union of sea and mountains in the person of a mountain-hunter residing by the ocean. This does not eliminate the possibility of a sea/land opposition, but it lessens its significance. Yet, while Ackerman uses this opposition extensively, his analysis is not itself dependent upon it. More important for his analysis is the inconsistency with which he deals with the death of *Asdiwal*. Ackerman suggests that the sea-lion, being a crest of the *Ganhada* clan, is associated with *Asdiwal's* father, a bird and also a crest of the *Ganhada* clan.[1] If this is the case, and it seems likely that it is, then *Asdiwal's* attraction to the sea-lions is a statement of patrifiliation. Ackerman recognizes this, but not before he has already suggested that *Asdiwal's* journey in the sea-lion's stomach has caused him to be metaphorically re-born as a member of the *Ganhada* clan. This is also plausible, but Ackerman cannot have it both ways. If *Asdiwal* has been reborn as a *Ganhada*, then his longing for the sea-lions, in Boas 1895, is a perfectly appropriate desire to be with his matriclan-by-adoption. He would now be related to his father not as son, but as nephew or brother. Ackerman's suggestion that the death described in Boas 1895 is brought on by *Asdiwal's* statement of patrifiliation cannot be correct in light of his own reasoning. Furthermore, *Asdiwal's* own use of the killer-whale as his instrument of revenge on his brothers-in-law reinforces his continued association with the *Gispudwada* clan (see Table 1).

The question then remains as to which, if either, of Ackerman's two suggestions is applicable to this story. Both have repercussions which apply to all the versions which contain reference to the sea-lions; that is, to Boas 1895, Boas 1902, and Boas 1912. First, though, it must be noted that acceptance of the sea-lions as being of the *Ganhada* clan includes acceptance of the fact that *Asdiwal's* wife's brothers are then hunting in *Ganhada* territory and must be *Ganhada* themselves. This association of the brothers and the sea-

lions is based on two facts. One, the origins of a crest were traced to the encounter of an ancestor with the crest animal (Halpin 1984a: 19); and two, these crest animals, or supernatural beings, "were associated with specific locations [and]...since they have a physical association with a particular locale, that place also became part of the House—its territory" (Cove 1982: 7). Of course, the brothers' sister would also be *Ganhada* and *Asdiwal's* marriage to her would thus be marriage to a woman of his father's clan—an FZD type marriage. This marriage takes place in all three of the above mentioned versions and is highly significant if it is believed that *Asdiwal* is reborn as a *Ganhada*. If this is the case, then his marriage becomes incestuous and deserving of some kind of negative value judgement. In Boas 1912, *Asdiwal* abandons this marriage very soon after returning from the sea-lions. This would seem to be the appropriate thing to do, and yet *Asdiwal* dies anyway. Granting that his supernatural helpers may have abandoned him for some other offense, this interpretation is possible. In Boas 1895, *Asdiwal* lives for many years before he dies, and he seems to die then only because, in speaking about the sealions to his son, he referred to his own clan. It could be that this reference is a double one in that it is also a reminder of the incestuous nature of *Asdiwal's* marriage and so, in that case, the interpretation might still be possible. However, in Boas 1902, *Asdiwal* lives happily-ever-after with his wife, in this incestuous marriage. This is not consistent, nor is it really plausible to expect a lack of censure. Thus, overall, the suggestion that *Asdiwal* is re-born as a *Ganhada* has shown itself sufficiently incapable of elucidating the events to be abandoned.

So, what about Ackerman's other suggestion? Is it consistent, or even useful, to consider that the sea-lions, *Asdiwal's* brothers-in-law, and his father are all of the *Ganhada* clan? In order to decide, the same three versions must be examined. First, in Boas 1895, *Asdiwal* longs to return to the sea-lions and dies. Assuming he has not been re-born into the *Ganhada* clan (which seems most reasonable), he is longing to live with his father's people

when he should be with his mother's people. He has made the wrong choice and he is punished for it. In Boas 1912, *Asdiwal* returns inland, leaving his wife and child, and lives on his own amongst his mother's people. He makes the correct choice, but has no reason to abandon his own family, and he dies anyway. It could be argued that he made two choices here, one right and one wrong. In any case, he is punished for some reason. In the 1902 version, *Asdiwal* kills *all* his brothers-in-law[2] and then lives happily-ever-after with his wife. There is no punishment here and, it could be argued, there is no need. His encounter with the sea-lions could be sufficient for him to lay claim on this territory for his own lineage and the elimination of the brothers-in-law forestalls any challenge to that claim. Thus, he creates his own choice to stay, a choice which is justified if not usual. So, to answer the question more directly, it is both consistent and useful to consider the association of the sea-lions, *Asdiwal's* brothers-in-law, and his father with the *Ganhada* clan. Such an association helps to elucidate the death in Boas 1895, and it does not result in contradictions in the interpretation of the events of the other versions. In other words, this suggestion can be applied equally to all the versions examined.

So far, the examination of each suggestion put forward has brought an understanding of the under-lying structure of the myth that much closer. One sociological structure has already appeared repeatedly. That structure is residence. However, residence cannot be broken down into two opposing parts, and the versions of the story of *Asdiwal* bear this out. In Boas 1895, *Asdiwal* lives with his wife's people, who are also his father's people, and he yearns for an even closer association with the *Ganhada* clan. In Boas 1902, *Asdiwal* lives with his wife's people, who are also his father's people, after he has killed all his brothers-in-law. In Boas 1912, *Asdiwal* lives with his wife's people in all three of his marriages. But, while these people are also his father's people in his first and third marriages, this is not the case in his second marriage. In Beynon-*Asdiwal* he does not marry, and in Beynon-*Waux*

he lives with his wife and her sister. In the two *Waux* versions, there is nothing to indicate which people *Waux* and his wife are living with. In fact, in Beynon-*Waux*, it is said that they go "to new territories" (Cove and MacDonald 1987: 174) thereby implying that they leave the areas associated with their families altogether. Apparently, there is no pattern in this. Furthermore, the almost total lack of reference to marriage or residence in the Beynon-*Asdiwal* version suggests that, should this be found to be part of the structure of the myth, it is not the primary structure.

So, what is the primary structure? It must be an element common to all the versions, based on the assumption made above, and the only such element is rivalry. In Beynon-*Asdiwal*, *Asdiwal* is challenged to hunt a white bear by a rival of his father. When he fails, his humiliation exiles him. In Boas 1902, *Asdiwal* proves himself a better sea-lion hunter than his brothers-in-law and they abandon him. Later, he kills them for it. In Boas 1895, *Asdiwal* is put to the test by his father-in-law. Later, there is the same incident of hunting sea-lions and *Asdiwal* is abandoned by all but the youngest of his jealous brothers-in-law. In Boas 1912 there are the same two incidents as in Boas 1895 plus a third in which *Asdiwal* proves himself better at hunting on land than his brothers-in-law are at hunting at sea. As a result, he is abandoned. Through-out these versions there is an increasing tendency to express the rivalry in terms of residence and marriage. Thus, in the two *Waux* versions, the secondary structures of residence and marriage have taken over and rivalry is seen only slightly between what *Waux* wants his wife to do and what she herself wants to do.

However, while rivalry is the theme of the story of *Asdiwal*, it is expressed as a binary opposition between competition and cooperation. Neither is considered to be better

than the other, and the mediation of the opposition does not lie in some compromise position but in the balance of both. Thus,

competition : (competition and cooperation) ::
cooperation : (competition and cooperation)

where one is unacceptable without the other. The most clear social expression of this and the one which most clearly expresses its importance in Tsimshian society is the potlatch. As previously explained, the potlatch accompanied every major social event in Tsimshian life. As Miller has said (1984b: 27), "the purpose of all of the potlatches and feasts was sharing, of both tangibles and intangibles, in a social situation." But, there were at least four distinct types of potlatching, one of which was an "aggressive, hostile, or boastful type" (Miller 1984b: 29). Yet even this type involved the sharing of resources and even the others involved conspicuous displays of wealth and status. In the potlatch, the competitive aspect, in terms of the assertion of social position, was linked to the cooperative aspect, in terms of the distribution of wealth and the assistance given by one's own and one's father's clan.

The incidents of competition in the story of *Asdiwal* have been noted above, but there are also instances of cooperation. In the Boas 1895 and 1912 versions the tests which *Asdiwal* is put through in competitive fashion are carried out by him cooperatively. That is, he does what is asked of him and always gives what he gains to the head of the house, his father-in-law. Although the chief in the 1895 version is initially very angry and ashamed that *Asdiwal's* power is greater than his own, he eventually comes to like him. This is even more pronounced in the 1912 version in that the chief respects and likes *Asdiwal* because his power is greater than his own. In fact, it is when this chief thinks *Asdiwal* has failed that he calls him a "miserable little slave" (Boas 1912: 107). Thus it can be seen that, in

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this episode, competition and cooperation are balanced. Yet, it cannot remain so for *Asdiwal* is living in the wrong place and must leave.

In Boas 1912 there then follows an episode which is not in any of the other versions, except 1916-*Waux*, and there it is not complete. *Asdiwal* marries and travels to the Nass River with his wife's family. Everything he kills while hunting he gives to his in-laws, in the same spirit of cooperation as found in the previous episode. However, this cannot continue since *Asdiwal's* wife is soon expecting a child and right away there is competition between *Asdiwal*, the child's father, and his brothers-in-law, the child's uncles. This incident is repeated in Boas 1912, and Boas 1895 where *Asdiwal* gets along fine with his brothers-in-law, the sea-lion hunters, until his child is born. Again, at this point, competition arises but, significantly, the youngest brother-in-law is separated from the others by his cooperation with *Asdiwal.* The reason for this lies in the motive behind the competition. That is, the conflict arises because of *Asdiwal's* son. Without a child, *Asdiwal* is a provider of food and a good one at that. As such, he is a welcome addition to any Tsimshian House (Adams 1974: 174). However, hunting, which *Asdiwal* is so good at, is learned from the father and passed on to the son (see Adams 1974: 174 as well as above). Thus, any son of *Asdiwal* can be expected to be a great hunter and a serious rival for the greatest names in the House.

Lévi-Strauss noted that these situations were incidents of rivalry as well; however, he determined that they expressed rivalry between the patriline (represented by the father) and the matriline (represented by the uncles). As the cultural background given in the previous chapter shows, it is highly unlikely that there was any such rivalry in Tsimshian society. That such a mistake could be made is owing to the story itself. Since *Asdiwal* is living with his brothers-in-law, the threat which his infant son poses to them is obvious even before the child is grown and capable of accepting the responsibility for that threat himself.

As a result, the father, *Asdiwal*, becomes the focus of the hostility toward his child. This would not occur if *Asdiwal* were living with his own matrilineal relatives. This is so because the threat posed by the child to his uncles would not be the least bit obvious if they were separated by distance. Furthermore, *Asdiwal* would not be available as a target for the hostility of his brothers-in-law. The tension, in general, is reduced by the proper residence arrangements. It is important, in this case, to keep in mind that the irregular residence arrangement could not have produced a regular rivalry. Thus, it can be seen that the irregular residence arrangement supplied in the myth leads to an irregular form of the uncle-nephew rivalry and not to any form of patriline-matriline rivalry.

By birth, a nephew is a source of cooperation but by merit, or achievement, he is a source of competition for his cousins and uncles. Thus,

merit : birth :: competition : cooperation

Neither can be dispensed with and a balance must be achieved between the two. *Asdiwal*, then, becomes an unwelcome presence by virtue of the position he can offer his children and competition arises. The youngest brother-in-law, being as it were at the end of the line of succession even without *Asdiwal*, feels the threat much less keenly than his older brothers.

It should be noted that Boas 1902 contains this same episode without any mention of a child. Also, this version does not distinguish between the older brothers-in-law and the youngest—*Asdiwal* kills them all in revenge. However, there is also no instance of cooperation between *Asdiwal* and his in-laws, their relationship is competitive from the first. As such, it cannot last and *Asdiwal* is duly abandoned at sea. So, why does he kill his brothers-in-law when he gets back? Here, the reason is the same in all three versions, Boas

1895, 1912, and 1902. By killing his brothers-in-law, *Asdiwal* effectively eliminates his competition. The youngest is never a threat and is spared in Boas 1895 and 1912, as stated. In Boas 1902, all are killed in an attempt to correct an incorrect residence arrangement. This will be discussed more fully below.

First, there is one last episode of competition and cooperation to examine. That is, in *Asdiwal's* stay among the sea-lions there is an instance of mediation between competition and cooperation insofar as *Asdiwal* competes against them for food and life in killing them, but also cooperates in giving life to them by healing their sickness. This is emphasized further in Boas 1912 and 1895 in that *Asdiwal*, or his arrows, is responsible for the sea-lions' sickness in the first place. This added touch is not explicitly present in Boas 1902.

It might seem that this episode, as well as the episode of the trials of *Asdiwal's* father-in-law, should end happily and this might have been the case were it not that competition and cooperation are not the only operative binary oppositions or structural elements. In addition, there is the secondary structure of residence. However, as noted above, this structure has many parts and puts forward several options, only one of which is positively valued. Residence of *Asdiwal* and his wife in her father's house is tried three times (twice in Boas 1912, once in Boas 1895), residence alone with his wife is tried three times (once in each *Waux* version and once in Boas 1902), residence alone is tried once (Boas 1912), residence with his mother's people begins each version and is tried once in addition, and residence with his wife and her clan is tried three times (Boas 1912, 1895, and 1902). This last can also be construed as residence with his father's clan since, as established above, this marriage was to a *Ganhada* woman. There is also one additional instance of a desire to live with his father's people (Boas 1895).[3] The one 'correct' option out of all these is residence of a man and his wife with his mother's people, or his own clan which is the

same thing. As the cultural data shows, this is the 'proper' and 'normal' place for a man to reside and all others are valued negatively in all the versions of the story of *Asdiwal.*

Competition and cooperation and residence are linked in this story for a reason. That is, the story 'shows' that residence of a man with his mother's people provides a solution to the problem of competition between a man and his in-laws over his children by separating the father from the in-laws. It is not a real solution, but it is the culturally valued choice and the story goes through every other option to show its failure. To begin, *Asdiwal's* death is the result of a wrong choice in Boas 1895, Beynon-*Waux*, and 1916-*Waux*. In the first, *Asdiwal* dies longing to live with his father's people. In the two *Waux* versions, *Waux* and his wife have chosen to live on their own, without their kin and they, too, die as a result. In Boas 1912, *Asdiwal* finally makes the correct residence choice in terms of the relatives he lives with, but he does not take his wife and child with him and dies for it. In Boas 1902, there is an interesting twist. *Asdiwal's* brothers-in-law all die because *Asdiwal* is living with them instead of with his own brothers. This is also the case in Boas 1912 and 1895, but here there is an apparently happy ending for *Asdiwal* and his wife. The idea underlying this rather surprising occurence is simply that *Asdiwal* is no longer living with his wife's people if he has killed them all off. He has 'successfully' altered his residence arrangements without actually moving. However, it is not likely that this would have been seen as an acceptable solution by any Tsimshian person. It would not be advisable, nor even possible, to kill all of one's wife's relatives. Thus, it is a non-solution.

There are two more interesting manifestations of alternate residence arrangements in the versions. First, in Boas 1895, *Asdiwal* marries the daughter of a great chief (his second marriage) and lives with her and her father. The marriage eventually ends when *Asdiwal* becomes homesick. While this is in itself an expression of the appropriateness of

residence with the mother's family over the wife's family, there are no negative valuations involved. However, there are also no brothers-in-law and no children involved. This seems to indicate that this is a possible solution *under specific circumstances.* Second, in Boas 1912 the identical situation exists in *Asdiwal's* marriage to Evening-Star, daughter of Chief Sun. There is an added consideration here, though, a tertiary structure which is fully operative in this version only. That is, there is an opposition here between marriage to the matrilateral cross-cousin (MBD) and marriage to the patrilateral cross-cousin (FZD). Along the lines of competition and cooperation, the solution is not in one or the other, but in both. Yet, this is not both in the sense of bilateral cross-cousin marriage. It is both in the sense of a cross combining MBD and FZD marriage, just as competition and cooperation must be combined, balanced. Thus,

MBD : (MBD and FZD) :: FZD : (MBD and FZD)

This hybrid is proposed in Boas 1912 in *Asdiwal's* celestial marriage. There are details in this version which place the characters as to clan and allow the marriage types to be determined.

First, as explained above, *Asdiwal's* father was of the *Ganhada* clan. From the list of clans and associated crests given by Henry Tate (in Boas 1916: 503-506), *Waux's* name, meaning 'very light' (Boas 1916: 243; Cove and MacDonald 1987: 173), seems to refer only to the crest Flying Children of the *Gispudwada* clan. Given the naming conventions, this would make *Asdiwal* a *Gispudwada.*[4] Evening-Star, because she wears the costume of the White Bear crest, is identified as a *Ganhada* and her father, the Sun, is a *Gispudwada.* What this all adds up to is that, in *Asdiwal's* marriage, he and his father-in-law are of the same clan: a result of an MBD marriage pattern. Also, *Asdiwal's* father and *Asdiwal's* wife

are of the same clan and this is a result of an FZD marriage pattern. This effect cannot be achieved in a bilateral marriage system or in an FZD or MBD system. It is an unrealizable compromise suitable for the celestial village, but not for a human one. Correspondingly, *Asdiwal's* marriage fails when he and his wife return to his mother's village and is restored again when they return to her father's village. Eventually, *Asdiwal* gets homesick again and leaves. His second marriage is to a woman living with her brothers and her father at *Ginaxangiget*. This gives us no clues as to the clan association of the woman, but it tells us that of her father. Since, according to Tate (in Boas 1916: 482), the village of *Ginaxangiget* was an entirely *Gispudwada* village, *Asdiwal's* father-in-law must be of the same clan as himself. Thus, this marriage seems to follow an MBD pattern. In *Asdiwal's* third marriage, he marries a woman who lives at *Laxalan* with her brothers. Since there is no mention of their father, it is implied that they are living in the House of their uncles and thus with their own clan. The village *Laxalan* is identified by Boas (1916: 484)[5] as *Ganhada* and thus *Asdiwal's* father and his wife are of the same clan, implying an FZD type marriage.[6] In the end, *Asdiwal returns* to the Skeena people, implying that he goes back to live with his mother's relatives, members of his own clan. The village he goes to is *Ginadas*, a *Gispudwada* village (Tate in Boas 1916: 483)—confirming *Asdiwal's* association with this clan. Here, he is effectively unmarried and this arrangement is valued negatively in his death.

None of the other marriages is valued negatively, in the sense that it leads to disastrous consequences. Negative incidents occur not as a result of the marriage, but rather as a result of the residence arrangement involved. The basis for making such a statement is a logical one. That is, only one sociological variable is 'wrong' at a time. If this were not the case, the instructive value of the narrative would be greatly reduced. Even a Tsimshian native, familiar with the culture from birth, could not be expected to decide whether one or

the other or all variables were being negatively valued without this logical rule. Thus, *Waux's* marriage to his uncle's daughter in Beynon-*Waux* and to his mother's cousin in 1916-*Waux* are both neutral in terms of value judgements. The residence arrangements in these versions are incorrect and are consequently valued negatively. The same reasoning applies to *Asdiwal's* marriages in Boas 1902 and Boas 1895. There are no marriages in Beynon-*Asdiwal.* As for the marriage of *Asdiwal's* parents, it actually occurs only in Boas 1895 and Boas 1912. In both, there is insufficient information to determine residence. That is, it is not clear whether the group is living near the father's people or simply without any associations with either parent's clan. Also, without knowing the clan membership of either *Asdiwal's* mother's father or his father's father, it is not possible to determine the type of marriage contracted. Therefore, it would appear that no judgement is intended for either these marriages or these residence arrangements. Quite simply, the narrative is about *Asdiwal* and not about his parents. To repeat, then, the only negatively valued marriage arrangement is that of *Asdiwal* at the end of Boas 1912 in which he has abandoned his wife and child and is living, effectively, unmarried.

In trying to organize the relations between the three levels of the narrative, it will be useful to resort to a few equations. They are as follows:

non-marriage : marriage :: residence with another clan :

residence with own clan   [for a man]

non-marriage : marriage :: cooperation : (competition and

cooperation)[7]

residence with another clan : residence with own clan ::

        competition : (competition and cooperation)

Therefore,

    non-marriage : residence with another clan :: cooperation :

        competition

and marriage, residence with own clan, and competition and cooperation are all equivalent. These last two deductions require an explanation. First, how does non-marriage equate with cooperation? In the social life of the Tsimshian people, a single person would be accountable only to his own clan. Granted that some of the stiffest competition any Tsimshian man will face will be with his brothers and his uncles, it is still the case that marriage increases his accountability. In marriage, he is accountable to his own clan and also to the clan of his children. The competition has doubled. Since balance is the goal, the cooperation will double to compensate. However, as the story of *Asdiwal* tries to show, this will only occur if the man is residing with his own clan. This leads to the second point which is that residence with another clan is equated with competition. The reasoning behind this link has already been discussed. Third, the narrative reveals that the proper balance of competition and cooperation is present in marriage where the husband and wife live with his clan. It should be noted that this is not a 'real' solution, it is the culturally advocated solution.

Finally, residence of a man with his own clan and marriage are preferred not only by the Tsimshian people, but also by the supernatural beings who support them. In fact, this is probably the deciding factor in favour of these residence and marriage arrangements since life is not possible for the Tsimshian without supernatural help of some order (see Seguin

1984: 117-118). Why would the supernatural beings prefer residence of a man with his own clan and marriage? Quite simply, no supernatural being in its right mind would associate with a man who had no successor. A non-married man will have no children and therefore, in an FZD system, no inheritor grandchildren. Furthermore, he threatens the social organization regardless of the marriage pattern by not providing nephews for his wife's brothers. Were his own sisters not to marry, he would be without nephews as well. A man who lives away from his own clan also lives away from his nephews. Even though nephews will live with their fathers until grown, at some point all uncles, brothers, and nephews share a single residence. They are thus in close contact with one another and succession is assured. This is not so without own clan residence in that a man is cut off from his male relatives.

Therefore, it is now possible to understand the fatal 'mistakes' which characterize the various versions. As Seguin (1984: 117) points out, accidents, mistakes, failure of any sort was an indication that the supernatural helper(s) was displeased at best or, at worst, had withdrawn its support. In *Asdiwal's* case, he makes the mistake of telling his son what he ate among the sea-lions (Boas 1895), he forgets his snowshoes (Boas 1912), and he goes hunting without his spear (Beynon-*Waux* and 1916-*Waux*)—all of which lead immediately to death. The implication is that *Asdiwal*, being without successors in every instance, is not a suitable associate for a supernatural being and has lost the help he once had. This is most clear in the last three instances mentioned in that the forgotten item was given to *Asdiwal* by his supernatural protector, his father. The item is missing and so is the power that went with it.

Unfortunately, this analysis is not without problems. The connection between non-marriage and cooperation, in particular, is especially vague. However, the problems arise

not out of the process of analysis but out of the subject matter itself. There is no solution to the problem of balancing competition and cooperation; indeed, as Lévi-Strauss has noted, if the contradiction is a real one, overcoming it is impossible (Lévi-Strauss, 1963: 229). Yet the narrative is trying to show beyond a doubt that there is a solution. To be exact, the narrative is trying to show that residence of a man with his own people and marriage provide that solution. As a result, there are leaps of reason which cannot be followed in a logical analysis. This is a limitation of such an analysis, but one which does not preclude it. It is only necessary to be aware of it and make allowances for those instances where the connections are logically suspect. Just as language begins with an arbitrary assignment of sound to object, so the narrative begins with an arbitrary, though culturally significant, assignment of solution to problem.

Notes

[1] Animals are generally associated with the crests which they personify. The crest identified as 'a bird' is called in Tsimshian *asiwalgad*. Since the letter 'd' is known to slip out of spoken Tsimshian much as t's and d's will slip out of spoken English, it is likely that *asiwal* and *Asdiwal* are the same. The suffix *gad* simply means 'people' (Boas 1916: 496). Thus, *Asdiwal* carries in his name a reference to his father's clan, as expected. Of further interest is the fact that the *asiwalgad* crest appears in two clans: the *Ganhada* clan and the *Gispudwada* clan (Boas 1916: 505). This is highly unusual and appears to be the only instance of such an occurrance. It deserves further attention but this cannot be done within the scope of this paper. The *Ganhada* clan has been chosen as the clan of Asdiwal's father since the translation here is "a bird" while the translation for the *Gispudwada* crest is "a monster bird."

[2] In Boas 1895 and 1912, *Asdiwal* spares his youngest brother-in-law.

[3] At the end of Boas 1912, *Asdiwal's* spirit goes with his father to 'Heaven'. Lévi-Strauss takes this as an incidence of patrilocal residence, but the same has not been done in this analysis. The reason for this is that the incident is found in this version only and has a strong Christian cast. Therefore, there is reason to suspect that this is a Christian ending, added to the text by Henry Tate. (For evidence that he was inclined to do such things, see Maud 1989: 160-161.) Since this analysis is concerned with addressing itself to traditional Tsimshian culture, the passage is not relevant here.

[4] It should be noted that *Waux* is not named in Boas 1912, but he is in 1916-*Waux*, which was collected from the same informant.

[5] This information came from information collected by Boas in Kincolith and not from the mythology itself.

[6] Incidentally, this backs up the interpretation made above which identified these brothers and sister as *Ganhada* based on the use of sea-lion hunting grounds.

[7] Non-marriage is equivalent to cooperation since it produces no children and so eliminates the competitive aspect of Tsimshian life. The sole purpose of an unmarried person is to assist in providing food for the residence group—a strictly cooperative role. In addition, any possible competition between an unmarried man and his nephews is severely limited by the fact that the former can have no grandchildren to inherit from him and thus has no successors. Since a man with no successors is a dead-end for any names he might have, he is not a strong candidate to receive the names of others.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This discussion has had two main goals. The first was to show that the failure of Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the story of *Asdiwal* is not a failure of structuralism. The second was to provide a structural analysis of the story of *Asdiwal.* In doing so, an attempt was made to comply with requests like that of Mary Douglas (1967: 68) that "richly abundant mythical material should be analysed against a known background of equally rich ethnographic records." As a result, the analysis did not reveal cultural elements which were not known previously; but, it did reveal the relations between them. That is, the conflict and cooperation of the potlatch, residence of a woman with her husband and his maternal kin, conflict within kin groups between brothers, cousins, and uncles, and the non-rigourous marriage patterning were all documented ethnographically before the analysis was even attempted. The analysis showed how the Tsimshian thought the conflict and cooperation inherent in their system could best be balanced.

The analysis done here has, of course, been done under the assumption that structuralism is a valid form of interpretation. It has left to one side many of the larger criticisms of the method in the belief that, despite them, structuralism can contribute to the understanding of culture(s). It has not been assumed that structuralism can reveal the 'real' meaning of a narrative. This is not the case. The meaning of a narrative exists on many different levels, one might say an infinite number of levels, and a structural analysis can address only one of these. Consequently, structuralism should not be taken as a replacement for other methods of interpretation, but as just one method among many. It is simply one level of analysis illuminating one level of meaning.

It is unlikely that this was Lévi-Strauss' idea of structuralism. He undoubtedly had greater plans in mind. (See Leach 1970: 7, 18, 36, 53, 112.) Yet, to consider structuralism only as the ideas, and practices, of Lévi-Strauss is, as this paper has shown, a limitation the method is better off without. Just as psycho-analysis continued beyond Sigmund Freud and took positions with which he did not agree, so structuralism should continue to go beyond Lévi-Strauss. It is time that structuralism was allowed to free itself of the limitations of Lévi-Strauss' use of it.

Nonetheless, it must still be recognized that, despite the inconsistency, the vagueness, and the arbitrariness of much of his work, Lévi-Strauss is still the founder of structuralism in anthropology. His theories and practices are not to be ignored but built upon and, hopefully, improved. Structuralism continues to have a place in anthropological theory and in the study of all myth and narrative in general, and it must develop accordingly. However, whatever changes may be made, as long as the method is to be called "structuralism" it will contain the ideas of Lévi-Strauss.

In fact, the purpose of this analysis has not been to show that Lévi-Strauss' method needs to be improved but rather that a rigourous application of his principles can produce a thoroughly relevant interpretation of the story of *Asdiwal.* Therefore, it has been shown that the differences between Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the story and this one are due to the carelessness with which Lévi-Strauss applied the principles of structuralism. This analysis, in taking all the versions into account, in considering the ethnographic material in detail, and in using those ethnographic sources with attention to focus and method of collection, has attempted to correct the problems which Lévi-Strauss had in "The Story of Asdiwal".

Certainly there are ways in which structuralism can be improved and modified, but that lies beyond the scope of this paper. The method has already proved itself over the last forty years despite, or maybe because of, the many criticisms. However, whether or not it remains as such in the corpus of social theory, it has added ideas and ways of thinking which will remain and continue to colour the human sciences.

Appendix

Legend:

1. Canyon City
2. Gitlaxdamks/
   Laxalan
3. Kincolith
4. Port Simpson
5. Metlakatla
6. Port Essington
7. Ginazangiget
8. Ginadoix/
   Ginadas
9. Kitsumgalum
10. Kitselas
11. Kitwanga
12. Kisgegas
13. Kuldo

Map labels: Tsetsaut, Nisqa, Gitksan, Tlingit, Coast Tsimshian, Carrier, South Tsimshian, Haisla, Bella Coola, Haida, Heiltsuk
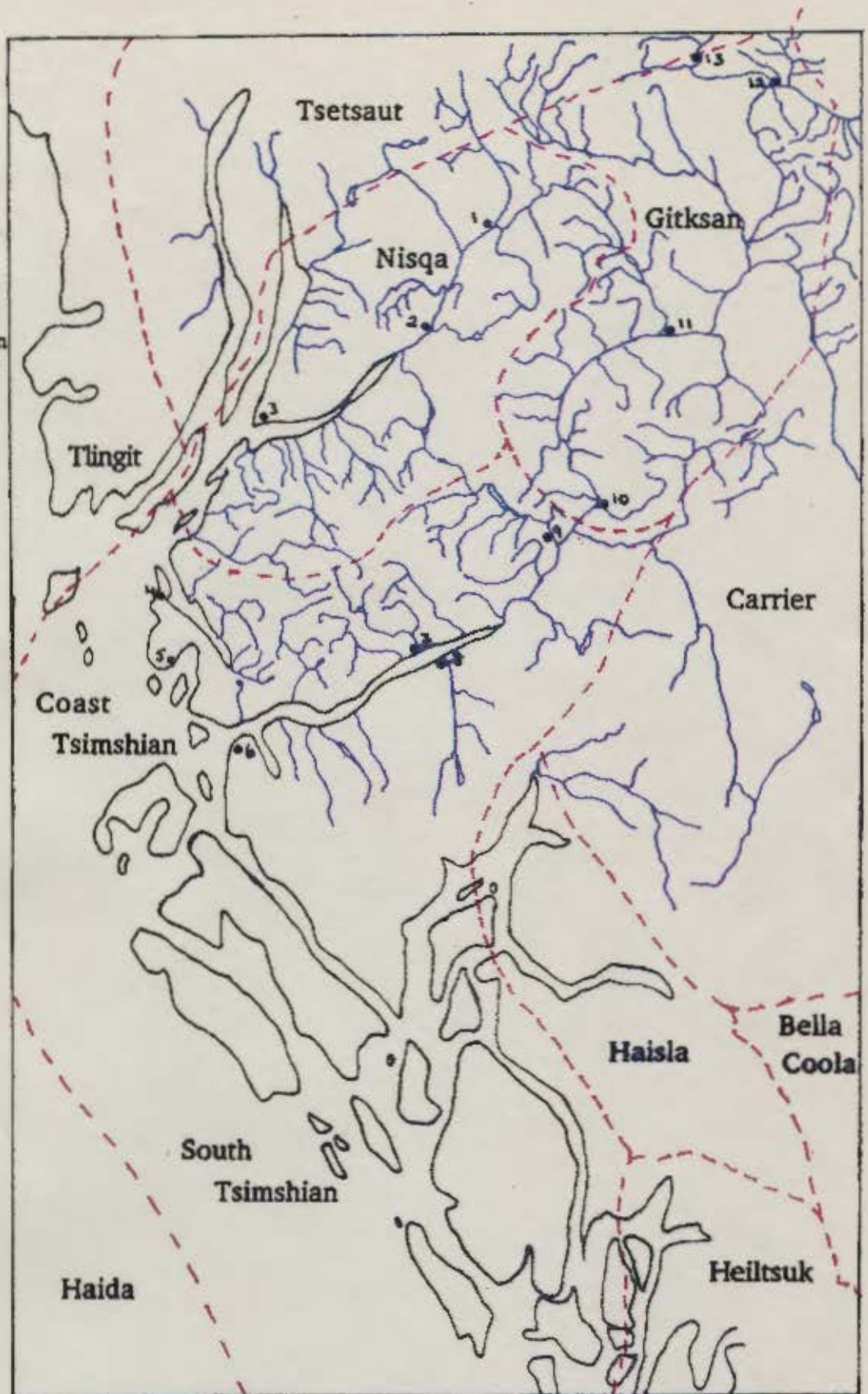
Tsimshian Groups and Towns

(from MacDonald 1984b: 65, 66, 75; Allaire 1984: 88; Seguin 1984: xi;
and Miller and Eastman 1984: xiv-xv)

Table 1   Tsimshian Clans and Crests

South/Coast Tsimshian	Nishga	Gitksan
Gispudwada (Killer Whale)	Gisgaast (Fireweed)	Gigaast [b] (Fireweed)
Ganhada (Raven)	Ganhada (Raven)	Ganhada/Laxsel [c] (Frog)
Laxgibuu (Wolf)	Laxgibuu (Wolf)	Laxgibuu (Wolf)
Laxsgiik (Eagle)	Laxsgiik (Eagle)	Laxsgiik (Eagle)

a. Each clan has two primary crests. The pairs are: Killer Whale and Grizzly, Raven and Frog, Wolf and Bear, and Eagle and Beaver.

b. The rows are equivalent across the language groups (e.g. Gispudwada is seen as the same as Gisgaast for marriage purposes).

c. Ganhada is used by the western Gitksan villages; Laxsel is used by the eastern villages.

(from Cove 1987: 79)

Table 2   Interethnic Moiety "Brothers"

Tsimshian	Haida	Tlingit
"Moiety" (1)	Killer Whale (Fireweed) Wolf	Raven	Wolf
"Moiety" (2)	Eagle Raven (Frog)	Eagle	Raven

(from Dunn 1984a: 37)

Table 3   Horizontal and Vertical Crest Axes

Primary Crest Animals

Operator	Wolf		Gispudwada		Ganhada		Eagle	
	Wolf	Bear	Grizzly	Killer Whale	Frog	Raven	Eagle	Beaver
abalone	Prince of Wolves	Prince of Bears	Prince of Grizzlies	Prince of Killer Whales		Prince of Ravens	Prince of Eagles	Prince of Beavers
split		Split Bear		Split Killer Whale				Split Eagle
young		Without Knowledge			Children of Chief Frog			
human faces			Supernatural Grizzly		Supernatural Frog	Supernatural Raven		Supernatural Beaver
white	White Wolf	White Bear	White Grizzly			White Raven		

(from Halpin 1984a: 28)
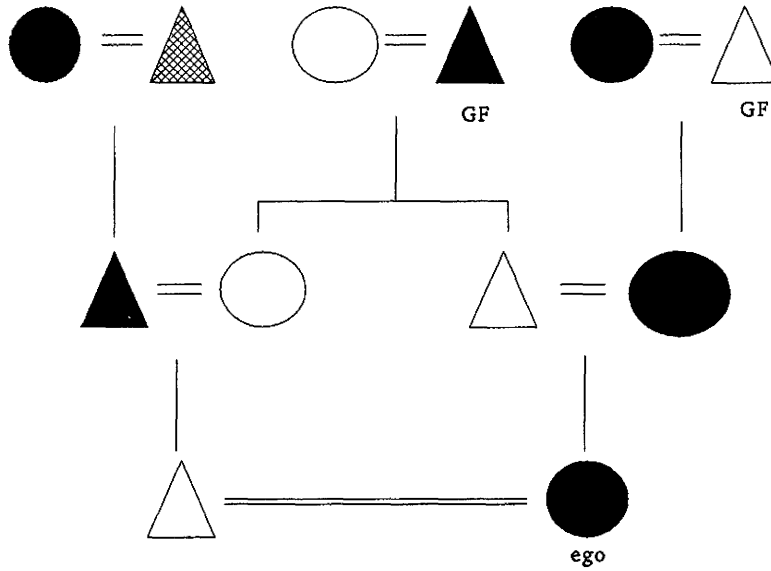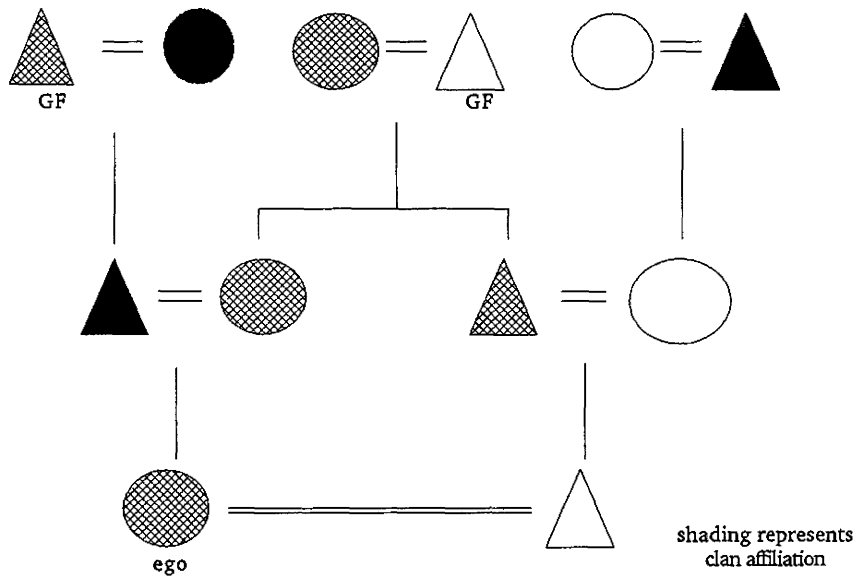
Figure 1 Marriage to a Grandfather
(from Cove 1976: 163)

F Z D
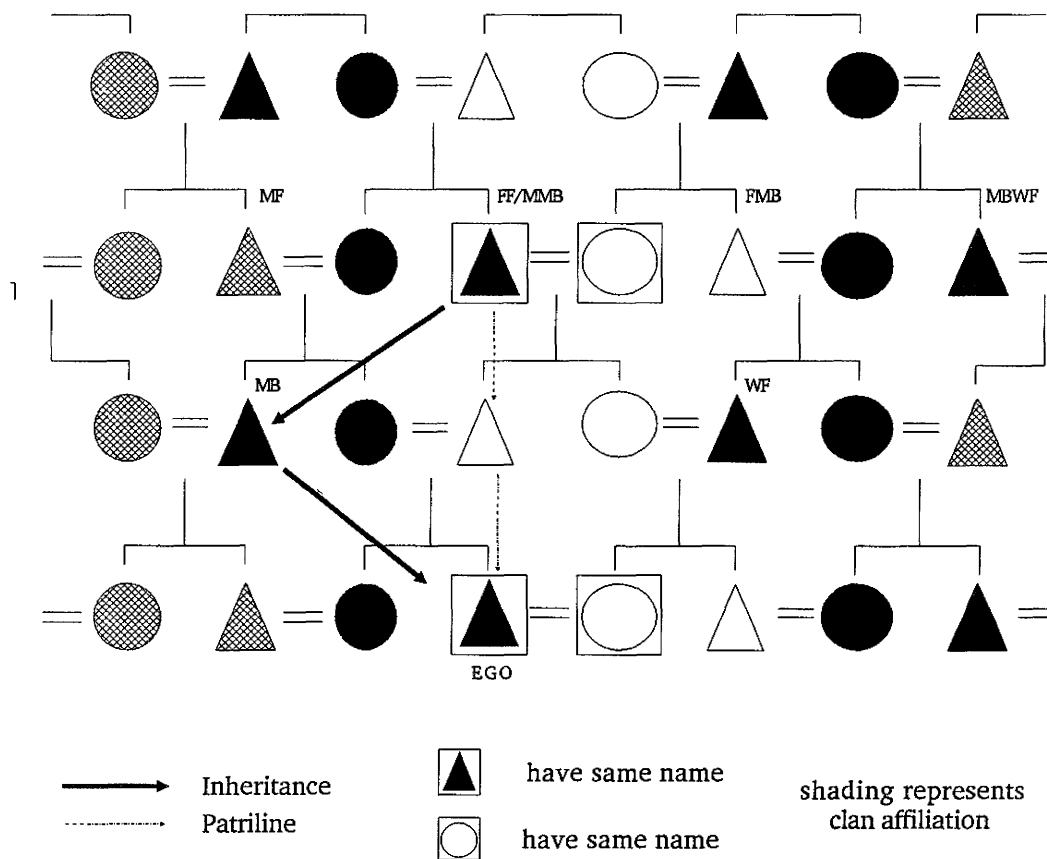
Figure 2   Inheritance and naming relations
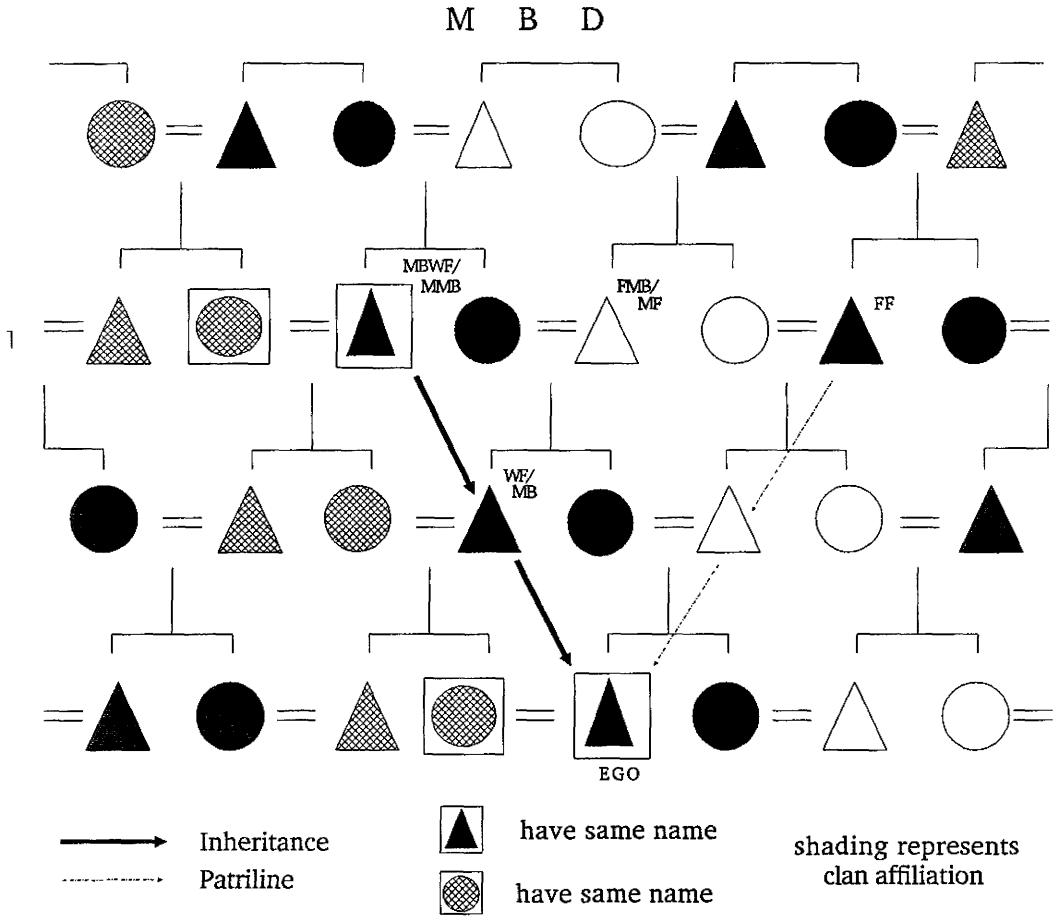
Figure 3 Inheritance and naming relations

The Stories of Asdiwal

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
two sisters liiving on Nass	=	mother and daughter living on Nass	mother and daughter living on Skeena	two sisters living on Skeena	
in separate villages	=	=	=	=	
famine in the land	=	=	=	=	
go to meet each other	=	=	=	=	
elder married sister goes upstream	younger married sister goes upstream	daughter goes up-stream	mother goes up-stream	married sister goes up-stream	
a man comes to the younger sister	=	a man comes to the daughter	=	a man comes to the elder sister	
he helps them get food	=	=	=	=	
		marries daughter			
a boy is born to them	=	=	=	=	a boy is born
he grows up very quickly		=	=		
given gifts by his father	=		=	=	=
	mother calls him Asihwil (A.)			Asdiwal, his father, calls him Waux	=
boy compares hunting with Large-Mittens	boy compares hunting with Large-Ears				

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
his father leaves		=	=		
women and boy grow rich		=	=		
			older woman dies		
			mother gives potlatch and names son Asdiwal (A.)		
			A. a great hunter in woods		
boy wants to go to uncles -Laxalsap	women and boy go with bros. - Gitxaden	go to woman's mother's tribe	mother returns to relatives at Canyon		
	boy's uncles give feast and name him Asihwil (A.)	his mother gives feast and names him Asiwa (A.)			
boy becomes a great hunter	=	=	=		
		marries			
noticed by the giant Large-Mittens - his father's rival	noticed by a super-natural being in heaven				
who wanted to challenge him	because great hunter he was a				

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
so he sent a white bear to A.'s village	sent a slave as a white bear to the Nass	sees a white bear on the Nass	a white bear ran on the ice down the Skeena		
A. pursued the bear	=	A. pursued the bear upstream	A. pursued the bear down river		
follows it up steep mtns	follows it up a cliff	=	follows it up mountains		
		reaches top of mountain	to the top		
			follows bear up ladder into prairie springtime		
		sees bear is really a man			
bear goes into cavern	bear goes into house	man goes into house	bear goes into house		
A. can't find bear	A. can't get in and loses bear	sees bear is an older slave of the chief	sees woman taking off white bear blanket		
humiliated, he goes to live with the Coast Tsimshian where he becomes a great hunter	goes to live with the Coast Tsimshian	enters house and marries chief's daughter	=		
		soon sent to mountain to hunt	=		
		wife warns him others have died trying	=		
		tricks the mtn and escapes the fog	=		

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
		kills lots of mtn-goats	=		
		gives fat to father-in-law	=		
			survives three more trials: water tree fire		
		chief angry and ashamed	chief respects and likes him		
		likes him later			
		A. gets homesick	=		
		chief sends him home	=		
		wakes up by the Nass	slides down rays of Sun to the Skeena		
			wife goes with him		
		he's been gone a year			
			takes a new name - Potlatch-Giver (P-G)		
			cheats on his wife		
			she kills him and her father resurrects him		
			he stays with them but gets homesick again		
			goes down the Skeena		

The Stories of Asdiwal (cont'd)

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
			marries at Ginaxangiget		
			a woman with four bros.		
			alll move to the Nass		
			P-G hunts food for wife's family	A. trains Waux to hunt	Waux goes hunting with his father
			hunting challenge between P-G and his bros-in-law		
			P-G kills four bears and they kill nothing		
			brothers ashamed and leave with his wife and child	A. leaves Waux	uncles take Waux away from his father
		six Gitxala bros. find him	four Gitxala bros. find him	lives with his mother's people	
		returning from Nass	going to Nass	used hunting grounds on the Skeena	used his father's hunting grounds
	marries	marries their sister	=	marries his uncle's daughter	marries his mother's cousin
		(child)	boy born		twins born
	bros have problems sea-hunting	=	=		children follow him everywhere
	A. goes hunting with them	=	=	goes to new territories	goes up new mountain

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
	kills lots of sea-lions	=	=	Valley of Supernatural Beings forbidden by father	children slip and die in Valley of Supernatural Beings
	all bros leave him on rock	bros jealous and leave him on rock	eldest ashamed and leaves him on rock	W. curious	
		youngest stays	P-G sends others back, youngest goes last		
	water starts to rise	=	=		
	builds tower to sit on	=	=		
	calls his father	transforms into a bird	father comes		
	water recedes	=	=		
	A. lies down to sleep	=	=		
	mouse calls him twice	mouse calls him four times	mouse calls him three times		
	follows her into house in rock	=	follows her down ladder into house in rock		
	sea-lion chief is sick	sea-lion people are sick	=		
	A. sees a harpoon is the cause	A. sees his arrows are the cause	=		

The Stories of Asdiwal (cont'd)

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
	promises to heal	=			
	mouse arranges payment				
	pulls out harpoon	pulls out arrows	=		
		he stays a long time	he stays some time		
			bros look for him		
		A. gets homesick	=		
		chief sea-lion sends for a canoe	=		
		all are damaged	=		
	A. uses sea-lion intestine for a canoe	A. uses sea-lion stomach for a canoe	P-G uses chief's canoe (his stomach)		
			finds his wife and child		
			only her youngest brother has helped her		
	resolves to take revenge	=			
	carves killer-whales	=	=		
	3rd one becomes real	=	last one becomes real		

The Stories of Asdiwal (cont'd)

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
		tells whales to upset bros canoes	=		
		and go easy on the youngest	according to the order in which they left him		
	whales break canoes	whales upset canoes	whales break canoes		
		but they protect the youngest	the two youngest survive		
		youngest frightened but grateful			
	A. went and stayed with his wife	all left lived together in peace	P-G went and stayed with his youngest bro-in-law	W. and wife go near Valley	move to father's hut at foot of mountain
		A. son grows up			
		A. yearns to be with the sea-lions	P-G homesick for his Skeena relatives		
		son asks why and persists	left wife and child and went to Ginadas		
			P-G takes a new name, Stone-Slinger		
		A. tell what the sea-lions fed him	goes hunting without the snowshoes his father gave him	goes hunting without the spear his father gave him	=

Beynon Asdiwal	1902	1895	1912	Beynon Waux	1916 Waux
				calls to wife to sacrifice fat	=
				she repeatedly mishears him	=
				tells her to eat fat and drink cold water	=
				she does and turns to solid quartz	she does and turns to flint with white marble
				mtn comes together and crushes Waux	
				jams pole in between mtn sides	
		dies with fishbones sticking out of his stomach	can't move from top of mountain and turns to stone	can't move and turns to stone	=
		because he told what he ate	his father takes him to his own home		because he forgot his spear
			his body remains on top of the mountain		

Legend

=   indicates the same event as given in the text on its immediate left

| indicates where an event has no correlation in the other versions

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