

“Wearing the Mantle on Both Shoulders”: An Examination of the Development of  
Cultural Change, Mutual Accommodation, and Hybrid Forms at  
Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams, 1834-1862

by

Marki Sellers  
B.G.S., Simon Fraser University, 2005

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## Supervisory Committee

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the relationships between newcomers of Fort Simpson, a HBC post that operated on the northern Northwest Coast of what is now British Columbia, and Ts'msyen people from 1834 until 1862. Through a close analysis of fort journals and related documents, I track the relationships between the Hudson's Bay Company newcomers and the Ts'msyen peoples who lived in or around the fort. Based on the journal and some other accounts, I argue that a mutually intelligible – if not equally understood – world evolved at this site. My specific concern is how the lives of these newcomers and local Ts'msyen people became intertwined and somewhat interdependent. While not characterized by universal fellowship and trust, I suggest that it did involve shared participation in significant cultural activities, the repurposing or remaking of each other's customs, and jointly developed practices in which customs from both groups were intermingled. I propose that some of these practices, particularly those of law and marriage, can be considered as culturally hybrid. While this study acknowledges that newcomer and Ts'msyen peoples had distinct motivations for entering into relationships with each other, it argues that these motivations cannot be understood without attention to the political dynamics of power and authority on both sides. My study ends in 1862. In that year a smallpox epidemic combined with

missionary activity and increasing colonial regulation brought an end to the brief period of accommodation and collaboration between HBC newcomers and Ts'msyen people.

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## Dedication

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my mother, Lori Anne.

## Introduction

In August of 1861 the first Christian marriage of a Ts'msyen couple took place at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. The couple, Stephen (Wahsh) and Martha (Wahtatow) Ryan, were early followers of the Anglican missionary William Duncan.<sup>1</sup> As the first Ts'msyen couple to participate in this new marriage ceremony, they sought to abide by Christian ceremonial customs by closely emulating the ornamentation and proceedings they had observed at celebrations hosted by Duncan.<sup>2</sup> They decorated their longhouse with evergreens, set and otherwise prepared three tables for the guests, and provided a feast of rice, molasses, biscuits, berries and tea for over fifty people. Each of these elements was highly applauded by Duncan and his fellow missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Tugwell, for although undertaken by Stephen and Martha Ryan, they were each a kind of replication of earlier "feasts" hosted by the missionaries themselves.

Duncan and the Tugwells attended the wedding festivities but left early in the evening, before the celebrations were ended. After they left, fiddlers from the fort and other Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) newcomers joined the party at the invitation of Stephen's sister, Mary Quintal,<sup>3</sup> who was the wife of Francois Quintal dit Dubois, the fort

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<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise stated, this thesis follows the orthography observed by Kenneth Campbell, *Persistence and Change: A History of the Ts'msyen Nation*, (Prince Rupert, British Columbia: Published by the Tsimshian Nation and School District 52, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> For New Years Day in 1861, for instance, Duncan and missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Tugwell decorated the school with evergreens and prepared a feast of rice and molasses, biscuits and tea for approximately two hundred and ninety Ts'msyen guests. William Duncan Journal, 31 December 1860, 10043; 1 January 1861, 10043-10044.

<sup>3</sup> Born around 1830, Mary Quintal belonged to the Gitlaan tribe. She was a skilled healer and midwife. Mary Quintal was also known as Noas Pierre, one of her Ts'msyen names, and as Mary Ryan and, after she re-married, as Mary Curtis. The name "Noas Pierre" or *Noos* Pierre was a teknonym. The use of teknonyms and the like seems to have been common practice among the Ts'msyen during the first half of the nineteenth century. Both the Catholic and the Anglican records document the use of this naming practice,

steward. Duncan was greatly displeased to learn of this turn of events.<sup>4</sup> For Duncan, it was “foolery” to dance to such music and to mix with the “disorderly men at the Fort.”<sup>5</sup> He scolded Mary Quintal, his former Sm’algyax (Ts’msyen language) teacher and sometimes confidante, for having organized the dance and inviting these guests he so disapproved of, insisting “upon her never introducing either dancing or any of their [the newcomers’] abominations...among the Christian Indians.”<sup>6</sup> However, matters at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu’alaams were neither as simple as Duncan might have imagined nor as in his control as he would have wished.

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with *Naks* (spouse of), *Noos* (mother of), and *Nagwats* (father of) being most common. Ts’msyen people had many names throughout their lifetimes. At birth, every Ts’msyen person received what HBC officer Pym Nevins Compton referred to as a “little name” and by the time of their death many had held a variety of both secular (ordinary) names and sacred hereditary names. Although adults had their own personal names (names that they currently held) it seems that teknonyms were used both when referring to others and when identifying ones self. Thus, once a Ts’msyen person became a parent they were referred to as the ‘Father of’ or ‘Mother of’ their oldest child. According to Compton, those Ts’msyen who were married but unable to have children might “adopt a dog & give away blankets &c for it, as if for a child, & give the dog some name, & they are then known as the father & mother of his particular dog.” Anthropologist Viola Garfield reported that married adults without children were often referred to as “spouse of so and so” while young children might receive an informal nickname that originated in their ownership of a pet so that girls might be called ‘mother of’ their household pet, for example. There is some evidence to suggest that it was considered impolite to refer to oneself or another by his or her adult name. Teknonyms seem to have had daily usage while adult names, both ordinary and sacred, were reserved as a mark of respect or for a formal occasion. Pym Nevins Compton, *Early Trip to Fort Victoria and Life in the Colony*, BC Archives, MS 2778, 35; Christopher Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 75; Boss, Martha Washington O’Neill Boss, *A Tale of Northern British Columbia from Cariboo to Cassiar, 1880-1956*, Typescript, MS 771, BC Archives, 63; John W. Arcander, *The Apostle of Alaska: The Story of William Duncan of Metlakahla* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), 341, 344; Viola E. Garfield, *Tsimshian Clan and Society* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1939), 221-226.

<sup>4</sup> I employ the term “newcomer” to describe those not from the Northwest Coast present at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu’alaams during the period under study here. I have chosen not to use the word “European,” except in specific circumstances, because of the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of the HBC employees who lived and worked at this fort, and of the outsiders who visited it. Additionally, I chose not to employ the term “trader” when referring to the newcomer employees of Fort Simpson because not all employees of the fort were traders. Moreover, as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people traded at this site it might mislead the reader. “Newcomer,” in this document, should be understood to apply to all of the non-Northwest Coast people at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu’alaams, including Hawaiians, Iroquois, Irish, Scottish, American, English, Métis, northern Europeans, and French-Canadians. Additionally, because Ts’msyen people regularly had contact with outsiders (both human and supernatural) the term “newcomers” works well to distinguish these new outsiders as something different from those the Ts’msyen had previously had contact with, while also maintaining a sense of continuity with Ts’msyen custom. As an alternative I might have used the Ts’msyen term for “white man,” *k’amsiwa*, but this word is specific to white people. For more information on the term see Christopher Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 243.

<sup>5</sup> William Duncan journal, 7 August 1861, 10127.

<sup>6</sup> William Duncan journal, 7 August 1861, 10127.

Indeed, the newcomer involvement and elements of the wedding, both those the missionaries approved of and those Duncan thought scandalous, suggest that the worlds of the newcomers of the fort and the Ts'msyen people living at Laxłgu'alaams were, by 1861, heavily intertwined. Having had, by that time, nearly thirty years of experience living and working alongside one another, newcomers and Ts'msyen people at this locale were well acquainted not only with each other but also with each other's customs.<sup>7</sup> The Ryans' wedding, although novel in the sense that it was the first Ts'msyen Christian wedding ceremony, was only one of many formal ceremonies in which both Ts'msyen and newcomer people participated.<sup>8</sup> They seem to have moved easily between Fort Simpson and the Ts'msyen villages of Laxłgu'alaams, trusting in their own safety and observing the appropriate protocol as they did so. Thus, while the wedding of Stephen and Martha Ryan was in many ways a departure from the past and a shift to the "new ways" of a Christian future it was also an indication of stability through change and a testament to the history and familiarity between HBC newcomers and Ts'msyen people. As such, it makes a fitting beginning to a thesis concerned with cultural change and the relationships between newcomers and Ts'msyen people at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams.

This thesis is concerned with cultural change and newcomer-Ts'msyen relations between 1834 and 1862. I argue that a mutually intelligible – if not equally understood –

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<sup>7</sup> In addition, it important to note that Ts'msyen people had been in contact with non-Indigenous newcomer maritime traders for over forty years by the time the HBC established a fort in Ts'msyen territory. It is important to note that the newcomers of Fort Simpson were not the first European outsiders that the Ts'msyen would have had contact with. Maritime traders had been visiting the northern Northwest Coast to collect furs since the late eighteenth century. Thus when the HBC established Fort Simpson in Ts'msyen territory there had already been over forty years of contact between Ts'msyen people and non-Indigenous newcomers. Robert Steven Grumet, "Changes in Coast Tsimshian Redistributive Activities in the Fort Simpson Region of British Columbia, 1788-1862," *Ethnohistory* Vol.22, No.4 (Fall 1975), 295-318.

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, as I demonstrate in chapter two, cross-participation in ceremony, the attendance of Ts'msyen people at a formal newcomer ceremony or of newcomer people at a formal Ts'msyen ceremony, was commonplace at this locale and held significance for Ts'msyen-newcomer relations more generally.

world was developed at this site in which the lives of these newcomers and local Ts'msyen people became intertwined and somewhat interdependent. While this world was not characterized by conditions of fellowship and trust it did involve shared Ts'msyen-newcomer participation in significant cultural activities, the repurposing or remaking of each other's customs, and jointly developed new practices in which customs from both groups were intermingled. I propose that some of these new practices, particularly those of law and marriage, can be considered as culturally hybrid. Further, I suggest that it was the compromised position of the HBC on the northern Northwest Coast, Ts'msyen cultural disposition, and dynamics of power within and between these groups which fostered the development a mutually intelligible world and hybrid Ts'msyen-newcomer practices.

I shall begin by briefly introducing the peoples who are the focus of this work and the territory in which they lived. I next offer a brief overview of cultural change at this site. I then turn to discuss my source material, both primary and secondary, and outline key issues of concern and debate. Finally, I end this chapter with a description of my theoretical considerations.

### The People at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams

Scholars generally agree that the Ts'msyen of the early to mid-nineteenth century had a well-developed and complex sociopolitical system.<sup>9</sup> Ts'msyen society was hierarchically organized, with a slave, commoner, and noble class and Ts'msyen

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<sup>9</sup> Carol Cooper, "'To Be Free On Our Lands': Coast Tsimshian and Nisga'a Societies in Historical Perspective, 1830-1900," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Waterloo, 1993); Margaret [Anderson] Seguin, *Interpretive Contexts for Traditional and Current Coast Tsimshian Feasts*, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper, No.98, National Museum of Man Mercury Series (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1985); John Cove, *Shattered Images: Dialogues and Meditations on Tsimshian Narratives* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1987).

territories, property, and trading privileges, among other things, were owned and controlled by houses and tribes but administered by *sm'ooygyit*, chiefly individuals. Early sources compiled by traders and others suggest that the Ts'msyen in the 1800 to 1850 period occupied a territory which included the Nass and Skeena Rivers and their tributaries and estuaries in what is now northern British Columbia. This thesis focuses on the Coast Ts'msyen, the Ts'msyen people who lived along the lower reaches of the Skeena River and the neighbouring coast.<sup>10</sup> Because of economic, political and cultural similarities, the Ts'msyen are commonly considered to include the Coast Ts'msyen and three other subdivisions or nations: the Nisga'a, in the Nass River area; the Gitksan, on the upper Skeena River; and the Southern Ts'msyen, who resided as far south as modern-day Klemtu.<sup>11</sup>

Fort Simpson was initially established in 1831 at a site on the Nass River. Chosen for its proximity to Russian America, the Hudson's Bay Company hoped that by establishing a fort at this location they would be able to monitor the Russian-British border and also curb trade activity from American vessels along the north coast.<sup>12</sup> By 1834 this initial site had proved unsatisfactory so the fort was moved, at Chief Ligeex's proposal, to the Ts'msyen site known as Laxlgu'alaams, on the Tsimpsean Peninsula.

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<sup>10</sup> Prior to the establishment of Fort Simpson at Laxlgu'alaams the nine tribes of the Lower Skeena River – the Giluts'aaw, Ginadoiks, Ginax'angiik, Gispaxlo'ots, Gits'axlaal, Gitando, Gitlaan, Gits'iis, Gitwilgyoots – had winter villages at Venn Passage near Maxlaxaala (Metlakatla). After the fort was established in Ts'msyen territory numbers of people from these tribes began to relocate to Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams, with most of the nine tribes residing in winter villages at this site by 1840. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> These four subdivisions are founded on linguistic divisions. According to Margaret Seguin [Anderson], "boundaries between the subdivisions were marked by long-established relationships of trade, intermarriage, established relationships between ranked chiefs at ceremonial occasions, and occasional conflict." Margaret Seguin [Anderson], "Introduction: Tsimshian Society and Culture," in *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present*, ed. Margaret Seguin [Anderson], (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984; reprint, 1993), ix, x.

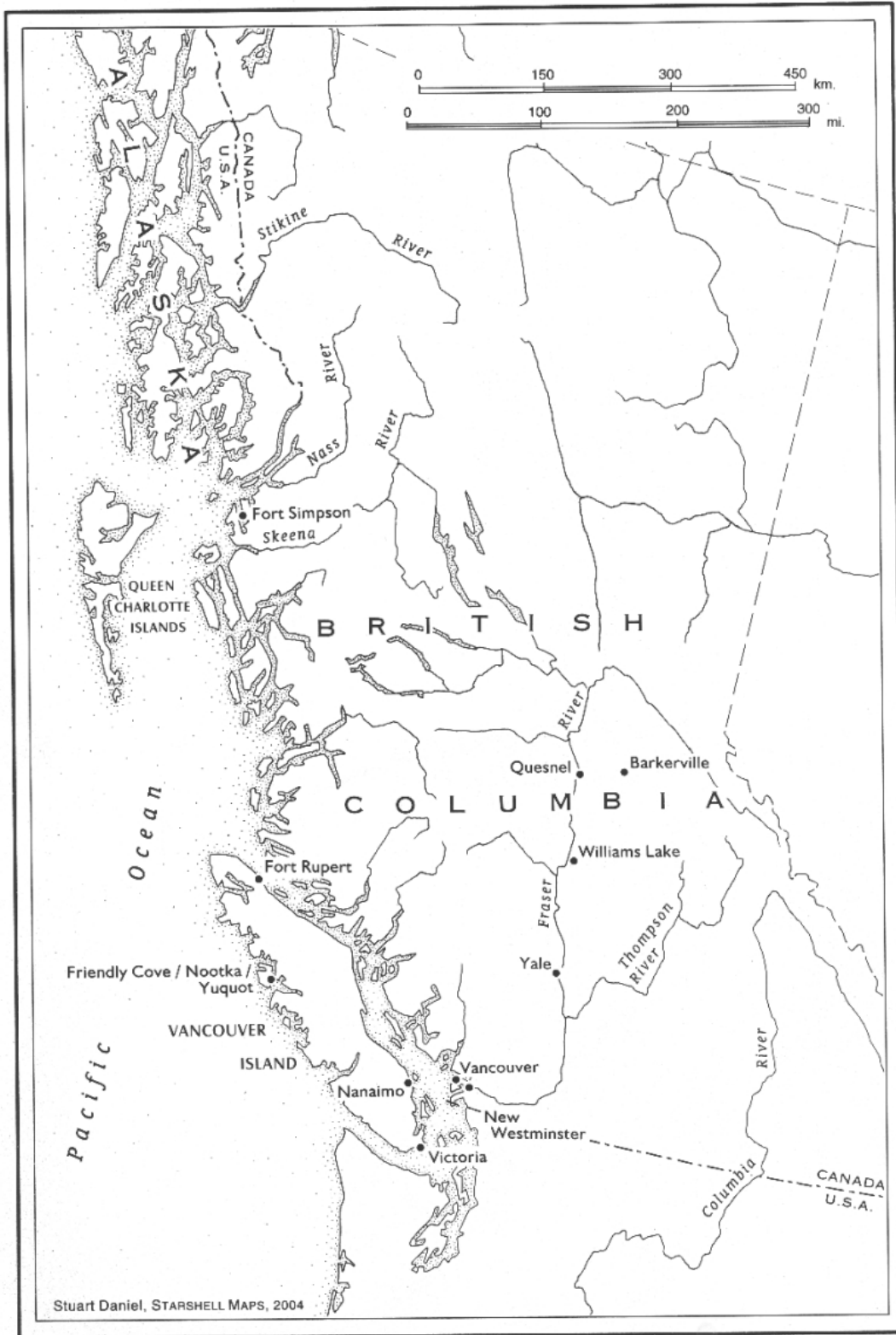
<sup>12</sup> Daniel W. Clayton, *Geographies of the Lower Skeena, 1830-1920* (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989), 17; Jan Hare and Jean Barman, *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 36.

The latter is approximately 600 miles north of what is now Victoria.<sup>13</sup> This site, the “place of the wild roses,” had traditionally been used as a camping site by Ts’msyen people as they traveled from their winter village sites at Venn Passage in February and March each year to the oolichan fishery at Nass River. Over the next few years most of the nine Ts’msyen tribes around Venn Passage shifted their winter village sites to Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Ligeex” is an owned chiefly name of the Gispaxlo’ots tribe. During the fur trade period the Ligeex name was held by four different men. This Ligeex was one of the most powerful Ts’msyen chiefs and rose to great power and influence during the land-based fur trade era as a result of his marriage alliance with the HBC (established through the marriage of his daughter, Sudaal, to an officer and doctor of the company, Dr. John Kennedy) and through his trade monopoly on the Skeena River. The spelling of “Ligeex” follows Susan Marsden and Robert Galois, “The Tsimshian, The Hudson’s Bay Company, and the Geopolitics of the Northwest Coast Fur Trade, 1787-1840,” *The Canadian Geographer* Vol. 39, No.2 (June 1995): 169-183. Ligeex is also often spelled “Legaic.” There is some debate as to the ownership of the site of Fort Simpson at Laxłgu’alaams. Robert S. Grumet contends that the site on which Fort Simpson was constructed at Laxłgu’alaams was owned by Ligeex and the Gispaxlo’ots tribe. Scholars Susan Marsden and Robert Galois note that some oral histories support this claim, that the fort was built on Ligeex’s camping site. Jonathan Dean argues convincingly against this position, asserting that the fort was built on the mainland on Giluts’aaw land. Dean’s claims are based both on a reading of the HBC Fort Simpson journal and the recorded locations of the respective nine Ts’msyen tribes and on Viola Garfield’s research. Garfield reported that the HBC purchased the land for the fort from the Giluts’aaw tribe and that this sale was the reason why only the Giluts’aaw tribe settled on the eastern shore of the post, separated from the other tribes by the portion of their land they had sold to the HBC. Robert S. Grumet, “Changes in Coast Tsimshian Redistributive Activities in the Fort Simpson Region of British Columbia, 1788-1862,” *Ethnohistory* vol.22, no.4 (Fall 1975), 304; Marsden and Galois, “The Tsimshian, The Hudson’s Bay Company,” 182; Jonathan Dean, “Those Rascally Spackaloids’: The Rise of the Gispaxlots Hegemony at Fort Simpson, 1832-40,” *BC Studies* no.101 (Spring 1994), 42; Viola Garfield, *Tsimshian Clan and Society, Tsimshian Clan and Society*, University of Washington Publications in Anthropology vol.7, no.3 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1939), 177.

<sup>14</sup> The nine tribes which eventually relocated to Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams were politically distinct in the period under study. Each of them established winter villages around the fort at different times and for their own reasons. It is not entirely clear when these relocations happened. The first Ts’msyen to move ‘permanently’ to be near the fort were the Gits’axlaal, led by the chief, Neshot. During the 1836 smallpox epidemic another tribe of the Ts’msyen relocated to Fort Simpson, hoping to find security from the disease. By the winter of 1840-41 most of the other nine tribes had built winter houses at Laxłgu’alaams, but some still continued to live at Pearl Harbour and other village sites near Maxłaxaala (Metlakatla). Even after the nine tribes had established themselves at Fort Simpson there remained considerable mobility among the residents, with almost none of the Ts’msyen actually residing year-round outside the fort. The two largest seasonal removals from Laxłgu’alaams happened in March during the oolichan fishery and in August or September for the salmon fishery. The five other tribes of Ts’msyen continued to live in their traditional territories. They are the: Gidasdzuu, Gitga’at, Gitxaala, Gits’ilaasü, and the Gits’mk’eelm. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, 1834-1838; Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 47.



Stuart Daniel, STAR SHELL MAPS, 2004

The nine tribes of Ts'msyen that relocated to the vicinity of the fort were politically distinct during the period under consideration here. Each of these groups – the Giluts'aaw, Ginadoiks, Ginax'angiik, Gispaxlo'ots, Gits'axlaaʔ, Gitando, Gitlaan, Gits'iis, and Gitwilgyoots – moved at different times and for different reasons. Moreover, there were also lasting divisions between these groups that reflected a long history of rivalry and political maneuvering.

Among the many Ts'msyen people who interacted with the HBC newcomers and came to feature in the fort journals, the title-holders of the Gispaxlo'ots name Ligeex are most well-known. As I mention above, Chief Ligeex established an alliance with the HBC through the marriage of his daughter, Sudaʔ, to Dr. John F. Kennedy. During the fur trade each of the men who held the Ligeex title were powerful figures with some seemingly maintaining monopoly control of Indigenous trade with the fort and along the Skeena River. Each of the Ligeex titleholders of the period under study here maintained a special relationship with the fort, regularly visiting the newcomers and dining as a guest of the officers. Like many other Ts'msyen people, the Ligeex who became Kennedy's father-in-law suffered great personal tragedy. In 1836 his son and intended successor, Looking Glass, contracted smallpox and died.

The scene at Fort Simpson is difficult to see as a unified whole. During the period under study here there were over one hundred officers and servants who worked at the fort – though never more than a handful of officers and around twenty working men at one time. The fort was an economic enterprise and the journal reflects this; much of the writing concerns the volume of trade and the items transacted. There is relatively little

comment on the inhabitants of the fort. When the journal keepers did remark on the residents of the fort it was most often in regards to illnesses or injury or by way of an assessment of workers' labours.<sup>15</sup> On the newcomers' wives there is even less commentary. The majority of the remarks concern childbirth, engagement in trade, travel, participation in Ts'msyen ceremony, alcohol use, and abuse suffered at hands of a husband. Yet even with the challenges of scant information and a focus on industry at the fort it is possible to glean some biographical information about the residents.

The key to collecting these details rests in the fact that so many of the employees worked at Fort Simpson for relatively long periods of time. At least twenty men worked at the fort for spans of ten to twenty years. They appear repeatedly in the fort journal during this time. Among the officers, both Dr. John Kennedy and Captain William McNeill resided at or regularly stopped at the fort over a period of no less than twenty years each. The long employment of these men at this fort allowed me to accumulate a significant body of remarks about their lives and the internal workings of the fort.

With so many HBC employees at the fort it is, needless to say, impossible for me to provide a biographical sketch on each one for this thesis. Instead, I will offer a brief summary of a couple of employees who can be considered representative of the larger body of workers employed at the fort.<sup>16</sup> I will also offer some biographical information on three of the officers associated with Fort Simpson.

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<sup>15</sup> An additional difficulty for the researcher is the variation in the writing of the journal. Several different officers kept the fort journal over the thirty year period I consider and the result was variations in the spelling of names and in the words by which the men were called. For example, Felix Dudouaire was sometimes referred to as Dudouaire and at other times he was Tailor

<sup>16</sup> These summaries focus on employees who worked long-term at the fort. The shorter term employees had similar ethnicities and work roles but it is impossible to follow their lives using Fort Simpson journals.

The officers who served at Fort Simpson are well-known names in the history of the Hudson's Bay Company. They include John Work, Captain William McNeill, Peter Skene Ogden, Dr. John F. Kennedy, James Birnie, Roderick Finlayson, and George Blenkinsop. I will offer only a brief introduction to and overview of three officers who were in command at Fort Simpson: Dr. John Kennedy, Chief Factor John Work, and Captain William Henry McNeill.

Dr. John F. Kennedy (1808-1889), a surgeon, arrived at Fort Simpson in the early 1830s and soon after married Sudaal, daughter of a leading Ts'msyen chief, Ligeex. In many ways he followed in his father, Alexander Kennedy's footsteps. The elder Kennedy was a senior HBC official who had married a Cree woman.<sup>17</sup> Sudaal gave birth to several children while living at the fort.<sup>18</sup> Kennedy kept a lively journal of fort life. He appears to have been a thoughtful supervisor, at times showing sincere interest in the welfare of the servants, even on one occasion sending rations of rum to the men who were labouring in extreme cold to assemble a raft on Finlayson Island.<sup>19</sup> After seventeen years at the post, Kennedy left for Victoria in 1852.

Chief Factor John Work (1792-1861) was an Irishman who served as Chief Trader at Fort Simpson from 1834 until 1849. Like Kennedy, he also took an Indigenous wife, Josette, a woman of mixed French-Canadian-Spokane heritage.<sup>20</sup> They had eleven

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<sup>17</sup> HBCA, "John Frederick Kennedy Biographical Sheet," [http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/k/kennedy\\_john-frederick.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/k/kennedy_john-frederick.pdf) (last accessed 22 November 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Their children were: Jenny Kennedy (who may have died in childhood), Eliza Kennedy, John George Kennedy, Mary Caroline Kennedy (married to Ogilvy and died in 1873 at approximately 33 years of age); James Philip Kennedy; and Alexander Augustus Kennedy, who may also have been a surgeon and died in 1867.

<sup>19</sup> Fort Simpson Journal, 15 November 1839. Kennedy wrote: "have for these three days past sent them a Glass Rum each which I doubt not is very acceptable to the poor fellows as their in the water all Day."

<sup>20</sup> By some accounts Josette Work (nee Lagace) was the niece of Pierre Lagace, a long-term Fort Simpson employee.

children, at least six of whom were born at Fort Simpson. John and Josette Work were known for their kindness and it is likely that they were successful at creating a friendly atmosphere for the officers and their families at Fort Simpson.<sup>21</sup> Josette often accompanied her husband on his expeditions. Work valued education.<sup>22</sup> While at Fort Simpson he had one of his men, Edouard Alin, serve as a school teacher to the children of the fort. And he sent two of his older daughters to school at Fort Vancouver in the 1830s. Though Work spent a considerable period of time at Fort Simpson there is relatively little information about him in the journals.<sup>23</sup>

Captain William Henry McNeill (1801-1873) became Chief Trader of Fort Simpson in 1851.<sup>24</sup> An American from Boston, McNeil had a long career in the HBC, having captained HBC vessels along the coast, including the *Llama* and the *Beaver* prior to taking up this post. This early work gave him regular contact with Fort Simpson. He too had an Indigenous wife, a woman named Mathilda. A high status Kaigani woman, she died just before he took up his post at Fort Simpson.<sup>25</sup> Unlike Work, McNeill was hot-tempered and given to violence. This made him unpopular among his employees.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Charles Wilson, *Mapping the Frontier; Charles Wilson's Diary of the Survey of the 48<sup>th</sup> Parallel 1858-1862, while Secretary of the British Boundary Commission*, ed. George Francis Stanley (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1970).

<sup>22</sup> Gardening was another of Work's great passions and many of the entries in the fort journal concerning Work focus on his efforts in the fort garden. His goal was to make the fort more self-sufficient and to save on imported foodstuffs.

<sup>23</sup> This is due, in part, to the fact that in addition to managing Fort Simpson he was in charge of the coastal trade and as part of his responsibilities had to regularly leave the fort to manage the trade. It is also a consequence of the source material: unfortunately the Fort Simpson journals from the years 1844 to 1852 are no longer extant.

<sup>24</sup> HBCA, "Captain William Henry McNeill Biographical Sheet," [http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/mc/m%27neill\\_william-henry1801-1875.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/mc/m%27neill_william-henry1801-1875.pdf) (last accessed 22 November 2010). McNeill died in 1875.

<sup>25</sup> She died as a result of birthing their twin daughters.

<sup>26</sup> While in charge of the *Beaver* in the late 1830s his crew struck work over conditions onboard the vessel. And, in 1849 while in command of Fort Rupert several of the servants struck work over their treatment at the fort and the conditions of their labour. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal.

McNeill looked down on the servants of the company, regularly referring to many as useless, especially as concerned their maintenance of the fort facilities. However, instead of simply flogging the men, as he had been known to do while at sea, McNeill seems to have gradually opted to try to bring about better work habits by keeping the men more satisfied, sometimes holding social events such as dances to effect this change. Within a few years of his arrival at Fort Simpson McNeill married a high status Nisga'a woman, Nis'akx. This was also her second marriage. She left her first husband Sagewan for McNeill. Nis'akx was an industrious and successful trader and worked for many years trading goods she received on credit from the HBC for furs from the Nisga'a.<sup>27</sup> She often traveled great distances as part of this trade, with regular canoe journeys between Victoria and the Nass River. Nis'akx continued trading among the Nisga'a even after Captain McNeill retired to Victoria in 1863.

Although many of the men spent only a year or two at the fort, there were some who were fairly permanent residents. Antoine Anneseata (Anciati) and Jean Baptiste Jollibois lived at the fort for years. Their experiences typified those of the long-term workforce. Anneseata, an Iroquois, arrived at the fort in 1837 and worked at various jobs on and off until 1865 and perhaps even later.<sup>28</sup> Within a few years of his arrival he had married *à la façon du pays* a Ts'msyen woman of the Giluts'aaw tribe named Saipou. The couple traveled to New Westminster in 1864 to have their young daughter, Catherine, baptized at St. Peter's Church. Jean Baptiste Jollibois, a French Canadian,

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<sup>27</sup> For more on Nis'akx see Chapter Three.

<sup>28</sup> Charles F. Morison who managed Fort Simpson in the late 1860s made reference to Antoine Anneseata still residing in the community in 1869 but I am not clear on whether he worked for the fort all this time or simply lived among the Ts'msyen outside the fort. Charles F. Morison, "A Brief Narrative History of Early British Columbia, 1862 to 1876, From the original manuscript of Charles Frederic Morison. Assembled in a more chronological and correlated order by his son John Whiston Morison," BC Archives, Typescript. MS-424.

joined the HBC workforce as a carpenter at Fort Simpson in approximately 1831. He also had a Nisga'a wife, Josette, the sister of Nis'akx.<sup>29</sup> Jollibois and Josette had at least six children many of whom were baptized in Victoria.<sup>30</sup> Jollibois worked at the fort until 1849 at which time he took a job as a shepherd at Fort Nisqually. In 1852 he and his family moved to Victoria.

Many of the employees of Fort Simpson, officers and servants both, maintained close contact with each other after leaving the fort. Men like Jollibois, Camille Raymond, Pierre Lagace, Nicholas Auger, and Joseph Maurice served as witnesses at each other's weddings and as godfathers to each other's children.<sup>31</sup> The friendships and kin connections established while living and working at Fort Simpson seem often to have lasted a lifetime. While they likely provided comfort to some HBC employees they also served as a source of practical support for those individuals who lived far from their extended families.

To a degree, the fort was a place of European rules and expectations, where English ideas of social status, gender and race dominated. Here Captain McNeill remarked in 1856 of a New Year's dinner of which the men and the officers partook: "We took dinner

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<sup>29</sup> Although the marriage was initially contracted *a la facon du pays* at some point before Jean Baptiste's death in 1861 the couple were legally married.

<sup>30</sup> St. Andrew's Cathedral (Victoria), Roman Catholic Cathedral. Register of Baptisms, Marriages, Burials for Victoria, Ft. Langley and Nanaimo, BC Archives, 1A.

<sup>31</sup> Nicholas Auger, who worked at the fort for at least seventeen years, was French Canadian; his wife Amelie was Nisga'a. Pierre Lagace seems to have been of French-Canadian-Spokane heritage and may have been related to Josette Work. Pierre was married to a Ts'msyen woman known as Lisette. Like Auger, he also worked at the fort for at least seventeen years. Camille Raymond, the fort blacksmith, was French Canadian. He was married to an Indigenous woman named Louise about whom all we know is that she came from the north. He worked at the fort for seventeen years. Joseph Maurice was married to an Indigenous woman named Catherine. The sources are not clear on her ethnicity but it seems as though she was Ts'msyen. Maurice worked at the fort as a carpenter for at least fourteen years and at least one of his sons also worked for the fort, in 1858. See Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal; St. Andrew's Cathedral (Victoria). Roman Catholic Cathedral. Register of Baptisms, Marriages, Burials for Victoria, Ft. Langley and Nanaimo, BCA, 1A.

with them in one of the [servants'] houses, which looks well between Master and man."<sup>32</sup>

Like the Ts'msyen, the HBC newcomers had a hierarchical society, with an officer and a servant (worker) class. Officers like Dr. John Kennedy, John Work and Captain William McNeill maintained firm divisions between themselves and the servants, actualized through mechanisms such as distinctions in dress, labour, and living and dining quarters.

The fort itself was constructed much like any other HBC fort in the Northwest Coast region. Inside its palisades stood a large building in which the officers dined and were lodged. Perpendicular to this and parallel to the pickets stood smaller houses for the workers, each of which was occupied by four men and their wives and children.<sup>33</sup> At most times there were at least three officers stationed at the fort with a newcomer workforce of about seventeen men.<sup>34</sup>

Underlying the formal unity of the fort was considerable diversity. At all times the residents of the fort were drawn from several different ethnicities, including: Hawaiian, Iroquois, French-Canadian, Scottish, English, northern European, Ts'msyen, Nisga'a, Tlingit, and mixed Indigenous-Non-Indigenous heritage. English, as a language and an ethnic identity, was always in the minority during the nearly thirty years under study here.<sup>35</sup> French seems likely to have been the most common non-Indigenous language

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<sup>32</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, HBCA, 1 January 1856.

<sup>33</sup> William Duncan reported that in 1857 the Officers' Big house was "60 feet by 30 & contains a hall a sitting room & 3 bedrooms." William Duncan journal, October 1857; Daniel W. Clayton, "Geographies of the Lower Skeena," 38; on HBC accommodation more generally see Cole Harris, "Strategies of Power," 13.

<sup>34</sup> These numbers are misleading as to the numbers of people living in the fort and their ethnicity as they do not include the Indigenous wives of the HBC newcomers and their children or the north coast Indigenous people who worked for the HBC at this site. I discuss this in greater detail in chapters Two and Three.

<sup>35</sup> This diversity included Hawaiian, Iroquois, French-Canadian, Scottish, English, northern European, Ts'msyen, Nisga'a, Tlingit, and those of mixed Indigenous-Non-Indigenous heritage. Throughout the thirty years under study here Roman Catholicism seems to have been the predominant religion observed by fort employees while management seems to have largely been Protestant. French, Gaelic, Sm'algyax, Nisga'a, Chinook jargon, and English seem to have all been commonly spoken and understood languages, though the fort journal was always in English. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal; William Duncan Journal; St.

spoken at the fort, although after the first few years the French Canadian employees rarely accounted for more than nine newcomers among a group of twenty or more newcomer men. When the presence of Ts'msyen wives and Ts'msyen workers are taken into account it seems more likely that Smalgyax was, by the 1850s anyhow, the most commonly spoken language at the fort (though obviously not among the newcomers).<sup>36</sup>

During the first year at its new site, for example, Chief Trader John Work had under his direction two officers (James Birnie and Dr. John Kennedy) and at least twenty-four different servants of the company.<sup>37</sup> Of these, fourteen were French Canadian, four were Scottish, were Hawaiian, and one was Iroquois. At least seven of these men had Indigenous wives.<sup>38</sup> The goal of the HBC was to maintain a sense of British culture within the fort but with so much cultural diversity among the workers this was not always easy to achieve. As I discuss in Chapter Two, both officers and servants at times transgressed these divides.

### Contextualizing Cultural Change at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams

Culture change, in particular, the emergence of culturally hybrid forms within the fort, was shaped both by custom and contemporary social dynamics.<sup>39</sup> The Ts'msyen and newcomer people at Fort Simpson were drawn together by one reason alone: the land-

Andrew's Cathedral, Register of Baptisms, Marriages, Burials for Victoria, Ft. Langley and Nanaimo, British Columbia Archives.

<sup>36</sup> James McDonald has shown that dozens of Ts'msyen people came to be employed at the fort, working alongside the newcomer men. They often completed what might be thought of as unskilled labour, such as collecting and chopping wood, digging potatoes, sorting through stored potatoes, and gathering seaweed for fertilizer. James McDonald "Trying to Make a Life: The Historical Political Economy of Kitsumkalum," Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1985.

<sup>37</sup> Numbers of these employees came and went over this first year but there were never less than seventeen servants employed at the fort at any one time.

<sup>38</sup> By the time the Anglican missionary William Duncan arrived at Fort Simpson in 1857, there were, in addition to the officers, nineteen men at the fort "of which 7 are Canadian – 3 Sandwich Islanders – 3 Indians from the other side of the Rocky Mountains – 3 halfbreeds One Norweigan – one Scotchman & one Englishman." William Duncan Journal, October 1857.

<sup>39</sup> Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 64.

based fur trade. Trade provided the principal site of interaction between newcomers and Ts'msyen people; it was why newcomers came to Ts'msyen territory in the first place. The dynamics of trade permeated all aspects of newcomer-Ts'msyen relations. In this thesis, I shall show how this plays out in the Ts'msyen feasting complex.<sup>40</sup> Both the land-based fur trade and the Ts'msyen feasting complex triggered significant cultural change at this locale, affecting not only the shape of these changes but also newcomer and Ts'msyen people's attitudes towards them. As I show in the following chapters, the land-based fur trade and the Ts'msyen feasting complex brought newcomers and Ts'msyen people into increasing contact with each other. This contact offered increased exposure to customs and ideas, especially as it encouraged heavy exchange of material goods on both sides. Moreover, it initiated a variety of roles and relationships between newcomers and Ts'msyen people – both social and work-based.

Just as a study of the economic context at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams offers insight into the nature of cultural change in Ts'msyen territory, an examination of the political context in which these changes occurred also increases our understanding of them. As might be anticipated, the political worlds of Ts'msyen and newcomer people were complex and dynamic. While it is impossible to give a complete overview of the political context, it is possible to identify key elements that influenced cultural change and the development of hybrid forms.

The HBC newcomers at Fort Simpson occupied a vulnerable position on the northern Coast. In his study of the Fort, historical geographer Daniel W. Clayton

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<sup>40</sup> Commonly known today as the potlatch, the feasting complex is the series of formal ceremonies at which an ancestral name, position, hereditary privilege, new power, or significant innovation is claimed or at which a social stigma was washed away or through which important mortuary customs are observed. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 43; Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990), 5.

emphasizes this point. Fort Simpson, he writes, was the least self-sufficient of the HBC's northwest forts.<sup>41</sup> It needed the cooperation and aid of Ts'msyen people for its survival, relying on the latter for, among other things, foodstuffs, information, and labour. Far from any centre of British (or any European) power, greatly outnumbered by Ts'msyen people, and quickly out-armed, the fort employees had little control over their safety in that locale. They responded to this vulnerability by making alliances with Ts'msyen peoples and by seeking out ways to satisfy them. Cultural accommodation became a key newcomer strategy to meet these ends.<sup>42</sup>

If contemporary social dynamics – like the need or desire to maintain, enhance, or subvert power and authority – were important factors in the development of hybrid forms, Ts'msyen custom, specifically the tradition of cultural innovation from outsider sources, was a vital stimulus. As I outline above, Ts'msyen people took great interest in the newcomers and their ways, adapting from them as they saw fit. In chapters Two and Three I provide more detail as to how I consider this custom together with the Ts'msyen system regulating the introduction of innovations into the Ts'msyen worlds, to have encouraged and facilitated cultural hybridity at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams: I suggest that it provided the Ts'msyen people living at Laxłgu'alaams with internal motivations for such cultural change and offered a firmly established framework through which it could be carried out. My thesis examines the dynamics of cultural change at this fort. I

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<sup>41</sup> Daniel W. Clayton, *Geographies of the Lower Skeena, 1830-1920*, Master's thesis (University of British Columbia, 1989), 15.

<sup>42</sup> This newcomer strategy was not unique to Fort Simpson, though it was perhaps more fully developed here than in other locales. Historical geographer Daniel Clayton found that the appeasement of Indigenous people was a key European strategy in Nuu-chah-nulth territory during the eras of early exploration and maritime trade. Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

am particularly interested in the ways in which select ideas, material goods, and customs were blended to create what can be seen as culturally hybrid forms.

### Primary Sources

I have drawn on a broad range of primary sources for my research. My main sources were fur trade journals and other trader-produced documents, missionary records, ship journals, and ethnographic collections. Because of the time-period of the fur trade, I had no choice but to work with non-Indigenous sources.<sup>43</sup> With few exceptions, the Indigenous peoples in my account did not keep written records at this time.<sup>44</sup> My main sources were the Fort journals and these were largely written by members of the elite within the fort: the Chief Factors, clerks and other officers. These accounts were intended largely for an elite readership based in Britain. Because of this, the detail concentrates on the actions and experiences of the elite at the fort (both newcomer and Ts'msyen). Although the officers' journals say much about Ts'msyen society and Indigenous-newcomer interaction they cannot be taken at face value. As Daniel W. Clayton notes, such documents offer a culturally laden reconstruction of Indigenous communities and must be carefully interpreted by scholars before they can be made use of.<sup>45</sup> In spite of these challenges, such sources should not be completely discounted. They serve as the main source of information on early contact relations in British Columbia and can offer valuable insight.

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<sup>43</sup> Exceptions include such documents as the will of Martha McNeill and transcripts of an interview between anthropologist Homer Barnett and Ts'msyen Matthew Johnson. It is important to note that even those who wrote the journals were not always strictly European. A number of the journals from the 1830s and 1840s were kept by Dr. John Kennedy who was part Cree. "Biographical Sheet for John Frederick Kennedy," [http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/k/kennedy\\_john-frederick.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/k/kennedy_john-frederick.pdf) (last accessed November 14, 2006).

<sup>44</sup> Some of the documents make reference to letters written by Ts'msyen people but I was unable to locate any for my research. In addition, Ts'msyen Arthur Wellington Clah began his personal diary near the end of my period of study but because of time and travel constraints I was not able to access this for this thesis.

<sup>45</sup> Daniel W. Clayton, *Geographies of the Lower Skeena, 1830-1920*, 11.

I have sought to carry out a critical reading of my source material, remaining mindful of the cultural biases within these documents and cognizant of their limitations. I found it a particularly useful strategy to cross-reference HBC journals with other historical materials. Although the primary sources for Fort Simpson lack Ts'msyen voices and are not as complete as I would have wished I am fortunate that they are quite rich in detail and that they were produced by multiple authors. Because of the large number of people residing at the site, over 2500 Ts'msyen in 1842, the volume of its trade, and its proximity to both Russian Alaska and to the Haida people, Fort Simpson was important to the HBC and to the colony of Vancouver Island.<sup>46</sup> Its import attracted a range of newcomers to visit its shores and many left written records of their experiences and observations while there. Each of these newcomers had a different motivation for visiting the fort and for recording their observations as well as distinct cultural conceptions about Indigenous people. The variation in the documents they left behind has proved useful to creating a relatively rich picture of Ts'msyen newcomer relations at Fort Simpson. I have also benefited from the fact that many of the HBC newcomers resided at the fort for lengthy periods of time. Their long residence was often the reason for their re-appearance in fort journals and this repetition helped me to more fully reconstruct events and familial connections.

The most significant collection of documents for this study are those produced by employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. Beginning with its establishment, officers at

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<sup>46</sup> In February of 1842 one of the officers (probably Roderick Finlayson) and HBC servant Pierrish undertook a census of the Ts'msyen living outside the fort. He found: "the whole amount to 2500 souls exclusive of several Canoes that left for Nass the number of which we have not as yet ascertained, their number of Guns 222 Pistols 145 Canoes 762 Lodges 174." Fort Simpson Journal, 24 February 1842.

Fort Simpson recorded daily entries into the Fort Simpson Journal.<sup>47</sup> Through copies of the journals compiled by commanding officers John Work, Dr. John Kennedy, Roderick Finlayson, Angus McDonald, Captain William McNeill and Hamilton Moffat obtained at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the BC Archives I was able to reconstruct approximately twenty years of Fort life.<sup>48</sup> In addition to these there are a number of other documents produced by HBC employees, including ship journals, probate files, and outgoing correspondence which I have consulted for this study.<sup>49</sup> Among the latter was mail from officers at Fort Simpson noting the goings on within the Fort and Indigenous village. A particularly valuable source was the correspondence featured in *Fort Victoria Letters, 1846-1851* or *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee*.<sup>50</sup> John Work, William Fraser Tolmie and John Sebastian Helmcken kept private journals of their experiences and observations at Fort Simpson. These journals provided me with valuable details not only about Fort Simpson but also

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<sup>47</sup> John Work and Dr. John Kennedy kept the journal from 1834 to 1838. Work, Kennedy and Angus McDonald kept the journal from 1838 to 1840. Roderick Finlayson seems to have exclusively written the journal for the years 1841 to 1842 and then shared the responsibility with John Work in 1842-1843. Captain McNeill and another officer (possibly George Blenkinsop or John Ogilvy), kept the journal for 1852, 1853, and 1855-1858. Hamilton Moffat and Captain McNeill shared the writing of the 1859-1862, 1863-1866 journal. Each of these officers had a distinct narrative style and interest. For example, John Work wrote in great detail about the fort garden, Dr. Kennedy about illness and injury, Captain McNeill about construction at the fort, Angus McDonald about Indigenous labour at the fort, and the unknown author (Blenkinsop or Ogilvy) gave more attention to individual HBC servants.

<sup>48</sup> Fort Simpson journals are available as follows: 1834-1838, 1838-1840, 1840, 1841-1842, 1842-1843, 1852-1853, 1855-1858, 1859-1862. All of the journals are housed at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg with the exception of the 1842-1843 journal and the 1859-1862 journal which are housed at the BC Archives.

<sup>49</sup> This includes outward bound correspondence from the fort for the years 1841-1844, 1851-1855 and 1859-1865.

<sup>50</sup> Hartwell Bowsfield, ed., *Fort Victoria Letters, 1846-1851*, (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1979); John McLoughlin, *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee*, ed. E.E. Rich, (London: Published by the Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1941-1944).

about the workings of the Northwest Coast fur trade and the personalities who managed it.<sup>51</sup>

Four of the men who traveled to Fort Simpson in 1853 onboard the ship H.M.S. *Virago* kept journals which proved immensely useful to this thesis.<sup>52</sup> George Hastings Inskip, the *Virago*'s navigating officer, Dr. Henry Trevan, surgeon, William Henry Hills, paymaster, and William Petty Ashcroft, quartermaster or helmsman, each kept journals covering their personal observations at the fort.<sup>53</sup> These records are of particular value because they offer non-HBC perspectives on Ts'msyen-newcomer relations at Fort Simpson and because they provide multiple perspectives on the same events. The Anglican missionary William Duncan who lived and worked among the Ts'msyen at Fort Simpson from 1857 on also left a large written record of his experiences. His journals provide valuable insight on fort life and Ts'msyen village life and the connections between the two. Duncan's writings reflect his Christian values and beliefs: he wrote condemningly of behaviours he considered immoral like drunkenness and sexual relations outside of marriage; he represented Ts'msyen people as moral infants whose

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<sup>51</sup> John Sebastian Helmcken, *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*, ed. Dorothy Blakey Smith with an introduction by W. Kaye Lamb (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975); John Work, *The Journal of John Work: January to October, 1835*, ed. Henry Drummond Dee (Victoria, BC: Charles F. Banfield, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945); William Fraser Tolmie, *The Journals of William Fraser Tolmie: Physician and Fur Trader* (Vancouver, B.C.: Mitchell Press, 1963).

<sup>52</sup> These four men included three officers and one man of lower rank. They were: George Hastings Inskip, the *Virago*'s navigating officer; Dr. Henry Trevan, surgeon; William Henry Hills, paymaster; and William Petty Ashcroft, quartermaster or helmsman. A fifth man, William Elrington Gordon, master's mate, kept a journal of illustrations, many of which appear in Akrigg and Akrigg's book. G.P.V. Akrigg and Helen B. Akrigg, *H.M.S. Virago in the Pacific, 1851-1855: To the Queen Charlottes and Beyond* (Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis Press, 1992); William H. Hills, Journal on Board H.M. S. *Portland* and H.M.S. *Virago*, 8 Aug. 1852- July 1853. Philip and Helen Akrigg Fonds. Box 20. Transcript; George Hastings Inskip, "Transcripts and Summaries of Part of *Virago* journals." Philip and Helen Akrigg Fonds. Box 20. Transcript; Henry Trevan, The Diary of Surgeon Henry Trevan, R.N. on HMS *Virago*, January 1852- December 1854. Philip and Helen Akrigg Fonds. Box 20. Transcript.

<sup>53</sup> Excerpts from the journals have been reproduced by G.P.V Akrigg and Helen B. Akrigg in their book *H.M.S. Virago in the Pacific, 1851-1855* and transcripts of the journals are housed in the University of British Columbia's Special Collections.

souls were in danger; and emphasized the urgent need to convert Ts'msyen people to Christianity. Because his journals were not meant to persuade his readers about the merits of economic success they present a very different picture of his work and the fort than those of the traders. Certainly they reflect his worldview but they also show his personal doubts and struggles to understand the Ts'msyen, to learn their language, and to reconcile all of this with his personal feelings and with the teachings of his church.

A key resource for this study was the twentieth century published ethnographic record on the Ts'msyen. Despite the problems of relying on the memories of people far removed from the early nineteenth century, these records remain an important source for historians. I found the narratives collected by Ts'msyen lay ethnographer William Beynon in the early twentieth century most valuable to my work. I also draw on Ts'msyen texts amassed for Franz Boas by Ts'msyen Henry Wellington Tate.<sup>54</sup>

### Secondary Sources

The literature related to my research can be grouped into three categories. The first focuses on Indigenous peoples' involvement in the land-based fur trade. The second concerns literature written on Indigenous women of the Northwest Coast. The third concerns analyses of cultural change and hybridity. In each of the following chapters I

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<sup>54</sup> In Chapter One I discuss the challenges of using these ethnographic records. Boas did not do field work among the Ts'msyen (although he did travel to Ts'msyen territory in 1888, visiting Port Essington and establishing research contacts with Ts'msyen people). He seems to have been put in touch with Tate through Arthur Wellington Clah, Tate's father. Boas directed Tate's work not only by providing the impetus to collect Ts'msyen narratives but also by sometimes requesting a specific story or providing a question to be answered. Tate sent two thousand pages of material to Boas between 1903 and 1913. Ralph Maud, *Transmission Difficulties*, 9-10; Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*; C.M Barbeau, "Review of Franz Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology*. Washington, 1916," in *American Anthropology, 1888-1920: Papers from the American Anthropologist*, ed. Frederica de Laguna (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Company, 1960), 723-740.

engage with this literature but in this final section of my introduction I highlight some of the leading debates in the field and situate my own work in these debates.

Historians of the fur trade in British Columbia have put forward many theories to explain cultural change in the region. Most focus on the role of power, dominance and violence in this process. Historian Robin Fisher led the way with the publication in 1977 of his book, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*. Arguing that the fur trade was a period of relatively peaceful and mutually beneficial contact between Indigenous people and European traders, Fisher's work initiated fierce debate and sparked new research. A seminal work in the field and relevant to my own analysis, Fisher's *Contact and Conflict* offers an ideal opening for analyzing the historiography of British Columbia's fur trade.

As I note above, questions of dominance and violence in the fur trade have become key issues in the study of the Pacific Northwest. They are also central to my thesis. Fisher asserts that the fur trade was mutually beneficial for both Indigenous people and newcomers. His view was that relationships between the two groups only began to deteriorate with the onset of large-scale settlement and missionization. Fisher's work is significant for underscoring the role of Indigenous agency in the fur trade.<sup>55</sup> In his study of the land-based fur trade, "Strategies of Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade," Harris challenges Fisher's findings, arguing that the fur trade was "built on terror and violence."

<sup>56</sup> For Harris, violence was one of the most effective means used by fur trade officers to

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<sup>55</sup> One of the strengths of Fisher's analysis lays in his attention to diversity among individual Indigenous actors. He recognized that Indigenous people had their own motives for acting and thus that there would be a range of responses to contact with European newcomers.

<sup>56</sup> Cole Harris, "Strategies of Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade," in *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 63; Cole Harris, "Towards a Geography of White Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade," *The Canadian Geographer*, Vol.39, No.2 (1995): 131-140.

keep both the fort employees and local Indigenous people in line. My research challenges both characterizations of the land-based fur trade, at least at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams, while also recognizing important contributions made by both scholars' work.

Harris' analysis is important both as a stimulus of debate and for its attention to power and authority. Power and authority, he argues, are essential to the working of the fur trade yet are too often neglected in its study.<sup>57</sup> Harris successfully demonstrates that the public performance of power and status was a significant element of fur traders' efforts to control workers and Indigenous people. I consider power and authority within Fort Simpson to have been under constant negotiation, continually asserted and contested, ultimately defying any simple explanation of HBC hegemony.

Harris' student, Daniel W. Clayton, joined this debate in 2000 with the publication of *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island*.<sup>58</sup> Unlike the latter, he explores the connections between European knowledge of what became Vancouver Island and the growth of western imperialism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Clayton's goal was to place the political worlds of the Nuu-chah-nulth and the Europeans in a single frame. His approach enabled him to recognize the dynamism of the political and commercial worlds of the Nuu-chah-nulth and to identify the influence Nuu-chah-nulth agendas had on native-white relations.

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<sup>57</sup> I am not alone in challenging Harris' arguments. Most recently scholars Marianne Ignace and Duane Thomson have written an article disputing many of his claims. For more on this see my chapter on hybrid law. Duane Thomson and Marianne Ignace, "'They Made Themselves Our Guests': Power Relationships in the Interior Plateau Region of the Cordillera in the Fur Trade Era," *BC Studies*, no.14 (Summer 2005): 3-34

<sup>58</sup> Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

*Islands of Truth* moves beyond Fisher's analyses of Indigenous and newcomer agency by recognizing that the political worlds of both groups affected the development of the maritime fur trade and the larger imperial project. To a degree, he searches for examples of symbolic power within both communities (the villages of the Nuu-chah-nulth and the European ships) and importantly, reveals specific ways in which Indigenous politics and agendas affected the European projects. His focus on the Nuu-chah-nulth allowed for a deeper analysis of Indigenous power performances than surveys of the fur trade. He showed that Nuu-chah-nulth chiefs sought to incorporate European traders into their own political rituals, even using them as markers of chiefly identity. Not merely struggling to manipulate European traders for better rates of exchange, the Nuu-chah-nulth had their own political agendas and sought to make use of Europeans for power and prestige within their own worlds. By attending to power Clayton creates a narrative that reflects the complexity of contact relations, uncovering a story of fear, prejudice, cooperation, conciliation, ambiguity, uncertainty, and desire.

Like the historiography of the fur trade at large, the studies of Fort Simpson tell an important story of its own. A major theme is the degree to which particular Ts'msyen chiefs and tribes controlled trade with the fort and changes in the status of Ts'msyen women brought about as a result of the fur trade. The most influential scholarship on Ts'msyen people's role in the fur trade is "The Tsimshian, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Geopolitics of the Northwest Coast Fur Trade, 1787-1840" by Susan Marsden and Robert Galois.<sup>59</sup> In this well-researched article Marsden and Galois argue that the fur trade destabilized Ts'msyen power relations and that Ts'msyen chiefs, in particular Chief

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<sup>59</sup> Susan Marsden and Robert Galois. "The Tsimshian, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Geopolitics of the Northwest Coast Fur Trade, 1787-1840," *The Canadian Geographer* Vol.39, No.2 (1995): 169-183.

Ligeex, sought to restore stability and expand their influence through strategies which included marriage alliances with newcomers. They consider Chief Ligeex and the Gispaxlo'ots tribe to have been the most powerful of the Ts'msyen and they argue that non-Ts'msyen Indigenous peoples' access to trade at the fort was controlled by Ligeex.

Historian Jonathan Dean developed this further by challenging Marsden and Galois' understanding of Ts'msyen power dynamics. His article, "These Rascally Spackaloids': The Rise of the Gispaxlots Hegemony at Fort Simpson, 1832-40" presents Chief Ligeex and the Gispaxlo'ots as less in control, especially concerning the possibility of a Gispaxlo'ots trade monopoly on the Skeena River.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, he considers Chief Ligeex's dominance in the trade at Fort Simpson to have come about in part because of his pliancy in relations with the HBC. Dean underestimates the importance of Chief Ligeex's relationship with the HBC officers at Fort Simpson but he does well to recognize that the Ts'msyen were shrewd traders, well-armed during the fur trade period, and accustomed to newcomer traders. Building on both these works, my research furthers Marsden and Galois' claim that Ts'msyen chiefs actively sought to expand their influence during the fur trade by, in part, striking alliances with HBC newcomers. It also gives credit to Dean's assertion that the Ts'msyen quickly became familiar with newcomer traders and, to a degree, newcomer culture.

Daniel Clayton has also analyzed the history of Fort Simpson in his MA thesis, "*Geographies of the Lower Skeena River, 1830-1920.*"<sup>61</sup> Clayton's objective was to uncover traders' views of the Ts'msyen. He highlighted three key factors: the punctiform

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<sup>60</sup> Jonathan R. Dean, "These Rascally Spackaloids': The Rise of the Gispaxlots Hegemony at Fort Simpson, 1832-40" *BC Studies* No.101 (Spring 1994): 41-78.

<sup>61</sup> Daniel W. Clayton, "Geographies of the Lower Skeena, 1830-1920," Master's thesis (University of British Columbia, 1989). In UBC Circle, <https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/28167> (accessed November 6, 2010).

nature of the trade, the fragility of the HBC's presence, and the anonymity of natives in its discourse. Although I agree with Clayton that the HBC operated from a position of vulnerability in Ts'msyen territory I draw different conclusions concerning Ts'msyen-newcomer relations than does he. In particular, I take issue with his claims that the fort journals present Indigenous people in and around the fort as anonymous entities. As my research uncovers, the journals offer much about the individuality of the Indigenous peoples in the region, due to regular contact with them, as co-workers and as kin, both inside and outside the fort walls. Although the traders did not have a Ts'msyen understanding of the Indigenous villages surrounding the fort they certainly had knowledge of particular Ts'msyen customs, had a degree of familiarity with individual Ts'msyen people, and at times even socialized with them outside of the fort. Indeed, the fort journals provide considerable information about the Ts'msyen and Ts'msyen-newcomer relations. The difference between my findings and Clayton's can be explained by looking closely at our sources. While I relied mainly on the Fort Simpson journals and William Duncan's journal, Clayton instead relied on published excerpts from these documents.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Certainly it is possible that Clayton read the fort journals and William Duncan's journals. Indeed, Clayton's M.A. thesis, "Geographies of the Lower Skeen, 1830-1920," bibliography includes an entry for Duncan's correspondence, notebooks, and journals. And in his *BC Studies* article, "Geographies of the Lower Skeena," he does directly reference the Fort Simpson journal of 1842-1843. However, there are few indications within these two works to suggest a consideration of these journals. Firstly, with the one exception, neither Clayton's M.A. thesis nor his *BC Studies* article cite the Fort Simpson journals. William Duncan's journals are cited only in the *BC Studies* article and then just once (for Duncan's "Fifteen Rules for Metlakatla"). All references to the Fort Simpson journals instead cite Helen Meilleur's *A Pour of Rain: Stories from a West Coast Fort*. Secondly, the Fort Simpson journals do not even appear in the bibliography of the M.A. thesis. Thirdly, the *BC Studies* article details the years for which the Fort Simpson journals are extant and the location at which they are housed as follows: "The Fort Simpson journals that have survived are for the years 1835, 1842-3, 1859-1861, and 1861-1862....All of these documents are in the BCARS." In fact, as I discuss above, Fort Simpson's journals are available for 1834-1838, 1838-1840, 1840, 1841-1842, 1842-1843, 1852-1853, 1855-1858, and 1859-1862. All of the journals are housed at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg with the exception of the 1842-1843 journal and the 1859-1862 journal which are housed at the BC Archives. And finally, Clayton makes claims about the contents

Carol Cooper and Jo-Anne Fiske have studied the impact of the fur trade on Ts'msyen women. In her recent article, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast: An Historical Perspective, 1830-1900," Cooper examined the changes to and persistence in Ts'msyen and Nisga'a women's roles in the fur trade and missionary project. She found that Ts'msyen women used political, economic and social strategies to maintain their autonomy and distinctiveness under the changing circumstances of the fur trade, missionization, and colonialism. In contrast to this, Fiske argued in her piece, "Colonization and the Decline of Women's Status: the Ts'msyen Case," that the fur trade enhanced the position of elite Ts'msyen men to the detriment of Ts'msyen women. Although at odds with one another, each of these studies has proved useful to my understanding of the roles Ts'msyen women held within their communities.

For Fiske, Ts'msyen women experienced a dramatic loss of status during the fur trade and later; Cooper, on the other hand, instead of finding a decline, argues that Ts'msyen women in this period "moved from a position of strength in the traditional era

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of the Fort Simpson journals that simply are not true, such as that in "their journals, Fort Simpson factors wrote that they and the HBC's other fort employees were detached from Coast Tsimshian affairs." In fact, the officers who kept the fort journal regularly identified fort employees as being connected to events among the Ts'msyen. Both the Fort Simpson journals and Duncan's journals are rich in detail relevant to, but never used for, Clayton's conclusions.

Helen Mellieur spent her early childhood in Port Simpson at the turn of the twentieth century. She was so captivated with the community and its rich history that she undertook a research project in which she read all of the HBC Fort Simpson journals. Excerpts from these journals were then published in a book along with her own personal narratives of her family's residence in Port Simpson. For information on William Duncan, Clayton seems to have relied primarily upon the works of Peter Murray and Jean Usher as well as published accounts by William Ridley and Thomas Crosby. Daniel W. Clayton, "Geographies of the Lower Skeena, 1830-1920," 23; Daniel W. Clayton, "Geographies of the Lower Skeena," *BC Studies* No.94 (Summer 1992): 29-58; Helen Meilleur, *A Pour of Rain: Stories from a West Coast Fort* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2001); Peter Murray, *The Devil and Mr. Duncan: A history of the Two Metlakatlas* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1985); Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1974); Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down The North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship* (Toronto: The Missionary society of the Methodist church, the Young people's Forward Movement Department, 1914).

to a position of strength in the mission era.”<sup>63</sup> My research supports Cooper’s conclusions. Although I recognize that some women, particularly those of slave status, suffered negatively under the fur trade, my reading of the sources suggest that elite women maintained their positions of power during this period. My work builds on that of Cooper and Fiske by offering additional information about the success of Ts’msyen women in maintaining their sexual and economy autonomy during the fur trade. I also suggest a new analysis of the marriages between Ts’msyen women and HBC newcomers as hybrid practices.

All of this work builds on the scholarship of historians Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer S.H. Brown who pioneered an important perspective on Indigenous women’s roles in the fur trade thirty years ago.<sup>64</sup> They argued against the idea that Indigenous women were marginal to the trade. More recent scholarship has built upon the research by Van Kirk and Brown by looking closely at sexuality, constructions of race and gender, and Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage.<sup>65</sup>

In the historiography of British Columbia, considerably more has been written about Indigenous women and their marriages to newcomers than on the impact of the fur

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<sup>63</sup> Fiske, “Colonization and the Decline of Women’s Status,” 530; Cooper, “Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast,” 44.

<sup>64</sup> Sylvia Van Kirk, *“Many Tender Ties”: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980); Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980).

<sup>65</sup> Adele Perry, *Adele Perry, On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Sylvia Van Kirk, “Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families of Victoria,” in *Readings in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, eds. R. Douglas Francis & Donald B. Smith, (Toronto: Nelson Thomas Learning, 2002), 437-458; Gray Whaley, “‘Complete Liberty?’ Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Social Change on the Lower Columbia River, 1805-1818,” *Ethnohistory* 54:4 (Fall 2007): 669-695. These themes are also reflected in the historiography of intermarriage internationally.

trade on Indigenous women in general.<sup>66</sup> These studies distinguish between the practice of intermarriage during the fur trade and that of the colonial period: they characterize those of the fur trade as long-lasting and mutually beneficial and those of the colonial era as often impermanent, and deeply affected by newcomer's racist and sexist ideas. One of the central disagreements among scholars of Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage has concerned the nature of these relationships. Feminist scholars, in particular, have been embroiled in a debate over questions of experience, subjectivity, and affective attachments in the writing of Indigenous history and of Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage.<sup>67</sup> This debate is ongoing but there has already been a shift in the writing of history a result: whereas historians initially approached the writing of Indigenous women's history with an emphasis on Indigenous women's experiences of the past and had as a goal the reconstruction of these women's lives, the historiography has since moved towards a focus on newcomer attitudes towards Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage, consideration of colonial legislation and other regulating forces, examination of regional variation, and the analysis of demographic data.<sup>68</sup> These shifts,

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<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Sylvia Van Kirk, "Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families"; Jean Barman, "What a Difference a Border Makes: Aboriginal Racial Intermixture in the Pacific Northwest," *Journal of the West*, Vol.38, No.3 (July 1999): 14-20.

<sup>67</sup> Historian Ruth Roach Pierson's article, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," is emblematic of this debate. She directly addresses the issues of subjectivity and experience, arguing that historians cannot and should not speak of the experiences of historical subjects without access to source material that directly articulates such experiences, especially in cases where the subject is an oppressed other and the historian is writing from a position of privilege. Even when such evidence exists there remains a need for care. Using experience-as-evidence can result in over-generalized group histories, wherein the experience of one individual is taken to represent the history of the whole. For a more in-depth analysis of experience and history see Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Summer, 1991): 773-797; Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," in *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives*, edited by Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 79-106.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*; Van Kirk, "Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families"; Jean Barman, "What a Difference a Border Makes"; Jean Barman, "Invisible Women: Aboriginal Mothers and Mixed-Race Daughters in Rural Pioneer British Columbia," in *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia*, editor R.W. Sandwell (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 159-179.

while reflecting the impossibility of fully reaching Indigenous women's experiences given both the paucity of source material and the challenges inherent in working with outsider-produced records, have also meant a shift, in some respects, away from women and onto men, away from the intimate and the domestic towards the public and the official, the formally political.<sup>69</sup>

Ruth Roach Pierson added her voice to these discussions in "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," by criticizing Van Kirk's analysis of Indigenous women's experiences in the fur trade. She found fault with Van Kirk's suggestion that Indigenous-newcomer marriages were often affective unions, with "tender ties" shared between an Indigenous wife and her newcomer husband.<sup>70</sup> Unlike the roles Indigenous women played in the fur trade, argues Pierson, this kind of "internal" knowledge – how an Indigenous woman felt towards her newcomer husband, for example – cannot be accessed through newcomer documents. These criticisms seem to have had a lasting impact on Van Kirk who has since shifted her analysis away from the experiences of Indigenous women and onto a consideration of the

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<sup>69</sup> Another significant reason behind their emphasis on newcomer perspectives is their hesitation to 'speak for' Indigenous people by claiming to represent Indigenous experiences. Aware of their identities as non-Indigenous scholars, these historians likely feel some responsibility not to further patronize Indigenous communities by presuming their ideas and experiences. As an unfortunate result we are left with an analysis which, although critical, is heavily weighted towards the newcomer community. Reluctant to 'speak for,' they speak less, and the reader is left with such unsatisfactory conclusions as the idea that Indigenous women desired connections with newcomer men merely to access European goods.

<sup>70</sup> Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," in *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives*, edited by Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 79-106. Van Kirk suggests that many of the marriages between Indigenous women and newcomer men in the fur trade "developed into lasting and devoted unions." Van Kirk, "*Many Tender Ties*," 33; Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance," 82.

ways in which newcomer ideas of race and gender impacted Indigenous women married to newcomers and their mixed-heritage children.<sup>71</sup>

The historical understanding of intermarriage in the fur trade has grown considerably in the last thirty years. Still, there remains much to learn. In particular, I see a need for approaches which consider the “intimate” – including domesticity, affect, kinship, and sexuality – and the relationship between intermarriage and the operation of power and authority at specific fur trade forts and within the fur trade generally. In my own work I have tried to be sensitive to the concerns highlighted by Pierson while at the same time giving attention to, among other things, the “intimate” at Fort Simpson/Lax̱gu’alaams. Although, I am not able to reconstruct individual Ts’msyen women’s lives and experiences, I would suggest that there is strong reason to suppose that affection did exist between some of the newcomer men and Ts’msyen women who married at Fort Simpson/Lax̱gu’alaams. That said, I do not wish to obscure coercive details of Indigenous-newcomer relations. Rather, I hope for a sophisticated understanding that allows for the presence of both affection and violence.

In addition, I have endeavoured to use intermarriage as one example of how the personal and political interconnected at this fort. I hope that my examination of the connections between intermarriage and the operation of power and authority help to provide a more nuanced understanding of Ts’msyen-newcomer history. To date, there has been little consideration of the relationship between Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage and the operation of power and authority within the fur trade. Historian Heather Rollason

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<sup>71</sup> Van Kirk, “Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families”; Sylvia Van Kirk, “From ‘Marrying-In’ to ‘Marrying-Out’: Changing Patterns of Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Marriage in Colonial Canada,” *Frontiers*, Vol.23, No.3 (2002): 1-11. In her more recent work Van Kirk argues that Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage was increasingly “denigrated and marginalized” and that the children of these marriages, particularly the sons, experienced racism and diminishing opportunities in the colonial context.

Driscoll has made some inroads on this matter in her study, “‘A Most Important Chain of Connection’: Marriage in the Hudson’s Bay Company.”<sup>72</sup> Building upon the earlier work of Van Kirk and Brown, Driscoll suggests that the reasons that marriage patterns in the fur trade shifted away from Indigenous-newcomer unions had as much to do with the operation of power within the HBC as it did with racism.<sup>73</sup> Marriages, she claims, could serve as an effective means to reinforce distinctions of social status within a fort. Marriages between a fur trader and newcomer woman served as visible symbols of status and worked to differentiate elites from subordinates. Like Driscoll I see intermarriage as central to power and authority and while her article was a preliminary study lacking specific evidence from fur trade forts, I offer detailed evidence from Fort Simpson to substantiate this view.

Like the impact of the fur trade on Indigenous women and Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage, sexuality has emerged as a theme in the historiography of Indigenous history.<sup>74</sup> Far from a “fetishised focus on the sexual,” contemporary historians analyzing sexuality in the fur trade and in the colonial context have approached this subject by researching the newcomer regulation and re-construction of Indigenous women’s sexuality as well as social change.<sup>75</sup> Of the handful of scholars working in this area historian Jean Barman is perhaps the most well-known. In “Taming Aboriginal Sexuality:

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<sup>72</sup> Heather Rollason Driscoll, “‘A Most Important Chain of Connection’: Marriage in the Hudson’s Bay Company,” in *From Rupert’s Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster*, eds. Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens, and R.C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 81-110.

<sup>73</sup> Driscoll, “A Most Important Chain of Connection,” 97, 100.

<sup>74</sup> Jean Barman, “Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900,” *BC Studies*, no.115-116 (1997): 237-266; Jean Barman, “Aboriginal Women on the Streets of Victoria: Rethinking Transgressive Sexuality During the Colonial Encounter,” in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada’s Colonial Past*, edited by Myra Rutherdale and Katie Pickles (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 205-227; Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*.

<sup>75</sup> Adele Perry, “The Autocracy of Love and the Legitimacy of Empire: Intimacy, Power and Scandal in Nineteenth-Century Metlakatlah,” in *Gender and History*, Vol.16, No.2 (August 2004), 262.

Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900,” Barman argues that newcomers imposed Victorian ideas of “purity, prudery, and propriety” onto Indigenous women, condemning Indigenous sexuality and providing a pretext for newcomers to reorder Indigenous societies.<sup>76</sup> Barman’s attention to Indigenous women’s agency and sexual autonomy has been influential to my own work. Although I recognize the value in seeking to understand the sexualization of Indigenous women and the connection between ideas of Indigenous sexuality in the project to reorder Indigenous society I disagree with her characterization of Indigenous men as members of an alliance which sought to refashion Indigenous women by taming their sexuality and keeping them in the home.<sup>77</sup>

Gray Whaley offers a more recent study of Indigenous sexuality in his article “‘Complete Liberty?’ Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Social Change on the Lower Columbia River, 1805-1818.”<sup>78</sup> Whaley examines social change among the Chinook, arguing that sexuality became both a strategy for social stability and a site of negotiation between newcomers and Chinook people. This research is important for its insight into the social position of Chinook women and its recognition of adaptation and the creation of new social roles during the fur trade period. Like Whaley’s conclusions for the Lower Columbia River region, I found there to have been a relationship between sexuality and

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<sup>76</sup> Barman, “Taming Aboriginal Sexuality,” 242.

<sup>77</sup> Barman makes some attempts to consider Indigenous perspectives with her ‘tripartite alliance’ thesis – wherein missionaries, government officials and Indigenous men worked together to “refashion Aboriginal women” – however her sources are heavily weighted towards newcomer perspectives, their aim of Christian conversion and the development of colonial policy on Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, Barman’s evidence of Indigenous men’s intentions regarding the ‘taming’ of Indigenous women’s sexuality is unconvincing and she perhaps reaches too far in suggesting that they were an informed and equal part of the tripartite alliance. Finally, Barman gives little attention to cultural differences among Indigenous people or various newcomers and her analysis is the weaker for it. Barman, “Taming Aboriginal Sexuality,” 249.

<sup>78</sup> Gray Whaley, “‘Complete Liberty?’ Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Social Change on the Lower Columbia River, 1805-1818,” *Ethnohistory* Vol. 54, No. 4 (Fall 2007): 669-695.

social change for the Ts'msyen. I offer examples of some of the ways Ts'msyen women used sexuality as a tool to maintain or enhance social positions at Fort Simpson. Finally, I share with Whaley the frustration that the sexuality of Indigenous slaves is nearly impossible to access in historical records. As a result of these difficulties I can say little about the prostitution of slaves except to suggest that in many cases it might better be describes as sexual exploitation than sex trade work.

Many of my ideas about cultural change have been influenced by the work of scholars Robin Fisher and Richard White. Though I make few specific references to their ideas in this thesis I owe much to their analyses of Indigenous-newcomer relations. In particular, I take from both these scholars the understanding that relations of power are central to the ways in which post-contact cultural change occurred among Indigenous people. In *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, historian Robin Fisher argues that a shift in power, from Indigenous people to European newcomers, brought with it a shift in the manner by which cultural change occurred among Indigenous peoples. For Fisher, so long as native people exercised control over their relationships with newcomers they remained able to dictate the terms of their cultural change. Under such circumstances the incorporation of newcomer customs or technologies into Indigenous communities should be viewed, according to Fisher, as a “creative process” more akin to the “elaboration of existing culture patterns rather than radical social change” or what might be considered as cultural transformation.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992), 21, 48.

Influenced by theories of cultural enrichment, Fisher looked at the fur trade as a period of positive change rather than as a period of negative Indigenous cultural change. Anthropologist Joyce Wike had earlier presented a similar enrichment argument in her doctoral dissertation in Political Science. She argued that cultural enrichment rests on the following assertions: access to European technology (i.e. tools, weapons) increased Indigenous productivity and allowed for a larger return from their labour; a shift away from production for consumption and towards production for exchange resulted in a great deal of new wealth; this wealth was channeled through chiefs and used to enhance their status; and finally, that new wealth encouraged the production of Indigenous art (i.e. more and larger poles, the curio trade) and more elaborate ceremonies.<sup>80</sup> In British Columbia, argues Fisher, the flourishing of Northwest Coast carving and the elaboration of Indigenous culture that characterized the fur trade eras ended abruptly with the arrival of settlers and missionaries. No longer able to control the conditions of contact with newcomers, Indigenous people experienced outsider-directed cultural change. Within this framework, Fisher interprets evidence of cultural change among Indigenous people after the later 1850s as signs of demoralized culture and newcomer dominance.

While I do not subscribe to the cultural enrichment hypothesis, seeing real problems with the ways in which it measures and represents Northwest Culture, I have benefited from Fisher and Wike's respective studies.<sup>81</sup> Both of these scholars drew attention to the need for researchers to consider changes in Indigenous culture when examining Indigenous-newcomer relations. They tried to account for why cultural change

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<sup>80</sup> Cole Harris, "Social Power and Cultural Change in Pre-Colonial British Columbia" *BC Studies* No.115/116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/1998), 70; Joyce Wike, "Problems in Fur Trade Analysis: The Northwest Coast," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 60, No. 6 (December 1958): 1086-1101.

<sup>81</sup> For a succinct analysis of the weaknesses of the cultural enrichment hypothesis see Harris, "Social Power and cultural Change," 80-81.

occurred and what the consequences of such changes were for Indigenous communities. And, although I disagree with the idea that ‘traditional’ Indigenous culture was enhanced by trade with newcomers, whether as a result of increased ceremony and art production or as judged against Western values, I am indebted to their views of cultural change and innovation from newcomer sources as more than simply a mark of the corruption of Indigenous culture.

In his book, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, historian Richard White analyzes Indigenous-newcomer relations in the Great Lakes region and concludes that encounters between these peoples were characterized by accommodation. White argues that because they had a mutual need or wish to engage with each other but lacked the power to dominate the other these groups relied on accommodation to achieve their desired ends. What developed was a system of shared European and Indigenous meanings and practices – a middle ground. While White’s middle ground offers a valuable framework for scholars of newcomer-Indigenous contact relations I found it inadequate for my examination of Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams. One of the key elements of the middle ground was persuasion: newcomers and Indigenous people tried to persuade each other to something by appealing to what they thought were the values and practices of the other. At Fort Simpson, Ts’msyen and newcomer people seem to have participated in each other’s ceremonies and jointly constructed hybrid practices not just to persuade each other of something but also to persuade members of their own group of that thing. And while misunderstandings were undoubtedly a part of the development of hybrid practices at Fort Simpson they were not the foundation of them. For these reasons I found hybridity theory a more useful

framework for my thesis. I have, however, been greatly influenced by White's analysis of Indigenous-newcomer power dynamics. His explanation that newcomers in the Great Lakes region could neither "dictate to Indians nor ignore them" made clear to me the importance of examining newcomer security and stability in Ts'msyen territory.<sup>82</sup> I have also benefited from his consistent attention to Indigenous agency.

In my view, the theories of hybridity as presented by Marwan M. Kraidy, Ania Loomba, and Homi K. Baba, are more useful for understanding cultural change at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. As they describe it, hybridity is understood as the creation of new cultural forms through the mingling of cultural signs and practices from an outsider and insider group or, in post-colonial theory, a colonizing and colonized culture.<sup>83</sup>

However, it can also be thought of as cultural repurposing or remaking. In this case, previously existing customs or cultural symbols belonging to another group are adopted by an insider group and invested with new meanings and functions. Since it involves the amalgam of "two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities," cross-cultural contact is a requirement of any study of hybridity.<sup>84</sup>

Although hybridity has most often been applied by post-colonial scholars to a colonized group, it can also be applied, as I have done here, to an outsider group or "colonizer."<sup>85</sup> Key to my study is the understanding that cultures are never monolithic or unchanging. At Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams, both Ts'msyen and newcomer people

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<sup>82</sup> White, *The Middle Ground*, x.

<sup>83</sup> John Lye, "Some Issues in Post-Colonial Theory," (1997/1998), <http://www.brocku.ca/english/courses/4F70/postcol.php> (accessed June 10, 2008). Hybridization manifests in many forms, including linguistic, cultural, political, and racial. As I use it here, hybridity refers mostly to culture but sometimes concerns the realms of race, language, and ethnicity.

<sup>84</sup> Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 5.

<sup>85</sup> My use of "colonizer" and "colonized" here is meant to reference the work of post-colonial hybridity theorists and should not be read as descriptors for Ts'msyen or newcomer people at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams during the period under consideration here.

changed in response to their new circumstances, adopting and adapting cultural forms. Post-colonial hybridity, with its view of culture as mutable and colonial identities as unstable and in flux, provides a framework for exploring the cultural changes experienced by both Ts'msyen people and newcomers.

One of the most significant criticisms of hybridity theory is its focus on the general. As Ania Loomba explains, certain scholars of post-colonial hybridity have created a generalized hybrid colonial subject who is “undifferentiated by gender, class or location.”<sup>86</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, one of the most influential post-colonial hybridity theorists, has come under heavy criticism for this universalizing tendency. He asserts that hybridity is as a shared post-colonial condition and theorizes a colonial identity which is insensitive to the ways in which subjectivities like class, gender, ideology, and context might shape it.<sup>87</sup> Scholars like Ella Shohat, Marwan Kraidy, and Edward Said have sought to address this problem by infusing their hybridity analyses with a temporal, spatial, geographic, political, and economic energy.<sup>88</sup> As Shohat suggests, attention must be given to “the diverse modalities of hybridity, for example forced assimilation, internalized self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence.”<sup>89</sup>

Hybridity, particularly in colonial conditions, is significantly influenced by local and supralocal relations of power. These dynamics of power operate to shape hybridity

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<sup>86</sup> Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Post-Colonialism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 150.

<sup>87</sup> Bhabha's hybrid colonial subject is characterized as male, internally divided, and agnostic. Some scholars suggest it is Bhabha's focus on semiotics which has produced this seeming lack of sensitivity to the ways in which inequalities and subjectivities have shaped hybridity. Loomba, *Colonialism/Post-Colonialism*, 150; Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 58.

<sup>88</sup> Loomba, *Colonialism/Post-Colonialism*, 150; Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 156; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 14; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 119.

<sup>89</sup> Ella Shohat, as quoted in Loomba, *Colonialism/Post-Colonialism*, 150.

and, in turn, the culturally hybrid forms which emerge at a given locale or among a given people reflect at once these dynamics of power as well as the existence of hegemony and its limitations.<sup>90</sup> In spite of the importance of power, post-colonial scholars have not always directed adequate attention to it. Some have treated hybridity as simply “cross-cultural exchange,” overlooking or denying imbalances and inequalities of power.<sup>91</sup> Such an approach has been accused of both minimizing oppositionality in colonial conditions or contact zones and, by stressing the mutuality of cultural change, concealing cultural differences.<sup>92</sup> To be clear, there is nothing in the idea of hybridity that negates inequality or the hegemony of the imperial process. Conversely, where scholars have given attention to hybridity and dynamics of power it has often been aimed at colonial authority and the resistance of the colonized.<sup>93</sup> While recognizing value in this type of scholarship, particularly in its ability to discern agency among colonial subjects, these studies can encourage a false dichotomy of colonizer and colonized (domination and resistance) premised, in part, on the illusory notion of these groups as discrete and homogenous communities. Finally, such studies are in danger of, as Kraidy suggests, glorifying local cultural hybridity as resistance.<sup>94</sup>

Another important criticism of the discourse concerns the somewhat narrow manner in which the concept of hybridity has been applied. While scholars might assert

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<sup>90</sup> Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 156.

<sup>91</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 119.

<sup>92</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 119.

<sup>93</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.12, No.1 (Autumn 1985): 144-165; Homi K. Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” *October*, Vol.28 (Spring 1984): 125-133.

<sup>94</sup> Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 155. Sensitive to these shortcomings, I have tried in this study to consider dynamics of power in tandem with the development of cultural hybridity, but since the newcomers of Fort Simpson were in a position of vulnerability their presence in Ts’msyen territory did not serve as a proto-colonial influence in the conventional sense. Therefore, the bulk of my attention is directed towards the local dynamics of power, both within the fort and the Ts’msyen communities and between them.

that all cultures are hybrid, in practice scholars of hybridity have used it as “a framework for studying and defining postcolonial nations and cultures.”<sup>95</sup> This particular geopolitical directionality should be met with caution. Equally concerning, as Loomba observes, is that even with this tendency towards the study of postcolonial cultures, scholars have actually given more attention to European culture and colonial discourse than they have to the Indigenous groups that are their supposed foci.<sup>96</sup> One of the results of this preoccupation with colonial culture is an unnecessarily limited record of contact relations or colonialism. Without attention to Indigenous culture and discourse we cannot hope to gain real insight into their diverse motivations for and views of cultural hybridity. Nor can we hope to learn the specificities of diverse hybridities.<sup>97</sup>

Such critiques provide a necessary caution to scholars like me who wish to apply the concept as a framework in their research. While recognizing that the discourse of hybridity is imperfect I suggest that this concept remains valuable to the field of history and particularly to the study of contact relations. Moreover, some postcolonial theorists have had success in overcoming limitations of the discourse, as Shalini Puri has, for example, by renewing attention to the local. Like Shohat, Kraidy, and Said, Puri argues for attention to the local context in which hybridity develops, the operation of power (both local and supralocal) at that locale, and to personal agency.<sup>98</sup> Such strategies,

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<sup>95</sup> Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 68.

<sup>96</sup> Loomba, *Colonialism/Post-Colonialism*, 151.

<sup>97</sup> Loomba, *Colonialism/Post-Colonialism*, 151.

<sup>98</sup> Marc Brudzinski, “Localizing Hybridity: Shalini Puri’s *The Caribbean Postcolonial*,” [http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/journals/small\\_axe/v010/10.1brudzinski.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/journals/small_axe/v010/10.1brudzinski.pdf) (June 18, 2008).

particularly the situating of hybrid forms within a specific “*local* cultural and political context,” refine hybridity and result in a more useful conceptual tool.<sup>99</sup>

### Theory

I have elected to use a microhistory approach because I think it has particular value for the study of Indigenous-newcomer relations in the Fort Simpson region.

Microhistorians investigate the small in order to learn something of the big. Using this approach allows me to examine critically some of the conclusions made by earlier scholars who, having used a macrohistorical methodology, have asserted a somewhat generalized history of Indigenous-newcomer relations in British Columbia’s land-based fur trade.<sup>100</sup> I am not suggesting that these earlier studies are without value.

Macrohistorical studies of the fur trade in Canada, for example, have uncovered valuable information on historical change on a large-scale; they have also successfully identified some of the major themes of the fur trade.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Brudzinski, “Localizing Hybridity,” 217.

<sup>100</sup> Sylvia Van Kirk, “*Many Tender Ties*”: *Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980); Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992). Macrohistories are generally considered as historical studies examining large and longer-term trends in world history. These histories take a broad approach to the study of the past and because of this, tend to view people as a group rather than as distinct historical actors. While, in certain ways, Robin Fisher’s *Contact and Conflict* and Sylvia Van Kirk’s “*Many Tender Ties*” resist classification as macrohistories I believe, in the study of Indigenous-newcomer history, it is fair to characterize them as such. *Contact and Conflict*, although it considers the eighteenth and nineteenth century history of Indigenous people in a relatively culturally-unified geographic region, is focused more on economic and political history than on the social history of the fur trade or colonial era. Moreover, Fisher gives little attention to differences between Indigenous communities on the coast, or to the many different individuals (newcomer and Indigenous) who are at the centre of this history. This is not to dismiss Fisher’s work or his contribution to the field of fur trade history. *Contact and Conflict* is a seminal work in the history of British Columbia and the Northwest Coast fur trade. Nonetheless, with the vast number of historical sources he consulted, the large geographic area, the long time-span, and the diversity of individual historical actors, this study is a macrohistory with the strengths and limitations of that methodology. Sylvia Van Kirk, on the other hand, has given attention to Indigenous women and to individuals in her examination of fur trade society. This study, while certainly more focused on the social history of the fur trade than Fisher’s, can be considered as a macrohistory because of its attention to a large geographic area, long time span, and tendency to generalize the experiences of historical actors, especially Indigenous women. Neither Van Kirk nor Fisher give attention to the tremendous diversity of Indigenous communities, to their unique worldviews, lifeways, and histories before and after contact with newcomers.

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada an Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven London: Yale University Press H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1930).

Such attention to the small can help scholars develop a more nuanced understanding of the history of the fur trade and Indigenous-newcomer relations in British Columbia. In part, the capacity to discern some of the subtleties of Indigenous-newcomer fur trade history comes directly from a narrowing of subject matter. Researching a single fort or geographic community allows a scholar, I suggest, a greater degree of mastery over his or her written sources. With a smaller volume of material to examine and assess there is, generally, less risk of overlooking important evidence. At the same time, the increased familiarity with source material can help scholars recognize important but obscure aspects of the past, for example, symbolic meaning and the operation and negotiation of local power and authority.<sup>102</sup>

A work of microhistory is concerned not only with the extraordinary but with the ordinary. Accordingly, I examine the everyday events of all individuals who lived at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. Although the lives of Ts'msyen and newcomer elite like Chief Ligeex and Captain William McNeill receive more attention in this thesis I have tried, where possible, to consider the experiences and actions of others in the community.<sup>103</sup> My attention to the everyday lives of these people and to the social and political contexts in which they operated has, I hope, helped recover and reconstruct something of their past. As scholar Richard D. Brown writes, it is "through these linkages [that] one comes

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Macrohistorical research continues to have value, particularly as regards the study of previously unexamined events or people.

<sup>102</sup> This discussion is greatly influenced by my reading of Richard D. Brown, "Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring, 2003): 1-20.

<sup>103</sup> In my research files I have created biographical sketches for sixty-one of the newcomer men and their families at Fort Simpson. These sketches are central to my understanding of the internal workings of the fort and although I do not include them in this thesis my arguments rest, in part, upon them.

to understand, however subjectively, the multiple contexts in which people made their decisions and acted out their lives.”<sup>104</sup>

I have tried in this thesis to examine equally the worlds of the Ts’msyen and the newcomers. This has not been feasible given the lack of Ts’msyen sources. I have had to satisfy myself with evaluating them alike as historical agents. In an effort to better understand Ts’msyen actions I undertook an evaluation of the published Ts’msyen ethnographic records. As I discuss in Chapter One, these sources, compiled a century after my period of study, are flawed and must be used carefully. Nonetheless, I hope to show that there are merits to such an ethnohistorical approach to the study of Indigenous-newcomer relations in the fur trade by adding new insights to existing scholarship.

A number of other theoretical approaches have influenced my work. My research and analysis have been informed by the theory of dialogism. Dialogism is premised on the idea that everything that is stated or enacted is in response to things that have been stated or enacted before and in anticipation of what will be stated or enacted. Although this thesis is not a dialogical work, per se, I have operated from the understanding that the historical actors of Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams were in a continual dialogue with each other. In this sense, I draw ethnohistorian Michael Harkin who, in his study of the Heiltsuk, uncovered examples of “negotiation of meanings, presentation and representation of self and other.”<sup>105</sup> Dialogic theory has also encouraged me to view both the Indigenous and newcomer people at this site as active and reactive. By asking the

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<sup>104</sup> Brown, “Microhistory,” 19.

<sup>105</sup> Michael E. Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1997), viii.

same questions of both the Ts'msyen and newcomer communities I again depart from the usual approach to this history.<sup>106</sup>

From Marxist theory I take the idea that class relations are fundamental to social relations. I am also influenced by feminist theory. I assume that women have played an important and active role in historical processes and I have approached my research looking for evidence of their actions. As much as possible given the limitations of the source material, my research includes a study of both the public and private spheres, elsewhere often viewed in an over-simplified way as men's and women's domains, historically important and unimportant, respectively. I see the two as interconnected and mutually shaping historical events, especially at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. Although I view both women and men as historical actors I also recognize that all people's respective power was limited by gender inequality, social status and ideas of race.

In conclusion, this study examines cultural change among HBC newcomers and Ts'msyen people at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams between 1834 and 1862. I suggest that during this time a mutually intelligible world developed at this site in which newcomers and Ts'msyen people became intertwined. Individuals from these groups found reasons to engage in relationships with each other and sometimes embraced behaviours and customs they found foreign and even objectionable in order to maintain these connections. I argue that the development of culturally hybrid forms by and between newcomer and Ts'msyen people was one consequence of these relations. These hybrid forms are most evident in

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<sup>106</sup> Most studies of the fur trade centre on either Indigenous people or newcomers. While there has been a number of important and sophisticated analyses of early newcomer-Indigenous relations produced in recent years (see for example, works by Michael Harkin, Paige Raibmon, and John Lutz) few have attempted to deal equally with both newcomer and Indigenous peoples in the fur trade. One exception is Daniel W. Clayton, whom I discuss below.

marriage and legal practices that emerged at this locale. I argue that it was often the competition for power and authority between parties which encouraged participation in each other's practices.

Chapter One analyzes the Ts'msyen custom of innovating from outsider sources and the ways in which they regulated the introduction of these ideas into their worlds. To illustrate this, I consider three culturally hybrid practices Ts'msyen people developed in response to newcomer goods, ideas, and customs: burial practices, new styles of housebuilding, and the repurposing of newcomer clothing. I draw heavily on published ethnographic records in particular the works of anthropologist Marius Barbeau and Ts'msyen lay ethnographer William Beynon.<sup>107</sup>

Chapters two and three look at how power and authority operated at the Fort. I show how hybridity and cross-participation in ceremony functioned as an essential tool in the preservation of elite status while also serving as a subversive device to destabilize the influence and control of elites and enhance that of subordinates. In this chapter I show how new legal strategies emerged to deal with new forms of crime and conflict between the two groups at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. Chapter Three looks closely at intermarriage between HBC men and Indigenous women. I argue that a hybrid system of marriage emerged at this locale, creating new domestic arrangements, kinship obligations, and expectations of women. I pay particular attention to the abilities of newcomers and Ts'msyen people to use their relationships with each other to enhance their own positions within their respective worlds.

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<sup>107</sup> See Chapter One for a more thorough exploration of the challenges of employing ethnographic records in historical research.

Chapter One:  
“The Many Ways of Acquiring”: How Ts’msyen People  
Welcomed Outsider Powers into Their Own Worlds  
Yet Became No Less Ts’msyen

“I have been sent by my father to marry you . . .  
So I will sleep with you and I have many things to show you.’  
Before it was daybreak, the man was gone, but just  
beside the entrance to the hut was a large spring salmon.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Informant Dan Gosnell (Giluts’aaw), George F. MacDonald and John J. Cove, eds., “The Many Ways of Acquiring Luck,” *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes: Tsimshian Narratives I*, collected by Marius Barbeau and William Beynon, (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987), 80.

At Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams, between 1834 and 1862, culturally hybrid forms were developed by and between newcomer and Ts'msyen people. In this first chapter I explore some of the Ts'msyen customs which, I suggest, inclined Ts'msyen people towards the development of what can retrospectively be described as hybrid practices by culturally innovating from HBC outsiders. I also consider ways in which I believe these customs worked to encourage intermarriage between Ts'msyen women and HBC newcomers. Finally, I offer some examples of hybridity developed by Ts'msyen people following their contact with the HBC newcomers of Fort Simpson.

This chapter represents my attempt to access Ts'msyen views and agendas. I do not think that we can interpret hybridity, intermarriage between Ts'msyen women and HBC newcomer men, or even Ts'msyen participation in the trade unless we take into consideration Ts'msyen perspectives. While acknowledging that it is difficult to recover the perspectives of nineteenth century Ts'msyen people I would suggest that a careful reading of the *adaawx* and *maalsk* narratives contained in the ethnographic record offers some valuable insight. When read alongside other sources they provide evidence of how the Ts'msyen dealt with newcomers according to their own set of social, political and economic understandings. The formulations that follow below are ground in my reading of the Ts'msyen ethnographic record. Like the nineteenth century newcomer documents I also rely on in this thesis, these sources are problematic and it is necessary to proceed cautiously when interpreting them. I open this chapter with a necessarily brief analysis of some of the key challenges historians face in using these documents and offer some discussion of my own use of these records.

I approached the ethnographic record with the hope that it might offer evidence of Ts'msyen agendas for participating in the trade and for forging intimate relationships with HBC newcomers. Having found signs of cultural hybridity within the newcomer source material I had accessed I was particularly interested in locating clues as to why some Ts'msyen people might have engaged in or developed such practices when the key conditions postcolonial scholars have identified as crucial to the development of hybridity were missing from this locale. While my search for nineteenth century Ts'msyen experiences and intentions was well-meaning it soon became evident that the ethnographic records could not offer this kind of information.<sup>109</sup> These narratives were collected after the decades under study in this thesis, generally lack direct reference to personal feelings, say little about non-Indigenous newcomers and, most importantly, were influenced by the collectors themselves. After adjusting my expectations I revisited the ethnographic record and considered what they could tell me about the Tsimshian, cultural change and contact with outsiders. As I explain in greater detail below, I found that by undertaking a critical reading of these texts and by comparing them with other

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<sup>109</sup> Historian Wendy Wickwire notes that ethnographic records are both complex and problematic and thus require a critical reading by contemporary scholars who would wish to draw on them for their own research. Scholars should consider the context in which these records were collected as well as the ideologies driving the collectors. The historical geographer Daniel W. Clayton provides one recent example of a scholar who has applied a critical reading to ethnographic records and managed to successfully integrate knowledge from these records with European primary documents in his careful and thorough study of contact relations between the Nuu-chah-nulth and European newcomers on the west coast of what is now Vancouver Island. Clayton explains that it is extremely difficult to get at Indigenous experiences of contact during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as Indigenous people in British Columbia left few written records themselves. Relying as we do on an historical record produced by European newcomers we have only a partial record of the past, one which offers outsider interpretations of Indigenous motivations and experiences but which, according to Clayton, "will do little to explain the nature of native motivations and experiences." Wendy Wickwire, "Reconciling Issues of Time-Past and Time-Present in New Works of BC Ethnography," *BC Studies* No.138/139 (Summer/Autumn 2003): 165-172; Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000); Daniel W. Clayton, *Geographies of the Lower Skeena, 1830-1920*, Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989 <<https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/28167>> (accessed November 6, 2010); Daniel W. Clayton, "Geographies of the Lower Skeena," *BC Studies* No.94 (Summer 1992), 57.

sources I was able to locate value in these documents for my own research. In particular, I encountered three motifs which I believe are of direct importance to understanding Ts'msyen participation in cultural hybridity.

Firstly, the Ts'msyen have consistently identified themselves as innovators. Both the nineteenth century newcomer-produced source material and twentieth century ethnographic collections indicate a general recognition among the Ts'msyen of change as a custom. In contrast to the position of contemporary Canadian courts that cultural change is a sign of "an abandonment of Indianness," Ts'msyen people seem to have sought it out, considering it as a marker of privilege and elite status.<sup>110</sup> Secondly, the Ts'msyen have a long-established system for introducing change into their communities: the feasting complex. This system supports innovation by creating a pathway by which change can receive legitimization within the Ts'msyen worlds. It also works to support stability by regulating who can innovate and how such innovation may be carried out. Thirdly, Ts'msyen narratives indicate that women played a special role in the process of cultural change. Characterized as agents of change, it is Ts'msyen women who consistently formed relationships with outsiders, usually through marriage, and thereby acquired new powers, goods or ideas which could be introduced into their lineage or community at large. This unique role may have worked to encourage relationships

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<sup>110</sup> I wish to make clear that although Ts'msyen people have consistently embraced change, introducing new objects, ideas and powers into their own communities, there is a distinct difference between change initiated by Ts'msyen people under conditions of political autonomy and those directed by colonial officials and Christian missionaries under colonialism. This chapter deals only with cultural change initiated by Ts'msyen people in the pre-colonial nineteenth century. In *Islands of Truth*, historical geographer Daniel W. Clayton notes that the courts' identification of First Nations people as either traditional, "with deep temporal roots in the land," or modern and thus inauthentically Indian has driven First Nations people in British Columbia who want to press for their land and other rights through the legal system to present proof of cultural continuity and an essentially static past. His study concerns the Nuu-chah-nulth of Vancouver Island but has importance for all Indigenous people living in British Columbia. For the Ts'msyen, a people who consider themselves innovators and take pride in change, this circumstance poses a particular quandary. Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 159.

between Ts'msyen women and outsiders. It might also have established what I would describe as a psychological space in which Ts'msyen people could imagine the existence of culturally mixed people or practices.

These three motifs are central to my reading of Ts'msyen agendas at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. I believe that they reflect longstanding elements of Ts'msyen society and thus can be used to pose questions about contact relations between the Ts'msyen and HBC newcomers. I use the published ethnographic sources cautiously, mindful of the dangers of ethnographic "upstreaming" that historians like Richard White have outlined.<sup>111</sup> Historical "upstreaming" presumes that key patterns of culture remain stable over time and therefore that data collected decades or more after contact can be used to infer or interpret Indigenous agendas from an earlier time.<sup>112</sup> This technique tends to stress continuity and leaves little room for considering how subjectivities like colonialism and Christianity, for example, might have impacted the perspectives of informants. Still, as historian Bruce M. White reminds us, "to presume that there was no similarity in culture...is equally problematic."<sup>113</sup> Considering these dangers I have not approached ethnographic record with the goal of reconstructing nineteenth Ts'msyen

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<sup>111</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xiv.

<sup>112</sup> Historical upstreaming was first proposed in 1957 by William Fenton, an early twentieth century scholar of the Iroquois and credited with advancing the study of Iroquois history. His concept rested on three assumptions: "1) that major patterns of culture remain stable over long period of time, producing repeated uniformities; 2) these patterns can best be seen by proceeding from the known ethnological present to the unknown past, using recent sources first and then earlier sources; 3) those sources which ring true at both ends of the time span merit confidence." In proposing the technique of historical upstreaming Fenton was reacting against scholars who presumed the inevitable acculturation of Indigenous people who faced European colonization. William Fenton, as quoted in Fred W. Voget, "Anthropological Theory and Iroquois Ethnography: 1850 to 1970," in *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies*, eds. Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi and Marianne Mithun (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 347.

<sup>113</sup> Bruce M. White, "The Woman Who Married a Beaver: Trade Patterns and Gender Roles in the Ojibwa Fur Trade," in *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader In Aboriginal Women's History in Canada*, eds. Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 64.

experiences. On the other hand, to ignore this key source would not only leave nothing but the at least equally flawed newcomer documents to draw on, it would suggest that the Ts'msyen record has nothing to offer about Ts'msyen history.

### Reading the Ts'msyen Ethnographic Record

Before turning to examine the Ts'msyen practice of cultural innovation from outsider sources it is necessary to comment on my use of the published ethnographic record and some of the methodological issues concerning these sources. As with any scholar of Indigenous-newcomer history I am motivated to locate Indigenous content and perspectives in my research. My use of these ethnographies reflects this goal but it also signals my recognition that some of these documents possess authenticity in that they speak of real Ts'msyen history.<sup>114</sup> As scholars like Andrew Martindale, Susan Marsden and Robert Galois have shown, some of these texts contain historical data describing persons and events thousands of years into the past with “demonstrable accuracy.”<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> I am not alone in this position. See, for example, Andrew Martindale, "Methodological Issues in the Use of Tsimshian Oral Traditions (Adawx) in Archaeology," *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 30(2): 159-193; Andrew Martindale and Susan Marsden, "Defining the Middle Period (3500 BP to 1500 BP) in Tsimshian History through a Comparison of Archaeological and Oral Records," *BC Studies* 138/139 (Summer 2003): 13-50; Susan Marsden, "Defending the Mouth of the Skeena: Perspectives on Tsimshian Tlingit Relations," in *Perspectives on Northern Northwest Coast Prehistory*, ed. J. Cybulski (Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2001): 61-106; Susan Marsden, "Adawx, Spanaxnox, and the Geopolitics of the Tsimshian," *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002): 101-135; J.A. MacDonald, "Images of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Economy of the Tsimshian," in *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views of the Present*, ed. Margaret Seguin [Anderson] (UBC Press, Vancouver, 1984): 40-54; and Christopher Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian: The Social Life of Names* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). On the challenges of using Ts'msyen oral records for historical purpose see Jonathan R. Dean, "The 1811 Nass River Incident: Images of First Conflict on the Intercultural Frontier," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* Vol. 13 No. 1 (1993): 83-103. Dean argues that while Ts'msyen oral histories are important to historical research scholars must also recognize that the narratives are dynamic and change over time. He suggests that while newcomer documents reflect an initial historical incident, Indigenous oral histories reflect the consequences of the historical event and not just the incident itself. For Dean, this makes Indigenous oral records an important source for understanding Indigenous perspectives but also marks them as problematic for historical purposes.

<sup>115</sup> Martindale, "Methodological Issues," 160. See, for example, Susan Marsden and Robert Galois, "The Tsimshian, The Hudson's Bay Company, and the Geopolitics of the Northwest Coast Fur Trade, 1787-1840," *The Canadian Geographer* Vol. 39, No.2 (June 1995): 169-183; Martindale, "Methodological Issues"; Dean, "The 1811 Nass River Incident."

Despite their genuine historical content however, these documents remain problematic for scholars.<sup>116</sup>

Of primary concern to scholars of Ts'msyen history is the complexity of Ts'msyen oral histories and the contextual setting in which the ethnographic records were collected. Ts'msyen oral histories are elaborate, they contain accounts of events and people thousands of years in the past, record supernatural doings, are both literal and metaphorical, and provide a flexible charter for managing change within the Ts'msyen social and political worlds, including the incorporation of new people.<sup>117</sup> In addition, the use and ownership of Ts'msyen oral histories is extremely prescriptive: individual oral histories are owned by Ts'msyen houses and only the highest-ranking members of a house know the histories and have the right to tell them. What is more, the oral histories often have multiple parts that are not always recounted together and may even be owned by related but geographically separate lineages of different nations.<sup>118</sup> Given this complexity, and the additional reality that most researchers seeking to utilize Ts'msyen oral histories are further distanced from them by their status as outsiders, it is understandable that contemporary scholars consider the documents problematic for researchers and call into question whether they can even be made use of.

Issues surrounding the collection of these documents pose a greater challenge still. The sometimes problematic manner in which these narratives were collected has influenced their content making them more difficult for scholars to evaluate and understand. Of fundamental concern are the roles of the anthropologist in the collection

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<sup>116</sup> I'd like to be clear that here I am only speaking of the recorded oral record – not questioning authenticity or historicity of the oral histories kept by Ts'msyen people themselves.

<sup>117</sup> Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 174-177. Roth offers an insightful analysis of Ts'msyen oral histories as “maps of and charters for a Tsimshian social and political order,” 175.

<sup>118</sup> Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 175.

of the narratives and of the Indigenous informant in crafting and presenting them. Although the anthropologists who collected the Ts'msyen narratives seem to have intended to create a comprehensive record of real Ts'msyen histories and oral traditions, scholars now recognize that their approach, the questions they asked, their philosophies, how they collected the material, and how they structured it once collected, greatly influenced their data.

The role of the Indigenous informants as the narrators of these texts presents a further complication for researchers. Certainly these individuals had a good deal of control over the information collected by anthropologists and thus were able to shape the content.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, it is important to remember that Indigenous informants are, of course, individuals with their own intentions, acting from within their own political and cultural context. These circumstances influenced both what they chose to share with anthropologists and, in the Ts'msyen worlds, what they *could* share.<sup>120</sup> Thus, while early anthropologists working with Ts'msyen informants were seeking to create an objectively-acquired and definitive body of Ts'msyen oral histories, what they achieved were in fact shot through with subjectivities.

Like any source material then, the ethnographic record contains partial truths. While the complexity of Ts'msyen oral histories and the manner in which these narratives were

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<sup>119</sup> Certainly during the time that these narratives were collected there was a condition of inequality between anthropologists and their informants. The Ts'msyen were losing both their territories and their sovereignty and these circumstances, along with conditions of poverty, may have made some Ts'msyen people more likely to 'sell' their stories for money. But even in such circumstances Ts'msyen informants continued to have a great deal of influence over what narratives anthropologists and other scholars were able to collect.

<sup>120</sup> Contemporary anthropologist Christopher Roth explains in *Becoming Tsimshian* that Franz Boas' Ts'msyen informant, Tate, had limited access to Ts'msyen oral histories because of his middling social status among the Ts'msyen. Lacking the social ranking of a *sm'oogyit*, Tate did not have the same access to Ts'msyen oral histories as someone like William Beynon, who, for a variety of reasons, had achieved the position of chief of the Gitlaan. The result, Roth suggests, is that the narratives collected by Boas are those in the 'public domain.' That is, they are stories to which any Ts'msyen has access, unlike the owned histories of the *adaawx*.

collected have impacted these documents, perhaps the greatest influence on their content was the elite status of the informants. Because so many of the informants were individuals of high status the ethnographic record reflects a chiefly view of the world.<sup>121</sup> This limits their usefulness in particular ways and I have tried to remain attentive to this point, working carefully with their statements.

This is not to say that these narratives are without value. Indeed, Ts'msyen *adaawx* collected by William Beynon, an Indigenous lay ethnographer of Ts'msyen, Nisga'a and Welsh descent who worked collaboratively with anthropologist Marius Barbeau, are considered by many Ts'msyen as having authenticity and are, according to contemporary anthropologist Christopher Roth, "widely distributed, closely read, and heavily consulted resources in every Ts'msyen village today."<sup>122</sup> Moreover, a number of published *adaawx* have been shown by contemporary academics to have, as mentioned above, demonstrable historical accuracy. Archaeologists researching the Ts'msyen past have found these collections particularly useful as evidence of historical land-use, residence patterns, and geological phenomenon.<sup>123</sup> It is clear that the ethnographies of the early twentieth century cannot be treated as a simple storehouse of facts nor can they be entirely dismissed as

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<sup>121</sup> Historical geographer{?} Daniel Clayton arrived at similar conclusions for the Nuu-chah-nulth ethnographic record. He suggests that both traders and ethnographers obtained a chiefly view of the Nuu-chah-nulth worlds and that they were also "implicated in the elaboration of chiefly power." Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, 105.

<sup>122</sup> On William Beynon as an ethnographer see Marjorie Myers Halpin, "William Beynon, Ethnographer: Tsimshian, 1888-1958," in *American Indian Intellectuals of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Margot Liberty (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1978), 157-176; Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 175.

<sup>123</sup> See, for example, Martindale, "Methodological Issues"; Martindale and Marsden, "Defining the Middle Period."

concoctions.<sup>124</sup> The challenge, then, is in evaluating and interpreting the ethnographic record.

To address these challenges I have undertaken a critical reading of these texts. I have sought to understand the context in which these narratives were recorded as well as something of their editorial and translation issues.<sup>125</sup> Given the nature of this thesis project, its large volume of source material and my own constraints of time and limited travel, this has, admittedly, been a somewhat superficial undertaking. A thorough examination of both the published and unpublished ethnographic record is needed and could, without question, offer up a greater and more nuanced understanding. That said, I hope that my efforts to reconstruct the context in which these ethnographies were collected, including consideration of what may have been the ethnographers' interpretive frameworks, helped me to better read their meanings and identify something of their significance within the Ts'msyen worlds.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Anthropologist Christopher Roth makes a strong case for the validity of the Ts'msyen *adaawx* collected by William Beynon. He contends that scholars cannot assume that these *adaawx* are fabrications by Ts'msyen informants given the hundreds of pages of narratives collected and the number of communities and individual informants involved in transmitting them. Although there are challenges to the documents, his response to scholars who would dismiss these collections is: "To suggest that there is structural pressure or an organizing social genius regulating such matters is to imagine that Tsimshians forget their history...." Plainly this is not the case. It is the very complexity of the *adaawx* Roth counters, and, in particular, that they do "not smooth over the rough edges of [Ts'msyen] history" that confirms their authenticity. Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 194-195.

<sup>125</sup> Franz Boas' *Tsimshian Mythology: Based on Texts Recorded by Henry W. Tate* has received criticism for undo editorial influence and as well as for errors in translation. In *Transmission Difficulties: Franz Boas and Tsimshian Mythology*, scholar Ralph Maud argues that because of these inaccuracies the narratives Boas recounts in this volume are inauthentic and should not be used for historical purposes. Franz Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology: Based on Texts Recorded by Henry W. Tate*, Thirty-First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1909-1910 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1916; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint 1970); Ralph Maud, *Transmission Difficulties: Franz Boas and Tsimshian Mythology* (Burnaby, British Columbia: Talonbooks, 2000).

<sup>126</sup> In "Claiming Legitimacy," anthropologist Julie Cruikshank suggests that a scholar's interpretive framework "predisposes us to interpret unfamiliar narratives in terms of familiar theoretical frameworks." For Indigenous women in the Yukon the consequence has been a failure by scholars to take seriously prophecy narratives as genuine representations of the world. Cruikshank, "Claiming Legitimacy," 151. It is difficult to get beyond my own interpretive framework (white, working class, graduate student living in what is now known as Prince Rupert, in Ts'msyen territory), or that of the ethnographer who initially

Additionally, I have also worked to familiarize myself with the academic debate that concerns these sources. The criticisms and concerns of other scholars in this field of research have proven extremely useful to my understanding of this material and guided my reading of these documents. In consulting what has already been written I have found useful models for how ethnographic records from the early twentieth century might be carefully drawn on. Some of the concerns with these texts can be overcome, as the work of scholars like Marsden, Martindale and Christopher Roth demonstrate, by comparing these narratives to other data to find points of commonality or by limiting the scope of inquiry to themes rather than, say, more particular questions of chronology or evidence of “what really happened.”<sup>127</sup> Moreover, although much in these narratives remains beyond our understanding, some aspects of meaning are self-evident. I have tried to follow these principles in this thesis, weighing sources against each other, searching for the self-evident, and limiting my inferences to the Ts’msyen narrative traditions.

While there are substantial difficulties with the Ts’msyen ethnographic record, particularly those narratives amassed by anthropologist Franz Boas, the narratives continue to have value for historians. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, and as I noted above, some of the concerns with these documents can be overcome through the use of theory and methodology. Secondly, many of the narratives were carefully collected and remain reliable sources on Ts’msyen culture and the Ts’msyen past.<sup>128</sup>

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collected them, to understand the Ts’msyen meanings of these narratives. My thesis should not be read as a claim to having authoritatively discerned Ts’msyen perspectives. Moreover, my own representation of these Ts’msyen narratives is only one of possibly many stories that explain how the Ts’msyen past connects with the newcomer past. Certainly these Ts’msyen narratives continue to have life today, outside of the static paper record I am drawing on, and the Ts’msyen people who hold these stories or hear them recounted have their own personal, cultural or collective narratives to explain them.

<sup>127</sup> Julie Cruikshank, “Claiming Legitimacy: Prophecy Narratives From Northern Aboriginal Women,” *American Indian Quarterly* Vol.18 No. 2 (Spring 1994), 161; Martindale, “Methodological Issues.”

<sup>128</sup> Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 23.

Boas' *Tsimshian Mythology* provides examples of problems that can be addressed through theory and methodology. The narratives and other data published in this work were collected for Boas over a period of twelve years by Ts'msyen Henry Wellington Tate.<sup>129</sup> Tate's methodology was certainly unscientific: he rarely used informants, he recorded oral narratives from memory rather than through dictation, and wrote them not as they were originally conveyed and as Boas would have liked, in Sm'algyax, but in English. Boas' role as editor further complicates the value of these narratives, drawing into question their authenticity. For example, Tate's continued refusal to record the stories as Boas wished, "in just the same way as they are told by [Ts'msyen] people," in Sm'algyax, led Boas to revise Tate's narratives.<sup>130</sup> Although Tate provided Boas with a Sm'algyax translation of the narratives he initially recorded in English, this translation did not satisfy Boas. Perhaps to affect the authenticity of fieldwork, Boas hired another Ts'msyen man, Archie Dundas of New Metlakatla, Alaska, to read Tate's Sm'algyax translation aloud to him so that Boas might create his own phonetic analysis. In later years he relied upon Tate's English accounts but revised them for publication.<sup>131</sup> Despite these challenges the Tate/Boas collection does have value.

While in some ways a motley collection, and not at all an accurate source on Ts'msyen social organization, crests, and names, *Tsimshian Mythology* remains a useful and insightful source for studying themes within the Ts'msyen transcendent myths and

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<sup>129</sup> Boas did not do field work among the Ts'msyen. He seems to have been put in touch with Tate through Arthur Wellington Clah, Tate's father. Boas directed Tate's work not only by providing the impetus to collect Ts'msyen narratives but also by sometimes requesting a specific story or providing a question to be answered. Tate sent two thousand pages of material to Boas between 1903 and 1913. Ralph Maud, *Transmission Difficulties*, 9-10; Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*; C.M Barbeau, "Review of Franz Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology. Washington, 1916*," in *American Anthropology, 1888-1920: Papers from the American Anthropologist*, ed. Frederica de Laguna (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Company, 1960), 723-740.

<sup>130</sup> Maud, *Transmission Difficulties*, 17.

<sup>131</sup> Maud, *Transmission Difficulties*, 21, 29.

traditions. Tate provided Boas with a sizeable amassment of Ts'msyen *maalsk*, which are non-lineage-owned stories considered to be not necessarily literally true.<sup>132</sup> Many of these stories are concerned with the origins of the universe, the origins of things (including power), and morality. These narratives provide insight into Ts'msyen worldviews by offering an explanation of the natural world, supernatural powers, customs, or ideals. Boas undertook a thorough comparative study of these *maalsk* narratives and gained valuable understanding of their plots and themes.<sup>133</sup> It is this more successful aspect of Boas' Ts'msyen work which I draw on in this chapter. Where Boas believed he had achieved a comprehensive collection of Ts'msyen narratives illustrating their customs and beliefs I recognize that the Tate/Boas collection is incomplete and therefore an inadequate source on which to base my understanding of the Ts'msyen worlds.

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<sup>132</sup> Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 170. Contemporary scholars speculate that Tate provided these stories rather than lineage-owned *adaawx* to Boas because of his own position within Ts'msyen society. Although Tate belonged to the more elite class, and therefore would have been exposed to *adaawx* through performances at feasts and other gatherings, he was not of high enough standing to possess the right to recount *adaawx*. Moreover, as a nonroyal *lik'agvet* (noble class) Tate was unlikely to be "capable of securing the permission of knowledgeable chiefs, matriarchs, and elders to record them [*adaawx*] for publication." Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 173.

<sup>133</sup> In his criticism of *Tsimshian Mythology*, Barbeau suggested that the *maalsk* narratives were of marginal importance to understanding Ts'msyen customs and beliefs because they were "the common patrimony of tribes scattered all over vast and not necessarily homogeneous culture areas" and are only "to a slight extent adapted or transformed to suit the milieu." While many of the Ts'msyen *maalsk* do have commonality with other myth narratives from the northern Northwest Coast (particularly among the Haida and Tlingit) the local variations are substantial and can, I would suggest, be explained by differences in culture. For example, the Tlingit have a body of narratives which anthropologist Julie Cruikshank characterizes as Prophecy narratives. Like many of the Ts'msyen *maalsk*, these narratives portray the meeting of a protagonist and superhuman being who then takes the protagonist on a journey to a supernatural domain. In the Prophecy narratives of the Tlingit, once in the supernatural world the protagonist learns "new knowledge about proper behaviour" and brings that knowledge home where it benefits the entire community. In contrast, a Ts'msyen individual who meets a superhuman being and journeys to their supernatural domain invariably acquires new knowledge or objects, both of which are viewed as powers and, when returned to their home community, work to benefit the individual and sometimes his or her lineage. The knowledge is rarely about proper behaviour in the sense of polite or respectful actions but rather refers to behaviour that is likely to result in wealth and therefore power for the Ts'msyen individual. Like the Prophecy narratives of the Tlingit, the Ts'msyen *maalsk* can be seen, I suggest, as "successful engagement with changing ideas" and circumstances. Barbeau, as quoted in Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 176; Cruikshank, "Claiming Legitimacy," 153, 163.

Accordingly I also utilize a wide range of source material in this thesis to gain the most comprehensive understanding of the Ts'msyen past that I can.

The collaboration of anthropologist Marius Barbeau and Ts'msyen lay ethnographer William Beynon stands in stark contrast to the work of Tate and Boas. Working over a period of decades, Barbeau and Beynon focused on acquiring narratives and other data that had sociopolitical significance in the Ts'msyen worlds. They were particularly interested in *adaawx*, crests, and lineage-owned names – precisely the traditions that were most important to their informants and remain so to Ts'msyen people today.<sup>134</sup> In addition to concentrating their attention on the more significant lineage-owned narratives Barbeau and Beynon also outdid Boas and Tate in their approach to collecting Ts'msyen narratives. To begin with, Barbeau rejected the Boasian methodology of using a single collaborator-informant and instead conducted his own field research in Laxłgu'alaams in 1915. During this field season Beynon worked as Barbeau's interpreter, consultant and as liaison with the Ts'msyen communities at Laxłgu'alaams. Because of his position as a high-ranking Ts'msyen chief, Beynon was able to broker interviews for Barbeau with almost all of the most knowledgeable elders and chiefs of the nine tribes in Laxłgu'alaams.<sup>135</sup> The participation of such individuals both provided Barbeau's work

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<sup>134</sup> Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 169.

<sup>135</sup> William Beynon was the son of a woman of the Ts'msyen Wolf clan and a Welsh steamer captain. Raised in Victoria, Beynon nonetheless learned to speak fluent Sm'algayax from his mother. In 1913 Beynon returned to Laxłgu'alaams for the funeral of his uncle, Chief Gwisk'aayn, and for reasons of demographic crisis subsequently inherited his name. Anthropologist Christopher Roth suggests a partial motivation for Beynon's work with Barbeau. He writes, "The fact that Beynon owed his own stature among the Ts'msyen to the use of the *adaawx* as a charter for social reproduction no doubt reminded him of the value of guiding Barbeau's ambitious salvage project to preserve that type of knowledge and to incorporate a sense of its social context. The survival of lineage estates in future generations might depend on it." Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 169, 174. Although exceptional circumstances led to Beynon's rise to chief of the Gitlaan tribe it was not, perhaps, as unusual as some scholars have supposed. Firstly, children of mixed Ts'msyen-newcomer heritage were common in Laxłgu'alaams and having such heritage did not preclude an individual from holding a position of power and prestige among the Ts'msyen. Secondly, as Ts'msyen people regularly traveled to Victoria it is more than likely that Beynon's mother remained in close contact

with an authoritativeness that Boas' lacked and offered his informants the opportunity to shape, to a degree, his research. Moreover, his focus on *adaawx* rather than *maalsk* meant that the narratives he heard were true tellings, that is, they tell the real history of the Ts'msyen.<sup>136</sup> With these research methods and the skilled assistance of Beynon, Barbeau was able to arrive at a greater understanding of Ts'msyen culture than had Boas.

Beynon and Barbeau continued to work together after Barbeau's initial fieldwork in Laxłgu'alaams. Under Barbeau's direction, Beynon conducted fieldwork among the Ts'msyen and then shared his field notes with Barbeau.<sup>137</sup> Where Tate's work for Boas can be considered to lack authoritativeness, Beynon's research for Barbeau was quite the reverse, being carefully collected and thorough. Beynon sought out the most knowledgeable individuals on a subject as informants, interviewed multiple sources on a narrative when possible, questioned his informants about irregularities in their accounts, and had someone he believed to be more able corroborate his translations.<sup>138</sup> The thousands of pages of field notes from this collaboration are considered by many Ts'msyen today as having authenticity and continue to be consulted as a legitimate source on Ts'msyen history and traditions. Not without weaknesses and limitations, the narratives and other data collected by Barbeau and Beynon are an important and insightful source on Ts'msyen history and culture. For this reason I draw heavily on their published ethnographic material in this chapter.

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with her Ts'msyen kin and thus that Beynon was exposed to Ts'msyen traditions not only through his mother. I would suggest that Beynon was not nearly such an outsider among the Ts'msyen as has been supposed.

<sup>136</sup> Roth defines *adaawx* as "a true history, an unquestionably valid report of an ancient or more recent event, the right to tell which belongs to the matrilineal descent group or groups whose history it is." Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 166.

<sup>137</sup> Barbeau directed Beynon as to the subject, content, and format of these notes. Barbara J. Winter, "William Beynon and the Anthropologists," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, IV 2 (1984) 279-292.

<sup>138</sup> Winter, "William Beynon."

### Ts'msyen Customs and the Creation of Hybrid Practices

In some ways, the nine tribes of Ts'msyen people who relocated to live at what was a Ts'msyen camping site and had become the location of the HBC's Fort Simpson had little reason to consciously modify their customs as a result of contact with newcomers. The Ts'msyen did not, during this period, experience the kinds of conditions scholars generally associate with the development of hybridity. As global communication and culture scholar Marwan Kraidy argues, "most hybridities tend to be structured by dominance," and therefore are more likely to develop under conditions of colonialism and imperialism than in circumstances like those at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams where the Ts'msyen held a position of both power and autonomy.<sup>139</sup> Historical geographer Cole Harris has argued that the HBC was a protocolonial presence on the Northwest Coast, but at this locale the HBC newcomers had little ability to control Ts'msyen people or to impose their customs upon them.<sup>140</sup> The Ts'msyen were well-armed and greatly outnumbered the newcomers of Fort Simpson.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, HBC weaponry proved

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<sup>139</sup> Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 60, 156. In Chapter Two I provide more detail on power dynamics at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams.

<sup>140</sup> Cole Harris, "Towards a Geography of White Power In the Cordilleran Fur Trade," *The Canadian Geographer*, 39, No.2 (Summer 1995): 132.

<sup>141</sup> During the nearly thirty year period between 1834 and 1862 there were rarely more than twenty-seven newcomers residing at Fort Simpson, while the Ts'msyen at the same location numbered around 2,000. The fort generally maintained a compliment of twenty workers and two or three officers. Although large numbers of the Ts'msyen did not establish residences at Fort Simpson until the late 1830s thousands of Ts'msyen lived within a thirty kilometer distance of the fort. By 1840 most of nine of the fourteen Ts'msyen tribes had established residences at Fort Simpson. In February of 1842 a fort officer conducted a census of the Ts'msyen population outside the fort, including the number of guns and pistols in the villages. He recorded "the whole amount to 2500 souls exclusive of several Canoes that left for Nass...their number of Guns 222 Pistols 145." In 1858 the Anglican missionary William Duncan enumerated the population, counting 2156 Ts'msyen at the fort with another 175 people away procuring fuel or living in the fort itself. In addition to the thousands of Ts'msyen living at or in the vicinity of the fort, thousands of Northern Coast Indigenous peoples visited the fort throughout the year, greatly swelling the numbers of armed Indigenous people at Fort Simpson. Ts'msyen arms during this period were most commonly knives, clubs and guns but even European cannons were not extraordinary possessions for Ts'msyen chiefs. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 22 February 1842, BCA, A/B/20/Si2.1; William Duncan, Journal, BCA, William Duncan Papers, Microfilm, 14 January 1858; E. Palmer Patterson, "'The Indians Stationary Here':

somewhat inconsistent in its performance and, more importantly, less than effective against the Ts'msyen people who lived outside the fort and the other Indigenous people who visited it.<sup>142</sup> Nevertheless, even without the characteristic domination by an outsider group that is associated with the development of cultural hybridity, Ts'msyen people created hybrid practices at this site. What, then, accounts for their creation?

While it is not possible to fully answer this question, I suggest that the Ts'msyen custom of innovating from outsiders along with their regulation of cultural change through the feasting complex were the most significant driving forces behind Ts'msyen people's production of hybrid forms. As practiced innovators, the Ts'msyen were primed to acquire and adapt from HBC newcomers. Well before HBC newcomers arrived in their territory Ts'msyen people had established a custom of incorporating elements of an outsider other's material culture, technology, knowledge, or power inventory into their own worlds. The ability to integrate outside influences was central to Ts'msyen identity and they readily sought to identify new technologies or ceremonies which could be put to service in their own meaning system.<sup>143</sup> It was in this way, for example, that the famed secret societies, or *wut'aahalaayt* orders, had made their way into the Ts'msyen worlds.<sup>144</sup> These ceremonies were acquired from Heiltsuk outsiders and, like all other

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Continuity and Change in the Origins of the Fort Simpson Tsimshian" *Anthropologica* XXXVI (1994): 181-203.

<sup>142</sup> John Work, *The Journal of John Work: January to October, 1835*, ed. Henry Drummond Dee (Victoria, B.C.: Charles F. Banfield, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945), 47, 74.

<sup>143</sup> Cooper, 'To Be Free,' 413.

<sup>144</sup> Viola Garfield, *Tsimshian Clan and Society* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1939), 293; Jay Miller, *Tsimshian Culture: A Light Through the Ages* (Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 3; Carol Cooper, "'To Be Free On Our Lands': Coast Tsimshian and Nisga'a Societies in Historical Perspective, 1830-1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of Waterloo, 1993), 71.

Ts'msyen innovations, in their new and somewhat intermixed form were no longer considered as foreign, but instead were regarded as Ts'msyen.<sup>145</sup>

It was the feasting complex that allowed for innovations acquired from outsiders to be transformed into Ts'msyen property. This elaborate and multifaceted system provided a pathway by which innovations could be legitimately introduced into the Ts'msyen worlds and at the same time comprised the regulations that worked to ensure that cultural innovation was not overly disruptive to Ts'msyen communities.<sup>146</sup> While facilitating cultural innovation from outsider sources, this system also, importantly, established incentives for such change. As will become clear, cultural innovation was integral to maintaining or achieving high rank within the Ts'msyen worlds.<sup>147</sup> It was the chiefly class, or *sm'gigyēt*, who held the privileged responsibility of introducing the new goods, customs and ideas which were to be received as new powers and they benefited or suffered accordingly. A *sm'oogyit* who failed to innovate or whose innovation failed to receive public sanction during a feast lost standing within the Ts'msyen worlds. And, in a like manner, a *sm'oogyit* who successfully introduced a new power through the feasting system gained esteem and social standing. Finally, the feasting complex encouraged particular relationships between outsiders and Ts'msyen people by requiring that

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<sup>145</sup> Although not considered hybrid at the time, at root these new practices bore characteristics of hybridity: A fusion of outsider and Ts'msyen customs, they gained new meanings and forms within the Ts'msyen worlds.

<sup>146</sup> The feasting complex is at once sophisticated, complex and adaptable. While I consider the regulation of cultural innovation to be one of the important functions it has served within Ts'msyen communities I do not mean to suggest that this was or is its only or even primary purpose. For a more thorough analysis of this system see Christopher Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*; Margaret Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts for Traditional and Current Coast Ts'msyen Feasts* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1985); Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990).

<sup>147</sup> The Ts'msyen, like other Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples, had a hierarchically organized society. Among the Ts'msyen there were four gradations of social rank: a royal or chiefly class (*Sm'oogyit*, plural: *Sm'gigyēt*), a noble class (*Lik'agyet* and *Galm'algyax*), a commoner class (*'Wah'a'ayin*), and an enslaved class (*Xaa*).

innovations be legitimately acquired in order to receive formal sanction within the Ts'msyen worlds.

The practice of cultural innovation seems to have been central, not incidental, to Ts'msyen culture.<sup>148</sup> As I have indicated, it was considered by many Ts'msyen people as important to their self-identity, and in the nineteenth century Ts'msyen people reportedly identified themselves as innovators.<sup>149</sup> According to historian Carol Cooper, they “actively cultivated a progressive image, priding themselves on their ability to master new technology and to integrate new rituals into their ceremonial system.”<sup>150</sup> Ts'msyen *maalsk* and *adaawx*, many of which are published in ethnographic collections, offer insight into how important innovation has long been to Ts'msyen culture. These narratives tell the history of Ts'msyen people from a Ts'msyen perspective.<sup>151</sup> Significantly, the acquisition of new powers and technology is a recurring theme in the both the *maalsk*, Ts'msyen narratives of events in more recent times or stories that are epic or mythical in nature, and the *adaawx*, historical reports of real events in the long ago past the telling of which “belongs to the matrilineal descent group or groups whose history it is.”<sup>152</sup> These stories describe how valuable innovations, such as the use of

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<sup>148</sup> Indeed, this understanding of Ts'msyen culture is central to historian Susan Neylan's analysis of syncretic religious practices among the Ts'msyen. Her book, *The Heavens are Changing*, rests upon the understanding that Ts'msyen people were predisposed to religious innovation. Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); Peggy Brock, review of *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*, by Susan Neylan, *The Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 85 No. 1 (March 2004), 131-134.

<sup>149</sup> Carol Cooper, “To Be Free,” 322.

<sup>150</sup> Cooper, “To Be Free,” 413.

<sup>151</sup> Ken Campbell, *Persistence and Change: A History of the Ts'msyen Nation* (Prince Rupert, British Columbia: Published by the Tsimshian Nation and School District 52, 2005), 8.

<sup>152</sup> Christopher Roth provides a detailed description of *maalsk* and *adaawx* narratives in *Becoming Tsimshian*. He explains that *maalsk* is in fact an overarching category “translatable as anything that is related or told, so that, in this sense, an *adaawx* is a kind of *maalsk*.” But, *maalsk* can be further separated into *adaawx* on the one hand and what Roth describes as *maalsk*<sub>2</sub> on the other, “true tellings that are not (or not yet) *adaawx*” (*smhawm*) and “decidedly untrue tellings such as the Txaamsm stories” (*sgatgamaals*).

devil's club or the technology of net-making, came into the Ts'msyen worlds and they emphasize the long history of Ts'msyen innovation.<sup>153</sup> The *maalsk* and *adaawx* are central to both Ts'msyen history and Ts'msyen identity: they not only recount the past, they shape the present by informing the Ts'msyen meaning systems and worldviews. And meaningfully, they characterize the Ts'msyen as progressive and dynamic.

The published Ts'msyen ethnographic record, as I have indicated, is replete with examples of Ts'msyen innovation.<sup>154</sup> Outsiders, both human and supernatural, feature prominently in these stories and are commonly identified as the source of new powers, goods, or ideas. Although Ts'msyen people could obtain these kinds of innovations in a variety of ways, the narratives typically portray Ts'msyen women as the conduits through which they were acquired.<sup>155</sup> Boas, who carried out a comparative study of *maalsk* narratives, considered those concerning Ts'msyen women and contact with an outsider supernatural being (animal or divine) as "one of the most characteristic types of

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While Roth suggests that the *sgatgamaals* are widely considered untrue and are to be understood more as myths I am inclined to read them as recounting times when the world looked very different than it does today. In any case, I see these narratives as informing Ts'msyen people's views of the world. Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 166.

<sup>153</sup> Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 8; MacDonald and Cove, *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes*, "The Many Ways of Acquiring Luck" and "The Origin of Devil's Club," 81, 82.

<sup>154</sup> Although I draw on the published sources to support my argument I recognize that a more in-depth study of the unpublished ethnographic record is desirable and would, no doubt, produce a more nuanced understanding of Ts'msyen culture and history. Such research might add to my conclusions or, perhaps, result in their modification.

<sup>155</sup> Here I am referring to the acquisition of innovations or new powers from outsiders by non-shamanic individuals. People considered to be "shamans" within the Ts'msyen worlds are generally characterized as having acquired their new powers through direct contact with supernatural beings. Anthropologist Margaret Seguin [Anderson] has written about the Ts'msyen association of fathers with supernaturals, animals, and foreigners. She notes that "Powers, good relations with animal Real People, and success were gifts from the supernaturals – first received from a supernatural father, then passed on matrilineally. The father/benefactor is inevitably located by the end of the story in a different world/village than the child/receiver, who has a token of the gift embodied in a name, song, dance, crest object, and so forth. (There are almost no Tsimshian tales of human males marrying supernatural women, and none that I know of resulted in children.)" Margaret Seguin [Anderson], "Lest There Be No Salmon," in *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present*, ed. Margaret Seguin [Anderson] (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 124.

Tsimshian stories.”<sup>156</sup> Such accounts generally involve a supernatural being who, having temporarily assumed human form, marries or has sexual relations with a Ts’msyen woman and takes her to live in his world. After a period of time the woman is returned to her Ts’msyen village and the supernatural being gifts to her or their children new powers from his personal power inventory.<sup>157</sup>

A second class of narratives concern encounters between a Ts’msyen woman (or, occasionally, a man or child) and an Indigenous human outsider. Generally the outcome of an arranged marriage, an intentional or accidental journey, or a kidnapping, the Ts’msyen character makes contact with an Indigenous outsider community and through that connection acquires new information, material goods, supernatural powers or other gifts which she then brings back to her Ts’msyen kin and home community. In some cases these gifts, generally considered as new powers, were embodied in crests and displayed in objects like poles, house front designs, and regalia.<sup>158</sup> Depending on their origin and the kind of power they represented, these power gifts could be passed on through the original Ts’msyen owner’s lineage, from one generation to the next.<sup>159</sup>

While the act of innovating was important to the identity of Ts’msyen people at large, it was especially important to the identity or role of a Ts’msyen *sm’ooygit*. The Ts’msyen meaning system stressed contact and exchange between chiefs, on the one

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<sup>156</sup> Franz Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology: Based on Texts Recorded by Henry W. Tate*, Thirty-First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1909-1910 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1916; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint 1970), 747.

<sup>157</sup> These powers are then reinterpreted in her Ts’msyen world and become owned privileges or powers of her lineage. Franz Boas classified the following stories in this category (although he did not describe them as I have here): “The Spider and the Widow’s Daughter,” “Prince Snail,” “The Otter who Married the Princess,” “The Widow and Her Daughter,” “The Mink who Married a Princess,” “The Bear who Married a Woman,” “The Princess and the Mouse,” “The Water-Being who Married the Princess,” and “The Story of Part Summer.” Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology*, 747-749.

<sup>158</sup> George F. MacDonald and John J. Cove, eds., *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes: Tsimshian Narratives I*, collected by Marius Barbeau and William Beynon (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987), x.

<sup>159</sup> MacDonald and Cove, *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes*, 268.

hand, and both insider and outsider powers, on the other.<sup>160</sup> It was considered a duty within the Ts'msyen worlds to, as Margaret Seguin [Anderson] describes it, “partake of the gifts received from other worlds, and to return gifts to those worlds,” and Ts'msyen *sm'oogyit* had, as a fundamental responsibility, the role of facilitating the introduction of such gifts and of dialoguing between their own and the others' worlds.<sup>161</sup> As a consequence, what it meant to be a chief was, in part, to innovate from and interact with outsiders.<sup>162</sup> If a chief failed to fulfill these he or she failed, essentially, to function as a chief should and could be in danger of losing his or her position of eminence if not his or her chiefly title.<sup>163</sup>

As I have suggested, in the Ts'msyen worlds there was a strong association between cultural innovation from outsider sources and the achievement of power and wealth. To a degree then, the Ts'msyen “quest for innovations” was motivated by the material benefits such innovation could bring a recipient or innovator.<sup>164</sup> Turning again to the published ethnographic records, many of the narratives concerned with innovation centre around the acquisition of something of value from an outsider and the subsequent benefit brought to a Ts'msyen individual, her kin-group, or home community. The important technology of net-making, for example, was acquired by a Ts'msyen woman who married the non-human supernatural being, Prince of the Spiders. As Harriet Hudson of Kitselas told Ts'msyen scholar William Beynon in 1948, the community who first acquired this new outsider technology was quick to recognize its value. Hudson related how the *sm'oogyit* of this village, an uncle of the bride, had said of the innovation, “You will be able to use

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<sup>160</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 62.

<sup>161</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 61.

<sup>162</sup> Cooper, “To Be Free,” 230, 417.

<sup>163</sup> Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 10.

<sup>164</sup> Cooper, “To Be Free,” 17.

this net and make it...and we will become the wealthiest of all people. People from afar will come to trade with us and no more shall we suffer hunger or hardships.”<sup>165</sup> Because material success and supernatural power were fundamentally intertwined in the Ts’msyen worlds, innovations of both a material and a supernatural nature brought benefits of wealth and prestige to their owner. Like the other innovations made by Ts’msyen people, the technology of net-making, once acquired, became Ts’msyen. Now part of the receiver’s identity, the stories of such acquisitions emphasize the central importance cultural innovation held for Ts’msyen people.

Indeed, cultural innovation from outsider sources gained such importance within the Ts’msyen meaning system that it became central to maintaining and enhancing social status. Ts’msyen chiefs and nobles were charged with, among other things, maintaining their own and their group’s power and authority. Because innovations from outsider sources generally resulted in wealth and prestige for the individual who acquired them and his or her kin group they were significant to the operation of power and authority within the Ts’msyen worlds. Ts’msyen chiefs and nobles, who, because of their high rank, had a special role within the system that regulated innovation, were able to use innovation as a means to preserve or increase their own power and that of their lineage.<sup>166</sup> Anthropologist Margaret Blackman notes that innovation was a special sign of high rank among the northern Northwest Coast peoples and new powers introduced by chiefs were highly esteemed and controlled.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> From the story “The Origin of Nettle Fibre,” Mrs. Harriet Hudson informant. MacDonal and Cove, *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes*, 88.

<sup>166</sup> Cooper, “To Be Free,” 27.

<sup>167</sup> Margaret Blackman, “Creativity in Acculturation: Art, Architecture and Ceremony from the Northwest Coast,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol.23, No.4 (Autumn 1976), 390.

The power and prestige associated with innovations arose not only from the utility value and economic wealth they might realize.<sup>168</sup> As I indicate above, cultural innovation from outsider sources also brought spiritual or supernatural powers to the Ts'msyen. The ability to fly, to transform one's bodily form, or to act as a prophet are some of the supernatural acquisitions recorded by Ts'msyen people from the time preceding contact with European newcomers.<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, within the Ts'msyen worlds it was possible to acquire or substantiate personal power and authority through the exclusive ownership of something considered to be a new power or privilege – whether a hereditary name or a new innovation from an outsider source or something else entirely. It was considered desirable to possess distinctive qualities which identified a person as uncommon or extraordinary. To own something possessed by none or few others marked a Ts'msyen person as distinct and could gain him or her social standing. It distinguished an individual (or a kin-group) from others who did not own the prerogative and thereby affirmed the possessor's power and prestige. Moreover, because a new power or privilege had to be introduced through the feasting complex, the exclusive ownership of something considered to be a power or privilege was generally a prerogative of high ranking Ts'msyen people. To possess such a prerogative made the owner not only distinct from other Ts'msyen people but also more 'real.'<sup>170</sup> Operating in a cyclical manner, the more

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<sup>168</sup> It is important to note that though wealth was valued by Ts'msyen people in the nineteenth century it was not the accumulation of wealth for wealth's sake that they esteemed. Rather, Ts'msyen people accumulated wealth with the intention to give their wealth away during a feast (potlatch). By giving away their wealth in such a ceremony they confirmed or enhanced their power and prestige within the Ts'msyen worlds. Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990), 11.

<sup>169</sup> McDonald and Cove, *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes*, 4, 267; William Beynon, *Tsimshian Stories* (Metlakatla, Alaska: Metlakatla Indian Community, 1980), 12.

<sup>170</sup> As "Real People" Ts'msyen chiefs were responsible for structuring the social world of the Ts'msyen, and their actions "had consequences for relations with the other real forces of the world." The least real

powerful a Ts'msyen person was the more owned powers he or she could come to possess and, the more powers he or she possessed, the more powerful he or she became.

As with the possession of an innovation (new power), the public performance of an innovation, particularly if it were a dramatic performance delivered during a Ts'msyen feast, could validate and even enhance an individual's power within the Ts'msyen worlds.<sup>171</sup> Considerable fame and social standing were gained by the revelation of a new and unexpected innovation during a ceremony.<sup>172</sup> Chiefs publicly competed with each other through the feasting system and, according to twentieth century informant Nisnawhl, a chief who constantly innovated and was able to demonstrate the "best powers and most modern theatrical devices" gained the esteem of all.<sup>173</sup> In this way, Ts'msyen chiefs were continually battling with each other for preeminence and both the possession of a new power and the public performance of that power aided their quest. To perform "a wonderful feat which surpassed anything...ever done" would almost certainly guarantee a chief (and his party) the foremost position.<sup>174</sup> Thus it was that one of the

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people among the Ts'msyen were the people who had been enslaved. Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 76.

<sup>171</sup> There are several different types of Ts'msyen feasts, including the succession feasts, washing off feast (*Gilksyooksk*), and naming feast (*Yaawk*). During a *yaawk* a *sm'oogyit* dramatizes his or her crests, displays his wealth, taunts his rivals, and confers names on his kin. Performances of the secret societies are known as *halaayt* and are the events at which a *sm'oogyit* performs his or her supernatural names and powers. Historian Susan Neylan defines *halaayt* as "spiritually endowed objects, people, or practices." A *halaayt* is "someone or something that is in contact or endowed by a *naxnox*." And a *naxnox* is "any being, event, or ability which appears to exhibit or express some form of 'power.'" Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 30, 31; Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 43; Ronald W. Hawker, "In the Way of the White Man's Totem Pole: Tsimshian Gravestones 1879-1930" (MA thesis., University of Victoria, 1988), 9-10.

<sup>172</sup> Chief Ligeex's use of an umbrella as a *naxnox* and Chief Ts'ibasaa's creation of "revolving stairs" are two examples of this kind of dramatic performance of a new power used to both outdo a rival and enhance their own respective positions of power and authority within the Ts'msyen worlds. See "The Last Raid of Legaick on the Skeena Gitksan," in Beynon, *Tsimshian Stories*, 28; "A Challenge Feast of Tsibasa," in George F. MacDonald and John J. Cove, eds., *Tsimshian Narratives II: Trade and Warfare*, collected by Marius Barbeau and William Beynon (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987), 114.

<sup>173</sup> Informant Henry Watt (Nisnawhl), relating the *adaawx* "A Challenge Feast of Tsibasa," in MacDonald and Cove, eds., *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 112.

<sup>174</sup> Informant Jim Tate (Saloben), relating the *adaawx* "The Halait of Legaick," collected by William Beynon, *Tsimshian Stories*, 61.

titleholders of the Ligeex name, having witnessed a magnificent *halaayt* performance by Gitxaala people, is reported to have returned to his tribe much distressed over having been outdone by these, his long-time rivals. In his efforts to regain his own position of preeminence in the *halaayt* Ligeex is reported to have instructed his *halaayt* attendants that “we must try and better the Gitkatlas. I want you to plan something that we will do to overcome them.”<sup>175</sup> The *éclat* gained by introducing innovations likely became increasingly important during the contact period when Ts’msyen people’s access to non-traditional sources of wealth initiated an upsurge in the size and frequency of feasts and prompted a rise in the occurrence of rivalry feasts.<sup>176</sup>

The benefits of cultural innovation often made their way to the lineage or village but they remained associated with the chief and his successors, the prestige of introducing these cultural innovations generally remaining beyond the reach of most Ts’msyen people of commoner status (*wah’a’ayin*) or slave (*xaa*) status.<sup>177</sup> Ts’msyen contact with the Europeans newcomers, however, resulted in some limited challenges to this system, as lower-ranking Ts’msyen increasingly gained access to outsiders and their goods. New sources of wealth, including wage work for Europeans and sex-trade, provided lower-ranking Ts’msyen with means to acquire some European goods. Additionally, the value of European manufactures was somewhat mutable during the fur trade, and as something

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<sup>175</sup> Tate (Saloben), “The Halait of Legaick,” in Beynon, *Tsimshian Stories*, 61. Ligeex is reported to have bested the Gitxaala by performing his own cremation and return from the dead. See “Legaix Cremates Himself” in MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 116 and “The Halait of Legaick” in Beynon, *Tsimshian Stories*, 61.

<sup>176</sup> Carol Cooper, “Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast: An Historical Perspective, 1830-1900,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.27, No.4 (Winter 1992-93), 50; Cooper, “To Be Free,” 171.

<sup>177</sup> The published ethnographies do contain some examples of non-chiefly Ts’msyen acquiring new power from an outsider but these examples are the exception. The literature, ethnographies and historiography, categorize innovation as a chiefly responsibility and characteristic.

lowered in value it also became more accessible to the lower strata of Ts'msyen.<sup>178</sup> Some of these people were able to harness the new opportunities created during the fur trade to enhance their own power and social status within their Ts'msyen world.<sup>179</sup> However, until the late 1850s – near the end of the period of study – chiefs largely persisted as the channel through which outsider innovations of significant prestige or wealth value to the Ts'msyen were introduced into Ts'msyen communities.

As a final point, both the mythical-style narratives and those recounting reliable historical data, depict a Ts'msyen past filled with adaptation to new circumstances as well as the attainment of new and beneficial property from outsiders. Ts'msyen people are repeatedly identified as having the facility for change while outsiders are revealed as a source for new goods and powers. These characterizations appear even within Ts'msyen narratives concerning first contact with Europeans. According to Cooper, these accounts not only reveal the “unsettling effects of first contact” they also demonstrate Ts'msyen people’s ability to master new technology and they confirm the power of

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<sup>178</sup> Such was the case with European guns. When first introduced they were traded in relatively small numbers and so were hard to come by. This, along with their association with Europeans, their status as non-local manufactures, and their physical attributes as weapons and producers of spectacle, meant that they were initially given very high value by the Ts'msyen. Indeed they were considered by the Ts'msyen to be “supernatural powers which spit fire and death” and were used as a chiefly prerogative. As these powers demonstrated themselves to be somewhat flawed, and as greater numbers of them found their ways to Ts'msyen hands, their value changed from that of a supernatural power to an item of utility. In this way they also became more widely available within Ts'msyen society. MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 192.

<sup>179</sup> Cooper notes that access to power in Ts'msyen society was contingent upon a person’s status and wealth. After the arrival of the Anglican missionary William Duncan access to the new power of Christianity was democratized somewhat and, while chiefs still continued to play very important roles in the introduction of this new power to the Ts'msyen, some lower-ranking Ts'msyen were able to use the adoption of Christianity as a way of “circumvent[ing] ‘traditional’ methods of acquiring status and power.” Additionally, the large number of deaths caused by the devastating smallpox epidemics of 1836 and 1862 “softened” the Ts'msyen social hierarchy by opening up new opportunities for social mobility through the deaths of titleholders. Cooper, “To Be Free,” 44; Robert Steven Grumet, “Changes in Coast Tsimshian Redistributive Activities in the Fort Simpson Region of British Columbia, 1788-1862,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol.22, No.4 (Autumn 1975), 305.

Indigenous goods and skills.<sup>180</sup> Although the Ts'msyen valued cultural innovation from outsider sources they wished it to be on their own terms and in ways consistent with their own culture. Outsider items like guns, kettles, and knives are represented as valuable technologies in the narratives of first contact but so too are Ts'msyen *naxnoxs*, *halait* demonstrations and other prerogatives.<sup>181</sup> Importantly, Ts'msyen innovation from outsider sources did not lead to a rejection of their own traditions. In fact, it worked to maintain cultural continuity within the Ts'msyen worlds.

Contact between the Ts'msyen and HBC newcomers was informed by Ts'msyen history and culture. Because the Ts'msyen had an identity as innovators they were, in a way, fulfilling their roles as Ts'msyen people when they innovated from outsiders. Moreover, it was Ts'msyen values that structured innovation, establishing the conditions and requirements for the transmission of new powers to Ts'msyen individuals. When a Ts'msyen person innovated he or she conformed to these regulations and as a consequence reinforced Ts'msyen values. In this respect, cultural change actually strengthened Ts'msyen society. Finally, both the feasting complex and the chiefly class were central to Ts'msyen sovereignty. When an individual participated in feasts they legitimated this complex and, accordingly, established support for the existing system of authority. A chief who attended or hosted such a feast calculated his response to an innovation based on its effect on his own or his corporate group's power base. An

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<sup>180</sup> Cooper, 'To Be Free,' 81. There are a number of different accounts of first contact between Ts'msyen people and European newcomers. While there is some variation between them they all highlight Ts'msyen people's ability to evaluate European technology and affirm the importance of Ts'msyen ceremony and spiritual traditions.

<sup>181</sup> Carol Cooper, "'To Be Free On Our Lands': Coast Tsimshian and Nisga'a Societies in Historical Perspective, 1830-1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of Waterloo, 1993), 81; Margaret Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 37; Richard Charles Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island: An Account of their Forests, Rivers, Coasts, Gold Fields, and Resources for Colonisation* (London: John Murray, 1862; reprint ed., New York: S.R. Publishers Limited, 1969), 280.

innovation that maintained chiefly power or enhanced it provided further support to the Ts'msyen system of authority and, ultimately, to Ts'msyen sovereignty.<sup>182</sup>

That the Ts'msyen had reasons to innovate from outsider sources and an established means to do so there can be no doubt. It is not possible, however, to ascertain the degree to which cultural innovation from outsider sources was undertaken by Ts'msyen people during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Nor can we learn just how firmly they adhered to a practice of introducing such change through the feasting complex. I am inclined to believe that the emphasis on cultural innovation within the published ethnographic record is reflective of real events of the past and that such change was, in fact, a widespread and valued practice. While this attention to innovation may be an indication of the collectors' bias – certainly the anthropologists who collected Ts'msyen oral narratives had particular questions they were seeking to answer – I think this too simple an explanation. Neither Boas nor Barbeau, the principal scholars who worked to gather Ts'msyen stories, were looking to collect stories of cultural change per se and even if the narratives are skewed in this way it would only account for the prominence of innovation among the collected stories not for the existence of the stories themselves. Contemporary scholars have continued to find that innovation was historically important to the Ts'msyen. And indeed many present-day Ts'msyen leaders persist in viewing it as fundamental to the Ts'msyen worlds, describing change and the borrowing of ideas from outsiders as “always a part of Ts'msyen culture.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> This is not to say that innovation from outsiders always sustained order within the Ts'msyen worlds. Indeed, Ts'msyen social order was always fluctuating as members of the chiefly class constantly sought to outdo each other and thus advance their own or their corporate group's position of power and authority. To a degree the competition between chiefs coupled with new opportunities created by the fur trade established crevices within the social order that sometimes worked to undermine Ts'msyen sovereignty.

<sup>183</sup> Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 75. This book is published by the Tsimshian Chiefs and Matriarchs.

Having considered some of the ways in which innovation featured within the Ts'msyen worlds I now turn to examine the main pathway by which innovations entered Ts'msyen society and, briefly, how innovation could be made to operate once there. As I have indicated, the regulating system devised by the Ts'msyen, and through which a new power was introduced to the Ts'msyen at large, was the feasting complex, commonly known today as the potlatch.<sup>184</sup> It was the chiefly class, or *sm'gigyit*, who held the privileged responsibility of introducing the goods, customs and ideas which were to be received by Ts'msyen people as new powers. Innovations which were to be considered owned powers and were to achieve legitimacy within the Ts'msyen meaning system had to be introduced by a *sm'oogyit* or other high ranking individuals during this kind of formal feast.<sup>185</sup> In such a ceremony the property claimed by an individual or kin-group as a new power was publicly identified and performed before an audience of paid witnesses. The Ts'msyen person or people seeking validation of a new and owned power announced their entitlement to it (showing also the path by which it was acquired) and, once gifts had been distributed to and accepted by witnesses, it was decreed to be a power both rightfully owned and legitimate. As I have indicated, this system worked to ensure that

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<sup>184</sup> Although Ts'msyen feasts functioned in this way it should be noted that the feasting complex was extremely versatile and served a multiplicity of complex functions within the Ts'msyen worlds. The feasting complex is the series of formal ceremonies at which an ancestral name, position, hereditary privilege, new power, or significant innovation is claimed or at which a social stigma was washed away or through which important mortuary customs are observed. In the nineteenth century the feasting complex was central to the Ts'msyen economy, operating not only as a system by which wealth was transferred but also as the means by which social standing and economic power were conferred. For more information on the feasting complex, as well as the efforts of agents of the colonial government and others to suppress its practice, see Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 43; Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990), 5.

<sup>185</sup> Of course, not all innovations made by Ts'msyen people had to be introduced through a feast. Generally only those which were to be considered as owned powers were revealed through this regulating system. However, because innovation was so closely linked to personal identity and power, and because the dramatic revelation of an innovation (new power) were so important to Ts'msyen people and the operation of power within the Ts'msyen worlds it would seem that a good number of innovations were introduced amongst the Ts'msyen in this way.

cultural innovation was not overly disruptive to Ts'msyen communities and, for the most part, acted as a stabilizing force by supporting the existing social structure and hierarchy.<sup>186</sup>

In the nineteenth century, this sophisticated and versatile system served many functions within the Ts'msyen worlds. I am particularly concerned with how this system affected the production of hybrid forms and encouraged relationships between Ts'msyen people and HBC newcomers. There are two features of innovation that I find especially relevant to these matters. Firstly, when an innovation was introduced into the Ts'msyen worlds it was ritually transformed from an outsider property into a Ts'msyen good. Once introduced and validated through the regulating system an innovation – regardless of its outsider derivation – was commonly considered by Ts'msyen people to have a Ts'msyen origin and form.<sup>187</sup> That is to say, within the Ts'msyen worlds, innovation from outsider sources, or even the outright adoption of foreign customs, was structured by the idea that once completed the innovations were no longer considered to be foreign but rather were Ts'msyen.<sup>188</sup> This was so both because the innovation had been placed within the Ts'msyen meaning system and because the privilege and the story of its acquisition became part of the interpretive context for the *sm'ooygit* and his or her group.<sup>189</sup> This traditional practice of seeking out outsider ways, repurposing them by giving them Ts'msyen meanings, and then considering them Ts'msyen, endures even now. In the

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<sup>186</sup> Incidentally, at the collapse of the hybrid world, as the dynamics of power began to shift in the newcomers' favour, this Ts'msyen tradition worked to maintain Ts'msyen identities in a changing world, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to fight colonialism in European terms. Roth makes the argument that the Ts'msyen feasting complex (through which Ts'msyen people formally took on their hereditary names) was designed to provide continuity in the face of stress and change. Roth, *Becoming Tsimshian*, 68.

<sup>187</sup> That is, so long as the Ts'msyen witnesses at the feast in which the power was introduced and claimed validated the claims by accepting their distribution of feast gifts.

<sup>188</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 1.

<sup>189</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 1.

nineteenth century, as Ts'msyen people and HBC newcomers came into ever-increasing contact, it served to encourage the creation of hybrid practices as Ts'msyen people gave new meanings and functions to newcomer customs and symbols.

Secondly, a Ts'msyen person wishing to introduce an innovation as a new power had to have acquired it in a manner considered legitimate. When a *sm'oogyit* introduced a new power to Ts'msyen people through the feasting complex he or she also stated the origin of the power and the proposed owner's entitlement to it.<sup>190</sup> Such a declaration was important not just because it identified the manner by which the new power came to its claimer but because it provided verification to the Ts'msyen witnesses that the new power had been acquired in a legitimate manner. Lacking a legitimate claim, a Ts'msyen person could not receive public validation for their declared new power and, consequently, could not officially assume it. While most feasts concerned privileges gained through heredity, with a Ts'msyen ancestor as the origin of the privilege, in cases regarding innovation the entitlement to the privilege or new power was acquired by way of some other channel. There were a limited number of means by which this legitimacy could be achieved: as a gift, by clever theft, through direct contact with a non-human supernatural being, or most commonly, and perhaps most accessibly, through kinship. That kinship could serve as a legitimate path to the acquisition of a new power worked, most importantly I suggest, to encourage intimate relationships between Ts'msyen women and HBC newcomers and facilitated Ts'msyen innovation from these new outsiders.

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<sup>190</sup> Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 5, 11. Although I am discussing the historic practice of the Ts'msyen feasting complex writing in the past tense, it is important to note that the custom of feasting continues to be practiced today in Ts'msyen communities.

The Ts'msyen employed a variety of kinship connections with outsiders which functioned as legitimate means by which outsider customs could be acquired. In the published *adaawx* and *maalsk*, the acquisition of new powers through kinship connections occur most often with outsider supernatural beings or with familiar Indigenous foreigners, like the Haida.<sup>191</sup> However, Ts'msyen people could establish kinship in many ways, including but not limited to, shared *Pdeex* (clan) or shared origin stories, the exchange of names, adoption or, perhaps most usually, through biological connections.<sup>192</sup> For innovation from non-Indigenous human outsiders like those of the HBC there were limited avenues for establishing kinship. I discuss each of these most common forms of Ts'msyen kinship in the next section.

Having shared *Pdeex* or origin stories could constitute kinship between a Ts'msyen person or kin-group and an outsider individual or group. When a Ts'msyen person made contact with an outsider group they sought to answer, according to scholar Susan Marsden, questions of identity like “What is your grandmother’s name? And where is your crest? How do you know of your past, where you have lived?”<sup>193</sup> Such was the case

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<sup>191</sup> The Ts'msyen association of the Haida as kin is so established that the Haida are symbolically viewed as fathers in the Ts'msyen meaning system. Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 55; John Asher Dunn, “International Matri-moieties: The North Maritime Province of the North Pacific Coast,” in *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present*, ed. Margaret Seguin [Anderson] (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984; reprint 1993), 102. While I am concerned here with the ways these connections functioned to allow for the legitimate acquisition of outsider goods and practices into the Ts'msyen world they also, and perhaps more importantly, served to establish peace between the Ts'msyen and outsider groups.

<sup>192</sup> It is not clear how frequently adoption was used to establish kinship in the pre-contact and early fur trade period. There are references in the published *adaawx* and *maalsk* to adoptions by high ranking kidnappers who, recognizing the noble rank of a captive, adopted her as kin and therefore saved her from slavery. Additionally, a woman might be recognized as the return of a deceased relative and be “adopted” (or rather, returned) to her name and position. Adoption likely increased after the smallpox epidemics of 1836 and 1862 as well as the measles epidemic of 1848 in order to fill vacant high ranking Ts'msyen names. There are four *Pdeex*: *Gisbutwāda* (Killer Whale), *Laxgyibuu* (Wolf), *Laxsgyiik* (Eagle) and *Ganhada* (Raven). Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 35.

<sup>193</sup> Marsden, quoting informant John Brown. For the Ts'msyen, identity is “defined by lineage and history, and without identity a person is not part of society.” Marsden, “Northwest Coast *Adawx* Study,” August

in ancient times when *Sm 'oogyit* Xamlaxyeltxw and *Sm 'oogyit* Luuxhon met a previously unknown people, the Gitwillaxgyap, at Nass River. Although these people were outsiders to each other, and spoke different languages, they were both of the Ganhada (Raven) *Pdeex* and therefore reportedly were able to consider each other kin with a “common ancient history.”<sup>194</sup> These kinds of shared identities provided Ts’msyen people with the means to establish peaceful relations with an outsider group, and offered a sanctioned channel through which cultural innovations from outsider sources could be publicly claimed in a feast, even without an identifiable biological kinship connection. It was in this way, for example, that the Haida chiefly name Gitxawn and the prerogative of the Cormorant headdress were introduced amongst the Ts’msyen.<sup>195</sup>

Another means by which Ts’msyen people could establish a shared relationship with an outsider, one which functioned as kinship and allowed them to peacefully engage with and acquire from the other, was the transference of high ranking names.<sup>196</sup> This practice, established long before European newcomers arrived in Ts’msyen territory, seems to have been especially employed by the Ts’msyen in their early contact with European outsiders. Both the Ts’msyen chiefs Ts’ibasaa and Xammisit exchanged names with European newcomers. During the first contact between the Gitxaala (Kitkatla) and Europeans, the Gitxaala chief Ts’ibasaa gave the highest ranking European newcomer,

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2004 Draft, [http://www.law.ualberta.ca/research/aboriginalculturalheritage/adawkwebversion\\_Oct1104.pdf](http://www.law.ualberta.ca/research/aboriginalculturalheritage/adawkwebversion_Oct1104.pdf) (28 May 2007), 5, 16.

<sup>194</sup> Luuxhon was the first to make contact with these outsiders. When he first encountered them, and learned that they were also of the Raven clan, he recognized them as his brothers. This relationship was later formalized through a feast. Marsden, “Northwest Coast *Adawx* Study,” 18.

<sup>195</sup> “The Children Who Drifted Away in a Hollow Log,” in MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives I*, 338. In this story Ts’msyen children drift out to sea in a hollow log, landing at a Haida village. Here the Haida Eagle chief recognized a Ts’msyen boy of the *Laxsgyiik* (Eagle) *Pdeex* as his kin and adopted him as his own nephew. When the boy returns to his own Ts’msyen people he takes with him his new Haida privileges which include the chiefly name Gitxawn, a Cormorant headdress, and a dirge song.

<sup>196</sup> Marsden, “Northwest Coast *Adawx* Study,” 21.

the captain, a headdress and bestowed upon him his own chiefly name and received a European officer's uniform and the name Hale from the captain.<sup>197</sup> Similarly, Chief Xammisit exchanged names with the Spanish commander Jacinto Caamaño, creating a chiefly connection between his and the European outsiders' worlds.<sup>198</sup> This transferring of names was generally accompanied by a series of feasts and exchange visits between high ranking Ts'msyen people and European newcomer officers.

These exchanges symbolized more than just the formation of kinship and contact with the European newcomers' worlds; they also established Ts'msyen connections with the outsider powers therein. In the case of Chief Ts'ibasaa, for instance, it was not merely a moniker and item of clothing that he gained from the captain. Ts'ibasaa converted these acquisitions, legitimately acquired by way of his kinship connection with the European newcomer, into new powers by hosting a *yaawk*, a naming feast, where he claimed the name Hale as an owned privilege and revealed the newly created *halaayt* in which, according to anthropologist Jay Miller, "he wore a top hat, cutaway coat, and pants."<sup>199</sup> This account is a particularly well-documented example of a Ts'msyen person's ability to generate kinship connections with outsiders and to innovate from an outsider (even a European outsider) source. It provides a glimpse of not only how Ts'msyen people

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<sup>197</sup> MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 158.

<sup>198</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 62. On Chief Ts'ibasaa see MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 158. The exchange of names to establish kinship and alliance also occurred between Indigenous groups. According to scholar Jay Miller, the name of Seeks belonged to Chief Ts'ibasaa, being a relative of Ts'ibasaa when the Ts'msyen lived at the ancestral village of Temlaxham, and was given by him to the Tlingit chief who became known as Shakes. Jay Miller, *Tsimshian Culture: A Light through the Ages* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 19. The Edenshaw lineage among the Haida similarly engaged in a name exchange with the European Captain Douglas. Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles: Totem Poles According to Crests and Topics*, vol. 1, Anthropological Series no.30, Bulletin No. 119 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, n.d), 563.

<sup>199</sup> Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 20.

integrated outsider goods, ideas, powers and practices into their own worlds but also indicates something of their willingness to do so.

By far the most commonly recorded means by which Ts'msyen people acquired outsider customs and incorporated them into their own culture is that of biological kinship. Often, this form of kinship between a Ts'msyen person and an outsider was established through the existence of a shared ancestor or, more directly, by a marital union between a Ts'msyen woman and an outsider man. The published *adaawx* and *maalsk* contain numerous examples of this practice, with the marriage of a high ranking woman to a supernatural being (who has temporarily taken the form of a human male) acting as the quintessential expression of it. The marital unions that established kinship between a Ts'msyen person and a human outsider seem also to have involved Ts'msyen women and generally fall into two categories: those unintentional, as with the marriage of a captive high ranking Ts'msyen woman to her equally high ranking outsider kidnapper, and those intentionally planned as a means to establish a relationship with an outsider group with whom the other forms of kinship, such as a common *Pdeex* or origin story, did not exist.<sup>200</sup> I consider the latter to have been of particular import for the HBC newcomers.

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<sup>200</sup> According to scholar Susan Marsden, "Where foreign peoples met and could not draw on any shared identity, the establishment of peaceful coexistence took place through marriage." Marsden, "Northwest Coast *Adawx* Study," 18. Sexual relations and likely even marriages occurred between lower status captives and captors but these are not generally recorded in the *adaawx* or *maalsk*. The customs or manufactures of value that the Ts'msyen recorded receiving in the published ethnographic records came from high ranking outsiders and a high ranking outsider male would have considered only a high ranking woman for a wife. It is generally upon the return of the Ts'msyen wife and her children to her home community that the high ranking outsider kidnapper bestows upon one or all of the children an outsider name, power, manufacture or technology. The child then returns home and a *yaawk* is hosted by his maternal uncle announcing his return and his new outsider acquisition. See, for example, "The Origin of the Gitxawn Group at Kitsemkalem," in MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 1.

As I have indicated, the unintended marital union between, on the one hand, a high ranking Ts'msyen woman held captive by an outsider group and, on the other, her equally high ranking outsider kidnapper, is a common theme in the published Ts'msyen *adaawx* and *maalsk*.<sup>201</sup> Though the conclusion of these narratives is often one of great benefits having been brought to the woman's Ts'msyen community or lineage, distress and isolation are also central to these accounts. Typically in these narratives the children of these relationships acquire outsider customs or manufactures from their foreign fathers that were destined to become significant new powers within the Ts'msyen worlds. Considered to be Ts'msyen – because of the Ts'msyen and other Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples' practice of matrilineal descent<sup>202</sup> – the children are characterized in the *adaawx* and *maalsk* as people never truly belonging in their father's foreign world.<sup>203</sup> They are commonly depicted as frustrated at being outsiders within their father's world and are often insulted by their father's people as being children “of unknown origin.”<sup>204</sup> Generally in these accounts the children return home to their own people, the Ts'msyen,

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<sup>201</sup> Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 52.

<sup>202</sup> Ts'msyen children receive their cultural identities through their mother. Any child born to a Ts'msyen woman is considered to be Ts'msyen, regardless of the identity of his or her father. Likewise, Ts'msyen children gain their tribal membership and their *Pdeex* from their mother; in this way a Ts'msyen woman of the Gitlaan tribe and Ganhada (Raven) *Pdeex*, for instance, would have children of identified as Gitlaan and Ganhada, regardless of the father's tribe and *Pdeex* (or lack of such). Therefore, when a Ts'msyen woman married an outsider, her children, even if they lived among the outsiders for the duration of their lifetimes, would be Ts'msyen. In this way a Ts'msyen chief, recognizing the extensive intermarriage between his tribe and the Stikine people, was able to observe: “among your people my tribe has grown.” MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 43.

<sup>203</sup> These relationships, between captive and captor, were different than strategically arranged marriages made between Ts'msyen and outsider families. They did not involve negotiation between families or the hosting of a feast by the Ts'msyen announcing the marriage. The women and her children born from the marriage remain outsiders themselves in the foreign land of the husband and father. Moreover, as the woman arrived as a captive and the marriage was not properly negotiated and feasted, some level of shame remained on them. This was not as damaging as that experienced by women and men who were made slaves but it was significant enough that the children might be bullied. It is not clear in the published *adaawx* or *maalsk* whether the women consented to these marriages.

<sup>204</sup> “The Origin of the Gitxawn Group at Kitsemkalem,” in MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 3. Insults such as “Why is it that those of unknown origin are so clever among us? One would think they were our equals. They are so clever” indicate at once the children's outsider status and their ignominious origin.

and bring with them ideas, goods, names or technology gifted to them by their outsider father. These new acquisitions are then given Ts'msyen form through the feasting system and become owned powers of the children and their lineage.

Intentionally crafted marriages between Ts'msyen people and human outsiders brought a variety of benefits to Ts'msyen communities, not least of which was the acquisition of outsider goods and ideas which could be transformed into new powers.<sup>205</sup> As Seguin [Anderson] observes, "traditional Ts'msyen culture was constantly incorporating objects, ideas and ritual forms" from others.<sup>206</sup> Marriage to outsiders fostered this practice by not only acting as one of the legitimate means by which outsider ways or manufactures could be received and transformed by Ts'msyen people but also by increasing Ts'msyen people's exposure to outsider customs. Cultural innovations acquired through this type of intermarriage were generally obtained in one of three ways: as a gift introduced during the marriage negotiations and feasts;<sup>207</sup> as a privilege claimed by the Ts'msyen spouse or lineage by virtue of their kinship bond with the outsiders; or as a prerogative gained by the children of the marriage from the outsider father. New ideas, technology, material goods, or supernatural powers received in one of these ways were sanctioned cultural innovations once appropriately introduced (through the feasting complex) into the Ts'msyen worlds.

It seems that Ts'msyen people generally greeted the arrival of HBC newcomers on the northern Northwest Coast as they had the appearance of other human outsiders, as

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<sup>205</sup> Marriages between high ranking Ts'msyen people and outsiders were also, of course, used to establish peace and trade alliances. Cooper, "To Be Free," 12.

<sup>206</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 74-75.

<sup>207</sup> MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives II*, 139.

a source of new powers and prestige.<sup>208</sup> They were seen as belonging to a world apart from the Ts'msyen, whether they were neighbouring Haida and Tlingit, non-human supernaturals, or even European or non-Northwest Coast Indigenous outsiders, and therefore were understood to have distinct histories, customs, laws and powers.<sup>209</sup> While their worlds were alien to Ts'msyen people they were, after contact, imagined and interpreted through a Ts'msyen lens. Consequently, outsiders, including the HBC newcomers, were considered to belong to a ranked society of "Real People" (the *sm'gigyet*), commoners, and slaves.<sup>210</sup> Most importantly, they were also believed to possess valuable goods, ideas and practices which were controlled by the foreign chiefly class and which could be transferred to or acquired by Ts'msyen people. Although European explorers, fur traders, and fur trade employees represented a new kind of outsider in Ts'msyen territory in the nineteenth century, Ts'msyen people, it seems, chose to interact with them as they did Indigenous outsiders, and in so doing indicated their intentions to, in a sense, integrate these new arrivals into their own Ts'msyen worlds.

In choosing to respond to the arrival of HBC newcomers as they did other human outsiders Ts'msyen people also signaled a willingness to permit innovation from this new

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<sup>208</sup> In a recently published article, historian John Lutz convincingly claims that though first contact between Ts'msyen people and European newcomers was a spiritual encounter – for both the Ts'msyen and the newcomers – Europeans were not considered "gods." Given that Ts'msyen people "lived in a world where there was no firm divide between the natural and the spirit world," seeing themselves and any other human outsider group they came into contact with as beings capable of communicating with other-than-human beings (supernatural beings), it seems very probable that Ts'msyen people viewed European newcomers as spiritual beings having, according to Lutz, "various links to the spirit world." John Lutz, "First Contact as a Spiritual Performance: Aboriginal -- Non-Aboriginal Encounters on the North American West Coast," in *Myth and Memory: Rethinking Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, ed. John Lutz (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 35-36.

<sup>209</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 1, 45.

<sup>210</sup> Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 45, 48. The word *sm'oogyit* literally translates from Sm'algyax as "real person."

source. As they had with other outsiders, Ts'msyen people were quick to identify HBC newcomer ideas, material goods, practices and powers which could be incorporated into their own culture, given Ts'msyen meaning, and a Ts'msyen identity. Having both a reason and a willingness to innovate, Ts'msyen people, not unforeseeably, seem to have sought out connections with HBC newcomer people which could facilitate legitimate innovation.<sup>211</sup> First among these were kinship connections.

Of the few means by which kinship could be established between Ts'msyen people and newcomers, marriage seems to have been considered the most favourable by both parties.<sup>212</sup> Marriages between Ts'msyen women and these newcomers were formally arranged as soon as the HBC established Fort Simpson on the Nass River, in 1831. Chief Ligeex was quick to create an alliance with the fort through the marriage of his daughter,

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<sup>211</sup> There were, of course, other factors influencing intermarriage between Ts'msyen women and HBC newcomers. In chapter three I examine some of these in greater detail. There are two other aspects of Ts'msyen culture or worldviews which are not discussed in this thesis but which I think also strongly contributed to marital unions between these groups of people. The first, and for which there is a significant body of literature, is the Ts'msyen association between outsiders and fathers. In the Ts'msyen meaning system more broadly, just as in the *adaawx*, fathers represent foreign supernatural animal beings from whom powers are received and then passed on through the matriline. Gifts from the supernaturals are transferred from the world of the supernatural through the father, both literally and symbolically. The received powers, ideas, goods or practices are embodied in an owned name, song, dance or crest. The display of such a gift at a feast publicly demonstrates the connection between fathers and new powers while at the same time reaffirming the symbolic association between fathers, supernaturals, animals and foreigners. This association is further exemplified by the payments made to the *ksi'waatk*, the human representatives of the father, during a feast. The father symbolizes an outsider supernatural world and when he or his kin receive payment during a feast it is also considered wealth returned to the supernatural world. The second, for which there has been little scholarly study, is the possibility that Ts'msyen people traditionally held a favourable view of fairness of skin and hair and that this view was a support for marriage to European newcomers. The published *adaawx* contain numerous references to women and men with these attributes being considered good-looking or beautiful. A child with fair hair and skin is often characterized as a "favourite" in these narratives. Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 46, 56-57. On fairness of skin and hair as attractive qualities see, for example, MacDonald and Cove, *Tsimshian Narratives I*, 2, 9, 132, 204, 208, 285; Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology*, 343.

<sup>212</sup> I am not suggesting that the sole reason for marriages between Ts'msyen women and newcomer men was the creation of kinship for the purpose of Ts'msyen innovation. Nor do I consider the Ts'msyen and the newcomers to have had the same understanding of the signification of marriage. There were many motivations for marital unions between newcomer men and Ts'msyen women at this fort and I explore some of these in Chapter Three. What I am proposing is that kinship served a special role in Ts'msyen innovation and for this reason it was advantageous for the Ts'msyen to create kinship ties with HBC newcomers. Marriage served, in part, because it happened to have merits to both groups.

Sudaał, to HBC officer Dr. John Kennedy. Other marriages between Ts'msyen women and fort employees followed. Not surprisingly, Ts'msyen cultural frameworks continued to be employed by the Ts'msyen in their motivations for and understanding of these marriages. The children acquired their mother's Ts'msyen identity, tribe and *Pdeex* memberships and they were expected to participate ceremonially and socially with their (Ts'msyen) people.<sup>213</sup> As the children grew they took on roles as cultural intermediaries between the Ts'msyen and newcomer worlds.<sup>214</sup>

While intermarriage was widely practiced at this locale I found no evidence at Fort Simpson of either the exchange of names or the adoption of an HBC newcomer by a Ts'msyen person during the land-based fur trade. That does not, of course, mean that these kinds of kinship ties were never established but I suspect that adoption was not a satisfactory option and that name exchange, while important during the maritime fur trade, fell short once newcomers were living alongside the Ts'msyen. In contrast, marriage had particular value for both Ts'msyen people and HBC newcomers. For the Ts'msyen, with their long tradition of marriage to outsiders, unions with newcomer men brought women into greater contact with the newcomer worlds and provided regular access to newcomer property while also securing kinship. HBC newcomers, on the other

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<sup>213</sup> Cooper, "To Be Free," 146-147.

<sup>214</sup> The Ts'msyen children born through marriage to outsiders were traditionally characterized as recipients of new goods or powers from their outsider father or his lineage. Moreover, though these children were considered to be Ts'msyen they were, it seems, also viewed as possessing innate qualities of their father and his foreign world. In the *adaawx* and *maalsk*, this symbolic hybridity could also manifest in a child's physical form with children reportedly being born in the animal form of their father or bearing other attributes belonging to him. During the fur trade era, the children of HBC newcomers and Ts'msyen women were able to use their position as people in-between to mediate between the Ts'msyen and outsider worlds. As scholars Jean Barman and Jan Hare note, Christian missionaries who arrived in the later-nineteenth century were quick to recognize and take advantage of these cultural mediators for their own purposes. See, for example, the *adaawx* "Adaowggam Git'anmaks (Hazelton): Myth of the People of the Torch Lights" or "The Dog Ancestors of the Gispakloats," in William Beynon, *Tsimshian Stories*, 12; "Bear Mother," in Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, 183; Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts*, 56; Jean Barman and Jan Hare, *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 50.

hand, relied on marital unions with Ts'msyen women as one of the means to establish peaceful relations between themselves and the Ts'msyen. Friendly relations were necessary for successful trade: the HBC could not afford to provoke or to alienate the Ts'msyen. Finally, marriage to Ts'msyen women met a pressing need for HBC newcomers who, lacking the presence of newcomer women within the fort, could not achieve heterosexual domesticity any other way.

By the time that Fort Simpson was moved to Ts'msyen territory, at Laxłgu'alaams, sexual relations and marriages were regularly occurring between Ts'msyen women and the newcomers. Almost every worker at the HBC fort seems to have had an Indigenous wife, with most of these women being Ts'msyen or Nisga'a. Doubtless, these women had their own motivations for marrying HBC employees but, whatever their personal reasons, we can be sure that they were encouraged by Ts'msyen ideas and understandings of outsiders and intermarriage. For the Ts'msyen then, marriage to HBC outsiders included, among other things, the possibility to access other worlds and the prestige of legitimately acquiring new powers.

To review, the making and remaking of Ts'msyen culture through innovation was so much a part of Ts'msyen worlds that, as noted above, the Ts'msyen developed a regulating system to manage the practice. This system had two key components: legitimate introduction and legitimate acquisition. As I have indicated, any cultural innovation from an outsider source which was to attain significance within the Ts'msyen worlds, and was to be considered an owned privilege and of a lasting nature, had to be introduced during a formal ceremony (potlatch) hosted by a *sm'ooogyit* or other high ranking Ts'msyen person. Only in this way could the innovation attain legitimacy and

standing as an owned power within the Ts'msyen worlds. Additionally, an individual or kin-group asserting the right to introduce and possess a new power had to publicly demonstrate their rightful acquisition of the said power. A kinship connection with the outsider individual (human or supernatural) or community from whom the innovation originated seems to have been one of the most common channels by which this was achieved. This system served to regulate the introduction of innovations into the Ts'msyen worlds and ensured that cultural innovation was not excessively disruptive to Ts'msyen communities.

The feasting complex also created a unique and important role for Ts'msyen women. Characterized in Ts'msyen narratives as agents of change, it was Ts'msyen women who consistently formed relationships with outsiders, thereby establishing kinship ties necessary for the legitimate acquisition of new powers. Once the HBC established Fort Simpson, this custom of forming marital unions with outsiders was extended to include HBC newcomers. The absence of newcomer women within the fort further encouraged marriages between Ts'msyen women and HBC newcomers.

How Ts'msyen people comprehended these innovations is one of the most significant aspects of this system. While it is impossible to know how individual Ts'msyen people felt about the practice it is possible for some level of insight into their attitudes towards innovation. Firstly, both the primary sources and the scholarly records document its central importance to Ts'msyen identity, both historically and still today. This suggests that innovation was widely participated in and very likely viewed as having considerable significance. Secondly, these sources reveal that when Ts'msyen people innovated it was for their own reasons. The Ts'msyen were not awe-struck by the foreign

goods of the newcomers. Rather, they identified select ideas, technology, and material goods among the newcomers that could be repurposed to meet Ts'msyen ends. As they imbued newcomer property with Ts'msyen meanings and functions they created what can be considered as culturally hybrid forms. Finally, Ts'msyen ideas of innovation were (and are) rooted in the Ts'msyen *adaawx* and *maalsk* narratives that linked the human and supernatural worlds, established outsiders as a source of new powers, and represented Ts'msyen women as conduits of change. Although cultural change was neither simple nor uncontested the source material demonstrates that in the nineteenth century the Ts'msyen were a people so adept at innovating that such change actually worked to reinforce Ts'msyen values, authority, and sovereignty.

Like any culture, Ts'msyen culture was fluid. Ts'msyen people changed in response to their surrounding environment and their contact with outsider people. While many of these changes can be considered substantial they seem not to have threatened the identities of Ts'msyen people or the survival of their culture. Indeed, this kind of cultural change seems to have become fundamental to it. Although I frame this type of cultural change as a kind of cultural hybridity I do so not to question the Ts'msyen integrity of these developments but rather in an attempt to create a useful framework for the analysis of cultural changes among both Ts'msyen and HBC newcomer people and, very generally, of the intersection of their respective worlds at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. Almost certainly neither Ts'msyen people nor HBC newcomers evaluated their respective cultural changes and innovations as forms of hybridity. Each of these groups remade the goods, ideas, customs, or powers that they selectively innovated from and imbued them

with their own internal cultural meaning. Because of this, the changes and innovations themselves bore continuity with the people who adopted them and who came to identify them as their own.<sup>215</sup> Finally, I should be clear that regardless of these or other changes, Ts'msyen people and Ts'msyen culture remained and continues still today to be authentically Ts'msyen.<sup>216</sup>

I consider the Ts'msyen and HBC newcomers to have developed hybrid forms at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. Lacking the conditions scholars have identified as typical for the creation of hybridity, I believe it was the Ts'msyen tradition of innovation from outsiders, with its link to social standing and authority and its emphasis on women as agents of change, which facilitated this development. However, given the challenges of the source material – the collectors' influences, the distance of the informants from the events, the scarcity of data – I add the caveat that these conclusions are preliminary. They might best be thought of as a series of impressions about cultural change and Ts'msyen-outsider relations rather than as a definitive explanation of hybridity. I sought to utilize the documentary evidence to access something of Ts'msyen agendas but I find now that there are more questions created by this work than clear facts.

There remains a need for a more thorough examination of the *adaawx* and *maalsk* record as well as for further fieldwork among Ts'msyen communities. I hope that my research will have contributed to opening up the debate around Ts'msyen-newcomer relations, cultural change, and the development hybridity on the northern Northwest

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<sup>215</sup> Influenced by Craig S. Womack, "The Integrity of American Indian Claims: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love My Hybridity," in *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, Robert Warrior (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 91-177.

<sup>216</sup> For a stimulating examination of Indian authenticity see Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

Coast. I sought to approach these questions in a different manner than most scholars of early British Columbian history, seeking to use ethnographic documents to access Ts'msyen agendas and reading Ts'msyen *adaawx* and *maalsk* for what linguist and scholar of Ts'msyen culture John Asher Dunn has described as “myth-based feelings about interethnic relations.”<sup>217</sup> I hope that my interpretation of this past initiates dialogue and spurs further research.

### Examples of New Hybrid Forms Following Contact with the HBC Newcomers

Like any culture, Ts'msyen culture changed in response to, among other things, new environmental conditions and new contacts with outsiders. At Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams – where for the first time nine tribes of Ts'msyen people came to live alongside not only each other but also newcomers of an HBC fort – contact and the Ts'msyen tradition of cultural innovation from outsiders, worked in tandem to encourage the creation of hybrid forms. In chapters Two and Three I examine two hybrid systems – law and marriage – which were jointly developed by Ts'msyen and newcomer people following their contact at this site. In the section below I offer examples of cultural hybridity independently developed by Ts'msyen people following their contact with HBC newcomers of Fort Simpson. These hybrid forms, though they in some measure originated in HBC newcomer customs, ideas, material goods, or technology, were developed for Ts'msyen purposes and operated within their worlds. While they might superficially have resembled HBC newcomer practices which were the inspiration for these new forms, they, like all other Ts'msyen innovations, were given new Ts'msyen

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<sup>217</sup> John Asher Dunn, “International Matri-moieties: The North Maritime Province of the North Pacific Coast,” in *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present*, ed. Margaret Seguin [Anderson] (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), 108. Here Dunn is referring to Indigenous outsiders but I think we can extend this to European newcomers as well.

meanings and, once properly introduced into the Ts'msyen worlds, were considered to be Ts'msyen.

In the Introduction I describe this form of cultural hybridity as a kind of remaking of outsider ways. At this site, previously existing HBC newcomer customs or cultural symbols were adopted, in some fashion, by Ts'msyen people and invested with new meanings and new functions. While Ts'msyen people could not control what newcomer customs, ideas, goods, and the like they were exposed to, short of removing themselves, they did determine what aspects they adopted and adapted and to what purposes they would mold them. These hybrid forms, while working somewhat organically within the Ts'msyen worlds as new customs or owned powers, for example, sometimes also worked to subvert or to enhance power and authority not only within the Ts'msyen worlds but also between the Ts'msyen and HBC worlds and within the worlds of the HBC newcomers. I give some attention to these empowering possibilities in the following chapters. I now turn to offer a brief examination of three hybrid forms developed by Ts'msyen people from HBC newcomer customs: the introduction of burial and grave markers in Ts'msyen mortuary practices; the integration of newcomer house-building techniques in Ts'msyen ceremonies and as symbols of innovation and eminence; and the donning of European garments to communicate emotional state and intention.

#### Hybrid Mortuary Practices

Mortuary practices in most societies are collective rites, influenced by the particular world views of the community or communities observing them.<sup>218</sup> Such was certainly true of Ts'msyen people living at Laxlgu'alaams during the period under study

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<sup>218</sup> Mary Shepardson, "Changes in Navajo Mortuary Practices and Beliefs," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, A Special Symposium Issue on Navajo Mortuary Practices and Beliefs (November 1978): 383-395.

here. Although their mortuary practices, like other Ts'msyen customs, periodically underwent change, Ts'msyen people had well-established mortuary customs structured around their world views. With the relocation of Fort Simpson to Ts'msyen territory in 1834, Ts'msyen people came into increasing contact with HBC newcomer mortuary practices and many Ts'msyen people rather quickly introduced changes shaped by this contact into their own mortuary practices.

Prior to the establishment of Fort Simpson at Laxlgu'alaams the Ts'msyen had practiced cremation for deceased high ranking Ts'msyen people.<sup>219</sup> Cremation continued to be important to the Ts'msyen, but once the nine tribes relocated to Laxlgu'alaams burial within the fort graveyard became a new option. The first Indigenous burial within the fort occurred as early as 1834 when a Nisga'a man arranged to have his deceased wife interred.<sup>220</sup> Over time, burial within the fort graveyard seems to have become increasingly popular among certain segments of the Ts'msyen population living at Laxlgu'alaams. Although it did not replace cremation as the primary treatment for corpses during the period under study, it was commonly used for Ts'msyen people who had particularly close relationships with the fort or for those of high rank who sought it out, perhaps as a sign of status. The deceased Indigenous wives and children of HBC employees, as might be expected, usually received burial in the graveyard, but so too did people like Dr. Kennedy's mother-in-law, a wife of the Ligeex titleholder of the 1830s; Sallaway, a Ts'msyen employee of the fort; Haiash, a brother of the Ligeex titleholder of

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<sup>219</sup> The corpses of the lowest ranking members of Ts'msyen communities, enslaved people, were disposed of with little regard, commonly in bodies of water such as rivers or the ocean. The corpses of shamans typically were not cremated and were instead placed in a remote cave, accompanied by their regalia and other owned power items. It appears that sometimes the bodies of very high ranking chiefs were placed in grave-boxes on the top of a totem pole or in trees, though the more usual custom seems to have been cremation. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 60; Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 104, 129.

<sup>220</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 8 September 1834.

1856; the high ranking Ts'msyen individual Mr. Hanson and his brother; and Charlotte, a woman friendly towards newcomers and who likely had a child fathered by an HBC newcomer, also buried in the fort graveyard.<sup>221</sup>

The Ts'msyen people who altered their custom of cremating high ranking individuals in favour of burial in the newcomers' graveyard did not simply adopt newcomer custom. Their new mortuary practices included more than just a coffin burial; a whole new set of mortuary customs, somewhat inspired by newcomer practices but Ts'msyen in substance and meaning, were developed by the Ts'msyen. In 1857, the missionary William Duncan witnessed some of these hybrid practices during the Ts'msyen funeral of the daughter of Chief Big Face Man at Fort Simpson. He recorded that, like a newcomer funeral, the Ts'msyen placed the body in a coffin and pallbearers carried the coffin next to her mother's grave and there buried it.<sup>222</sup> However, a mortuary pole was erected at the head of her grave like a pole that would have traditionally been erected by her relatives at their house in the Ts'msyen village outside the fort.<sup>223</sup> Big Face Man and his kin adapted the pole to serve not only as a Ts'msyen mortuary pole but also

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<sup>221</sup> Although relatives or friends of these deceased sought out burial for them in the fort graveyard quite obviously they also required the willingness of the fort officers to make this happen. It may be as much for this reason that the Ts'msyen people who received burial in the graveyard seem to have been those of high rank or with closer relations with the fort than that these were the kind of Ts'msyen people most likely to seek such burial out. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 2 December 1836; 10 February 1840; 22 October 1856; 5 November 1855; 13 July 1856.

<sup>222</sup> The mother had died sometime earlier and also received burial in the fort graveyard. Duncan, *Journal*, October 1857, 9558.

<sup>223</sup> Prior to the establishment of Fort Simpson within Ts'msyen territory it was the custom to erect a memorial pole for the high ranking deceased one year after their death, after the mourning period was ended and a feast was held to pass on the name. As Duncan's account makes clear, the raising of this hybridized memorial pole-grave-marker was done days after the girl's death and reflects another level of change to adapt the pole to serve as a grave-marker. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 60. Today this delay between death and the placing of a memorial gravestone on the grave continues to be practiced. A gravestone is often purchased soon after a family member dies but the stone will remain at a family member's home, often publicly displayed in the yard, until a stone-moving feast is held. The feast also allows the deceased's name to be passed on to his or her rightful heir. James Andrew McDonald, *Living Landscapes*, "Come Back to the Territory: The Heritage of Waaps Nishaywaaxs, A Tsimshian Family" <[http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/northwest/waaps\\_nishay/heritage.html](http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/northwest/waaps_nishay/heritage.html)> (15 April 2008).

– being at the head of the burial plot – as a kind of newcomer-inspired grave-marker.<sup>224</sup>

Like the hybrid pole of her mother's grave also erected at the head of the gravesite and to which had been affixed a garment and several drinking vessels, a Ts'msyen garment was suspended from the pole commemorating Chief Big Face Man's daughter.<sup>225</sup>

While scholars of Ts'msyen history like historian Susan Neylan have suggested that by the second-half of the nineteenth century Ts'msyen gravestones were commonly syncretic in form, Duncan's account of this 1857 memorial and the Fort Simpson journal indicate that these developments had earlier origins.<sup>226</sup> Very early on numbers of Ts'msyen people sought out not only the newcomer practice of burial for their kin but burial within the newcomer-structured and, ostensibly, newcomer-controlled fort graveyard. Although this ground was constructed, in many ways, to resemble a newcomer graveyard as it might appear in their own land – with family plots, grave-markers, and paling fences around the graves – that Ts'msyen people chose to bury their

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<sup>224</sup> This practice, of innovating on newcomer grave markers, transforming them into Ts'msyen objects with Ts'msyen meaning and form, has been discussed in detail by scholar Ronald Hawker and, more recently, by historian Susan Neylan. Ronald W. Hawker, "In the Way of the White Man's Totem Pole"; Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

<sup>225</sup> Duncan, *Journal*, October 1857, 9558. Big Face Man's daughter died on 5 October 1857 and was likely buried on this date or very soon after. It is possible that those Ts'msyen people who chose to bury their dead may have, as anthropologist Margaret Blackman found for the Haida, buried kin according to matriline. No studies have, as of yet, been done on this matter, though the fact that Chief Big Face Man's daughter was buried next to her mother suggests the possibility. Hawker, "In the Way of the White Man's Totem Pole," 102.

<sup>226</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 264. Ts'msyen people introduced several changes to their mortuary practices during the nineteenth century, the most studied of which is the integration of Ts'msyen traditional mortuary poles and newcomer grave-markers. Duncan's account of the Chief Big Face Man and his family erecting a hybridized memorial pole in the fort garden seems to be the earliest written record of this practice which was to become a common feature of Ts'msyen mortuary customs beginning as early as the 1860s. While scholars studying this innovation have not generally characterized it as a hybrid form they have typically described it as a newcomer custom given new meaning and symbolism within Ts'msyen worlds. Art historian Ronald Hawker has undertaken the principal study of the use of gravestones by Ts'msyen people. He notes that while newcomer-inspired gravestones came to largely replace mortuary poles they were transformed by Ts'msyen people, given new meanings and functions within the Ts'msyen worlds. Ronald W. Hawker, "In the Way of the White Man's Totem Pole"; Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

kin within it should not be read as a forsaking of their Ts'msyen identities. To reiterate, even within the bounded newcomer space that was Fort Simpson the Ts'msyen were able to remake the characteristic physical symbols of newcomer cemeteries to meet their own needs, conferred Ts'msyen meanings on adapted newcomer practices, and succeeded in establishing hybrid mortuary practices.<sup>227</sup>

Duncan recognized newcomer influences in the funeral of Chief Big Face Man's daughter but he identified the memorial service as fundamentally Ts'msyen in form and thus foreign to himself. Chief among the differences Duncan remarked upon was the gendered division of mortuary responsibilities. Ts'msyen people had long had a custom of prescribed responsibilities for mortuary practices and this was maintained within the culturally hybrid mortuary practices. At the service Duncan witnessed it was men who conveyed the coffin to its burial place and who erected the memorial pole, and women who performed the attendant wailing services.<sup>228</sup> As with "traditional" Ts'msyen mortuaries, the hybrid mortuary practices continued the custom of the father's lineage assuming responsibility for the funeral arrangements, with Chief Big Face Man securing permission from the fort for the burial of his daughter within the fort graveyard.<sup>229</sup> While neither Duncan nor the HBC newcomers of Fort Simpson ever describe the treatment of a corpse, the inclusion of grave goods in the coffin, or adornment of the coffin with crest

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<sup>227</sup> Fort Simpson Journal, 12 December 1862. HBC officers devoted considerable employee time and energy to maintaining the graveyard. In 1862, for example, HBC servant Antoine was regularly employed constructing and repairing graveyard fencing and grave palings.

<sup>228</sup> This is not to imply that the wailing of mourners at this memorial was insincere. Duncan remarked that "the scene was very affecting & . . . awfully solemn." Even without Duncan's appraisal however, there can be no doubt that the friends and family of the deceased strongly felt their loss and exhibited during this service. Still, Duncan's account also reveals that the wailing ceased the moment the pole was successfully erected at the head of the girl's grave, indicating that in this as in other Ts'msyen mortuary customs, there was a culturally prescribed way of publicly mourning during a memorial. Duncan, *Journal*, October 1857, 9558.

<sup>229</sup> Duncan, *Journal*, October 1857, 9558; Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 60; Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 160.

designs, it is likely that innovations were also introduced on these levels. For example, at a Ts'msyen funeral held in Victoria for a deceased Ts'msyen woman from Laxłgu'alaams who had married an HBC employee and lived for a period of time within the fort before relocating with her newcomer husband and child to Victoria, her Ts'msyen kin placed in the coffin "fifteen blankets...a work bag, a looking glass, a box of matches & sundry other articles."<sup>230</sup> These Ts'msyen adaptations, influenced by newcomer mortuary practices but shaped by Ts'msyen people's understanding of outsider ways, and given new form, meaning and functions within the Ts'msyen worlds, comprise the culturally hybrid mortuary forms practiced at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams.

#### Hybrid Forms in Ts'msyen Housing

As with mortuary practices, Ts'msyen people selectively adopted aspects of newcomer housing, invested them with new meanings and functions, and integrated them into the Ts'msyen worlds. While there were undoubtedly many levels on which this happened, I am concerned here with innovations introduced to ceremonial house-building. A Ts'msyen house, especially the house of a high ranking person, was more than just a domestic space – it was the centre of ceremonial and political activity and the physical and metaphorical container of the family group or lineage.<sup>231</sup> Accordingly, the longhouse of a chief was the location at which his feasts were held, and his powers were asserted and performed. It was also the space in which ceremonies which forged new

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<sup>230</sup> Roberta L. Bagshaw, ed., *No Better Land: The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop George Hills* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1996), 3 February 1860, 63. This woman was married to newcomer Thomas Cotsford who previously worked on the HBC *Beaver* and seasonally resided at Fort Simpson, but who in 1860 worked as assistant trader for the HBC store in Victoria.

<sup>231</sup> Indeed, the word for house and house group (lineage) in Sm'algyax is the same, *Waap* or *Walp*. According to Neylan, this word describes "lineage relations, their territory, and their wealth." Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 237.

alliances or signified new friendships were held.<sup>232</sup> In these ways a Ts'msyen house held significance for social standing within the Ts'msyen worlds but, as with most other aspects of Ts'msyen material culture, it was not only the uses to which it was put but also its physical structure that expressed social standing.

To Ts'msyen people, the physical appearance of Ts'msyen houses communicated something of the owner's and, correspondingly, the lineage's, rank and power.<sup>233</sup> The size of the house, a housefront painting (depicting owned crests), and other imposing qualities, including the depth of floor excavation creating interior lower levels to the house, all worked to convey to observers the significance of the chief and lineage to whom the house belonged.<sup>234</sup> As with feasts, it was important within the Ts'msyen worlds to introduce novel designs into the structure of the house, especially if those designs by their expense or dedication of labour, for example, concomitantly revealed the extravagance or wealth of the chief. Several elements of newcomer housebuilding were adapted by Ts'msyen chiefs to serve just this purpose.

Hinged doors, glass windows, sawed lumber, nails, and copper plaques were some of the newcomer building materials adapted and ceremonially introduced by Ts'msyen *sm'gigyit* at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. Use of these materials greatly enhanced the prestige of both the *sm'oogyit* of the house and his lineage. Within the Ts'msyen worlds the use of such materials confirmed a chief's ability to meet his responsibilities of communicating with outsiders and acquiring outsider powers for his lineage. The more

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<sup>232</sup> Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 19.

<sup>233</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 237. The location of a house, in relation to the other buildings in the community, also signaled a person's status. Village sites were spatially organized, with the chief's house prominently erected in the centre of the village and the lineage heads with the lowest social standing at the outskirts of the village.

<sup>234</sup> Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 39; Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 37, 40.

exceptional the innovation, the more *éclat* gained by the chief from its acquisition and display. During the ceremonial season of 1857-1858, for example, Chief Ligeex had constructed a new house featuring a wooden floor, four small windows and, over the house, a copper plaque, likely the work of the fort blacksmith, Marten Larson, engraved with an eagle figure and the inscription in English that read, “Legaik, my crest is the Eagle, The King of the Birds” and the European date of February 27, 1858.<sup>235</sup> Each of these elements on its own would have qualified as extraordinary at the time, but together they made Chief Ligeex’s wealth and power unmistakable both to his Ts’msyen observers and the newcomer residents of the fort. Moreover, the particular use of writing, at the time generally considered to be a form of newcomer power, established not only his eminence but also his cleverness, important attributes in the Ts’msyen worlds.<sup>236</sup>

Chief Ligeex was not alone in the remaking of newcomer building materials to serve Ts’msyen needs at *Laxłgu’alaams*. A number of other *sm’ooygit* similarly introduced such hybrid forms into their homes. For example, Jacob Johnson, of the Giluts’aaw tribe, had built a new house featuring a sawn lumber front, three window panes, the use of nails, and the first Ts’msyen use of door hinges. Houses like Chief

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<sup>235</sup> Chief Ligeex’s house is pictured in a painting done by Frederick Alexcee. The four windows and eagle figure are clearly visible in the painting. See Appendix I. Windows were extremely hard to come by at Fort Simpson at this time. Indeed, when William Duncan’s mission school was vandalized by Cushwaht in 1859 and its four windows broken, Duncan was unable to repair the damages because “Capt. McNeill cannot spare me the glass.” Duncan, *Journal*, 18 August 1859, 9766; 4 September 1859, 9781. On Ligeex’s house see, Fort Simpson Journal, 21 November 1857; 28 December 1857; Michael P. Robinson, *Sea Otter Chiefs* (Calgary, Alberta: Bayeux Arts Incorporated, 1996), 77; William Duncan, *Journal*, “*First Report to the Society*, Drawn up February 1858,” 9585.

<sup>236</sup> Historian Carol Cooper asserts that Ts’msyen and Nisga’a people came to “attach supernatural powers to the acts of reading and writing” during the first half of the nineteenth century. Literacy was so valued by Ts’msyen people that it was “one of the primary goals” they sought through the missionary education provided by William Duncan. Historical geographer Cole Harris argues that Indigenous people in the Cordillera region came to associate literacy with “spirit power” and to distinguish HBC newcomers as supernatural beings, further enabling HBC power within the region. Cooper, “To Be Free,” 250; Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 16; Duncan, *Journal*, 17 December 1858, 9686; Harris, “Towards a Geography of White Power,” 136.

Ligeex's, Jacob Johnson's, Chief Nisłgumiilk's, and the House of the Grizzly Bear (*Walps Midiiks*) which featured newcomer-influenced designs also maintained many characteristics of "traditional" Ts'msyen longhouses.<sup>237</sup> They continued to function as political and ceremonial centres, as containers of the lineage, and as multigenerational domestic spaces, but with the addition of these hybridized outsider elements they also served as signposts of new powers or as new powers themselves. The extant source material says very little about these innovations, particularly as to how they were acquired by Ts'msyen people. No doubt there were mixed reactions among Ts'msyen people towards the acquisition and introduction of these kinds of materials/powers – likely all the more so because of the intense competition between the chiefs and leading houses of the nine tribes now living alongside one another and needing to re-establish or confirm their respective social standing. The successful discrediting of another's innovation or power could help one's own position of social standing.<sup>238</sup> However, records indicate that the chiefs who introduced these innovations at least sometimes acquired them through their kinship connections with HBC newcomers and, so it appears, always introduced them to the Ts'msyen as was customary, through a feast.

Perhaps the best documented introduction of newcomer-inspired hybrid elements into Ts'msyen house-building is that of Jacob Johnson. Johnson's son, Matthew Johnson,

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<sup>237</sup> Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 116, 118, 119; Homer Barnett Notes, 19; Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 238-239. The House of Grizzly Bear (*Walps Midiiks*) was altered to include plank floors, windows, and a hinged door while that of Chief Nisłgumiilk, head chief of the Giluts'aaw, had double window panes.

<sup>238</sup> Matthew Johnson reported that when his father held the housewarming for this house he made a special effort to introduce new things. He made benches for guests, served tea and biscuits, and sang a newly composed song saying "All the new things come to us now, let us go for it." These innovations were not welcomed by all his Ts'msyen guests. According to Matthew, some guests stood up and answered his father's song with the question, "Why do you want to have that?" This initiated a passionate discussion among guests, some arguing for the new ways and others cautioning against them. There were some who "got up and left in disgust at the changes. They wouldn't sit on the benches. They left right away, didn't even stay for food." Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 119-120; Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 6.

acted as an informant for anthropologist Homer Barnett. He told Barnett that the windows Jacob Johnson introduced into his house structure came from the HBC newcomer Charline who was married to Johnson's wife's sister (making Charline Matthew Johnson's uncle by marriage). Jacob had the windows installed by another HBC newcomer and relation by marriage, Atwin (Antoine Anneseata), the carpenter of Fort Simpson, and the husband of Jacob's sister, Saipou.<sup>239</sup> Together, Atwin and Charline also constructed the sawn lumber front of this house, using nails from the fort.<sup>240</sup> According to Matthew, his father and Atwin were "always giving presents back & forth" and through these two kinship connections the Johnson family acquired many new technologies, a number of which they ceremonially introduced and made use of for social standing.<sup>241</sup>

Like Jacob Johnson, Chief Ligeex engaged HBC newcomers in the construction of his house. Over a period of approximately a month and a half, HBC employees Pierre Turcot, Taylor (Felix) Dudouaire, William Rudland, and another man, laboured sawing planks for the grand new house described above.<sup>242</sup> During this ceremonial season at least twenty-six new houses were under construction at Laxlgu'alaams, and Chief Ligeex, considered by his newcomer contemporaries and many present-day scholars to be the leading chief of the nine tribes, had considerable need to distinguish his house and his housewarming feast from the others as the most impressive.<sup>243</sup> To this end, he drew on

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<sup>239</sup> Antoine Anneseata was Iroquois. He lived at Fort Simpson for over seventeen years.

<sup>240</sup> Homer Barnett Notes, 19, University of British Columbia Special Collections (hereafter UBCSC), A/14A/1/2; Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 116-119

<sup>241</sup> Among these were pants, iron cooking boxes (kettles), a frying pan, and yarn. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 117, 119; Homer Barnett Notes, UBC Special Collections, 19-25.

<sup>242</sup> Turcot and Dudouaire worked for most of January and February of 1858 on Ligeex's house, with Rudland working occasionally on its construction. An unnamed fourth HBC newcomer also "volunteered" his labour on Ligeex's house. Fort Simpson Journal, 12 January 1858 to 26 February 1858.

<sup>243</sup> Scholar Jonathan R. Dean argues that Chief Ligeex was elevated to this position as leading chief after the 1836 smallpox epidemic which killed two of his rivals, Chiefs Nieshot and Tsa-qaxs. Dean suggests that it was only after 1836 that Chief Ligeex gained his monopoly on the Skeena River, determining the

his relationships with the HBC newcomers and secured not only newcomer materials which he could adapt to serve his needs, but also newcomer labour. As with Jacob Johnson, it is very likely that the HBC newcomers who “volunteered to saw wood for the Chief ‘Elgeth’” did so because of their kinship connections, established through marriage, with Ligeex.<sup>244</sup> I discuss these in greater detail in Chapter Three. Whatever the case, Chief Ligeex’s actions demonstrate his ties to the HBC newcomers and his power and influence both within the Ts’msyen worlds and those of the HBC.<sup>245</sup> In securing HBC labour for the construction of his house, Ligeex succeeded in meeting the Ts’msyen ambition of performing “a wonderful feat...surpassing anything ever done.”<sup>246</sup> By doing so he not only vanquished his chiefly competitors, he confirmed his and his lineage’s ingenuity, and his ability to fulfill his chiefly responsibilities.

As I have indicated, the construction of new houses was accompanied by a housewarming or house-building feast.<sup>247</sup> Like other innovations intended to be associated with power, then, innovations in housing were introduced with a feast. The standards of legitimate acquisition of an innovation or new power – publicly declaring

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terms of trade along that important route. Jonathan R. Dean, “‘These Rascally Spackaloids’: The Rise of the Gispaxlo’ots Hegemony at Fort Simpson, 1832-40,” *BC Studies*, No.101 (Spring 1994): 41-78. Scholars Susan Marsden and Robert Galois suggest that the titleholder of the Chief Ligeex name rose to power as early as 1787 as the leading chief of the Gispaxlo’ots who were, according to Marsden and Galois, the leading tribe of the Ts’msyen. They assert that Chief Ligeex owned several important trade monopolies which, together with the strategic marriage alliances he arranged for his children, bolstered his power during the fur trade era. Susan Marsden and Robert Galois, “The Tsimshian, The Hudson’s Bay Company, and the Geopolitics of the Northwest Coast Fur Trade, 1787-1840,” *The Canadian Geographer* Vol. 39, No.2 (June 1995): 169-183. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 22 December 1857.

<sup>244</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 12 January 1858.

<sup>245</sup> The workers’ willingness to labour, without pay, on Ligeex’s house, together with the HBC officers’ agreement to permit these servants of the company to leave off their work, testify to Ligeex’s power.

<sup>246</sup> Tate (Saloben), “The Halait of Legaick,” in Beynon, *Tsimshian Stories*, 61.

<sup>247</sup> This is true at least for those houses of high ranking lineages or chiefs. There were three stages in house-building, each of which was attended by a feast. The first was an announcement that the follow year the chief will give a feast. Food was given at this feast but no property was distributed. The next year another feast was held and the house owner’s clan danced and sang. Smaller gifts were distributed, like blankets and spoons. The third year the major *yaawk* was given, and everyone who helped build the house was given payment and the house was formally named. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 118.

and performing new powers, distributing feast gifts, and otherwise meeting ceremonial protocol – also applied. Thus, when Jacob Johnson introduced windows into the front walls of his house, immediately under the Raven wings of his housefront painting, he called together the members of his Giluts'aaw tribe for a feast at which he announced the innovation and performed it for all to see. He also sang a newly composed song, “First house to have windows – nobody have windows like me.”<sup>248</sup> When Johnson's son, Matthew Johnson, was interviewed by Homer Barnett he detailed not only the innovations made by his father, but also the legitimate path (kinship) by which he acquired these innovations and the important feast at which he announced and displayed them. I suggest that this was not happenstance, or reflective of Barnett's influence in the interview, but rather that Matthew deliberately shared these details because they were culturally prescribed. The example of the Johnson family suggests that Ts'msyen people continued to practice their system for the regulation of innovation even concerning HBC newcomers, acquiring innovations from these outsiders through kinship connections and publicly identifying and performing them at feasts.

In hosting a house-building feast for houses using HBC newcomer-inspired building practices or materials, a Ts'msyen chief indicated that he or she was creating something new and significant within the Ts'msyen worlds. They remade newcomer materials, transforming them from devices of utility into power objects with the ability to confer upon their owner prestige, distinction, and enhanced social standing. Thus, when Jacob Johnson sang “First house to have windows – nobody have windows like me,” intoning:

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<sup>248</sup> Jacob Johnson was not the first to have windows at Laxlgu'alaams, as we know from newcomer sources that Chief Ligeex had them at least four years before Johnson. However, he likely was the first in his tribe to have them. Barnett notes, 19; Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 118.

*I see you before, you a poor man.  
I meet a small sloop. And it makes me glad.  
Now I use the windows in my house.  
I am glad I am katsukkswal*

he transformed these newcomer material objects into an owned prerogative that denoted his wealth, prestige, and power at the same time as it pointed toward the poverty and lesser social standing of his audience. This transformation was made possible not so much by the cross-cultural contact between the Ts'msyen and the newcomers which made achievable Johnson's acquisition of the newcomer materials he was to remake, but rather by the Ts'msyen tradition of innovation itself. As his song makes clear, the Ts'msyen worlds were changeable but they were still Ts'msyen worlds. The newcomer materials were remade to fit within them – given new meanings and functions, and even new origins. For, as with other Ts'msyen innovations, when these materials were introduced through a feast they became Ts'msyen customs and, ultimately, despite their mixed forms, something entirely new.

Certainly, HBC newcomers used building materials not just as devices of utility, but to distinguish social status as well.<sup>249</sup> However, it was not in the same manner as Ts'msyen people used or thought of their own homes. A Ts'msyen house was considered to be the container of the lineage. According to anthropologist Margaret Seguin [Anderson], members of a lineage were not in a *waap*; they *were* the *waap*.<sup>250</sup> A house had its own name and identity, and was, in many respects, seen as a body – with an

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<sup>249</sup> I have not focused on this newcomer practice here because I have been concerned with Ts'msyen practices and customs. Newcomers employed such features as the size and location of a house, number of rooms, number of windows, size of property and other elements as symbols of social status. At Fort Simpson, as with other HBC forts, the officers had larger quarters, in the Big House, which was, as its name indicates, the largest living quarters of the fort, and as I discuss in Chapter Three, had other distinguishing decorative elements designating the space as both newcomer and elite. The smaller, more rudimentarily constructed, sparsely furnished, shared housing of the newcomer servants of the company also indicated their standing as subordinates of the officers.

<sup>250</sup> Seguin [Anderson], "Lest There Be No Salmon," 111.

external physical form, and an internal mind (central hearth), located in the body's heart.<sup>251</sup> Buildings were personalized, carved and painted with the crests of the lineage, and each home represented the ancestry of the matriline, clan, and moiety.<sup>252</sup> In addition, Ts'msyen houses had supernatural significance: As ceremonial sites they were "places in which encounters with Real Beings from other worlds were to be expected" and were therefore considered as more than ordinarily real.<sup>253</sup> They were, according to Seguin [Anderson], "recognized, named, and treated as potent."<sup>254</sup> Newcomer building materials and practices were integrated into this meaning system. Windows, hinges, sawed lumber and the like became part of the container of the lineage and therefore part of the lineage itself. And, they gained supernatural significance not only for any particular supernatural quality the objects themselves were seen as embodying but also as an appendage of the container (body) in which encounters with otherworldly Real Beings occurred.<sup>255</sup>

Within the newcomer worlds, houses and building materials could suggest the social standing of their residents but they were not the material form of an individual or lineage's social standing as they were within the Ts'msyen worlds. For Ts'msyen people, houses were the embodiment of their wealth, power, heritage, and status. Newcomer building materials were remade within the Ts'msyen worlds to function in this same way.

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<sup>251</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 237.

<sup>252</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 237; Seguin [Anderson], "Lest There Be No Salmon," 113.

<sup>253</sup> Seguin [Anderson], "Lest There Be No Salmon," 116.

<sup>254</sup> Seguin [Anderson], "Lest There Be No Salmon," 116.

<sup>255</sup> It is likely that many of the newcomer housing elements incorporated by Ts'msyen people were considered to have supernatural power. However, I have found references only to the use of windows and nails as supernatural objects. According to scholar Ken Campbell, nails were considered to be *naxnox* (supernatural) "because the nails seemed to have an almost supernatural power to hold wood together." The concept of "light" is an important one within the Ts'msyen meaning systems. It is considered to be a primordial wonder, is associated with Heaven and the supernatural, and implies power and male potency. Anthropologist Jay Miller suggests that Ts'msyen people considered windows to be "doubly wondrous" prestige objects because they introduced light, with all its attendant meanings, into Ts'msyen houses and were associated with crystals, long considered significant emblems for chiefs and shamans in their supernatural work. Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 119; Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 14, 30, 39; Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 238.

Although Ts'msyen people were always acutely aware of the outsider origin of these materials – in fact, this origin was of utmost importance to them and to the power the objects were to embody – they did not accept them as they came but rather transformed them by conferring on them new meanings and functions.

### Clothing and Hybrid Forms

Even before Fort Simpson was relocated to Ts'msyen territory numbers of Ts'msyen had begun to use newcomer clothing as part of their daily dress and even ceremonial wear. Some of these adaptations, like the well-known button blanket, involved using newcomer apparel to denote social standing and power within the Indigenous worlds of the northern Northwest Coast.<sup>256</sup> And some, like the Ts'msyen use of clothing I discuss below, involved the donning of specific garments to convey sentiment to a newcomer audience. In this way, newcomer clothing within the Ts'msyen worlds became a sign of one's immediate feelings toward newcomers and the manner in which one intended to act towards them. These developments, though distinctly Ts'msyen, are reflective of the new reality – experienced by the members of the nine tribes – of living in a contact zone and regularly engaging with HBC newcomers. Ts'msyen people invested newcomer garments with new meanings, remaking them to serve their increasing needs for communication with these outsiders. In so doing, they created a practice which can be described as culturally hybrid.

In the hands of Ts'msyen people, newcomer clothing was transformed and made to serve purposes never intended by newcomers themselves. As with housing, clothing was

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<sup>256</sup> One of the most well-known North West Coast ceremonial adaptations to newcomer clothing is the button blanket, a ceremonial robe constructed from a Hudson's Bay Company blanket and shells or buttons arranged in a crest design.

thought about differently by Ts'msyen people. Newcomer garments were fit into the Ts'msyen meaning system and adapted to serve Ts'msyen needs and ideas. They were transformed into formal symbols of concord and mode of action. In this way items of clothing came to signal whether a Ts'msyen person was in a state of peace with the newcomers or that they were agreeable to dialogue with or be in the company of a newcomer. Conversely, the lack of newcomer garments and the wearing of traditional Ts'msyen clothing could be used to indicate a state of conflict with newcomers and the intention to respond to that conflict in a customarily Ts'msyen way.

The unique meanings and functions Ts'msyen people invested in newcomer garments were not lost on the residents of Fort Simpson. Indeed, the absence of newcomer garments worn by a Ts'msyen *sm'oogyit* was commonly read by the newcomers as a sign of something amiss. In 1853, while the H.M.S. *Virago* was at Fort Simpson, a conflict arose between the Captain of the vessel and the Ts'msyen chiefs over the theft of twenty-eight cannon shot. Observer William Hills recorded that one of the Ts'msyen chiefs, Nestadod, responded to the conflict by immediately changing from the European-styled "tolerable suit of clothes" he had been wearing when in contact with the officers and crew to a "piece of blanket," painting his face red and black, and rearranging his hair into a traditional Ts'msyen war style. Hills, who traveled to Fort Simpson on board the *Virago*, was quick to comprehend Nestadod's message: "He was very angry at the Captain punishing the chiefs" by prohibiting them from coming onboard the vessel.<sup>257</sup> Once the conflict between the Captain and the Ts'msyen chiefs was resolved, the stolen cannon shot returned to the vessel, Nestadod removed the paint from his face and

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<sup>257</sup> William Hills, "William H. Hills, Journal on Board H.M. S. Portland and H.M.S. Virago, 8 Aug. 1852-July 1853," Philip and Helen Akrigg Fonds, Box 20, The University of British Columbia Archives, July 1853, 106.

promptly changed back into his best newcomer clothing. Hills was assured that “‘all done silas,’ or his anger was all done now.”<sup>258</sup>

William Duncan observed similar actions during his stay at Fort Simpson. In one very well-known incident, the ‘showdown’ between Chief Ligeex and himself, Duncan indicated that his Sm’algyax language teacher, Arthur Wellington Clah, had changed from his usual dress of a newcomer pea-jacket and trousers to a blanket to meet the hostility of Chief Ligeex.<sup>259</sup> Anticipating the confrontation between Chief Ligeex and Duncan, Clah had altered his clothing to demonstrate his intention to respond in a Ts’msyen manner to Chief Ligeex’s threats. Waiting outside Duncan’s school for Ligeex’s arrival, Clah “instantly followed” him into the building and, armed with a gun, “literally stood guard over his pupil and *protégé*.”<sup>260</sup> Like Nestadod, Clah used the wearing of newcomer or Ts’msyen clothing to convey his emotional state as well as the customs – newcomer or Ts’msyen – by which he intended to act. This use of newcomer garments may have been unanticipated by the HBC newcomers but it was certainly understood.

### Conclusion

By the nineteenth century, the Ts’msyen had a long-established practice of innovation from outside sources, complete with a system for regulating the novel within the Ts’msyen worlds. Innovation was important to Ts’msyen identity and it was

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<sup>258</sup> Hills, “William H. Hills, Journal,” July 1853, 105, 106. While the *Virago* was undergoing repairs at Fort Simpson some of the vessel’s goods had been stored at the fort. A number of Ts’msyen people were able to steal twenty-eight cannon shot from amongst these goods, apparently smuggling them out of the fort by hiding them underneath their blankets. The conflict was not resolved until the shot were returned to the ship. Chief Sweet William responded to the conflict with the *Virago* by refusing the officers of the vessel entry to his house, just as the Captain had denied him access to the *Virago*.

<sup>259</sup> J.J. Halcombe, *Stranger than Fiction* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1872), 45-46. For another example of this practice see Duncan, Journal, 22 April 1858, 9614.

<sup>260</sup> Halcombe, *Stranger than Fiction*, 46.

significant for the acquisition and maintenance of power and wealth. The *sm'gigyet* had a special role in this regulating system, they had a particular motivation to innovate and, more importantly, they were the means by which innovations were introduced to the Ts'msyen at large, through the feasting complex. Kinship relations were central to the legitimate acquisition of innovations and Ts'msyen women filled a special role in the establishment of these connections. Where other forms of kinship with an outsider were lacking – such as a common *Pdeex* – the forming of a marital union between a Ts'msyen woman and the outsider could establish kinship. Indeed, this role was so fundamental to Ts'msyen people that within the *adaawx* and *maalsk* Ts'msyen women are commonly associated with outsiders and are characterized as the conduits through which new powers (innovations) from human and supernatural outsiders were acquired.

When Ts'msyen people first made contact with European outsiders in the eighteenth century they greeted them as they had other outsiders, approaching them as Real People who possessed powers that could be acquired. This attitude, together with the existence of the Ts'msyen system regulating the introduction of innovations from outsiders, and the importance innovation held within the Ts'msyen worlds, inclined Ts'msyen people towards innovation from these new outsiders and, with the establishment of Fort Simpson, from HBC newcomers in particular. When they innovated from the HBC newcomers of the fort they were acting in a Ts'msyen manner, performing the Ts'msyen tradition of acquiring new powers from outsiders. They identified particular ideas, material goods, and customs among the newcomers that could be made to serve Ts'msyen needs and wants within their own worlds. They selectively adopted these, assigned Ts'msyen meanings and functions to them, and introduced them into the

Ts'msyen worlds through their "traditional" system of the feasting complex. By this process they not only acquired new powers from the outsiders, they remade them as Ts'msyen.

These new practices, though Ts'msyen in function and meaning, continued to bear resemblance to their newcomer origins. Graveyard burials or markers, the use of windows and sawed lumber, or the wearing of newcomer clothing – while remade to serve Ts'msyen needs – were not so transformed as to have eliminated any trace of their HBC newcomer source. Indeed, although Ts'msyen innovators sought to transform their innovations into Ts'msyen privileges it was, in many ways, an innovation's connection to outsiders that gave it value. It is this mixed nature – the fusion of HBC newcomer customs with those of the Ts'msyen – that suggests cultural hybridity. For, when Ts'msyen people borrowed newcomer ideas, goods, or customs, read them through their own interpretive lens, blended them with their own traditions, and created something new from them they were performing what can retrospectively be discussed as hybridity.

I have focused here on the changes that numbers of Ts'msyen people seem to have willingly made at Laxlgu'alaams. But, as with any community, not all of the Ts'msyen people living at Laxlgu'alaams practiced these new forms or willingly accepted them. At one feast intended to introduce "new things" to the Ts'msyen at large, the host, Jacob Johnson, was directly challenged by some of his guests, asking "why do you want to have that?" while other guests "left right away, [and] didn't even stay for food."<sup>261</sup> Innovation and change, perhaps especially that resulting from the arrival of HBC newcomers, did not go uncontested. That said, I give little attention to such resistance because I am concerned here with the ways in which HBC newcomers and

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<sup>261</sup> Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 120. See also, footnote 96 above.

Ts'msyen people changed themselves in response to the other, producing new practices in the process. In the next two chapters I give more attention to the ways in which HBC newcomers and Ts'msyen people changed themselves, and to the significance that these changes held for the relations of power and authority within and between their respective communities.

Chapter Two:  
From Regulating People, Power and Authority to  
“Sharing in the Cup of Sinful Pleasure”: The Development and  
Practice of Hybrid Law and Cross-Participation in Ceremony  
at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu’alaams, 1834-1862

“Those who fear not God & those who do not even know there is a God  
agree in practice & can share in the cup of sinful pleasure.”<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, British Columbia Archives, 16 April 1858, 9613.

Shortly after the marriage between Sudaal, a daughter of Chief Ligeex of the Gispaxlo'ots, and Doctor John F. Kennedy, second officer at the Hudson Bay Company's (HBC) Fort Simpson (Nass), her father, Ligeex arranged for the HBC to relocate the fort to the Ts'msyen territory of Laxlgu'alaams. Both the HBC and the Gispaxlo'ots had their own motivations for this move. The HBC, having found it difficult to navigate their ships through Nass Straits to the fort, wished for a more navigable port; the Gispaxlo'ots seem to have desired the opportunity to control the trade between the Company and the Ts'msyen by acting as middlemen at the new location; and Sudaal reportedly wished to live at a site that was both warmer and closer to her people.<sup>263</sup> The relocation of the fort offered a solution which was mutually beneficial. It provided each party with a resolution to their main concerns without pushing them beyond their respective limits of comfort to achieve it. Even more significantly, though the newcomers and the Gispaxlo'ots likely did not anticipate the importance it would hold or the extent to which it was to develop, the move initiated a new relationship between them. Like a marriage, this new relationship was full of compromise and change. It would involve shared participation in significant cultural activities, the repurposing or remaking of each other's customs, and jointly developed new practices in which Ts'msyen and newcomer customs were intermingled (cultural amalgams). With the marriage of Sudaal and Dr. Kennedy then, came, in many ways, a marriage of Ts'msyen and newcomer cultures: while neither party

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<sup>263</sup> Ken Campbell, *Fort Simpson, Fur Fort at Laxlgu'alaams* (Prince Rupert, British Columbia: The Ts'msyen Chiefs for Ts'msyen Children Present and Future, 1992); In 1836, HBC officer Duncan Finlayson reported to Chief Factor John McLoughlin that the new location in Ts'msyen territory possessed "many advantages over the former, such as: being more central for the trade, affording better facilities for the Shipping, better resources in the way of living, and better means of guarding our frontiers from the encroachments of our enterprising opponents." Duncan Finlayson, as quoted in Duncan Finlayson to John McLoughlin, 29 September 1836, John McLoughlin, *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825-38*, ed. E.E. Rich (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1968), 324.

forsook their distinctiveness, they shared and, at least functionally, united some of their respective cultural practices in new, hybrid customs. Some of these shared and hybrid customs are the subject of this chapter.

This chapter begins with a discussion on terminology. I first describe hybridity as it relates to this study and then turn to discuss select shared formal activities which similarly functioned at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams to facilitate cultural change, mutual understanding, and the negotiation of power and authority. I then offer some examples of the culturally hybrid law which developed at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams as well as the practice of Ts'msyen-newcomer cross-participation in formal activities. Throughout, I demonstrate that a mutually intelligible – if not equally understood – world was developed at Fort Simpson in which the lives of newcomers and Ts'msyen people became intertwined and interdependent. This world was not one characterized by fellowship or trust – it was a world always in flux, with individuals and groups vying for power and authority, and conflict and violence often present. Still, both newcomers and Ts'msyen people continued to engage in relationships with each other, and were willing to take part in behaviours and customs they found foreign and even objectionable in order to maintain these connections.

For the Ts'msyen, it was not the “superior” European technology, as some might imagine, which served to motivate their relationships with the newcomers but rather, it would seem, particular individuals' or kin-groups' positioning within the Ts'msyen power structure (social hierarchy) and meaning system. Newcomer goods, ideas and powers became important for the maintenance or enhancement of one's status in Ts'msyen communities, as did the wealth of the fur trade and the role of middleman to

the trade. Ts'msyen individuals and kin-groups sought relationships with newcomers in part to obtain access to these qualities, for what they had come to mean in the Ts'msyen worlds. In contrast, the newcomers needed the Ts'msyen for their very survival. They required from the Ts'msyen, among other things, Indigenous foodstuffs, information, and safety. This condition of dependence likely encouraged the newcomers to accept a certain degree of cultural accommodation. Vulnerable, and unable to use force to secure their wants and needs, it was essential that the newcomers find some means by which to satisfy the Ts'msyen and to facilitate Ts'msyen support and cooperation towards the newcomers.<sup>264</sup> Altering their own behaviour to be more in line with the expectations of the Ts'msyen proved to be one of the key strategies the newcomers adopted to meet these ends.

Such accommodations made by Ts'msyen people and newcomers resulted, in part, in cross-participation in formal activities, shared participation in informal day to day activities, and the development of hybrid practices at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams.<sup>265</sup> The most fully developed hybrid customs at this locality seem to have been those of marriage and law. This is not coincidental but rather is a reflection of the primacy marriage and law held for both the Ts'msyen and newcomers during this contact period. Both of these institutions were fundamental to the successful operation of the fort and to

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<sup>264</sup> In February of 1842 one of the fort officers conducted a census of the Ts'msyen population outside the fort, including the number of guns and pistols in the villages. He recorded "the whole amount to 2500 souls exclusive of several Canoes that left for Nass...their number of Guns 222 Pistols 145." Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 22 February 1842. See also, Duncan Finlayson to John McLoughlin, 29 September 1836, in McLoughlin, *The Letters of John McLoughlin*, 323.

<sup>265</sup> Like cross-participation and hybrid practices, shared participation in informal day to day activities created opportunities for the development of intimacy and understanding between Ts'msyen people and newcomers. Because Fort Simpson relied so heavily on Ts'msyen people, for food, labour, information, transport, sexual and marriage relations, the newcomer employees were in daily contact with Ts'msyen people. The impact of this regular and close contact has not been satisfactorily explored to date. Unfortunately, do to the constraints of this project I have been unable to include an analysis of it here.

the functioning of the Ts'msyen worlds. Marriage, as I argue in Chapter One, was one of the key means by which Ts'msyen people could legitimately introduce innovations into their personal (or kin group) power repository. In the next chapter I examine some of the benefits marriage held for newcomers, as well as some of the ways in which marriage functioned for both newcomers and Ts'msyen people at this fort. The institution of law, on the other hand, was essential for the establishment and maintenance of power, authority, order and legitimacy, and receives treatment in this chapter.

### Terminology

I am concerned here with two kinds of hybridity. Hybridity is most commonly understood as the creation of something new. Often associated with contact zones and colonization, it refers to cultural amalgamation, the creation of new cultural forms through the intermingling of outsider and insider customs. The institutions of marriage and law at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams meet this definition. Alternately, hybridity can be thought of as cultural repurposing or remaking. In this case, previously existing customs or cultural symbols belonging to an other are adopted by an insider individual or group and invested with new meanings and new functions. The Ts'msyen use of newcomer clothing as a symbol of peaceable intentions or their incorporation of newcomer housing materials and design in longhouses as, in part, symbols of innovation and eminence are examples of such repurposing. Each of these forms of hybridity were present at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams, and were performed by both newcomers and Ts'msyen people, if unequally. Regardless of the extent to which they embraced cultural change and hybrid practices, many of the individuals living at Fort

Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams – both Ts'msyen and newcomer – participated in these developments and found ways to use hybridity for their own gain.

In addition to these forms of cultural hybridity, I am also interested in the cross-participation of Ts'msyen people and newcomers in formal activities like rituals and ceremonies as well as their shared participation in informal activities which made up everyday life. Both were spaces in which Ts'msyen people and newcomers jointly participated, creating shared contexts and building intimacies. Unlike the hybrid practices referred to above, which were given meanings and value by the innovating party or parties, the formal activities I refer to were jointly participated in but were not, it seems, given fundamentally new meanings or embraced by the other (outsider participant) as a new owned custom. To be sure, Ts'msyen and newcomer people who took part in ceremonies and rituals of the other did so for their own reasons and likely had their own, and very different, understandings of the practices, but in contrast to the hybrid customs which concurrently developed, the formal events I refer to remained the purview of the originating culture. Ts'msyen and newcomer people who took part in such formal customs of the other seem to have done so as outsider guests rather than as group members. The particular ceremony or ritual did not become their own. Instead, the ceremonies remained culturally foreign to them.

My final concern is with the shared informal activities of everyday life. These activities were also jointly participated in but not necessarily hybrid. They include, but were not limited to, employment for the fort, the production, preparation and consumption of foodstuffs, domestic chores and child rearing, and other interactions brought about through shared living accommodations and the intimacies of domestic

space. In contrast to the cross-participation in ‘foreign’ formal customs of the other, the shared informal activities of everyday life were owned by both the Ts’msyen and newcomer participants because they were mutually involved in the production and performance of these activities. And, as they lived and worked alongside one another, establishing tasks and carrying out the necessary work of everyday life, they were also fashioning these acts into a realm of routine. This transformation of shared activities into a world of the ordinary is of interest for my purposes because it supported the growth of intimacy between newcomers and Ts’msyen people. It could also facilitate conversations and accommodations and create a sense of common ground or community between them. Moreover, as scholar Ann Laura Stoler has suggested, politics resides in commonplaces and therefore, the study of everyday life can offer insight into, for example, the important issues of social status, personal or group identity, and power relations.<sup>266</sup>

That numbers of newcomers and Ts’msyen people developed relationships in which trust and intimacy were present does not, needless to say, indicate that all of their relations were characterized as such. Again, the relations between Ts’msyen people and newcomers were not idyllic, marked only by trust and friendship. Conflict was always present, and, very likely, their motivations were often far from romantic. Instead, they seem to have been largely driven by the more practical concerns of maneuvering for power and attaining, without the use of force, something they desired from the other. These motivations, among others, brought Ts’msyen people and newcomers into daily contact with each other at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu’alaams and also encouraged their participation in each other’s formal activities. Whatever their motivations and intentions

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<sup>266</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 11.

for their joint participation in these activities, the results were, in part, the development of intimacy and mutually comprehensible (though not necessarily equally understood) customs and symbols. While not required for the development of hybrid practices, cross- and shared participation in formal and informal activities, along with the connections these brought about, could, and sometimes did, facilitate the development of hybridity at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams.

### The Development of a Hybrid System of Law

The HBC relocation of Fort Simpson and its newcomers to Ts'msyen territory brought about a new relationship between the company and Ts'msyen people. In order to attain what they desired from each other, including good trade relations and an improved sense of safety for the newcomers, the Ts'msyen and the newcomers required mutually agreed upon rules of conduct which could regulate their interactions and provide, when followed, a measure of social order. A hybrid system of law served to meet these ends. Though the form owed more to Ts'msyen custom than newcomer, it was a hybrid institution because it was crafted by Ts'msyen people and newcomers from both of their customs. It facilitated order and stability at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams by establishing the terms of their interactions as well as the manner in which conflict between Ts'msyen people and newcomers was to be resolved. In addition, the hybrid law maintained both the Ts'msyen and newcomer social hierarchy and reinforced the power and authority of the elite class in each community. Finally, the hybrid institution of law maintained the internal autonomy of both the Ts'msyen and the HBC and served to validate their respective customs.

An established system of law was essential to the management of HBC forts and to the functioning of Ts'msyen society. Both the HBC and the Ts'msyen had a well developed system of law when, in 1834, Fort Simpson was relocated to Ts'msyen territory. These legal systems governed the affairs of their respective communities and, therefore, allowed for a measure of order and stability. Within the fort a system of law, backed by the discipline of corporeal punishment, allowed the officers to manage lower ranking employees and to maintain the strict regiment of regulation and order so prized by the HBC. For both the Ts'msyen and the newcomers, law also functioned as a support for the social hierarchy by legitimizing not only the social divisions within their respective communities but the claims to power and authority made by individuals of high rank. Hybrid law, then, insofar as it was observed acted to reinforce the existing social order and functioned as a basis of mutual understanding and agreement within the Ts'msyen and newcomers worlds.

Soon after the establishment of Fort Simpson in Ts'msyen territory conflicts arose between Ts'msyen people and newcomers. Both parties seem to have recognized that they required mutually agreed upon procedures and protocols to resolve these conflicts. Because the Ts'msyen held the larger degree of power – being in clear control of the territory, militarily skilled, relatively well-armed, and overwhelmingly outnumbering the newcomers – the resolution to such conflicts could have involved a complete conformation to Ts'msyen customs and demands. This kind of resolution would not have been unfeasible for the HBC. While the HBC newcomers generally followed British law, the company also had a history of legal and regulatory adaptations in response to regional variations and the particular relationships between a fort and an Indigenous group.

According to scholars Duane Thomson and Marianne Ignace, in the Interior Plateau region of the Cordillera, for example, representatives of the HBC modified their own practices to conform to Salish legal precepts: in crimes against property or person they followed Salish procedures and protocols because it was their only means to reach a resolution of these issues in this Salish-controlled jurisdiction.<sup>267</sup> At Fort Simpson the HBC newcomers faced similar circumstances to those of their counterparts in the Cordillera region, yet their solution was not to conform absolutely to local standards.

Instead, the Ts'msyen and the newcomers at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams developed a mutually agreeable and commonly understood hybrid system of law which functioned to provide a measure of stability and order, and offered agreed upon practices for resolving conflict and crime. The development of this hybrid system required accommodations by both the Ts'msyen and the newcomers. The newcomers occupied a precarious position within Ts'msyen territory and seem to have been quick to recognize that in order to maintain the relatively peaceful relations they experienced with the Ts'msyen they needed to develop resolutions to conflicts which were agreeable to the Ts'msyen. Just as the HBC had done in similar circumstances in other regions, such a positioning made them especially willing to adapt and accommodate. The Ts'msyen, on the other hand, had the power to refuse to accommodate. I would suggest that it was their propensity for innovation, especially by forming relationships with newcomers, as well as their interests in the continued existence of a fur trade establishment in their territory – for the increased access to newcomer goods it provided, and its associated prestige – that drove their choices (in contrast to the newcomers' need) to accommodate. The result was

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<sup>267</sup> Duane Thomson and Marianne Ignace, "They Made Themselves Our Guests': Power Relationships in the Interior Plateau Region of the Cordillera in the Fur Trade Era," *BC Studies*, No.14 (Summer 2005): 3-34.

a tacit agreement between the two parties, where the newcomers agreed to resolve conflict with Indigenous peoples largely by following an adapted Ts'msyen law, and the Ts'msyen agreed to make particular alterations to their law for the appeasement of the newcomers. In practice, this was the hybrid Ts'msyen-newcomer legal system.<sup>268</sup>

The hybrid institution of law both drew Ts'msyen people and newcomers closer together and afforded the opportunity for their continued political autonomy. Having a shared system for the resolution of Ts'msyen-newcomer conflicts and crimes linked Ts'msyen people and newcomers together in complex and important ways. In theory, they no longer pursued their own responses to conflicts and crimes in which both a Ts'msyen person and a newcomer were involved. Instead, they followed the mutually agreed upon procedures and protocols of the hybrid system. And, by laying the foundation for their future interactions – determining the rules of conduct which would regulate their interactions – the hybrid law also served to encourage further connections between Ts'msyen people and newcomers. It provided some assurance of stability and security. Moreover, the willingness of each party to accommodate and to engage in a shared system of law attested to their desires to maintain relations with the other and thus could act as a symbol for building trust between them. Their mutual participation in a shared system of law also demonstrated a willingness to fulfill the obligations of their relations to one another.

While the hybrid system of law linked them together and facilitated greater connections between them, it also permitted their continued autonomy. The newcomers, or rather, the officer newcomers, remained in charge of the business of the fort. They

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<sup>268</sup> The whole system of law between the Ts'msyen and newcomers may not have had the same Ts'msyen partiality. Further research is needed in order to better or understanding of this system.

continued to enforce, though not always successfully, their pre-existing British laws as they concerned the actions of newcomer workers. And, in particular circumstances, even used the hybrid Ts'msyen-newcomer system of law to execute HBC law. Similarly, the Ts'msyen continued to practice their pre-existing Ts'msyen system of law in their villages, towards other Ts'msyen people, and towards visiting outsider Indigenous people. With few exceptions, the HBC newcomers did not try to restrict Ts'msyen political or legal autonomy, despite finding many of their actions disagreeable.<sup>269</sup>

### The Hybrid Law in Application

As I suggested above, the hybrid system of law that developed at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams was a new creation, jointly produced by Ts'msyen and newcomer people. Though it was largely based on Ts'msyen law there were significant alterations made to bring it more in line with newcomer ideas and acceptable norms. This then, the merging of newcomer and Ts'msyen practices, was the substance of the hybrid law. And, though the law was likely not identically comprehended by Ts'msyen people and newcomers it was mutually intelligible. By this I mean that it set in place mutually understood guidelines for their interactions with each other and, importantly, established procedures and protocols by which conflict and crimes between Ts'msyen people and newcomers would be resolved. This hybrid law was likely, at times, intentionally crafted by Ts'msyen people and newcomers, with explicit negotiations. At other moments its

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<sup>269</sup> The exceptions generally concerned matters of death. The newcomers, or at least those officers who recorded their ideas in the fort journal, objected to the Ts'msyen use of killing to resolve conflicts over insults, injuries, or deaths. On some occasions, the officers of the fort intervened in Indigenous conflicts in an attempt to prevent deaths. They generally attempted to negotiate a resolution to the conflict through the exchange of property – often providing gifts from the fort to facilitate the process. While they seem to have been motivated by a general distaste for such killings they were certainly also motivated by a desire to maintain peace and good relations with both parties for the good of the trade.

creation was likely accidental and even born out of misunderstandings. I now turn to examine some of the most commonly practiced elements of this hybrid system.

For my purposes, I am especially interested in aspects of the hybrid law which facilitated further relationships between Ts'msyen people and newcomers, and those that particularly concerned power and authority. By far the most commonly recorded and, seemingly, most commonly practiced feature of the hybrid Ts'msyen-newcomer law was the payment of goods for the offense of causing an insult, an injury, or a death. Because the perpetration of such offenses by newcomers towards Ts'msyen people, whether intentional or accidental, were likely to result in serious conflicts between the involved parties, the establishment of a legal process by which these cases were to be resolved worked, as mentioned above, to encourage stability and security and, therefore, promoted continued Ts'msyen-newcomer relations. This is the first practice that I explore. While aspects of the hybrid law supported further connections between Ts'msyen people and newcomers other features of the law served to facilitate the continued operation and autonomy of newcomer and Ts'msyen worlds by upholding and reinforcing their internal power structures and social hierarchies. Such practices include the Ts'msyen capture of newcomer deserters, the Ts'msyen transport of accused newcomer criminals, and the newcomer adoption of Ts'msyen slavery. An examination of these practices forms the final part of this section.

Offences concerning insults, injuries, or death were considered particularly significant within the Ts'msyen worlds. An injury or an accident indicated a loss of prestige and power both because it signified an incorrect relationship with *naxnox* (the supernatural or spirit world) and also because the occurrence of such an event diminished

one's power. Property distribution was the means by which a defect could be remedied; it worked to inform other Real beings that any deficiency had been resolved.<sup>270</sup> In application this meant that a Ts'msyen person who suffered a wound or experienced an accident resolved their loss of power or prestige through the distribution of goods in a feast and, if another were believed at fault for the incident, by the receipt of payment from that other, or by taking action to cause injury or even death to the person deemed responsible or to his or her kin.

The newcomers of Fort Simpson found it necessary and expedient to participate in this Ts'msyen system of recompensing victims.<sup>271</sup> While they objected to the use of violence against newcomers to resolve any deficiency caused by such incidents they did agree to make payments to meet their obligations for insults and injuries considered by the Ts'msyen to have been brought about by newcomers. This was so even when the newcomers themselves considered these insults or injuries rightfully deserved, or when they recognized no fault of their own in the event itself. During the early years of the fort, these payments were negotiated between chiefs and the newcomer officers, often under the threat of Ts'msyen violence should the fort refuse to pay.<sup>272</sup> Initially, Ts'msyen representatives sought relatively large amounts of property from the newcomers. The officers of the fort met these demands with a refusal to pay anything at all. The process of negotiation often lasted several days, with a Ts'msyen chief demanding goods to the

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<sup>270</sup> Margaret Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts for Traditional and Current Coast Ts'msyen Feasts* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1985), 50.

<sup>271</sup> In 1860 William Duncan succinctly described this system as "the Indian law of Compensation for injuries or insults The impossibility of reconciliation without it." William Duncan, *Journal*, 6 March 1860, 9893. According to Ts'msyen scholar Patricia June Vickers, if an offending family did not settle the issue with the grieved family than the latter had the right to take double the lives that were lost. Patricia June Vickers, "Ayaawx (Ts'msyen ancestral law): The power of Transformation," Ph.D. (University of Victoria, 2008), 71.

<sup>272</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 5 May 1836; 7 June 1836; William Duncan, *Journal*, 26 April 1859.

amount of, for example, “30 Blankets and 2 Guns or 50 without Guns” for an offense such as having been struck by a newcomer after having forced his way into the fort. In these initial cases the officers of the fort worked to secure a chief’s agreement to a much lower amount.<sup>273</sup> By the early 1850s, negotiation was seldom required for the resolution of these conflicts: the Ts’msyen and the newcomers had developed a mutually agreeable system in which insults and injuries experienced by Ts’msyen people, with a few exceptions, were responded to with payments made by the newcomers.<sup>274</sup> Even when the insult or injury occurred as far away as Victoria or the American community of Port Townsend, HBC newcomers agreed to “satisfy them with property for the real and suffered injuries received from [newcomer] fellow country men,” noted the Anglican missionary William Duncan in 1859.<sup>275</sup>

Perhaps the most successful aspect of this compensatory hybrid law involved payment for death. This facet of the pre-existing Ts’msyen legal system seems to have been readily adopted by the HBC newcomers. As mentioned above, under Ts’msyen law, compensation (in the form of payment in goods) was to be provided by the party deemed to be responsible for a death to the victim’s kin. An individual could be considered criminally responsible for a death whether that death was brought about by accident, was a willful murder, was a justifiable homicide, or was believed to have been caused by a

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<sup>273</sup> Payments made by the newcomers could range from “a clothing and a keg of Liquor” to “Ten 2 ½ pt. Blankets.” Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 7 June 1836; 16 July 1857.

<sup>274</sup> Exceptions included an intentional insult or injury received by a low-ranking Ts’msyen person, especially if that person had been engaged in some type of behaviour seen by the newcomers to have been deserving of the assault. This was the case in 5 March 1842 when two newcomer workers gave a “sound drubbing” to an enslaved Indigenous person and an outsider Ts’msyen man (from Kitselas) who had attempted to deceive the newcomers into providing double payment for canoes of seaweed purchased by the fort for garden fertilizer. It is impossible to know exactly when the newcomers and Ts’msyen people established a relatively standard payment for these offenses as much of the fort journal is missing from the 1840s. When the fort journal picks up again in January of 1852 this had become part of their hybrid law. The amount of the payment varied depending upon the status of the Ts’msyen person who claimed the offense: the higher their social status the more compensation was expected and paid.

<sup>275</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 26 April 1859, 9730.

supernatural act by the assailant.<sup>276</sup> From my limited examination it is difficult to discern the precise extent to which newcomers participated in this practice and just how much of this law was incorporated into the hybrid legal system. However, newcomer records do indicate that the newcomer residents of Fort Simpson quickly settled into the practice of paying compensation for Ts'msyen deaths which occurred directly or indirectly at newcomer hands.<sup>277</sup> In the succeeding years, negotiation or Ts'msyen threats became unnecessary as the newcomers promptly offered payment whenever such a death occurred. Deaths by falling equipment, rolling logs, and even when a heart attack was the likely cause, were all readily met with compensation to the victim's family.<sup>278</sup> Even the Anglican missionary William Duncan, who resented this aspect of Ts'msyen law and actively worked to reshape it and Ts'msyen customs more generally, found himself paying compensation for death. Unwilling to acknowledge, even in his journal, his own submission to this standard practice, he was careful to explain that he "did not agree to making payments as if I had killed the man." Rather, it was the poverty of the deceased man's kin, Duncan declared, that compelled his payment.<sup>279</sup>

While it might seem as though the newcomers were the only ones to accommodate in circumstances of insult, injury, or death – and therefore that the shared law was Ts'msyen rather than hybrid – in fact, the Ts'msyen made significant modifications to

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<sup>276</sup> A typical example of a supernatural act causing death was that of a 'sorcerer' creating an illness in someone by manipulating objects and properties. Scholars John Cove and George McDonald suggest that chiefs regularly employed sorcerers to frighten Ts'msyen people into joining secret societies. John Cove and George McDonald, eds., *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes: Tsimshian Narratives I*, collected by Marius Barbeau and William Beynon (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987), xii.

<sup>277</sup> The payment of goods was a more agreeable resolution for the newcomers than suffering physical retribution.

<sup>278</sup> See, for example, Fort Simpson Journal, 27 June, 1853; 4 March 1858; Inskip, "Transcripts and Summaries of Part of *Virago* journals," Akrigg Papers, Box 20, UBC Special Collections, 251.

<sup>279</sup> The Ts'msyen man had died while employed by Duncan in the construction of his school building. William Duncan, *Journal*, 30 July 1858, 9641.

meet newcomer cultural expectations and thereby enabled the development of a hybrid law. They agreed to accept payments of less value than they wished for and than seem to have been the usual practice in cases between Ts'msyen people or Ts'msyen people and outsider Indigenous people.<sup>280</sup> They also seem to have agreed to the newcomers' timetable for negotiating settlements, more quickly coming to an agreement and, with some negotiation, almost always accepting the payments offered by newcomers. This differed from the pre-existing Ts'msyen practice and its concurrent performance in cases of insult, injury, or death between Ts'msyen people or between Ts'msyen people and outsider Indigenous people. In these cases resolution was often long and protracted, with sometimes multiple offers of payments rejected. In the Ts'msyen worlds it was the prerogative of the injured party or parties to reject or accept the compensation offered by the accused party, and the 'victim' or his or her family (in the case of death) could elect to use violence instead of accepting payment.<sup>281</sup>

An even more significant accommodation for the Ts'msyen involved such a practice of physical retribution. They seem to have agreed to eliminate its use as a means to resolve conflicts arising from insults, injuries, or deaths when they concerned

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<sup>280</sup> Some of the payments they accepted from newcomers were of less value in the Ts'msyen worlds than those they would have received from the responsible party had they been Indigenous. More regularly, however, they accepted payments from the newcomers which were of less value for the newcomers relative to the wealth of the newcomers.

<sup>281</sup> The rejection of payment in favour of violence seems to have been a somewhat regular occurrence among the Ts'msyen living at Laxlgu'alaams. In one famous example, Ts'msyen Arthur Wellington Clah sought the shelter of Fort Simpson when the family of a woman he had killed rejected his offer of payment in favour of using violence. Clah, afraid for his life, seems to have used his kinship connections with Neshaki McNeill (the Nisga'a wife of Captain McNeill, the commanding officer of the fort, and a close relative of Clah's wife) to secure residence inside the fort and safety from his victim's kin. This outcast state was the condition Anglican missionary William Duncan found him in upon his arrival at Fort Simpson in 1857. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 13 September 1857; William Duncan, *Journal*, 2 November 1857, 9564; Robert Galois, "Colonial Encounters: The Worlds of Arthur Wellington Clah, 1855-1881," *BC Studies*, Numbers 115 & 116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/1998), 111; Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 97.

newcomers. In the Ts'msyen worlds, as noted above, an individual or their kin who had received an insult or injury from another Indigenous person, or whose kin had been killed as a result of another Indigenous person's actions (corporeal or incorporeal), could choose to resolve the occurrence by injuring or even killing the individual considered responsible, or one of his or her kin.<sup>282</sup> According to one scholar, Ts'msyen law specified that in cases where a death was caused by another the victim's family had the right to take double the lives they had lost if payment were not promptly offered by the assailant's family as restitution.<sup>283</sup> The newcomers disapproved of this system, finding it offensive to their sensibilities, unpredictable, and inconvenient for trade. Already inhabiting a precarious position within Ts'msyen territory, being far outnumbered and out-armed by the Ts'msyen, the newcomers recognized that to engage in a system of law which permitted the use of physical force as a means to resolve conflict could have quickly led to their demise.<sup>284</sup>

The Ts'msyen initially tried to secure newcomer participation in the use of violence as a means to resolve these kinds of offenses. In 1839, for example, Ts'msyen people suggested that a Ginaxangik prisoner – held at the fort for the newcomer crime of thieving potatoes from the fort garden – either be freed or be killed and that “they would revenge his death...observ[ing] that the white men would be going out of the fort bye &

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<sup>282</sup> When the person injured was of high rank they could choose to resolve the injury or insult by injuring two people of low-rank from among the responsible person's people. Such resolutions often led to cycles of violence, as the kin of the person believed responsible for the initial incident might respond to the violence by making their own attack to balance the injuries received. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 2 October 1836; 18 June 1842; 11 February 1853; 21 October 1856; 13 September 1857.

<sup>283</sup> Patricia June Vickers, “Ayaawx (Ts'msyen ancestral law): The power of Transformation,” Ph.D. (University of Victoria, 2008), 71.

<sup>284</sup> In February of 1842 one of the fort officers conducted a census of the Ts'msyen population outside the fort, including the number of guns and pistols in the villages. He recorded “the whole amount to 2500 souls exclusive of several Canoes that left for Nass...their number of Guns 222 Pistols 145.” Fort Simpson Journal, 22 February 1842.

bye.”<sup>285</sup> In a more pointed example, a chief whose slave had been chastised by newcomers upon being caught stealing from the blacksmith’s shop in 1846, proposed resolving the insult he had experienced, “affronted in the person of his vassal,” by having Mr. Work “kill the blacksmith, while he himself... would sacrifice a slave.”<sup>286</sup> The newcomers met such suggestions with refusals and with declarations of their preparedness to defend themselves in any attacks upon newcomers the Ts’msyen might undertake. Though the newcomers would not conform to Ts’msyen standards on this matter they recognized that some mutual resolution was needed as, in the words of one fort officer, “it is not our interest to get into serious quarrels with them.”<sup>287</sup> Ts’msyen people’s willingness, then, to accommodate these concerns by removing physical retribution as a means to resolve conflicts with the newcomers was necessary to both the creation of a hybrid system of law and to the newcomers’ survival.<sup>288</sup> As, of course, was newcomer’s willingness to pay compensation.

This Ts’msyen accommodation was not an insignificant one. The use of physical force as a means to rectify a perceived insult, injury, or even a death was common in the Ts’msyen worlds. More than that, it seems to have been an important practice and

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<sup>285</sup> Fort Simpson Journal, 27 August 1839. As early as 1836 Indigenous people attempted to incorporate the newcomers into the practice of physical retribution for crimes, threatening physical retribution against two newcomer employees after a chief had been killed by a Ts’msyen man while employed by the company to retrieve a stolen axe. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 5 May 1836.

<sup>286</sup> George Simpson, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World During the Years 1841 and 1842* (London: H. Colburn, 1847), 232.

<sup>287</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 27 August 1839.

<sup>288</sup> Over the nearly thirty year period under study here there were occasional conflicts between Ts’msyen people and newcomers which were resolved using physical force against property. These cases generally involved a newcomer reneging on an agreement made with a Ts’msyen person or insulting a Ts’msyen individual. In these cases a Ts’msyen person, in order to reconcile such an offense, physically destroyed newcomer property. The HBC officers seem to have acknowledged such actions as a legitimate response as they appear not to have punished or penalized in any way the Ts’msyen perpetrators. See, for example, Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 4 January 1860; William Duncan, *Journal*, 22 April 1858; William Duncan, *Journal*, 18 August 1859, 9766; William Duncan, *The British Columbia Mission, or, Metlahkatlah*, Church Missionary Society, CIHM no.: 14633 (London: Church Missionary House, 1871), 45.

perhaps was even the preferred method by which such offenses were resolved by Ts'msyen people. More research is necessary to gain a more thorough understanding of this practice, however, it is clear that the use of physical force to resolve offenses was very common particularly, it seems, when the injured party was a person of high social status. It may be that physical retribution became more important to the Ts'msyen legal system as guns and ammunition became more readily available, and also as alcohol was more frequently consumed.<sup>289</sup> By the 1850s, injuries and deaths from gunshot wounds were regular occurrences in the Ts'msyen villages outside the fort and many of these incidents occurred as attempts to resolve earlier insults, injuries, or deaths. Given the significance physical retribution played in the Ts'msyen legal system, the elimination of this practice in cases involving newcomers was a considerable accommodation.

While accommodation was central to the development of this shared system of law at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams neither the newcomer officers nor the Ts'msyen elite seem willing to have accommodated at the expense of their own internal autonomy, power, or authority. As a result, the hybrid law was constructed in such a way that it functioned to maintain these features of the Ts'msyen and newcomer communities. Historical geographer Cole Harris has examined the important role HBC officers' authority played in the management of fur trade posts.<sup>290</sup> Although not all of his conclusions are applicable to Fort Simpson, the ability of officers to establish and

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<sup>289</sup> In the 1850s, physical aggression and, specifically, gunshots frequently accompanied the consumption of alcohol in the Ts'msyen villages surrounding the fort. One of the results seems to have been an increase in the use of physical retribution to reconcile the offense of the initial injury, insult or death. In such cases, it appears as though the victim or his or her kin took immediate action to reinstate their balance with Real beings: instead of waiting for the aggressor to offer payment the victim or his or her kin, often in a state of inebriation, they responded by shooting or otherwise physically attacking the offender. These situations often set off a cycle of violence, with each party responding to an attack with their own assault.

<sup>290</sup> Cole Harris, "Strategies of Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade," in *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 31-67.

maintain their authority was essential here for keeping order within the fort and convincing newcomer employees generally to carry out the work of the fort. The ability of the officers to capture newcomer deserters and to carry out punishment of employees they considered insubordinate or criminal was central to the officers' power and authority at Fort Simpson. It is therefore not surprising that these aspects of newcomer law were maintained alongside the hybrid legal system devised by Ts'msyen people and newcomers.<sup>291</sup>

The precarious position of the fort and its newcomer residents made it difficult for officers to enforce HBC regulations at Fort Simpson without the cooperation of Ts'msyen people. As has already been mentioned, the newcomers were greatly outnumbered and, within a short span of time, out-armed by the Ts'msyen. The significance of their vulnerable condition was not lost on them and resulted, in part, in an unwillingness to send parties of newcomers after deserters if the distance they were to travel from the fort was great or the period of time they were to be away was significant. In addition, newcomers' limited knowledge of the surrounding region, and their inferior technology and skill when it came to small ocean-going crafts reduced the likelihood that they would actually capture a deserter. Where the weaknesses of newcomers hindered such success the strength of Ts'msyen people virtually assured it: their expert knowledge of their territory as well as their renowned skill for traveling rapidly and adeptly on ocean waters made the success of capturing a newcomer deserter very likely. To a degree, then, newcomer officers found themselves dependent upon Ts'msyen people for the enforcement of HBC law and order at Fort Simpson.

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<sup>291</sup> This aspect of the hybrid law was regularly contested by newcomer workers. Some of their more successful tactics in the subversion of this practice are discussed in Chapter Three.

In its performance, the hybrid Ts'msyen-newcomer legal system included Ts'msyen enforcement of HBC newcomer regulations on newcomer workers. HBC officers hired Ts'msyen people to locate and restore to them newcomer workers who had deserted from the fort.<sup>292</sup> In addition to capturing these runaways, Ts'msyen people at least occasionally delivered punishment upon newcomer deserters. When the fort blacksmith deserted in 1839, for example, newcomer officer Dr. John Kennedy directed a party of Ts'msyen people to “go and search for” the man and punish him by “plunder[ing] him if they saw him.”<sup>293</sup> A perfect example of the hybrid law in practice, Kennedy's directive had Ts'msyen people carrying out a newcomer custom but with the new and locally developed aspect of also plundering (not a part of newcomer customs). This kind of collaboration between Ts'msyen people and newcomer officers worked to uphold the authority of the officers at Fort Simpson. Ts'msyen support gave the officers the means to ensure that HBC regulations were carried out at this fort, providing them with the power to back up their demands that workers obey officers' orders and comply with HBC rules.

As the hybrid law evolved, the practice of Ts'msyen participation in the enforcement of HBC regulation and, thus, in newcomer officers' authority, expanded. Ts'msyen people eventually came to be transporting accused newcomer criminals from Fort Simpson to Fort Victoria, a distance of more than fifteen hundred kilometers. What is more, in their roles as the conveyors of newcomer prisoners Ts'msyen people served as guards of the accused, controlling their person and seeing that the prisoner “does not

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<sup>292</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 7 October 1839; 8 October 1839; 11 February 1856; 12 February 1856.

<sup>293</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 5 October 1839.

escape” during the two week journey.<sup>294</sup> They also delivered the necessary legal documents to Fort Victoria, including the charges against the accused, the evidence, and details of how the officers at Fort Simpson wished their HBC superiors to proceed in the matter. Without a doubt, the Ts’msyen transport of newcomer workers accused of criminal activity at Fort Simpson worked to uphold and even to extend officers’ authority.

That newcomer officers were willing to place the lives of HBC workers in the hands of Ts’msyen people indicates not only the officers’ dependence on the Ts’msyen, and the overall vulnerability of newcomers in Ts’msyen territory, but also something of the nature of the relationships between Ts’msyen people and newcomers. While HBC officers seem, from their commentary, to have had few positive feelings for the newcomer workers at Fort Simpson they remained responsible for their persons and were, if for this reason alone, unlikely to unduly jeopardize their security. Therefore, when Ts’msyen people operated as the guards and conveyors of newcomer prisoners they were doing so because the HBC officers of Fort Simpson trusted them to deliver the men to their destination unharmed. Though the Ts’msyen – a people with an extensive slave-trading network – had the power and imagination to injure or even enslave and trade newcomer accused criminals, the HBC officers seem never to have doubted that accused newcomer criminals would be safely transported. It was the existence of the hybrid law – with its established procedures, protocols, and guidelines – and, quite clearly, the continued Ts’msyen adherence to it that gave HBC officers this confidence.

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<sup>294</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 30 May 1857; 29 September 1858. The newcomer workers transported in this way had generally been caught stealing trade goods from the fort.

The maintenance of Ts'msyen and newcomer internal autonomy, power, and authority was central to the hybrid legal system at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. In the example above, I offered an illustration of how the hybrid law could function to support the power and authority of HBC officers: The Ts'msyen capture of newcomer deserters and their transport of newcomer prisoners were physical acts which validated both HBC regulations and newcomer officers' right to command and control workers. Under the hybrid law, HBC officers were to maintain their internal autonomy and have dominion over their workers – at least in regards to workers' actions within the fort. Similarly, the hybrid legal system upheld Ts'msyen autonomy and, most especially, maintained the power and authority of the Ts'msyen elite.

The versatility of this system meant that a single practice could serve diverse functions. For example, when the newcomers turned to Ts'msyen people to capture deserters and transport prisoners they were acknowledging Ts'msyen people's dominion over their territory. It was the Ts'msyen, not the newcomers, who had the power and the authority to enforce law and carry out justice (even if it was newcomer justice upon newcomers) in Ts'msyen territory. By such acts newcomers conceded their own dependence within Ts'msyen territory and confirmed Ts'msyen sovereignty in the region. This kind of deferential newcomer performance was likely necessary for the development of a hybrid system of law, as well as for the continued security of newcomer people in Ts'msyen territory.

Ts'msyen people seem to have taken on the roles of captors, conveyors and guards of newcomers fairly easily. Many of the Ts'msyen had had years of experience in these kinds of activities through the Ts'msyen slave-trafficking system. The Ts'msyen,

like other Indigenous peoples on the Northwest Coast, had a hierarchically organized society which included an enslaved class. Consequently, numbers of Ts'msyen people – especially those people of high rank – were accustomed to tracking and capturing runaway slaves, and to transporting unwilling canoe passengers in the form of enslaved prisoners. More than preparing Ts'msyen people for the task of guarding and transporting newcomer prisoners, of course, this system of slavery had important functions within Ts'msyen society. As part of the Ts'msyen social system, slavery was central to the traditional operation of the Ts'msyen worlds. Moreover, slaves were wealth and status markers and the possession of an enslaved person by a Ts'msyen person served as an indicator of the Ts'msyen individual's rank and power. Though not a legal practice in the sense that it did not entail criminal offences or their penalties, slavery deserves consideration as part of the hybrid legal system at Fort Simpson/Lax̱gu'alaams because of its status as a lawful practice.

The newcomers residing at Fort Simpson largely observed local law and custom in the matter of slavery. They negotiated minor modifications to the Ts'msyen custom, incorporating some newcomer ideas, in order to develop a hybrid practice. Despite the British Parliament's 1833 prohibition of slavery within the British Empire, the HBC newcomers followed Ts'msyen custom and engaged in slave-holding at Fort Simpson/Lax̱gu'alaams.<sup>295</sup> During the period under study, at least three different officers and four workers (with their wives) owned Indigenous slaves at Fort Simpson.<sup>296</sup> One of

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<sup>295</sup> Missionary William Duncan was aware of newcomers at Fort Simpson owning slaves, as he recorded in his journal a conversation he had with Mary Quintal, the Ts'msyen wife of HBC worker Francois Quintal, concerning the treatment of these slaves. Duncan, *Journal*, 21 December 1857, 9570.

<sup>296</sup> John Kennedy, husband of Sudaal, likely owned at least three slaves between 1833 and 1842. William McNeill's wife, Nisakx, owned a slave who lived at the fort with the couple. Hamilton Moffat, son-in-law of McNeill, owned a slave with his wife Lucy Moffat (nee McNeill). Mary Quintal (wife of HBC worker Francois Quintal), John Sabeston, John Smith and Coap all owned slaves within the fort as well. Fort

these, Hamilton Moffat, the chief officer at Fort Simpson for periods in the early 1860s, and son-in-law of William McNeill, purchased a female slave for his personal household in 1860, paying “80 Blankets 2 Guns” and the obligatory small presents.<sup>297</sup> Such newcomer participation in the Indigenous slavery system served to re-enforce the practice.

In addition to their purposeful ownership of enslaved people, newcomers also followed Ts’msyen law in their observance of the Ts’msyen social hierarchy and its attendant enslaved class. The newcomers seem to have accepted slavery as more than merely a circumstance an Indigenous person might find themselves in; it seems to have been viewed by some, at least, as a character descriptor. The remarks of the officers who kept the fort journal indicate that whether in the company of their owners, employed at the fort, or trading goods to the fort, they considered these men and women slaves and treated them with disdain. William Duncan seemed to have considered the behaviour of the officers towards vulnerable and powerless slaves as fitting examples of the “great wickedness” of the newcomers at Fort Simpson.<sup>298</sup> Although he certainly had his own motivations for discrediting the HBC and its officers at Fort Simpson, Duncan’s reflections offer some insight into the dynamic between HBC officers and Ts’msyen slaves at Fort Simpson. According to Duncan, when a “poor slave boy” had “begged for more allowance of treacle on receiving his rations from the fort” the commanding officer, William McNeill, responded with a “lion rant & roar... cursing dreadfully the name of

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Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 13 January 1836; 14 October 1841; 15 July 1858; 20 July 1858; April 17 1857; William Duncan, *Journal*, 21 December 1857, 9569.

This practice of HBC employees keeping Indigenous slaves was practiced at at least one other fort, Fort Rupert. Robert Hunt and his Tlingit wife Mary Ebbets Hunt (Anislaga) owned a slave there. Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles According to Crests and Topics*, vol. 1, Anthropological Series no.30, Bulletin No. 119 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, n.d.), 654.

<sup>297</sup> Fort Simpson Journal, 16 June 1860; Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, 654.

<sup>298</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 9772, 20 August 1858.

God.”<sup>299</sup> While perhaps not a contrast to McNeill’s behaviour towards his own newcomer workers, it stands in distinction from his more usual treatment of high ranking Ts’msyen who, more often than not (despite the reluctance of the officers) received gifts in their interactions with the newcomers.

The newcomers seem to have given little or no thought to freeing slaves – within the fort or without – or to affecting changes in Ts’msyen society which might result in the freedom of the enslaved class.<sup>300</sup> On a relatively small number of occasions throughout the period the officers of the fort paid ransoms for slaves to Ts’msyen and other Indigenous people, particularly the Haida, but these actions were taken not for the freedom of the individuals or in objection to the system of slavery itself, but because particular gain was seen in the exchange. Generally these ransoms were made for newcomers captured by Indigenous people when their vessel was seized or sunk or for high ranking Indigenous people from communities friendly to the Hudson’s Bay Company or with whom the HBC were trying to establish friendly relations in the hope that a return of prisoners might secure their goodwill.<sup>301</sup>

Although HBC newcomers accepted the existence of the Ts’msyen slavery system, and even participated in it through the ownership of Indigenous slaves, there were some

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<sup>299</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 9772, 20 August 1858.

<sup>300</sup> That kind of outsider-driven change came only with the arrival of the missionary William Duncan in 1857. While Duncan objected to slavery he did little, at first, to reform the system, simply encouraging slave owners to treat their slaves well. It was only with the move to Metlakatla in 1862 that Duncan was able to prohibit slavery within the village, but this did little to improve their status among other Ts’msyen people. According to historian Carol Cooper, former slaves who lived at Metlakatla were “never fully accepted by the native residents of the mission villages.” Onetime slaves seem to have either resided with other former slave families or continued to live within their former masters’ house, now serving as domestic servants. The children of these former slaves carried the stigma of that descent. Cooper, “Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast,” 63.

<sup>301</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), *Post Journal*, 4 October 1852; 6 October 1852; 3 November 1852; 22 September 1838; 19 April 1857; 16 June 1857; 23 June 1857. On one occasion the fort purchased an enslaved Haida woman from the Ts’msyen, hoping to make a prisoner exchange with her people, likely for the son of the fort carpenter, Jean-Baptiste Jollibois. Fort Simpson (Nass), *Post Journal*, 7 June 1839; 2 December 1839.

aspects of this Indigenous practice which the newcomers found objectionable and worked to change. The newcomer officers – whose ideas are more accessible to us because they wrote the fort journal – generally seem to have objected to slave trafficking; the killing of slaves, particularly when committed during a show of wealth in an Indigenous ceremony; and the mistreatment of enslaved people by their masters. On the matter of slave trafficking the newcomers had little room to negotiate. They objected to the trade in slaves not, it seems, for reasons of morality but rather because of the “great deal of predatory warfare” which accompanied the trade and the negative effect this violence, instability, and commerce had on HBC business.<sup>302</sup> Whatever the newcomers’ interests and concerns, the capture and sale of slaves were far too important to the Ts’msyen for concessions to be made in this regard. Slave trafficking was to remain a lawful practice at Fort Simpson/Lax̄lgu’alaams during this period.

The newcomers had far more success negotiating over the treatment of slaves. It was changes in this regard, along with the HBC newcomers’ willingness to adopt and legitimize the Ts’msyen slavery system, which established the hybrid and legal practice of slavery at this post. At times, newcomers protested against the ill-treatment of an enslaved person by his or her master. This seems to have been especially true concerning the treatment of slaves within the fort. On one occasion, having witnessed what he considered to be the excessive beating of a female slave by her Ts’msyen owner, the wife of a newcomer worker, the Chief Trader of the fort solicited the missionary William Duncan to intervene on the slave’s behalf, asserting that “if she was not interfered with the slave would be sure to lose her life.”<sup>303</sup> More often, however, newcomers were

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<sup>302</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 21 June 1838.

<sup>303</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 21 December 1857, 9569-9570.

concerned not with the corporeal punishment of a slave but with what they considered murder.<sup>304</sup>

HBC newcomers disapproved of the killing of slaves, particularly during a show of wealth in an Indigenous ceremony.<sup>305</sup> They used what bargaining power they had with the Ts'msyen and other Indigenous peoples to secure the near elimination of this practice, at least in the immediate vicinity of the fort.<sup>306</sup> They turned instead to the less objectionable, in newcomer eyes, ceremonial destruction of material property as a demonstration of wealth and power. With these accommodations by Tsimshian people the aspects of the slavery system considered unacceptable by newcomers were resolved. The modified system of slavery came to be considered by Ts'msyen and newcomers alike as a lawful practice and, comprising both Ts'msyen and some newcomer ideas, it also operated as a hybrid one.

It is difficult to determine just how significant these accommodations were for the Ts'msyen people who implemented them. Newcomer observers disagreed with each other as to the importance of the practice of ceremonial killing slaves among the Ts'msyen. Some reported that they had “never known an instance of such” taking place among the Ts'msyen while others claimed that it was “sometimes” carried out “to satiate

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<sup>304</sup> It would appear that some of the newcomers of Fort Simpson treated their slaves badly. Mary Quintal (Noas Pierre) reported to William Duncan that she had witnessed HBC officers beat their workers and their slaves. William Duncan, *Journal*, 21 December 1857, 9570.

<sup>305</sup> In 1858 the officers of the fort recorded their objections to such ceremonial killing, writing that “we tried to prevent the poor creature being killed.” Although they effected change in this practice they were not always successful in achieving their desires. In this instance the ceremonial killing of an enslaved woman was deemed to be more important by the chief, Nislaganos, and his daughter, whose feast it was, than pleasing the HBC. Because Nislaganos' daughter was Tongass (Tlingit) – having a Tongass mother – her feast followed Tlingit protocol and apparently among the Tlingit at this time the ceremonial killing of a slave was an important element of a feast. Fort Simpson (Nass), *Post Journal*, 11 February 1858.

<sup>306</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), *Post Journal*, 21 June 1838; 21 September 1838; 13 February 1853.

the vanity of their masters or to take away reproach.”<sup>307</sup> Whatever the case, it seems as if the practice was not integral to the wealth, power, or ceremonial system of the Ts’msyen at Laxłgu’alaams. Moreover, slaves were considered highly valued by the Ts’msyen, both for their labour and as a marker of status, and for this reason, as one newcomer explained, he did “not think much persuasion necessary to deter them from killing them.”<sup>308</sup> Consequently, this accommodation may not have been as significant an adaptation as it might initially appear.

And, as with other parts of the hybrid legal system, participation in the hybrid slavery system did not require a relinquishment of autonomy. For the newcomers, what autonomy they possessed in Ts’msyen territory seems to have been little affected by the participation in a hybrid slavery system. As for the Ts’msyen, though they accommodated to some newcomer ideas, the modifications they made were perhaps of minor import to their customary practice and seem to have had little impact on the meaning slavery held in the Ts’msyen worlds. Slaves continued to serve as formal markers of wealth and status among the Ts’msyen and the owners of enslaved people continued to possess the power to control their labour and exact obedience from them.<sup>309</sup> Furthermore, Ts’msyen people and other Indigenous visitors to the fort determined for

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<sup>307</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 21 June 1838; William Duncan, *Journal, First Report to the Society*, February 1858, 9587. William H. Hills, who visited Fort Simpson on the *H.M.S. Virago* in 1853, reported that slaves were sometimes killed at feasts. Scholar Jay Miller contends that slaves were killed during rivalry potlatches. Anthropologist Viola Garfield also concluded that slaves had been killed during Ts’msyen ceremonies. William Hills, “William H. Hills, Journal on Board H.M. S. Portland and H.M.S. Virago, 8 Aug. 1852- July 1853,” Philip and Helen Akrigg Fonds, Box 20, The University of British Columbia Archives, 113; Jay Miller, *Tsimshian Culture: A Light Through the Ages* (Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 85; Viola Garfield, *Tsimshian Clan and Society* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1939), 315.

<sup>308</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 21 June 1838.

<sup>309</sup> Kenneth M. Ames, “Slaves, Chiefs and Labour on the Northern Northwest Coast,” *World Archaeology*, Vol.33 (1), 3.

themselves the ceremonial activities which were to take the place of the formal killing of slaves. Their accommodation was not a surrender of control.

In this section I have examined some of the practices which composed the hybrid legal system at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams between the years 1834 and 1862. The newcomers' payment for deaths, the Ts'msyen capture and transport of newcomer deserters and accused criminals, and the shared participation of Ts'msyen people and newcomers in a system of slavery involved accommodation and innovation by Ts'msyen people and newcomers alike. They were hybrid practices because they were mutually constructed, mutually intelligible and jointly participated in, and because they combined Ts'msyen and newcomer ideas and customs. Some of these hybrid legal practices would likely never have emerged at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams if not for the particular marital, sexual, and labour relations between Ts'msyen and newcomer people. HBC newcomers living less proximately to Ts'msyen people, or perhaps occupying a position of power rather than one of weakness, probably would not have agreed to follow a law which required the payment of property for deaths. Similarly, without the particular connections between Ts'msyen people and newcomers at this post Ts'msyen people would not have been solicited to carry out newcomer justice on deserting workers or accused criminals, nor would they have been likely to want to do so. And finally, the ownership of Indigenous slaves by newcomer residents of the fort was fundamentally connected to their association with the Ts'msyen, this being an unlawful activity within British territory.

For both Ts'msyen people and newcomers, accommodation and change were possible, and even readily embraced, so long as they did not threaten the autonomy,

social hierarchy and power structure of their respective communities. In the case of law these terms of adaptation were especially important because their respective legal systems were well established and essential to the orderly functioning of their societies. What is more, for both Ts'msyen people and newcomers their systems of law also served to uphold the power and authority of elites. The relative insecurity of the newcomers in Ts'msyen territory, and the need for shared procedures and protocols which could be used to resolve conflicts and crimes between them, made a shared legal system necessary. The creation of a hybrid legal system allowed Ts'msyen people and newcomers to achieve greater security and stability between themselves while never substantially threatening their respective autonomy, power, or authority. My discussion of hybridity in this chapter has largely focused on how it served to uphold power and authority at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. In chapter Three I offer some examples of ways in which hybridity was used to subvert power and authority.

#### Cross-Participation in Formal Activities

Ts'msyen people and newcomers developed hybrid legal and marriage practices at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams, but quite obviously these were not the only areas in which Ts'msyen and newcomer people interacted and connected with each other. As I suggest above, during the period under study here, Ts'msyen people and HBC newcomers often attended and participated in formal activities of the other. This cross-participation in ceremony served to create shared contexts for Ts'msyen people and newcomers and built intimacies between them. To some degree these kinds of shared experiences surely were integral to the development of hybrid institutions. It is beyond the scope of this limited

study to comprehensively examine the links between cross-participation in formal activities and the emergence of hybridity at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. Instead, I offer a brief analysis of the importance such cross-participation held as a vehicle for building trust and mutual understanding between Ts'msyen people and newcomers. In addition, I consider some of the ways in which cross-participation served as a legitimating force as well as ways in which it influenced the operation of power and authority within and between Ts'msyen and newcomer worlds. Finally, using the example of William Duncan's frustrated missionizing efforts, I consider how the practice of cross-participation suggests the existence of hybrid space at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams.

As with the hybrid legal system, Ts'msyen people and newcomers had their own – and often divergent – reasons for attending formal activities of the other. It is difficult to identify the myriad of motivations behind their actions. It is likely that both Ts'msyen and newcomer participants considered there to be benefits in attending and participating in ceremonies of the other. These could include improved trade relations, greater security for newcomers, access to information, legitimation of their ceremonies, and validation of their own power and authority. More readily discernable to scholars, relying heavily upon the written documents of newcomer officers, are some of the effects and newcomer perceptions of such attendance. When high ranking Ts'msyen people attended formal dinners hosted by HBC officers within the fort and HBC officers, by invitation, attended a Ts'msyen feast, they were not merely enjoying another's hospitality or taking in a show – whether they were aware of it or not they were also signaling their desire and readiness to enter into relationships with each other. Such activities were social exchanges between

the hosts and the guests and the outcomes were the construction and maintenance of relationships between them

Cross-participation in formal activities served to build, maintain and demonstrate trust and relationships between Ts'msyen people and newcomers. This was accomplished, in part, through the actual behaviour of individuals during ceremonies they attended as well as through symbolic meanings ascribed to such behaviour. Although we cannot know how Ts'msyen and newcomer participation in the other's ceremonies was perceived by individuals at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams I would suggest that there are some reasonable inferences to draw.<sup>310</sup> As I indicate above, to attend a formal event of an outsider other, or to host a formal event at which an outsider other was to be a guest, demonstrated to the other a willingness to enter into a relationship. The host of such an event, Ts'msyen or newcomer, signaled something of their intentions toward an outsider guest through their investment in the event: the expenditure of time and energy on planning and preparation, and on food, drink, or property to be exchanged all communicated in a very public manner their investment in the relationship between themselves and their guests. Attendance at such an event served similar functions. When an HBC officer attended by invitation a Ts'msyen feast or a Ts'msyen chief accepted a welcome to the officers' table at the fort he indicated a willingness to establish or to

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<sup>310</sup> With the notable exception of William Duncan, who, while not a participant, was a close observer and made his views very clear on the matter. Newcomers and Ts'msyen people had very different cultures and meaning systems, and consequently divergent understandings of their relationships with each other. However, by 1834 there had been forty years of contact between Ts'msyen people and newcomers, and by the 1860s they had been in association for seventy years. I would suggest that this long association had habituated them to some of each other's symbols – and those I am about to discuss seem to hold true for newcomers.

uphold a relationship with the host.<sup>311</sup> An HBC newcomer's attendance at a Ts'msyen feast further confirmed, at least in the Ts'msyen meaning system, acceptance of the host's claims to power and owned prerogatives.<sup>312</sup>

The conduct of host and guest during the ceremony itself was as important for relationships and trust between Ts'msyen people and newcomers as the act of hosting or attending a formal activity at which the other was to be present.<sup>313</sup> When a Ts'msyen or newcomer host invited an other to participate in his formal event, and accommodated them much as he would an individual of his own community, he validated the outsider's status as a person of high rank. Such behaviour – the extension of the exclusive and gentlemanly privilege to dine at the officers' table, the deliverance of a formal Ts'msyen invitation to a feast, the assignment of special seating – indicated to fellow guests and outside observers a friendly relationship between the insider host and outsider guest. How exactly this was perceived by newcomers and Ts'msyen people is not clear. However, William Duncan, at least, considered the Ts'msyen likely to draw such conclusions about this kind of inclusive behaviour. In 1859, the newcomer officer Francis Dobbs visited Duncan's school for the Ts'msyen. Dobbs was a particularly active attendee of Ts'msyen feasts and repeatedly and deliberately goaded Duncan over the matter.<sup>314</sup> During Dobbs' visit to the school Duncan very intentionally refused to invite him to sit down and

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<sup>311</sup> It is entirely possible that Ts'msyen women of high rank or *Sm'ooygyit* status were invited to dine with officers in the fort. Because the occurrence of such dinners were so rarely recorded it is impossible to know for sure. In the fort journals, however, there are no references to female chiefs dining at the officers' table.

<sup>312</sup> Please see chapter one for a more thorough discussion of the Ts'msyen feasting complex and meaning system.

<sup>313</sup> There were obviously many different behaviours which held symbolism at a feast or formal dinner. Because of the limited nature of this study I have only touched on a small number here.

<sup>314</sup> See, for example, William Duncan, *Journal*, 20 December 1859, 9846. According to Duncan, "To day the head chief was in the hall when I went in to dinner & Mr Dobbs the 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer in order to annoy me began asking him if he had had plenty of dancing & medicine work while he had been away on a visit to another tribe from which he has just returned." Eventually, Dobbs attacked Duncan's character by suggesting that his private visits with Indigenous women were sexual rather than scholarly in nature. William Duncan, *Journal*, 29 August 1859, 9777.

otherwise “neglected” him. Duncan explained his behaviour in his journal, stating that he could not regard him as a friend “nor could I treat him before the Indians as a gentleman lest they should think I cared nothing about his conduct but was in terms of friendship & intimacy with him.”<sup>315</sup>

The provision and consumption of food during a ceremony was another aspect of host and guest behaviour significant to relationships and trust between Ts’msyen people and newcomers. At both newcomer formal dinners and Ts’msyen feasts, the host provided food to guests. Because the sharing of food is often considered an intimate act, the sharing of a meal at a feast or officers’ dining table indicates something of the close acquaintance or familiarity between the Ts’msyen and newcomer participants. Moreover, as eating is an incorporative act according to the authors of recent psychological studies, “involving taking an outside substance that contains potential ‘residues’ of other people” into the body, the sharing of food at a feast or formal dinner also demonstrated a degree of trust by the guest towards the host.<sup>316</sup> When a Ts’msyen or newcomer guest ingested the food provided by the outsider other, they positioned themselves in a place of vulnerability, putting their very lives in the other’s hands. That a newcomer or Ts’msyen guest was willing to do so – knowing that the food ingested might be harmful or even lethal to them – indicated his trust in the host. And, because these formal events were

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<sup>315</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 9 January 1859, 9700. Duncan tried this tactic several times during his stay at Fort Simpson. In October and December of that same year he refused to display affective or friendly behaviour to two different female students. The first, having chosen to live unmarried with an American man in the village, Duncan reported that “since I knew of her state I have scarcely recognized her & yesterday I passed her without speaking.” The second, a young girl who was to be initiated into one of the secret societies, he refused a gift of soap because she was being “heatheniz[ed] this winter.” William Duncan, *Journal*, 13 October 1859, 9804; 9 December 1859, 9839.

<sup>316</sup> Lisa Miller, Paul Rozin, and Alan Page, “Food Sharing and Feeding Another Person Suggest Intimacy; Two Studies of American College Students,” *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Volume 28, 1998, 434.

also, to some degree, public events, the exchange of food between host and guest further served to publicly perform the degree of trust and intentions between them.

Very little is known about Ts'msyen and newcomer observance of protocol at a formal ceremony of the other. Newcomers rarely even recorded their attendance at a Ts'msyen feast and Ts'msyen people, as I noted in my introduction, left few written records from the early- to mid-nineteenth century. And yet, their continued attendance at ceremonies of the other indicates that newcomer officers and Ts'msyen *sm'ooogyit* were aware of and observed the appropriate protocol of the other at these events. Had Ts'msyen or newcomer guests behaved otherwise, serving as a disruption or threat to a ceremony, they would not likely have been invited again. By all accounts, newcomer officers who attended Ts'msyen feasts complied with Ts'msyen protocol by, at the very least, sitting in their assigned places, consuming foodstuffs, appropriately watching performances, and properly receiving their distribution of gifts.<sup>317</sup> Likewise, the Ts'msyen guests at HBC officers' formal dinners followed protocol by, among other things, sitting in chairs and dining at a table, engaging in casual dinner conversations, consuming foodstuffs, and otherwise acting in accordance with their roles as high ranking guests to the officers' table.<sup>318</sup> These formal meals within the fort seem to have been

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<sup>317</sup> John Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory and British North American Fur Trade: With an Account of the Habits and Customs of the Principal native Tribes on the Northern Continent*, (London: Edwards and Hughes, 1844), 282. Dunn seems to have previously worked as a storekeeper at Fort Vancouver and was, in the early 1840s, traveling along the northwest coast and recording his observations. William H. Hills, who traveled to Fort Simpson in 1853 on board the *H.M.S. Virago*, similarly reported that the Captain and officers of the *Virago* received a "formal invitation" by Ts'msyen chiefs to a feast. Hills, "Journal on Board *H.M.S. Portland* and *H.M.S. Virago*," 18 June 1853. Matthew Johnson, a Ts'msyen informant of anthropologist Homer Barnett, also reported HBC officers attending Ts'msyen feasts. Homer G. Barnett, Notes, University of British Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections, Box 1, A/14A/1/2, Folder 1-9, 10. William Duncan, *Journal*, "First Report to the Society," drawn up February 1858, 9586.

<sup>318</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 5 December 1859, 9836; 20 December 1859, 9846. Michael P. Robinson asserts that Chief Ligeex, father of Sudaal Kennedy, regularly dined with Dr. Kennedy and Sudaal at Fort Simpson. As he provides no citation for this assertion it is difficult to verify. Michael P. Robinson, *Sea Otter Chiefs* (Calgary, Alberta: Bayeux Arts Incorporated, 1996), 72.

carried off without any significant disruption as neither the fort officers nor William Duncan ever recorded any – even at dinners where both Duncan and his “bitter enemy,” Chief Ligeex, were present.<sup>319</sup> While these actions by Ts’msyen people and newcomers might seem insignificant they were important behavioural modifications for both hosts and guests.

The Ts’msyen and newcomer guests who attended ceremonies of the other can be thought of as having engaged in a degree of mimicry while participating in these events. They imitated the behaviour of the other while participating in these ceremonies so as to, in part, be seen by the host as having behaved in an appropriate manner. As I noted earlier in this chapter, the ceremonies in which Ts’msyen people and newcomers cross-participated remained the purview of the originating culture. Ts’msyen and newcomer guests did not, it seems, internalize these ceremonies or the other’s norms as practiced at these ceremonies. Instead, they consciously constructed their behaviour to mimic what they perceived as the other’s social mores for such events. Some hosts expected this adaptation of behaviour from their outsider guests. Newcomer John Dunn, who visited Fort Simpson in 1844, reported that when HBC newcomers attended Indigenous feasts, both at Fort Simpson and other HBC posts on the Northwest Coast, “the greatest silence, attention, and decorum were expected from them” by their high ranking Indigenous hosts.<sup>320</sup> For both newcomer and Ts’msyen guests their ability to mimic – though never seamlessly – the other’s (host) behaviour had important advantages: it reduced some of the disrupting influence of their presence at a ceremony, likely gave satisfaction to their

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<sup>319</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 9 1859, 9728; 5 December 1859, 9836; 20 December 1859, 9846.

<sup>320</sup> John Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory and British North America fur trade with an account of the habits and customs of the principal native tribes on the northern continent* (London: Edwards and Hughes, 1844), 254, 282.

host, and in some ways provided assurances to the host and other guests that they could be legitimate guests, knowing how to act in a manner befitting their status and the status of the other participants.

When Ts'msyen people or newcomers mimicked the behaviour of the other while participating in a formal event of the other they were performing a double articulation. On the one hand, they maintained their positioning as outsiders – and their self-identities – and in these roles engaged in cross-participation and mimicry for their own outsider reasons and advantages. At the same time, however, they employed the conventions of the other within the other's meaning system and world. Such ambivalence – the ability to be one thing while acting as another – worked to destabilize identities at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. While individuals participating in this kind of behaviour may not have experienced their identities as in flux, Ts'msyen and newcomer observers of this ambiguous behaviour would likely have perceived a fractured and destabilized identity. These changes acted as discursive elements between HBC newcomers and Ts'msyen people and facilitated the creation of a third space at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams in which hybridity could and did develop.<sup>321</sup>

Just as outsiders' observance of protocol was important to the development of trust and relationships between Ts'msyen people and newcomers, so too was the performance of reciprocation. As I suggest above, cross-participation in formal activities was a social exchange between hosts and guests. Participants were expected to not only observe protocols while in attendance at the ceremony but also, if relationships were to be

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<sup>321</sup> This discussion is informed by Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, Vol.28 (Spring 1984): 125-133; Dina Sherzer, "French Colonial and Post-Colonial Hybridity: Condition Metisse," *Journal of European Studies* 28 (1998): 103-120; Sharron A. Fitzgerald, "Hybrid Identities in Canada's Red River Colony," *The Canadian Geographer*, Vol.51, No.2 (2007): 186-201.

established or maintained between hosts and guests, afterwards. Just as accepting an invitation to a feast or formal dinner, following the mutually understood protocol once there, and consuming the food and drink offered, all signified a willingness on the part of the guest to enter into a relationship with the host, a reciprocal offer to serve as host to the other who had hosted indicated, more heartily, the same. To refuse to reciprocate was also to signal a refusal of the relationship implied by the initial social exchange. Similarly, for a newcomer or Ts'msyen former host to refuse to reciprocate as a guest at the other's ceremony would have symbolized a rejection of not just the event but, more meaningfully, of the relationship between themselves and the host (or perhaps even the host's community).

These aspects of Ts'msyen-newcomer cross-participation in formal activities, practical and symbolic, were significant to the development of relationships between Ts'msyen people and newcomers. They provided some of the assurances both Ts'msyen people and newcomers likely found necessary for trust to develop between them. Moreover, their mutual involvement in these ceremonies brought Ts'msyen people and newcomers into closer contact with each other and this increased association further facilitated relationships between them. Finally, cross-participation in each other's formal activities, with its attendant mimicry of certain mores of the other, likely also resulted in an increased understanding of the other. Intimately exposed to ceremonial practices and protocols of the other – and sometimes even joining in them – this close association certainly would have improved their knowledge of the other and likely enhanced their comprehension of the other's meaning as well.

Cross-participation in formal events of the other not only facilitated the development of trust and relationships between Ts'msyen people and newcomers; it also influenced the operation of power and authority at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. As I have suggested earlier, both the Ts'msyen and the newcomers had hierarchically organized societies with developed behaviours and conventions that operated to support their respective hierarchical power structures. Ceremony was a significant part of these systems. For Ts'msyen people, the feasting complex was fundamental to social status, powers (economic, social, metaphysical), and privilege. It operated as the nexus of the Ts'msyen social system, and was the means by which an individual's social status and powers were demonstrated and legitimated.<sup>322</sup> Although the newcomer ceremonies at Fort Simpson were quite unlike the Ts'msyen feasting complex they, as part of the HBC's "theatre of power," served some similar functions within the newcomer worlds. Formal activities, like officers' dinners, served to symbolically reinforce officers' power and authority because they acted as signals of status inequality.<sup>323</sup> They conveyed to participants and observers the elite status of those partaking in the privileges and the subordinate status of those excluded.<sup>324</sup> The degrees of power and authority within the HBC were performed through these kinds of ceremonies and in this way workers and

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<sup>322</sup> Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: the Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990), 12, 10.

<sup>323</sup> Scott Hamilton, "Dynamics of Social Complexity in Early Nineteenth-Century British Fur-Trade Posts," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol.4, No.3 (2000): 217-273.

<sup>324</sup> In order for the HBC "theatre of power" to function as they intended it to the HBC employees had to accept these symbols as signs of power and authority, and consider the officers' as having rightful claim to that power and authority. Or else, officers had to have some physical ability to compel workers to follow their authority – to respect their power. At Fort Simpson the officers did not possess the physical ability to force the workers to their will. The officers used their relationships with Ts'msyen people to reinforce their power and authority, and to restrict that of their workers. But, as one would imagine, the workers did not accept without contest their lower social position. When newcomer workers accessed symbols of high ranking newcomer status their behaviour threatened the standard operation of power and authority at this post. Officers responded to such occurrences with outrage. I discuss the negotiation of power and authority by newcomers in greater detail in chapter three.

officers alike learned their place and the places of others.<sup>325</sup> It is not surprising, given the relationship between ceremony and power and authority, that Ts'msyen and newcomer people's participation in formal activities of the other held significance for the operation of power and authority within their own worlds as well as within those of the other.

Both the Ts'msyen feasting complex and the HBC newcomers' formal events relied upon witnesses for their successful operation. For these ceremonies to achieve their hosts' objectives – for example, the reinforcement of rank and privilege or the bestowal of increased privileges and powers – participants and community observers had to grasp the intended meanings and then, through their actions, acknowledge the lawfulness of the hosts' claims.<sup>326</sup> While outsider participants and observers likely did not have the same understandings of these ceremonies as did their hosts they were nonetheless, by way of their attendance, integrated into their hosts' meaning system and its attendant spheres of power. In this way, the high ranking Ts'msyen people who formally dined with HBC officers at Fort Simpson, regardless of their intentions or understandings, gave their support to the disciplinary strategy of the HBC and thereby, to the power and authority of the commanding officers at this post. At Fort Simpson, as with other HBC posts on the Northwest Coast, formal and informal symbols like dress, conduct, food, housing and ceremony were employed as status symbolizers intended to emphasize the power and

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<sup>325</sup> In addition to ceremonies, the HBC employed material culture, informal and formal symbols, the organization of physical space, corporeal punishment, and other techniques to communicate status at their posts. Important symbols of power and authority incorporated into officers' formal dining included: preferential treatment, exclusive access to valued commodities, the unequal distribution of preferred foods. For more information see Cole Harris, "Strategies of Power"; Hamilton, "Dynamics of Social Complexity."

<sup>326</sup> Harris, "Strategies of Power"; Scott Hamilton, "Dynamics of Social Complexity in Early Nineteenth-Century British Fur-Trade Posts," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol.4, No.3 (2000): 217-273; Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 5.

authority of HBC officers within the fort.<sup>327</sup> When Ts'msyen people participated in officers' formal dinners they, knowingly or otherwise, accepted the officers' rights to host such a ceremony, to display their carefully crafted symbols of status, and to claim their respective power and authority.

Similarly, newcomer participation in Ts'msyen feasts served to legitimate the feasting complex as well as the claims to rank, power and privileges made by their Ts'msyen hosts. This newcomer legitimation likely took on increased importance with the arrival of newcomer Christian missionaries and the growing assault on Ts'msyen autonomy. Whereas the formal dinners of HBC officers' offered an implicit assertion of officers' power and authority – formulated as it was to perform their superior status over newcomer workers – Ts'msyen feasts involved a very public and explicit claim to elite status and exclusive powers and privileges.<sup>328</sup> The guests at a Ts'msyen feast played an integral role in the ceremony. As witnesses they listened to the host's claim to the new powers, including the ancestral origin of these rights, and through their actions either validated or refused them.<sup>329</sup> According to scholars Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, in the nineteenth century the public distribution of feast-gifts “served as the mechanism for recognition of the rank and prestige that were fundamental to Northwest Coast social systems.”<sup>330</sup> For the Ts'msyen then, HBC officers' attendance at a feast and, most especially, their acceptance of goods distributed in a feast, signified acknowledgement of

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<sup>327</sup> And, of course, the contrast between the officers' symbols (dress, conduct, food, etc.) and the workers' also emphasized the newcomer workers' status as subordinates. Harris, “Strategies of Power”; Hamilton, “Dynamics of Social Complexity.”

<sup>328</sup> Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 5.

<sup>329</sup> Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 5.

<sup>330</sup> Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 10.

the claims made by the host chief.<sup>331</sup> HBC officers' and other newcomers' participation in Ts'msyen feasts would have been interpreted by the Ts'msyen not only as their assent to the right of a host chief to his or her declared privileges but, most significantly when missionaries arrived, as recognition of the legitimacy of the feasting system itself.

Perhaps as important as the legitimacy outsider attendance at ceremonies of the other conferred upon the host and host's meaning system was the significance that attached to outsider guests as participants. Participation in a Ts'msyen feast or an officer's formal dinner was a relatively exclusive privilege, generally extended only to individuals considered within the host's community to be of high rank (whether an insider or outsider to the community). As a result, when a Ts'msyen or newcomer host of such a ceremony extended an invitation to an outsider newcomer or Ts'msyen guest they were, in part, publicly acknowledging the guest's elite status. Additionally, one of the effects of Ts'msyen feasts and HBC officers' dinners within their own respective communities was a demonstration of a kind of unity among the participants, conveyed by means of, among other things, their shared privileges, status, interests, and sympathies.<sup>332</sup> When outsider guests participated in these ceremonies they were drawn into the leadership ranks of the other (host) as well as into the unity symbolically performed through these ceremonies. What is more, by including Ts'msyen or newcomer others in their formal events the hosts of such events were effectively using their own power and authority to symbolically and physically support – or even enhance – the power and authority of their Ts'msyen or newcomer outsider guest. In other words, through their cross-participation in ceremonies of the other Ts'msyen and newcomer guests gained

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<sup>331</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 30 April 1861; 5 May 1861; John Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory*, 282.

<sup>332</sup> Hamilton, "Dynamics of Social Complexity," 248, 249.

public validation of their own elite status from their host; inclusion in the leadership ranks of their host's community; a public performance of solidarity; and the support of their host's influence.

In the matter of Ts'msyen and newcomer cross-participation in formal events of the other, therefore, Ts'msyen and newcomer power and authority intersected. Both Ts'msyen and newcomer guests and hosts of the other conferred and received power through their participation in these ceremonies. Whether Ts'msyen or newcomer, hosts' drew on their own power and authority to validate or even bolster the status of their newcomer or Ts'msyen guests. Similarly, Ts'msyen and newcomer guests at ceremonies of the other legitimated, by way of their behaviour, the power and authority of their host, as well as prerogatives the host may have claimed, and the host's meaning system itself. In these ways Ts'msyen people and newcomers influenced each other's meaning systems and the respective negotiations of power and authority within those systems. Members of both communities came to play crucial roles in both of these systems – through the act of cross-participation – and the lives of Ts'msyen people and newcomers intertwined in yet another significant way.

Although cross-participation in formal events of the other was a significant and regularly practiced activity at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams not all Ts'msyen people or newcomers participated in these ceremonies and those who did were not always entirely pleased to do so. Because there are few extant Ts'msyen records from this time it is difficult to know much about Ts'msyen ideas on the matter. However, I think it is fair to assume that not all high ranking Ts'msyen people welcomed the participation of newcomers in Ts'msyen ceremonies. Given the divisions among the nine tribes of

Ts'msyen people living at Laxlgu'alaams, and the demonstrated differences in attitudes towards the newcomers among the Ts'msyen *sm'oigyet*, it is more than likely that particular high ranking individuals who had a closer relationship with the newcomers – like Chief Ligeex and Chief Nestoya (Sweet William) – were the Ts'msyen people most likely to have had newcomer officers participating in their ceremonies.<sup>333</sup>

For the newcomers, the attitudes of the HBC workers towards cross-participation remain elusive while those of the officers demonstrate considerable ambivalence towards these events. Many of the HBC officers seem to have had mixed feelings about both Ts'msyen ceremonies and newcomer participation in these ceremonies. Ceremonies hosted by high ranking Ts'msyen people might be described by newcomer officers as “Medicine Nonsense” one day and as “a famous Medicine exhibition” the next.<sup>334</sup> Despite their ambivalence about the Ts'msyen feasting complex newcomer officers' regular attendance at Ts'msyen ceremonies indicates that they found it necessary or at least advantageous to participate in these events.<sup>335</sup> Similarly, newcomer officers seem to

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<sup>333</sup> The various men who held the title Ligeex seem to have maintained a close relationship with the fort officers, dining with them in the big house, exchanging gifts and information, and even attending Christmas celebrations at the fort. Chief Nestoya (of the 1850s) seems also to have had a close relationship with the HBC officers and this relationship was likely key to their, and the officers of the *H.M.S. Virago*, being invited to attend his grand feast in 1853. The close relationships between Ligeex and the HBC officers and Nestoya and the HBC officers stands in sharp contrast to individuals like Cushwhat, who had, at best, an antagonistic relationships with the fort. Known as a “troublesome fellow” by the fort officers, Cushwhat was repeatedly in conflict with the HBC as well as with other Ts'msyen people living at Laxlgu'alaams. William H. Hills, who traveled to Fort Simpson in 1853 on board the *Virago*, reported that the Captain and officers of the *Virago* received a “formal invitation” to Chief Nestoya's feast. Hills, “Journal on Board *H.M.S. Portland* and *H.M.S. Virago*,” 18 June 1853; George Hastings Inskip, “Transcripts and Summaries of Part of *Virago* journals,” Phillip and Helen Akrigg Fonds, Box 20, transcript, 250; Fort Simpson Journal, 4 July 1853; see also the Fort Simpson journal keeper's discussion of Cackas, 2 November 1836, writing of the smallpox deaths in the Ts'msyen village: “Among them is Cackas who was a great rascal he was concerned in the murder of Cougalt he seldom or ever brought any thing for trade so that we have little cause to regret the death of such a fellow but rather be happy of being freed from such a troublesome good for nothing villain.”

<sup>334</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 1 December 1858; 3 February 1857.

<sup>335</sup> It is unclear exactly how newcomer officers felt about Ts'msyen feasts and cross-participation – if they even knew themselves – however, many clearly had ambivalent feelings towards these events. Officer Francis Dobbs and perhaps Officer Pym Nevins Compton seem to have been among the minority in their

have found it a necessary accommodation to grant Ts'msyen *sm'ooogyit* special rather intimate privileges like access to officers' quarters and invitations to officers' formal dinners.<sup>336</sup> At least one HBC officer, Hamilton Moffatt, despised these practices and resisted observing them when he took charge of the fort as first officer. He soon became resigned to such behaviour however, perhaps finding that he had little choice in the matter. Whether he accommodated for reasons of power and authority, for issues of fort security, or for the economics of trade we never learn – certainly all are feasible as motives for his behaviour – what is clear is that despite his greatest wishes to the contrary Moffatt found himself extending invites to high ranking Ts'msyen people to dine at the officers' table.<sup>337</sup> Moreover, both Moffatt and his wife Lucy Moffatt (nee McNeill) ultimately became guests at Ts'msyen feasts, participating fully in the fort's long-standing tradition of cross-participation.<sup>338</sup>

Notwithstanding their sometimes ambivalent feelings on the matter, newcomer officers clearly were motivated to participate in Ts'msyen ceremonies. In fact, newcomer officers were so resolute about cross-participation that they were willing to transgress race, class, and religious boundaries to do so. When the Anglican missionary William Duncan arrived at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams in the fall of 1857 he began a campaign to reshape Ts'msyen people by, among other things, bringing an end to the Ts'msyen

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seemingly unequivocal support for Ts'msyen feasts and newcomer attendance at them. At least part of their interest seems to have been entertainment based – finding the performances at these events of interest.

<sup>336</sup> Ts'msyen *sm'ooogyit* also demanded the privilege of borrowing clothing from fort officers – whether personal clothing or from the fort store is unclear – to be worn during Ts'msyen feasts. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 16 February 185; 17 February 1860.

<sup>337</sup> Shortly after taking charge of the fort in 1859 Moffat wrote: "I have no idea of being compelled to make the mess room, or my own quarters, a publick [sic] place of entertainment to every chief that likes to come." He soon found it necessary, however, to have high ranking Ts'msyen guests to his dinner table. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, HBCA, 17 February 1860; William Duncan, *Journal*, 5 December 1859, 9836; 20 December 1859, 9846.

<sup>338</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 20 December 1859, 9846.

feasting complex. The continued participation of newcomer officers in Ts'msyen feasts not only undermined Duncan's crusade but also violated the British ideals of white, Christian, middle class solidarity. In supporting Ts'msyen feasts – and Ts'msyen power and authority – the fort officers sided against a member of their own ethnic group, social class, and Christian faith, allying themselves instead with the “heathen” Ts'msyen.<sup>339</sup> These transgressive acts by newcomer officers – as well as the mimicry and cultural hybridity at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams – operated to destabilize the binaries of newcomer (white) and “savage” at this location. They demonstrated something of the complex relationships between Ts'msyen people and newcomers at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams and suggest the absence of a unified colonial space.<sup>340</sup> Moreover, like the hybridity and multivocality Bhabha has discussed in other contact zones, these developments served to dislocate the early process of colonialism at this locale by, in this case, destabilizing Duncan's work among the Ts'msyen.<sup>341</sup>

The effects of newcomer participation in Ts'msyen ceremonies were not lost on Duncan. He believed that the repeated attendance of HBC officers at Ts'msyen feasts thwarted his own attempts to bring Christianity to the Ts'msyen. In a characteristic journal entry Duncan expressed how “very much depressed in spirit” he had become over such behaviour by the HBC newcomers.<sup>342</sup> In spite of his pleas against it, “the officers would go [to Ts'msyen feasts] although they knew it was weakening [his] hands to do so.”<sup>343</sup> So desperate was he to end the officers' participation in Ts'msyen feasts that he

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<sup>339</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 16 April 1858, 9613.

<sup>340</sup> Fitzgerald, “Hybrid Identities in Canada's Red River Colony,” 199.

<sup>341</sup> Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” *October*, Vol.28 (Spring 1984):125-133.

<sup>342</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 24 November 1859, 9825.

<sup>343</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 24 November 1859, 9824.

engaged in a kind of letter writing campaign against one particularly engaged officer, condemning the man's actions and asserting that the officer had, by his behaviour, "shown whose side [he was] on."<sup>344</sup> For Duncan, the officer's cross-participation in Ts'msyen feasts marked him as "the enemy of Christ, the friend of the devil, [his] opponent & a stumbling block to the poor heathen."<sup>345</sup>

The participation of HBC officers in Ts'msyen feasts served to destabilize Duncan's missionary efforts in part because it provided validation and sanction of the very system Duncan struggled against. In 1858, soon after his arrival at the fort, Duncan observed that HBC officers had "attended the heathen shows & added their applause ever since this place [had] been established" and thereby "had their influence on the side of heathenism."<sup>346</sup> In many ways the success of Duncan's mission among the Ts'msyen hinged upon his ability to convince Ts'msyen people to forsake the Ts'msyen feasting complex. As I indicate in Chapter One, feasting played a fundamental role in Ts'msyen society and so long as the Ts'msyen feasting complex continued to operate at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams so too would Ts'msyen spirituality, power, authority, an autonomy. HBC newcomers' continued support for Ts'msyen feasts – demonstrated through their continued attendance at feasts, acceptance of feast-gifts, and honouring of "heathen" Ts'msyen chiefs – was likely understood by the Ts'msyen as a disapproval of Duncan's larger aims and Christian ideas. Duncan certainly believed this was so. Towards the end of his first year among the Ts'msyen Duncan wrote that "the Indians are already pointing to the conduct of these men as strangely in contrast with what I want to

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<sup>344</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 24 November 1859, 9825. The letter was sent to HBC officer Francis Dobbs.

<sup>345</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 24 November 1859, 9825.

<sup>346</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 20 November 1858 and 28 December 1858.

teach them.”<sup>347</sup> He bemoaned the officers’ attendance for the approval it appeared to offer the feasting complex and the effect it served in undermining his work for conversion: “they have been to the head chiefs [sic] home to sit & witness some heathenish tricks & thus patronize what I am raising my voice against.”<sup>348</sup> In his struggle to bring Christianity to the Ts’msyen Duncan had rightly identified the Ts’msyen feasting complex as a threat to his success.<sup>349</sup> With HBC officers ignoring his sermons and his letter writing campaigns against the support of and attendance at Ts’msyen feasts Duncan observed “there is no doubt that the bad example of the whites in the Fort is a great hindrance to my good work among the Indians.”<sup>350</sup>

#### Cross-participation and the Showdown Narrative

Duncan’s missionary efforts among the Ts’msyen and his struggles to overcome the resistance to Christianity at Laxlgu’alaams have often be represented by the “showdown” between Duncan and the Ts’msyen chief, Ligeex.<sup>351</sup> Upset that Duncan refused to suspend his school during the important feasting season and that he would not stop the ringing of the school bell during the arrival of secret society initiates to the village, Ligeex is reported to have entered Duncan’s school and threatened his life at knifepoint

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<sup>347</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 19 September 1858, 9650.

<sup>348</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 28 December 1858.

<sup>349</sup> When William Duncan and his Christian converts moved to establish the Christian village of Metlakatla in 1862 Duncan instituted a series of rules by which the residents were to live by. Rule number one, “to give up their *Ahlied* or Indian devilry” directly addressed Ts’msyen feasts. The “*Ahlied*” (*Halaayt*) included the series of ceremonies associated with initiation into the secret societies of dog-eating and cannibalism. Rule number one applied to all Ts’msyen feasts, “to cease giving away their property for display.” Of course, Duncan was never entirely successful at preventing Ts’msyen feasts, even among his Christian followers. Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, Appendix A, 282. For more on William Duncan and his mission to the Ts’msyen, particularly the Ts’msyen development of syncretic practices, see Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*.

<sup>350</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 18 January 1859, 9704.

<sup>351</sup> For more on the “showdown” between Duncan and Ligeex see: Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 91-99; Welcome, *The Story of Metlakahtla*, 11-13; Barbeau and Beynon, “How Tamks Saved William Duncan’s Life” and “When Legaix Tried to Murder Mr. Duncan” in *Tsimshian Narratives 2: Trade and Warfare*, 206-212.

to achieve these ends.<sup>352</sup> Though this narrative has been well-studied I have chosen to offer another analysis of these events, turning to examine the “showdown” for what it reveals about the relationships between Ligeex and the fort officers and the ways in which cross-participation served to impact power, authority and the early stages of colonialism at this site. I believe it is particularly useful to unpack the set of reported circumstances leading up to and culminating in the “showdown,” not necessarily for their historical accuracy but for what they disclose about Duncan’s perceptions of his missionary efforts. As historian Susan Neylan states, the showdown narrative was “a rhetorical convention used by missionaries to represent tensions and conflict they and their missions had introduced.”<sup>353</sup> Duncan’s “showdown” narrative is particularly telling of his understandings of these tensions and conflicts at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams. Moreover, my examination of this narrative reveals the previously neglected but important role that HBC newcomer-Ts’msyen relations and cross-participation played in these events.

Duncan began agitating against the Ts’msyen feasting complex soon after his arrival at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams. He considered the Ts’msyen feasting complex, and especially the *halaayt* ceremonies, to be “abominations” taught by the devil and he wished to teach the Ts’msyen the “new & better way” of his own god.<sup>354</sup> Ts’msyen people had varied responses to Duncan’s mission. Ligeex himself was not, it would seem, entirely opposed to Duncan’s work. He initially offered Duncan the use of his own house

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<sup>352</sup> The arrival of spirits at Ts’msyen feasts was signaled by the sound of whistles, with each society having distinctive sounds marking the presence of *naxnox* in the village. Duncan’s bell-ringing disrupted this practice and was believed to pose a significant spiritual danger to the Ts’msyen. Chief Ligeex was particularly concerned about this because his daughter was one of the initiates that season. Duncan, *The British Columbia Mission*, 35.

<sup>353</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 91.

<sup>354</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 20 November 1858, 9666; 29 November 1858, 9672; 20 December 1858, 9687; Duncan, *The British Columbia Mission*, 35.

as the site of Duncan's school to the Ts'msyen.<sup>355</sup> As Duncan's opposition to particular Ts'msyen customs grew – including important spiritual practices – and his stance against the feasting complex became clearer to Ts'msyen people Ligeex, as one of the most powerful leaders among the Ts'msyen and as the head of the *Nulim* (Dog-Eaters) society, came into increasing conflict with him.<sup>356</sup> During the winter feasting season of 1858 the conflict between Duncan and Ligeex came to a head in what Duncan and some of his contemporaries described as a showdown between the two, when Ligeex sought to have Duncan close his school for a month during the important *halaayt* ceremonies.<sup>357</sup> The newcomer officers of Fort Simpson played an important role in this showdown, one which has not been examined before now.

It was through the fort officers that Duncan first learned about Ligeex's desire to see the school – held in a newly constructed building on Gispaxlo'ots ground – closed.<sup>358</sup> Ligeex had approached the newcomer officers, explained his position and asked them to persuade Duncan to stop his school for the month. Although Ligeex had, at this time, a somewhat friendly relationship with Duncan – enough so that Duncan recorded this opposition came “from the chief I had least expected” – it was the fort officers to whom Ligeex turned.<sup>359</sup> His request reflected the long-standing cordial relationship between the

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<sup>355</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 14 June 1858, 9629. Duncan himself recorded surprise at the turn of events with Ligeex, saying “a storm is in the horizon. I must prepare for fierce opposition, and that from the chief I had least expected.” Duncan, *The British Columbia Mission*, 32. Murray, *The Devil and Mr. Duncan*, 46.

<sup>356</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 97.

<sup>357</sup> Though Duncan and his contemporaries did not use this word the narratives they created clearly depicted an explosive confrontation between Duncan and Ligeex that ultimately ended with a victorious Duncan having overcome his greatest adversary by bringing him into the church and to the ‘word of God.’ William Duncan, *Journal*, November 1858 to January 1860; Henry S. Wellcome, *The Story of Metlakahla*, 11-13; John W. Arctander, *The Apostle of Alaska: The Story of William Duncan of Metlakahla*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), 130-135.

<sup>358</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 1 December 1858, 9673.

<sup>359</sup> Duncan recorded surprise at the turn of events with Ligeex, saying “a storm is in the horizon. I must prepare for fierce opposition, and that from the chief I had least expected.” Duncan, *The British Columbia Mission*, 32.

HBC fort and the holders of the Ligeex name – begun as early as 1831 with the marriage of this Ligeex’s predecessor’s daughter to one of the officers previously posted at Fort Simpson, Dr. Kennedy – and suggests the degree of familiarity and confidence this Ligeex felt towards the newcomer officers.<sup>360</sup> When Duncan refused to stop school Ligeex, and other spiritual leaders in the community, changed tactics: They began to speak against Duncan and his mission and pressured Duncan’s supporters to stop attending his school.<sup>361</sup> Ligeex also sent a representative to the fort to inform the HBC newcomers of their intention to stop Duncan “by force” if he did not comply with their demands.<sup>362</sup>

The newcomer officers not only conveyed these messages to Duncan on Ligeex’s behalf, they urged Duncan to do as Ligeex’s party wished and suspend his school.<sup>363</sup> The HBC officers had many reasons to want Duncan to comply with Ligeex’s wishes. Some of the newcomers, both officers and workers, seem to have seen little value in Duncan’s school and, according to Duncan, even took pleasure in any occurrence that hindered its operation.<sup>364</sup> Additionally, as I have explained previously, all of the HBC newcomers had an interest in avoiding conflict with Ts’msyen people and in preventing conflict between Ts’msyen people outside the fort. Duncan’s insistence in carrying on his school in the face of such opposition threatened to bring violence not just to Duncan but to the various other factions involved in the dispute – Ts’msyen and newcomer alike. But most significantly for my purposes, I believe that the newcomer officers would have been motivated to aid Ligeex in part to preserve their relationships with him. They would have

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<sup>360</sup> Carol Cooper, “Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast,” 54.

<sup>361</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 14 December 1858, 9682; 8 December 1858, 9678.

<sup>362</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 14 December 1858, 9683.

<sup>363</sup> Duncan’s journal records the involvement of the fort officers in the ‘showdown’ between himself and Ligeex while Duncan’s published accounts of the conflict, for example *The British Columbia Mission*, selectively mentions their involvement.

<sup>364</sup> Duncan believed that many men in the fort would “have rejoiced” to have seen the school damaged in some way. William Duncan, *Journal*, 18 November 1858, 9664.

had reason to be seen as assisting him in his conflict with Duncan and, importantly, to have supported the continued operation of the Ts'msyen feasting complex. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the officers entered into a "long talk" with Duncan on the matter of suspending his school and told Duncan he "ought to yield" to Ligeex's demands.<sup>365</sup>

On the day of the showdown between Ligeex and Duncan, when Ligeex is reported to have entered Duncan's school and threatened him at knifepoint, Ligeex again appealed to his relationships with the newcomer officers to win Duncan's capitulation. Arguing with Duncan about the importance of the *halaayt* ceremonies and his desire to see the school closed and the ringing of the school bell ended during the ceremonies, Ligeex reportedly presented "teapots" (letters) he had collected from the chief officer of the fort, Captain McNeill, and other newcomers testifying to his good character.<sup>366</sup> It would seem Ligeex considered that a demonstration of his relationships with the HBC newcomers and, significantly, their approval of his person – as represented in these documents – would add weight to his arguments with Duncan. Though Ligeex was wrong about the value these documents would hold for Duncan he rightly understood the nature of his relationships with the newcomer officers.<sup>367</sup> For, as I have shown, during the *halaayt*

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<sup>365</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 14 December 1858, 9683.

<sup>366</sup> Duncan, *The British Columbia Mission*, 36; Arctander, *The Apostle of Alaska*, 134-135.

<sup>367</sup> The various written accounts detailing the showdown between Ligeex and Duncan claim that Duncan was the victor. Ts'msyen accounts report that this victory was due not to Duncan himself but to the aid of his Ts'msyen language instructor and an early convert, Arthur Wellington Clah (who, during the conflict, pointed a gun at Ligeex and therefore prevented Ligeex from murdering Duncan). The fort journal is almost silent on the matter, recording only that "The Ispotelots stopped Mr Duncan from keeping School as they were carrying on Medicine jugglery" – but this was recorded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, three days after the showdown is supposed to have occurred. Although Duncan's records name him the victor it was not a complete victory (if at all). He was forced to move his class to another location, much farther from Ligeex's village site, at the home of another chief. In some ways then Ligeex achieved his desire of closing his school down and ending the ringing of the bell. Furthermore, the following year during the feasting season Duncan did not even try to keep classes going but instead immediately conceded to requests to suspend school.

season and the showdown with Duncan the fort officers advocated for Ligeex and his party in both words and actions. Their support, and Ligeex's reference to it, had little impact on Duncan's behaviour – except perhaps to turn him even further against the fort residents and to increase his sense of alienation at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams.

Nonetheless, these circumstances serve to indicate the value of the relationships between HBC newcomers and Ts'msyen people and the way in which a high ranking Ts'msyen person, in this case Chief Ligeex, might at times draw on the power and authority of the newcomers, and the legitimacy and sanction gained through relationships with them, for support.

Duncan believed that agreeing to Ligeex's demands would be viewed by Ts'msyen people as surrender. He was very aware of the tensions and conflict his mission had introduced among the Ts'msyen. At the time of his showdown with Ligeex Duncan believed that four of the nine tribes at Laxlgu'alaams were willing to abandon the feasting complex and ally themselves with Duncan and his Christian beliefs.<sup>368</sup> Had these tribes actually given up their ceremonies in favour of Christianity it would have been a tremendous gain for Duncan, strengthening his work and furnishing him with the backing he desperately needed. Ligeex's opposition threatened not only this hoped-for success but also Duncan's very existence. To give in to Ligeex's demands would have been to acknowledge Ligeex's strength and his own personal weakness. Moreover, to Duncan's mind, it would have signaled the defeat of his mission and the triumph of "the devil's work" at this locale.<sup>369</sup> In this volatile climate participation in a Ts'msyen feast assumed new meanings and significance. It marked participants as allies of the Ts'msyen people

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<sup>368</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 16 November 1858, 9661; 20 November 1858, 9666.

<sup>369</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 21 November 1859, 9823.

who wished to maintain the feasting complex and as adversaries to Duncan, the Christian Ts'msyen converts, and even Christianity.

The “showdown” at Lax̄l̄gu'alaams has often been simplified as a confrontation between Ligeex and Duncan. However, the conflict over the continuation of the Ts'msyen feasting complex involved many other actors.<sup>370</sup> HBC newcomers were also implicated in the showdown, drawn in not only by Chief Ligeex's actions but by their own insistence on continued participation in Ts'msyen ceremonies. Duncan's opposition to these ceremonies seems to have had little impact on the newcomer officers. They not only persisted in attending Ts'msyen feasts, they participated in the very ceremony Duncan and Ligeex had clashed over. When Ligeex's daughter returned from “the clouds” two of the fort officers were there to witness the final ceremony associated with that stage of her initiation.<sup>371</sup> This affront to Duncan's convictions was not unnoticed by the missionary; he disclosed his anguish in his journal, writing that their “heathenish or worse than heathenish conduct...tend to cast me down here.”<sup>372</sup> In the following year, during the Ts'msyen ceremonial season of 1859, newcomer officers not only persisted in attending Ts'msyen feasts, some moved on to flaunting their participation and the feasting system itself in Duncan's face.<sup>373</sup> The showdown at Lax̄l̄gu'alaams was neither a

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<sup>370</sup> The historian Susan Neylan has recently explored the role of Duncan's Ts'msyen convert, Arthur Wellington Clah, in this narrative. See Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*. Scholar Peggy Brock has given some examination to the aftermath of the showdown, the continuing conflict between “traditionalists” and Duncan's converts after their relocation to Metlakatla, in “Building Bridges: Politics and Religion in a First Nations Community,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 81, 1 (March 2000): 67-96.

<sup>371</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 28 December 1858, 9695; Fort Simpson Journal, 18 November 1859.

<sup>372</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 28 December 1858, 9695.

<sup>373</sup> Both Officers Francis Dobbs and Pym Nevins Compton seem to have taken pleasure in taunting Duncan over their attendance at feasts and at the Ts'msyen practice of the more “heathen” aspects of the feasting complex. At a meal for which Duncan was present in December of 1859 the fort officers invited Ligeex also to dine. According to Duncan, Dobbs proceeded to ask Ligeex very pointed questions about the “dancing & medicine work” at a recent feast Ligeex had attended. Duncan wrote of this and other similar experiences, “thus I have to sit at a table with the avowed enemies of God.” He eventually became so depressed in spirit over the behaviour of the newcomer officers that he almost entirely gave up eating with

two-party affair nor was it a one-day event. Though the threat on Duncan's life seems to have been removed, the resistance to his work remained, with the newcomer officers at Fort Simpson strongly positioned against his work and some even against his person.<sup>374</sup>

The individuals involved in the “showdown” over the Ts'msyen feasting complex drew on their personal power and authority as well as on ideas of legitimacy in their efforts to overcome their opponents. Chief Ligeex used his roles as a *sm'ooygit* and as the leader of the *Nulim* society, his support from other “traditionalists” and spiritual leaders, and even his relationships with HBC newcomers to sustain the feasting complex and, particularly, the ceremonies of the *Nulim* society and the *Xgyedmhalaayt* (Human-Eaters) society at Laxlgu'alaams. He seems to have wanted Duncan to understand why the feasting complex was important to Ts'msyen people and just how Duncan's behaviour was threatening the ceremonies and the people participating in them. In addition, it appears that Ligeex wished Duncan to be aware of the support other newcomers had demonstrated for Ts'msyen ceremonies and for Ligeex himself. By producing his “teapots” for Duncan's evaluation Ligeex was signaling both that he had the support of the HBC officers behind him and that Duncan should give merit to his argument because other newcomers had validated his honest nature. Duncan himself had few allies at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams at this time. He relied heavily on his belief in the power of his god, his own influence and authority, and the support of his Christian converts (particularly Arthur Wellington Clah) in his struggles to end the feasting

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them, though it regularly meant going without a meal altogether. William Duncan, *Journal*, 26 October 1859, 9808; 20 December 1859, 9846.

<sup>374</sup> Newcomer officer Francis Dobbs, the individual Duncan identified as particularly engaged in Ts'msyen ceremonies and against whom he launched his letter-writing campaign, apparently resorted to using gossip as a tool to subvert Duncan's work and to undermine his power and authority. According to Duncan, Dobbs spread a rumor that Duncan was having illicit relationships with some of his female converts (most notably his female language instructor, Noas Pierre or Mary Quintal). Of course, it is entirely possible that Duncan was involved with this or another Ts'msyen woman. William Duncan, *Journal*, 29 August 1859, 9777.

complex. Duncan was all too aware that the power and authority of his fellow newcomers at the fort – made so readily available to Chief Ligeex – would not be offered to assist him. Though the HBC newcomers gave Duncan rooming quarters in the fort they were careful to distinguish that accommodation from a sanctioning of his mission to the Ts’msyen. They opposed him in what he would depict as one of the great battles of his life.

Whatever the details of the conflict between Duncan and Ligeex, between Christian converts and the supporters of the Ts’msyen feasting complex, it is clear that the behaviour of the newcomer officers left Duncan feeling alienated and undermined. The officers’ actions provided a clear contrast to Duncan’s and, to his way of thinking, not only served to confuse Ts’msyen people but caused them to question the validity of his words and his work. Moreover, the HBC officers’ participation in Ts’msyen ceremonies continued to confer legitimacy on both the system and its proponents that Duncan so vehemently opposed. They publicly performed their disregard for Duncan and his mission and in so doing subverted his power and authority at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams. Never one to hide his despair, Duncan recorded his feelings concerning the officers’ behaviour and its effect on his mission work in terms he repeated frequently thereafter: “O how crushing it is to see ones own countrymen hindering the spread of the Gospel not only refusing obedience themselves but standing as a stumbling block to the heathen.”<sup>375</sup> His distress was two-fold; he was bothered both by their un-Christian behaviour and by their transgression of class and racial boundaries.

Duncan tried to establish control over the Ts’msyen by challenging their belief systems and ceremonial practices. He wanted to do away with the Ts’msyen feasting

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<sup>375</sup> William Duncan, *Journal*, 19 September 1858, 9650.

complex, a sophisticated system he rightly recognized as integral to Ts'msyen autonomy, power and authority. The long-standing practice of Ts'msyen-newcomer cross-participation in formal events of the other worked to support the continued operation of the feasting complex and Ts'msyen independence. Although it was most certainly Ts'msyen people's strength, ingenuity and resistance which enabled their persistence as a distinct people under the onslaught of colonialism it is significant that the actions of HBC newcomers at Fort Simpson helped destabilize the early stages of colonialism at this site. For those Ts'msyen people who adopted Christianity they did so, to a degree, on their own terms.

The relationships between Ts'msyen people and newcomers, the practice of cross-participation in ceremonies of the other, and the willingness on the part of Ts'msyen and newcomer people to engage in mimetic behaviour all worked to not only destabilize Duncan's mission but also the production and application of oppositional binaries at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams.<sup>376</sup> While divisions like white and savage, civilized and savage, Christian and heathen were present at this locale they cannot be said to have defined the experiences of the Ts'msyen and newcomer men and women resident there during the

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<sup>376</sup> Because Duncan left more comprehensive records than the fort journal we perhaps gain a distorted perspective on the relationships between newcomers and Ts'msyen people. Duncan provides great detail as to how Ts'msyen people were able to use their relationships with his fellow newcomers to resist or undermine him and his mission while at the same time providing comparatively less on his own relationships with Ts'msyen Christians or insight into how Ts'msyen people made use of their relationships with Duncan. Certainly Duncan's Ts'msyen followers used their relationships with him to negotiate new power and authority for themselves. The life of Arthur Wellington Clah offers a perfect example of this. When Duncan arrived at Fort Simpson Clah was living somewhat in exile – possibly even staying within in the fort – because he had recently killed woman he suspected of having used sorcery to cause the death of one of his relatives. Clah used his relationship with Duncan, gaining nearly exclusive access to Duncan's plans for his mission through his role as one of Duncan's language teachers, to gain power within the Ts'msyen worlds. Scholars Susan Neylan and Peggy Brock have both given some attention to Christian Ts'msyen converts use of their relationships with missionaries to further their power and authority within Ts'msyen worlds. As my focus has been on the fort newcomers and their relationships with Ts'msyen people I have not explored the ways in which Ts'msyen cross-participation in Duncan's Christian ceremonies may have functioned to develop relationships or to negotiate power and authority. That is a story that needs to be told elsewhere.

period under study. Because Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams was a dynamic space it was possible for Ts'msyen and newcomer cultures to interact, transgress and transform each other.<sup>377</sup> This destabilized and productive space made it feasible for a third possibility to develop wherein newcomer and Ts'msyen lives and identities could become intertwined and where culturally hybrid practices might emerge and a hybridized, rather than a unified colonial space, could be realized.

The story of Ts'msyen-newcomer cross-participation in formal events of the other is an important one. It reveals a complex history of newcomer-Ts'msyen relations where the presence of unfriendly or violent interactions did not exclude a concurrent reality of intermingled lives, accommodations, and alliances between Ts'msyen people and newcomers. Uncovering some of these complexities allows us to recognize Ts'msyen and newcomer people as the agents they were, responsive to the particular structures and social dynamics at play at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. Learning that Ts'msyen and newcomer outsiders took part in some of the other's formal channels of expressing and maintaining social position and power also helps us to understand more the nuanced ways power operated at this locale. Cross-participation in ceremony, like other connections between newcomers and Ts'msyen people, could be employed within and between these groups as both a tool for support and subversion. As we gain a greater understanding of the actors, and the social, political, and economic forces shaping their worlds, the people become more tangible to us.

In this chapter I have examined the development of a hybrid system of law and cross-participation in ceremony between Ts'msyen and newcomer people. In doing so I

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<sup>377</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge 1994); Wikipedia, "Homi K. Bhabha," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homi\\_K.\\_Bhabha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homi_K._Bhabha), last accessed 11 March 2008.

hope to draw attention to some of the connections that developed between Ts'msyen and newcomer people, as well as to some of the ways in which those connections were used to negotiate power and authority within and between these groups. To a degree, I have situated these developments within the particular historical conditions present at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams, giving attention to agency, social practice, structure, and dynamics of power. That my analysis has heavily favoured Ts'msyen and newcomer elites is regrettable and was not my wish. Rather, it reflects the limited extant sources, being almost exclusively written by newcomer elites and reflective of their experiences and actions and, to some degree, the actions of particular Ts'msyen elites.

Hybridity and cross-participation can be read many different ways. I have chosen to emphasize mutual understanding, accommodation, and cultural change because, in part, I wished to make clear that in the contact zone of Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams ethnicity and identity were not immutable categories. Both Ts'msyen and newcomer people and their cultures were dynamic and responsive: far from the widely held beliefs of an essentialized Ts'msyen or newcomer culture, in actuality Ts'msyen and newcomer cultures were always changing, and numbers of Ts'msyen and newcomer people readily integrated elements of the other's culture into their own and participated in the joint creation of new cultural practices. These developments should not be romanticized, however. They are not indicative of absolute mutual respect, admiration or love between Ts'msyen people and newcomers (though these sentiments certainly seem to have been held by some Ts'msyen and newcomer people). More likely, these practices emerged because of the particular conditions of this contact zone together with Ts'msyen and newcomer people's will or need to interact with each other. It was in both their interests,

for instance, to develop stable, orderly, predictable, and peaceful relations with each other. Hybrid law and cross-participation in ceremony provided a method to achieve these ends.

To conclude, at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams law and ceremony were spaces in which Ts'msyen people and newcomers jointly participated, creating shared contexts and building intimacies. Though they likely had very different motivations, as well as somewhat different understandings of these practices, individuals from these communities found reasons to participate and to use hybridity and hybrid spaces for their own gain. In this contact zone, hybridity and hybrid spaces were permeated with power. But use of that power did not bring about a generalized, hegemonic outcome: there were limits to the social actor's power, even that of an elite. In other words, though the hybrid forms that developed at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams were structured by, in part, the conditions of social inequality and, particularly, the dominance of both the HBC newcomer officers and the Ts'msyen *sm'ooogyit*, they are not reflective of total dominance. While this chapter has focused on the ability of the newcomer and Ts'msyen elites to employ hybrid law and cross-participation in ceremony to empower themselves or their group, especially over their perceived subordinates, the next chapter gives some attention to ways in which hybridity was used by subordinates to empower themselves and increase their influence over the course of their lives. The hybrid forms which developed at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams could be used as tools for support or for subversion, to uphold the status quo or to oppose it.

Chapter Three:  
Intermarriage, Cultural Hybridity and the  
Negotiation of Power and Authority at Fort  
Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams

“...the whole garrison both officers and men living in a most careless dirty manner, appearing almost to endeavour to forget civilized decency, and copy their neighbours the Savages.”<sup>378</sup>

“...the Indians are great imitators. They usually copied our dress as near as possible....”<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Captain D.D. Wishart of the *Norman Morison*, remarking on Fort Simpson in 1850, as quoted in Helen Mellieur, *A Pour of Rain: Stories from a West Coast Fort* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2001), 114.

In 1860, after his first Ts'msyen wife had died of complications from childbirth, Hudson's Bay Company Captain John Swanson married a Tlingit woman named Khukts.<sup>380</sup> Her adopted father was at first reluctant to allow the marriage: Khukts' mother had once been involved with and then forsaken by a newcomer man, and Khukts' step-father feared the same fate for his adopted daughter. To gain Khukts as his wife then, Captain Swanson had to put her father's worries to ease by agreeing to "bring her to Victoria and marry her there, as a white man would."<sup>381</sup> Though they were wed in a Christian ceremony, the marriage of John and Catherine (Khukts) Swanson was, like the other couples who are the subject of this chapter, a hybrid union. Their participation in a newcomer wedding service was followed by the performance of an Indigenous custom, a pole bearing her eagle crest was raised in her adopted father's community. And, as a further signal of the cultural hybridity of which they were a part – one which brings to

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<sup>379</sup> Martha Washington Boss (O'Neill), reflecting on the Ts'msyen people she encountered while living at Fort Simpson in the 1880s, "A Tale of Northern B.C., from Cariboo to Cassiar," BCARS, 60.

<sup>380</sup> Khukts was a Tlingit (Tongass) woman but she had strong connections at Fort Simpson/ Laxlgu'alaams. Before her marriage to Captain Swanson, Khukts had lived at Fort Simpson or in one of the Ts'msyen villages outside the fort for some time, and attended the missionary William Duncan's school. After their marriage, Catherine regularly lived at the fort, spending periods of several months there. Though she often traveled on-board the HBC *Labouchere* with her husband, and seems to have lived with him in Victoria for a time, by the early 1880s she was again living at Laxlgu'alaams (this time outside the fort and, it seems, without her husband). Her residence at Fort Simpson/ Laxlgu'alaams as well as the tribal affiliation recorded on her baptism record – KITAHKANNEEDZK (which I take to be Ginax'angiik) – suggest to me that though she was Tongass she also had familial connections to the Ts'msyen.

Born in 1827, Captain John Swanson joined the HBC in 1843 and by 1855 was in command of the steamship *Otter* in 1855 and then in 1859, the *Labouchere*. Swanson married Catherine in 1860 when he was thirty-three and she was, apparently, thirteen. Together they had at least five children, four whom met tragically early deaths. The couple had a tumultuous relationship and sometime after Swanson retired from the company Catherine returned to the north to live at Kincolith. William Duncan Journal, 18 August 1861, 10133; BCARS, 34-5-16697, <[http://search.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-5799722/view/Baptisms/find-adv%2B%20givennames%20%3D\(%40fuzzy\(catherine\)\)%20AND%20surname%20%3D\(%40fuzzy\(swanson\)\)%20AND%20\(year%20%3C%201900\)%20%2B%2B%2B%2B/4](http://search.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-5799722/view/Baptisms/find-adv%2B%20givennames%20%3D(%40fuzzy(catherine))%20AND%20surname%20%3D(%40fuzzy(swanson))%20AND%20(year%20%3C%201900)%20%2B%2B%2B%2B/4)> (27 September 2008); Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles According to Crests and Topics*, Vol.1, Anthropological Series no.30, Bulletin no.119 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, n.d), 407, 409; Lloyd James Bailey, "Captain John S. Swanson: Historical Unknown," *BC Historical News* (Summer 1991): 3-6.

<sup>381</sup> Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, 408.

mind the mortuary pole raised for Chief Big Face Man's daughter in 1857 and discussed in Chapter Two – the clothes worn by Captain Swanson on his wedding day were nailed to this totem pole.<sup>382</sup>

This chapter, like the story of John and Catherine (Khukts) Swanson, concerns the marriages between newcomer men and, largely, Ts'msyen women and the cultural amalgams which resulted. I examine the institution of marriage at Fort Simpson as a hybrid practice and explore some of the ways in which both newcomers and Ts'msyen people made use of hybridity and the kinship connections established through intermarriage to negotiate power and authority at Fort Simpson. I will focus on some of the possible motivations for, and the forms and functions of intermarriage at this fort in an effort to both highlight the hybrid nature of these unions and to provide insight into why this hybridity developed. Marriages between Ts'msyen women and newcomer men at Fort Simpson were commonly occurring, generally long-lasting and at times distinctly affective. Local circumstances – including the dynamics of power at the fort as well as Ts'msyen traditions concerning both marriage to outsiders and cultural innovation (discussed in Chapter One) – significantly influenced the nature of these relationships and were fundamental to the formation of intermarriage as a hybrid institution at Fort Simpson. Finally, both newcomers and Ts'msyen people had distinct motivations for entering these relationships, as well as for cross-participating in formal and informal customs of the other, and many attempted to use hybridity as a tool to undermine another individual's authority and enhance their own power at this site.

#### Problems and Perspectives in the Writing of the History of Indigenous-Newcomer Intermarriage

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<sup>382</sup> Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, 409.

Intermarriage between fur trade employees and Indigenous women in British Columbia has been, relative to other regions, little studied. The seminal works in the field of Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage in the Canadian fur trade are macrohistories and, as a result, pay only limited attention to British Columbia. Sylvia Van Kirk's *"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* and Jennifer S.H. Brown's *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country*, significant for the challenge they offer to the notion that Indigenous women were marginal to the fur trade and to Indigenous-newcomer history, demonstrate that Indigenous-newcomer marriage was indispensable to the economic success of fur traders.<sup>383</sup> Since their publication these ideas have become foundational to the field. However, more recent studies have done little to build upon these initial findings especially as concerns British Columbia.

A handful of studies have been published which consider intermarriage in British Columbia during the fur trade and the early colonial period.<sup>384</sup> These works have tended

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<sup>383</sup> Sylvia Van Kirk, *"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980); Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980). Brown offers an analysis of the patterns of intermarriage which developed out of the two different traditions of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company.

<sup>384</sup> See, for example, Jean Barman, "What a Difference a Border Makes: Aboriginal Racial Intermixture in the Pacific Northwest," *Journal of the West*, Vol.38, No.3 (July 1999), 14-20; Jean Barman and Bruce M. Watson, "Fort Colville's Fur Trade Families and the Dynamics of Race in the Pacific Northwest," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. (Summer 1999): 140-153; Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies*, No. 115/116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/98): 237-266; Darren Friesen, "Canada's Other Newcomers: Aboriginal Interactions with People from the Pacific," (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2006); Emma Milliken, "Choosing Between Corsets and Freedom: Native, Mixed-Blood, and White Wives of Laborers at Fort Nisqually, 1833-1860," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (Spring 2005): 95-101; Jay Nelson, "'A Strange Revolution in the Manners of the Country': Aboriginal-Settler Intermarriage in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, & the Law*, eds. John McLaren, Robert Menzies, and Dorothy E. Chunn, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 23-62; Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Sylvia Van Kirk, "Colonized Lives: The Native Wives and Daughters of Five Founding Families of Victoria" <[http://ccins.camosun.bc.ca/~latham/pin\\_money/vankirk.htm](http://ccins.camosun.bc.ca/~latham/pin_money/vankirk.htm)>; Sylvia Van Kirk, "Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families of Victoria," in *Readings in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, eds. R. Douglas Francis & Donald B. Smith, (Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002),

to take a comparative approach, examining, for example, differences between Canadian (British Columbia) and American (Washington) practices and policy towards intermarriage, or contrasting the fur trade period with the later colonial response to intermarriage in British Columbia.<sup>385</sup> Though useful for the attention they have drawn to the differences region, gender, and time period made on the practice of intermarriage they have been unsuccessful at enhancing our understanding of Indigenous or newcomer motivations for intermarriage, the forms these marriages took or the ways in which they functioned within either Indigenous or newcomer communities.

To be fair, the scholars who have studied intermarriage are not entirely to blame for this deficiency: a lack of sources, and the more profound challenges concerning the limits of historical knowledge, means that questions regarding motivations, forms and functions of intermarriage in the fur trade period can never truly be answered. And yet, through additional research and new approaches, it is possible to learn more than we have. The more expansive approach of earlier works, as well as the tendency by these scholars to both focus their attention on the newcomer elite (at the expense of the more numerous working class) and fur trade communities in more heartland locations (like Fort Victoria) has meant an unnecessarily narrow view of relationships between Indigenous women and newcomer men. Moreover, many of the scholars who have examined intermarriage in British Columbia's land-based fur trade have done so without a sufficient grounding in Indigenous history. They have failed to consult sources which could offer greater insight into Indigenous women's experiences of and motivations for marrying newcomers, such as oral histories and ethnographic collections. In failing to take notice of these sources

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437-458; Sylvia Van Kirk, "From 'Marrying-In' to 'Marrying-Out': Changing Patterns of Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Marriage in Colonial Canada," *Frontiers*, Vol.23, No.4 (2002):1-11.

<sup>385</sup> See, for example, Barman, "What a Difference a Border Makes" and Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*.

scholars are not only neglecting Indigenous histories but also Indigenous interpretations of the past.<sup>386</sup>

The importance of Indigenous history is a recurrent theme in this thesis. All too often scholars have undertaken studies of Indigenous-newcomer relations without attending to the unique history and culture of the particular Indigenous people in question.<sup>387</sup> Yet it was the history of an Indigenous group prior to their contact with newcomers that determined, to a great degree, how the community would respond to this contact.<sup>388</sup> The history and culture of a particular Indigenous community, then, is an essential part of the context in which historical actors operated and in which historical events transpired. Not only did an Indigenous community's history and culture effect how they responded to contact with newcomers, it also influenced the meanings they constructed of these events. Thus, any consideration of Indigenous people's actions or

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<sup>386</sup> Historian Wendy Wickwire makes this argument in her article, "Stories from the Margins: Toward a More Inclusive British Columbia Historiography" in *Myth & Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, ed. John Sutton Lutz (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 118-139.

<sup>387</sup> In the field of Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage or sexual relations the work of Adele Perry, Sylvia Van Kirk, and Jean Barman stand as good examples of this tendency to overlook Indigenous history and differences between Indigenous groups. In *On the Edge of Empire*, "From 'Marrying-In' to 'Marrying-Out,'" and "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality" neither Perry, Van Kirk, nor Barman, respectively, consulted ethnographic records or Indigenous oral histories nor did they consider cultural differences between Indigenous communities as factors influencing Indigenous people's experiences and the relations between Indigenous people and European newcomers. That is not to say that their studies are without merit. Perry, Van Kirk, and Barman have made considerable contributions to the study of Indigenous-newcomer relations in British Columbia. However, their work would have been stronger and their analysis more astute had they considered these important circumstances. Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*; Van Kirk, "From 'Marrying-In' to 'Marrying-Out'"; Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality."

<sup>388</sup> In *The Heavens are Changing*, historian Susan Neylan offers a fine example of what can be gained by considering ethnographic records and the history or culture of an Indigenous group prior to contact with European newcomers. In her analysis of Ts'msyen people's encounters with Protestant missions Neylan contextualizes the actions and reactions of Ts'msyen people towards Christianity within the Ts'msyen traditions of innovation and spirituality. By considering ethnographic records and oral histories of the more ancient Ts'msyen history Neylan is, I think, better able to understand Ts'msyen people's experiences of these mission projects as well as the important roles some Ts'msyen people played in shaping Christianity and negotiating Christian identities. It is unfortunate that Neylan did not also examine the HBC fur trade records as her understanding of Ts'msyen people's responses to Christianity and the missionaries William Duncan and Thomas Crosby would have been strengthened by doing so. Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

experiences of contact must be understood within the contexts of their own particular history and culture, as much as is possible.<sup>389</sup> In my own research I have attempted to learn these particulars through the study of ethnographic records and published oral histories. Attention to these kinds of sources can provide historians with new evidence and draw attention to aspects of Indigenous people's lives usually overlooked or deemed irrelevant in other histories.

The historical and cultural variations between Indigenous people and Indigenous communities are not widely recognized in Canada, even amongst historians.<sup>390</sup> Although the Indigenous peoples who lived in what has become known as Canada were incredibly heterogeneous, with distinct languages and cultures, there has been a propensity for scholars and the public at large to ignore this diversity. Indigenous people have repeatedly been characterized as a homogenous group, having a single worldview and acting as a uniform whole.<sup>391</sup> This concept of a monolithic, essential Indian is so

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<sup>389</sup> The same is, of course, true for the study of newcomers. However, scholars generally already take pains to situate the actions of newcomers within the context of newcomer history and culture. That said, there is significant room to improve in the study of contact history and fur trade history in Canada, particularly as regards the study of non-European newcomers and newcomers not of an officer class.

<sup>390</sup> While the diversity of Indigenous peoples across Canada is more broadly acknowledged – with distinctions made between culture groups like the Northwest Coast, Plains, Inuit and Iroquois – there remains a tendency amongst some scholars and the public at large to disregard differences between Indigenous people, particularly in small geographic areas like British Columbia. Significantly, the Indigenous peoples of what is now British Columbia were incredibly heterogeneous: The Northwest Coast region alone was one of the most linguistically diverse areas of Indigenous Canada, with at least sixteen different languages once spoken in this region. Alan McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada: An Anthropological Overview* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1995), 187. That some scholars overlook the tremendous cultural diversity amongst Indigenous people in British Columbia, and particularly of those Indigenous communities residing along the Northwest Coast, is in part, I would suspect, a result of the mistaken belief that a shared basic economy necessarily also meant a common culture, complete with uniform customs, beliefs, and political organization. That the Indigenous peoples living along the Northwest Coast based their economies around the same essential resources – such as salmon, shellfish and berries – did not mean that they responded in a like manner to contact with newcomers or that they experienced contact with newcomers and the fur trade in the same way.

<sup>391</sup> Devon A. Mihesuah, "Commonalty of Difference: American Indian Women and History," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol.20, No.1 (Winter 1996), 15. Even Sylvia Van Kirk, a historian who has spent decades researching Indigenous-newcomer history and who has written a seminal book in the field, has been guilty of this generalization. In "From 'Marrying-In' to 'Marrying-Out'" Van Kirk writes: "From the

pervasive that even a scholar's intellectual awareness of "diverse aboriginal traditions" does not preclude her from employing universals and generalizations about Indigenous people.<sup>392</sup>

Scholars of Indigenous history and Indigenous-newcomer relations must take care in their research and their writing to recognize diversity amongst Indigenous people. Working from this understanding, scholars who seek to research Indigenous history or Indigenous-newcomer relations must first gain knowledge of the particular customs of the Indigenous people or peoples who are the focus of their work and then take these particulars into consideration as factors influencing Indigenous people's responses to, actions towards, and experiences of historic events.<sup>393</sup> Such differences between Indigenous groups would include variation in religion, economy, values, worldviews, gender roles, and social systems, to name only a few. In failing to consider the differences between Indigenous communities scholars miss out on an important device to better understand the past and cannot help but misconstrue the history of Indigenous people and of Indigenous-newcomer relations.

At the same time as it is important to recognize differences among Indigenous people in the writing of history, scholars must be careful to recognize differences between themselves and the people who form the subject of their research. This is

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Aboriginal point of view, cross-cultural unions were a way of integrating the Euro-Canadian stranger into Native kinship networks and enmeshing him in the reciprocal responsibilities that this entailed." Van Kirk, "From 'Marrying-In' to 'Marrying-Out,'" 4.

<sup>392</sup> See, for example, Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, "Introduction," *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, third edition (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1. In a paragraph on the subject of the need to "avoid overgeneralization and false universals" when writing about First Nations women Strong-Boag and Fellman state: "Such assertions need to be evaluated within the context of multiple and diverse aboriginal traditions that varied tremendously over 'Turtle Island', as North American was known..." While a number of North American Indigenous groups had a concept of their homeland as Turtle Island (albeit in their own languages) this was not a universal name for what is now known as North America.

<sup>393</sup> This section is influenced by my reading of Devon A. Mihesuah, "Commonality of Difference: American Indian Women and History," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol.20, No.1 (Winter 1996): 15-27.

especially true for scholars like me who belong to a privileged group (white) and are writing about an oppressed other. Ruth Roach Pierson has offered a valuable and important critique of the historiography of native-newcomer intermarriage in Canada in her article, “Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women’s History,” cautioning historians, particularly those from the dominant group (white, middle class), to recognize difference and take care not to speak for the Indigenous women who married or partnered with newcomer men during the fur trade period and form the subject of their research.<sup>394</sup> Pierson’s critique is important for, in the zest to access the truth about the past, and to uncover historical agents’ *feelings* about their experiences, historians have at times presumed to know too much. That has been especially true for an earlier generation of historians who, in their attempts to re-introduce women into the written history as historical actors represented women as a homogenous group with a common experience of the past.<sup>395</sup> While many of the women who lived in earlier times shared with each other and with women of the present the common context of gender oppression, there were and are distinct differences between women that translate into significantly divergent experiences. In overlooking the differences between women such scholarship has had a tendency to prioritize the (presumed) experience of gender oppression over those of race, class, sexuality, religion,

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<sup>394</sup> Ruth Roach Pierson, “Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women’s History,” in *Writing Women’s History: International Perspectives*, edited by Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 79-106.

<sup>395</sup> Since 1987 the field of Women’s History has become increasingly concerned with avoiding false generalizations. Criticisms from African American and Indigenous scholars concerning the writing of women’s history, particularly the conflation of “woman” with “white woman” has challenged the idea of a homogenous womanhood and universal woman’s experience. Arguing for analysis which considers the intersection of race, gender, and class in the lived experiences of women’s lives these scholars have initiated a debate in the field concerning, as Pierson succinctly describes it, “experience, difference, dominance and voice.” Gerda Lerner, “U.S. Women’s History: Past, Present, and Future,” *Journal of Women’s History* Vol.16, No.4 (2004), 10-27; Pierson, “Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice.”

or other differences.<sup>396</sup> As with the study of Indigenous communities, scholars must attempt to reconstruct the intricacies of the women's lives we research by attending to difference and particulars, be they Indigenous or newcomer women.<sup>397</sup>

Additionally, Pierson reminds scholars that we must use caution when attempting to access the lives of women, particularly women of colour, through the documents of newcomer men. These documents, writes Pierson, are "more likely to reflect the discursive world of the speaker than that of the spoken about."<sup>398</sup> Her review of the field of Women's History and the historiography of Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage is important and has had a tremendous impact on the writing of women's history. And yet, the conclusion that Indigenous women's experiences are forever to be missing from our historical narratives and concealed from modern audiences is not an easy one to accept either.

Pierson, clearly also struggling with this unhappy conclusion, suggests that perhaps these women's lives do not have to remain forever elusive to us. She proposes that contemporary Indigenous women can, to some degree, access the experiences of these important historical actors and better relate them to a broader contemporary audience.<sup>399</sup> Like the scholars she is critiquing, however, I would suggest that Pierson is again falling susceptible to the notion of a universal women's – or in this case, universal Indigenous women's – experience in making this suggestion. Certainly, there is real value in Indigenous scholars writing history – whether that history is of their own Indigenous

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<sup>396</sup> Scholar Joan W. Scott argues that experience is both an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted. Thus the concept of a shared experience of gender oppression is actually an interpretation made by historians, that is to say, it is a naturalization of the category gender oppression. Experience is, according to Scott, "that which we want to explain." Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* Vol.17, No.4 (Summer 1991), 797.

<sup>397</sup> Mihesuah, "Commonalty of Difference," 16.

<sup>398</sup> Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice," 92.

<sup>399</sup> Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice," 92.

community or of another subject entirely: The greater the diversity of historians the richer our analysis of and understanding of the past will be. Moreover, an Indigenous historian writing about their own community likely has insider cultural knowledge which could better help them to understand the events and the people whom they are analyzing. However, to suggest that contemporary Indigenous women, by virtue of their status as Indigenous and their shared experience of colonial oppression, can access the feelings and experiences of Indigenous women of the past is to fail to appreciate the very significant differences between Indigenous communities in Canada, Indigenous history, and, not insignificantly, Indigenous women themselves.<sup>400</sup>

Although I do not agree with Pierson's solution to the very unsatisfying position historians have found themselves in – that the limits of historical knowledge determine that the experiences and feelings of Indigenous women of the past remain forever elusive to us – I think she is right to suggest that all may not be lost in this regard. Scholars should continue to make an effort to access this aspect of the past. I suggest that by employing new theories and methodologies, and expanding the source material scholars' access to include a greater diversity of materials, we might increase our ability to access this kind of information. Alternative approaches might yield more insight into how particular women viewed their worlds, how they responded to the changing circumstances brought about by contact with newcomers, and why they may have responded in these ways. Certainly, the entirety of Indigenous women's lives in the past,

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<sup>400</sup> Historian Devon Mihesuah makes this point in "Commonality of Difference." In noting the importance of difference among Indigenous women Mihesuah writes: "Even what may appear to be similarities may actually be differences, however, because cultural disparities between tribes, such as religion, social systems, and economies caused Indian women to react to common experiences of externally induced adversity and change in dissimilar ways. Authors can challenge notions of fixed identity among Indian women by investigating their allegiances to tribal traditions, their definitions of ethnicity and self, their emotions and physical appearance." Mihesuah, "Commonality of Difference," 15.

all of their feelings and experiences, will remain beyond our purview but we can, I believe, get closer to understanding their lives than the place we are currently at.

And where exactly are we? The publication of Pierson's article stimulated debate in the fields of Women's History and Women's Studies in Canada. Likely as a result of this debate, the writing of Indigenous women's history has taken a turn away from a focus on feelings and emotions and towards formal policy and the external pressures on Indigenous women and on intermarriage. Unable to access emotions and lived experiences, and acutely aware of the challenges entailed in writing the history of an oppressed other, many historians have turned to situating the history of Indigenous women or Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage within "the larger colonial context or to examin[ing] their legacy for settler/Aboriginal relations."<sup>401</sup> Although these kinds of studies have been valuable, they tend to reveal more about newcomer society or newcomer husbands than they do about Indigenous women or Indigenous communities.<sup>402</sup> In contrast to these more newcomer-focused approaches, a small number of scholars have continued to centre their attention on Indigenous women and Indigenous communities.

Using a wide range of source material and new analytical approaches historians like Susan Sleeper-Smith have managed to gain significant new insight into Indigenous-newcomer history. In *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes*, for example, Sleeper-Smith's breadth of sources, including personal diaries, photographs, paintings, vital records/statistics, and inventories of trade

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<sup>401</sup> Sylva Van Kirk, "From 'Marrying-In' to 'Marrying-Out': Changing Patterns of Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Marriage in Colonial Canada," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol.23, No.3 (2002), 1.

<sup>402</sup> David Peterson-del Mar also makes this point in "Intermarriage and Agency: A Chinookan Case Study," *Ethnohistory*, Vol.42, No.1 (Winter 1995), 2.

goods, help her to better reconstruct the world in which Indigenous women of the Great Lakes were living in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>403</sup> At the same time, the attention she gives to culture and custom, both that of Indigenous people and newcomers, helps her assessment of the actions of individual historical actors. By attending to the history of the people of the Great Lakes region prior to the arrival of European newcomers to this region and also considering social practice and symbolic meaning Sleeper-Smith is, I would suggest, better able to identify cultural change, accommodation, and personal agency. And while a substantial understanding of the emotions of Indigenous women of the Great Lakes region remains beyond her knowing, these new approaches offer further intelligence concerning their affections, aversions, and motivations for action.

There is no question that the historical understanding of Indigenous women and intermarriage in the fur trade has increased significantly since the publication of *Many Tender Ties* and *Strangers in Blood*. These early works drew attention to the important roles Indigenous women played in the Canadian fur trade. They also brought to light some of the intimacies and affections between Indigenous women and newcomer men and, in the process, exposed one of the human dimensions of the fur trade.<sup>404</sup> However, as the work of scholars like Sleeper-Smith demonstrates, there remains much still to learn. Among Canadian scholars, the subsequent turn away from a history of emotion and sentiment has also meant, in some ways, a turn away from the consideration of the intimate and all that such a focus can reveal. This is in stark contrast to scholars in fields like post-colonial studies who have given increasing attention to the intimate domains of

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<sup>403</sup> Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

<sup>404</sup> Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties," 831.

empire, including sex, sentiment, domestic arrangement and child rearing.<sup>405</sup> While the recent work of Canadian scholars like Sylvia Van Kirk has value, particularly as concerns our historical understanding of the external pressures affecting Indigenous-newcomer relations during the fur trade (like newcomer constructions of race and gender, for example), in privileging the larger colonial context over the intimate domains, such scholars are apt to miss that the intimate domains are the locations which allow us to, as scholar Laura Ann Stoler writes, “identify what Foucault might have called the microphysics of colonial rule.”<sup>406</sup> For, as the work of Stoler and others has revealed, the intimate domains are not merely domestic, offering insight into the familial arrangements of historical actors, but also political.

The histories of intimacies matter because these domains are fundamental sites of power. As the influential Stoler asserts, it is often within the intimate domains that colonial policies or strategies of governance were actually implemented and acted out.<sup>407</sup> In studying the intimate, then, historians can learn more about the ways in which colonial administrators or, in this case, officers of the fur trade, attempted to manage intimacy as a strategy of dominance. They can also gain insight into some of the ways in which political authority may have been assured and how it operated through the management of the intimate, including marriage and domesticity. While in many cases the intimate domains were managed to ensure distinction between colonizers or newcomers on the one hand and the colonized or Indigenous peoples on the other they were not always characterized so. At times the intimate domains made possible the production of a particular kind of cultural space where key markers of white, middle class, gentlemanly

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<sup>405</sup> Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties,” 830-31.

<sup>406</sup> Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 7.

<sup>407</sup> Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 8, 11.

status could be fashioned.<sup>408</sup> Finally, the study of the intimate domains allows historians to ascertain some of the ways in which strategies of governance, power and authority, and the relations between colonizer and colonized or newcomer and Ts'msyen could be confounded. Despite what colonial administrators or fur trade officers might have wished theirs were not hegemonic institutions. As a result, there was a distinct difference between prescription and practice in colonial frontiers and in the land-based fur trade of the Northwest Coast. Newcomers and Ts'msyen people regularly subverted the strategies of management, transgressed the expectations of class, race or religion, and blurred the distinctions between them. Although dominance and oppression were ever-present, at Fort Simpson and in the colonies, some individuals were able to creatively maneuver their circumstances into personal advantage.

In the study of the land-based fur trade of the Northwest Coast I see a particular need for approaches which consider both the intimate – including domesticity, affect, kinship, and sexuality – and the operation of power and authority within the trade and between an Indigenous community and fur trade fort. As Stoler's research has demonstrated, the intimate and the operation of power are deeply connected. By omitting the intimate domains from study scholars are unnecessarily limiting their research and thus their understanding of the past. Additionally, consideration of the operation of power and authority are particularly important because the fur trade and Northwest Coast Indigenous societies like the Ts'msyen were hierarchically structured. The divisions

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<sup>408</sup> Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties," 842. Under conditions of colonialism these key markers were often reliant on the presence of Indigenous peoples in the intimate domains as the domestic servants of colonists while at Fort Simpson it was the presence of Indigenous women as wives that made these privileges and distinctions possible.

between officer and worker or chief and slave were central to the functioning of both the fur trade and Ts'msyen society.

Surprisingly, little work has been done on the relationship between Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage and the operation of power and authority within the fur trade or at particular fur trade forts. Historian Heather Rollason Driscoll is one of the few scholars to attend to the impact the operation of power had on the practice of intermarriage within the fur trade. In “‘A Most Important Chain of Connection’: Marriage in the Hudson’s Bay Company” Driscoll suggests that the shift in marriage patterns in the fur trade that earlier scholars had identified – away from newcomer marriage to Indigenous women and, eventually, towards marriage to newcomer (white) women – had as much to do with the operation of power within the HBC as it did the increasing racism amongst newcomers.<sup>409</sup> Whereas Driscoll’s article was a preliminary study lacking specific evidence from fur trade forts, I offer detailed evidence from Fort Simpson in this chapter to substantiate the view that intermarriage was central to power and authority in the fur trade. I hope that my combined attention to intermarriage on the one hand and power and authority on the other illustrates how the personal and political interconnected at this locale while also offering yet another substantiation of the argument that the intimate domains are political.

In giving attention to the intimate at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams I have tried to be sensitive to the concerns highlighted by Pierson. Unwilling to give up the possibility of

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<sup>409</sup> Heather Rollason Driscoll, “‘A Most Important Chain of Connection’: Marriage in the Hudson’s Bay Company,” in *From Rupert’s Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster*, eds. Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens, and R.C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 81-110. On changing marriage patterns see, for example, Sylvia Van Kirk, “From ‘Marrying-In’ to ‘Marrying-Out’: Changing Patterns of Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Marriage in Colonial Canada,” *Frontiers* Vol.23 No.3 (2002): 1-11.

accessing affective attachments however, I have turned to new source material, methodology and theory to learn more about the sentiments of the Indigenous women and newcomer men who married at this fort. Following the suggestion made by historian Jennifer S.H. Brown in “Partial Truths: A Closer Look at Fur Trade Marriage,” I have examined individual Indigenous-newcomer relationships and their trajectories over time in the hope that I might be able to gain insight into personal experiences.<sup>410</sup> While I cannot reconstruct Ts’msyen women’s lives and experiences I would suggest that there is strong reason to suppose that affection did exist between some of the newcomer men and Ts’msyen women who married at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams. For, despite external pressures against these unions, including increased regulation and attempts to reform both Indigenous women and Indigenous-newcomer intermarriage, many of these relationships were long-lasting and committed unions.<sup>411</sup> That said, I do not wish to obscure coercive details of Indigenous-newcomer relations. Domestic violence was present in many of these unions and feelings of disaffection are just as likely as or perhaps even more likely to have been present than feelings of affection between Indigenous women and their newcomer husbands. I hope for a sophisticated understanding of Ts’msyen-newcomer relations and intermarriage at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams that can allow for the presence of both affection and brutality.

My own work, then, is in many ways a departure from these earlier studies of intermarriage and the land-based fur trade. Where much of the earlier research has been undertaken using a macrohistorical approach I have employed a microhistorical

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<sup>410</sup> Jennifer S.H. Brown, “Partial Truths: A Closer Look at Fur Trade Marriage,” in *From Rupert’s Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster*, eds. Theodore Binnema, Gerhard Ens, and R.C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 59-80.

<sup>411</sup> On the forces of regulation and reform see Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, chapter four.

methodology, studying one particular fur trade fort over a period of thirty years, in an effort to gain a deeper understanding into some of the issues that have gone unanswered in earlier studies, the questions of motivations, forms and functions of intermarriage during the land-based fur trade period. In an effort to achieve a more complete picture of the institution of marriage between Ts'msyen women and newcomers I have endeavored to examine not just the relationships between officers and Ts'msyen people but also those between newcomer workers and Ts'msyen people. Both my methodology and my analysis of these relationships are greatly influenced by my reading of ethnographic records.<sup>412</sup> I believe that a consideration of these records provides some intelligence into the historical events which preceded the arrival of European newcomers in Ts'msyen territory and the onset of the fur trade as well as revealing something of Ts'msyen customs and culture. This knowledge is essential if scholars are to have any hope of understanding Ts'msyen actions towards the HBC newcomers. Using these methods and materials, as well as the post-colonial theory of hybridity, which I discuss below, I hope to enhance our understanding of intermarriage between Indigenous women and fur trade employees in British Columbia's land-based fur trade and achieve a truer understanding of the men, women and children who were concerned.

#### Intermarriage at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams: Extent, Affection, Motivations

This chapter is, in many ways, born out of my desire to access something of Ts'msyen women's experiences of the fur trade. Newcomer documents of the fur trade reveal little about the lives of Ts'msyen women, inside the fort or without. References to

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<sup>412</sup> Given that this research was undertaken for a Master's Degree and that I am limited by time and other constraints I was not able to consult all of the records I would have liked. A number of pertinent documents remain unpublished in archives outside of British Columbia. Nor was I able, unfortunately, to undertake an oral history project. It is hoped that further research of this kind will be carried out and will reveal more about the historical actors at Fort Simpson and intermarriage at this fort.

marriages or sexual relationships between Ts'msyen women and newcomer men are one of the few spheres of Ts'msyen women's activities or experiences remarked upon in the documents and thus are one of the key avenues by which a scholar can hope to retrieve something of their lives. To that end I give significant attention to the form of intermarriage at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams and to some of the visible ways in which Ts'msyen women used these relationships for their own gain.

Hybridity and cultural change have been central themes in this thesis and receive treatment in this final chapter as well. Although hybridity theory has rarely been used in the study of the Canadian fur trade, associated instead with colonization and postcolonial discourse, I believe it can serve as a valuable framework for scholars in this field.<sup>413</sup> One of the central concepts of this theory is the understanding that cultures are changeable. By examining the cultural changes and mutual accommodations undertaken by individuals living within a contact zone, like the newcomers of Fort Simpson and the Ts'msyen people of Laxłgu'alaams, it is possible to learn more about the strategies such people used to navigate their new realities, reveal something of the workings of the relations of power, and bring to light the actions of historical actors, like women, who too often have gone unnoticed using conventional historical methods.

Additionally, this thesis and, particularly, this chapter, are fundamentally shaped by my understanding of the intimate domains as political sites. As scholar Laura Ann

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<sup>413</sup> For an example of hybridity theory applied to the study of the fur trade see Heather Rollason Driscoll, "'A Most Important Chain of Connection': Marriage in the Hudson's Bay Company," in *From Rupert's Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster*, eds. Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens, and R.C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 81-110. Although they did not use hybridity theory in their respective studies, historians Richard White and Susan Sleeper-Smith have both demonstrated the value of attending to cultural change and accommodation in the study of the fur trade and Indigenous-newcomer relations. See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and the Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

Stoler found for colonialists in the Dutch Indies, the sexual and domestic arrangements of HBC employees at Fort Simpson were political issues, not merely private matters, and they sharpened or subdued the categories of superior and subordinate.<sup>414</sup> Permeated with political meanings, the intimate domains were fundamental to the organization of the fort and to the management of newcomer workers. Working with this understanding I have given considerable attention to some of the ways in which power and authority were secured through marriage, domesticity, and sex at Fort Simpson. In particular, I examine some of the means by which newcomer officers and workers seem to have endeavoured to use their intimacy with specific Ts'msyen people as well as their own cultural hybridity as tools to negotiate power and authority within the fort. Marriages to Indigenous women seem to have been especially useful in the class struggles between workers and officers of the fort; they could be used to destabilize the power of the elite or to reinforce it and, importantly, they could serve as a means to cultivate distinctions among the residents of the fort.

I began this chapter by situating intermarriage at Fort Simpson within the historiography of intermarriage and the fur trade. In the remainder of this chapter I explore intermarriage at Fort Simpson in detail. I begin with a discussion on the extent to which intermarriage was practiced at this locale, the possibility of affective attachments within these unions, and some of the likely motivations for the newcomer men and Ts'msyen women who entered into them. I then turn to examine the form of intermarriage at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. I argue that intermarriage, like law at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams, was a hybrid institution and I describe some of the amalgamated Ts'msyen and newcomer marriage customs which embodied this institution. Finally, I

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<sup>414</sup> Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 25.

consider some of the political implications of intermarriage at this locale. In particular, I examine various ways in which intermarriage and hybridity were used to negotiate power and authority both within and without the fort.

At Fort Simpson, between 1834 and 1862, intermarriage between newcomers and Ts'msyen women was a widespread practice. Nearly every man who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company fort during these years had a Ts'msyen, Tlingit or Nisga'a wife.<sup>415</sup> Though some of these unions were short-lived, ending, for example, when the newcomer left the service of the HBC or relocated to another fort, a substantial number endured until the death of a spouse. Many of these couples remained together despite relocation to a community outside of Ts'msyen territory, such as Victoria, and growing colonial disapproval of such relationships.<sup>416</sup> These marriages seem to have been committed and even, in some cases, affective: in the face of a multitude of challenges the spouses remained together and even put each other first, prioritizing their marriage over other commitments such as employment for the HBC.

Of the nineteen long-term employees who worked at Fort Simpson for a period of between ten and thirty years, at least seven were married for twenty years or more to a

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<sup>415</sup> It appears that in the 1830s the greater number of the HBC employees wives at Fort Simpson were from the Nisga'a nation. This is likely because the marriages had been established during the fort's tenure in Nisga'a territory, on the Nass River. When the fort was relocated to Ts'msyen territory the majority of the marriages between Indigenous women and the newcomers of the fort involved Ts'msyen women. Still, Nisga'a and Tlingit women continued to establish marriages with HBC employees throughout the fort's history. Such a pattern in marriage was not restricted to the fort alone; the Ts'msyen also established marriages with Nisga'a and Tlingit people. The fort journals offer some evidence that a number of the Nisga'a and Tlingit women who married HBC employees during this period had kin living in the Ts'msyen communities outside of the fort.

<sup>416</sup> See Sylvia Van Kirk, "Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families of Victoria," in *Readings in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, eds. R. Douglas Francis & Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002), 437-458; Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies*, No. 115-116 (1997): 237-266; Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*.

Ts'msyen, Nisga'a or Tlingit woman.<sup>417</sup> Because of the limited extant records it is difficult to ascertain certain things about these relationships or those of the other Fort Simpson employees. However, it is clear that the majority of the newcomer men who worked at the fort married Indigenous women, most especially Ts'msyen women, and they generally remained with them well beyond the duration of their contracts at Fort Simpson. Several of these couples elected to confirm their commitments to each other through a newcomer Christian wedding ceremony. For example, no less than ten couples from Fort Simpson made the journey to Victoria between the years 1849 and 1860 to be married in St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church.<sup>418</sup>

Although the newcomer men and their Indigenous wives likely held divergent views on the meanings of these ceremonies, the events nonetheless indicate significant dedication from both spouses. A sacramentally sanctioned marriage was both inaccessible and expensive for people along the Northwest Coast during the period under study here.<sup>419</sup> The couple had to undertake the journey to Victoria and once there might, depending on the changing legislation, have to pay a fee to secure a license and then another to obtain the services of the clergy or else, inconveniently, remain in Victoria for a period of weeks as the marriage banns were read.<sup>420</sup> Given these circumstances, participation in this kind of newcomer ceremony demonstrated a serious desire on behalf of the couples' to have their unions recognized as more than casual in nature, wishing for

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<sup>417</sup> Fort Simpson Journals; William Duncan recorded that Dr. Kennedy, for instance, lived for more than twenty years at Fort Simpson, married to his Ts'msyen wife, Sudaal. William Duncan Journal, 18 May 1861, 10208.

<sup>418</sup> St. Andrew's Cathedral (Victoria), Register of Baptisms, Marriages, Burials for Victoria, Ft. Langley and Nanaimo, 1A, BCARS. At least five other couples were married by the Anglican church of Metlakatla.

<sup>419</sup> Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 98. Before 1865, marriage licenses were only available on Vancouver Island.

<sup>420</sup> Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 98. Before 1859 marriages were conducted in church by the reading of the banns, after 1859 couples could choose either to be wed by banns or to purchase a license from Government House and then pay a fee to a clergyman to be wed.

whatever reasons, their relationship be assigned the legal and social sanction of newcomer society. Moreover, it shows a willingness on the part of the Ts'msyen, Nisga'a and Tlingit wives to accommodate their partners and perhaps even to sanction newcomer ceremonies.

The long duration of these marriages as well as actions like participating in a ceremony which was at once foreign in content and in place suggests that Ts'msyen-newcomer marriages at Fort Simpson were at times genuinely affective. Residency practices offer additional evidence of commitment and attachment between Ts'msyen women and their newcomer husbands. It is perhaps not surprising that many Ts'msyen-newcomer marriages at Fort Simpson were long-lasting since, for newcomers, the fort was in a relatively remote location and contact with newcomer women was generally non-existent during this period.<sup>421</sup> If the HBC newcomers desired heterosexual relationships, children, and matrimonial domesticity they had little option but to form a union with an Indigenous woman. Yet these relationships were not merely about geographic convenience: at Fort Simpson, when a worker's contract expired, he retired from the service, relocated to another fort, or even deserted, it was not unusual for his Indigenous wife to move with him. Several Ts'msyen women relocated with their HBC husbands to distant and more urban communities like Port Townsend, Victoria and Nanaimo after their husbands left their posts at Fort Simpson.<sup>422</sup> As historian Adele Perry

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<sup>421</sup> It appears that the first newcomer woman to visit Fort Simpson was the married Anglican missionary Mrs. Tugwell. She arrived in 1860 and remained there, living in the newly constructed mission house in the Ts'msyen village, for nearly a year. Over the years a number of the HBC officers at Fort Simpson married women of mixed Indigenous-newcomer heritage and though they could be considered newcomers the evidence indicates that even the most culturally "European" among them had skills, knowledge and perhaps even identities which positioned them in-between.

<sup>422</sup> The best examples I located of couples who remained together after relocating outside of Ts'msyen territory are: Dr. John Kennedy and Sudaal, who lived together at Fort Simpson, Fort Durham, Victoria and Nanaimo; Captain McNeill and Nis'akx, who lived together at Fort Simpson and Victoria; Benjamin and

argues in *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*, Indigenous women and Indigenous-newcomer couples who lived in such heartland communities often experienced increased prejudice and regulation at the hands of newcomer reformers who considered intermarriage degrading and viewed newcomer men who married Indigenous women as demoralized by the relationship.<sup>423</sup> Moreover, Indigenous women living in such communities were often mocked and critiqued by European newcomers, conceived as sexually dangerous, unattractive and uncivilized.<sup>424</sup> Given such attitudes, the persistence of Ts'msyen-newcomer marriages outside of Fort Simpson and Ts'msyen territory indicates more than utility, it suggests sentiment.

The newcomers who kept the journal for Fort Simpson were not unaware of the affections shared between some Ts'msyen women at their newcomer husbands at Fort Simpson. Captain William McNeill, the officer in charge of Fort Simpson from 1851 to 1863 and himself married to the high-ranking Nisga'a woman Nis'akx (Neshaki), recorded in 1856 that "the Women of this place have some 'way' to turn mens brains."<sup>425</sup> Of course, referencing tender or romantic feelings between newcomers and Ts'msyen women was hardly important to the HBC journal keepers. What was considered of import, and generally the reason why we learn at all about such things, was the effect such affections had on the workings of the fort. In 1853 McNeill decried one worker as

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Agnes Raine, who lived at Fort Simpson and Dungeness near Port Townsend, Washington; William and Mary (Weeboo) Rudland who lived at Fort Simpson, Nanaimo and Metlakatla; Jean Baptiste and Susette Jollibois who lived at Fort Simpson and Victoria; Thomas Cotsford and his wife (name unknown) who lived at Fort Simpson and Victoria; (Marten?) Larsen and his wife (name unknown) who lived at Fort Simpson and Nanaimo; Camille and Louise Raymond who lived at Fort Simpson and Victoria; Nicholas and Amelie Auger who lived at Fort Simpson and Victoria; Donald and Margaret MacAulay who lived together at Fort Simpson and Victoria, where Donald managed the HBC's Viewfield farm.

<sup>423</sup> Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 69-70.

<sup>424</sup> Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 49, 51, 56.

<sup>425</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 10 February 1856. Neshaki was born in 1818. She left her first husband for Captain McNeill around 1851. The couple lived together for many years at Fort Simpson and Victoria before legally marrying in 1866

now “useless to the Company” because he was “over head and ears in Love” with his Ts’msyen wife.<sup>426</sup> Love for a Ts’msyen woman drove more than one HBC employee to desert Fort Simpson, to break the rules that governed the fort, to defy the officers and to be otherwise insubordinate. It was not unusual, then, for an officer of the HBC to record his frustration with what he perceived to be a worker’s affections for a woman hindering the industry of the fort.

While the affections felt by newcomers towards their Indigenous partners are sometimes remarked upon in the primary source material, the feelings of Ts’msyen women are much more difficult to access. Lacking any written records by Ts’msyen women it is impossible to truly know whether any of the women married to newcomer men developed the kind of tender ties towards them that historian Sylvia Van Kirk suggests accompanied some of these fur trade marriages. Instead, scholars must piece together a sense of these women’s lives using, as I have suggested above, their interpretive skills and what little evidence Indigenous women left over the course of their lives. In considering the marriages between newcomers and Indigenous women at Fort Simpson over a nearly thirty year period it becomes clear that Ts’msyen women found benefit in these relationships as so many of them remained with their newcomer husbands until death. Within the Ts’msyen worlds, as I discuss in greater detail below, it was permissible and even common for women to leave their “husbands” if they were dissatisfied with the union. While domestic violence was often a motivating factor in the

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<sup>426</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 5 January 1853. The journal keeper used this phrase to refer to Kiona, a Hawaiian employee. Kiona remained working for the HBC until at least 1869, living at Fort Simpson it appears with his Ts’msyen wife. Margaret Seguin Anderson and Marjorie M. Halpin, *Potlatch at Gitsegukla: William Beynon's 1945 Field Notebooks*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 200.

separation of husband and wife a lack of affection was also grounds for parting.<sup>427</sup> Given the ease with which a Ts'msyen woman could separate from her husband – experiencing no real censure for doing so and, indeed, generally receiving the support of her kin – it is plausible to construe the long-lasting marriages between Ts'msyen women and newcomer men as at least sometimes indicative of real affection between husband and wife.

At times the affection felt by an Indigenous woman towards a newcomer man is unmistakable in the source material. Such is the case with an incident that occurred in 1839. According to Dr. John Kennedy, having been prevented by the fort officers from meeting up with his Tlingit paramour the blacksmith, Camille Raymond, “arranged matters with the Indian woman to desert and to offer himself to Russians at Stikine.”<sup>428</sup> The officers of the fort objected to the relationship between Raymond and this woman, identified as Madame Barnett in the journal, because she “belonged to another man.”<sup>429</sup> Unwilling to be apart, being “madly attached or infatuated” with each other, the couple had schemed to be together by leaving their homes for the geographically and culturally unfamiliar locale of the Russian fort.<sup>430</sup> Unfortunately for the couple, Raymond was captured by a party of Tlingit people and returned to the fort. Seemingly distraught at the thought that Raymond might be punished for having left with her, Madame Barnett came

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<sup>427</sup> The historically well-known Ts'msyen woman, Elizabeth Dudoire Lawson (Diiks), refused to marry her intended Indigenous husband because she did not like the match. Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down The North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship*, (Toronto: The Missionary society of the Methodist church, the Young people's forward movement department, 1914), 19. While many of the Ts'msyen narratives represent Indigenous marriage as an alliance or as beneficial for reasons of wealth and power they also make frequent mention of affection between spouses.

<sup>428</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 6 October 1839.

<sup>429</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 7 October 1839. It is likely that Madame Barnett was “married” to another newcomer man who worked for the HBC, possibly an employee on one of the HBC vessels.

<sup>430</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 7 October 1839.

to the fort “to share his fate” insisting that “if he was put in Irons she must too.”<sup>431</sup> How the story of Raymond and Barnett ended is not recorded in the fort journal. Nevertheless, this brief glimpse into their relationship offers the valuable insight that at least one Indigenous woman at Fort Simpson felt strongly enough for her newcomer lover that she was willing to leave her partner, relocate to another outsider community, and risk imprisonment to be with him.

The willingness of a newcomer man or Ts’msyen woman to transgress class, race, or religious boundaries to be with their partner offers another avenue through which to access affective attachments between newcomer men and Indigenous women. This kind of example is easier to identify for newcomer men than it is for Ts’msyen women. In many ways just being involved with an Indigenous woman constituted a serious social transgression for newcomers during the nineteenth century. Although Indigenous-newcomer marriages were common at Fort Simpson there were times in which such unions were opposed and in these cases the persistence of either partner in seeking a relationship with the other can be read as a demonstration of affection.<sup>432</sup> The relationship between Henry (Harry) McNeill, a son of HBC officer William McNeill, and a Ts’msyen

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<sup>431</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 8 October 1839.

<sup>432</sup> In the late 1850s two female Ts’msyen supporters of William Duncan found themselves similarly caught between their affections, or perhaps practical desires, for their newcomer lovers on the one hand and Duncan’s approval and the sanction of Christianity on the other. Both women had been regular attendees at Duncan’s school and church and were early supporters of his mission. Understanding that Duncan would object because their relationships were not sacramentally sanctioned, each of these women stopped attending Duncan’s school and church services as well as avoided any contact with him. Family members of one of the women, perhaps Elizabeth Ryan, were so distressed that Duncan might alter his behaviour towards them by, for example, refusing to acknowledge them in passing, that they approached Duncan and attempted to explain their own disapproval for the relationship and their insistence that the union end if the couple did not seek a formal marriage ceremony. Despite the pressures of Duncan and these family members the couple persisted in their relationship, “making love” and preparing to live together outside the fort. Little more is said about this relationship and it would seem that it ended not long after however it serves as some further indication that some Ts’msyen women felt strongly enough towards their newcomer partners to risk the disapproval of friends and family in order to be together. William Duncan, *Journal*, 17 February 1859, 9713; 13 October 1859, 9804.

woman can be understood in just this way. In 1855, as I explain in greater detail below, Harry defied his father and the regulations of the HBC when he engaged in a sexual relationship with a Ts'msyen woman. Harry initially concealed this relationship from his father and the other officers of Fort Simpson. Once discovered, however, Harry refused to end the relationship, despite his father's fury and his own banishment from the fort.<sup>433</sup> Harry's choice to remain with this Ts'msyen woman, as I describe below, was to cost him his father's affection and his career in the HBC – a significant sacrifice and one which bespeaks a deep and ardent affection.

It was not only HBC officers who sometimes transgressed class boundaries to remain with their Indigenous wives. In 1856 Captain McNeill reported with outrage the desertion of fort employee Jeremy Serrieur who reportedly left Fort Simpson to accompany his wife to Victoria.<sup>434</sup> The motivation for this trip, the officers soon learned, was Serrieur's wife's desire "to procure Loaf Sugar" for her tea instead of the customary molasses allotted to newcomer workers.<sup>435</sup> Not only did Jeremy Serrieur's efforts to accompany his wife contravene the regulations of the fort, it violated English social class and gender mores as well. That Serrieur abandoned his work and defied his "master" to follow his wife to Victoria was an affront to both the nineteenth century ideals of servants obeying their masters and husbands commanding their wives.<sup>436</sup> Moreover, in deserting the fort to attain "White sugar" for his wife, a material good unmistakably associated with the officer class (molasses was the sweetener for the lowest social class), Serrieur

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<sup>433</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 22 December 1855.

<sup>434</sup> Jeremy Serrieur's name is variously spelled in the journal.

<sup>435</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 10 February 1856.

<sup>436</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 108.

transgressed the boundaries of social class.<sup>437</sup> The uppishness of Serrieur's wife and, by his acquiescence, Serrieur himself, served as a threat to the officers of the fort. Such imitation of the officers' lifestyle could undermine markers of officer rank and thus destabilize their status as middle class within the fort.

That a newcomer worker would willingly transgress class boundaries for the affection of his wife is not particularly remarkable. Unlike officers like Harry McNeill, workers at the fort had little to lose in participating in or performing behaviours outside their social rank. However, Jeremy Serrieur's actions were not without risk. In deserting the fort he gave up his position of employment and incurred the anger of the officers. Furthermore, his decision to follow his wife on her journey to Victoria was decidedly in contradiction to the ideals of masculine behaviour at the time and likely would have been read by his contemporaries as undignified and even emasculating. Finally, the journey to Victoria by canoe was long, arduous and hazardous. To make such a journey, with all of these attendant risks, suggests Serrieur felt deep affection for his wife.

Both Ts'msyen people and newcomers at Fort Simpson had strong motivations for intermarriage. As mentioned above, marriage to an Indigenous woman was generally the only means by which a newcomer could experience matrimonial domesticity or

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<sup>437</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 9 February 1856. Within the HBC, both tea and its sweeteners were graded by class. In "'Dynamics of Social Complexity in Early Nineteenth-Century British Fur-Trade Posts,'" archaeologist and ethnohistorian Scott Hamilton argues that in the fur trade "such preferred food types can be considered a luxury good. Exclusive or disproportionate access to such a preferred luxury good would have been an effective means of asserting and reinforcing social position within the small social universe of the trade post." As Hamilton notes, officers in the fur trade "could engage in such behaviour without concern for transportation costs." This difference between HBC officers and workers, their ability or inability to access preferred food items, became an important part of the "theatre of power" at HBC forts. Therefore, when Serrieur and his wife left the fort to procure this luxury item they were, in effect, undermining the power and authority of the HBC officers. Hamilton, "Dynamics of Social Complexity in Early Nineteenth-Century British Fur-Trade Posts," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* Vol.4, No.3 (September 2000), 261; Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 111.

heterosexual sex at Fort Simpson.<sup>438</sup> These reasons alone likely served as powerful motivators for intermarriage. However, given the hierarchical structure of life within the fort and the control that officers had over their workers' domestic lives, officers would certainly have had to have considered such marriages as beneficial to the operation of the fort to have endorsed them. As Van Kirk and Brown have demonstrated in their respective studies on intermarriage between fur trade employees and Indigenous women, such marriages proved beneficial to traders because they often served to establish trade alliances between the parties and, just as significantly, because Indigenous wives could provide information, skills, and important cultural knowledge. These same benefits accompanied Indigenous-newcomer marriages at Fort Simpson.<sup>439</sup> In addition, intermarriage served to provide stability and security for the fort.<sup>440</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> While it was sometimes possible for HBC employees to engage in sex with Ts'msyen women outside of marriage this was often difficult to accomplish. There were Ts'msyen women willing to engage in short-term and casual sexual relations with newcomers, particularly in the role of a 'lucky woman' or what newcomer observers like the missionary William Duncan identified as prostitution, but the HBC had strict regulation against this kind of encounter. Disapproving of these types of casual sexual encounter the HBC officers attempted to control the comings and goings of newcomer men from the fort. In 1852, for example, newcomer worker Pierre Ladabouche was caught trying to sneak a Ts'msyen woman into the fort for what appears to have been a casual sexual encounter and was prevented from doing so and subjected to a reprimand. Although the officers were not always successful at controlling the worker's behaviour, or that of other officers for that matter, it does seem as though these types of relations were most often engaged in by short-term newcomer visitors to Fort Simpson, like the men on the HMS *Virago*, for example, than by the newcomer residents of the fort. That is not to say that they didn't seek them out, just that they were considered illicit and attempts were made to regulate and prevent them. Given these circumstances, and the benefits associated with marriage to a Ts'msyen woman, it is not surprising that so many newcomer men at Fort Simpson married Indigenous women. William Duncan suggests that casual sexual encounters and prostitution were common when the company ships were in port but the fort journal indicates that many of the men on the ship had women they considered as wives in the Ts'msyen village and returned to them when the ship was in port. William Duncan, *Journal*, 31 May 1859, 9737; Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 26 December 1852.

<sup>439</sup> The marriage between Dr. John Kennedy and Sudaal has often been analyzed in this way. As individuals of high-rank within their respective communities, Kennedy was an officer of the fort and later received charge of the fort while Sudaal was the daughter of Ligeex, the pre-eminent chief among the nine tribes of Ts'msyen who relocated to the fort, their relationship is described in the scholarship as having cemented a trade alliance between the fort and Chief Ligeex's tribe, the Gispaxlo'ots. See, for example, Susan Marsden and Robert Galois, "The Tsimshian, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Geopolitics of the Northwest Coast Fur Trade, 1787-1840," *The Canadian Geographer*, Vol.39, No.2 (1995): 169-183; Carol Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast: An Historical Perspective, 1830-1900," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.27, No.4 (Winter 1992-93): 44-75; E. Palmer Patterson, "'The Indians Stationary

The considerable number of newcomer employees who remained working at Fort Simpson for a period of ten or more years indicates significant workforce continuity and stability. In a post considered remote, as this one was, having reliable workers was particularly advantageous. Marriages very likely functioned to facilitate this stability by offering employees, both workers and officers, an opportunity to achieve desirable domestic arrangements while also providing them with familial attachments to the particular location of Fort Simpson. Moreover, these relationships served to establish relatively stable relationships with the Ts'msyen communities located outside of the fort. The officers who recorded the journal entries for the post understood that casual sexual relationships between newcomers and Indigenous women could result in conflict and violence as had often happened at other posts. They publicly reasoned that many of the violent incidents among the Ts'msyen had "A Woman as usual at the Top and bottom of the affair."<sup>441</sup> Concerned with the instability as well as the danger such conflicts created, officers would have been quick to recognize that marriages between Ts'msyen women and the newcomers limited the occurrence of casual sexual relationships between the two communities and the attendant instability that could result.

The support by officers and workers for marriage relationships between newcomers and local Indigenous women at Fort Simpson appears to have served to regulate, to a degree, extra-marital sexual contact. To be sure, some casual sexual relations continued to occur throughout the period in question, but generally the newcomers of the fort seem

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Here': Continuity and Change in the Origins of the Fort Simpson Tsimshian," *Anthropologica* XXXVI (1994): 181-203.

<sup>440</sup> Historical Geographer Cole Harris argues that intermarriage between Indigenous women and fur trade employees "calmed the men, provided links to and allies in Native societies and channels of information about them." Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 49.

<sup>441</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 9 November 1856.

to have elected for marriage. In this way the fort and the Ts'msyen negotiated, through practice at least, the kinds of Indigenous-newcomer heterosexual relationships that were to be mutually sanctioned. Marriage, unlike casual sexual relations, also likely served to reduce conflicts arising from jealousies and the transgression of Ts'msyen customs in regards to sex and marriage (if only by limiting the number of Ts'msyen women involved in such relationships).<sup>442</sup>

In addition to the stability and security I discuss above, these marriages also served as alliances between the newcomers and the Ts'msyen. The newcomers of Fort Simpson were always vulnerable to Ts'msyen attack. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Ts'msyen greatly outnumbered and at times out-armed the newcomers. Given these dynamics of power, the HBC was in a position of needing to appease the Ts'msyen regarding the operation of the fort and the residence of its newcomer employees within Ts'msyen territory. To a degree the Ts'msyen seem to have been willing to accept the fort for the opportunities it provided them as intermediaries in the trade, the increased access to European goods it supplied, the economic opportunities of employment for the HBC, and perhaps even for the prestige it offered the Ts'msyen as one of the few Indigenous nations along the coast to have a fort within their territory. However, as the conflicts, threats and violence between Ts'msyen people and the newcomers of the fort indicate, these benefits were not in themselves able to guarantee the newcomers' safety, particularly in the early days. Intermarriage seems to have functioned as an additional safety measure for newcomers. It provided a relationship between newcomers and the

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<sup>442</sup> The Company's support of marriage at Fort Simpson was also likely linked to the fate of the progeny of sexual relationships between newcomers and Indigenous women. Reluctant to see large numbers of mixed-heritage children living without their fathers in the Ts'msyen communities the officers of the fort likely saw marriage as a more agreeable solution.

Ts'msyen which was sought after by some Ts'msyen kin groups, as Chapter One suggests. Moreover, it encouraged some of the Ts'msyen people allied with the fort to actively aid and support the fort by informing them of planned Indigenous attacks on newcomers or by interposing themselves between Indigenous and newcomer parties in conflict.

Not every member of the nine Ts'msyen tribes who had relocated their villages near Fort Simpson sought out marriage alliances with the newcomers or supported intermarriage. For those who did, among them chiefly families from at least five of the nine tribes, their motivations were undoubtedly grounded in both tradition and contemporaneous circumstances.<sup>443</sup> As I argue in Chapter One, the Ts'msyen are an innovative people who actively pursued relationships with outsiders as a legitimate means of accessing new goods, ideas and powers. The arrival of HBC newcomers in Ts'msyen territory, facilitated by Sudaal and her father, Chief Ligeex, provided a new set of outsiders with whom kinship connections could be established and from whom innovations could be developed. Additionally, marriage with a newcomer outsider held particular advantages for Ts'msyen women and their kin, gaining them increased access to European goods, a better rate of exchange in trade, and, for some, an alternative to an arranged Indigenous marriage they did not want.<sup>444</sup> And, although the newcomers were

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<sup>443</sup> The five tribes are: Giluts'aaw, Gispaxlo'ots, Gitando, Gitlaan, and Gitwilgyoots. It is very difficult to discern just what tribe a woman married to a newcomer at Fort Simpson belonged. The little that researchers have published about the tribal membership of Ts'msyen women who married newcomers at Fort Simpson generally comes from the few baptism records which recorded such information and other missionary-produced documents. Having developed a base for intermarriage research at Fort Simpson, including detailed genealogical information gathered from several sources I hope it may now be possible for future studies to discern more about the wives of the workers and their tribal affiliations. Certainly beginning an oral history project in the community could prove fruitful on this front.

<sup>444</sup> Avoiding an arranged marriage was, apparently, at least a contributing motivation for Elizabeth (Dudoward) Lawson's marriage to Felix Dudoward. Her family had arranged a marriage for her with a much older Indigenous man from another community. Seeing the canoes carrying bridal gifts which would

not often in a position to come to the aid of the Ts'msyen generally, marriage alliances with the fort could at times provide security for Ts'msyen families. The most dramatic example of this occurred during the 1836 smallpox epidemic at Fort Simpson when Dr. Kennedy's father-in-law, Ligeex, and brothers-in-law were the only Ts'msyen people to be vaccinated by the newcomers.<sup>445</sup>

### Marriage as Hybrid

Having offered some description of the extent of intermarriage at Fort Simpson, the character of the relationships and motivations for these unions I now turn to examine the nature of these marriages in greater detail. Like the institution of law discussed in Chapter Two, intermarriage at Fort Simpson was a culturally hybrid practice. Newcomer and Ts'msyen marriage customs were re-interpreted and re-deployed to serve the circumstances of a contact zone and the result was a marriage practice constructed of customs intermingled from each community.

Generally associated with contact zones, hybridity involves the fusion of two previously relatively distinct forms or practices. Postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha

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seal the marriage contract between herself and a much older man, Elizabeth is reported to have fled to the fort and to Dudoaire (Dudoward) in order to escape. Their marriage lasted only a handful of years, it would seem, with Dudoward dying young. Their son, Alfred Dudoward, became an important leader among the Ts'msyen in the later nineteenth century. Elizabeth later remarried, again to a newcomer man. See Susan Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down The North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship*, (Toronto: The Missionary society of the Methodist church, the Young people's forward movement department, 1914), 19; Carol Williams, *Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). While it seems that the Ts'msyen wives of newcomers may not have continued to receive a preferential rate of trade the journal does record this as a feature of marriage in the 1830s. See Fort Simpson Journal, 7 September 1840.

<sup>445</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 9 November 1836; Patterson suggests that Ligeex accepted inoculation as a result of his "relationship with the fort and his awareness of its uses to him" but given that these inoculations are the only ones recorded in the fort journal as having been given to a Ts'msyen person it seems more likely that the fort provided the vaccine to Ligeex because of his kinship connection to Dr. Kennedy and his significant contribution to the fort as a trader. Patterson, "The Indians Stationary Here," 189.

has explored the development of hybridity among colonized cultures, arguing that colonized peoples have used hybridity as a tool of subversion against colonial power and dominant cultures.<sup>446</sup> Although the conditions at Fort Simpson were not yet colonial and neither the newcomers nor the Ts'msyen held the necessary power, or perhaps even the desire, to impose their will or culture onto the other, Bhabha's theory of hybridity is relevant here. For Bhabha, hybridity acts as third space in which new practices and ideas are able to emerge. Such a space developed at Fort Simpson between 1834 and 1862 but the circumstances from which it developed differ from those of the colonial world. As discussed in Chapter Two, Fort Simpson was a place in which both the Indigenous people and the newcomers desired something from the other while neither party held both the power and the will to use force to acquire it.<sup>447</sup> Instead, the Ts'msyen and the newcomers attempted to gain what they desired through communication, accommodation and alliances. Cultural change and hybridity proved to be one of the key means by which the newcomers and the Ts'msyen could secure what they desired from the other.

In this third space, the culturally and ethnically diverse newcomers and the politically diverse Ts'msyen developed practices – like marriage and law – which were comprised of customs from both the newcomer and Ts'msyen cultures. For the Ts'msyen, as they actively reshaped themselves, re-interpreting and re-deploying goods, ideas and powers they had acquired from the newcomers, it is likely that this was, at least on some level, intentional. Regardless of how exactly this took place the result is clear: a cultural

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<sup>446</sup> Paul Meredith, "Hybridity in the Third Space: Rethinking Bi-cultural Politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand" (paper presented to Te Oru Rangahau Maori Research and Development Conference, Massey University, July 7-9, 1998),

<http://lianz.waikato.ac.nz/PAPERS/paul/hybridity.pdf> (accessed September 23, 2007); Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 148-151.

<sup>447</sup> My reading of these dynamics of power at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams is greatly influenced by Richard White's book, *The Middle Ground*.

intermingling occurred at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams which resulted in hybrid systems of marriage and law. Inter-marriage between newcomers and Ts'msyen women was constructed as neither Ts'msyen nor newcomer in form, but yet resembled both and could be mutually understood. And, although hybridity at this post was not employed as a tool against colonial power at this time, it was used as a tool of subversion and empowerment. For, as I argue below, the Ts'msyen and the newcomers used hybridity and the intimacy they developed as a result of their hybrid relationships to negotiate power and authority at Fort Simpson.

In many respects the unions between Ts'msyen women and newcomers at Fort Simpson resembled newcomer marriage customs. Very generally, newcomer marriage practices influenced or worked to regulate the residency, division of labour, and sexual activity of Ts'msyen-newcomer couples within the fort. It appears that almost every Ts'msyen, Nisga'a or Tlingit woman who married a newcomer at Fort Simpson relocated from her family home and Indigenous community to live with her husband inside the fort. While their friends and relations were usually not far away, especially after nine of the Ts'msyen tribes relocated to live outside the fort, living within the pickets of the fort presented a significant change in lifestyle for Ts'msyen women. The fort was a fenced and gated community; watchmen and gatekeepers regulated, although not always successfully, access to the fort. At night the gates were locked and both entrance and exit was prohibited. In addition, the residents of the fort were expected to follow a regimented daily and weekly routine. Meal times, hours at which work began and ended, employment and even the cleaning of houses were scheduled by the officers. While women living in the fort likely escaped some of this regimentation, it being aimed more

at the workers than their wives, Indigenous women would have been greatly impacted by these newcomer practices. They and their families were subject to outside observation, their domestic time was oriented around the HBC's newcomer and company schedule, and the ever-present tolling of the fort bell emphasized newcomer time, activity and state of security.

In addition to the regulation of time and activity within the fort, newcomers, particularly the officers, sought to manage sexual activity by applying the newcomer ideal of monogamy to Ts'msyen-newcomer intimate relations. As I argued above, both the Ts'msyen and the newcomers had motivations for establishing marriage-like relationships between their communities. For the officers of the fort, one of the most important motives seems to have been the desire to regulate what they considered "licentious intercourse with Indian women."<sup>448</sup> They disapproved of such casual sexual relations not only because they increased the instability and insecurity of the fort but also because they considered it, like polygamy, to be against "the rule of civilized life."<sup>449</sup> As Chief Factor John McLoughlin made clear to Chief Trader John Work in 1842, letting "loose women" into the fort "to sleep with the men [was] contrary to orders."<sup>450</sup> Recognizing that they lacked the ability to actually prevent their workers or other officers at Fort Simpson from engaging in sexual relations with Indigenous women, the officers authorized intermarriage in part to manage the nature of these relations. Sexual intimacy between newcomers and Ts'msyen women at Fort Simpson then was to conform to

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<sup>448</sup> John McLoughlin, *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee Third Series, 1844-46*, ed. E.E. Rich with an introduction by W. Kaye Lamb (London: Published by The Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1944), 20 November 1844, 18.

<sup>449</sup> William Duncan, *Journal, First Report to the Society*, February 1858, 9580.

<sup>450</sup> John Work, replying to a letter from John McLoughlin, 7 September 1842, Fort Simpson, Correspondence.

newcomer officers' ideas: polygamy, while practiced by the Ts'msyen, was prohibited within the fort and heterosexual, monogamous, marriage-type relationships were the only Indigenous-newcomer sexual relationships to receive formal sanction.

To a degree, marriages at Fort Simpson followed newcomer custom in that they appeared to be committed heterosexual monogamous relationships in which children were raised, labour was divided according to gender, and the newcomer husbands were expected to meet their paternal obligations by financially supporting their wives and children. So long as the men and women in these relationships seemed to conform to these practices their unions were accorded legitimacy and matrimonial status at Fort Simpson. Such recognition may not be surprising coming from the officers of the fort. They were recording the affairs of the fort for superiors who opposed sexual relations outside of marriage and therefore were more likely to use language like "wife", "Mrs." and "Madame" to describe women inside the fort. Moreover, the officers themselves were often married *à la façon du pays*. It is significant however, that even a Christian missionary at Fort Simpson considered these unions to be marriages. In 1862 the Anglican missionary William Duncan found himself frustrated with the baptism policies of the Anglican church when the Reverend Tugwell refused to baptize "Captain McNeill's wife" Nis'akx because they were not "*lawfully*" married.<sup>451</sup> His comments suggest a standard by which Indigenous-newcomer relationships might be assessed marriages by their contemporaries. Recording in his journal his reasoning for why baptism should be granted to Nis'akx, Duncan stated:

The view I take of the matter is that she is living with the Capt & has done for several years altogether as his wife & is normally acting as a wife ought to do & as the Captain seems to love her & [be] determined to keep her as his wife...I

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<sup>451</sup> William Duncan, Journal, 24 October 1859, 9807; 15 April 1862, 10196. Emphasis his.

consider that they are as man & wife in God's sight & that therefore baptism should not be refused her.... Considering all the circumstances [and] discarding prejudice – the matter does not appear improper at all.<sup>452</sup>

Duncan used mores of newcomer marriage as standards against which their relationship could be evaluated. Because Nis'akx and McNeill had lived together for more than ten years in a committed and loving relationship and Nis'akx had adequately fulfilled, in a newcomer sense, her wifely duties he considered them to be married.

Yet while the relationships between Ts'msyen women and newcomer men at Fort Simpson could seem, even to a resident missionary, to entirely follow newcomer customs, in performance they constituted an intermingling of cultural signs and practices from both newcomer and Ts'msyen societies. Even while their daily domestic activities were shaped by newcomer ways, the Ts'msyen-newcomer couples within the fort observed several significant Ts'msyen marriage customs. They established domestic arrangements which conformed in many ways to those of the Ts'msyen. In addition, it seems that the newcomer husbands were integrated into the Ts'msyen kinship system, with its attendant familial obligations, and, to a degree, that they met their responsibilities. Moreover, Ts'msyen women in these marriages continued to have sexual, personal, economic, spiritual and political autonomy which seems to have closely matched that of non-slave-class Ts'msyen women at large. This merging of customs was enabled by the particular circumstances of Fort Simpson between 1834 and 1862 and resulted, as we shall see, in a hybrid marriage institution composed of reinterpreted Ts'msyen and newcomer ideas.

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<sup>452</sup> William Duncan, Journal, 15 April 1862, 10196. At this time McNeill and Nis'akx had been living together for at least eleven years.

Though the Ts'msyen-newcomer couples of Fort Simpson resided within newcomer space and followed newcomer practices, their domestic arrangements largely maintained Ts'msyen customs. As explained above, Ts'msyen women generally relocated to live within the fort with their newcomer husbands. Although this certainly changed the experiences of Ts'msyen wives, it was not an entirely foreign custom: A Ts'msyen woman who married an outsider usually relocated to live in her husband's home and among his people.<sup>453</sup> Housing within the fort was heavily regulated, with HBC employees assigned their living quarters according to their rank within the company, but Ts'msyen women were quite familiar with the practice of utilizing houses and domestic spaces as manifestations of status.<sup>454</sup> Officers' wives faced more of a contrast, but for the women who married fort labourers, their new accommodations, while different in physical construction, offered strong similarities to those of Ts'msyen villages.<sup>455</sup> Four families lived in a single house with each assigned a corner as their personal domestic space, and all cooking at a shared fireplace in the centre of the room.<sup>456</sup> Such domestic arrangements bore more in common with Ts'msyen customs than they did the European middle class ideals of domesticity and personal privacy. In 1857 the missionary William Duncan,

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<sup>453</sup> Jay Miller, *Tsimshian Culture: A Light Through the Ages* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln and London, 1997), 47; Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast," 46.

<sup>454</sup> Traditionally, Ts'msyen houses were "spatially organized to reflect the status and wealth of each house and its chiefs." Houses were considered as assets of the lineage group and they were constructed to embody the lineage's "wealth, prestige, and authority." Susan Neylan, "Longhouses, Schoolrooms, and Workers' Cottages: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Mission to the Tsimshian and the Transformation of Class Through Religion," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, Vol.11, No.1 (2000), 78.

<sup>455</sup> Officers and their families in the fort had their own quarters at Fort Simpson. In addition, at certain times over the approximately thirty year period, the fort carpenter, Indian trader, and blacksmith had their own quarters – shared with the carpentry shop, the trade shop, and the forge respectively.

<sup>456</sup> John W. Arctander, *The Apostle of Alaska: The Story of William Duncan of Metlakahtla* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), 52.

relatively fresh from England and very concerned with propriety, considered this to be “one of the many degrading arrangements of the place.”<sup>457</sup>

In addition to these communal living arrangements, Ts’msyen practices can be identified in other aspects of the couples’ daily lives. As mentioned above, it was HBC newcomer custom that directed meal times and the regimentation of the daily and weekly activities within the fort. Yet the foods most often eaten by both officers and labourers and their families were Indigenous foodstuffs procured by Ts’msyen, Nisga’a and Tlingit people. The fort regularly purchased deer, salmon, halibut, oolichan, bird eggs, oolichan grease, berries and berry cakes for daily meals. It was only when local foodstuffs were unavailable that preserved European foods like salted pork seem to have been used at the fort. Potatoes were one newcomer staple (albeit with an Indigenous origin) but even these were mostly provided by local Indigenous people.<sup>458</sup> Besides the local produce supplied at the fort as rations, Ts’msyen women living in the fort had their own access to traditional foodstuffs. During the berry season Ts’msyen women, with their newcomer husbands and their children, would often travel to berry grounds to harvest food for their own use.<sup>459</sup> And, during the oolichan season they at least sometimes traveled with their children and their Ts’msyen kin to the Nass River where they participated in the fishery and production of oolichan grease.<sup>460</sup> When these sources of traditional Ts’msyen foods failed them they might, as did newcomer Antoine Annesata’s wife, Saipou, turn to their

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<sup>457</sup> William Duncan, Journal, 1 October 1857, 9556.

<sup>458</sup> The fort had a relatively successful garden but they could never produce enough potatoes for their wants and they lacked the ability to properly preserve their potatoes once harvested. Stored in cellars, the potatoes regularly rotted from dampness or exposure to frost. As a result the majority of their potatoes were purchased from Haida and Nisga’a who successfully grew and stored significantly large numbers of the root vegetable, or from Ts’msyen traders who acted as intermediaries. See the Fort Simpson Journal generally.

<sup>459</sup> See, for example, Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 8 July 1839; 2 August 1859.

<sup>460</sup> Duncan, Journal, 18 April 1862, 10200.

Ts'msyen kin. According to Ts'msyen informant Matthew Johnson, his Aunt Saipou came to the house of her brother, Jacob Johnson (Matthew's father), for dried and fresh salmon, berries and oolichan grease. Anneseata, who lived at Fort Simpson for approximately twenty-nine years, was apparently quite comfortable with this arrangement. According to Johnson, when Saipou "wanted good salmon and grease to eat, she'd tell Atwin [Antoine Anneseata] 'let's go to my brother's house.' Atwin sat just like the Ts'msyen, on the ground."<sup>461</sup>

It was not only foodstuffs and the internal organization of domestic space which comprised the hybrid domestic life within Fort Simpson. At work and at home, in both the public and private spheres of the fort, the Ts'msyen language, Sm'algyax, or else the hybrid language of Chinook jargon was commonly used. Because the newcomers of the fort were ethnically diverse, no less than four different primary languages being spoken among them, it appears that Sm'algyax and, perhaps more often, Chinook operated as the most commonly understood and therefore used languages at the fort.<sup>462</sup> Duncan considered Chinook to be the language used between "father & mother" at the fort but Matthew Johnson reported that "nearly all working men knew Tsimshian [Sm'algyax]...because [they were] married to Tsimshian women."<sup>463</sup> In either case, spouses and children regularly communicated by means of a non-newcomer language.

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<sup>461</sup> Matthew Johnson, recalling the 1860s, as quoted in Ken Campbell, *Persistence and Change: A History of the Ts'msyen Nation* (Prince Rupert, British Columbia: Published by the Tsimshian Nation and School District 52, 2005), 117; Matthew Johnson, in Homer G. Barnett, Notes, University of British Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections, Box 1, A/14A/1/2, Folder 1-9, 19-20. Antoine Anneseata seems to have begun work at the fort in 1838 and remained there until at least 1869. However much of the 1840s journal is missing so it is unclear if he remained continuously at the fort during that time. He was at Fort Simpson in the early 1850s when the journal begins again.

<sup>462</sup> The traders at the fort obviously needed to speak Chinook and or Sm'algyax for their jobs. In addition, beginning in the 1830s and only increasing with time, the fort employed dozens of Ts'msyen men and women as labourers. To communicate with these labourers, and especially for the newcomer men acting as overseers, it must have been necessary to have a working use of Sm'algyax and Chinook.

<sup>463</sup> Matthew Johnson as quoted in Barnett, Notes, 14.

For the children of the fort, exposure to the multiplicity of languages resulted in a new language at play, according to Duncan, “a compound of the five” spoken by their parents.<sup>464</sup>

These hybrid Ts’msyen-newcomer practices affected the newcomer husbands as well as their Ts’msyen wives. But more than this, some newcomer husbands at Fort Simpson actively took up certain Ts’msyen practices reinterpreted to serve the new circumstances of intermarriage. Newcomer men married to Ts’msyen women appear to have been expected to and did, to some extent, participate in the Ts’msyen system of kinship obligations. They engaged in gift exchange with their wives’ families and even met specific familial responsibilities. Items such as pants, windows, and frying pans were gifted to Ts’msyen kin by newcomer husbands.<sup>465</sup> According to Matthew Johnson, his own father was able to be the first Ts’msyen to build a house with windows at Laxłgu’alaams, a prestigious event for which he held a feast and composed the song, “First house to have windows – nobody have windows like me,” because his newcomer brother-in-law, “Charline,” gave them to him.<sup>466</sup> Johnson told the anthropologist Homer Barnett that there were “always presents, *even now*” in the early twentieth century, from his newcomer kin.<sup>467</sup> In addition, at least some newcomer husbands apparently acted as *Kswaatk*, or father’s kin, in the Ts’msyen kinship system wherein specific life services were performed by the father’s side of the family.

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<sup>464</sup> William Duncan, Journal, *First Report to the Society*, 9577.

<sup>465</sup> Johnson, in Barnett, Notes, 19, 21.

<sup>466</sup> Matthew Johnson, recorded by Barnett, as quoted in Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 118. I have not yet been able to determine who Charline is. Barnett’s records reflect Johnson’s pronunciation of names and it is somewhat difficult to match this up with the spelling used in the fort journals.

<sup>467</sup> Johnson as quoted in Barnett, Notes, 20. See also Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 117, 118.

Newcomer men who contributed their labour towards house construction for their Ts'msyen kin seem to have been doing so, in part, because of their familial relationship, reinterpreting a Ts'msyen practice. According to scholar Margaret Seguin [Anderson], house-building, pole-carving and canoe-carving were purchased from father's kin.<sup>468</sup> When a high-ranking Ts'msyen person wished to build a new house he called together his father and the members of his father's clan and requested them to build his house.<sup>469</sup> While the newcomers generally were not biologically paternal relatives of adult Ts'msyen people during this period, as husbands they did, it would appear, sometimes function in this kinship role. It is likely that paternal kinship relations formed at least some of the motivation for the participation of Felix Dudoaire's (Dudoward) and Antoine Anneseata's roles in the construction of Chief Ligeex's house and the house of Jacob Johnson (Matthew Johnson's father), respectively.<sup>470</sup> Dudoaire's wife, Elizabeth Dudoward Lawson (Diiks), was clan sister to Chief Ligeex and, though their familial connection is not entirely clear from the sources, was further related to Chief Ligeex through her Gispaxlo'ots brother, Niswaymot.<sup>471</sup> This kinship connection seems to be the

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<sup>468</sup> Margaret Seguin [Anderson], *Interpretive Contexts for Traditional and Current Coast Tsimshian Feasts* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1985), 55.

<sup>469</sup> Campbell, *Persistence and Change*, 118. Such activities were, of course, also carried out by high-ranking Ts'msyen women.

<sup>470</sup> Although familial connections seem to have been the reason for the particular involvement of Dudoaire and Anneseata in the construction of Ts'msyen houses, following a Ts'msyen custom, the prestige associated with having newcomers participate in the building of a home, as discussed in Chapter Two, with the attendant first use of materials such as windows, sawed lumber, nails and hinges, likely influenced both Chief Ligeex and Jacob Johnson to seek out newcomer labour in the first place.

<sup>471</sup> Carol Cooper, "'To Be Free On Our Lands': Coast Tsimshian and Nisga'a Societies in Historical Perspective, 1830-1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of Waterloo, 1993), 323; Barnett, Notes, 15. Regarding the relationship between Elizabeth Dudoward Lawson and Ligeex: Ligeex was chief of the Gispaxlo'ots and Niswamak was also a Gispaxlo'ots chief. In the 1830s the man who held the title of Ligeex was brother to Niswamak. It is not entirely clear what relation the Ligeex and Niswamak of the 1850s were to each other, or to Elizabeth Dudoward Lawson. However, this connection, along with the information that Elizabeth's son, Alfred Dudoward, laid a claim to the Ligeex title in the late nineteenth century indicate familial relation. As discussed in Chapter One, Ts'msyen tribal membership is acquired through the maternal line. Because Diiks belonged to the Gitando tribe and her brother, Niswaymot, to the Gispaxlo'ots tribe it is probable that they shared the same father but different mothers. Also, on at least one journey to

reason why Dudoaire was one of two newcomer employees to “volunteer” their labour on the construction of Chief Ligeex’s new house.<sup>472</sup> In similar circumstances, but about which we know more, the newcomer Anneseata offered his labour on the construction of Jacob Johnson’s new house expressly because of his kinship connection to Johnson’s family. According to Matthew Johnson, who was Jacob Johnson’s son and the nephew of Antoine Anneseata, the familial relationship between Atwin (Antoine Anneseata) and Jacob Johnson was the “reason why Atwin [Antoine Anneseata] help[ed]” in the construction of the house.<sup>473</sup> The participation of Dudoaire and Anneseata, and other newcomer men, in the construction of their Ts’msyen kin’s houses was a reinterpretation of a traditional Ts’msyen practice. When newcomer men married Ts’msyen women they were integrated into the kinship system and their spousal responsibilities carried hybrid obligations.

As with domestic arrangements and kinship connections, hybrid Ts’msyen-newcomer practices developed at Fort Simpson concerning Ts’msyen wives’ sexual, personal, economic, political and spiritual autonomy. While newcomer customs promoted monogamous, marriage-like relationships between newcomer men and Ts’msyen women at this post, Ts’msyen customs concerning women’s sexual freedom and arranged marriage continued to operate. The officers of the fort generally permitted marriages between newcomers at the fort – themselves included – and Ts’msyen women so long as the intended wives were unattached. Whether they were motivated by their own culture’s

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Victoria Elizabeth Dudoward Lawson seems to have traveled with Ligeex. According to Jean Barman and Jan Hare, Elizabeth Dudoward Lawson was “a chief’s daughter of the house of Ligeex.” Jean Barman and Jan Hare, *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 41; Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 3 September 1856.

<sup>472</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 12 16, 19, 25, January 1858; 1, 9, 23, 25, 26 February 1858.

<sup>473</sup> Barnet, Notes, 40.

moral sensibility or their practical concern for avoiding conflict with the Ts'msyen, they would refuse a worker's requests for a wife when it was known that the woman "belonged to another man."<sup>474</sup> However, Ts'msyen women quite clearly did not consider previous marriage, arranged marriage, or other sexual activities such as those of a "lucky woman" necessarily to be a hindrance to marriage with a newcomer. Likely because of their divergent attitudes on this subject, newcomers were often kept ignorant of Ts'msyen women's previous connections, learning of them only after a marriage took place and a disgruntled ex-partner arrived on the scene.

In such a circumstance, as with other cases of obligation under Ts'msyen law, the newcomers seem to have followed Ts'msyen custom. A married Ts'msyen woman or one who had been previously betrothed in an arranged marriage was considered to retain certain obligations to her previous spouse or fiancée. If her newcomer husband wished to have his more recent marriage to such a woman recognized as legitimate by the Ts'msyen, and in so doing reduce potential conflict with Ts'msyen people over the matter, he was expected by both the Ts'msyen and the newcomers to make a payment to the injured party.<sup>475</sup> So it was that one of the fort men found himself abandoned by his wife in 1858: unable to afford the payment demanded by her Ts'msyen betrothed, his wife "left the fort...to live" with her Ts'msyen husband.<sup>476</sup> While the newcomers, particularly HBC officers, disapproved of Ts'msyen women with previous marriage commitments marrying newcomer men, they had little power to prevent it at Fort Simpson.

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<sup>474</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 7 October 1839.

<sup>475</sup> These payments should not be understood as a bride price or as the purchase of a woman's person. Instead, they should be read as an aspect of the Ts'msyen legal system, discussed in Chapter Two, in which the payment of compensation was integral.

<sup>476</sup> William Duncan, Journal, *First Report*, 9604.

Similarly, while the Ts'msyen-newcomer marriages at the fort were supposed to follow the newcomer ideal of monogamy, in practice Ts'msyen women generally continued to exercise sexual freedom. Not surprisingly, some Ts'msyen women left their newcomer husbands for other men or even engaged in affairs with other newcomers. In such circumstances there was little recourse for their newcomer husbands. Recognizing their inability to compel Ts'msyen wives to remain monogamous, the officers of the fort on at least one occasion attempted to avert affairs between married residents of the fort by imposing a fine on the offending newcomer husband.<sup>477</sup> Even more significantly, Ts'msyen women married to newcomer men seem to have retained the right to operate as “lucky women.” This Ts'msyen practice, in which women – usually of high rank – who were considered to be “very lucky, and also very clever and industrious” engaged in sexual intercourse with men for gifts or payment, was believed to impart some of the women’s luck, cleverness and industry to their sexual partners.<sup>478</sup> The wife of newcomer Robert Reid gained particular attention for her role as a lucky woman when, in 1853, the notorious Ts'msyen man Cushwhat threatened to shoot the officers of the fort because he had not received what he considered to be “the value of the property he gave the Woman.”<sup>479</sup> Despite pressures from the newcomers to observe monogamy, and

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<sup>477</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 22 June 1857.

<sup>478</sup> It is not entirely clear whether lucky women were always of high social rank. George F. MacDonald and John J. Cove, eds., *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes: Tsimshian Narratives I*, collected by Marius Barbeau and William Beynon, (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987), 82-83; George F. MacDonald and John J. Cove, eds., *Tsimshian Narratives 2: Trade and Warfare*, collected by Marius Barbeau and William Beynon, (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987), 47; Cooper, “Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast,” 59-60.

<sup>479</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 15 January 1853; 16 January 1853; Cooper, “To Be Free on Our Lands,” 184-185. How the conflict was resolved is not made clear in the journal. Cushwhat demanded “either to get the property back, or the woman outside the Fort” but no mention is made as to whether either was done. Cushwhat was well known at Fort Simpson and in Victoria for his aggressive behaviour towards newcomers. On several occasions he threatened newcomers’ lives at the fort and once broke all of the windows in William Duncan’s school at Fort Simpson. In 1860, while in Victoria, he was found guilty of

newcomer moral judgements against engaging in sexual activity for payment, women in the fort maintained their Ts'msyen custom of sexual autonomy.

Ts'msyen-newcomer marriages at Fort Simpson followed Ts'msyen customs regarding women's personal autonomy. In contrast to newcomer practices – wherein women's freedom of movement, their ability to divorce their husbands, to own property, and the like were restricted – at Fort Simpson Ts'msyen women retained their power of person. Far from the British ideal of a dependent, submissive wife, while married to newcomers these women continued to control their own mobility, responded assertively to bad treatment of their person and, to a large degree, determined their own marital status.<sup>480</sup> They regularly traveled long distances or for long periods of time without their husbands. Often taking their children with them, they journeyed by canoe to visit kin, to trade, or for pleasure.<sup>481</sup> At least some of these journeys were made against the wishes of the officers of the fort. Women traveling to communities like Victoria and Port Townsend often returned with large amounts of alcohol which they proceeded to trade to the Ts'msyen and newcomers alike. Though the HBC officers objected to this practice – which violated the hoped-for monopoly of the HBC at Fort Simpson and also increased instability both within and outside the fort – their opposition seems to have had little impact on Ts'msyen women. As the wife of newcomer John Spence demonstrated when she “sold Four Bottles of Brandy or Rum from...*inside the Fort*” in 1857, Ts'msyen

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firing on a schooner and was flogged and given two months in jail. William Duncan, Journal, 30 June 1860, 9949.

<sup>480</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 108, 114.

<sup>481</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 15 November 1842; 10 October 1855; 9 November 1857; 23 December 1857; 12 June 1862. They commonly visited locations like the Nass River, Tongass, Fort Rupert, Victoria, Nanaimo and Port Townsend.

women expected the same degree of personal autonomy within the fort as they received within the Ts'msyen villages.<sup>482</sup>

Though marriages between Ts'msyen women and newcomer men were many times committed and even affective relationships, they were not always conflict-free. There are several references in the fort journals to domestic violence committed by newcomer husbands.<sup>483</sup> Ts'msyen wives often responded to such ill-treatment by their husbands in the same manner they would have had they been married to Ts'msyen men: they left. These escapes from their husbands were not always permanent. Often, it seems, such a tactic was used by women to negotiate the conditions of their marriage. They might consent to remain wedded to their husbands but only so long as the men's violent behaviour stopped. Newcomers, despite any ideas they may have held regarding a husband's right to control a wife's person, had little power to oppose their wives' departures. Ts'msyen women had the support of their Ts'msyen kin for leaving an abusive husband; they were offered shelter in Ts'msyen houses and, at times, members of their immediate family physically intervened on their behalf.<sup>484</sup> Because of the particular power dynamics of Fort Simpson, discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, Ts'msyen women were able to maintain their traditional right to leave a husband who mistreated

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<sup>482</sup> Fort Simpson Journal, 5 August 1857. Mrs. Spence had brought the rum up to Fort Simpson by canoe from Victoria. At this time Fort Simpson did not trade alcohol (though they sometimes gifted it) and it was illegal for Indigenous people to purchase alcohol in the colony. The officers of the fort objected to this illegal trade at Fort Simpson both because it offered direct competition on what they considered to be their grounds but also because the Ts'msyen would hold back their furs, traveling once or twice a year to Victoria to trade there for alcohol, rather than trading at Fort Simpson.

<sup>483</sup> Though newcomer men were, not surprisingly, usually the aggressors in cases of domestic violence, Ts'msyen wives at Fort Simpson could also assault newcomer men. Thomas Underwood's wife, for example, "thrashed her husband, and broke 11 frames of glass in the men's house window" after attending a memorial feast in the Ts'msyen village. On another occasion, George Thibeault's wife attacked both the newcomer gatekeeper and Captain McNeill after one of her relations was denied access to the fort. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 21 February 1860; 17 May 1852.

<sup>484</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 28 March 1842; 24 November 1856; 25 December 1860; Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast," 55-56.

them.<sup>485</sup> Moreover, in contrast to newcomer law, Ts'msyen children belonged to their mother and, as one officer at Fort Simpson observed, "should she separate from her husband they go with the mother."<sup>486</sup>

As they had with women's sexual and personal autonomy, and despite the customs or desires of the newcomers, HBC employees married to Ts'msyen women at Fort Simpson found themselves having to adapt to Ts'msyen practices concerning women's economic freedom.<sup>487</sup> Although Fort Simpson was, in some senses, a newcomer space intended by the HBC to be managed under British law, in practice, as I have shown, the fort and its residents functioned in a hybrid space and observed an amalgam of customs. Women at Fort Simpson were not confined to the private sphere of the home as were British, middle class women at this time. Many, perhaps most, Indigenous wives at this post acted as traders in their own right, regularly selling goods like oolichan grease, furs, alcohol, mats, berries, seaweed, potatoes and clothing to newcomers and Ts'msyen people within and without the fort. Nis'akx, a high ranking Nisga'a woman married to Captain McNeill, is the female trader most celebrated by scholars of the northern Northwest Coast but, while she is singularly well known, she represents only one of the dozens of women who successfully functioned as traders at this post.<sup>488</sup> These women, as

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<sup>485</sup> MacDonald and Cove, *Tricksters, Shamans and Heroes*, 56; Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles: Totem Poles According to Crests and Topics*, Vol. 1, Anthropological Series no.30, Bulletin No. 119, (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, n.d.), 609; Franz Boas, "Tsimshian Mythology," *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1909-1910* (Washington: Government Printing Officer, 1916), 79, 85, 270; Cooper, "To Be Free," 145.

<sup>486</sup> Pym Nevins Compton, *Early Trip to Fort Victoria and Life in the Colony*, British Columbia Archives, MS2778, 31; Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 28 March 1842; 3 August 1858.

<sup>487</sup> Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast," 56.

<sup>488</sup> Nis'akx married McNeill *à la façon du pay* in 1851 and remained with him until his death in 1875. Her story is well known because of the relatively large number of extant documents featuring the couple, both McNeill and Nis'akx's relatively high rank within their home communities, and the tremendous amount of trade Nis'akx brought to Fort Simpson during its last significant years as a fur trade post (1858-62 approximately). When the Ts'msyen began to hold up their furs for trade in Victoria and schooners selling alcohol arrived on the north coast to challenge the HBC's monopoly, Nis'akx began regular voyages to the

mentioned above, acted independently of their spouses as they traveled for trade, exchanged goods disapproved of by the officers of the HBC and considered illegal under newcomer law, and challenged the Company's monopoly. What is more, they controlled their own property and, it seems, their earnings.

In contrast to British common law, wherein a wife's property was under the control of her husband, Ts'msyen women married to newcomers at Fort Simpson owned their own property and could do with it what they liked.<sup>489</sup> Such financial independence likely served as a further support to women who left their spouses; they not only had Ts'msyen kin to turn to outside the fort but also often had the means to support themselves and their children once apart from their newcomer husbands. Naks Sabiston seems to have had just this in mind when, in 1858, after her husband was demoted from Assistant Indian Trader to labourer, she "took all her children and an immense quantity of property out of the Fort and went to live in one of the Indian Lodges."<sup>490</sup> Here again a Ts'msyen woman demonstrated that her children and her goods belonged only to herself.

Within their marriages, as well as without, Ts'msyen wives of newcomers maintained control of their property. This is made especially clear by their continued participation in the Ts'msyen feasting complex. As I noted in Chapter One, a crucial

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Nass River to acquire furs on the HBC's behalf. On Nis'akx see: Sylvia Van Kirk, "Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families of Victoria," in *Readings in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, eds. R. Douglas Francis & Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Nelson Thomas Learning, 2002), 437-458; E. Palmer Patterson, "Neshaki: Kinfolk and Trade," *Culture* x, 2 (1990): 13-24; Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*; Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast." On women trading at the fort: Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 7 September 1840; 8 September 1840; 21 November 1841; 29 November 1841; 9 December 1841; 19 April 1842; 13 January 1852; 8 March 1852; 3 September 1856; 24 December 1856; 2 March 1857; 16 July 1857; 5 August 1857.

<sup>489</sup> Allison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), 88.

<sup>490</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 3 August 1858. Naks Sabiston's Ts'msyen name is not known at this time. I am using William Duncan's terminology, based on the Ts'msyen practice of referring to a person in terms of their kinship relationships. So that, in this instance, Mrs. Sabiston is called "wife of" (Naks) Sabiston.

aspect of any Ts'msyen feast, and one particularly important to securing the legitimacy of a prerogative claimed by a host, is the giving away of large amounts of wealth goods to the attending guests.<sup>491</sup> Newcomers' wives who hosted feasts, of which there were many, also fulfilled this obligation as part of their ceremonies.<sup>492</sup> Although this type of large-scale distribution of property went against many newcomers' ideas of industry, civilization and thrift, the men at the fort seem to have resigned themselves to the practice.<sup>493</sup> This may be because they lacked the power to force their ideas on their wives or, alternatively, they may have recognized a benefit for themselves and their families in their wives' continued participation in the Ts'msyen feasting (and ranking) system. Whatever their views, the relatively agreeable tone taken by officers toward wives' feasting indicates that, with a few exceptions, the officers, at least, accepted a Ts'msyen woman's right to distribute her property in accordance with Ts'msyen custom.

While marriages between newcomer men and Indigenous women at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams largely followed Ts'msyen customs and disregarded newcomer ideals regarding the sexual, personal and economic autonomy of Ts'msyen women, in the exercise of Ts'msyen women's political power and ceremonial or spiritual lives there was more blending between Ts'msyen and newcomer customs. Ts'msyen wives continued to function within the political and ceremonial meaning systems of the Ts'msyen even as

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<sup>491</sup> Guests at a feast, by witnessing the claims made by the host and by accepting property gifted, validate the hosts right to the announced prerogative. For more on the potlatch see Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990).

<sup>492</sup> Over the nearly thirty year period under consideration here, Ts'msyen wives at Fort Simpson hosted mortuary feasts, pole-raising feasts, house-building feasts, rum feasts and challenge feasts. As very little descriptive information is provided in the fort journals regarding these feasts it is very probably that they hosted other kinds of feasts as well. See, for example, Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 21 November 1841; 29 November 1841; 27 September 1856; 29 October 1856; 29 April 1857; 1 May 1857.

<sup>493</sup> Newcomers' condemnation of the Northwest Coast feasting complex (potlatch) increased in the later half of the nineteenth century. For more on such attitudes see "'A Worse than Useless Custom'" in Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*.

they acquired additional roles as the wives of newcomers. A number of Ts'msyen wives received Christian baptism, were wed in Christian marriage ceremonies, and even engaged in the proselytization of their Ts'msyen friends and kin. In spite of such participation, many of these same women continued to host and attend feasts, sell and consume alcohol, and engage in other kinds of activities condemned under Christianity. Madame Lisette Lagace, for example, baptized and married only a year earlier in a Catholic ceremony in Victoria, hosted a rum feast soon after returning home to Fort Simpson at which "all the *Elite*" of the Ts'msyen became drunk. In a very passionate judgement against her behaviour one officer wrote: "*Madame* Pierrish Lagace at the head of the drunk. She is a very devil."<sup>494</sup> Similarly, Anglican missionary William Duncan reported with disappointment the "inconsistency" of Nis'akx's behaviour. The wife of Chief Factor William McNeill and an early supporter and convert of Duncan's, Nis'akx supplied alcohol to a number of Christian Ts'msyen converts at Fort Simpson in 1862. Although she considered herself to be a Christian, reportedly believing that "God's Word is truth," she chose to respond to the devastating smallpox epidemic at Fort Simpson by, at least initially, partaking in "intoxicating drink" and the Ts'msyen custom of rum feasting.<sup>495</sup> The behaviour of Lisette Lagace and Nis'akx McNeill demonstrates that at Fort Simpson/Laxlg'u'alaams, Ts'msyen women's marriages to newcomers and their

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<sup>494</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 27 September 1856. She was the wife of the fort interpreter, Pierre (Pierrish) Lagace (Lagasse). Though they had been together since the 1830s it was only in October of 1855 that she, Pierrish and their children traveled to Victoria to receive baptism and a Catholic wedding ceremony.

<sup>495</sup> Nis'akx, as quoted in Henry S. Wellcome, *The Story of Metlakatla* (London and New York: Saxon and Co., 1887), 58; William Duncan Journal, 25 July 1862, 10246; 7 August 1862, 10253. It seems that alcohol was considered a particularly important element of Ts'msyen mortuary feasts by the 1840s. When the sale of alcohol was stopped at Fort Simpson, in 1843, John Work wrote: "They [the Ts'msyen] still much regret rum being withheld from them and say they have no spirits to excite themselves, particularly when they make a feast in commemoration of any of their deceased friends, they find nothing as a substitute for it." Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Correspondence, 21 September 1843.

participation in newcomer practices did not constitute a replacement of their Indigenous customs.<sup>496</sup>

Although newcomer husbands undoubtedly applied pressure on their Ts'msyen wives to participate in particular newcomer customs, here again, in the domestic sphere, they lacked the power to compel their wives. As a result, Ts'msyen women were able to maintain their own customs while somewhat selectively adapting and innovating upon newcomer ones. In doing so, they seem to have envisioned these newcomer roles as providing new opportunities for themselves to exercise their own power and influence. In addition, the dynamics of power at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams meant that Ts'msyen women could apply pressure on their newcomer husbands to take up Ts'msyen practices. From this mutual accommodation and innovation, hybrid relationships and a hybrid culture formed at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams; Though they were hybrid practices, they were heavily influenced by Ts'msyen ideas of political and ceremonial autonomy.

When the Ts'msyen wives of newcomers hosted feasts they were engaging in both the ceremonial and the political system of the Ts'msyen. As I note in chapters one and two, the feasting complex was the means by which prerogatives, social rank, traditional names, and hereditary privileges were legitimately acquired by Ts'msyen people. While the ceremony – with its dances, speeches, distribution of property, and guests as witness – was a necessary element of any feast, the feasts themselves held political meanings.<sup>497</sup>

Ts'msyen wives, as feast hosts, were publicly performing a claimed prerogative and

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<sup>496</sup> Susan Neylan offers a consideration of syncretic Christian practices among the Ts'msyen in *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*. Neylan offers a very brief discussion of Ts'msyen women and Christianity in chapter four of this book but given the tremendous role Ts'msyen converts like Mary Quintal, Elizabeth Ryan, and Nis'akx played in William Duncan's early mission days more work needs to be done.

<sup>497</sup> Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 5.

sought, by this act, public validation of their status. Even attendance at another's feast holds specific political meaning for the Ts'msyen. It both serves as an affirmation or sanction of the host's claim and confirms the guest's own status through the seating at the feast, the order in which gifts are received, and the respective value of the received gifts. In their continued participation in the Ts'msyen feasting complex then, Ts'msyen wives were validating this distinctly indigenous meaning system. Moreover, they were publicly demonstrating their intention to maintain or enhance their own power and status within the political spheres of the Ts'msyen worlds.

Significantly however, Ts'msyen wives did not limit their political participation to the Ts'msyen system alone. Like the Ts'msyen generally, they were skilled innovators and quickly maneuvered within the newcomer customs to establish rank and gain power for themselves and their families. Sudaal, the high ranking Ts'msyen wife of newcomer Dr. John Kennedy, created for herself a kind of middle class domestic newcomer identity by bringing into the fort at least two enslaved women to serve as her servants and nursemaids to her children.<sup>498</sup> As slaves in a Ts'msyen village these women would have spent considerable time in activities like hauling wood and water for their master; within this new hybrid space Sudaal redefined their roles and activities to meet newcomer ideals of domesticity and social class.<sup>499</sup> At the same time as she developed these new sources of power for herself, however, she continued to uphold her traditional power within the Ts'msyen villages by hosting feasts.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 30 March 1842.

<sup>499</sup> On the increasing importance domestic servants played in the construction of middle class status and identity in England see Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 388, 389.

<sup>500</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 21 November 1841.

Nis'akx, the high-ranking Nisga'a woman married to newcomer William McNeill, similarly positioned herself within the newcomers' power structure at Fort Simpson while maintaining and even enhancing her authority within the Nisga'a communities. She left her Nisga'a husband, Chief Sagewan, for McNeill around 1851 and quickly established a home for herself within the fort Big House as McNeill's wife.<sup>501</sup> Not willing to rely on McNeill financially, Nis'akx acted as a trader and undertook dozens of trading voyages to the Nass River for the HBC. She continued in this role even after she and McNeill relocated to Victoria, often traveling, independent of him, between Victoria and the Nass River with her Nisga'a and Ts'msyen kin. In this way she was able to amass a substantial personal fortune. In the 1860s, when her former husband, Chief Sagewan, attempted to recover some of his power, lost when he was deserted, by shaming her at a feast, she successfully met his challenge. Though a "woman of the bleached Victoria tribe" she responded to his attack by hosting a feast with her brother, Niskinwatk, in which she gave Chief Sagewan a large Haida canoe decorated with her own insignia, the bear.<sup>502</sup> When Chief Sagewan again challenged her, publicly announcing that he had cast her off as his wife, Nis'akx defeated him one final time by hosting a grand feast and erecting a memorial pole carved by the preeminent carver, Oyai, for her now deceased brother, Niskinwatk. This feast not only served to vanquish Chief Sagewan, it also enhanced her

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<sup>501</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal; William Duncan, Journal, 10 August 1862, 10129. McNeill's first wife, a Kaigani Haida woman, died in 1850 from complications in childbirth. When McNeill moved to Fort Simpson in 1851 he had twelve children to care for. It seems that he and Nis'akx became a couple almost immediately upon his arrival at Fort Simpson, when she was approximately twenty-six years old. Though it appears that Nis'akx and McNeill never raised their own children together, on 25 July 1853 Nis'akx bore a son (likely McNeill's) who, it would seem, died sometime after birth. There is a gap in the Fort Simpson Journals between 1853 and 1855 and there is no mention of the child after this so it would appear he died during these years.

<sup>502</sup> Chief Sagewan, as quoted in Miller, *Tsimshian Culture*, 136; Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 119.

power within the Nisga'a-Ts'msyen worlds as she assumed her brother's name and title and became the leader of the Wolf clan.

Even in the last year of her life, 1883, Nis'akx continued to operate within both newcomer and Indigenous fields of power. Her last will and testament provides significant insight into her wealth and status within Nisga'a and newcomer spaces, her maternal feelings for McNeill's children as well as her Nisga'a relatives, and the long-lasting associations between the residents of Fort Simpson. She left her property on the Nass River (at Kincolith) to her Nisga'a nephew, George Naskinwat (Niskinwatk). Her land in Victoria was distributed between her step-grandson – by marriage to McNeill – Donald McNeill, daughter-in-law (and mother of Donald), Mary McNeill, step-daughter, Lucy Moffatt, her niece, Catherine Armor, and nephew George Naskinwat.<sup>503</sup> While the will was dictated in her Nisga'a language – translated by her friend, Margaret Hankin, and step-grandson, Donald McNeill – she did not forsake her connection to her deceased husband, McNeill, or to newcomer symbols of status. Even in death, Nis'akx sought to possess and communicate newcomer power: she made arrangements to be buried next to McNeill in Victoria's Ross Bay Cemetery, and allotted two hundred dollars “that a

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<sup>503</sup> Her nephew was the successor to her brother's title, Niskinwatk. Her niece was the daughter of her sister, Josette Jollibois, who had married the carpenter at Fort Simpson, Jean Baptiste Jollibois, likely during the time that the fort was located on the Nass River, 1831-1834. George Naskinwat and Catherine Armor received the largest sections of land. Donald McNeill was named after his grandfather, Donald MacAulay, who lived at Fort Simpson for approximately thirty years and was married to a Tlingit (Tongass) woman. MacAulay's daughter, Mary McNeill nee MacAulay, married William McNeill jr. in 1853. Lucy Moffat was the daughter of William McNeill sr. and his first wife. She married the HBC officer, Hamilton Moffat, and returned to live at Fort Simpson as an adult and the wife of the commanding officer. It would appear that Lucy and Nis'akx were quite close. Lucy once journeyed by canoe with Nis'akx on one of her trading voyages to the Nass River. Margaret Hankin was also a daughter of Donald MacAulay and therefore, was the sister of Mary McNeill. Both Mary and Margaret were raised at Fort Simpson and, it would seem, both learned to speak Indigenous languages from their mother. Margaret Hankin nee MacAulay served as a translator in the Hazelton region, interpreting for trials. Fort Simpson Journal; Norma V. Bennett, *Pioneer Legacy: Chronicles of the Lower Skeena River*, Vol. 1 (Terrace, British Columbia: Dr. R.E.M. Lee Hospital Foundation, 1997).

tombstone shall be erected over my grave and that an iron fence shall be placed around the graves of myself and late husband.”<sup>504</sup>

Sudaal and Nis’akx, like other Indigenous women married to newcomers at Fort Simpson, were able to maintain political and ceremonial roles within their villages while at the same time establishing new positions for themselves within the fort. Though their power and authority might at times be challenged by Indigenous people or newcomers, these women met such challenges in ways which reveal equally their intelligence and their understandings of and familiarity with Indigenous and newcomer mores. And, while one contemporary observer characterized Ts’msyen wives as having been “tamed” through their “associat[ion] with traders” – citing their domestic skills, cleanliness, “comparatively fair” complexion, and European dress as evidence – these women, it appears, never lost sight of their Indigenous identities.<sup>505</sup>

### Negotiating Power and Authority at Fort Simpson

As I have argued above, the institution of marriage at Fort Simpson was, during the period under study, hybrid. Ts’msyen and newcomer marriage customs intermingled, creating a practice which was new but also familiar to the newcomer men and Indigenous women who lived married lives there. Furthermore, like the hybridity Bhabha has described under colonial conditions, the hybridity at Fort Simpson was sometimes used to subvert narratives of power and dominance. It could also, conversely, serve to affirm and entrench them.

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<sup>504</sup> Last Will and Testament of Martha McNeill, 4940, BCA, B8953, GR 1052.

<sup>505</sup> John Sebastian Helmcken, *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*, ed. Dorothy Blakey Smith with an introduction by W. Kaye Lamb (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), 304, 328.

The Ts'msyen wives of newcomers at Fort Simpson were particularly adept at occupying the position of in-betweenness and turning it to their advantage. However, newcomer men at the fort were not without skill in this area; they too were able, to some degree, to straddle the Ts'msyen and newcomer worlds. The newcomer workers at Fort Simpson readily deployed their in-betweenness to achieve gains for their working conditions within the fort. The officers of the post also found hybridity useful, particularly in establishing and maintaining their personal power and authority at Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. They used their relationships with Ts'msyen people to gain status both within the fort and without, and in both the private and public sphere.

Newcomer workers at Fort Simpson were quick to realize that hybridity could serve them as a tool in the negotiation of power and control within the fort. They used their relationships with the Ts'msyen, particularly their marriages, as well as their knowledge and understanding of Ts'msyen culture to gain improvements in their own working conditions. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, the working and living arrangements within the fort were strictly hierarchical. A small number of officers, often only two or three men, were given charge of the post and the twenty or so other newcomers. Newcomer workers resisted the divisions between "Master and man" at Fort Simpson, and sought strategies to undermine the officers' power and to increase their own.<sup>506</sup> Cultural hybridity and, most especially, the hybrid institution of marriage, functioned as an exceptionally useful tool in achieving these ends.

Like employee-employer relations in other industries, the relations between newcomer workers and officers at Fort Simpson were, from the start, marked by conflict over conditions of labour. Newcomer workers, not surprisingly, seem to have resented

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<sup>506</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 1 January 1856.

the privileges reserved for officers alone, and therefore, attempted at times to gain access to such advantages for themselves. They desired and so agitated for increased personal freedom, improved food rations, access to alcohol, the right to marry or to sexual autonomy, and various other prerogatives which were associated with elevated social status. When traditional strategies like strikes failed to achieve significant gains for them, they used their relationships with Ts'msyen women and the culturally hybrid space at Fort Simpson to affect change and win their point.

Linked as they were to the Ts'msyen villages beyond the walls of the fort, newcomer workers at Fort Simpson were able to back up their demands for better working conditions with credible threats of desertion. A newcomer man, as both the officers and workers at the post recognized, could choose “to live an Indian life, with his wife’s people” when his contract with the HBC ended.<sup>507</sup> Having this as an option provided the workers with the security to make relatively significant demands over conditions within the fort: they knew that should the officers refuse their demands, or even attempt to discipline them, they had alternatives to HBC employment.

This tactic, the threat of desertion to Ts'msyen villages, was used repeatedly throughout the thirty year period under study here. In disputes over rations, alcohol, women, and signifiers of social rank newcomer workers sought to gain their objectives through the frequent ultimatum: “that [they] would go outside and leave the Fort.”<sup>508</sup> This strategy served workers whose contracts had ended or who had close relationships with Ts'msyen people and trusted that they would not be captured and returned by force to the fort. Some newcomer workers with particularly close relationships with Ts'msyen people

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<sup>507</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 31 January 1863.

<sup>508</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 22 September 1857.

used this tactic to gain more than improved working conditions. Newcomers Francois Dubois dit Quintal and Louis Oteckorie, for example, employed this tactic to negotiate their treatment by management at the fort. Unwilling to further tolerate behaviour they considered as insults and slights from the officers, these men refused to remain working for the fort under these conditions and, because of their kinship connections and cultural hybridity, found refuge when it suited them among the Ts'msyen.<sup>509</sup> Similarly, newcomer George Thibeault and his Ts'msyen wife employed this tactic in their negotiations over access to the fort for her Ts'msyen kin. Both Thibeault and his wife relocated outside the fort, according to a fort officer, because "she did not like our regulations" concerning admission to the fort.<sup>510</sup> While it is unclear in the journals how much such protests won workers, the increasing report of the use of this threat in the late 1850s and early 1860s indicates that it was considered by the workers to be at least potentially effective.

The formation of a culturally hybrid space at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams offered newcomer workers more than just a powerful threat with which to negotiate, it also offered them benefits which were immediately tangible. One of the key demands made by newcomer workers concerned alcohol. They wanted increased rations of alcohol, the right to decide when and how those rations would be received, and the freedom to

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<sup>509</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 26 December 1863; William Duncan, Journal, 8 August 1859, 9759. Francois Quintal had been at Fort Simpson since at least 1834. He was married to a Ts'msyen woman of the Gitlaan tribe, Mary Quintal (also known as Noas Pierre, Mary Curtis, Mary Ryan and Mary Weha). For Hawaiian Louis Oteckorie, this was not the first time he had protested conditions inside the fort with desertion. In 1861 he had spent several months living with his wife and three children in the Ts'msyen village outside the fort over the issue of alcohol consumption. In the earlier instance the fort officers had offered him the ultimatum of living by the fort rules – no alcohol consumption for newcomer workers beyond the limited rations provided by the HBC – or departing the fort. Oteckorie was not willing to accept these conditions and removed to the village for a period of four months. Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 2 November 1861; 3 February 1862.

<sup>510</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 17 May 1852.

consume alcohol whenever they chose.<sup>511</sup> Officers at Fort Simpson were unwilling to bend to these demands, and threatened punishment for the “rough and uncivil way” the men asserted them.<sup>512</sup> Yet all was not lost for the workers: their relationships with Ts’msyen people provided an alternative avenue by which they could achieve their goals. In addition to the rum traded to fort workers by Ts’msyen wives, mentioned above, newcomer workers also acquired alcohol from Ts’msyen people living in the villages.<sup>513</sup> Both the workers and the HBC officers recognized the subversive nature of this activity. As newcomer workers used their connections with and understanding of the Ts’msyen to get alcohol they defied HBC rules and the officers’ supposed authority over their persons. Not only did their actions work to undermine the officers’ power within the fort, it also, at times, forced officers into carrying out the work of their subordinates. In 1856 McNeill wrote gallingly that “most of our men the worse for liquor. We have been obliged to do most of the work ourselves.”<sup>514</sup> While this was an exaggeration of conditions at the fort – not only did the officers lack the skills to do many of the tasks assigned to their workers, they also had a considerable number of Ts’msyen employees working at the post – it conveys a sense of the officers’ frustration at their inability to prevent such outright insubordination by newcomer workers: an insubordination which was assisted by Ts’msyen people and made possible because of the cultural hybridity in which both newcomers and Ts’msyen people were a part.

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<sup>511</sup> See, for example, Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 4, 9, 10, 11 February 1860.

<sup>512</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 4 February 1860.

<sup>513</sup> In the summer of 1856 access to alcohol and drinking among the workers was so common that the journal keeper was able to remark: “Our men get drunk every Sunday with Rum from the Indians.” Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 20 July 1856.

<sup>514</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 19 December 1856.

Assured of their personal safety and even assisted by Ts'msyen people, newcomer workers at Fort Simpson created from their hybridity opportunities to improve their living and working conditions. About his own newcomer workers' "familiarity with the Indians," contemporary newcomer manager Francis Poole reflected:

The consequences to be expected from such a course were obvious to my mind....It effectually emancipated the men from everything save the merest semblance of control. They worked when they liked, and left off when they chose, the mass of Indians correspondingly losing the respect they used to have for my [the manager's] authority or influence.<sup>515</sup>

While newcomer workers at Fort Simpson did not enjoy such total emancipation from HBC authority on the level feared by Poole, their intimacy with Ts'msyen people did serve to weaken the company's control. Moreover, the workers at Fort Simpson were empowered by their intimacy with and understanding of Ts'msyen people and Ts'msyen customs, in contrast to newcomer workers at other fur trade posts on the Northwest Coast, who could find themselves subject to the "strategies of power" employed by officers because, in some measure, of their own superficial contact with or lack of knowledge regarding local Indigenous people.<sup>516</sup> Precisely because of their great familiarity and intimacy with the Ts'msyen they were able, to a certain extent, to negotiate power and authority at this fort.

The officers were, of course, concerned over their diminishing control at Fort Simpson. They described the newcomer workers as "villain[s]," "the slowest mortals that

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<sup>515</sup> Francis Poole was an English surveyor who spent nearly two years living on Haida Gwaii during the early 1860s. Francis Poole, *Queen Charlotte Islands: A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1972), 246.

<sup>516</sup> The historical geographer Cole Harris argues that workers' fears of being murdered or turned in to the fort by local Indigenous people kept many workers from deserting or from using this as a tactic to negotiate better conditions of work. Cole Harris, "Strategies of Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade," in *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change*.

ever came to this country,” and “Big scamps...[who] require to know their master.”<sup>517</sup>

Yet for all their rhetorical posturing the officers were relatively powerless to impose their will upon the men. They understood that the workers had alternatives to employment within the fort. Further, they knew that they required a full compliment of newcomer workers at the fort in order to complete the necessary work of a fur trade post as well as to achieve what the officers considered to be a sufficient degree of security.<sup>518</sup> Though the officers did, at times, resort to physical punishment for what they considered a worker’s insubordination, they understood that for reasons of security and commerce they had to keep their workers generally satisfied. Desiring hegemonic power, unwilling to accept such challenges, the officers of Fort Simpson sought alternative ways to ensconce their authority.

Several of the tactics officers employed to reinforce their authority at Fort Simpson, as I argue in Chapter Two, relied upon cultural hybridity and its attendant mutually comprehensible symbols and customs. In addition to the practices identified in Chapter Two, officers at the fort further worked to uphold their authority by creating locally recognized symbols of status and power. Marriages between officers and Indigenous women were essential to this strategy. Officers used their personal domesticity – only made possible by marriage to an Indigenous woman – as a signifier of their status as middle class gentlemen and to secure their concomitant perquisites. They repurposed their hybrid marriages to serve as social icons of power alongside more conventional ones like differential dress and freedom from physical labour, for

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<sup>517</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 30 October 1841; 12 April 1853; 28 March 1853.

<sup>518</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 8 October 1839.

example.<sup>519</sup> Finally, officers turned to their own relationships with Ts'msyen people, forged through the hybrid practices of marriage and a kind of intrarank unity, to establish additional support for their power and authority both within and without the fort.

Officers at Fort Simpson incorporated domesticity into the “theatre of power” used to legitimize their authority and control. Because the dynamics of power were relatively fluid at this post, with newcomer workers, newcomer officers, nine internally stratified, separate resident tribes of Ts'msyen people, as well as numerous different Indigenous visitors all vying for power, it was particularly important for the officers to gain support for and recognition of their right to command. To this end, formal and informal performances of rank and power were used by the officers – as they had been throughout the land-based fur trade period – to express and defend their social positions performing, in historical geographer Cole Harris’ terms, a “theatre of power, with calculated disciplinary intent.”<sup>520</sup> As with other contact zones, domesticity was given new meaning at Fort Simpson and became an important element of the performance of power and identity.<sup>521</sup> Officers used their hybrid marriages to Indigenous women to create for themselves some of the key markers of middle class, gentlemanly status. A committed and monogamous marriage, spacious and commanding living accommodations, costly interior décor, the presence of house servants (in addition to Indigenous slaves), and the education of their children all came to symbolize officer identity. And, as officers

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<sup>519</sup> On such signifiers of rank see, for example, Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia* and Scott Hamilton, “Dynamics of Social Complexity in Early Nineteenth-Century British Fur-Trade Posts,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* Vol. 4, No.3 (2000): 217-273.

<sup>520</sup> Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, 43; Hamilton, “Dynamics of Social Complexity,” 243.

<sup>521</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 17, 24.

participated in these social icons of power they publicly performed both their elite status and their power and authority before an audience of subordinate newcomer “servants.”

Housing had always served as a signifier of social status and power in the land-based fur trade. Officers’ quarters were generally located at the back of a fort, opposite to the main gate, in a commanding and visually dominant position. In contrast to the housing of the workers, where several families shared a single room, officers’ quarters were spacious. At Fort Simpson, the officers’ housing included several separate rooms, as well as bedrooms, for the use of the commanding officers and their families. Like the houses of the emergent middle class in England, the segregated living spaces of the officers’ quarters reflected not only their privileged circumstances but also their freedom of time and freedom from labour.<sup>522</sup> Unimpeded by subsistence needs, the officers used these indoor spaces for the leisure activities of reading, writing, and the entertainment of friends. These distinctions in housing were intended, in part, to act as markers of status and were understood as such by newcomers and Ts’msyen alike. In 1844, while he was commander of the HBC barque *Cowlitz*, Captain McNeill was so insulted at the accommodations offered to himself and his family by Chief Trader John Work at Fort Simpson that he threatened to resign and removed himself, his Kaigani Haida wife Mathilda, and their six children to the Russian fort at Sitka rather than accept them.<sup>523</sup> According to McNeill, “Mr Work would not give myself lodgings in the two spare rooms

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<sup>522</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 362.

<sup>523</sup> Before Captain McNeill was in charge of Fort Simpson he worked for the HBC as commander of the barque *Cowlitz* and the steamer *Beaver*.

at his Fort but wished me and my family to stow away in the single room or Indian Hall.”

<sup>524</sup> Such an affront to his status the Captain “would not consent to.”<sup>525</sup>

In a comparable circumstance, the Ts’msyen wife of a newcomer assistant trader at Fort Simpson promptly removed herself and her children from the fort when her husband suffered a demotion.<sup>526</sup> As assistant trader, John Sabeston had occupied a position of liminal status within the fort. He was not quite an officer but he was more than a labourer. His housing had reflected this elevated rank; as an assistant trader he and his family had been given accommodation within the trade shop. When Sabeston was demoted to the position of common labourer he was also removed from the shop and ordered “to live in one of the mens houses.”<sup>527</sup> Recognizing the demotion and move in residency for what it was, a loss of social standing, Sabeston’s Ts’msyen wife took her children and her property and removed to the Ts’msyen village outside the fort. For both McNeill and Mrs. Sabeston the offer of accommodations associated with low social rank was an affront that could not be tolerated.

The incident of 1844 seems to have had a great impact on Captain McNeill, for when he later had the power to construct and shape his own quarters – which he inherited from Work – he made sure they were becoming of his status as a gentleman. Taking charge of Fort Simpson in 1851 he set about enhancing his accommodations in the Big

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<sup>524</sup> William McNeill, as quoted in Robin Percival Smith, *Captain McNeill and His Wife the Nishga Chief, 1803-1850: From Boston Fur Trader to Hudson’s Bay Company Trader* (Surrey, BC: Hancock House Publishers, 2001), 180. This incident seems to have involved a conflict between John Work’s wife, Josette Work, a woman of mixed European and Spokane heritage, and McNeill’s Kaigani wife Mathilda, as he wrote that “this is all about the women....I wrote Mr Work that if women were to arrange the H.B.C.’s affairs it was high time for me to be out of this service.” McNeill’s first wife, Mathilda, died from complications in childbirth in 1850. I have not been able to learn more about this conflict between the two women at this time. It is hoped that more information will come to light through future research.

<sup>525</sup> McNeill, as quoted in Smith, *Captain McNeill and His Wife*, 180.

<sup>526</sup> This is the same incident discussed in note 67.

<sup>527</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 3 August 1858.

House with accoutrements of the British middle class. During the years that he and his second wife, Nis'akx, lived at Fort Simpson they gave increasing attention to their accommodations, employing architectural devices to emphasize their elite status. They had a new Big House constructed, complete with a verandah, mouldings fitted around the doors, their rooms clapboarded, their sitting room and bedrooms wallpapered, iron bedsteads constructed, a stand for the hall clock built, ventilators installed, and, as the pinnacle, a chandelier made.<sup>528</sup> Their home in Victoria, built in the 1860s, was even grander. The residences of the McNeill family had symbolic significance that worked to reinforce the power structure at Fort Simpson and the distance between the ranks. McNeill, like the other officers at this post (and, indeed, the British middle class more generally), carefully utilized housing to communicate social superiority.

While the Big House under McNeill's command was re-created as the picture of British middle class gentility, it would be a mistake to assume that he and his family were living what historian Sylvia Van Kirk describes elsewhere as "colonized lives." Both he and Nis'akx were active participants in the hybrid world which developed at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. Even as late as the 1860s the couple continued to participate in Ts'msyen and Nisga'a feasts and to entertain high ranking Indigenous guests in their northern home. And, according to Van Kirk, who notes the exceptionality of this couple in colonial Victoria, their home in Victoria was itself a hybrid space, "a cross between a Scottish baronial hall and a Nis'ga longhouse."<sup>529</sup> It was, in part, this cultural hybridity that McNeill was drawing on at Fort Simpson to negotiate his own power and authority within the fort and without.

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<sup>528</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 9 April 1856; 13-18 June 1856; 30 June 1856; Helen Meilleur, *A Pour of Rain: Stories from a West Coast Fort* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2001), 81.

<sup>529</sup> Sylvia Van Kirk, "Colonized Lives."

Officers at Fort Simpson used their personal domesticity to indicate both their gentlemanly status and their distinctness from newcomer workers. Indigenous women and mixed-heritage children were crucial to these performances because they embodied key roles necessary to family and domesticity. A wife, despite her hybridity and continued participation in Indigenous customs, could perform the (newcomer) part of “good and faithful partner” and “kind mother” while the rearing of their mixed-heritage children provided officers an opportunity to distinguish themselves from the newcomer workers through the children’s schooling, cleanliness, conduct and, eventually, the marriages of their daughters and the careers of their sons.<sup>530</sup> Since their own marriages were culturally hybrid the officers of the fort were performing hybridity even while producing such symbols of British gentility. Moreover, hybridity seems to have been so commonplace at Fort Simpson that the continued participation of officers and their wives in Indigenous customs offered no contradiction to or detraction from the production of British symbols of social power and rank.

Behaviours that did threaten the effectiveness of the officers’ use of middle class domesticity included internal transgressions and external mimicry. While the Indigenous wives and mixed-heritage children of officers were not living colonized lives at Fort Simpson, officer-fathers seem to have expected their children to observe certain newcomer mores. Having an Indigenous name, speaking an Indigenous language, and intermingling with the Ts’msyen, it would appear, were allowable hybrid activities for the children of officers.<sup>531</sup> However, behaviours which violated British middle class notions of moral propriety, such as sexual promiscuity and excessive consumption of

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<sup>530</sup> McNeill, as quoted in Sylvia Van Kirk, “Colonized Lives.”

<sup>531</sup> James Kennedy, the son of Officer John Kennedy and his Ts’msyen wife, Sudaal, was also known by his Ts’msyen name, Ta:wi:s. Homer Barnett, Notes, 5.

alcohol, were disapproved of. Such behaviours jeopardized the distinction between officers and workers and threatened to undermine officers' authority within the fort.

At least one officer so disapproved of what he seems to have considered the sexually immoral behaviour of his son that he appears to have disowned the child over it. In 1855, as I indicated above, Captain McNeill discovered that his son, Henry (Harry) McNeill, had "been in the habit of sleeping *outside* nightly for a long time."<sup>532</sup> McNeill was so outraged at Henry's actions – and his refusal to stop seeing the Ts'msyen woman he had been sleeping with – that he "ordered him out of the Fort to act as he thought best," never providing him accommodation at the fort again.<sup>533</sup> I suggest that it was not only that Henry had been having sexual relations with an Indigenous woman that angered his father, for this was common practice at the post (albeit generally within marriage relationships), but rather that Henry's particular actions had transgressed the expectations of his rank in several particular ways. Firstly, Henry had snuck out of the fort, leaving the keys to the gate with the watchman or the steward to keep until morning. This both made the fort vulnerable and undermined its social hierarchy, as the control over entry and exit to the fort moved from officers to workers. Secondly, Henry was engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage, something prohibited at this post. In doing so he was

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<sup>532</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 21 December 1855.

<sup>533</sup> Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 22 December 1855. This conflict between Henry and his father was never resolved. Henry was able, because of his close relationships with Ts'msyen people, to convince nine of them – despite the cold weather and lack of financial compensation – to transport himself and his Ts'msyen partner to Victoria. Four years later he returned to Fort Simpson, this time as a member of a gold seeking party headed for the Queen Charlotte Islands. He and his party were not provided accommodations within the fort and instead "took up lodgings on shore." McNeill described the party as living a "*reckless lazy idle* Indian sort of life" and contrasted their character with a more respectable and praiseworthy life of "*regular* daily Labour, and regular salary." Little is known of Henry's later life. He worked for the Collins Overland Telegraph Company in the late 1860s, putting his cultural hybridity to good use in the position of foreman of the Indigenous employees. Captain McNeill seems to have continued to disapprove of Henry's life choices and when he died in 1875 he left Henry out of his will entirely. Fort Simpson Journal, 21-23 December 1855; 19 July 1859; 10 August 1859; Van Kirk, "Colonized Lives"; William Henry McNeill, "Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Copy of Will," E/C/M231.9, BCA.

directly challenging the authority of the officers and, through his insubordination, was aligning himself with the newcomer workers. Finally, it would seem that the woman he was involved with was of a lower social rank else marriage, still commonplace between officers and Ts'msyen women, could have been suggested by Captain McNeill as the obvious solution to this episode.<sup>534</sup>

Just as newcomer workers at Fort Simpson employed their relationships with Ts'msyen people as leverage against the company in the hopes of enhancing their own position, the officers relied on their connections with high ranking Ts'msyen people to support their authority at the fort. These relationships, and the intrarank unity between officers and high ranking Ts'msyen, were all the more important because of newcomer workers' familiarity with the Ts'msyen. As at other HBC forts, the officers at this post looked to local Indigenous people to act as enforcers of their authority by, for example, capturing newcomer deserters and returning them to the fort.<sup>535</sup> Newcomer workers' relationships with Ts'msyen people hindered this plan, as we have seen, and forced the officers to develop new strategies to secure Ts'msyen assistance. Whereas presents may have been an effective incentive at other forts, for the officers at Fort Simpson, cultural hybridity, particularly when expressed through the social recognition of high ranking Ts'msyen people or a marriage between an officer and high ranking Indigenous woman, was required.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Though it was becoming less common for officers to marry Indigenous women at this time, some HBC officers continued to wed Ts'msyen women at least into the late 1860s. Examples include Captain Swanson and Robert Cunningham. It is probable that some of McNeill's discomfort concerning Henry's behaviour rested in his disappointment that Henry was seeing a Ts'msyen woman rather than a woman of European or mixed Indigenous-newcomer heritage.

<sup>535</sup> Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, 45-46.

<sup>536</sup> Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, 45. Harris concludes that "natives currying favour and presents from officers at the fort often brought deserters back." For those who harboured newcomer

Because the Ts'msyen communities outside the fort were factionalized, it was possible for both the newcomer officers and workers to find support for their respective positions from Ts'msyen people. Through marriages to high ranking Indigenous women like Sudaal and Nis'akx and cross-participation in formal activities – their participation in the Ts'msyen feasting system and their entertaining Ts'msyen chiefs, as discussed in Chapter Two – officers at the fort secured support from high ranking Ts'msyen people for their own authority and power. This support was performed, in part, through the Ts'msyen feasting system. Though newcomer workers were frequent guests and even residents in Ts'msyen houses, they seem never or only very rarely to have attended Ts'msyen feasts.<sup>537</sup> It was usually officers alone who were accorded the privilege of an invitation and attendance at a feast. This Ts'msyen symbol of power was extended to officers, as to other guests, as recognition of their high rank and friendly relations. Therefore, by attending a Ts'msyen feast, officers were performing the authentication of their rank and power within the Ts'msyen meaning system while also, because of the exclusivity of this prerogative, their dominance over newcomer workers.

Conversely, in their roles as husbands to high ranking Indigenous women, and as commanding officers of a fur trade post, the officers at Fort Simpson frequently entertained their Indigenous kin in the fort. Both Nis'akx's and Sudaal's relatives regularly visited the Big House, with Sudaal's father, Chief Ligeex, apparently making a regular visit to the post every Christmas season until his death. As I argue in Chapter

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deserters, Harris argues that the threat of violence from officers and other strategies were effective for gaining their return.

<sup>537</sup> The extant records are somewhat unclear on this matter. I am left with the sense that newcomer workers were not generally in attendance at major Ts'msyen feasts but may have participated somewhat frequently in the less exclusive Ts'msyen rum feasts. On newcomer workers' residence in Ts'msyen houses see Barnett, Notes, 14-15.

Two, such visits also served as signifiers of power and status as only individuals of high rank received such treatment from the officers at Fort Simpson.

It was this kind of mutual participation in the cultural hybridity of Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams along with cross-participation in formal activities and shared participation in informal activities of everyday life (as discussed in Chapter Two) that provided officers with the necessary Ts'msyen support for their power and authority. Although they were always being challenged, these performances by officers acted to maintain the divisions between themselves and the newcomer workers, while also establishing bonds with some of the figures of authority in the Ts'msyen villages. Ts'msyen people had been quick to recognize the distinctions in social class amongst the newcomers at Fort Simpson, initially identifying newcomer workers as the slaves of officers and connecting officers to high ranking Ts'msyen people.<sup>538</sup> While no longer considering workers slaves, it was Ts'msyen peoples' identification of workers as the officers' subordinates and recognition of the officers' rank and authority which secured their cooperation in the capture and return of newcomer deserters, the transportation and policing of newcomer prisoners, and other such enforcement of newcomer officers' power and authority.

### Conclusions

As I have shown, marriages between newcomer men and Ts'msyen women were common at Fort Simpson. These relationships can be characterized as committed, long-lasting and, for some, even affective unions. Many of the couples stayed together until

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<sup>538</sup> There are a handful of references in the extant records to Ts'msyen people identifying newcomer workers at the fort as slaves. See, for example, Fort Simpson (Nass), Post Journal, 23 January 1839; 25 September 1839; 16 May 1853.

death, remaining dedicated to each other even while increasingly subjected to racism and newcomer condemnation of their relationships. Furthermore, a large number of these families developed significant connections with each other and worked to maintain them throughout their lifetimes, both at Fort Simpson and away. Though the newcomer men and Ts'msyen women who married at this post held distinct and even divergent motivations for doing so, they found value in these relationships and were even able to construct from them something new.

Both the Ts'msyen and the newcomers wanted something from the other but were generally unable or unwilling to use force to attain it. This, along with the vulnerability of the newcomers and the Ts'msyen tradition of cultural innovation, worked to create a third space at Fort Simpson. In this third space, the Ts'msyen and the newcomers developed new practices and ideas which were comprised of Ts'msyen and newcomer customs and could be commonly understood. Whatever their respective intentions, the results are clear: Ts'msyen and newcomer cultural practices were re-interpreted and re-deployed at Fort Simpson and resulted in the development of a culturally hybrid world. Intermarriage was a fundamental institution of this hybridity. Among other things, it worked to facilitate intimate connections between Ts'msyen people and newcomers which were necessary for the development of genuinely shared customs. The Ts'msyen-newcomer families of Fort Simpson not only participated in the formation of this hybridity, they embodied it.

Like the hybridity Bhabha attaches to colonial situations, the hybridity of Fort Simpson/Lax̱gu'alaams offered the possibility to challenge and subvert. Ts'msyen people, newcomer workers, and newcomer officers were able to use their hybridity to

negotiate power and control at the fort and in the village. Those with little power, like the newcomer workers of the fort, used their hybridity to challenge the authority of the officers; they destabilized the conventional power structure of HBC forts, subverting the master-servant narratives and improving their own status, living or working conditions. Similarly, those with more power employed their hybridity to maintain or enhance their status and authority. They added new theatrical tools to their power performances by, for example, incorporating outsider symbols of rank and power. In addition, they used the hybrid institution of marriage to achieve significant markers of status like, for officers, British, middle class domesticity, or access to relatively exclusive privileges like, for the Ts'msyen elite, the ownership of glass windows. The hybridity at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams, then, while serving as a mechanism to unite Ts'msyen and newcomer people, also served variously to challenge, maintain, or enhance power and authority.

In either case, as a culture mutually created and understood, or as a tool to negotiate power and control, the hybridity at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams blurred the boundaries between the Ts'msyen and the newcomers. As it did so, it represented not just a third space in which something new might be created at Fort Simpson but also an alternative possibility for Indigenous-newcomer relations in British Columbia. As they blurred boundaries, produced new meanings and crafted new yet familiar customs, the Ts'msyen and the newcomers were also challenging nineteenth century European notions of culture and identity. Had the dynamics of power remained weighted towards Indigenous peoples in "British Columbia" this third space may have continued to exist. As it is, the 1860s brought a rapid and radical shift in power and authority on the

Northwest Coast, and though Ts'msyen people continued to use hybridity as a means to resist and attempt to negotiate, their messages went largely unheard.<sup>539</sup> The newcomers as a body were no longer interested in dialogue. In the place of accommodation and mutually comprehensible (though not necessarily equally understood) customs and symbols came an increasingly narrow understanding of the Ts'msyen and other Indigenous people. Although the Ts'msyen persisted in their attempts to speak to newcomers through the mediums of cultural change, hybrid forms, and material culture their actions were increasingly read by colonial society as assimilation or contemptible pretense.<sup>540</sup> With little room for ambiguity in colonial society, Ts'msyen people were now criticized for “wearing the mantle on both shoulders.”<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> In *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, historian Richard White offers a thorough examination of this kind of power shift, from compromise and mutual accommodation to colonial domination as Indigenous people in the Great Lakes region “ceased to have the power to force whites onto the middle ground.” White, *The Middle Ground*, xv.

<sup>540</sup> Paige Raibmon, “Living on Display: Colonial Visions of Aboriginal Domestic Spaces,” *BC Studies*, No.140 (Winter 2003/04), 85.

<sup>541</sup> William Duncan, as quoted in John W. Arctander, *The Apostle of Alaska: The Story of William Duncan of Metlakahla* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), 158, 159.

## Conclusion: A point on the spectrum

“We are a new people  
We are an old people  
We are the same people”<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> I first encountered this chant at the ‘Ksan Historical Village and Museum in Hazelton, British Columbia. This heritage site is used by the Gitx̱san, according to their website, to “truthfully portray the lifestyles of the people who have always lived here.” The phrase accompanies one of the exhibits and is used as an expression of contemporary identity for the Gitx̱san people. I am not clear on the origins of this chant, however, it appears in the book *Shamanism* compiled by Shirley Nicholson. Shirley Nicholson, ed., *Shamanism*, (Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987), xiii; ‘Ksan Historical Village website, <<http://www.ksan.org>> (last accessed 23 August 2010).

I have focused here on cultural change and the development of hybrid forms among the Ts'msyen people and newcomers living at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams during what can loosely be defined as the land-based fur trade period. Where some scholars have questioned the value of the post-colonial concept of hybridity as a framework for the study of Indigenous-newcomer relations in the Americas, characterizing such analysis as unimportant because it claims the obvious – that human beings are influenced by other cultures, I have found value in hybridity as a tool for understanding power, authority, and encounter at this locale.<sup>543</sup> In part this usefulness stems from my understanding that the cultural changes undertaken by Ts'msyen people and newcomers were influenced by their respective traditions and thus retained continuity with the Ts'msyen and newcomer communities from which they emerged.<sup>544</sup> This understanding is important if hybrid forms are to be read as anything other than merely assimilation.

Hybridity, as I have suggested above, can be read many different ways. My attention to mutual understanding, accommodation, and cultural change derives from my wish to convey that in the contact zone of Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams ethnicity and identity were not immutable categories. Both Ts'msyen and newcomer cultures were dynamic and productive, active and reactive. They were quick to respond to the new circumstances of this contact, and used cultural change and hybridity as one means to better their own situations. In such able hands hybridity was made to function as both a tool of support and of subversion.

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<sup>543</sup> Craig S. Womack, "The Integrity of American Indian Claims: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love My Hybridity," in *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, eds. Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 139-140.

<sup>544</sup> In other words, though the hybrid forms that developed at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams were something new they were not *new* in the sense that their origin was other or outsider. Certainly these forms were influenced by the contact with others and with outsider ways but, whether Ts'msyen, newcomer, or jointly Ts'msyen-newcomer, they were also intrinsically insider forms.

Neither their sometime success in these endeavors nor my attention to mutual understanding, accommodation, and cultural change, should characterize Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams as a harmonious place, however. The history of this fur trade post should not be romanticized. As with any other contact zone Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams was also, at times, a site of conflict and violence. My attention to the operation of power and authority within and between the worlds of the Ts'msyen and the newcomers gives some suggestion of these dynamics but as my concern lay elsewhere this thesis stops short of investigating them. Still, by situating cultural change and hybridity within the unequal power relations of the Ts'msyen and newcomer worlds at this locale, and analyzing some of the ways in which these inequalities – the structures and the discourse – operated to shape hybridity's development I hope to convey a sense of this tension.

Not everyone at Laxlgu'alaams and Fort Simpson embraced these cultural changes or willingly participated them. These changes were contested by some and though such views are harder to access they are sometimes reflected in the primary sources.<sup>545</sup> Those who did support cultural change did so for their own reasons, finding some value in it. For, though the hybridity and hybrid spaces of this contact zone were permeated with power they were not reflective of a generalized hegemony. These changes were not foisted upon the residents of Fort Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams but rather were innovations made through the course of the lives of Ts'msyen and newcomer participants for their own reasons and their own purposes. Like hybrid law and cross-participation in

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<sup>545</sup> For example, when Ts'msyen Arthur Wellington Clah hosted a feast to announce his decision to “renounce his former savage ways” and convert to Christianity several chiefs present at the feast spoke against Christianity, “denouncing those who had been baptized.” William Duncan, Journal, 19 August 1861, 10134.

ceremony they were the result of the particular conditions of this contact zone together with Ts'msyen and newcomer people's will or need to interact with each other.

One of the questions ever present for me has been that of experience. Like many people who have an interest in the past I am curious about the personal experiences of those who lived it. It has been a great challenge for me to accept that I can never really know what the men and women of Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams thought and felt about their personal circumstances. In the end I have had to resign myself to the not knowing. All the same, I have tried to use the tools available to me – theory, methodology, and example – to reach something more of their lives than merely the roles and tasks they performed. This has not been easy, especially as the greater part of my source material is HBC records, documents never meant to betray emotions and certainly not to reveal love and romance, affection, loyalty, or familial ties.

This thesis follows scholar Ann Laura Stoler's framing of the intimate as political. Accordingly I have sought to understand some of the ways in which power and authority at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams were secured through marriage, domesticity, and sex.<sup>546</sup> This attention to the intimate – while illuminating why and how domestic life, miscegenation, and friendship are political – can also help us to better understand the lives of those people who form our subjects. Intimacy in the fur trade received relatively early historical attention in Canada with the publication of Sylvia Van Kirk's *“Many Tender Ties”*: *Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870*, and her focus on Indigenous-

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<sup>546</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol.88, No.3 (December 2001): 829-865.

newcomer marriages and the “tender ties” of the fur trade.<sup>547</sup> Despite this promising beginning relatively little attention has been paid to intimacy in Canada’s fur trade and even less to the relationship between intimacy and power since. While my thesis is not explicitly devoted to intimacy I have sought to consider the intimate alongside the operation of power and authority and with a view to Ts’msyen and newcomer culture and traditions.

Throughout this process I have used the very practical and controlled documents of a company to reach the messy, unpredictable lives of people. I have attempted to access something of the human dimension of the land-based fur trade on the northern Northwest Coast, viewing these characters as people, whose lived lives crafted our history and shaped our present, rather than just historical actors whose achievements were weighed and measured, and whose actions were wholly calculated. At times, perhaps, I have too firmly established this sense of their lives as plotted and planned. I believe that they, like men and women today, tried to create options for themselves and for their families. Sometimes they found the success they seem to have been after, often, I am sure, what they attained was not at all what they sought. Regardless, I wanted to reveal some of their possibilities in this text. I wanted them to be, at least in this one sense, as they really were, people who were productive, affective, creative, and flawed.

In approaching the subject of Indigenous-newcomer relations at Fort Simpson/Lax̱gu’alaams I expected to find that the residents at this locale had changed in response to their contact with each other. This conclusion in and of itself, however, is hardly profound. It is, as literary scholar Craig S. Womack writes, “like claiming

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<sup>547</sup> Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties,” 831; Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980).

‘humans breathe.’”<sup>548</sup> Nevertheless, there remains today a widespread and ahistorical belief among the general public in the immutability of culture generally and also, more particularly, in the notion of authentic Indianness. The first concept can result in a failure to consider the cultural changes undertaken by newcomers, especially when such analysis is made from the position of white privilege and when Indigenous cultural changes are understood as assimilation.<sup>549</sup> The second concept is part of a binary framework in which “Indians” were (and are) characterized as traditional, uncivilized, and static while “whites,” on the other hand, were modern, civilized, and prosperous.<sup>550</sup> This thesis challenges these notions by drawing attention to some of the many ways in which newcomers and Ts’msyen people changed culturally. Also of importance is the nature of these changes, particularly the relationship between cultural change, hybridity, and the operation of power and authority at this locale. Finally, that some of these cultural changes, including the development of a hybrid system of law and of marriage, were jointly constructed by Ts’msyen people and newcomers significantly challenges the idea of discrete communities of Indigenous people and HBC newcomers with little significant interaction aside from trade, sex, or marriage.

This thesis offers a preliminary investigation into cultural change and hybridity at one Northwest Coast fur trade fort. It offers a glimpse of the complex worlds that were Fort Simpson/Lax̱gu’alaams, and draws attention, I hope, to the interconnection between newcomer and Ts’msyen history. It also makes clear the very real possibility that newcomers and Indigenous people on the Northwest Coast during the fur trade era were

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<sup>548</sup> Womack, “The Integrity of American Indian Claims,” 139.

<sup>549</sup> Womack, “The Integrity of American Indian Claims,” 121.

<sup>550</sup> Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 7.

not quite as separate from each other as it sometimes seems. That is not to suggest that the Ts'msyen do not have a unique history, one which also documents their long residence on the northern Northwest Coast and supports their rightful title to their land. But, once contact was initiated between Ts'msyen people and newcomers the historical narrative of this region shifted to include them all.

It is the events of the past that bring us, the people of the present, to where we are. The past shapes our contemporary ideas, our choices, and our experiences. It does so not only because of its continual resonance, its lingering impact, but also because it is people of the present who frame and tell the narratives of the past. Beginning with the onset of the Northwest Coast maritime fur trade and continuing on to today there is a shared newcomer-Ts'msyen history of Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams. This history, quite obviously, is not understood in the same way by its various stakeholders. There likely are as many understandings of and responses to this history as there have been individuals. Nonetheless, the connections between Ts'msyen people and newcomers shaped these individuals and continue now to shape us who live here. It is important for the people of the present-day to recognize at least some of the effects newcomers and Ts'msyen people had on each other for it can help us to see how, in some small way, we remain historically connected today.

This thesis offers, to borrow Craig Womack's phrase, "merely a point on the spectrum, not the spectrum itself."<sup>551</sup> I have presented one interpretation of this history, drawing attention to the events I thought important to tell for the ways in which they challenged popular notions of fur trade history and of Ts'msyen people. But there is much more work still to be done. Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams has many more stories to

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<sup>551</sup> Womack, "The Integrity of American Indian Claims," 139.

tell and it is my hope that other scholars can build upon these initial findings to increase our understanding of these worlds. It remains still to answer whether this fort was typical for the Northwest Coast or whether it was an exception.

By the 1870s the worlds of the Ts'msyen and the HBC newcomers had yet again undergone considerable change. Where once the newcomers of the fort had occupied a position of vulnerability in Ts'msyen territory, relatively far from any centre of European power, out-numbered by Ts'msyen people and lacking the weaponry to defend themselves or dominate the Indigenous population, it was now the Ts'msyen who found themselves in a precarious position. The devastating smallpox epidemic of 1862, the subsequent removal of the Ts'msyen Christians to Metlakatla, the arrival of 'gunboat justice' in Ts'msyen territory, and a rise in colonial authority brought about a lasting shift in power, away from Ts'msyen people and increasingly into the hands of newcomers and a colonial government. With this shift also came a change in the Indigenous-newcomer relations at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu'alaams.

Where once Indigenous women married to HBC newcomers, like Mary Quintal (Noos Pierre), Nis'akx McNeill and Sudaal Kennedy, had been able to move fluidly between their Ts'msyen or Nisga'a communities and the worlds of the HBC fort, maintaining important positions within each, under these new conditions their choices were more and more constrained. To marry a newcomer in the 1870s, at least in the eyes of some newcomer resettlers, necessitated a choice between an identity as an "Indian" or as a "White."<sup>552</sup> Of course, the shift towards colonial authority over Ts'msyen territory was neither absolute nor immediate. A number of newcomers and Ts'msyen people were

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<sup>552</sup> Martha Washington (O'Neill) Boss, "A Tale of Northern B.C. from Cariboo to Cassiar," typescript in BCA, Ms. 771.

interested in and able to continue something of their former collaboration and negotiation, especially those with kinship connections. Yet even while some newcomers and Ts'msyen people continued to accommodate the other, these accommodations were increasingly framed within the conditions of colonialism.

The late-nineteenth century marriage of Ts'msyen Florence Dudoward to newcomer Captain George Magar provides us with a pertinent example. Whereas Florence's sister-in-law's marriage to Florence's brother, William Dudoward, had "made her an Indian of the "Eagles," her own marriage to newcomer Captain George Magar made her, in the eyes of a contemporary, "white."<sup>553</sup> Their wedding, though in many ways a culturally mixed affair, exemplifies the growing spatial and cultural divisions between Ts'msyen and newcomer people at Port Simpson/Laxlgu'alaams. Fort Simpson had been renamed Port Simpson in 1880, a name more fitting for the era of white resettlement, and like other Indigenous communities, the village had been partitioned into an Indian Reserve and a newcomer community. The wedding ceremony of Florence and George reflected this division, taking place in the English church of Port Simpson with the attendant "Eagle Feast" held in the reserve's rifle hall "in the usual manner of the tribe."<sup>554</sup> And, although the bride was attired in a dress modeled after newcomer fashion and the rifle hall was bedecked not with "traditional" art but with flags, the feast was objectionable enough to the Captain that he seems to have considered it below his dignity to have

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<sup>553</sup> Boss, "A Tale of Northern B.C.," 90. This positioning lasted only so long as her marriage, however. When her husband died, Florence remarried, this time to "one of her own kind, a French half-breed named St. Piere" and in so doing lost her standing, in the eyes of some, as a "white" woman and returned to being an "Indian."

<sup>554</sup> Boss, "A Tale of Northern B.C.," 57.

participated, asking a newspaper reporter present “not to make too big a thing of this,” his involvement.<sup>555</sup>

The marriage ceremony of Florence and George Magar continued to draw on traditions of both newcomers and Ts’msyen people but did so within the framework of colonialism. This separation between Ts’msyen people and newcomers – both spatial and cultural – was to become increasingly institutionalized as the schools and even the church services at Port Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams became racially segregated.<sup>556</sup> Such divisions left little room for the expansion or facilitation of dialogue. In the place of the somewhat jointly constructed and mutually understood worlds characteristic of the land-based fur trade at Fort Simpson/Laxłgu’alaams there remained only a small and fragile hybrid space into which very few new people entered. Supplanting it was a colonial society in which Indigenous people were increasingly regulated, controlled and marginalized. The Ts’msyen never accepted this turn; they engaged in various forms of resistance against the colonial government continuing to try to dialogue and innovate with newcomers who were now no longer interested in or compelled to hear them.

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<sup>555</sup> Boss, “A Tale of Northern B.C.,” 57.

<sup>556</sup> Jan Hare and Jean Barman, *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 238.

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