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SLEEPING BEAUTY

***The Material Culture of
Tsimshian Shamans***

by

MARY ANN BARBARA SLADE, B.A. HONS.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
November 29, 1994

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SLEEPING BEAUTY

The Material Culture of Tsimshian Shamans

submitted by

MARY ANN BARBARA SLADE, B.A. HONS.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor
Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

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date

ABSTRACT

This thesis enhances our understanding of shamanism as practiced by the Tsimshian by examining their material culture. There are extensive collections of Tsimshian artifacts held in many museums. Some of these, and their associated documentation, have been examined in detail to clarify conceptualizations about what is "shamanic" for the Tsimshian and what is not. These sources have also been explored for information and insights on how shamans used these specific artifacts, and more generally on how the Tsimshian shaman practiced. Ethnographic sources, accounts of early missionaries, tourists and explorers, and archival sources, particularly the unpublished Barbeau-Beynon files held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, have been combed as sources of both panoramic overviews and treasured bits of detailed information. These have been used to enhance the data gleaned from studying the artifacts. Informed by the literature on shamanism cross-culturally, and that on neuroscience and consciousness theories and explorations, a richer understanding of Tsimshian shamanism is presented.

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This thesis is dedicated to my father
William John Caple Slade
on the occasion of his eightieth birthday
November 29, 1994.

Happy Birthday, Dad!

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ONCE UPON A TIME,

a long, long time ago, there lived people who were very special. They could talk with all life forms - animals of the air, land and sea, and even with the rocks and trees themselves. They could see far into the future, and way back into the past. They could also travel far - through the earth or the oceans, out to the moon or the stars, and sometimes to realms we can't even imagine. In their travels, they made many friends who had wonderful powers, and these friends would help them in times of need.

These people knew special songs and dances, and made clothes and tools and charms showing their powers. When they put on these clothes, and sang their songs, and danced, these tools and charms would seem to come alive. With their help, and the help of their friends, they could often do amazing things - they could see things that nobody else could see, find out secrets, and even make those who were ill well again.

Although all this sounds like fun, these people had to work very hard and faced great dangers in their travels. They also faced danger from within themselves, as it could be tempting to misuse their powers for selfish ends. This would lead to disaster all around - and there are stories that tell of this. But usually, these people used their special powers to help people, and animals, and all other things, to live life the way they believed was right.

Then, one day, other people came - very many people. These people had very different ideas of what was right, and they wanted everyone to think just like them. There was much arguing and fighting. People died, and each group blamed the other. Slowly, many of the people who were left stopped believing in the old way of what was right, and in the powers of the special people, so these ceased to be.

But when they went away, some of them left their special creations behind them. These have been sleeping, on shelves, in boxes and even in glass cases - waiting, waiting ...

INTRODUCTION

"Tsimshian" is the family name given to a linguistically distinct collective comprising Nisga'a, Gitksan and Tsimshian. "Tsimshian" is also used ethnographically to denote members of the Nisga'a, Gitksan and Coast/Southern Tsimshian tribes. In this thesis, unless otherwise noted, "Tsimshian" will be used in this established collective way, although it must be remembered that this convenience overlooks the differences in practices and beliefs between the groups. It should also be noted that the members define themselves as belonging to separate, although related, tribal entities, and traditionally preferred to identify themselves by their home village, House¹, and matrilineal clan.

The Tsimshian live along the coastal islands and mainland almost directly east of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and up into the mountains along the two largest rivers in the area - the Skeena (for the Gitksan) and the Nass (for the Nisga'a). Along with the Tlingit to their north, and the Haida to the west, these Tsimshian peoples comprise the northern subgroup of the "Northwest Coast Culture" (NWC) group. Two of the many characteristics common to this group are a very distinctive, complex and beautifully crafted material

¹"House" refers to an economic/political local unit of the matrilineal clan, comprising one or more multi-family residential "houses". Each House was led and administered by a chief whose name, ranked with all the other names in the clan, was hereditary. Clans were exogamous. A village might comprise one, two or several Houses, each of which held specific rights to lands and resources and prerogatives (both material and intangible).

culture, and a world view that stresses the primacy of shamans in maintaining both a healthy populace and a healthy balance between humans and all other realms of being.

This thesis explores the use of material culture by Tsimshian shamans. This area has not been examined in any significant way either within the field of shamanism generally or for its particular insights into Tsimshian culture.

There are a number of reasons for undertaking such a study. Although there is a vast body of literature available on the Northwest Coast peoples generally, and the Tsimshian in particular, it is problematic, particularly with reference to "shamanic" classifications. There are numerous reasons for this, which will be dealt with in depth in the "methodology" chapter, but problems have resulted largely from the attempts of missionaries, tourists, collectors, and even anthropologists to describe a very conceptually complex society from perspectives of incomplete understanding, and from data obtained during a time of marked and continuing cultural change.

In addition to what can be learned about Tsimshian shamanism, and more generally about Tsimshian culture, examining the use of material culture by shamans can also tell us something about the shamanic complex per se. There is a corpus of beliefs/behaviours referred to by anthropologists as "shamanic". "Shaman" and "shamanic" have also lately captured the imagination of the general public, so that the term is developing wider and more diverse meanings. Some would say that this popularization of the term has reached

the point where it is now so general and all-encompassing as to be meaningless as a classificatory category within the discipline.

It is my contention that there is a core of practices and beliefs common to and definitive of all shamans, that there is a general tradition of secondary practices particular to shamans of a given people, a given linguistic group or a given geographical area (eg Northwest Coast, Central American), and that we can best learn about these through examining the practices and paraphernalia of individual shamans.

For the Tsimshian, in the period under study (18-20th century), the individual shamans are no longer with us. But much of the equipment they created and used is still available to researchers, in museum collections. We also have access to records of a few personal anecdotes, life stories, demonstrated songs and performances, and of course, transcribed and translated oral histories and traditions, as well as a wide range of published information providing some excellent archaeological, museological, mythological and ethnographic data and insights.

The focus of this thesis is on the artifacts themselves, and their documentation. The analysis of Tsimshian shamanic paraphernalia will not only draw upon cultural understandings (emics), but a more general body of ethnographic and theoretical literature, including relevant literature from related disciplines (art history, psychology, religion, medicine, neuroscience).

This thesis is not informed by personal fieldwork amongst contemporary Tsimshian shamans for several reasons:

- 1) insufficient funding available for travel and research
- 2) a lack of practising shamans, or at least publically practising shamans, with whom to speak
- 3) insufficient time available to develop the extensive community contacts and relationships necessary to determine the validity of, or compensate for (2).

However, I do not believe that the quality of this thesis is compromised in any significant way by the lack of fieldwork amongst contemporary Tsimshian peoples, as it examines materials, practices and beliefs of an historical nature. Culture is not static, and the Tsimshian peoples have endured or enjoyed extensive culture change within just a very few generations. The way they choose to live now is markedly different in significant ways (particularly in the areas of medicine, religion and technology) than it was in the "pre-contact" and early historic times relevant here. Furthermore, most of their traditional artifacts, especially those of a ritual or ceremonial nature, were lost to tourists and "curios" collectors, sacrificed to the religious zeal of missionaries, confiscated by the courts, or sold to museums, leaving very little on site for contemporary Tsimshian to be familiar with. Thus, they would be relying for their knowledge on much the same sources as I used.

It is true that Tsimshian people would have access through transmitted tradition, family and personal memory, and life experiences to knowledge unavailable to me. It is possible that this knowledge would bring a new or better understanding to this material than is presented here. However, since I do not have access to this knowledge, I can only hope that someone who does will decide to correct any errors or omissions, or provide new insights. Meanwhile, one does with what one has - and with the museums and the ethnographers, one has quite a bit.

It is my intention in the rest of this thesis to catch and provide a glimpse of the world and practices of these Tsimshian shamans from this new perspective - examining their regalia and their "tools of trade". One can learn much about a craftsperson's interests and skills by looking at his or her tools; one can learn much about the values and beliefs, the "heart and soul" of a people by looking at their artistic creations. For the Tsimshian both of these aspects apply, as their "tools" are often also beautiful works of art.

For me, it is axiomatic that the material culture created by or for people in general and shamans in particular is an indicator or reflection of the way they conceived of and patterned reality and their place in it, and also a trigger for the continuing patterning of such reality in human consciousness.² This perspective draws for its theoretical basis on

² Although the main created reality that a shaman's artifact might reinforce would be that of the shaman or the patient or other members of the culture, Cove's report (1987) of "experiencing" the reality of Tsimshian myths after extensive meditation on an artifact modelled after a Tsimshian shaman's mirror, indicates that the triggering effect is not so constrained.

current knowledge of states of consciousness, particularly the biogenetic structuralism paradigm developed by Laughlin et al.³

Accordingly, an examination of the material culture of Tsimshian shamans should help us better to understand the shamanic perspective - how they saw their universe and how they chose, and managed, to function within it. Although my personal approach to and understanding of the data was strongly influenced by the states of consciousness paradigmatic perspective, my analysis will attempt to be from an emic perspective (although with the focus of that perspective as well bent towards "consciousness" explorations).

Within this framework, I have searched for evidence of the pan-cultural category of beliefs and actions known to us as "shamanism", as represented through material culture. I chose to do this exploration within one particular culture, the Tsimshian, as it is both exceptionally rich and exceptionally well documented. However, even given these conditions, this exploration was not simple, for the Tsimshian have a complex culture. This complexity brought me face-to-face with one of the difficulties inherent in anthropology - dealing with problematic classifications and concepts.

³ See Winkelman (1994) for an exploration of the meaning of the term "consciousness" utilizing this particular paradigm. For a quick, comprehensive updating on altered states of consciousness theories, see Price-Williams and Hughes (1994).

The first problematic concept to be dealt with is central: that of "shaman" and "shamanic". Key questions, of course, are: "What is a 'shaman'? What does a shaman do? What does a shaman not do?" Stimulated largely by Eliade's (1964) classic work, one of the first to treat the subject of shamanism seriously, there is now a vast literature attempting to answer those questions.⁴

A brief general etic response might be that shamans are people who have mastered abilities to enter and control other states of consciousness and thereby access knowledge or effect actions not possible in a state of ordinary waking consciousness. A brief general emic response might be that shamans are people who have been gifted or chosen by the spirits to act as powerful intermediaries between their realms of existence and the everyday world of humans.

Regardless of which stance one takes, several points are clear, and form what I believe to be a pan-cultural core for the concept of "shaman". Shamans are considered to be non-ordinary people, people with extra-ordinary abilities, people with the awesome power to manipulate the forces of life and death. Shamans are valued for their abilities to look across time into the past or the future; to ensure a sufficient abundance of foodstuffs (particularly by their abilities to call game and to influence the weather); to bring good fortune to one's own, and misfortune to one's enemies; to heal the injured, to cure the

⁴ For a concise review, and an excellent interpretation based largely on Jungian concepts, I recommend Sherlock's [1992] M.A. thesis on just this topic.

sick, to rescue and protect the lost (of body and/or of soul); to position or re-position an individual in both society and in the wider universe at a time of their transformation (birth, puberty, other rites of passage); to guide and ensure the proper transition of beings from a state of life into and perhaps through a state of death. These transitional or "life crisis" events loom large in human existence, and, in the hunting and gathering societies where most shamans are found, shamans are treasured for these abilities. But shamans are also feared for these same abilities - the power to heal provides the power to kill; the power to attract game is tied to the power to dispel it; the ability to save a people entails the ability to destroy them; the power to create balance in the universe is also the power to create chaos. Thus shamans exist in what Turner might call a liminal world, their nature always somewhat ambiguous.

This is particularly true for the Tsimshian shaman, for reasons that will be dealt with shortly when we examine the Tsimshian worldview. But whatever their worldview or cosmology, (which provide the models and the richness of symbols by which shamans and their communities pattern and explain their experiences), all shamans must learn to work in altered states of consciousness.

For many (but not all) shamans during their initiation experiences (and for some ⁵ throughout their practice), these states are experienced as being traumatic, approaching

⁵ This is particularly so for shamans from Siberia and the areas arching around the Bering Sea, including most of the Inuit and the Pacific coastal islands.

madness . This madness originally comes when the initiates, as they say, are first removed from this world and taken to the alternate worlds of the spirits, where they are challenged, consumed and re-formed by the spirits.

If they survive this encounter, if they survive personally experiencing the destruction or transformation of everything they believed to be true and real, including the nature of their own being, and if they have the power to overcome these destructive forces (envisioned as other powerful beings) and to create new form and meaning out of this chaos, they return to sanity, to the mundane world, with new knowledge of themselves and of the universe. With the assistance and guidance of the "supernatural allies" they developed, the new shamans must then learn how to control their minds so that they can safely enter and leave these states, summon the powers of their allies, and operate within these other realities, at will. Eliade (1964) has described this as mastering the "techniques of ecstasy"; Guédon (1984) refers to it as entering "controlled madness".

However it is envisaged, it has as its main defining feature a fundamental "change of mind" (Halpin 1984.), an alteration of the shaman's state of consciousness. This alteration allows the shaman to experience other realms of reality; within those realms, the form and details of which are largely patterned by the shaman's native culture, the shaman is no longer bound by the limitations of the ordinary human condition, and can thus transcend time, space and form. With these capabilities, augmented by the powers of the "supernatural aides", anything is possible for the shaman. This potential is necessary since,

to negotiate with beings of power in other forms (eg game animals, predators), or from other realms (eg ghosts), or to find the cause of illness (all illnesses having some "invisible" spiritual aspect which the shaman must come to "see" and alter), or to locate a lost soul or even a lost body, the shaman must be able to do what is impossible for humans in their ordinary state to do (Guédon 1984).

For some shamans, for example the Dene (Ridington 1988; Guédon 1984), most shamanising is done in the state we call "dreaming", entered through another state we call "sleep". For many other shamans, however, a variety of states of consciousness are used, and they have developed a variety of what we call trance induction techniques to achieve these states. These techniques often include physiological "drivers", so called because they have a direct, predictable and profound effect on the human nervous system⁶. Such drivers include: intense light (especially flickering); intense noise (particularly with a steady rhythm); repetitive movements; monotonous aural or visual inputs; sensory deprivation. Physiological stress also predictably drives one into an altered state of consciousness: intense heat or cold (particularly, even exclusively, of the head); deprivation of food or water; oxygen deprivation; muscular exhaustion. Applied or ingested chemicals, of course, can also be effectively used to alter one's state of consciousness: psychotropic plants (the solanaceous family; peyote; some mushrooms; several cacti types; hemp [cannabis]; tobacco; cocoa; coca) or their extracts (ayahuasca; San Pedro; opium and its derivatives;

⁶. Please see Laughlin (1990) for a complete description of the nature of these drivers and their physiological and neurological effects. Bourguignon (1973) and Tart (1972) also discuss the production and characteristics of altered states of consciousness (ASC).

caffeine), or the results of botanical infestation or biochemical degradations (ergots: alcohols).

To the best of our knowledge, and with the exception of tobacco which was chewed (but possibly by the general populace rather than ceremonially), psychotropic plants or other chemicals were not used by the Tsimshian. Unlike their counterparts in the southern parts of the continent, even alcohol seems not to have been used in shamanic practice, despite its widespread non-ceremonial use and abuse after its introduction by traders. So Tsimshian shamans must have depended on other techniques to alter their states of consciousness.

The preceding general discussion of shamanism hints at other areas in which to search for indications that Tsimshian shamans were interested in producing and working in altered states of consciousness - the presence and use of drivers. The ethnographic record of the personal experiences of Tsimshian shamans leaves no doubt that repeated and profound altered states of consciousness (including descriptions of what we now more generally call out-of-body experiences, and some experiences approaching possession) were a central characteristic of their early "shamanic contact" experiences. But the descriptions of the later workings of experienced shamans seem to be of a somewhat different nature, primarily by being fully under the control of the shaman. Nevertheless, altered states of consciousness are clearly indicated, both in the shamans' descriptions, and as evidenced

through their rituals, which were replete with physiological drivers of sound, light, motion, breathing, and psychological "triggers" - songs and shamanic paraphernalia.

It is my contention that all Tsimshian shamanic work was done utilizing altered states of consciousness, and that all their paraphernalia contributed in some way to the achievement of the desired state or to accomplish an action within it. It is for this reason that the study of their material culture and its documentation should be most informative. And it is this exploration which forms the body of this paper.

METHODOLOGY

Beginning: Storybooks and Castles

Taking a literal interpretation of Husserl's (1977) admonition to "return to the things themselves" when searching for knowledge, I chose to approach the study of shamanism amongst the Tsimshian by studying the artifacts (and their associated documentation) held in some Canadian museums.

As stated in the introduction, I believe that the tools, goods and toys - the artifacts - that people produce are a reflection of their perceptions of reality (as they know it to be, or wish it to be) and an indicator of how they interact with that reality. Therefore, one way to approach an understanding of another's reality is through a study of their artifacts. Accordingly, researching the material culture of the Tsimshian shamans would seem an effective means of gaining some insight into their perceptions, their realities, and how they interacted with those realities - how they did those things that, as shamans, they were expected to do.

The interpretation, analysis and understanding of both these artifacts and of the Tsimshian culture generally was informed by published archaeological and ethnographic works, including Tsimshian mythologies and House histories; by missionary, trader and tourist accounts; by the reports and works of artists; by analyses of art historians, and by the

unpublished but immensely valuable field and working notes of the anthropologists Marius Barbeau and William Beynon held in the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) archives. Photographs in the archives of both the CMC and the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) not only provided data regarding the artifacts but enriched my mental picture of the world of the Tsimshian, a world I have not yet visited, even today.

Significantly, the available literature indicated that there were specific artifacts used only by shamans, and these artifacts were seen in some way to possess or conduct or open into supernatural powers, as all but the shaman (or assistants) were proscribed from handling them. Thus, I had a clearly designated and separate category of artifacts upon which to base my studies. I feared that, because of the proscriptions around handling or possessing them, there would be very few shamanic artifacts available for examination. There were, however, hundreds of them in the collections, for reasons I will speculate upon later. Additionally, the literature indicated that certain types of artifacts - rattles, crowns, soul-catchers - seemed to be standard equipment for all Tsimshian shamans. I hoped to determine why that might be. I also hoped that reading details of the collection procedures would give me more information about actual historically existing shamans; there are a few accounts, but they are quite limited. Finally, I hoped that by turning to the actual artifacts as well as the primary data I could eliminate the ambiguities around classification of artifacts as shamanic, or even Tsimshian, that I had encountered in the literature.

A large and very beautiful collection is held by the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC), Hull and this is where I did most of my "field" research. I was also able to examine the full shamanic collections of the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia (MOA) and the Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria (RBCM), and briefly view the public displays at the Vancouver Museum (VM). I was also able to examine a special shamanic collection made by Dr. Marius Barbeau for the Academy of Medicine, now owned by the Canadian Museum for Health and Medicine (CMHM), and presently on loan to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Toronto. Excluded from this study (for purely financial/logistical reasons) were the smaller collections held in other Canadian museums, the Tsimshian collections presently held in foreign countries, the artifacts for public display currently held by the Tsimshian themselves, and any private collections.

Doing research on catalogued artifacts in museum collections and on primary documentation (fieldnotes, reports etc.) held in archives would seem to be a straightforward, uncomplicated and precise route to knowledge (or at least to substantive information). It is not. In fact, it proved to be the opposite.

Since the problems and shortcomings inherent in this form of research are directly relevant to the value of the information obtained, and this information is the basis of my thesis, I will discuss these difficulties in some detail. They include those common to almost all anthropological research: the motivations, knowledge and skills of one's

informants; the accuracy of translations; the validity of interpretations; the precision and thoroughness of records-keeping; the motivations, knowledge and skills of one's editors. They also include problems specific to the study of the Tsimshian themselves, namely attempts of varying success to understand their complicated world-view, and dealing with the multiple interweavings of realities encompassed by the emic category of HALAIT (an ambiguous designation of the presence of power, applied to beings, artifacts and processes). The latter proved to be the most significant problem relative to the study of Tsimshian shamanic artifacts.

Thickets and Thorns: Encountering "The Data"

I quickly came to discover how unreliable classifications and attributions from "primary data" can be: many articles in the museum collections did not appear to be Tsimshian, but were so classified; other articles were attributed to other groups but were probably Tsimshian. The same problems occurred with the attribution of function to an object as had occurred with its origin; the designation of "shamanic" for an article rapidly came to loose significance.

There are several reasons for these problems in classification and attribution, most of which cannot presently be overcome:

- extensive trading and gift-giving amongst all the coastal groups resulting in wide dispersion of one group's artifacts, style or technique (e.g., the Haida supposedly carved for trade many or most of the highly prized mountain goat horn spoons; the same applies to the Nisga'as' classic raven rattles)
- the contracting out of commissions for carved articles to highly esteemed "foreign" artists by those of high status in any House
- generally totally inadequate (limited, missing or wrong) provenance data for most artifacts
- the variance in practice of attributing an article to a culture group based on where it was collected, where it was used, or where it was made

- sloppy work, or lack of serious interest, on the part of some collectors (especially, but not exclusively, private ones)
- deliberate falsification of data (to enhance an object's monetary value) by vendors
- deliberate misrepresentation or inadvertent misunderstanding of Native beliefs and practices
- "misappropriation" of an artifact somewhere in its history, with the resultant loss or falsification of data
- carelessness, lack of sufficient cultural expertise, or lack of time to do detailed background research on the part of cataloguers
- articles (or their accompanying information) "gone missing" from a museum collection due to degradation, damage, loss, theft or trade (and now re-appropriation)
- lack of sufficient knowledge of some of their own traditional styles, customs and practices for proper identification by indigenous groups (both historically and currently)
- the unfortunate tendency for the sources of the artifacts (purchases or donations) in the museum collections to be descendants or distant relatives of the person who originally obtained (for a tourist or non-commissioned collector), or made/used (for a Native source) the artifact; such source frequently had little knowledge of and/or interest in, the origin and history of the artifact.

Nevertheless, despite all these difficulties, the collections are still priceless for their research value. It was most unfortunate that in the CHIN system (the computerized listing

of artifacts now commonly used by museums), "shamanic" was not a designated field. This meant that a quick search through computer records for shamanic artifacts in collections was not possible - some were designated as shamanic, but most were designated as "charm", "figure", "headdress", "necklace", "cane", "drum" etc - mixed in with similar articles that were not at all shamanic.

Ultimately, I found that an artifact-by-artifact search (looking first at the cataloguing cards, then at the laser disc files, then perhaps at the artifact itself, then at the supporting documentation) proved necessary - although this meant looking at data for almost 3000 individual items at the CMC alone.

Although time-consuming, I found this approach had an added advantage: continuing such breadth of research through the CMC collection, combined with limited exploration of non-anthropological data (e.g. Tsimshian dictionaries) and re-reading of some Tsimshian myths, helped me to slowly develop a fuller, more complex model of traditional Tsimshian cosmology, social structure and life-ways. This new base model then provided me with a more precise and profound understanding of the information presented in the more significant ethnographic works, creating an even better model from which I could re-examine CMC artifacts, study other collections, and begin delving into the archives.

Thus a cycle was established wherein the more literature I read, the better grasp I had of the complexities of the Tsimshian world, and the meanings of/within the artifacts, and the

more I questioned their documentation; the more I studied the artifacts and their documentation, and especially the far more detailed information in the archives, the better I could judge the probable accuracy of the published literature. Thus, although there was no quick and easy way to determine whether or not any particular object was part of the shamans' material culture, or even which ethnographic data was assuredly about shamanism⁷, it was possible to develop a *sense* for what was and was not shamanic.

This type of cycle is, of course, typical of the research process, and is unending. One can always come across some new data that will re-inform (perhaps drastically) one's understanding of the project at hand. But one cannot refuse to make a statement until all is known - otherwise we would all be mute! So I have chosen this level of my competence for a speaking platform. From the understanding I now have, I say: "There is a lot of confusion, misunderstanding and even misrepresentation surrounding the Tsimshian shaman, but not as much as there has been. I hope to reduce it a bit more."

⁷ Many missionary and early ethnographic descriptions, including informant interviews, which at first appeared to be shamanic, were in fact about other HALAIT practices. Those later ethnographic works which relied on the published secondary analyses of the Tsimshian by the early ethnographers (rather than on their primary data sets) tended to be unreliable for the resultant conflation of all the HALAIT categories. Those ethnographers, working mainly within the last two decades, who have combed both the primary and the secondary sources to support their own form of analyses, proved the most useful for re-delineating the HALAIT categories.

There was also a tendency for some informants to incorporate or confuse aspects of the adventures of shamans as relayed in myths, and stories of other associated figures of legendary status such as Kitwankool Jim and Bini the Prophet) with the activities of the more recent shamans of high renown. This was particularly difficult to detect, and only became evident after reading multiple versions of the same event, and developing a sensitivity towards "story" forms of speech.

Drawbridges and Gateways: Helpful Published Works

Some of the early ethnographers (eg Boas, Garfield, Barbeau, Beynon, Emmons) did meticulous research, and seemed, for the most part, to have a good grasp of the complexities of the Tsimshian culture both as it was at that time and often as it was represented to have been generations before. Unfortunately for this thesis, none of them had the study of shamanism as their primary interest. Compared to other HALAIT activities such as potlatches, with their elegant speeches, extravagant displays of material possessions, and spirit dramatizations, or to the dramatic demonstrations of the then-infamous Secret Societies, shamanic healings were relatively long and unexciting, as well as being, on the surface, uninforming with regard to the economic system, the political system, or the kinship system - or any other "system" then of interest. At that time, (the early half of this century), the discipline of anthropology itself was generally dismissive of Native medical/religious practices; the term "shaman" didn't even come into common use until after Eliade's work in the 1960s, and shamans were often considered to simply be aberrant individuals with unstable personalities.

Although Tsimshian shamanism was not the sort of thing, in that environment, which caught the eye and held the attention of one searching for the "exotic" (such as Emmons), or grand theory diffusionists (such as Barbeau), in fact both Emmons and Barbeau did attend at least one shamanic healing ceremony each, which they recorded in detail, and

both collected shamanic regalia. Their primary data forms the backbone of this thesis. Barbeau's later publications mainly develop speculations from his analysis of this data, and are of much more limited value.

The anthropologists' contemporaries and/or predecessors, the missionaries, seemed either deliberately or inadvertently to have misunderstood most aspects of the culture. The missionaries were unfortunately both exceptionally vocal and exceptionally influential in their time, so that they had a disproportionate impact (with a strong Victorian bias) both on the general public's image of "their Indians" and on government policy of the times. They also, of course, had a very powerful and significant impact on the Tsimshian themselves. Of primary relevance to this thesis is the fact that the missionaries saw the shamans as "the devil incarnate" (Duncan in Murray 1985), their adversaries in the battle for control of the souls (and the minds and the resources) of "their" people. They deliberately did their best - with outstanding success (which we will discuss later) to destroy the practice and the practitioners of shamanism. Converts were encouraged to destroy all "heathen" regalia. This was usually burned, but sometimes was taken by the missionaries for their private collections, for sale, or as donations on behalf of the church.

The missionary Charles Harrison claimed (in Lillard 1984:175) :

"Perhaps the author's greatest triumph was the influence he attained over the SA-AG-GA KU-TE [a Haida shaman], and it was such that he abandoned his magical practices and handed over all of his charms and his favourite rattle that were fittingly deposited in the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford."

However biased in their outlook and reporting, and however destructive to traditional Tsimshian culture proved their behaviour, the missionaries were valuable sources of information. As they were frequently amongst the first "Whites" to intrude upon, or be invited by the Tsimshian into their villages, the missionaries saw and recorded the "traditional" practices and beliefs of the Tsimshian just around the beginning edge of their most massive and swift cultural changes. These traditions were certainly not "pre-contact" in any pure sense of the term. There had been contact of at least a limited extent with Euro-American sailors, whalers and fur traders (Russian, Spanish, British, American, French, Portuguese, Dutch) for multiple generations; the literature is full of speculation on possible contact with Asians, especially Japanese, Chinese and Hawaiian peoples, for many centuries - perhaps millennia - preceding written historical accounts. However, their practices and ceremonies were still largely a reflection of the *Tsimshian* view of the world and their place in it, informed by a timeless living history of words and deeds.

MacDonald's M.A. thesis (1985) provides an excellent review of the missionaries as collectors, as well as useful insights into Native behaviours and motivations. Unlike MacDonald, I did not look at any of the archival church documents or private writings of the missionaries, but I did read some of their published works, sometimes on the Tsimshian and sometimes on other Northwest Coast peoples (COLLISON, 1915; CROSBY, 1914). I also read several accounts by modern scholars describing these missionaries, analyzing their impact, and quoting extensively from their original writings (BOLT, 1992; LILLARD, 1984; MAUD, 1982; MURRAY, 1985). All of these proved

to be very useful for understanding the general lifeworld of the Tsimshian at that time; slightly less useful for understanding the practices of the shamans themselves, but very useful indeed for grasping the missionaries impression of, and depth of hatred for, the practice of shamanism. It is not possible to imagine a more vitriolic description of a person than that typically provided of a shaman by a missionary!

As an example: "The medicine-man, or witch-doctor, that demon among heathen peoples... is the representative of the grossest features of paganism. He has wielded, and still wields to some extent, a marvellous influence over the people, because of the supernatural powers which they believe him to possess...[he] is able, so he claims, to heal the sick and raise the dead and look into the future, and even cause the death of many who may oppose his magical powers. The tyranny of this wretched despot and the awful absurdity of his miserable pretensions, together with his fiendishly bitter opposition to everything that is good, leads him to be feared and hated."(Crosby in Lillard 1984:107).

The more practically useful part then follows: a detailed description of a shaman at work during a healing ceremony.

The writings of Boas were tremendously valuable for the vast amount of data he collected on the Tsimshian, particularly the songs and myths or narratives. Many narratives were the living histories of the Houses, and were House property. The rights to speak such myths were restricted to one individual, who obtained them by inheritance, and, although others might know them, having heard them recited at ceremonial occasions in the past, it was very improper for any but their owner to speak them. There were other myths and legends that were generally known and could be told by anyone. It was mostly these

myths that Boas was provided by his assistant Henry Tate⁸. Since Tate was not a Tsimshian of noble status, it is probably that there was much information to which he was not privy, and many understandings which he did not share. It has also been noted⁹ that Tate did not take any notes when talking with his informants, but reconstructed the interviews later, in private - and wrote them first in English, then translated the English version into Tsimshian, forwarding both to Boas. Accordingly, there was much room for error and omission in these records.

The same restrictions applied to songs, which were also House property - all, that is, except the shamans' songs, which were based on each individual shaman's personal experiences, and were sung in a different manner entirely (to be discussed further on). Every major event in the life of an individual as a member of a House (birth, initiation, death - with the birth song being also the death dirge) had an associated song; every House myth had an associated song; every NAXNOX performance involved song and dance; even the HALDOWGET rituals around the grave reportedly involved the singing

⁸ Tate in fact provided Boas with the bulk of the information he used; Beynon also did some work for Boas, and Boas himself did a limited amount of fieldwork. (See Halpin 1994 for a quick summary, Maud 1982 for a detailed description of ethnographers and collectors).

Cove notes (1987:16) that the use of commonly known myths suited Boas' purposes: "His concern with tribal autobiography leads him to focus on commonly known narratives since they would be the most representative."

⁹ Contemporaries, such as Barbeau, were critical of his work for such reasons. Halpin (1994) provides an updated version of such criticism, of both Tate and Boas, and adds a new perspective.

of "HALDOWGET songs" (BF.727.1). Boas fortunately published many of these songs - and some of those he published were shamanic. Barbeau too recorded and published many songs, including shaman's songs, perhaps the best known being Isaac Ten's songs (Barbeau 1958). I found these particular songs to be extremely helpful in understanding the experiences of a shaman while working in trance, because Tens himself discussed their meaning. Other shaman's songs were less useful because an explanation from the shaman was not presented - and the songs themselves have little intrinsic descriptive elaboration. One is left to extrapolate from the examples such as Tens onto other similar forms, to guess at experience and meaning. Examining the other songs (e.g. the songs of the SEMHALAIT) also helped clarify the difference between the shamans and the other HALAIT practitioners - the songs were very descriptive of their experiences.

The publications of Boas were also particularly useful for the work he did on the Kwakiutl (assisted by George Hunt), especially that detailing the nature, structure and performances of their secret societies. Equally valuable work along the same lines was later done by Viola Garfield. It is now generally accepted, as Boas first asserted, that the Tsimshian secret societies were most likely a development of those originated by the Heiltsuk [Bella Bella of the Wakashan family]. The Kwakiutl secret societies were also known as shamans societies, as shamans played a major role therein. This was not true for the Tsimshian - shamanism and secret society membership were quite distinct (although an individual could be both). However, because of the Kwakiutl model, secret society members and initiates became steadfastly the major category of HALAIT

practitioners to be confused with the shamans - both by Europeans and by non-initiated Natives themselves. The detailed descriptions provided by Boas of the rites and especially of the regalia used by the Kwakiutl proved to be the most helpful to me of all the literature in attempting to separate shamanic from non-shamanic regalia for the Tsimshian.

Publications about another group of people neighbouring the Tsimshian also proved extremely helpful both for providing another detailed model of shamanism with which to compare the Tsimshian, and for rich descriptions of a strikingly similar material culture. The people in question are the Tlingit, and the most outstanding work was that done by Frederica de Laguna (1960; 1972)

Although not particularly involved with shamanism, Fisher's work (1977) was especially helpful in putting Native/White relations throughout the period relevant to this thesis into clear historical context.

As far as general works on shamanism, the founding base was provided by Eliade's classic work (1964 trans.). Although his ideas on the "universal" nature of shamanism (especially travel through 3 distinct realms; shamanic death and dismemberment; the tree of life model) fathered a dynasty of faithful followers (eg Halifax, 1982; Nicholson, 1987), they have become somewhat outdated. His most valuable contribution (besides actually beginning the serious scholarly treatment of shamanism) remains the wealth of ethnographic data he presented.

Harner is perhaps the second most popularly known anthropologist who has done work of lasting value on shamanism, both general and ethnographically specific (Jivaro), and who has also established a whole dynasty of "neo-shamanic" followers. I found his (1973) work on hypnotism to be most intriguing, providing insights from a different perspective for the shaman's claim to be able to enter another's reality or dream and operate therein.

Peters (1982;1989) and Rogers (1982) provided interesting theories on symbolic healing, Van Baal (1971) useful discussions around the nature and function of symbols generally, and Ullman et al (1972) on the transmission of symbolic images in non-corporeal ways.

Personal insights into the meaning and practice of shamanism during present times were provided by Geyshick (1989). The power of drumming, and especially of the shaman's drum, were explored by Hart (1990).

Although not a published source, MacKinnon's (1979) M.A. thesis was also most useful. Shamanic artifacts themselves - specifically shaman's charms - were the focus of her research. She identified several styles of shaman's charms and advanced suggestions as to their significance. Her work both provided me with information and raised questions in my mind for further exploration.

With the focus drifting more towards material culture than shamanism, several authors provided exceptionally useful data. For ceremonial art, the various works (both for their

publications, their creations, and for their impact on both the Native and the academic communities) of Bill Holm and of Bill Reid were remarkable.

Extensive research, down to the smallest details, was presented by Hilary Stewart in her various publications on Northwest Coast material culture and technology. Her books on "Cedar" and "Artifacts" gave me practical information, from an archaeological perspective, on the actual working of most of the materials from which shamanic regalia were created (wood, bones, stones). Some of this information was not otherwise available, and much of it was difficult to find elsewhere. Although none dealt specifically with shamanism, I found her books to be extremely valuable for their straight-forward approach as well as for their richness of information from a unique "how to" perspective. Her superb skill as an illustrator enhanced her works greatly.

The contribution of Wilson Duff cannot go unrecognized. From his writings, he seems to have had the mind of a scientist and the soul of an artist, and focused both abilities on his Northwest Coast studies. His analyses not only stated the "obvious" with calm authority (which others of his time seemed hesitant to do) - for example, discussing the blatant (and subtle) sexual nature of many archaeological and contemporary artifacts. He also brought forward - revealed or speculated upon - that which was not so easily seen by other scholars: the hidden meanings, the underlying connections, the other rich universes of potential represented by these artifacts, alluded to in myth and ritual. His

explorations into these worlds of meaning are continued and enhanced by many of the present generation of Northwest Coast scholars.

The most fortuitous grouping of articles of prime importance to this thesis were assembled by Margaret Seguin (1984) in "The Tsimshian: Images of the Past, Views for the Present". Every article in that book informed my understanding in one way or another. However, special mention must be made of a few:

- MacDonald's article "The Epic of Nekt: The Archaeology of Metaphor" was particularly helpful in documenting the antiquity of the Tsimshian habitation, as well as the age and extensiveness of their trading networks via the "grease trails". He also challenged the generally held belief (which he expanded upon in 1987) that the Tsimshian did not have metal tools or weapons until after the arrival of European traders, pointing out that the earliest explorers found iron tools already in use by carvers, and metal artifacts were found which pre-date direct contact with Europeans.

I found extensive support for his viewpoint scattered throughout the Barbeau-Beynon files, and have come to believe that most of the artifacts within the shamanic collections were primarily carved using metal tools. (Details follow in the "artifacts" section).

- Seguin's proposals in "Lest There Be No Salmon" were helpful in modelling a Tsimshian world view - particularly where she takes Cove's idea of a cline in the "Real-ness" of beings and applies it also to a cline in the "Real-ness" of occasions; also for

raising the importance of the concept of the container, and how the Tsimshian viewed themselves as the container for the House.

- Halpin's articles were also useful in understanding more of the Tsimshian world view, particularly some of the fascinating insights presented in "Seeing in Stone". (Halpin's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, based on many of the same Barbeau-Beynon records as this thesis, was also both helpful and inspiring.)

- Shane's article "Power in their Hands: the Gitsonkt" presented information and raised interesting speculation on the nature and role of the carvers of sacred regalia.

- Undoubtedly the most helpful articles for this thesis are those by Guédon: "An Introduction to Tsimshian World View and Its Practitioners" and "Tsimshian Shamanic Images". Solidly grounded in linguistic analysis, extensive fieldwork and detailed artifactual knowledge, they presented a wealth of insightful information on emic views of reality, both for the Tsimshian generally and for the shamans in particular. They also provided a clear and coherent detangling of HALAIT concepts and categories.

Another book that handled many of these same issues, but added both a more phenomenological and a more theoretical perspective, was that of Cove (1987). His focus was on exploring and engaging the Tsimshian narrative corpus, supplemented by ethnographic work. All ethnographies are ultimately reflections of the author as much as

they are pictures of a culture. This ethnographic exploration was refreshingly open in that regard, helping us approximate experiencing the Tsimshian world as much through Cove-as-a-Tsimshian, and his interpretations of Tsimshian narratives, as through the words of the narratives themselves. In addition to its challenging approach, it was especially useful for delving into areas less covered by others, such as the nature and realms of ghosts and souls, and the non-healing practices of shamans (most notably the explorations of the possibilities of the "shaman's mirror"). I was also particularly intrigued by the patterns traced for the metaphors of "shiny" and "hard", and the particularly complex one of "skin" - all of which are highly informative in the shamanic context.

In the domain of theory, a general orientation was provided in the realms of perception and interpretation and the construction of mythologically patterned and performed realities by writers such as Husserl, Geertz and Turner, and even Levi-Strauss. The supremacy of the written word, as explored by writers such as Derrida, also became an issue when dealing with writings about a totally oral culture. The very nature of the meaning of "knowledge", and its modes of acquisition, was questioned and re-informed from another perspective as well: that of Dene philosophies as transmitted by Ridington and Guédon. Theories about representation, symbol and metaphor¹⁰ were explored for their possible contributions. But for the purposes of this paper, the most useful synthesis of the insights cleaned from the above, combined with my own bias towards the exploration of the

¹⁰ Particular thanks here go to Sharon Johnson, University of Ottawa, for her informed and challenging discussions on the nature and use of metaphor.

human mind via the discipline of neuroscience, was contained in the biogenetic structuralism paradigm proposed by Laughlin et al, particularly as illustrated in the article by MacDonald et al (1989), and detailed in the unpublished M.A. Thesis (1980) of Webber . The works of Hobson (1992), Tate (1972), Harner (1973) and Ullman et al (1972) served to reinforce many of the basic tenets of the biogenetic structuralism theory.

Hidden Treasures: Helpful Unpublished Works

The singularly most useful collection of unpublished documents proved to be the Barbeau-Beynon files. These files have been thoroughly researched by others, who then either published some of the information (Cove and MacDonald), or utilized and expanded upon this information for their own work (eg Cove; Duff; Guédon; Halpin; MacDonald; Shane). However useful and insightful these other works might have been, there is just no substitute for experiencing these files for oneself.

I have not read everything in these files: there are thousands of pages in dozens of storage boxes. I originally approached these files wisely - with a guide (Cove's 1985 detailed inventory), and a plan (look up all the shamanic information). But the fate of "best laid plans" struck: there was no specific category in the index for "shamanic"¹¹, so I had to read the whole thing, hunting for what appeared to be shamanic. I compiled a very long list of items to review, and gave them to the archivist, who fed them to me a few boxes at a time. I had allocated six week's worth of Monday afternoons (the only time I had available to go to the museum), and seriously believed I would have seen everything useful by then. Ha!

¹¹ A good indicator of how research interests can change: this 1985 inventory does not treat "shamanic" as a useful category for classification, yet the same author's 1987 publication is an exploration of "shamanic" within that same culture.

With time off for holidays, sickness, and just occasionally living a life, I have now spent more months than I had allocated weeks looking at these files. I am almost - but not quite - finished looking at everything I feel I must look at. I only wish I now had time to start over, and read everything I would like to look at - which basically, is everything therein.

The "files" themselves were Barbeau's working files, and reflected both his responsibilities as a civil servant and his personal and academic research interests (Cove, 1985:5). They comprised field notebooks (mostly by Beynon, as he did most of the fieldwork), manuscripts, scribbled research notes or personal memos on scraps of paper, letters, copies of articles by other authors of interest to Barbeau, assorted photographs (frequently not annotated), drawings (especially maps), partial drafts of research papers or publications, and occasionally entire reports. Each bit of paper was numbered and categorized by Cove for the index - a monumental, but worthy, task. It is to these numbers (BF.XXX.yy - Barbeau Files.file number.item number) that citations in this thesis refer.

Working through this labyrinth of data could be tiring and frustrating as well as rewarding. Barbeau's handwriting left much to be desired at the best of times; furthermore, he made many of his notes in shorthand. Fortunately, much of his work had been typewritten (my deepest thanks to the unknown person or persons who took on that chore). To compensate for margin notes, diagrams and simply "undecipherables" that did not survive the transposition experience, the best way to read these seemed to be a side-by-side comparison of original to typed copy. Occasionally this proved well worth the effort, as

words had been mis-transcribed, loosing the sense, or worse yet altering the sense, of the original.

William Beynon's fieldwork was, simply, superb. The fact that he was himself Tsimshian,¹² and the holder of a highly ranked name ("Gusgain" BF.451.2), allowed him access not only to observe, but to be an invited participant in ceremonies and situations to which "outsiders" such as Barbeau would have been unwelcome, and to do so with a level of understanding that can come only from training to be a participant in a ceremony, an understanding that would not have been possible for a "commoner" such as Hunt. Beynon also was fortunate to be married to a Nisga'a woman, so he had an "insiders" access (and obligations) to her people as well.

Beynon's value as a scholar came not only from the fact that he was a Native ethnographer. He was raised outside of traditional Tsimshian culture, and it was not until he was an adult that he returned¹³ - so he had also the outsiders awareness of unique cultural beliefs and practices, explored with an adult's sense of freshness. Most of all, Beynon had a gift for professional ethnographic reporting, with a style that made (for the most part) clear his own involvement in whatever activity was going on, yet not making his reports egocentric. He occasionally added personal comments (often explanations of

¹² His father was a Welsh immigrant, his mother was a Coast Tsimshian from Port Simpson - and the Tsimshian are a matrilineal society.

¹³ He notes in BF.451.2 that it was "in 1913 when I first came to reside permanently among my People" at Port Simpson.

translations) to expand upon an interview, but does not seem to have censored others' opinions. Nor did he hesitate to present different, sometimes even opposing, versions of an occurrence, or a narrative. Finally, although he seemed to take his work very seriously, he did not seem to take himself too seriously.

I came to have more faith in Beynon's reports, comments and translations than in any other Northwest Coast scholar. Sadly, many of Beynon's notebooks had been cut apart by Barbeau, with the pages re-assembled by topic (Beynon kept the little hard-bound books in chronological order). Although this cut-and-paste approach might have been the most useful for Barbeau at the time (this was well before the time of photocopiers or scanners), it was most unfortunate for others, as some irreplaceable information (sources, dates, etc.) was sometimes lost in the shuffle. Furthermore, the hand of Barbeau (who was Beynon's employer) was clearly visible in the notebooks, wielding the editor's big red crayon. Beynon's own editorial hand was also seen occasionally, altering slightly some of the translations he made¹⁴. It was interesting to see how subtle changes could make a distinct difference in the nature, quality or tone of the information conveyed. It was especially interesting to compare Barbeau's original notes on the conversation with the shaman Isaac Tens (where Beynon acted as translator) with the published version (Barbeau, 1958) of that same story.

¹⁴ Although many, perhaps most, of the interviews Beynon conducted were carried out in Tsimshian rather than English, he normally recorded only the English version, with significant terms noted in Tsimshian.

I quickly discovered in my readings that some of the most useful information could be found as little bits, side comments or noteworthy observations, included in articles (that simple curiosity lead me to read in the first place) that had nothing at all to do with shamanism. Since there remains so much that I have not yet seen, I of course wonder what other treasures remain to be found. Sadly, they will have to wait for another researcher, or another time.

Riddles and Mysteries: The HALAIT

Even upon cursory examination of the ethnographic literature, it was apparent that there existed much confusion around the Tsimshian term HALAIT. This word expressed a polysemic concept relating to the nature and manipulation of "supernatural" power, and was applied equally to chiefs, shamans, and secret society initiates ("dancers"), as well as other "gifted" individuals - HALAIT being simultaneously the individual and the gift and its display (Guédon 1984). An excellent description and clarification of the various HALAITS is given in Guédon's and Halpin's articles in Seguin 1984. Cove's entire book (1987) also addresses these categories. Very briefly there were:

- . the SEMHALAIT (as chiefly welcomer, NAXNOX mediator, conduit for the powers of heaven - with specific regalia).
- . the four secret societies of dancers, translated as the "dancers" and the "fire throwers" or "dog eaters" (open to all), the "destroyers" (open to chiefs and, according to Beynon, to select high ranking advisors) and the "cannibals" (open only to chiefs). These are the categories most often mistaken as shamans. Each society had multiple levels of initiation (which was expensive and time-consuming to achieve), and each level had associated paraphernalia (special cedar bark head rings, neck rings and arm/ankle rings). The NAXNOX involved with each society also each had unique-sounding whistles, signifying the presence of the NAXNOX at that site.

. the WIHALAIT - the senior initiating members of the secret societies - also with specific regalia identifying their level of rank to other initiates.

. NAXNOX performers (wearing masks and other regalia and using props appropriate to the NAXNOX being demonstrated)

. the SWANASU HALAIT - healing shamans (specific regalia - to be discussed)

. the LAXELTH - shamans who acted as seers or astrologers (regalia unknown)

(Cove 1987:225; Beynon BF.116.4).

. the HALDOWGET - witches who manipulated, but did not control, power (regalia, beyond ashes, body parts and "witch boxes", unknown).

. the GITSONKT¹⁵ - the carvers and advisors (Beynon BF.679.6) for ceremonies, who summoned power through their carvings and directed it through their technology (no specific regalia known).

Unfortunately, HALAIT was (and still is) most usually translated as "shaman", although more often than not, this was incorrect.¹⁶ As mentioned previously, shamans

¹⁵ Beynon says of the "GIDZONTK" (BF.679.6): "GITZON = in rear (the adding of the "t" makes it a definite group or secret group) who were the advisors and the makers of all plans of the chief. To this day any group who act as a committee on any of the various groups are known as GITZONTK group". Membership in this group was hereditary, with apprenticeship beginning in childhood. The members of the GITSONKT are generally written of as being only carvers, and only males, (see for example, Shane 1984), but many of Beynon's informants speak of them as doing much more than carving. Herber Clifton told Beynon (BF.122.2) in 1952 that "These were the most powerful advisors of the chief as well as the real originators and planners of the various HALAIT initiations and also picked the initiates. They also could and did control life and death or the power of it".

I also suspect (since women were initiated into all the societies, and therefore were privy to all the "secrets" of initiates, and since women were also chiefs, who would have been fully informed of what was to happen to their initiates), that women were also members of the GITZONTK, and that the male reference is yet another example (many are cited in the artifact descriptions) of the ethnographers habit of referring to all people as male. Whether women were also carvers is uncertain: it is generally accepted that women did not carve, yet there is a rattle cited later in this paper that was described as being carved by a particular woman, and there is a mask (VII-C-143) in the CMC collection with the notation "made [before 1903] by a woman carver TSIXSGA.X". This is a question to be explored in upcoming research.

¹⁶ For example, within the same book (Seguin 1984) in which Guédon provides her very detailed descriptions of the multiple meanings of the term HALAIT, another writer makes the blithe statement, "He had been initiated as a HALAIT (shaman) as a young man" (Campbell, 1984:7), and goes on to give some details of the initiation, which is most surely for a non-shamanic HALAIT. The person in question, Ambrose Robinson of
(continued...)

"SWANASU", "SWANASKU HALAIT" (Barbeau 1958:39), or "HALAIDM SWANASKXW" (plural, Guédon 1984:174) for healing shamans, and LAXELTH (Cove 1987:225; Beynon BF.116.4) for seers and some astrologers, were widely and consistently confused with the secret society initiates. In general conversation, each was simply referred to as HALAIT.

Furthermore, most shamans would also have been members of at least one secret society before they became shamans. Strong pressure was applied by the WIHALAIT to all "proper" Tsimshian to join, and first initiations typically began when one was a young child (see Cove 1987, and BF.879.3 for details). If the shaman were also of high rank, and then did not become a shaman until well into adulthood (which seemed to have been a pattern, especially for women), he or she might have been an initiated member of several secret societies in addition to, or prior to, being a shaman.

As if this was not confusing enough, there were the NAXNOX names (NAXNOX being roughly translatable as "supernatural power"/"supernatural being"). Four specific NAXNOX were the basis of power of the secret societies; specific encounters with other NAXNOX powers were also the origin of the inheritable House crests; the actions of the

¹⁶(...continued)

Hartley Bay, was a chief, so this could have referred to some of his preparations to assume chieftainship, or to assume a NAXNOX, or (most likely) to one of his (probably multiple) initiations into a secret society. Mr. Robinson might, indeed, also have been a shaman - although this initiation is not shamanic. A perfect example of the possibilities for confusion around who was, and was not, a shaman!

SEMHALAIT introduced House members to diffuse NAXNOX "sky" powers (Guédon 1984:156); chiefs (SEMOOGET) were expected to quest for NAXNOX power before officially assuming house leadership (Cove 1987); NAXNOX who imposed themselves on individuals (usually in the form of some personal abnormality), and were successfully defeated or incorporated (through feasting), became inheritable as NAXNOX names (Cove 1987); NAXNOX were the aides encountered by shamans, whether as mythical/supernatural or as "Real" beings (see Cove 1987 for a discussion of "realness" in all forms of being, and Seguin 1984 for a discussion of "realness" in all forms of activity).¹⁷

I had especially hoped that looking at the Tsimshian collections (including artifacts, photographs, cataloguing cards, collector's notes, acquisition notes, and archival field notes) would quickly clarify and eliminate this confusion and the resultant errors. Unfortunately, the opposite proved to be the case. Not only was there confusion amongst the ethnographers and collectors, there was also some confusion amongst many of the Tsimshian informants! This was especially the case when persons who had never been secret society members or shamans would attempt to give details of the initiations or other non-public activities of either group. Part of this confusion stemmed, no doubt, from

¹⁷ "Real" is not used here in its normal sense, implying such opposites as "false", "fake", "imaginary" or "unreal". It means instead a level of development in the perfection of the characteristics attributed to that particular form of being. Similar ideas are conveyed in such expressions as "the enlightened mind"; "the fully self-realized individual"; "the ultimate performance"; or "the quintessential blueberry" - the very most and best that a blueberry can be.

deliberately engineered variance in the levels of knowledge within the culture itself - as with most occult groups, non-initiates were not provided with full details on practices or beliefs or esoteric meanings, nor would lower-level initiates have the full information and understanding available to more advanced initiates.¹⁸

The result of this confusion combined with the unfortunate tendency for many of the informants to be descendants of shamans, rather than shamans themselves (most people having converted to Christianity, which prohibited the practice of shamanism). The result was that, even when records were kept of statements from artifact sources (which frequently did not occur), they tended to be along the lines of "my great grandfather, chief KNOW'SHISNAME, was a powerful man, a great SWANASU, and these are the articles he used as a HALAIT": which might, but probably did not, mean any specific article was ever used in shamanic practice!

It eventually became clear to me that confusion and misunderstanding were inevitable, both for informants and researchers. Tsimshian (emic) categories of "SEMOOGET-SWANASU-HALDOWGET-HALAIT-NAXNOX" cross-cut etic categories of "chief-shaman-witch-power-powerful being". Emic categories displayed the characteristics of what Halpin (1994) calls (regarding NAXNOX descriptions and crest representations)

¹⁸ Beynon, for instance, notes how people "versed in the signs" could tell which persons were members of which Secret Societies by the way they danced in public performances, by where they placed their right hand and their left arm while dancing. Those not so versed, would not get this message.

"essential ambiguity",¹⁹ and Laughlin (1993:31) has termed "fuzziness" - having elastic boundaries with degrees of inclusion, partly because they were grounded in "a range of experiences, the memories of any and all of which may contribute to the meaning of the term in each participant's mind". Tsimshian concepts of spirit and power, natural and supernatural, did not correspond to our etic distinctions (Seguin, Guédon, Halpin 1984; Cove 1987). Furthermore, the words chosen for translation and elaboration (eg soul; ghost; sorcerer; heaven; spell; curse; spirit; evil; possessed; gods; demons; reincarnation; summoning, directing or throwing supernatural power) added to the confusion by their relationship to Christian beliefs and attitudes: not only were the English words poor and limited translations of Tsimshian concepts, they were also loaded with Christian moral and ethical entailments which I believe were quite inappropriate to traditional Tsimshian beliefs.

These problems were further compounded by four factors present since the commencement of the fur trade (and the advent of the "curios" collectors - and manufacturers) or the influx of miners and European settlers (which coincided with the

¹⁹ Halpin (1994:6) says the of the NAXNOX and crest art: "[it] is ambiguous, imaginative, unstable, poetic, endlessly variable, changing, and productive of the new, the unexpected" and stresses "the relationship between crest art and the oral tradition that still gives it meaning". Laughlin (1993:18) notes that "fuzziness... refers to the imprecision, ambiguity, relativity, vagueness, elasticity, incompleteness, and possibility that are qualities of categories and propositions in much of human thought". Laughlin then postulates that "the more a state of consciousness is oriented on direct experience, the more fuzzy will be the categories informing experience" (p23). Since it is the direct experience of NAXNOX that leads to the production of crests, they should have to be ambiguous - and they are.

beginning of ethnographic work). These were: the 70-year legal prohibition of the potlatch; the decimation of the population by epidemics; the strong British authoritarian parochial nature of the education system, and the extensive conversion of the remaining population from traditional spiritual beliefs to Christianity. These represented massive cultural loss, not only of persons, traditions and rituals, but of full knowledge of words and meanings for what remained.

Without the words to express a concept, the rituals to enact it, or a life-world to sustain it, the concept, like an organism, must change or die. Most of the available information came from this time of concept "mutation". Between the original knowledge that was lost, and the remaining terms which have changed to some unknown degree, whole realms of meaning might have vanished from the Tsimshian world. Thus the problem becomes partly to deduce (perhaps even guess at?) what such terms (HALAIT, NAXNOX, SWANASU / power, spirit, shaman) might have originally meant/ could otherwise have been translated. This was especially true for the intriguing twists of thought in Tsimshian indicated by the use of one word to express what in English are multiple (and frequently opposing) concepts: song/breath/spirit; vision/trance/dream; to make or be sick/to cure or be well; to bewitch/to heal; cradle/burial box; birth song/death dirge (Beynon n.d.). Once translation (of language and belief system) has split these unitary concepts asunder, how can we re-create the world they represented?

Attempting to attain this understanding could involve linguistic analysis, reexamining remembered usages, synonyms and antonyms, metaphorical associations and tracing recent developments in changes of meaning. Although some researchers, for example Guédon, Dunn, Halpin and Seguin are doing work in these areas, only a small beginning has actually been made, particularly in the "spiritual" realm. It is certainly a task well beyond my abilities to deal with, and rests outside the scope of this paper.

My original intention, to clearly distinguish the shamanic from the other HALAIT categories of SIMOOGET/NAXNOX/WIHALAIT/HALDOWGET

²⁰ by eliminating "mistakes" in descriptions and classifications, has thus not been possible to the extent I originally hoped. However, at least some clarification has been possible, and will be presented next, in the section on the SWANASU and their artifacts.

²⁰ I agree with Guédon (1984) that HALDOWGET are not properly HALAIT in Tsimshian terms, but include them here because of the confusion of "witch" and especially "sorcerer" with shamans.

FINDINGS

TRANSFORMING WORLDS: THE TSIMSHIAN PERSPECTIVE

I will not go into detail on the rich and complex Tsimshian world view; for that the reader is referred to the excellent books by Cove (1987) and Seguin (1984). There are, however, a few concepts that must be mentioned, and aspects that must be dealt with, to more fully grasp the nature and meaning of the shaman's artifacts, and even of the shaman. Thus, relevant highlights of the Tsimshian view of the nature of the world and the position of humans within it will be presented.

The Tsimshian believed that the world and everything in it had the power to be constantly transforming and transformative. Myths tell how the various actions of the main culture figure TXEMSAM, the Raven, the trickster, brought the world into its present state (BF.445.5) - and Raven is still here, so the future is always uncertain, pregnant with possibilities. One of the key features of TXEMSAM (besides his amoral character and his total unpredictability) was his ability to transform into any form he wished. Like other NAXNOX, TXEMSAM could effect this transformation simply by thinking it so; other levels of Real beings (see Cove 1987), both human and animal, needed some form of material assistance - usually donning or removing a skin - to do so.

There seem to be two aspects to the Tsimshian view of the world. On the one hand, they evinced a belief in parallel universes. For example, the world of ghosts, in which the dead lived another life before (in the proper turn of things) being reincarnated back into this world, appeared to be a mirror image (the same but everything reversed) of this world (Cove 1987). There were boundaries between these universes, which twisted around and within and without each other. Only certain Real human beings (SIMHALAIT, SHAMANS; see Guédon 1984) could cross into these other universes; the NAXNOX could traverse them at will (and had particular fondness for inhabiting individualized geographic areas known as SPANAXNOX)²¹. One of the main responsibilities of the shaman appears to have been controlling passage across these boundaries, maintaining the proper balance between them and ensuring that other universes did not overwhelm this one. The concept of parallel universes was particularly evident in the myths.

On the other hand, there was an implication that there was only one world, but its nature transformed according to the point of view of the subject. Guédon's (1984) article in particular gives an eloquent, but mind-bending, rendition of how this "point of view" world might have appeared to various Beings. In this model, the emphasis was on communication between Beings (both human and other) by the use of symbols, in order to attempt to understand, or to experience, each other's point of view. Here, the shaman's

²¹ SPA here is a Tsimshian word meaning "the place of", and should not be confused with our own term "spa" as a resort for fitness or recreation - although, perhaps for the NAXNOX, it was!

main skill was a combination of universal translator/ambassador/hunter (not hunting to kill, but hunting to capture).

I cannot determine whether these different models of the world resulted from the differences in informants (the former view came largely from the mythic base, the latter from modern informants), or just a better explication of meaning (the latter view could be discussed and probed in great detail, as the informants were alive; the mythic versions, although variable across time and between individuals, attempt to remain timeless, constant and ambiguous). Or, what is most likely, both are only incomplete approximations of the concepts the Tsimshian were trying to convey.

Halpin (1984) offered this description of the traditional Tsimshian world view:

In the domain of an animal species, the animals perceived themselves as human, and perceived humans as powers or foreigners (never apparently as food animals)....Each world (or as the Tsimshian perceived it, each village) was as Real as the others; from within any particular world the view of each of the others was different. Relations between each village/world were the particular responsibility of the Real People and Real Beings, *and also of shamans, who were especially adept at discerning the state of affairs of other worlds, and negotiating with them, frequently being given tokens of supernatural power from other worlds.* (emphasis added).

Certain concepts or symbols remained constant across these models. One of these was the nature and use of names. Seguin (1984:116) observed: "Reality is laden with power, and with responsibility. Reality among humans is linked to names, which are distinct from the persons who assume them". In one respect this was not true for shamans, in that their

names, unlike other Tsimshian names, did not become House property, and were not inheritable. Like many House names, they did reflect a personal encounter with some form of NAXNOX, but it was the shaman's individual encounter with the supernatural, and the name was given to him or her by a supernatural aide in a song which reflected that encounter. According to Tens (BF.727.8), these names were sometimes only meaningless syllables or isolated terms, which had import only for the shaman, as an incident from his or her vision. Thus, although there was a clear link between the name and the power, no two shamans would have the same name.

Another pervasive concept was the nature and use of skin. Everything had its own skin, and all skins were normally removable, except for that of humans, who were "trapped" in their skins (see Cove 1987:91 for an excellent discussion of the powers inherent in donning a skin and dangers inherent in wearing it too long). When a skin was removed, the true form and nature of that being was evident. That true form was often depicted as being human ("animals are just like us under their skins"); however, this might be an erroneous interpretation, when what was actually meant was that all things, including humans, shared the same essence of being, which was hidden under skin. Most importantly, skins held power. Therefore, when a skin was donned, the powers inherent in that animal form were available to the wearer. Equally, when a skin was removed, those powers were also removed from that being. Skins, and their usage, held great significance in shamanic practice.

Stones and bones also held unusual importance. Stone was associated with immortality (see Cove 1987) and also, in the myths, with transformation of form or existence in a non-human realm (Cove and MacDonald 1987). I believe that the Tsimshian considered bones to be the organic equivalent of stones: bones had to be properly treated for reincarnation to take place, and bones, surviving cremation, endured death of the individual and thus were also to some degree immortal. It is particularly significant in this respect that almost all the shaman's artifacts were organic, and the largest part of them comprised skins, nails, teeth, and bones. Stones were also used, but they were frequently unusual ones - nephrite, red or black volcanic pumice, black volcanic obsidian (both probably from the Nisga'a lava fields), and most notably, crystals, which were considered to be extremely powerful, and embodied all the attributes of supernaturalness: they were hard, shiny, transparent, and of unusual form.

The final concept relevant to shamanism was the nature of life and death. Everything was considered to be alive in some manner: to possess spirit, or soul or power. Of all organic life-forms, humans were considered to be the least powerful, and the most in aid of assistance from other life powers to survive. Since the powers of each form of being were unique and limited (see Cove 1987), reciprocity amongst all life forms was the norm.

The same concept of transformation that appeared to allow such fluidity in the Tsimshian space/time formations applied not only between "living" beings, but between dead ones as well. Although much more information is available on life and death for humans than

for animals (and that itself is not a huge amount), there are clear indications that the same model applied across life forms. Death was not seen as an end for an individual, but yet another transformation of state or form. If death occurred properly, and the body was cremated, the person's soul(s) would become a ghost, and live a mirror life cycle in the land of ghosts (fed by offerings, sent by smoke and fire, from relatives remaining in this realm). When the ghost "died", the soul(s) ideally would re-incarnate within the original House once more (see Cove 1987 for a thorough exploration of this life/death cycle). The bones remaining after a human cremation, since they were not completely consumed by the fire, were put in grave boxes and either put behind the houses (low rank) or raised on memorial poles (high rank), with the bones possibly acting as a point of intersection, perhaps even a portal between, the realms of ghosts and humans. If the person died improperly, especially by being lost or drowned so that the body (or skin?) could not be transformed by cremation, the spirit was said to have been taken by land-otters or BAEGWAS and its possibilities for reincarnation into the human realm might be impeded or permanently lost. Cove (1987) points out that death by beheading (since it both severed the backbone (prohibited for other animals) and removed the head, which was considered to be the "seat" of the soul (Beynon BF.727.8)) also had negative consequences for personal reincarnation. Nonetheless, for the Tsimshian, life and death were the natural order of things, and formed an infinite continuum of spirit altering form.

DREAMWEAVERS: THE SHAMANS

Shamanism was presented in the introduction as a complex of practices and beliefs regarding interaction with the "supernatural" world. Ethnographically, shamans are found world wide, usually amongst peoples with an egalitarian sociopolitical structure and a hunter/gatherer subsistence base. Typically, shamans are amongst the most knowledgeable of their people: as expert herbalists, they must also be botanists; as summoners of game or guiders of the hunt, they must know both the local geography and detailed patterns of the animals around them; as counsellors, they must know human nature and local politics; as healers, they must know the human body, and the human psyche. Shamans also have a thorough knowledge of the "other real worlds" - learned through personal (often traumatic and frequently unwanted) experience, enhanced through self-awareness, and accessed and mastered through the control of one's mind. These other realities are everywhere mythologically patterned by the shaman's own culture, but they are always worlds of transformation of matter and energy, space and time. Their souls can be lost or found, mysteries explained, future events seen or influenced - worlds where the lost can be returned, or made safe, or at least found and bid a proper farewell. In these worlds the impossible becomes possible, so immeasurable danger is always present, as well as immeasurable assistance to the shaman strong enough in his or her own mind control to call upon and direct the powers available.

Wilson (1989:499) poetically described the shaman as: "Keeper of wisdom, keeper of dreams, keeper of power, keeper of the secrets of why we were placed upon this earth".

The shaman obtains these powers and secrets, and comes to wisdom, through contact with other realities, other ways of being, accessed in other states of consciousness.

This general form of shamanism and what is known of Tsimshian realities are not isomorphous. Tsimshian social structure was not egalitarian, but hierarchial, with ranking as an idiom pervading all aspects of their culture: names were ranked within a House; Houses were ranked within a village and within a clan; even the NAXNOX themselves were ranked. The Tsimshian were also atypical in that their livelihood was based largely on fishing, of which there was usually an abundance at predictable times and places, allowing them an unusually high level of geographical stability. There were several forms of ceremonial practitioners within the Tsimshian culture, and they excelled at elaborate rituals incorporated into an extended ceremonial season, enriched by a beautifully crafted material culture.

Tsimshian shamans appear not to have had any particular knowledge of or interest in herbalism. Heber Clifton of Hartley Bay told Beynon in 1952 (B.F.122.2) that such was the domain of the "old women" in the villages, and that these herbalists were "not in any HALAIT group".²² Although we believe that shamans were involved in annual rites of significance to the community (eg "the First Salmon" ritual in the spring) and in rites of passage for individuals (eg puberty and initiation rites, activities around birthing, funerals),

²² Although the Tsimshian believed that all illness had some "spiritual" component, which was dealt with by a shaman, physical discomforts could often be alleviated by herbs, plasters etc.

virtually nothing is actually known about shamans' participation in these activities - more is known about the roles of chiefs, but in fact, very little is known at all.

It is possible that at least some of these events (eg the First Salmon) were more the purview of the shamanic seers, the LAXE.T HALAIT rather than the healing shamans, the SWANASU HALAIT (in this paper, "shaman" incorporates both, but is more usually a SWANASU). Sam Bennett (BF.116.4) reported to Beynon that the LAXE.T was "the most influential advisor of the chief. He was, as it were, the astrologer, he made predictions after studying the sun and stars he foretold the arrival of the oolichan and salmon runs. His station for every day was on the house top where he sat all day long." Heber Clifton (BF.122.2) made a similar report, adding that "their duty was to sit on the house tops and watch the different phases of the moon and the sun. From this they would foretell the arrival of different species of fish, the depth of the cold for the winter and even foretell the arrival of any strange people". SWANASU HALAIT also functioned as seers, but they would use the powers of their supernatural aides to obtain information (BF.122.2, BF.727.3). Mrs Irene Harris described this process (BF.122.5): "Whenever any event was about to happen the white owl or the white squirrel [her two main aides] came to me and told me, thus I was able many times to warn people of some coming danger to them; they were able to meet these things prepared".

Finally, in the world of the Tsimshian, many humans, not just shamans, could have some form of contact with other realms of existence and with supernatural beings, and could

in some way share that knowledge and experience with their people - the power and influence of chiefs, NAXNOX performers, and secret society members (the various HALAITS) rested exactly on having such experiences. Chiefs in particular, as Real-beings, were responsible in many significant ways for maintaining proper relations with all other Real-beings in all other realms (Cove 1987; Seguin, Guédon, and Halpin 1984). But, as with the general model, it was only the shaman who could summon such experiences at will; it was only the shaman who could travel alone and without ceremony to and from any of these other worlds; and it was only the shaman who could directly control and manipulate these powers to his or her own desires. The nature of the shaman's realms and states of consciousness, and the shaman's ability to access them at will and function within them, will be examined in detail later in this paper. For now, we will deal with the basic nature of Tsimshian shamanism, and with the conceptual and classificatory difficulties arising from the presence of the other HALAIT practitioners. As much as is possible, for one who is neither Tsimshian nor a shaman, my perspective toward the presentation and analysis of shamanism, as for the Tsimshian world view, will be thoroughly "emic".

For the Tsimshian, shamanism was not passed along to a chosen family member as it was for their Tlingit neighbours to the north (de Laguna 1972), nor was it achieved through the forms of spirit-questing practiced by the Carrier (Athapaskan) to their east. Nor was it the more frenzied practices of the Kwakiutl communities to the south (Boas 1918). It was also totally different in acquisition and nature from the possession states of the

Tsimshian secret society and NAXNOX dancers (Guédon 1984). Their shamanism, like the Tsimshian themselves, was unique.

Tsimshian shamans could be either men or women. Ethnographers indicated that many more men than women became shamans, but how much of that belief came from a male bias in the literature is hard to determine. There was little enough information obtained about male shamans (Isaac Tens, via Barbeau, being a rare exception); there was virtually nothing recorded about the women, although both Barbeau and Emmons recorded healing ceremonies where several of the participating shamans were women, so the problem was hardly that they couldn't find any. Within the BF files, there are brief interviews with women who were shamans, or who refused the "calling" to become shamans (the missionary influence was well ensconced by the time of Barbeau and Beynon's work, particularly the latter decades), but they contain very little information, and that piecemeal. Whether this is because the women were reluctant to answer the (male) anthropologists' questions (one of the unfortunate aspects of these records is the absence of any context, including even the questions, for the interviews), or whether the anthropologists simply did not think, or choose, to ask the proper questions, remains unknown. It is probable that the latter is the case, however, as women seemed quite willing to discuss other personal aspects (initiations into secret societies, seclusions around puberty rites and adult menstruation). This dearth of information on women shamans represents a profound and irreplaceable loss to our knowledge of both the Tsimshian and shamanism.

As de Laguna (1972) said about the Tlingit, there are indications that pre-menopausal women were believed unable to be shamans because the powers of menstrual blood could annul shamanic powers. Cove (1987) noted the particularly negative symbolic significance of any flow of blood for the Tsimshian. Yet for both the Tlingit and the Tsimshian, the narratives also speak of young women as shamans. The Tsimshian myth of the Glass-Nosed Being (Cove and MacDonald 1987) attributed the shamanic powers of a young girl directly to her menstrual blood. A Metlakatlan variation of this myth (BF.117.3 "The Myth of the Beautiful Plume") attributes the girl's shamanic powers to the fact that she just came from her "secluded house" rituals, so "was pure and clean" (purity being a prerequisite for supernatural contact). In both cases, the girl was able to restore bodies and life to her dead companions by jumping over them. In the mundane Tsimshian world, it was tabu for women, especially menstruating women, to step over any other being. The message is thus ambiguous: did she gain shamanic power because she had just completed menstruation rituals, and thus, viewing time as flowing linearly forward, she was as far away from menstruating as she could possibly get? Or was it because she was as close to menstruating as she could possibly get, and still appear in public? Or was it simply because she had just undergone a purification ritual, which only coincidentally was associated with menstruation?

I found no other mention, in narratives or in interviews, of whether a woman would actually function as a shaman while she was menstruating, and if so whether her female-

based power would be considered to impede or augment her shamanic-based power.²³ I also found no mention whatsoever of whether, or in what way, pregnancy affected the shamanic practices of women - or, conversely, how the summoning of shamanic powers might have affected the foetus of a pregnant shaman. I did find, however, that there was no support for the suggestion that women maintained only supportive roles as shamans; some shamans were considered to be more or less powerful than others, but the powers were not divided by gender.

Shamans were described as always having assistants (human) to help them. These assistants also occasionally developed limited shamanic abilities due to their close association and training with the shaman. The preferred number of assistants, in the narratives, was four or a multiple of four (four being a number of mystical importance for the Tsimshian, indicating completeness (McNeary 1984)). The assistants for a male shaman were specified as also being male (usually his cousins). I did not find detailed information on the assistants for female shamans,²⁴ but considering that they would be

²³ I do know from previous fieldwork that in some modern Wiccan practice, a witch who is menstruating is not supposed to use her athame (a ritual power knife) when casting circle or invoking supernatural forces, in part because the powers are seen as cumulative and she would be "too strong" (i.e. have to guard her thoughts, words and actions too carefully) at that time. Whether the Tsimshian would agree, I do not know.

²⁴ de Laguna (1972:712) does mention that the assistants for an historical Tlingit female shaman known as CAKwE, were men, but no explanation of this is given. The Tsimshian narratives speak of girl's "companions" as other girls, and imply, but do not state, that a female shaman's "companions" would also be women. Given the information in the literature I have seen, I would be tempted to say that the female shaman had no

(continued...)

responsible for the well-being of her body while her own mind was seeking or in contact with power forces, and considering the importance placed (at least in the narratives) on chastity and purification before major shamanic endeavors, I believe her assistants would have been female. Whether they would have been from her own residence house (usually her father's or husband's clan) or from her own and her mother's clan (normally resident elsewhere) I would not hazard to guess.

As HALAIT power, shamanism was truly a gift - but not always one that was desired, for the life of a shaman was not an easy one. As stated previously, shamanic powers, unlike some NAXNOX and crest powers, were not inheritable property amongst the Tsimshian. However, "inheritability" is somewhat problematic: some of Barbeau's informants did speak of "inheriting" their power from ancestors who were shamans, although this seems to have been exclusively in a visionary manner. For example, Mrs. Irene Harris (BF.7.2/3) told Beynon the following in 1948:

All my ancestors were great haloeits and I was told that I would have to become one [she was being doctored by shamans for sickness]...but I refused ... Then I had a vision. I dreamt that I saw myself dead and I was talking at the same time. I was saying, 'It is because you do not believe in halaits is why you are ill. And now you can see all these people they are halaits.' In this immense house I saw a great gathering of halaits men whom I had heard of and one after another they spoke to me, urging me to acquire my inherited power, which if I did not use it it would destroy

²⁴(...continued)

assistants (as they are not mentioned, and they are frequently mentioned for the men); however, considering that they seemed essential for the male Tsimshian shaman, they would probably also be essential for the female shaman. Yet another one of those frustrating instances of where more ethnographic information is needed on women!

me. I was told that I would have powers to cure and also to foretell events. When I awoke I felt much stronger and gradually grew stronger and I was now considered a halait or person with halait powers. I now had these powers that I inherit from a long line of ancestors who were all sweosk halaits.

Isaac Tens (BF.727.8) also described one of his healing "songs" which was based on having a vision (which he induced in preparation for a specific healing) in which he "inherited" powers from two dead uncles who had been shamans:

"I went into this house [part of his vision] and I saw my uncle who had been a famous haleit who had been dead for several years named TSIGWI' and another uncle GUKSWOTU. They were both famous haleits in their time. So this is the song I heard them sing....My uncle then took a rattle and placed it in my hand and they both gave me a rattle and placed it into my hand. That is why I always use two rattles in my performance".

Whether or not there was any familial predisposition associated with becoming a shaman, having relatives who were shamans was quite helpful to the nurturing and elaboration of emerging shamanic abilities (Cove 1987; Guédon 1984; Beynon BF.727]. Whether the initial shamanic experience was deliberately sought, as in spirit-questing, is debateable: the narratives mention both boys and girls deliberately "playing" at being shamans, or handling shamanic regalia, knowing that this was forbidden behaviour as it resulted in (summoned?) shamanic contact.²⁵ Others of adults gladly following the call of NAXNOX spirits into other realms, and becoming shamans because of their experiences.

²⁵ Cove (1987) mentions that in Tsimshian "to mimic" means also "to mock" - and mocking a supernatural being is done at the peril of being visited by that displeased being!

Shamanic powers might have been sought discreetly: Cove (1987) and Guédon (1984) point out that actions, statements and even clearly-formed thoughts all had powers that could be sensed by Real-beings, or that could be operational in a realm beyond the mundane. It was therefore considered importunate, and so unlucky, to state (or definitively think) that one was going out to overcome a Real-being (eg hunt a bear). Cove suggests that this same belief may have caused the shamans to deny that they deliberately sought to become shamans, even when spirit-questing (although there is no indication that this belief inhibited new chiefs from visiting SPANAXNOX to encounter spirits before the "red feast" of inheritance (Cove 1987)). Even if they did not practice spirit-questing to originally become shamans, Guédon (1984) points out that they did deliberately go on quests to obtain new supernatural aides after they had become shamans.

Whether or not shamanic power was desired by some, it was quite clear, both from the shamanic narratives and from the interviews of Barbeau and Beynon that it came to many quite uninvited, generally in the form of an unusual and life-threatening illness²⁶. This illness was often, but not always, preceded by sporadic loss of consciousness, and increasingly frequent visual and/or auditory hallucinations, visions or dreams of unusual and unsettling events or beings. Other shamans (frequently many of them) were usually called to get the patient through the crisis period, often by recognizing the illness as shamanic contact, strengthening ("SEDAXGETU", Tens BF.727.8) the patient's soul with

²⁶ Cove (1987) provides an intriguing interpretation of this illness as being analogous to meditative experiences, with "illness" as an inadequate descriptor provided by caregivers or outsiders who were not participating in such an experience.

their breath or their own power, and helping the patient release and develop the "songs" that the spirits were creating within him or her. (Harris, BF.727.3; Ross BF.727.4; Woods BF.727.5; Tens BF.727.7 & 8; Cox BF.727.11; Boas 1970; CMC Collection notes VII.C.1152:63; Guédon 1984; Cove 1987). This diagnosis and release (and legitimizing?) of the beginning of shamanic power was sometimes a necessary, but never a sufficient, way to become a shaman: full healing (physical and psychological) could take several years,²⁷ and primarily depended on the personal abilities and determination of the individual involved. There was a general belief that, if the individual was not strong enough to endure the trials of mastering shamanic power, or if the individual refused to accept these powers, then he or she would die.

This initial illness was believed to be a form of initiation by the spirits; the subsequent care and tutoring by other shamans over the ensuing year or years of self-healing, represented only a public acknowledgement of what the spirits had called into being. Public acknowledgement and acceptance was, however, vital to the psychological well-being of the emerging shaman. Guédon (1984) stresses the importance both of a mythological base which recognized and valued such experiences, and a supportive human environment that confirmed and validated these experiences as shamanic, and not psychotic. Munroe (1977) relates the personal sufferings that can endure for years when such support and validation is not available, as in our culture.

²⁷ Tens (BF.727.7 & 8) speaks of spending over a year doing nothing but resting, having visions and creating songs, all under the guidance and care of four shamans.

Once the individual decided to accept this shamanic "calling" and survived the crisis period, a lifetime of hard work and dedication began. In order to maintain themselves as fitting receptacles of supernatural power, (and perhaps to enhance their achievements in non-corporeal realms?), shamans led disciplined lives. They frequently fasted and purified themselves; spent prolonged periods of time in relative isolation, enhancing their powers or seeking new visions; and travelled extensively to participate in healings or other shamanic activities (see for example Cove 1987:160). A shaman who developed a good reputation could become both wealthy and powerful - yet it is not clear how much they were personally able to enjoy their wealth, living such austere lives (although their families would certainly benefit); and power created both jealousy and fear, as well as respect. Shamans did, however, have to effect successful cures to become wealthy: although they were paid in advance, if the patient failed to recover they had to return the entire payment (Tens BF.727.8) - and of course suffer a blow to both their public and private images! Furthermore, shamanic healing work itself was quite demanding - sessions were reported to have gone on for days, with shamans going in and out of trance, singing, dancing and rattling until they were exhausted (Collison 1915; Crosby 1914; Tomlinson, in Lillard 1984; Barbeau BF.727.6; Tens BF.727.8; Emmons in Cove 1987).

Tsimshian shamans were most clearly known for their extensive use of mouth-work or breath-work in their healing practice. Sucking spirits out of a patient's body, and then blowing them away (often out the smoke-hole), were hallmarks of Tsimshian shamanic practice. In fact, NAXNOX masks of shamans are most clearly differentiated by having

lips extended in a long funnel shape to represent this blowing activity. It is particularly significant, in this respect, that the Tsimshian word for breath was the same as the word for song. Although we may not clearly understand the unity of what, to us, are distinct concepts, for the Tsimshian there was an association between breathing, the flow of air, vocalizing, ancestral spirit connection, and travelling/transforming between realms of being.

It is also interesting to note that the concept of "evil" spirits being sucked out seems to be a Western one, used by outsiders reporting the event, and later, by devout Christian Tsimshian. The original concepts, as reflected in the narratives and by some early informants, seemed to simply be one of "spirits", with the concept of "evil" missing, although "dangerous" was certainly acknowledged. Thus the shaman's practice would seem to have been more in line with removing from the person (or removing the person from the clutches of) another being or spirit who had merged in some way with the patient, this merging having manifested itself as human illness.²⁸ Note, too, that the initial contact of shamans themselves with their spirit powers also manifested itself as illness, as did some contact by initiates and dancers with NAXNOX spirits: all indicating that it could be very hard, even lethal, for the human body to house multiple spirits.²⁹ The

²⁸ This is in accord with the suggestion presented in Cove (1987) that various spirits wanted or needed to possess bodies in order to maintain their existence within other realms of being. It is also in accordance with reports from shamans of songs wanting and needing to be sung to give them (and their powers) life.

²⁹ The discussions of Seguin and Halpin (1984) regarding the nature of people as
(continued...)

shaman thus did not "kill" the evil spirit, but rather overcame it, merged with it, had the ATIASXW merge with it, or in some way convinced it to e-merge from the patient, using his or her breath/songs to separate the beings and distance the various realms once more.

Most people were familiar with the general techniques of shamanic healings, as these were usually held in the patient's home, near the fire pit in the old communal houses. According to Emmons (in Cove 1987:210), a large fire was maintained "although it was a warm day". Tens (BF.727.8) also mentioned that the first thing he requested when beginning a healing ceremony was that a fire be lit; at a turning point in one ceremony, he required the fire to be split in two, above the head and below the feet of the patient, and he travelled and worked within that space. The image of one or more burning fires, frequently in unusual realms (eg under the ground or under water) also appeared in some of the visions related to explain the shamans' songs. Unfortunately, no significance, beyond the provision of heat both for the participants and for "warming" or "feeding" souls (Tens, BF.727.8), was ever suggested for the necessity of fire. Fire was used, through cremations and for burning of food or goods, to send souls to other realms, and to nourish and nurture them when there. It was also reported (Cove 1987:114; Beynon BF.116.1) that simply holding something over a fire was sufficient to transmit it, or its essence, to another realm. Thus it could be speculated that shamans worked with fire (the

²⁹(...continued)

containers for the House, and the nature of containers generally, is also significant in this context.

fastest and most potent transformative force in nature) because it functioned as some form of corridor between realms, or a beacon for spirits - and one which was avoided by ghosts, who could steal patients' souls, because the "cold" from a fire could be lethal to a ghost (Cove, 1987; Cove and MacDonald 1987).

Healings were always public occasions, including, at minimum, adult members of the patient's House. There appear to have been no particular restrictions, with regard to age, gender or any form of initiation, around who was able to attend a healing (although Barbeau clearly understood he was most unwelcome at the healing ceremony he slipped into - and was ejected from (BF.727.6)). Barbeau also indicated that there was a spatial or containment aspect to the ceremony (which may be one reason it was always done indoors, if at all possible) - he determined that he and his companion were angering the participants by intently staring at the proceedings from outside the building through a hole in the wall. Again, when the husband of the patient was about to leave in the middle of a ceremony, the shaman called him back and performed various covering and rubbing activities over him (especially his head) before allowing him to leave - yet there was no indication of anyone needing ritual treatment to enter the ceremony, or to leave at other times. The suggestions of Cove (1987), and Seguin and Halpin (1984) around the nature of containment and the spatiality of powers would again seem to be reflected in shamanic practice.

In addition to being spectators, (and providing sources of Real power for the shaman to draw upon and manipulate?), family members often participated by beating sounding boards and sticks, and by singing the shaman's songs. Barbeau (BF.727.6:13) reported experiencing the "monotonous" singing, drumming and rattling to a "puzzling" beat as having "had fine effect of great weirdness and gravity". He also found the nature and level of all the noisemaking around a healing to be completely overwhelming, and to have remained echoing in his head for hours afterward.

It seems to have been unusual for a shaman to work alone. In most cases as reported both in the narratives and by shamans, or those treated by shamans, there was usually a whole team of shamans who would gather to work on any particular patient. Tens (BF.727.8) described there being a "chief" shaman, who would direct the work of the remaining shamans - yet who was "chief" at any particular time seemed to change throughout the ceremony. A few points do seem clear: within any group there was a tendency to work in rotation, with one shaman taking over when the previous one tired. Each shaman would, when his or her turn came, usually work alone in a visionary world created within or by personal songs, with the help of his or her personal supernatural aides. Occasionally, however, two or more shamans would work together, usually to push on the patient's body to remove spirits (frequently pushing them up and through the patient's mouth); sometimes an entire group of shamans would simultaneously work with one purpose on one patient. This implied the ability of the shamans to share, if not their allies (which were highly personal) then at least their vision, certainly amongst themselves, and likely

with the patient as well. Thus all involved would be existing simultaneously in the mundane corporeal world and in a mutually experienced and jointly transformed other world.

Each shaman also had several helpers, the assistants or constant companions, to beat the drums, sing the songs, and provide any other assistance the shaman required. They were also the only other people to routinely handle shamanic regalia. As noted previously, these assistants occasionally became shamans in their own right, as a result of their experiences and their constant exposure to the shaman's power. However, being an assistant would seem to have been a preferred position: assistants benefitted from the wealth (as they also were well-paid for their services by the patient's family) and the reflected glory, enjoying much of the shaman's prestige, but lead a safer life physically and mentally (they did not have to make the frequent trance journeys into other realms or do battle with nonhuman beings or manipulate supernatural power, as did the shamans).

Finally, experienced shamans would often take novice shamans to healings as observers or helpers - Isaac Tens (BF.727.8) speaks of the importance of such guidance, cooperation and consultation in the development of his shamanic abilities and self-confidence. Beyond this, however, there was no formal training or apprenticeship for the Tsimshian shaman - the teachers were the spirits and supernatural beings, and their original gift of shamanic power was continually supplemented with new techniques,

powers and aides received through the shaman's questing, dreaming and healing experiences.

Each shaman would have his or her own primary source of shamanic powers, derived from the supernatural being(s) encountered in the first shamanic experience: the fact that the shaman had not been destroyed by this encounter, but had proved equal to the being's test, gained the shaman the co-operation of this being (perhaps of a whole populace of such beings, if the shaman's encounter was with the "chief" of these beings).³⁰ This being would give powers like its own to the shaman, and give the person the shamanic name and identity he or she would henceforth always assume when doing shamanic work. The being would instruct the shaman in techniques to summon this new power (or to summon the being itself if necessary). These instruction would include: dances; visualizations; things to say; things to hold; things to wear. Visualizations included any images of other-worldly tools the shaman might use - for example, Isaac Ten's (BF.727.7) "spirit canoe". The things to say were the healing and power songs; both the lyrics and "melody" (meaning more beat and tone, as these songs were more like short chants - or long mantras - than songs as we know them) were caused by the spirit to "swell up of their own accord" (Tens BF.727-8) from the shaman. Things to hold would include the

³⁰ It is important to note here Cove's comment (1987:188): "... a person's supernatural aides help him to cure his own sickness, and thereby become a shamai who can then use the powers to help others. This pre-supposes the cause of illness need not be the supernatural beings who later became aides. If the supernatural in general is both the source of the sickness and the source of powers, then becoming a shaman is a relatively complex process of interactions involving conflicts and alliances".

shaman's drum (although this was more normally held and beaten by one of the assistants), the shaman's rattle(s), canes, crystals or stones, and figurines, animal bits (eg paws, claws, teeth) and carvings or charms - "ATIASXW" (Guédon 1984). Things to wear included headdress or crown, cloak or robe, dancing apron, and necklace. These instructions would not only include the type and style of these articles, but also any designs or decorations to be carved into or put upon the shaman's clothing, drums, rattles or containers.

Much of the shaman's paraphernalia represented physical manifestations of this particular supernatural being: (eg. bear claws for headdress and necklace if the encounter was with a bear spirit-being; mountain goat robes or horn charms if it was a mountain goat; squirrel teeth necklace from the squirrel spirit-being etc). ³¹

In addition to the powers, instructions and gifts received from the first spirit power, the shaman continued to obtain new aides through his or her healing practices and dreams - where the shaman would envision new tools or charms appropriate to the healing required, and would develop new songs. These new gifts might be specific to only one healing, but more often they formed a corpus of knowledge and tools upon which the shaman could draw as required, according to his or her diagnosis of the problem at hand [see, for example, Isaac Tens (BF.727.8; Barbeau 1958) description of the development and use of songs]. The shaman always believed that these songs or visions of healing charms -

³¹ See Guédon 1984 for a discussion of the range of these spirit-beings.

ATIASXW - were received from the supernatural beings who were his or her helpers. A powerful shaman would, through self-purification (to enhance acceptability to the spirits) and questing (to indicate willingness, and to physically get to the earthly abode - SPANAXNOX - of a supernatural power), attempt to obtain many additional supernatural aides of various types and powers. The narratives tell of supernatural beings giving powers to young shamans because they were trying so hard, and the being admired their determination and took pity upon their state; others tell of aides being won or claimed as rewards by experienced shamans for outwitting opposing ghosts, BAEGWAYS or other supernatural beings; others were obtained as gifts of thanks (equivalent to human payment) from supernatural beings when the shaman had performed a difficult cure on one of the spirit beings itself. However they were obtained, these aides and ATIASXW were central to the SWANASU's work. Accordingly, they will also be central to our investigation and interpretation of Tsimshian shamanic practice.

There were a few basic goods that were common to all shamans, and others that were only used by some shamans, or only used for specific healings. Although there were common styles and themes in all shamanic paraphernalia, the artifacts owned by each shaman were unique - his or her own representation of the nature or the instructions of the supernatural beings. Shamanic artifacts were not generally inherited or shared ³²,

³² There were a few exceptions in the collections, to be noted later. Most notable in the narratives was the "woman of sickness" doll, mentioned in several versions as being shared (or perhaps it was only the woman-of-sickness spiritual aide that was shared), by the shaman who originally ordered it created, to all the surrounding shamans who came
(continued...)

although the shaman might have a vision giving him or her instructions to use songs or artifacts identical to those used by a previously deceased shaman - usually a relative (see for example Tens BF.727.8).

I found a few notable exceptions, however, that call this "unshared" concept into question. In the collection made by Barbeau for the Academy of Medicine, held at the ROM, there were several artifacts clearly specified as being inherited from other shamans:

- . HN 1261 - bone whistle (with five lines for five previous owners?);
- . HN 1235 - bone "bear" charm;
- . HN 1262 - stone charm "seen by the medicine person, the owner [Thomas Wilson, QAWAYAN-LAW'P, Hazelton], in a dream...It was an important charm, and the owner claimed that it had cured many people. The former owner obtained it from her sister, who lived at Kitwanga, and had used it for thirty years or so. She used it for several years, and died four years ago.";
- . HN 1263 - shaman's storage box "made by the Haidas. It has been in Kispiox for about fifty years ... It has always been owned by members of Mrs. Wesley's [HISWARH, a shaman] family");

³²(...continued)

to him in an attempt to combat the influenza epidemic then (1918) sweeping through their people. Perhaps it was only because this was an epidemic (brought by Whites), and thus comparable in some respects with the other major afflictions of mankind recorded in the narratives for which one shaman shared his or her knowledge with all the others (eg the use of Devil's Club), that justified this anomaly. This red cedar doll, and accompanying legend, was collected by Marius Barbeau, and is presently in the possession of the CMC (catalog notes VII.C.1156). It was purchased from a Tsimshian woman, and there is no indication that it was ever buried. Since this is an historically documented shamanic artifact, supposedly of great power, I do not understand why any Tsimshian person would keep it in her possession - it should, according to their belief system, be far too dangerous to contact. Unless perhaps this woman herself (Mary Wilson) was a shaman? Or perhaps a dedicated Christian convert who refused to believe in these old "superstitions"?

. HN 1254 - rattle "HASAERH used by a medicine man. Made by the mother of the well-known medicine-man, the late Peter John, of Hazelton... From her it passed to Peter John, and from him to ['NU, Andrew] Crosby."; [emphasis added]

. HN 1236 - deerskin bag "very old" used to keep rattles ("ANDASSERH, sack-rattles); it formerly belonged to SEPHADEM_SQEARHS, in the family of TAEGRAMUK... of Kispiox";

. HN 1242 - a shaman's cane: "the cane will tell him in his sleep at night [whether the treatment of the patient will or will not succeed]. Made of maple. Very old. Belonged first to TSINHLAEK, the third holder of the name before the present. Five medicine-men in all have owned and used this cane in turn. They have all died, and the last of them, the wife of Samuel Johnson, died last year.";

. HN 1260 - canoe charm "called Canoe-of-the-Otter. It formerly belonged to NAW'AWSU...of Hazelton and was acquired by the wife of [Samuel] Johnson at his death";

. Barbeau's #35: - copper canoe charm "'(MALEM'UQ) for a medicine-man... It is old, and has been used by several doctors in succession. The owner [Mrs. Solomon Johnson KUHALAKU]- herself an old woman - got it from L. SWA, her grand-mother, who died an old woman, many years ago."

I found very few other examples of shamanic artifacts that had been passed on from one shaman to another. Most of the shamans involved were women, and most were from Kispiox or Hazelton, so it is possible that this "inheritance" phenomenon is gender-related, geographically specific, or limited to relatives. A few of the narratives also hinted at

obtaining artifacts (especially rattles) from "retired" shamans,³³ but most spoke of the shaman getting them from supernatural beings, or occasionally making his or her own.

As a general rule, paraphernalia was supposed to be buried with the shaman, and people avoided these graves because they were dangerous. Cove (1987) speaks of spirits and songs wanting to contact people and possess them - or with shamans, to work with and through them - so that these supernatural beings and powers could be given "life" in the human world. It is possible that buried spirits, whose channel for life was now no more, would try to possess another human, to live again. Since it seems the Tsimshian believed that to put something on (particularly to put the skin of something on) was in some ways to become that thing or partake in the essence of that being and its powers (see especially Cove 1987), for another to handle a shaman's regalia at any time was to partake in some way in that shaman's power, as well as the power of the spirit represented by the article - and such contact could be as fatal to the person as the original contact almost was for the shaman. To handle the articles of a dead shaman would appear to have been even more dangerous, since now the shaman also might be attempting to "live" again.

³³ "Retirement" is seldom discussed, and no one specifically mentioned what they did with their equipment when they stopped practicing for reasons other than religious conversion. Isaac Tens (BF.727.8), who did convert to Christianity, mentioned that he tried to "revive" some of his old charms to aid his ailing children: "But my body was altogether different from what it used to be. I was sure I had lost my powers as a SWANASSU. I was unable to act on my children. Being too weak, I had to quit. Then I spent \$50 on medicine-men to assist me in my trial. But like me they could do nothing. My charms were of no use to them." One is left to assume that a shaman who ceases to practice (due, for example to old age) simply keeps all the paraphernalia wrapped up in its special storage case - waiting, just in case!

This touches upon one of those areas I found confusing about Tsimshian concepts of cosmology and shamanism, and worthy of a slight digression. The Tsimshian cremated their dead, and later put the burnt bones in a burial box,³⁴ so that the person could be re-

³⁴ In BF.451.2 Beynon notes that the Tsimshian term for burial boxes or caskets is the same as the term used for babies cradles: "'WO'" (Emma Wright BF.441.2 used "'WO'MTK'"), meaning sleeping box.

An interesting insight on these burial boxes was provided in BF.111.2 by Mrs. Cox. Since she mentioned "windows", which were a post-contact phenomenon, these would have been latter-day burial boxes, created in the intermediate times after White contact but before the Christian practice of burial replaced the Tsimshian practice of cremation. In discussing funeral practices, she mentioned that the expression "leather funeral" was used to denote a funeral done in the traditional style (described, for the Nisga'a, in detail by Beynon BF.15.1) whereas "school funeral" denoted a Christian funeral done in White's style.

The respect shown the dead by the Tsimshian is clearly contrasted in Mrs. Cox's story with the lack of respect shown by the intruders:

"They don't do the graveyards like they used to. They used to take so much care and pain to build a grave as they would a bungalow. It had painted windows, they would prepare it inside and they put all the worldly belongings of the departed. And if it was a woman they always cut the hair off and put it in the grave, hung it. And all her clothes, her trunks. And the same with the man. And the things were never touched. They stayed there until they rotted, quite safe; none thought of robbing them. It was quite a job when the construction came through here. Many graves were robbed by the white. They would pick whatever they had a sense to. Sometimes there was carelessness on the grave. And a doctor had all his instruments and some of that was taken".

She goes on to tell of two women tourists she witnessed who came and photographed the burial boxes, climbed and poked about them, and then looted some for the nice pieces of dishware they contained!

In 1920 Mrs. Cox had also observed to Beynon (BF.321.13) that Christian converts believed that their baptismal certificate ("Christianizing Certificate") was their "pass to heaven", so they would clutch it in their hands when they were dying. She did not comment on the fate of the certificate after the individual's death. One should also note that Mrs. Cox (who frequently served as interpreter - Gitksan - for Beynon) spent two
(continued...)

incarnated (it was hoped, as a person again within that same House). The Tsimshian also burned ³⁵ the bones of salmon and other game, so that their souls too could re-incarnate as their own kind - what was not properly burned could not be properly re-incarnated. Shamans, however, were never burned upon their death - they were always buried, and the burial boxes were hidden.³⁶ According to Tsimshian beliefs, this then meant that the shaman could never re-incarnate as a human. There is some indication in the narratives that the shaman's soul might "re-incarnate" as another form of being (especially an owl), or as a leader in the realm of the Ghosts - but such seems to be rare. Exactly what does happen to the shaman's soul is not really specified - but it would seem to remain close to the dead body - perhaps "trapped" by the still-remaining skin.³⁷

³⁴(...continued)

years living with the missionaries Rev. Tomlinson and his wife, to whom she was quite devoted ("Mrs. Tomlinson is my godmother" BF.321.1); all information coming via her translations (including those from Isaac Tens) should therefore be viewed with this in mind.

³⁵ Cove (1987) notes that this practice was more common for the interior groups, especially the Gitksan, than for the coastal ones, who tended to return the salmon bones to the waters from which they came. The concept of the significance of bones, however, remains the same.

³⁶Herbert Wallace told Beynon in 1922 (BF.15.2:10)"In the case of a great HALAIT or sorcerer the burial place was always an isolated place known only to the immediate members of the family, the fear being that the remains would become known to another HALAIT who would go to the place of such burial and usurp the powers of the dead HALAIT".

³⁷ Harrison (in Lillard 1984:174) noted that the Haida believed that shamans "bodies never decayed but dried up without decomposition".

There is an amazing picture (Andrews 1960:84, credit to Provincial Archives, Victoria) with the caption "Mummified Tsimshian Man - Fort Simpson". The body is (presumably
(continued...)

It was said that the people did not want shamans to re-incarnate, as they were so powerful when compared to ordinary people, and so mobile (freely passing to and from the many spirit worlds) when compared to even Real-people, that they would have posed a great danger - become too powerful - if they re-incarnated (Cove 1987; BF.122.2). Having each shaman "start from scratch", as it were, to develop his or her powers, would provide some form of limitation on those powers. Even the shaman's SWANASU name was never to be used (or given life) by another. On the other hand, if a shaman were also a chief,³⁸ then he or she would be cremated like a chief, rather than buried like a shaman (Cove 1987) - so then the shaman's soul would be able to re-incarnate. Since it was indicated (see footnote #33) that normally a chief's bones would be attended by some of his/her regalia [other favourite personal goods were burned (BF.15.1)], one might expect a shaman/chief's regalia to also be put into the burial box. Was it the presence of these articles, these manifestations of shamanic power, that then kept the shamanic part of that soul bound and unable to re-incarnate?

Then again, one of the main abilities of a shaman was to maintain life and good health (they could even restore life, in the narratives, although they became restricted to a four

³⁷(...continued)

posed) in a kneeling position beside what appear to be planks from a covered grave, located near a cliff. The body appears perfectly preserved; there is no associated paraphernalia visible. I have no idea who took the photograph, or when, or why - and can only guess that it might be a shaman's grave.

³⁸ Several chiefs who were also SWANASU are named in the BF files, the most notable being NITSU, the shaman made infamous in the "Kitwankool Jim" stories (BF.201).

day limit). When a shaman actually died, did this not indicate that he or she was no longer powerful, that the supernatural aides had deserted or been overcome? Or that the shaman had personally decided to leave the body behind and permanently dwell in some other realm? If so, what was there to fear in disturbing the shaman's grave? Perhaps the nature of the ATIASXW, to be explored later, will provide an answer.

As a final comment on this point, the narratives speak of shamans deliberately "dying" as a show of power,³⁹ with the intention of returning to re-inhabit their bodies later (a year, to the day, is usually the time mentioned). Is the shaman's body not burned but buried (keeping (after Cove 1987) the skin - for essence - on the bones - for immortality) so that the shaman's physical being will still be available if ever he or she decides to come back for it? And, as reportedly happens to living people having out-of-body

³⁹ Other HALAITS, chiefly NAXNOX demonstrators and some secret society dancers, also put on a show of "dying" and later being revived to demonstrate their power. In these displays, they were occasionally revived by a performer dressed as a shaman, complete with full "shamanic" regalia (although the crown was usually made of wood, and often rotates). For example, the NAXNOX WOTLU'LOO (BF.105.3) had, in addition to his "doctor's tools", "a little carving about a foot high of the corpse ... [and] had a doctor's song. They could go by that name without being a SWANSKU. He played the SWANSKU only when taking the part".

In performance, it would have been easy to determine that a true shaman was not working, as the performer would wear a NAXNOX "shaman's mask". Unfortunately, it is sometimes not possible to tell, in the context of the museum collections, whether a particular article was a "real" shaman's tool, or a NAXNOX shaman's tool. This is particularly confusing around rattles, the form and decoration of which present a continuum between the poles of the basic round shaman's rattle, and the elaborately carved and crest-decorated chief's dancing rattles. Without proper documentation, the ascription of "shamanic" to any of the intermediate range of rattles is tenuous at best.

experiences (as Guédon, 1984, claims the shaman's experiences are), is this wandering shaman's spirit pulled back to the body if it is disturbed, endangering the person disturbing it?

THE THINGS THEMSELVES

In the myth of Only-One, said to be one of the greatest shamans (Barbeau 1958:76-81) he received his gifts of shamanic paraphernalia in this way:

The Gylodzau followed this shining man, who led him into a large house. A number of people sat about, and at the rear was a great chief, with many rattles which looked as if they were alive... The chief wore a crown of grizzly-bear claws, and in each hand he held a rattle which appeared to be alive. They rattled of their own accord. While he sat there, another door opened through which a young man entered. He had a rattle in each hand, and came to where the Gylodzau sat. He also had a rattle in each hand and wore an apron (AMBELAN) which was fringed with deer hoofs. These hoofs gave a rattling sound with every movement that he made. While he stood there, one more door opened, and boards came out as if they were alive and spread out in front of the fire. Then live clubs appeared. They went to the boards and began to beat time on the boards. The people in the house began to sing, following the tune sung by the young man with the rattles in his hands. A live drum then ran out and began to beat itself with one of the beaters. Everything seemed to be alive. The Gylodzau heard the singing and the dancing. The great chief arose and rubbed the Gylodzau-man's eyes. Then all became quiet in the great house. He no longer could see. Everything was in darkness... 'I have acquired greater powers than any other HALAEIT. Now I have received powers which enable me to restore to life those who are dead. I have been given a HALAEIT name: QAMKAWL - Only One'.

These gifts are clearly reflected in the world of ethnographically documented shamans, who were reported to use (dependent on the directions of their supernatural aides): a crown or headdress of claws or horns; quill "brooches" for crowns; robe (animal skin); dancing apron; necklace of leather thongs or shredded cedar bark, usually with several ATIASXW (carved bone, horn or stone ornaments; whole ermine pelts; eagle or swan head; eagle claws; small mammal paws) attached; rattle(s); spirit catcher (bone/ivory); bird wings; eagle feather; skin drum; bag of red ochre; bag of eagle down; bag of black carbon

(graphite, charcoal etc); small knife; hair combs or pins; cane; stone "mirrors"; scrying bowl ("SILIN", Tens B.F.727.8); sounding boards and sticks. The shaman might apply to the patient: mats; dolls or puppets; crystal(s); stones, various carved ATIASXW; various naturally-occurring ATIASXW; cedar-bark neck ring; small leather bags to contain hot ashes or other medications. All these were carried, as needed, to the place of healing by the shaman and the shaman's assistants, using special bags of leather or cedar bark. When not in use, all the shaman's goods were stored in a special wooden box in the shaman's part of the communal house.

To better understand the shaman through these "ANAW'YAM SWANASU things used by a medicine-man" (Barbeau artifact list, CMHM/ROM special collection), a more detailed description follows, with examples of each category.

First, however, I would like to list those things that I clearly believe were NOT shamanic, although they were frequently reported as being so.⁴⁰ These things did participate in some form of HALAIT power - but were not shamanic tools: the raven rattle (which looks quintessentially shamanic, but was used by chiefs)⁴¹; frontlet; headdresses made from real

⁴⁰ Some of these articles (eg dance leggings) were included in Emmon's list of "shamanic" materials (see Guédon 1984, Cove 1987), but I believe they were part of the individual's separate role of dancer, not shaman. As stated previously, it is probable that most shamans were initiates into at least one secret society, and those who were also chiefs would hold several distinct HALAIT identities.

⁴¹ Although the Tsimshian are quite adamant that these are chiefs rattles (eg Holms 1972), and not used by their shamans, raven rattles are repeatedly identified by collectors (continued...)

animal heads ⁴² ; masks; wooden whistles; box drums; dance leggings; Chilkat blankets; button blankets; any crested goods,⁴³ and finally, totem poles.

⁴¹(...continued)

or cataloguers as shamanic. Rattles just like these are shamanic - but for the Tlingit, not the Tsimshian (de Laguna 1972). Bird rattles of a similar design, which I first thought might be proto-raven rattles, are also shamanic rattles for the Tlingit. They are not, however, raven rattles, but are "oyster catcher" rattles, described at the Crossroads of Continents exhibition (CMC) as "a most sacred object" and a "prized possession of the Tlingit shaman". The people on the back represented "the shaman torturing a witch" - an activity the Tlingit shamans indulged in, but the Tsimshian shamans did not. So again (as Bossom and others did for masks) an artifact that was shamanic within another culture was mis-identified as being a shamanic artifact within the Tsimshian culture as well.

⁴² Although having an actual skin of an animal aide to put on as a cloak or wear as an ATIASXW was necessary for the shaman, wearing the actual head of the animal as the *crown* was restricted to chiefs in their other HALAIT roles (Halpin and Seguin 1990:276). Furthermore, Herbert Wallace told Beynon (BF.22.17) that the crest "G.ALKMZDIZK 'hat of grizzly bear'" [a hat made from a grizzly bear head] could easily be differentiated from a grizzly bear NAXNOX because "if it were a NAXNOX, it would be all over the body", (a form of full body masking that would have covered the face as well).

⁴³ There is some debate as to whether crested objects were used by shamans. On this I find the arguments of both Guédon (1984) and Halpin and Seguin (1990) most compelling. The first, that the shaman would not mix the powers of the House crests with his or her own personal ones: they were two separate realms. The second, that to wear crested objects when going to a healing would be inappropriate: Halpin (p 276) asserts that "crest images were worn in the potlatch, used in the feast, and represented on the houses where potlatching occurred. Sapir (1915a:6) notes that 'one cannot even pay a neighbour a visit and wear a garment decorated with a minor crest without justifying the use of such regalia by the expenditure of property at the house visited'". Thus it would not only be inappropriate for a shaman to wear a crest but also counter-productive: the intention was to be paid for the visit, not to have to pay! Also, an important point to remember when discussing crested vs non-crested goods is that crests were extremely specific in their portrayal of the being involved (see especially Halpin 1973), so that, although one might have the wolf as one's crest, one did not use as a crest just any depiction of a wolf, but rather exactly one depiction, and that specific depiction usually carried a name. In this way, dozens or even hundreds of variations of "crest wolf" were simultaneously operative within the community - and depictions of wolves which were not one of these specific forms were thus not crests. Therefore, if a shaman who had rights to a wolf crest painted a non-specific depiction of a wolf on, say, a rattle, it would not have been the crest that was being illustrated - it would have been the animal "wolf".

I was unable to find any definite correlation between the level of experience and power of a shaman and the amount, elaborateness or excellence of craftsmanship of his or her shamanic paraphernalia. In the narratives, some of the most powerful shamans used little more than a basic rattle, crown, necklace of animal claws or teeth, and rough skin cloak. Others had elaborately decorated and beautifully crafted carvings, and drew on an impressive amount of material aides. The visual beauty of the articles might have been more a function of family wealth and status than of the shaman's powers, while the amount of paraphernalia drawn upon was perhaps more a function of the complexity or difficulty of the particular healing required (see, for example, Tens descriptions of such a healing in Barbeau, 1958:53).

Despite the extreme individualism of each shaman's choice of paraphernalia, a level of conformity was maintained through two main forces: the distinctive artistic styles common to all Northwest Coast material culture, and the patterning of shamanic visions and experiences by the mythology and cosmology of the Tsimshian people (which beliefs, of course, these shamanic experiences reinforced in their turn). Accordingly, it is possible to present a "top down" description of a "model" shaman, examining the collections of ANAW'YAM SWANASU for substantiation and enhancements.

HAIR AND COMBS

The most common descriptor of the shaman's overall appearance was "wild". Boas, describing turn-of-the century shamans of his acquaintance, said (1916:563): "The shaman wears stone and bone amulets, and does not cut his hair. His appearance is the same as that of the Tlingit shaman." According to de Laguna (1972), the Tlingit shaman was usually quite skinny (from frequent fasting) and wild-eyed and haggard looking (from the strain of spirit-questing and healings). He (or she as the Tlingit also had female shamans) was most remarkable for the huge mass of long hair, uncut and uncombed but twisted into 8 ringlets which flowed down the back, sometimes dragging on the ground behind him (they were suspected of braiding other hair in to make it longer). This hair was said to fly out, like a writhing mass of live snakes, when the shaman danced.

The Tsimshian shamans too believed they would lose their power if their hair was cut, so it grew long, and was let to fly loose in performances. Often when not performing, they wore it twisted up on top of the head, held out of their way with bone pins or combs (Lillard 1984:169). Collison (1915:133,105) said the Haida shamans twisted their long hair into two pinned "horns", the effect of which made these shamans look like "representations of the Evil One which I had seen in illustrations from the old masters."

Although we know Tsimshian shamans had long hair and pinned it up, we don't know if it was in this style. ⁴⁴

Around the turn of the century, shamans were encouraged or forced, by White missionaries or other invaders, to cut their hair (de Laguna, 1972; Lillard, 1984). This act both symbolized and effected the domination of the native HALAIT beliefs by the Christian and western medical ones: shamans whose hair was cut usually ceased to

⁴⁴ I see a contradiction in having such long hair: in the narratives, all types of spirits are repelled by any form of dirt, filth or mess; shamans (as well as others) spend a lot of time washing in the icy-cold waters to increase their personal power and to keep their bodies very clean. If one could never cut or comb one's hair (in fact the Tlingit shaman's hair is often described as a dirty, matted mess) how could it ever be kept clean? If it was not clean, would it not repel spirits rather than maintain power? In that case, could it have been used as a shield by the shaman, let loose to protect self or patient (or both) from other dangerous spirits (of illness, ghosts, competing shamans) - analogous to spraying oneself with urine? When twisted and pinned more tightly to the head, did it serve as a shield only for the shaman's head, which was seen as the seat of the soul, thus protecting the shaman's "home base" while his or her soul travelled to other realms? It would be interesting to know when and why the Tsimshian shaman's hair was tied up or let loose, and whether it was supposed to be clean or dirty.

Finally, it is always possible that "dirty" was simply an ethnocentric judgement made by White observers, who generally disliked the popular Native practice of greasing their skin and hair (mountain goat fat was preferred) to enhance their beauty. The bird down that would cling to the hair of a practicing shaman might add to the impression of "mess" to outsiders.

practice (Murray, 1985; Collison 1915:184).⁴⁵ Harrison (in Lillard 1984:169) added that for the Haida:

"This long hair was believed to assist in his magical power over the evil spirits. As soon as the hair was cut the man lost the rank and dignity of a magician and his clients refused to consult him in cases of illness, as they fully believed that all his magical influence had departed from him."

The idea of cutting hair to effect a separation from powers or spirits appeared in two other Tsimshian practices. Slaves (who had never had, or had lost, all their access to

⁴⁵ It is worth remembering here that most missionaries also functioned as medical practitioners (although seldom licensed to do so). Medical care was in fact the reason that many Natives came to see them in the first place, and cures (possibly evincing HALAIT powers in the missionaries, particularly in view of the massive epidemics against which the SWANASU struggled in vain), were one of the major causes of conversion. Collison (1915:107) quoted a Haida chief regarding the smallpox epidemics, which were recognized as having come "first from the north land, from the iron people ... (later) from the land of the iron people where the sun rises... Our medicine men are wise, but they could not drive away the evil spirits; and why? because it was the sickness of the iron people. It came from them." Doctoring of course was the other side of the missionaries' "war" against the shamans. Collison (1915:202) recognized this when he introduced vaccine for the third smallpox epidemic: "the assurance that I was making an effort to shield them against an enemy which had carried off nearly half the Haida population... would, I believed, eventually give me another victory over the sorcery and superstition of the necromancers". Ridley (in Lillard 1984:189) was even more direct about his campaign against the Tsimshian shamans: "Now I must describe my artillery practice. The medicine chest is my ammunition tumbrel. Stoppered phials have been my Armstrong guns, and my shells were hurled on the foe from pill boxes. During school hours bodies of wounded would accumulate, and, school over, my artillery would be plied. Five hundred and fifty applications for healing have been made, and if, as the medicine-men say, I have killed some, I have relieved so many that I am the most famous medicine-man known to the nation. So raged the battle."

power) had their hair cut short. Following a death, mourners, family members (except for the deceased's wife (BF. 201.16)), would fast, blacken their faces and cut their hair. "The close cutting of the hair of all members of the family was an important rule. This was supposed to separate the influence of the death spirit from them" (Beynon, BF.15.1).

The significance of the act of hair cutting for shamans seems to have faded somewhat, at least for some, as shorter hair became more stylish. Barbeau (1958) had several pictures of shamans whose hair was not long; in 1924 the artist Langdon Kihn (a close friend of Barbeau) painted at least one portrait of a Tsimshian shaman (TSEEWA) with very short hair (VII.C.1107). Then again, Barbeau (BF. 727.6) described one of the shamans whose performance he witnessed in Hazelton, an old blind man, as having "long, black wavy hair" (p.11), and added that he "was in poor costume before. Now stripped from waist up assumes a status. Gives appearance of dignity" (p.19).

There were several examples of the bone pins and hair combs used to fasten this long hair in the collections, as well as several tapered "head scratchers" (sometimes also called "probes"). Unless specifically noted by the collector, it was often not possible to tell a bone pin made to clasp clothing from a plain bone made to fasten a twist of hair or to "scratch" the head, or to "probe" the patient. These also could easily be confused with awls, which were identical except that there was, on the broad end, a groove (looking very much like a mouth) for pushing twine, and at 90 degrees from that, a hook for pulling twine. Several of these were collected by Wrinch (who called them "needles" in

1937; Sapir renamed them "awls", and they were catalogued in 1980 as "probes" - CMC VII-C-1500a-d)); one in particular is carved like a snake, and looks very shamanic - careful examination is needed to recognize the groove and the hook.

Stewart (1973:142) noted that these "bone" pins were most often made from horn or antler, as the strength and natural curve in the material resulted in an artifact that was resistant to breakage, and easy to thread through several layers.

There were three outstandingly beautiful shaman's hairpins in the CMC collection, one double pronged and two single pronged, both inlaid and carved to resemble shamans - complete with inserts of long black hair (VII-C-174, VII-C-188 and VI-I-C-250).. Examples of these fancy pins, and also plain pins, scratchers, or probes, are presented in the Plates.

CROWNS AND HEADDRESSES

Perhaps the most definitive shamanic clothing was the crown, worn on top of the head. As was the crown of the mythical first shaman, this was usually made of bear claws (the bear spirit was seen as especially powerful). These grizzly-bear claws, called HLAQS-LEGYEAN'SU (Barbeau catalogue record HN 1223, CMHM/ROM) were sewn at the base into a leather strap which fit around the head, and held together at their upper tips by a fine string of leather, cedar bark, strips of ermine skin, or wool, wrapped around a shallow groove carved into the end of each claw for this purpose. The flexibility of this construction allowed the crown to fold flat for storage, and then to spread, like outstretched hands, around the shaman's head when worn (please see Plate 1).

Sometimes these claws were plain; at other times, they were beautifully carved faces, occasionally even inlaid with abalone shell (eg RBCM 9686) to make them shiny (shining, as stated previously, indicated supernatural presence). If the main spirit of the shaman was another animal (most commonly a lynx, mountain-goat, beaver, eagle or squirrel) then the hard parts of these animals (claws, horns, teeth or bones as appropriate - because hardness was equated with immortality?) might be used in place of the bear claws in the crown (artifact collection files; Guédon 1984). There were, in the collections I viewed, one example of a lynx claw head dress (VII-C-993), and 3 of beaver incisors (CMHM/ROM HN 1225; RBCM 1635; RBCM 9536- here the beaver teeth were inserted as horns into

elegantly carved mountain goat faces). It is interesting that the term noted by Barbeau for these beaver incisors was "HLAQS-TSEMAELIH, beaver-claws" (CMHM/ROM catalogue record HN 1225).⁴⁶ There were also a few examples of crowns made of wood or copper, but these were not SWANASU HALAIT crowns: they were crowns that were part of NAXNOX costumes (eg. CMC VII-C-323, VII-C-1095, and VI-C-1559 of wood, and VII-C-1228, VII-C-1152 and VII-C-1136 of copper; RBCM 1544).

There were often other attachments to the shaman's crown as well. Small bits of wool or fur might be attached to the upper string (eg RBCM 1573). At least one crown (RBCM 6549) had a string of beads attaching the tips, and the crown used by Mrs. Samuel Johnson ('NAGIL'PANDE of Kispiox (ROM HN 12255)) had orange and white dentalium shells strung horizontally between the tip of each "claw" tooth.

A more common attachment is somewhat intriguing: a frequently complex construction of quills, all defeathered, and cut and fitted one into the other like the branches of a tree (eg RBCM 6549, Plate 2). No indication was ever given as to the significance of these quills, which of course invites speculation. It is interesting to note that these quills are placed in an orientation that reverses the "normal" attachment of a full feather, in which the quill base is attached to or held by a head band. In these constructions, the base of the

⁴⁶ It is intriguing that the term for "claw" is used, when these are clearly teeth, and beavers do indeed have claws too, although their teeth are very long (as are bear claws), while their claws are very short. Is it more the concept (long, strong extensions of working parts?) or the image (something reaching out?) that is considered significant, rather than the actual body part itself?

quill (the fat bit) is always furthest away from the band, pointing up and out, and it is the narrow end that is the point of attachment. I will resist the great temptation to do a Levi-

Straussian analysis of the feather and the quill!

BROOCHES

A similar, but much larger, construction was also made out of quills, and was apparently worn cross-wise over the crown. These are most often catalogued as "brooches", although are also frequently listed as "fans" (which I differentiate as a completely different artifact) or "combs". Barbeau catalogued these (eg CMHM/ROM HN 1227) as "Comb or brooch of swan (QAQAIH) quills, called SQA'HIAWSU = sticking across, from the fact that it was placed across the medicine-man's head". Although Barbeau used the term medicine-man (as he almost invariably did), these had actually been the property of a female shaman. Another set, VII-C-952 (CMC) specifies that they are for a "medicine-woman".

These brooches were sometimes collected as matching pairs, and even most of those not so identified can in fact be paired with others within the collection (for example, the brooches within the Barbeau collection at the CMHM/ROM, pictured in Plates 29 and 30).⁴⁷ All indications within the literature, and existing photographs, support the idea that they were used in pairs. There are suggestions that they were only worn by female shamans, but I am uncertain of this. Barbeau's (1958:39 Plate 41) photograph of John Larahnitz shows at least one of these brooches lying across his crown (and also shows one of the other type of quill attachments standing up at the rear of the crown), which would

⁴⁷ The comment that accompanies each of these brooches, all collected by Barbeau from a relative of Mrs. Samuel Johnson (a Kispiox shaman) in 1929 is: "It was placed across the medicine-man's head, on top of the crown of claws. Very old"

indicate that male shamans used these too. I also have a note that photograph PN # 3936 (RBCM), taken by Collison, has these quill overlays, but I do not have a copy of the photograph, and failed to note whether the shaman portrayed was a man or a woman. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that one cannot place full faith in many of the "ethnographic" photos, as most were posed, frequently with whatever combinations of garb and artifacts the photographer found appealing. As an example, Claude Mark was shown dressed as a shaman in Barbeau's Plate 43, wearing the same dance leggings (not shamanic) as he had on in Plate 78, when he was wearing a NAXNOX costume, (although the dance apron in each of these was different) (Barbeau 1958:40, 63).

These shaman's brooches were usually quite long (roughly 12 inches), made from an average of 9 individual quills (from some bird with very long feathers -CMHM/ROM HN 1227 specifies swan's feathers; MOA A7961 L-Q specifies eagle feathers). They were completely defeathered and smooth. They were joined near the narrow end (which was frequently trimmed for an even fit), and the upper end, and frequently in the middle as well, by string threaded through holes pierced across each quill. They formed a flat fan-like shape, but again, the reverse of a normal feather fan, as the bulbous quill end formed the upper part, not the lowest part. There were frequently brightly coloured bits of ribbon or wool attached to the joining threads; sometimes these were just pieces of wool string, but more often they were wool pom-poms. The size of these brooches and the individualized decoration (location, style and colour of wool), assisted in distinguishing pairs. Examples of these brooches are presented in Plates 28, 29, and 30.

Again, I could find no suggestion for the significance of these shamanic brooches - but there were several sets of them in each collection I viewed, so they were obviously a popular item. My personal bias is that shamanic articles were only "popular" because they had some purpose - so am thus fascinated by what role these brooches might have played. Was there significance to the juxtaposition of the hard claws of the great earth digger - the bear, with the hard parts (front claw equivalents) of the great creature of the winds - the bird? If indeed they were all made from swan's feathers, did the Tsimshian share some of the Dene beliefs in the powers of the swan to transport souls and to bring peace? Why were they all - from so many locations and times - made so similar in size and shape, and decorated with man-made products: coloured ribbons or wool, even bells, rather than naturally occurring ones (neither feathers nor fur seem to have been used)? Were they always worn in pairs, like folded bird wings? Were they used to indicate a female shaman (and if so, what about her femaleness were they related to?), or a shaman with a bird as a supernatural aide? Were they always attached over the shaman's crown, or were they donned only when the shaman felt she or he would have to "fly" to some other realm? Or did they represent the opposite, the restriction of flight, the binding of the spirits of air? Questions, but no answers.

DOWN

Within the crown, and over the bodies of the assistants and patient, the shaman would sprinkle handfuls of soft, white, fluffy eagle down. This 'PALKWA (Heber Clifton, BF.679.7) was said to symbolize peace, facilitate communication and provide purification, making the environment fit for supernatural powers. Boas (1895:530) said "the eagle down brought into the house supernatural power (which is not supposed to be present where there is no down)." Eagle down was widely used for these purposes in most rituals and ceremonies, not only shamanic healings, and was not considered to be associated with the Eagle clan.

I was unable to determine why only eagle down was used (the Athapaskans for instance used only swan's down for their shamanic rituals - Ridington 1988) if it was not associated with the totemic eagle. Perhaps it was partly due to the special natural and mythical associations eagles (the strongest air-borne predators) have both to flying and to salmon. Cove (1987:146) mentions a particularly intriguing association for down at inheritance potlatches:

"It represents a return to a prior state of affairs disrupted by the death of a real person. That message draws upon an historic event common to all Tsimshian: the flood, as given in M28 and M37, which drove their ancestors from their original villages. The retreat of the waters was accomplished by birds dropping their feathers which the spreading of down recalls".

Is it thus possible that the spreading of down by a shaman during a healing ceremony also shares, as one of its aspects, this representation of a return to a previous state, with all beings existing in their appropriate realms (resulting in good health for the patient)? Whatever the reason for its choice, a bag filled with eagle down was always part of the shaman's kit.

PAINTS

The shaman's face and body (and often those of the assistants and the patient as well), would be painted. Usually for healings, red ochre was used. Boas (1895, quoting his assistant Tate) mentioned painting the face with charcoal when treatment required going to a grave site to retrieve a lost soul; the narratives mention the use of both red and black paints, or bodies rubbed with ashes. Emmons, in Cove (1987:218) reports a shaman using paints to protect a patient: "he takes a small skin bag containing dry powdered mineral paint which he rubs on his face, and may then paint the face, breast, hands and feet of the patient. This is done to keep evil spirits away". One example of such a bag is MOA1761 in Plate 24.

Red ochre was also used as a decorative paint on the shaman's clothing or artifacts; the narrative of Mouth-At-Both-Ends (Cove and MacDonald 1987) describes lightning as becoming red ochre and painting itself on the shaman's drum. The shaman always carried a bag of red ochre; sometimes there was also a bag for the black carbon or graphite, at other times burnt sticks from the fire were used. Other pigments (yellow, blue, brown, and white) were available (de Laguna 1960:104) and occasionally used on persons or tools. Macnair (1984:27-28) noted that vermilion, imported dry in little paper packets, "became available in the early nineteenth century when ships engaged in the sea otter trade returned to the Northwest Coast from the Orient", and rapidly became a popular paint

replacement for ochre. Macnair continued, "Similarly the subtle greens and blue-greens [from copper minerals] were succeeded by an ultramarine blue, obtained by pulverizing cubes of blueing, a laundry preparation introduced in the historic period", with fish eggs and spit used as a binder.

Barbeau, amongst others, collected several bags of both red ochre and vermilion from shamans; I was unable to determine whether or not vermilion was only used on artifacts, while ochre remained for use on both artifacts and people. However, for most shamanic artifacts in the collections showing traces of red, it was described as being "ochre". There were three examples of these mixed bags of paints in Barbeau's CMHM/ROM collection alone (HN 1257, 1258 and 1259), about which he commented: "Bag of red paint (ANDE MAS = bag red paint). Old. Before operating, the doctor paints stripes with this paint on his wrists and on his face and on his body. The dark red paint is Gitksan native ochre; the brilliant red is white-man's paint".

Barbeau also mentioned the use of face painting by one of the female shamans he witnessed in Hazelton (BF.727.6): "face painted, across nose and cheeks, under eyes, a band of buff red, a crown of bear claws on her head; birds quills across crown, bear skin on back". Unfortunately, he seems to have made no attempt to determine why the face was painted, or what, if any, significance the design had. This lack is particularly frustrating and surprising since he did make such determinations for both clan tattoos and NAXNOX painted dancers.

A brief mention should here be made of colour symbolism. Again, as far as the Tsimshian shaman is concerned, these comments must be mostly speculative, as there is very little documentation in this regard, and most of that is cited above. The three main colours used by a shaman were red, black, and white - highly visible, distinct, and powerful pigments.

We know red ochre represented protection and power. It is possible that the actual chemical components of ochre have some healing, calming or enervating effects on the human body, which might account for its world-wide use in association with both healing and sacred rituals - to my knowledge, no research has been done on the possible physiological properties of ochres. The aspect of ochre usually noted is colour: ochres range across yellows and oranges and browns, but the most commonly used appears red. Red is the colour of blood, and blood (according to Cove 1987, referencing both the Tsimshian narratives and ethnographic reports) had great mystical potency. The Tsimshian used a soluble extract from alder bark to dye cedar bark and other materials red, and, mixed in water and held in secreted little skin bladders, as "fake" blood (much easier to clean up than real blood) in some of the more exciting secret society and NAXNOX demonstrations.

Red is also the colour of a liminal state: as the colour of blood and living tissue, it represents life when contained within the body, and death when removed from the body; it is the colour we "see" when we stand bathed in light with our eyes closed; it is the colour of our flesh, against the shadow of our bones, when we "see through" our bodies

with light. We are all bathed in blood red by our birth, and many are also bathed by it at death, so it is a marker for the great transition states of our physical existence. Illness also was a liminal state; shamans were liminal beings, known for their abilities to "see through" bodies to locate problems within: painting lines or designs on the face and/or body might not only have provided mystical protection to the participants, but might have marked them as being in a liminal state, and might also have united them within that state.

Red also implies warmth, as white implies cold, and black implies something in-between - in a state of rest, or absorption, or as charcoal, as having been consumed by (or transcended?) the destructive powers of heat. An informant told de Laguna (1960:77) that Tsimshian warriors painted their faces black with charcoal because "'When they put that on... they don't go back from their word'. That is blackening the face is like making a vow". She also described an old woman who painted her face black with stove ashes presumably because she "had known herself to be dying and had thus prepared herself for death to show that she was not afraid". Did shamans blacken their faces to show that they were not afraid, and that they would keep their word? Boas (above) described blackening the face with ashes from the House firepit to go to a grave site: was it the black colour that was most important, or the fact that it was ash, something that had been burned and thus sent ahead to feed the spirits in the land of the ghosts? Or was it the association with the House and its occupants (and ancestors) that was important?

Black was the usual colour for the main formlines in classic Tsimshian "abstract" artwork, with red usually used to denote secondary forms (Holm 1972; McNair 1984:27-42). In the radically different "X-ray" style (showing flat outer body form/inner body structures) generally associated with shamanic art, it is interesting to note that red is most often used as the primary colour, and black as the secondary (although what is "primary" in this style, in the sense of most important to highlight, varied with the intent of the artist, and can thus be difficult to determine). An interesting example of colour reversal and form alteration in shamanic art occurs on the carved and painted Nisga'a shaman's storage box (RBCM 1564, from Kitladamix, collected by C.F. Newcombe in 1918, full of shaman's goods) pictured in Plate 41. The style is a combination of abstract/X-ray, and the primary colour is red. Unfortunately, my photograph is poor, and does no justice to the striking impact this design has on the viewer (and overwhelming sense of attraction/uneasiness it quickly generates, at least in me).

And what of white? In regard to the Kwakiutl, Hawthorn (1967:116) noted "Red cedar bark was an integral symbol of the Tsetseka dance series. In the Bakoos, or non-supernatural, season, white bleached cedar bark and often feathers were used. The use of both red and white cedar bark indicated that the object was used in both seasons". For the Tsimshian, white usually symbolized Real-being in animals (eg. White Wolf, White Squirrel, and, as an unusual condition in nature, as a marker of NAXNOX and the supernatural. It is reported to be a symbol of peace and communication.

White is also the colour of smoke, which rises up into another realm, transporting something to the realm of the Chief of the Skys and into the domain of ghosts. Was this white smoke breathing strength into the souls there, like the breath of the shaman and the crown's nest of white eagle down infused the patient's soul with strength? Breath can only ever be clearly seen in the cold (when the land itself is often white with snow), and it then appears to be a sparkling white. White is the colour most things become when they go from transparent or invisible to visible: cold water into frost crystals or snow flakes; hot water into steam; water when raised into the sky as clouds, or descending to the earth as fog; the heat of a fire traced by smoke; quartz crystals when their alignment is disturbed and they "cloud". Thus could white symbolize a change of state or a movement into another realm? In much of the Tsimshian territory, the ground is white with snow in the winter - winter is the time of ceremonials, when people stay near their houses, and the spirits come closer. Is white seasonally associated with supernatural visitations, but, with these northern peoples, is the "white" season more naturally the snow season, the winter? Or is the association with protection? Or with vulnerability? Since white is associated with cleanliness and purity, and supernatural beings are attracted by cleanliness, are they also then attracted by the colour white itself? White is the colour of bones and teeth - those parts of a human body that are not consumed by fire, but endure. Is white then a symbol of endurance? Strength? Immortality? Are so many of the ATIASXW carved from bones and teeth because of these aspects of the material, or because of the colour - a soft, glowing white?

Perhaps all of the above. Perhaps none.

NECKLACE

A leather or cedar-bark thong was strung with bones, skins, beaks or entire heads of birds, paws of small animals, bear claws, horns, teeth and/or carved bone or ivory amulets, bells, coins - even wooden gambling sticks - and worn around the shaman's neck as a necklace. One of the functions of this necklace was to make a loud clattering noise when the shaman danced. It would also have a powerful visual effect on the patient, as it was a tool that hung close before the patient's eyes, and rested on or was pressed against the patient's body, during various of the doctor's diagnostic or healing practices. Also, like the shaman's crown, it was a distinctive and highly visible sign to all observers: an indicator that the person was a recognized medical authority. Examples of such necklaces can be seen in Plate 20 (middle RBCM 1580; lower RBCM 1579), and Plate 22 (CMHM/ROM HN 1255), and Plate 25 (MOA 9074 , 7961, and 9075) .

If the patient were also a shaman, then the patient (and sometimes the healer as well) would also wear a cedar-bark noose or ring around the neck, similar to the elaborate ones ("LU.I", BF.122.2) used by Tsimshian secret society initiates (Tens BF.727.8). One such ring is just visible in Plate 25, (upper right portion of bottom image). Barbeau (1958:43 plate 47) photographed a staged demonstration of such a treatment. One of the functions for these rings, within the dancing societies, was to provide protection to others from secret society members, or more appropriately from their possessing spirits: for example,

it was said (Boas 1916) that one could protect one's cherished property from the Destroyers, or one's favourite dog from the Dog-Eaters, by putting a red cedar-bark ring around the dog's neck or on the property. Similar neck-rings were also put around the necks of the secret society initiates during the winter ceremonies: the presence of the neck-rings indicated some level of possession by supernatural beings, and the removal of the final ring indicated that the person was only a human being again. What function these neck-rings had in shamanic work is not clear: did they protect the sick and weakened shaman from the supernatural powers of the healing shaman? Did they protect the healing shaman from the supernatural aides of the ailing shaman? Did they serve as tethers, keeping each shaman's powers in the appropriate body? Did they have the opposite effect, and allow the supernatural powers of the two shamans to unite in a joint healing effort? What was the significance of putting the ring around the neck, rather than, say, the forehead, wrist, or waist? These questions have not been addressed in the literature.

SOUL CATCHERS

There was another article that was usually worn on a thong around the neck, although the shaman sometimes kept it in a bag instead: the soul catcher. This was a thick, short (10-15 cm average length) tube, flared at the ends, made from bone, ivory or antler.⁴⁸ Two small holes were drilled in the top near the centre through which a thong, or string, or as in CMC VII-C-1569 (collected in 1937 from "the Skeena River" by H.C. Wrinch) several strings of beads were attached for suspension. The soul catcher was usually carved with the face of a spirit-being at both ends (the hollow tube becoming the mouth openings), and often had a human face or figure carved around the middle. Frequently, only the

⁴⁸ In response to my queries, experts at the CMC examined their soul-catcher collection, and determined that most of them were made from the bone of a sea mammal, very dense and extremely smooth, with an exceptionally high polish. The actual bone used was not identified, only that it was a bone containing marrow (which was always removed). A few, remarkable for their creamy whiteness, were identified as ivory, and a very few, less dense and darker, as antler or land mammal bone.

I have still not determined what bone from the mammal was used. Almost all the soul catchers have a pronounced, laterally symmetrical flare for the mouth, and it is this flare, given both the broad diameter of the bone and its relatively short length, which I find so intriguing. Long bones (those with marrow) do flare towards the joints in mammals, but the upper flare is normally at a ninety degree offset from the lower flare, whereas, for the soul catchers, the flared ends are virtually identical. It is possible that the piece is removed from the straight centre of a long bone and deliberately treated in some manner so that it can be shaped, as were both wood (for bent boxes and canoes) and mountain goat horns (for spoons). However, the molecular structure of bone is quite different from wood or horn, and would not lend itself easily to such treatment. My own experiments with long bones from land mammals proved fruitless - the bone, when softened and put under pressure, occasionally split up from the end, or curled up at the very tip, but I could never develop any appreciable curvature to the entire mouth area. The mystery remains.

outward facing side of the soul catcher was carved, with the back side remaining smooth but uncarved or only lightly or roughly incised; at other times, both sides were carved as mirrors of each other; in yet other cases, (for example VII-C-169) a complex three-dimensional design wrapped all the way around the soul catcher. These carvings were often most exquisitely done, many with inlays of abalone shell, and can be taken as masterpieces of Tsimshian art.

The spirit-beings were often described by collectors as being representations of Sisiutl, a water-dragon spirit of the Kwakiutl.⁴⁹ MacKinnon (1979), in her examination of Tsimshian charms, insists on this interpretation of the iconography. Although the resemblance to the Sisiutl description is striking,⁵⁰ I do not believe the Tsimshian thought of this as a representation of Sisiutl. They would of course have been familiar with the stories, and the design may have derived from that or been influenced by that, but Sisiutl is not a character in Tsimshian mythology or cosmology.

⁴⁹ Hawthorn (1967:133) says: "The Sisiutl, the double-headed serpent whose body was a face, played an important part in the [Kwakiutl] ritual of Winalagilis, the war spirit. This mythological creature was the warrior's assistant. It could be ridden and rowed like a canoe; its flesh was impervious to any spear; it could inflict instant death by its glance; and it could cause any enemy who looked upon it to be turned to stone, with all his joints turned backward".

⁵⁰ Holm (1972:57) says, again for the Kwakiutl: "The Sisioohl is a mythical creature usually represented in the form of a serpent with a face in the middle of his body. At each end was a head with a curled horn and nostril and a long, sharp tongue. It was a dangerous creature, capable of bringing harm or death to anyone coming upon it. At the same time, for the person who was properly prepared to deal with the Sisioohl, the acquisition of its scales, spines, or blood could bring great power. It is the frequent subject of stories and art".

I prefer the shamanic interpretation of the figures. As Guédon (1984) stressed, Tsimshian shamanism was largely centred on mouth-work (sucking, blowing), breathing and singing. As mentioned previously, in Tsimshian the word for breath is the same as for song, and the very term SWANASU derives, according to Beynon, who spelled it SWENSK. (BF.679.8) from "SWEN = blow; SK = actual act of blowing. The name is derived as when the HALAIT has finished his dancing over a patient he always will suck the portion of the body where the pain is and then blow this out through the smoke hole". Accordingly, mouth-as-portal was a major concept in their work - as reflected in the importance of the narrative shamanic character "Mouth-At-Both-Ends". Cove (1987:223) suggests that the supernatural beings on either end represented the two simultaneous realities of the working shaman (the mundane world of the sick patient and the supernatural realms of beings and powers), the hollow tube the portal between the two realms, and the figure in the middle the shaman, travelling freely in either realm, and controlling access between them - a compelling interpretation.

It is my belief that the spirit-being most often represented on these soul catchers is a supernatural killer whale. The wide-open mouth was usually depicted with a full set of upper and lower teeth exposed, and these teeth are usually uniform in size (as are those of a killer whale - canines are not overly extended). On most specimens, elegantly carved fins were depicted behind the head, and a dorsal fin above, with the shaman in the place of the flukes. These of course are only my interpretations - like much Northwest Coast art, the renditions are often deliberately ambiguous. The idea was suggested, not only

from the actual form of the carvings, which greatly resemble other depictions of killer whales, but also from some of the narratives, which speak of shamans being transported to the realms of other beings in canoes which transformed into killer whales. I am not the only person to make this association: several examples of soul catchers and charms representing soul catchers (mostly from the Nisga'a) were described by the collector Priestly (1913) as being designs of killer whales (eg. RBCM 9619). C.F. Newcombe in his 1913 collection notes that the being represented was "LAHIXWILA" (RBCM 1596), a supernatural monster of the sea. Beynon (BF.22.17) noted the comments of an informant Wallace in 1915:

LAQAX'WE.SA both ends/mouth (old sem.) 'mouth at both ends' made to represent the mouth of the 'NEXT at each end... Row of teeth; no tongue protruding. This is a general crest now used by all the Gispewudwada ... Originally it belonged to the salt water group it was not used by the Gidksidzo people originally; only by the recent generations who have mingled with the other Gispewudwada. It belonged originally to the Gitnaoonaks and the old salt water Gispewudwada ... the people of the salt water considered as a whole that the 'NEXT [killer whale canoe] was more distinctive of them than the MEDIOGOM [grizzly bear of the water]. More of the hills (Domnaxam) preferred the MEDIOK".

Thus it is possible that the design was influenced by a crest originally belonging to the "salt water people". As either a supernatural killer whale, or supernatural monster of the sea, it is most appropriate that soul catchers are usually made from large sea mammal bone.

Guédon (1984 and personal communication) has suggested that the soul-catcher is yet another representation of the land otter-canoe complex that appears in some narratives and

shamans' reports of their visionary experiences (see, for example, Tens BF.727.8). As a part of this complex, the soul-catcher would also have been a powerful spirit of a land otter or a canoe, with abilities to travel over or through land or water or air (Tens spoke of his canoe as being able to travel anywhere), which could transform, or be transformed by, the shaman's point of view (as required of the experience at any particular time). This also would be appropriate, as land otters were known to steal the souls of lost (particularly drowned) people. In this case, perhaps the shaman in the middle was not only travelling in his or her canoe, but was also controlling the land otter spirit, allowing it to capture and hold - but only temporarily - a human soul.

Land otters were especially significant to Tlingit shamans - the obtaining of a specific number of "living" land otter tongues, which were wrapped in cedar bark and kept on the shaman (usually in a necklace) was a necessary condition for becoming a shaman (de Laguna 1972). This practice, however, was not carried out by the Tsimshian, who allotted comparatively (to the Tlingit) little significance to the land otter. If the soul-catcher were, though, another transformation of the land otter, it is interesting that, unlike so many other representations of supernatural beings in the Tsimshian world, and unlike the Sisiutl, the soul-catcher is never shown with a tongue.

A final interpretation of the soul-catcher iconography is that it represents, as do so many other of the ATIASXW, the transformation of the shaman himself into another form of being. In this case, the "mouth at both ends" should not be seen as the two mouths of the

spirit-being, but rather as the mouth of the shaman for one end, and the mouths of the spirit being at the other end, in a somewhat unusual example of Tsimshian "split representational" style. The transformative aspect was particularly evident in one of the soul-catchers in the CMC collection - VII-C-22. When looked at quickly, it appears to be a soul-catcher with standard iconography, but ever so slightly off-centre. When looked at more closely, it is clear that the face of one of the spirit-beings is not simply that at all - it is also, when seen from a different perspective, a human face, with a cloaked (or bird?) body! This soul-catcher is not only unusual in design, it has an outstandingly high level of craftsmanship, and is quite beautiful to behold.

Within the Barbeau collection I viewed at the CMHM/ROM, there was another, very unusual, soul-catcher. HN 1234 had been seen as a grizzly bear "across rhubarb" (SQA-HAMAWQ which became the name of what Barbeau called "the bone charm collar") by the shaman Mrs. Samuel Johnson of Kispiox. She described her vision to her husband, and he (in about 1923) carved an image of the grizzly bear for her from a grizzly bear leg bone, in the style of an otherwise typical soul catcher - but one with clearly defined ears, canines, and front legs, and abalone insets instead of a face in the middle. Barbeau commented that a smaller charm of a bear (HN 1235 "ancient, and a fine carving") was originally attached to this. "Ermine skins are attached to the string, which is placed around the doctors neck. These skins are attached in this way only after the doctor has dreamed of these animals, which give him [the shaman to whom he was referring was a woman!] power. This bone charm is more for the show than otherwise, as only a few of the most

wealthy medicine-men own such. They are therefore considered precious". Although I have no doubt that they were considered precious,⁵¹ there are quite a number of them in the collections - so if his other statement is correct, there must have been quite a number of wealthy shamans.

There was only one exception that I saw to the rule that Tsimshian soul catchers were always made of bone, ivory, or antler, and that was the one large wooden "soul catcher" on public display at the Vancouver Museum, attributed to a Tsimshian shaman. This soul catcher was painted with standard killer whale iconography, rather than carved (the mouth was carved open). It would seem to be much more in the nature of MacKinnon's (1979:38) "southern tribe" (especially Kwakiutl) type of soul catchers, which she describes as being usually made of wood; styled along the lines of a long, thin box rather than a tube; highly painted; seldom inlaid; and much larger than the northern ones. This wooden soul catcher is shown in Plate 6.

Despite the name "soul catcher", which first seems to have been used by Emmons (MacKinnon 1979:55) (Barbeau catalogued all of his as "charms" or "bone tubes";

⁵¹ I so admired the beauty of these soul-catchers that I tried to make one for myself. The results, sadly, were not a soul-catcher, but the process provided useful technical information, as well as some insights (not the least of which being that I am no carver!). Barbeau was particularly keen to show that Tsimshian carvings such as these were derived from sailors' scrimshaw, which itself seems to have developed during whaling around Polynesia. I disagree with him, but there is much useful and interesting data on scrimshaw and bone carving in the BF files (BF.311-318), and comments on early contact experiences as well.

Newcombe called his "spirit catchers" or "charms"; Wrinch listed his as "soul traps"), we are not entirely certain of their use amongst the Tsimshian. Tubes for sucking out spirits were widely reported - and there are a number of simple, hollow bird-bone tubes ("bone sucking tubes") within the collections which might have been used for this purpose. Or, these "soul catchers" might have been used for that purpose. However, it is widely believed that these tubes were quite specifically used to trap and transport souls.

Soul loss was considered to be one of the major causes of illness amongst the Tsimshian, therefore soul retrieval was a necessary skill for much shamanic healing.⁵² When a shaman travelled to a spirit-realm in search of a patient's lost soul, the soul was sucked into this hollow tube, and the ends were plugged with cedar bark. The shaman thus could carry the soul safely back to the mundane world in this tube and, when the shaman had sufficiently strengthened the soul, it was blown back into the patient from this tube.

There was one other article in the collection (CMC VII-C-1574) that was also documented to be a shaman's "soul trap". It was a small net, described by the collector Wrinch as

⁵² Harrison (in Lillard 1984:163,178) reported that: "...the Zimsheans as well as the Haidas believed that the soul quitted its mortal abode before death actually occurred, and the tribal medicine men if paid for their trouble professed to have power to catch the soul, and restore it to the body that was about to die." He later specified that the soul was believed to depart "about forty-eight hours before death actually occurred". Harrison, who documented a wonderful store of information about Haida shamanism, also noted (p 168) that "Most of this information was obtained from the late Shaman KUTE, the last medicine man amongst the Haidas at Masset, and even then it was very difficult to obtain, as he considered that it was outside a European's province to interfere with him and his spirits by inquiries as to his methods."

"native fibre net, very small, mesh, very old" (CMC Collectors Files, 1937). This appears to be the only such example noted within the collections. Thus, if this net were also a soul trap, a Tsimshian shaman might have used more than one method to capture a lost soul. This was the only such net found (or at least the only one collected), and there were dozens of bone soul catchers in the collections ⁵³. Whether the frequency of collection correlates with the frequency of use of these artifacts, or more with the individual collector's penchant for a particular type of article (most of the soul catchers are strikingly beautiful, the net quite plain) cannot be known. However, the ethnographic descriptions, which speak of bone tubes (or occasionally, hands held together to form a tube) into which spirits were sucked and trapped, are compatible with the concept of a bone tube used to capture human souls.

Also quite common within the collections, but invariable classed as charms, were pieces of what had obviously once been soul catchers, but were now cut into several large pieces, frequently with a hole or a few holes drilled near the upper edge for attachment to a thong or a garment. Although they would indeed appear to be used as charms or ATIASXW, I have included them with the soul catchers instead, to emphasize their association with the functional soul catchers, and to differentiate them from the many

⁵³ MacKinnon (1979) notes that 23 out of 31 bone soul catchers she examined from the NWC were Tsimshian in origin (p 103); that of all shaman's charms (under which she included soul catchers) with known sources (total 1764) 23.5% were Tsimshian (p. 130); and that the overwhelming majority of all shaman's charms were "Northern" (Tsimshian, Tlingit or Haida) - 92.9% (p. 131). Her research indicates that the classic bone soul catcher was largely a Tsimshian phenomenon (the Haida being the next largest source), while most small carved bone charms came from the Tlingit.

other forms of charms which seem to be miniature representations of soul catchers. Examples of miniature soul catcher charms can be seen in Plates 18 and 26. . Examples of soul catcher pieces can be seen in Plate 14 (RBCM 9547). Similar charms are in the CMC collection (eg. VII-C-196, VII-C-199).

A soul catcher is almost invariably a beautifully made piece, which must have taken a great deal of time to create. Also, as noted above, they were "considered precious". Thus, I was very puzzled to find what were clearly examples of several of these soul catchers cut to pieces! The pieces were not of random shape or size, so could not be simply pieces that had broken off of soul catchers (some soul catchers did have small pieces missing, usually a part of the jaw, where the material was thinnest and extensively worked). These were very neatly cut rectangles. I also did not believe that they represented a deliberate destruction of soul catchers for reasons of religious conversion: although the actual soul catcher was destroyed by the act, the pieces themselves, with their carefully drilled holes and smoothed edges, were obviously still used for some purpose, and were classified as shamanic charms. Not at any time, in any piece of documentation anywhere, have I found any explanation for why soul catchers were cut up.

Accordingly, I have a few suggestions of my own. Reflecting the same form of logic that Cove (1987) said allowed the secret societies to all share in the NAXNOX power transferred to them by the WIHALAIT, and, perhaps even more, the same logic that allowed for the re-incarnation of a person into more than one "host" body simultaneously,

the giving of a charm by a shaman to a patient may have transferred the activated protective power to that patient, while still within the shaman's control (so that the power itself did not overwhelm the patient). This sharing of power was perhaps most strikingly demonstrated with the "broken" soul catchers. Cutting apart an artifact as ostensibly powerful as a soul catcher could represent an attempt at destruction or dismantling of its power - but this does not correspond with the pieces then being made into charms. Instead I propose a model from modern technology: the hologram. If a hologram is broken into one or multiple pieces, the image is not "broken"; each piece will still contain a complete image. Even if the pieces are very tiny, the image will be, perhaps not quite as distinct as the original, but certainly as complete. This same principle when applied to the pieces of the soul catcher would make cutting them up analogous to replicating, in each, the power of the whole.

There may be an alternate explanation, analogous to cutting up coppers. Cove (1987) spoke of coppers being cut up to "release souls"; many others have spoken of coppers being "killed" at feasts to increase their value. Either concept could apply here, but the one that is most appealing for a soul catcher is of course for the release of souls. Cove did not go into detail on how the copper souls are released, or whether they return to people or to ghosts. Since souls captured in the soul catcher were blown back into the body during the healing ceremony, they did not remain trapped in the soul catcher, so would not need to be released by cutting. However, the psychopomp aspect of the Tsimshian shaman remains largely unknown. Perhaps if a patient died while under a

shaman's care, this being an 'unnatural' death, the shaman stored the soul safely within the bone of the soul catcher for release at a later time when the 'unnaturalness' of the death had been overcome, or until the soul catcher became 'full' (as might well happen during epidemics). The resultant pieces of the soul catcher could have then been refashioned into even more powerful charms (as they had guarded souls for so long), to be worn by either the shaman or other of the shaman's patients.

WHISTLES

In all the collections except one (at the CMHM/ROM, see below) there are simple, long, thin bird-bone tubes that are also called "soul catchers". Sometimes these are flat at the ends and undecorated, although often they have slightly pointed V-shaped ends, in the general form of the soul catchers, and have shallow, basic incising (for example, round dots for "eyes"). They all have a small unusually shaped hole (somewhat hourglass) at the centre top, with a metal pin across it, around which a thong is often attached for hanging (see Plate 23). I do not believe that these are soul-catchers at all; I believe they are whistles.

I make this claim for three reasons. First, it would make no sense to make a "trap" for a soul out of a thin bone with a large hole in the top, especially one with a design and location so difficult to plug (the classic soul catchers also have two holes in the top surface, but they are very small, and are effectively blocked by the suspension cord). Second, Hilary Stewart (1973:150) described and drew pictures of bird bone whistles which look exactly like these bone "soul catchers". She says "Like the drinking tubes of ceremonial use, these whistles were simply a long hollow bone of a bird, perhaps a heron, with a single perforation in the centre made by incising. With careful tongue and finger manipulations, they were made to produce a whistling sound". She also mentioned a rare two-holed whistle which sounded like a loon (all of those I saw had only one hole).

Third, and most significantly, two collectors identified examples in each of their collections as "whistle". At the RBCM, there are two examples, purchased by Newcombe in 1913 from two separate collectors. Each artifact is identified simply as "bone whistle" : #1598, part of the Thorkildson collection; #1579, part of the Priestly collection (both collections comprising a significant number of shamanic artifacts). In addition, Barbeau catalogued one for the special medical collection now housed at the CMHM/ROM. HN 1261 describes a "Bone whistle (HAGWIYUK), made from the wing bone of a crane (TAWLQAWQU). Very old. Used by medicine-men when doctoring a patient. Note - IIIII - the five marks along-side, which may mean the number of owners in succession", (which is reported, for CMC VII-C-779 and in BF.7.13, to be the meaning of such lines when incised into drinking tubes used in girls' puberty rituals).

The use of specially constructed wooden whistles, carved by the GITSONKT to make a variety of very specific NAXNOX sounds for secret society initiations and NAXNOX demonstrations, has been widely documented, and there are quite a number of such whistles in the collections. Shamans, however, have not been reported as using whistles. Yet, there is no reason why they should not - the aural aspects of shamanic performances - the singing, the drumming, and the peculiar sound of the rattles - seem central to every shamanic endeavour. I propose that, perhaps like the shaman's mirror, these bone whistles have previously been mis-classified, and actually highlight an aspect of Tsimshian shamanism that has been ignored because we presumed it did not exist.

CAPES

Tied around the shoulders and falling down the back was the shaman's robe, cloak or cape - QUIS'A'UL (Barbeau VII-C-1034). This was usually made of black bear skin or the skin of the animal that was the shaman's main supernatural aide. As mentioned previously, the Tsimshian concepts of skin were complex, and related to transformations in states of being. The narratives are full of stories of people who obtained specific powers of an animal while wearing its skin (eg don a cloak made from raven feathers and fly away): if ordinary people could occasionally tap into these powers in this way, a shaman, being much more experienced in transformations, must have derived great power from donning this robe. For a shaman, the powers did not seem to be specific to the type of cloak: i.e. one did not don a feather cloak to travel to air realms, then a salmon skin cloak to travel under water, etc. As with the Prince in the Metlakatlan myth (BF. 116.1), one skin cloak seemed to serve all transformation purposes. Although different shamans preferred different types of skins, the most popular appears to have been bear skin (although no explanation for this is given; thus it probably has a meaning that everyone within that culture "knows", so it need never be stated). Usually the animal's fur was left attached, and often the inside was lined with cloth; occasionally, the skin was cleaned, and the remaining leather painted with some shamanic decoration. There was also an example (CMC VII-C-813) of a cape made from a mountain goat skin, collected by Barbeau in 1920 from the shaman GAMCECI'L of Kisgegas. Barbeau noted "sometimes the medicine

man uses the goat, and sometimes the bear skin for his ritual performances. There were several examples of skin robes at the RBCM which may have been used by shaman, including #7229 (bearskin from Kispiox); #7230 and # 16217 (wolf skins from Kispiox), and #7261 (robe of rabbits feet, from Hazelton).

There was an unusually elaborate and very beautiful wolf skin cloak on display at the Vancouver Museum, which I photographed (see Plates 4 and 5). This cloak was said to have belonged to a Tsimshian shaman, a woman named MAICHL-LAT-QUOR, and was donated to the museum, with several other pieces of her regalia, in 1911. Although it is much larger and fancier than the usual skin robe, the presence of the vertically-attached ermines standing watch by the shaman's shoulders is certainly a shamanic motif.

APRONS

This is another category of paraphernalia where it is almost impossible to tell shamanic from non-shamanic without specific information from the owner. Dance aprons (AMBELAN - Barbeau 1958 and Smith VII-C-1186) were worn, it seems, by all shamans; they were also worn by secret society members, NAXNOX performers, and chiefs - basically, anyone who did any dancing. There is every indication that shamanic paraphernalia was not used for any other purpose, so a shaman who was also a dancer would have two separate aprons (see, for example, the photographs mentioned previously of Charles Mark in Barbeau (1958). As a very general guide, if a dance apron coordinated with dance leggings, it would be a non-shamanic outfit. Equally, if a dance apron displayed House crests, it also would be non-shamanic garb. And finally, if an apron were made of leather, and not painted with a crest design, it probably would be a shaman's apron (particularly if, as in RBCM 14330 it was decorated with shamanic bone "charms").⁵⁴

Dance aprons served three main purposes: they covered the genitals (although this was more likely for warmth or protection than from any Western sense of body modesty, a belief that the Tsimshian did not share); they provided a large surface for colourful,

⁵⁴ Cloth aprons were used by both in later years; early dancer's aprons were often made of woven cedar bark.

personalized decoration, and, perhaps most importantly, they provided points of attachment (particularly when fringed) for a multitude of little noisemakers. Puffin bills, pieces of deer hooves, thimbles, bells, Chinese coins - and on shaman's aprons, carved ATIASXW - were all incorporated. These noisemakers effectively enhanced even the slightest movement of the dancer, and contributed an aural, as well as a visual, aspect to the movements. For the shaman, the attachment of ATIASXW, and the painting of shamanic designs on some of these aprons, made them more intensely personal, and more obviously shamanic.

There were a number of examples of "shaman's aprons" in the collections, but this classification must be viewed with caution, since the "shamans" in these cases were frequently only dancers, and, as mentioned before, most shamans would also be some level of dancer as well. Those that were part of a larger collection of shamanic materials, or that were specified as being used in healing ceremonies, provide the surest examples of shamanic aprons. There are three aprons in the CMC collection that are specified as being shamanic: VII-C-1186 (collected by C.V. Smith, VII-C-1436 collected by H.I. Smith, and VII- C-1538, collected by H.C. Wrinch). RBCM 1571 is also specified as being a shaman's dance apron, being part of a full set of shamanic regalia collected by C.F. Newcombe from Kitladamix in 1913.

DRUMS

For Eliade (1964), the defining tool of shamanism was the drum, which became the "horse" the shaman rode upon, or the "canoe" the shaman or the supernatural aides rode in, to travel to and from the spirit worlds. The Tsimshian were somewhat of an exception: although the skin drum was an essential element in shamanic rituals, the vital tool for the Tsimshian shaman was the rattle. Nevertheless, the round skin drum, widely referred to as the "shaman's drum" based on style rather than use, was present at every healing ceremony.

Barbeau (VII-C-891) said the "medicine man's drum" was known as the " 'AN.UT " and the drumstick was the "SOGANTHUT". Unlike the huge wooden box drum used by the dancers, the shaman's drum was small enough to be held by one hand, and beaten by the other - and it was beaten, not by the shaman, but by one of the assistants. Hart (1990) suggested that the function of the drum was not so much to guide the shaman throughout his or her journey, as it was to serve as a tether or sonic pathway to guide the shaman back home. The drum beat, a very powerful auditory driver, would also function to entrain the entire audience (there might be large numbers of people at a healing), and focus their attention on the task at hand.

These drums were single headed frame drums. The round frame was often made of willow or yellow cedar, and the skin head was of caribou, beaver, deerskin, or moosehide (collection notes) held to the frame by thongs. There were two cross-pieces of leather thongs or wood on the back of the drum, which served as handles. Sometimes puffin bills were attached to these cross-pieces, to make the drum rattle when moved (but this style, common amongst the Inuit shamans, was rare amongst the Tsimshian). As with most other shamanic articles, little is said in the literature about who made the drum: some were hand-made by the shamans who used them, while others seemed to be commissioned works.⁵⁵ It is possible that the creation of the Tsimshian drum was similar to this description by Hart (1990:171-172) of the creation of the Khakass (Russian) shaman's drum:

"In a trance [the shaman] receives special instructions from 'the masters of the holy mountain', which he then imparts to the members of his tribe who are responsible for building the drum. These instructions are precise and detailed and include the location of the tree that is to furnish the wood for the drum's body, how the animal that will furnish the skin is to be killed, what sort of pendants are to be fastened to the drum, and how the handle

⁵⁵ Mickey Hart (1990) (drummer for the Grateful Dead) has written a fascinating book on the history and phenomenology of drums and drumming, brimming with anthropological titbits. He gives a description of his first, and only, attempt to make a drum, a process he admits he might never have completed without the assistance of his young "students" at a summer camp. They were following the instructions to make an Ojibwa pow-wow drum: "OBTAIN THE HIDE OF TWO-YEAR-OLD STEER. That's a simple sentence to read, but it doesn't even begin to convey the reality of a sixty-pound hunk of steerhide, dripping with blood, with big gobs of fat still clinging to it. The kids didn't blink an eye, but it nearly made me sick, and it sure depressed me as I contemplated the amount of work it was going to take to reduce this formless bloody mass into a finely stretched and tuned membrane". It took the group two weeks; the personal creation of a drum is a significant endeavour.

is to be fashioned. It is vital that the wood for the body of the drum and the handle be procured in such a way that the trees that furnish them are unharmed. If the tree dies, it is considered a very bad omen ... once the drum has been fashioned, the process begins that will slowly awaken it as an instrument of power ... The skin of the drum is decorated with symbols of the shaman's world map ... these represent not only his allies, but familiar landmarks he will encounter while entranced. Once the world map has been drawn, the shaman begins to play an active part in the drum's awakening. Entrancing himself, he begins seeking the soul of the animal whose skin now covers his drum. He searches in the animal's favourite grazing spots, even locates the place where the animal was born, and eventually he captures the wandering soul ... When the shaman's drum dies, so does the shaman's power, and frequently so does the shaman".

When I originally began looking at artifacts, I thought that drums would be the most clear-cut category of artifacts to identify as shamanic: chiefs and dancers drums were large wooden box drums; the small skin drums were used only by shamans. I maintained that belief until I started looking at the photographic collection in the RBCM: there, to my horror, were a number of pictures of people using skin drums to accompany dancers, and, even worse, using "shamans" skin drums in parades, to accompany the brass band section! It is probable that the use of these drums in non-shamanic ways was a post-contact phenomenon resulting from missionary influence and especially religious conversion, but I hold that as belief, not fact. Meanwhile, unless specified as being used by a shaman (as opposed to "a shaman's drum", which often refers only to style), one cannot be certain that any particular one of these drums is actually shamanic. Even decorative style is not a fool-proof indicator - some of the photographs (unfortunately I did not note the reference numbers) showed drums with "shamanic" decoration being used in non-shamanic ways, while some of the drums used in shamanic healings had no decorations at all (eg CMC VII-C-891).

Some of the shaman's drums included within the CMC collection are:

VII-C-758 - (part of a shaman's kit) deer skin drum with band of red paint around the upper edge.

VII-C-1387 - collected by Barbeau in 1927 from Kispiox, it is painted in multiple colours with a red band, a central face, and four humanoid forms radiating out in four directions.

VII-C-1441 - a moose skin drum, with a red band painted around the edge.

These three shaman's drums were collected by H.C. Wrinch from "The Skeena River" in 1937:

VII-C-1532 - Concentric red and green circles radiate out from the centre, with the border comprising "eyes painted with red triangles".

VII-C-1533 - drum painted with a red, blue, brown and yellow rainbow design around the upper three-quarters of the drum's surface.

VII-C-1534 - drum painted with orange outer round boarder, blue inner zig-zag border, blue inner circle with orange surround, and four blue lines radiating out from the inner to the outer circles.

SOUNDING BOARDS

In addition to the drum beat, rhythm and noise were also produced by the audience beating on sounding boards. In the narrative of Only-One, the Great Shaman (Boas 1916:332), these boards were described as running "in through the door like serpents, and each laid itself on one side of the large fire. Then weasel batons ran along behind the boards ... the weasel batons began to beat of themselves". The narrative of The Great Sorcerer (Cove and MacDonald 1987:120) gave the most complete description of them:

These boards were folded up and he [the supernatural being] straightened them, shaking them at the people on each side of the house for them to bite. The little boy was thunderstruck at these beautiful boards; they were carved, there were skins on them. All kinds of ghosts and animals were carved on them. Then he got the sticks for them to play with and they were beautifully carved.

Although the use of the sounding boards and idiophones was mentioned in most descriptions of shamanic healing (and also in dances), little other information was provided about them; I am not sure whether they were normally a part of the shaman's regalia, or if they were the property of the House of the patient, and borrowed for the healing. The narratives imply the former, but the ritual descriptions imply the latter, especially since they were normally beaten by House members, and only the shaman or the attendants touched shamanic regalia.

I did not find examples of these boards in the collections. Although the narratives describe some of them as elaborate, the ritual descriptions (for example Barbeau B.727.6) leave the impression that they were just planks of wood, suitable for many uses within the House. This impression is reinforced by their absence from any of the collections - no one would have much motivation to collect a plain plank, in an environment filled with plain planks. They were also described as being beaten with sticks; there were several examples of plain sticks in the collection, usually specified as being drum sticks. There were also artifacts called "clappers", which may have been sounding board beaters, but would seem to be efficient noise makers in their own right. They were usually long wooden batons, split in two, hollowed out and attached by cedar bark bindings at the handle; they made a clapping noise when tapped on a surface. They were also usually elaborately carved with crest figures, so it is probable that they were used as House property in feasts (and therefore would not be used for shamanic purposes). Plate 31 shows an unpainted (perhaps unfinished) clapper on display at the RBCM.

Barbeau (BF.727.6:19-20), describing the healing he witnessed, said at one point:

Now the din had reached an intense volume; gradually increasing. I counted twelve sticks beating the boards heavily; almost everyone present beating time; four rattles, the drum now in the hand of a woman beating very heavily; could barely hear the voices ... remarkable pauses at rare intervals; drumming would sudden in unison stop; we heard the voice lowered then some words as if in prayer. Then drum rattles and sticks would all beat once beat boom clap, then the voices would in unison sing in curves of lower tones; and stop; drum and sticks would then beat twice: boom, boom! and the monotonous regular beats and song resumed.

RATTLES

As previously mentioned, the defining tool for the Tsimshian shaman was the rattle - all shamans were reported to use at least one, and they were central to the shaman's work. Guédon (1984), in her etymological analysis, suggests that both rattles and the HALAIT conditions were associated through the word HALHAL meaning spinning top, and that an experienced shaman could shake and twirl the rattle so fast that the rattle itself seemed to be alive. It is especially interesting that she claims these rattles were twirled, not simply shaken, an action that produces a unique "swushing" sound quite different phenomenologically from the sound of a shaken rattle. Twirling a rattle requires a very different type of motion than shaking one: Barbeau (BF.727.6:19) reported just such a motion by the most senior of the shamans whose practice he witnessed: "has curious side elbowed motion of the rattle in his right hand". Once a well-balanced rattle were spinning, it could indeed appear to be moving of its own accord. The narratives also support such a style, as the rattles are reported to move as if they were alive.

The main function of the rattle was to make noise, which they can do quite effectively, despite their small size: a well-worked rattle can produce sound measured at upwards of 100 decibels (well above the 90 decibels at which hearing protection is recommended for

prolonged exposure).⁵⁶ Rattles produce noises at a range of frequencies simultaneously (as opposed to drums which produce low frequency sounds, or whistles which produce high frequency sounds, or at least clear notes), which makes them both irritating and compelling to hear. Combined with the fact that the shaman's rattle was always close (within arm's reach, and often right by the shoulder) to the shaman's ear, and was also rattled over the body and around the head of the patient, the penetrating forces of the rattle's sounds and rhythms would be overwhelming.

Guédon (personal communication) has indicated that the sound of these rattles might serve as the sound of the spirit voices for the shaman. It is interesting, in this regard, that the rattle was always held and used by the shaman, not the assistants, and Barbeau (BF.727.6:15) noted that the rattle was "shaken in different rhythm from that of beats of sticks", as would be appropriate if it were serving a different purpose.

Guédon (1984) also suggested that the rattle was associated with the term "to wake up", and it is this concept that I have come to believe might have been the most important with reference to the songs and the nature of the shaman's ATIASXW. The shaman, I believe, used the rattle to "wake up" the ATIASXW which had been sleeping in storage since their last use. I will explore this idea in depth in a later section.

⁵⁶ From the "Sound Report" 91-0368, December 15, 1993 of the Scientific and Laboratory Services Division, Product Safety Bureau, Health Canada. They note therein that the "threshold of hearing is 0 dB... the threshold of pain is 130 dB", and that the human ear is sensitive to a range of frequencies from 20 Hz to 20 000 Hz.

There were rattles represented in all of the collections. Unfortunately, rattles presented the same problems for identification and classification as did aprons: they were used not only by shamans, but also by chiefs, and some NAXNOX and secret society dancers. Please see Plates 32 to 40 for examples of various types of rattles.

Some rattles were easy to classify: the classic raven rattle, for instance, was a chief's dancing rattle, and was not used for shamanic purposes. As noted previously, they have sometimes been referred to as shaman's rattles, but they were not.⁵⁷

The classic Tsimshian shaman's rattle was also generally easy to identify. This style had a large globular "head", usually plain but sometimes carved like a spirit face, or painted with a shamanic design, which was supported on a narrow, flared handle. The rattle was usually carved from a single split piece of hollowed out wood (usually maple); tiny stones or shot were placed in the hollow head as noisemakers, and the unit was sealed at the sides and through the handle with resin and pegs or bound with leather or cedar-bark thongs..

⁵⁷ Beynon (BF-7.14) quotes Jos. Starr in 1947 regarding the chief's WIHALAIT rattle (raven rattle): "Different from the rattle of the SWENSK HALAIT. The rattle would represent his crest, the more common type using the figure on the back of a bird with the human being shown as having a protruding tongue which is sucked by a frog if of the raven clan, by small bear if of the GISPOUNDWADA clan; by the GASGOS (stork) if of the LAXGIBU; and by a beaver figure if of the LAXSKIK clan". He also said that the initiation season was known as the "GWENDOSOMHALAIT - arrival on earth HALAIT". Unfortunately he did not give any names for the different rattles mentioned. CMC catalogue card for VII-C-1394 tells the story of the creation of the first raven rattle.

Even within this classic design, there was a lot of variation in size, shape and specific construction details, so that rattles could be grouped according to several criteria:

- . overall size (large, medium, small, tiny)
- . shape of head (round, oval, square, angular)
- . the presence or absence of a "lip" around the central join of the rattle (absent, thin (on side edge only), thick (on side and upper edge))
- . the presence or absence of a "collar" where the handle joined the head
- . the shape of the handle (tapered, cylindrical or flared)
- . the shape of the joint along the handle (straight split, "U" shape, complex insert)
- . the shape of the end of the handle (truncated, tapered, indented)
- . the styling around the end of the handle (none, grooved, grooved and drilled)
- . the presence or absence of small holes drilled in a pattern on one or both faces of the rattle.

I was unaware of these differences when I first began studying these rattles, and was much more caught up in the differences and similarities between plain globular rattles, painted rattles, incised and painted rattles, and the deeply carved and decorated rattles, which form a continuum between shamanic and non-shamanic categories. When I did finally notice these aspects, and saw them repeated on the other forms of rattles as well, I hoped that I might use them to localize styles, trace an evolution over time, perhaps isolate individual artists, or owners, or clarify the nature of use by finding identifiers separating shamanic from non-shamanic creations. Unfortunately, I was unable to do this

to any useful extent with the time and resources available to me, exacerbated by the grossly inadequate information provided by most collectors on owner, maker, nature of use, and even site of acquisition (an ascription of "Northwest Coast, probably Tsimshian" does not narrow the field much!).

I had hoped to find perhaps another clue as to whether a rattle was shamanic or non-shamanic by examining the Tsimshian terminology, whenever it was recorded. This also proved inconclusive. Barbeau and Beynon, the best sources for such terms, noted several similar terms for rattles, with the most common being "HAS.E.X" (VII-C-989). The artist (and amateur collector) K. Seligmann has noted on the backs of two photographs of Mrs. Gows collection, Hazelton, (CMC Seligmann file) "HASHEM TSAOUTS" for bird rattles and "HASHEM SWANESRH" for round rattles (Photo K Seligmann 1938). So if there was definitive terminology designating shamanic rattles, it has not been clearly recorded.

I did find a few interesting details or unique styles, that call out for further research. The overall shape of the handle, and size of the head, proved significant in determining how the rattle was probably worked. Those that lent themselves most easily and effectively to the twirling motion ascribed to shamans had comparatively large heads (round or square seemed equally effective, as long as the heads were heavy), and long handles with a pronounced flare at the end. The large head allowed the development of good momentum to the twirl, while the flare stabilized the rattle in the hand - rattles with tapered handles

tended to try to work their way up and out of the hand once any significant rotation was established. An example of a rattle with a functionally satisfying design is CMC VII-C-1204, a plain globular rattle collected in 1925 "from Kispayaks" by C.V. Smith.

Other rattles were equally obviously designed to be shaken, not twirled - most notably the chief's dancing rattles - raven rattles and NAXNOX rattles, which frequently had tapered handles and usually were asymmetrically weighted, with most of the mass at the front of the rattle. Some of the more elaborate dance rattles were in pairs (eg VII-C-5 and -10, two woodpecker rattles collected from Metlakatla in 1879 by Dr. I.W. Powell, who called them "medicine rattles") and VII-C-339 and -340 (two bear rattles also collected in 1879 by Dr. I.W. Powell.) These last two (VII-C-339 and -340, shown in Plate 33) were amongst my favourites, for several reasons. First, they were excellent examples of artistic skills - both the carving and the painting were masterful. Second, they were "feel good" rattles - the little spirit beings riding between the ears of the bears, both from their broad smiles and their "hang on" body postures, seemed to be having a remarkably good time, and that feeling was contagious when the rattles were put into motion. Third, they provided an excellent example of the difficulties of functional classification, and even cultural ascription. These two rattles, although hand-made, are virtually identical to each other. More significantly, they are exceptionally similar to other such rattles (minus the spirit beings) on display at the MOA - and attributed to the Haida. They are also virtually identical to the rattle pictured in Macnair, Hoover & Neary (1984:48), also attributed to the Haida, and particularly to Haida shamans (p 154). Macnair's description of the

relevant characteristics of Haida sculpture (p 46) versus the relevant characteristics of Tsimshian sculpture (p 48),⁵⁸ lend strong support to the argument that these rattles are Haida, not Tsimshian, although the ones I photographed were designated as both Tsimshian and shamanic. The fact that there are several copies of these rattles with virtually identical design would indicate that they were crest/NAXNOX rattles, and not the highly individualized designs of the Tsimshian shamans.

Several rattles of different types shared a style that I came to identify as the "Hazelton handle", as most examples seem to have been collected around Hazelton. The end of these rattles was usually wrapped with a thong or a string, which was threaded through a hole drilled through the tip of the rattle, and lay in a small groove incised across the end of the handle. In some cases, a long thong or string handle was also attached, which could fit around the wrist. This would allow the rattle to hang from the wrist, so that the user could rest his or her hand (rattling is hard work for the hands, wrists and forearms) without having to lay the rattle down.

⁵⁸ McNair says for the Haida "the eyebrows cover more than half of the forehead; the eye-socket is usually ovoid and smoothly concave; the eyelid line is carved in prominent relief; a flat, sloping cheek is evident; and the lips are thick and broad". The Tsimshian style he describes as "refined and sensitive, expressing a smoothly transitional flow between facial features. Eyebrows are arched and relatively thin. The forehead slopes back. The orbit is open and softly rounded, the eyelid is incised but lacks a defining line around the edges". He continues to quote Holm "the upper cheek, forecheek and cheek planes intersect to form a truncated, rounded pyramid. The mouth is fairly wide and the lips thin. In many examples the chin is short from top to bottom ... sculptural form creates a serene countenance ... an impression of skin pulled tightly over muscle and bone".

The style of the split/join line in the handle varied both between different examples of shamanic rattles, and across the categories of shamanic/non-shamanic rattles. In all cases, the split/join through the head of the rattle was straight, horizontal and laterally central. This was not true of the handles. The most common design of handle split/join was simply a straight horizontal line through the middle from the tip to the head of the rattle. Some rattles, however, had a "Z" split/join when viewed laterally, (eg. VII-C-114, a raven rattle called a "medicine rattle" by Dr. Powell) and a few even had a "U" split/join (eg. VII-C-149, a startling hawk-faced woman rattle called "shamanic" by the collector W.A. Newcombe, but more likely to be a NAXNOX rattle). The more complex the split, the more difficult it would have been to execute, but the more secure the join would have been. There were even examples in the collections of a very complex handle, including CMC VII-C-2322, shown in detail in Plates 38-40. In these, there was the usual horizontal split down the middle. However, there was an additional "U" split on the upper side, between the lower part of the handle and the upper part (attached to the head). The advantage of this style was that the upper surface of the head could be slid out (to replace noisemakers?) with comparative ease, and then re-inserted into a firm joint. Although these complex handles may well have been the special style of only one artist or group of artists, I was unable to confirm this.

The most difficult area within which to differentiate shamanic from non-shamanic were the decorated rattles, particularly the round rattles and the bird rattles. Sometimes these were just called rattles; other times they were specified as being shamans rattles;

occasionally they were called dancers, chiefs, or ceremonial rattles. No certain attribution can be made without direct substantiation from a knowledgeable user (which was seldom documented, or at least seldom catalogued). However, certain generalizations can be made, derived partly on what is known about the use of similar rattles in other Northwest Coast culture groups, and what is known of other Tsimshian ceremonial practices.

As mentioned previously, these decorated rattles can be grouped in such a way as make clear a continuum, or gradation, from less to more. However, there are at least four ways in which these groupings can be effected: one is by the physical "depth" of the decoration (ranging from surface painting to full 3-D plastic sculpting); second, the level of artistic skill displayed (ranging from very crude to masterful); third, the level of stylization (naturalistic to highly abstract); fourth, the elaboration of a "theme" (eg bird faces, human faces, animal faces, faces with halos, transformation images). Examples of some of these groupings are presented in the attached Plates.

Drawing heavily upon the descriptions and illustrations in Boas (1895), Gunther (1962), Hawthorne (1956) and Macnair, Hoover and Neary (1984), the following generalizations can be advanced, to supplement the sketchy artifact documentation. Round or oval shaped rattles, painted or painted and carved in shallow relief, with large halos around them, were typically used by the southern Northwest Coast tribes in their secret society dances, and were most likely imported and transformed by the Tsimshian with these dances. Thus such rattles are most likely to be HALAIT rattles used by dancers, but not by shamans.

Examples of such rattles are CMC VII-C-1787 and VII-C-1794 from Kispiox (despite being called "typical Gitksan shaman's rattle" in Lord Bossom's collection notes). For comparative purposes, see the Kwakiutl dancers rattle illustrated in Boas (1895:437) "Rattle of HE'LIG.A, set with red cedar bark, representing a conventionalized face ... collected by Jacobsen".

The classic raven rattles were used by chiefs. However, there is a range of rattles that are clearly not classic raven rattles, but are nonetheless bird-shaped rattles. It is probable that many of these were HALAIT rattles belonging to NAXNOX dancers, as birds of various sorts were often demonstrated as NAXNOX (masks were always noted as part of a NAXNOX costume, rattles only occasionally). Some birds were also crests; although it is probable that most crest representations of birds were the more elaborate "abstract" style found on round rattles, some crest figures might have been depicted in this more naturalistic manner. In this case they would have been used as HALAIT rattles at initiations. Finally, they could have been shamanic rattles. Many of these rattles (eg. VII-C-1577) strongly resemble the Tlingit "oyster catcher" rattle, which was reported (Crossroads of Continents exhibition, CMC 1993) to be the rattle of choice of Tlingit shamans. Others more strongly resemble the water bird rattles of the Nootka or the Salish (which became particularly evident in the displays at the MOA). And some might well be intended to be a portrayal of one of the shaman's supernatural aides - cranes being particularly popular in the narratives. Since any one of the above HALAIT uses was glossed as shamanic by the collectors, it is very difficult to be sure that any "medicine

man's rattle" really was used by a shaman - unless it is described as being part of an actual (not a NAXNOX) shamanic ritual, or is designated as shamanic by one who was actually a shaman.

Other rattles that are equally hard to classify are rattles with faces. Many rattles classified as shamanic have a human face on one side, and frequently another face, often a bird face, on the other side - and these rattles are usually carved in full 3-D representational style, and are frequently brightly painted (a feature of HALAIT rattles that were not shamanic). Some of these rattles bear a strong resemblance to the "skull" rattles used by the Kwakiutl in their HAMATSA rituals, and may well have been influenced by them, and used in Tsimshian secret society rituals. Boas (1895) noted rattles similar to the two-faced design in use in southern dancing society ceremonies. NAXNOX "transformation" dances might also have been reinforced by such rattles. Some human face rattles portray an "emergence" theme; since there are several very similar examples of this style, it is more probable that they were associated with House NAXNOX and similar forms of HALAIT than with shamans. Again, the attribution of "shamanic" to any of these rattles should not be accepted without question.

Finally, there are the decorated round rattles. These are often slightly smaller than the classic shaman's rattle, sometimes with flared handles, sometimes with tapered ones. They are frequently carved in low relief, often with the posterior surface done in classic NWC abstract style. Painting is frequently limited or non-existent. Some, for example VII-

C1203 and VII-C-215 are outstanding examples of the carver's mastery of both the medium and the form. Others, such as the owl rattle (VII-C-945)⁵⁹ carved by the shaman Isaac Tens are most kindly described as "crude" executions. Some of those (especially with the more abstract design) may well have been chief's rattles, used in their NAXNOX demonstrations of healings. Others, still of superb craftsmanship, might have been the possessions of shamans who were wealthy enough to purchase, or personally skilled enough to create, such impressive artworks. Again, one should be circumspect when classifying these rattles as shamanic.

Rattle CMC VII-C-215 provides an excellent example of the possible types and levels of confusion that can occur around these rattles. It is catalogued simply as a "shaman's rattle", collected by W.A. Newcombe in 1905 from Kitladamicks Village on the Nass River. It is a unique and beautiful rattle, intricately carved in shallow relief on both sides, with images of spirit beings surrounding a humanoid figure. It appears to be the same rattle pictured in Jensen and Sargent's "Robes of Power" (1986) and described therein by Dr. George MacDonald as having a shamanic motif. The rattle described in the book belonged to "Chief MINESQU' of the Nishga Village, Gitlaxdamix", and the design depicted was his crest design (also depicted on his button blanket and house front). So this

⁵⁹ Barbeau notes for this artifact "Indian medicine man's rattle for treating a patient; GUTWENUKS owl design. Alexander Mott (HATLYAM, LAXOEL'), the owner of this, had seen it in his dream and used it on his rattle; whatever a "doctor" dreamt of could be used in this way although the object or animal might be the crest of another or in a different phratry (in fact the own is a crest of the GISGA.ST)."

rattle is not a shaman's rattle, but a chief's rattle - although he may have used it in a "NAXNOX shaman" performance.

Another rattle in the CMC collection which could easily be taken as an elaborate shaman's rattle, if care were not taken in reading all the associated documentation, is rattle VII-C-1150. This round rattle, carved in high relief on one side, depicting the face of a martin, and with only a painted design on the back (similar in style to the rattle illustrated in Plate 37), could easily be seen to depict a shaman's helper. And in a sense it does. This martin rattle, which Barbeau noted was made about 1884 as "a NARNOQ of the house of KANAMUX", was used in conjunction with "a copper clawed headdress and a mask", which could be either VII-C-1136 (copper headdress and mask), or the headdress VII-C-1152 ("Claws of copper") and some other mask (unspecified). The person wearing it would have been depicting a NAXNOX shaman, with a martin as an aide or a crest. Barbeau was meticulous in providing such information (although the complete details don't always make it through unto the cataloguing cards) - many other collectors made no such effort. How many of the other rattles that might appear to be shamanic are thus really NAXNOX? We really no longer have any way of knowing.

Whether shamanic or not, rattles were frequently slipped into an individual bag (usually soft leather) before being stored in the chest with the other shaman's artifacts. Barbeau termed this bag "ANDASAERH = sack-rattles" (CMHM/ROM HN 1236). There are several represented within the collections.

FANS AND FEATHERS

In addition to the de-feathered quills that were used as brooches on the shaman's headdress, there were a number of single large feathers (usually eagle feathers) and entire bird wings (sometimes called "wands") in the collections. Barbeau called the two that had belonged to Mrs. Samuel Johnson "GUTKWINURHS = owl feather fan" (ROM HN 1229).

Usually these fans were left plain, but sometimes they were decorated with bits of skins, ribbon, cloth - one even had a bell attached. Occasionally a wing was attached to a thong or cedar bark necklace; usually they were left free, to be held in the hand. Please see Plates 24 and 28 for examples.

Fanning the patient or softly stroking the patient with a feather, was mentioned in all descriptions of healings. Unfortunately, why the shaman fanned the patient is not so mentioned. It might have been simply to cool or refresh the patient (or the shaman). It might have been to "brush away" unwanted, intruding spirits. Perhaps it functioned as a calming action, uniting both shaman and patient in a less frenetic activity than the singing and dancing and massaging.

The movement of air, through sucking, blowing and singing, was a key part of Tsimshian shamanic practice. Guédon notes (1984:206) that "the NAAHLX or "breath" is much more than the vital wind which keeps a human being alive; it is the immortal principle on which individual and social continuity is affirmed beyond death. To breath NSINAAHL on a soul is to increase its vitality". Perhaps ensuring a movement of air around the patient was seen somehow as analogous to breathing, and necessary for the well-being of the patient's soul.

Feathers, both the sharpened quill end for fine lines and the feathered end for broad strokes, were also used by shamans (and others) as paint brushes.

KNIVES

Although there were many examples of knives within the collections, made from iron, copper, stone or bone (often finely crafted and elaborately carved), they are not known as shaman's knives.

There are no reports of Tsimshian shamans performing serious surgery upon a patient - their healings were of a spiritual nature - although they sometimes made small incisions in the skin through which they sucked out (or appeared to suck out- some were skilful prestidigitators) small foreign objects causing or representing the patient's illness. There are only 3 knives in the collection specifically identified as being shaman's knives. The documentation for one, CMHM/ROM HN 12218, collected by Barbeau in 1929, used by Mrs. Samuel Johnson states:

"Scalpel. Small, narrow, rectangular block of wood, with 5 small, sharp iron knife-like projection in a row on one side. Centre bound with strip of cedar bark. Points of steel called "AHLALPU", used for cutting, and affixed to a handle. Used by the medicine-man for cutting the flesh of a wounded limb or a sore. Very old. (Dr. Wrinch, Hazelton, has the only two other instances I have seen). Used by any body, not just the medicine man. Samuel Johnson himself has marks of these points inside his right wrist and arm."

Unfortunately Barbeau neglected to ask or record why Mr. Johnson received these cuts (in a healing, initiation, "feeding" a cannibal HALAIT?). This knife looks just like a miniature cedar bark shredder. The blades, although small and shallow, are almost razor sharp. They are perfectly designed for scarification (not recorded as generally practiced by the Tsimshian) or the production of profuse bleeding from any flesh wound produced.

MATS

Most healing ceremonies, both narrative and ethnographic, reported the use of mats by the shaman during healing ceremonies. Not only were patients laid on top of mats, they were often partially or completely covered by mats. The mats were usually described as being made of cedar bark, and were frequently specified as being the shaman's mat (mats of all sorts were ubiquitous in the households). No other details (size, style, decorative pattern) are available by which these shaman's mats might be differentiated from any other mats in the collections, and I found no mats specifically noted as being shamanic. Thus, although we know that the shaman's paraphernalia included mats, we have no idea which mats these might be.

PUPPETS

Shamans occasionally put on very elaborate displays in their work, grasping and holding the attention of the audience (which often included other shamans) by using techniques of high drama and theatrical-style props. These would often include the use of dolls or puppets which were manipulated in this realm to represent the actions of the shaman, the spirits and/or the patient in the shaman's realm. The best example of the use of a shaman's puppet in a theatrical healing are the stories around "KSEM HAESIPK, The Woman of Sickness" doll, used for curing in the 1918 influenza epidemic. One version of this story (there are several in the BF files, e.g. BF.289.2; BF.445.2; B-F.454.1:) was published by Barbeau (1958:74-75). The actual KSEM HAESIPK doll is in the possession of the CMC, artifact VII-C-1156 (although version BF.454.1, given by an informant who "said she actually saw and heard this", states that the original KSEM HAESIPK doll was put "in the fire", as burning it was required as part of the healing).

Several other examples of "medicine man's dolls" are in the collections. Some are large, articulated puppets, while others are smaller carvings or statues. Examples include CMC VII-C-175 and -176, both collected by W.A. Newcombe in 1905 from Lakalsap Village, and VII-C-1149, collected by Barbeau in 1924 from Kispayaks, said to be used by a shaman and to have "the power of a doctor for curing". Once again, there can be problems around the designation of puppets as "shamanic" - puppets were also widely

used in NAXNOX demonstrations, particularly HALAIT demonstrations of shamans, recounting legendary cures. Barbeau was particularly diligent in trying to identify NAXNOX puppets, and to provide some details on the context for their use. Unfortunately, not all other collectors made such efforts, and even for Barbeau, often information identifying an artifact as being NAXNOX was cryptically noted in his original records, but never managed to make it to the final cataloguing records.

With regard specifically to the SWANASU HALAIT, the main effect of these dramatizations might have been threefold: first, the shaman and assistants had to maintain "crowd control" in these large, public healing ceremonies, and keep everybody's attention focused on the task at hand - healing the patient. Since healings could run hour after hour for many days, dramatizations could help alleviate the inevitable boredom and frustration of the audience. This would provide both a physical and psychic atmosphere facilitative of the conduction of shamanic work, and provide the shaman with a supportive base to draw upon.

Secondly, providing a dramatic depiction of the shaman's battles to save the patient would provide some reassurance (and a certain amount of emotional catharsis?) to distressed family members who could themselves do little to help their critically-ill loved one. As Halpin noted (1984:287):

(Quoting Garfield) "the ability to carve, plan and operate novel mechanical masks or other objects, or compose songs was considered a manifestation of the powers which the individual had received". Thus, although the use of masks and mechanical devices [including puppets] to manifest power

was indeed theatrical simulation through artifice or "trickery", the ability to manifest the simulation was itself a manifestation of power."

Thus, the audience did not simply have to believe that the shaman had power in this situation, they could see that the shaman had power.

Finally, as Cove (1987) said, actions that are done in this realm - even only in acting - were believed to be effective to some extent in another realm, so having puppets do mock battle here might have aided the shaman's battles in the spirit realm. In the shaman's description of his experiences with the KSEM HAESIPK doll mentioned above, the doll was very clearly depicted as an ATIASXW, a manifestation of a shaman's NAXNOX supernatural aide, who not only helped him see the cause of the epidemic (canoe of hunters who harpooned people) but also provided directions for protection and cure - "drink oolachen oil and devil's club juice and burn HOOHLENS (hellebore roots) to disinfect the houses", and sing the song of KSEM HAESIPK (Barbeau 1958:75).

SONGS

A song is not an artifact in any material sense. Some might argue that songs therefore should not be mentioned in this thesis. Since, however, I believe that a Tsimshian shaman considered song-breath to be the most essential personal possession/supernatural aide/communications medium/tool used within a healing, songs will be included here. To deny their reality (by our classifications) would be an error and a serious omission within an emic presentation.

Songs as power conduits/transformation guides were used by all HALAIT, not just shamans. Each House had a whole library of songs, considered to be possessions of privilege for its members, to be used only on specified occasions. Although these songs were passed down through generations, new songs could also be created to convey and embody new NAXNOX experiences. Those who were most likely to have new experiences, and who therefore generated the most new songs, were the shamans.

SWANASU songs differed from others, however, in significant ways. For House and clan songs, everybody might know them, but only their "owners" were permitted to sing them. When a SWANASU created a new song, it was expected that others would learn it (exactly as the SWANASU directed, which was exactly as the supernatural aide from whence it came directed), and would add their voices to that of the shaman whenever

necessary. Tens (BF.727.7) stressed that when he first was having his shamanic encounters, he had visions in which he "saw many things ... visible only to myself. I memorised the song. The people assembled in order to learn the song". He adds (BF.727.8) that, as he spent the next year having visions and composing songs "There were four people looking after me all the time in order to hear me sing any new song, and they would quietly grasp them and learn them". All the ethnographic reports of healing ceremonies mention the shaman's songs being taken up and sung by the other participants. As with all the other shaman's tools, the song would not be used, the experience not called into being, except under the shaman's guidance.

The shaman's first song was part of his or her original shamanic experience (as opposed to the regalia, which was all created later), and frequently was the source of the new working name the shaman then received. Other songs came to the shaman at other healings, appropriate to the vision or dream experienced for that particular patient. Tens (Barbeau 1958:41) describes the creation of these songs:

"A chant was coming out of me without my being able to do anything to stop it ... The songs force themselves out completely without any attempt to compose them. But I learned and memorized those songs by repeating them".

Similarly Hart (1990:169) quotes an Alaskan shaman:

"Songs were born in stillness while all endeavoured to think of nothing but beautiful things. Then they take shape in the minds of men and rise up like bubbles from the depths of the sea, bubbles seeking the air in order to burst. This is how sacred songs are made".

The shaman sang these songs over and over while dancing around or fanning over the patient; these songs were always cryptic, and were always sung in the present tense, indicating that this was an immediate experience for the shaman, whenever it happened.

Isaac Tens (BF.201.2:5) had a discussion about songs with Beynon, which I feel is worth quoting in its entirety for the insights he presents to the shamanic process.

The gestures of the SWANASK when he presses the body of the patient and places what he has in his hands means that: he is extracting the evil spirits and blow them away. Before extracting or before promising [pressing?] on a patient the SWANASU would first in his vision be told as to the origin of the evil spirit probably it is from some mountain probably it is from a canyon and probably from some grave and it is at this place that the HADAGM HEWSIK [evil spirit] after it has been extracted from the patient are blown to. There may be many spirits in one sick individual which are extracted by songs belonging to the evil spirits. And so the SWANASU sees what are the evil spirits in his vision he knows the songs belonging to them. The SWANASU sees their home in their vision and then comes the song which is supposed to be the property of the HADAGUHEIK. By these means he can extract them. These SWANASKU songs are changed many times.

Tens' experience is reflected in the recorded comments of all the other shamans as well.

There is no healing without song, and no song without vision. Both Boas and Barbeau made recordings of some of these songs which are part of the museum's collections.

Many more were transcribed and some published by Boas and by Barbeau and Beynon.

CANES

Another article used by shamans, but about which there is very little information, is the cane ("Q'AT" - Barbeau CMHM/ROM HN 1242). Canes and talking-sticks were used also by chiefs and their messengers for various HALAIT functions, and since both these and the shaman's cane were carved with animal images (those of the chief being totemic or crest NAXNOX, and those of the shaman being supernatural aides), there is no easy way to tell them apart without knowing the cane's actual history (in cataloguing pictures and descriptions, I could not tell one type from the other).

Most information regarding the function of the cane for the shaman is also vague: the narratives mention the cane as transforming into an animal (usually a snake), and travelling into areas too small for the shaman, or acting as shamanic scouts. The cane is also described as being used as a weapon in shamanic battles, or planted into the ground near a patient (to stand guard? to ground the shaman's power? to claim rights to "shamanic territory"? ⁶⁰ to establish a SPANAXNOX?). In the "Crossroads" exhibit, the planting of an Alaskan shaman's cane into the ground was explained as "the centre around which the spirits would gather when the shamans danced". De Laguna (1972:896)

⁶⁰ As Cove (1987) said was one of the functions of a chief's cane, and possibly one of the functions of totem poles.

mentions that for the Yakutat shaman, canes and dance wands could be used as pointing instruments, themselves determining and indicating who was guilty of witchcraft, or stunning or killing a victim at a distance. The narratives mention a crystal being used for such purposes by Tsimshian shamans; perhaps canes were so used as well. They were generally simply described as "carved canes with mystic powers" (Barbeau 1958:52).

I did find two separate and distinct descriptions of the use of canes by shamans, in Barbeau's collection notes. CMHM/ROM HN 1242 was a maple cane belonging to the shaman Mrs. Samuel Johnson (NAGIL PANDE), of Kispiox, collected by Barbeau in 1929, one year after her death. He originally noted "The shaman places the cane next to himself while he sleeps; it tells him if treatment will succeed", and then expanded "When the medicine-man (SWANASU) is called to doctor a patient he places his cane next to himself to find out whether he is going to succeed in his treatment or not. The cane will tell him in his sleep at night... Five medicine-men in all have owned and used this cane in turn. They have all died". Thus it seems this cane was used as a diagnostic tool or ATIASXW. Note however that since the Tsimshian do not clearly differentiate linguistically between trance/sleep/vision/dream, this cane might indeed have been used overnight during sleep, or might have been used during trance while working on the patient. "At night" might have been Barbeau's addition, entailed by the translation of the shaman's experience as "sleep".

A second cane had also been the property of the shaman Mrs. Samuel Johnson, and illustrates some of the possible complications around shamanic articles that incorporate images of animals also used in crests. This cane was described by the cataloguer as being made "of spruce wood, yellowish. Long round stick with carving to represent an entwined snake, which is painted green, yellow and black".⁶¹ Barbeau collected it in 1929, noting that it had been "carved 6 years ago (1923) by the owner's brother, NAEQT (Solomn Johnson)". Comments regarding its use were:

The Snake cane (LAIT = snake) used as a family emblem in family of owner, or as a charm by a Native doctor in this family. When it is used for doctoring, the doctor begins with his songs [remember that the doctor to whom he is referring is a woman] accompanied by round rattles which he holds in both hands and shakes them; then he calls for his cane. It is then thrust under the bear skin which he uses on his back, from below towards his neck. It is believed that the magic of the cane then makes it stick to him fast; nobody can remove it by sheer force, until the doctor himself pulls it off.

By an interesting coincidence, there are in the BF files two other descriptions of a cane being used by a female shaman in this way, both given by another female shaman, Mrs. Irene Harris. In a 1948 interview with Beynon, (BF.727.3) she described her memories, as a young woman herself just beginning shamanic work, of seeing an old woman, a renowned healer and seer, demonstrate her "physic" powers, and I believe that the woman she saw was none other than Mrs. Samuel Johnson:

"She took a cane and after removing all her clothes, she was nude, they then placed the cane against her body and nobody could remove it, three

⁶¹It is worth noting that snakes and particularly lizards are common shamanic motifs amongst the Nisga'a, and the narratives tell of a lake filled with lizards which were driven out when the lake was destroyed by the volcanic eruption hundreds of years ago.

men tried to pull the cane from her body but could not do so. Then she took the cane and handed it back as if nothing had happened."

In an earlier section (BF.122.5), she describes a similar performance she saw "at Kitwankool while I was a young woman before I was married", probably by this same woman. In addition to her unusual abilities to command her cane, Mrs. Harris described the powers this shaman also had over her bearskin robe - with only her robe tied around her shoulders, she could make it rise and stand straight out from her back and "move as if alive".

Although the elder SWANASU in question was highly renowned as a healer (Mrs. Irene Harris credits her with having a vision which gave her instructions to successfully cure a plague), this unknown old woman was most famous as a seer.

MIRRORS

There are several examples scattered throughout the collections, most of them at the RBCM, of what Cove (1987) has tentatively classified as the "shaman's mirror", and collectors more generally called "mirrors". These mirrors were usually simply polished black slate, but at least one (CMC VII-C-1640) was of a red stone "imitation of slate".

Stewart (1973:91) called this same type of artifact simply a "stone pendant". She says "Relatively rare among artifacts, the stone pendant may have been purely decorative and hung from a garment, headdress or some paraphernalia, or it may have served other functions. Most are well made and finely finished, with a neatly drilled hole, usually biconical, or sometimes with a groove, for suspension."

All of the ones I saw in the collections had a pronounced "groove" or indentation on both sides, which could well have been used for hanging, but served very well for finger grips when holding the mirror upright. Most also had incised designs, usually geometric, and some were slightly concave on one side.

Unfortunately, there exists no known record of the use of these mirrors, by shamans or by others, therefore their exact function is hard to ascertain. Phenomenological explorations centring on slate replicas of these mirrors formed the focal point of Cove's

book "Shattered Images" (1987). Cove was somewhat uncertain of the veracity of classifying these mirrors as shamanic tools, saying they might, as others had suggested, have been mirrors used by high status women (although the argument he presents against this is compelling). If they were shamanic, they might have been used for scrying in healing rituals (Tens BF.727.8 reported the use of bowls and pools of cold water for such purposes). It is more probable, however, that they were used by shamans outside the context of the healing ceremony.

As noted previously, Tsimshian shamans did more than heal: they entered altered states of consciousness to find and summon game (especially the first salmon of the year), or to locate other sources of food in times of crisis; they "travelled" to distant places to locate lost persons, or to obtain news of distant activities; they manipulated the weather; they were often, (like Mrs. Irene Harris, Mrs. Samuel Johnson, and Mr. Louis Gray (BF.679.8)), prescient. Many of these activities would not be conducted in a group (as were healings), but in private, either with assistants or completely alone. Particularly when working alone, a portalling tool such as a mirror might have been useful.

Cove suggested that the mirror was a tool or focus for meditation, and this raises an issue which is not specifically addressed in any of the other literature: did Tsimshian shamans meditate?

Meditation is an ancient, effective and appealing technique for exploring and expanding consciousness, and is used by many shamans - and by many who are not shamans; the Eastern religions, for example, have raised it to a high and very specific art. Yet meditation is never mentioned for the Tsimshian shaman. We are told that the new shaman spends much time alone in the woods, or isolated in her or his sleeping quarters, learning to master these blossoming powers - but exactly how this mastery is achieved remains largely unknown. Shamans are said lifelong to enhance their knowledge through "dreams" (with no distinction being made between a dream or a vision). Some of these dreams are said to occur while the shaman is staring into the fire; astrologers are reported as spending extensive amounts of time alone on roof-tops, staring at the sky, sun, moon, and stars. It is quite probable that staring at an object, an ATIASXW or a mirror, was also deliberately done to induce these "dreams". The slate mirror in particular, with its reported ability to focus the mind and produce tunnelling experiences, as well as the most appropriate "split image" transformation of the shaman's face (Cove 1987), would seem an ideal meditation object for the Tsimshian shaman.

CHARMS

Perhaps the most significant, frequently the most beautiful, and certainly the most common shamanic artifact was the charm - ATIASXW (Barbeau HN 1216). Some of these charms, such as Tens' Otter-Canoe (BF.727.8) existed not as material objects in this realm, but as objects only a shaman could see and manipulate in some parallel realm (although in that realm they had the characteristics of clearly defined physical objects). Others were accumulated from the natural environment: bits of bone or fur of power animals; crystals; unusual stones or bits of wood; even animal heads or feet (claws, hooves or paws), sometimes strung on a necklace, singly or in groups. Occasionally an entire animal (especially mink or ermine) would be stuffed and used as a charm; there are examples in both the RBCM and the CMHM/ROM collections of skins being turned into "stuffed bears" or "stuffed dogs" and described as being "filled with medicine" (see Plates 19-21).

Other ATIASXW were hand-crafted from wood, bone, ivory, horn or stone. Some of these were simple shapes (eg stone discs) or roughly carved, while others were small masterpieces of the carver's art, exhibiting the best of the Northwest Coast style (see, for example, Plates 16-18). These were usually depictions of supernatural beings encountered in shamanic journeys; often they were shown in the process of transformation into another form of being, or into a human. The human so often incorporated into the form might

have been the shaman communing with, for transforming into, another form. I have provided fewer pictures of these, because virtually any book that covers Tsimshian or Northwest Coast art will have beautiful pictures of these ATIASXW. Their enigmatic beauty is hauntingly attractive.

As with the earlier section on the soul catchers, the reader is referred to MacKinnon's thesis (1979), which is explicitly on Northwest Coast shamanic charms, including the Tsimshian ATIASXW. In attempting to trace the history of shamans' charms on the Northwest Coast, she examined the archaeological record, drawing heavily on the works of MacDonald (1975), particularly his excavations at Prince Rupert. To summarize her findings: although firm collection dates do not extend much beyond the late 17th Century, archaeological finds, although limited, support a development of these charms from before the previous millennia (i.e. for greater than 2000 years); zoomorphic forms, which might have been precursors to these charms, were found at Prince Rupert by MacDonald's team and dated to over 4000 years ago. MacKinnon also notes that "of the close to 1200 dated [NWC] shamans' charms, 534 have been collected by Lt. G.T. Emmons, most of these before or at the turn of the century", and Emmons was renowned for taking charms and other artifacts from shaman's graves (1979:12). The ATIASXW upon which I rely most heavily for this thesis were obtained mostly by Barbeau, who purchased them from Tsimshian households (and thus obtained good information on their history and use).

In her thesis, MacKinnon identified three "styles" of shamanic charms, based primarily upon the degree of plasticity of the carving and the complexity of the image. She did not differentiate charms made from bone and charms made from teeth (which would be my first level of separation). MacKinnon's Type 1 comprised simple incised carvings, usually of only one "static" subject (eg a salmon) and not modifying the natural shape of the material to any significant extent. Type 2 comprised somewhat more complex images of one figure holding another, or holding a human being; these were high relief carvings, but still maintained the natural outline of the material. Type 3 carvings were the complex, dynamic, multi-subject type that "disregards the demands of a naturalistic contour, emphasizing instead a highly complex system of images" (1979:41). Examples of each of these types can be seen in the Plates. These different styles of ATIASXW should not be seen as in any way evolutionary; documentation supports the collection and use of all three types simultaneously, and MacKinnon noted that they were "still all in abundance in the mid-nineteenth century" (1979:49). Based on Barbeau's collections, I would extend that date to the mid-twentieth century.

ATIASXW were a material representation of the shaman's supernatural aides (although the nature of this "representation" is unclear, and will be explored in more detail later). Each shaman had a unique relationship with his or her supernatural aides, and yet a being using the same name (eg "The White Owl; The White Otter") was claimed as supernatural aide by many shamans. Whether or not there was seen to be only one "White Otter", who developed a personal relationship of assistance with more than one shaman, or whether

there was his "White Otter" and her "White Otter" and another shaman's "White Otter". all different, remains unclear, although the latter is implied. As there were commonly named sources of supernatural aide, there were also common representations of these aides: there are a vast number of ATIASXW, from different sources, that are remarkably similar to each other. These are usually of the Type 1 and Type 2 variety, and are most commonly: sea birds made from bear's teeth; fish made from bear's teeth; fish made from flat bones (ribs?); killer-whales made from flat bones; bears made from flat bones; small "soul catchers" made from flat bones; wolf/mink/lizard made from flat bones (the actual animal is somewhat ambiguous - they look like crocodiles to me!). These were often made to attach to the shaman's clothing or necklace, providing multiple representations of the same image. Please see Plate 15 for examples.

Other carved ATIASXW, the Type 3 variety, are much more individualistic, and represent specific visionary experiences of the shaman who made or commissioned them. They might have been suspended around the neck as an amulet,⁶² or attached to a larger necklace, or simply kept in a bag and removed when the shaman wanted to contact that supernatural aide or re-live that visionary experience. These are the ATIASXW that are most often photographed and displayed; all are gripping in their beauty, and many indicate

⁶² MacKinnon (1979:76) noted that "carvers were reluctant to place the [suspension] hole in the head of the carved figure" or, if they did, they used it as a mouth. Therefore, some of these carvings had the hole in the bottom, and accordingly hung upside down (as would the shaman's mirror). Was this reluctance to put a hole in the image's head because the Tsimshian viewed the head as the seat of the soul?

an incredible level of mastery by the carver of both the subject and the difficult medium. Please see Plate 16 for examples.

It is important to note, however, that not all of the shaman's ATIASXW were artistically beautiful. One of the more common ATIASXW was the canoe, often called, after Tens, the "otter-canoe" as it was believed capable of such transformations. There are some examples of such canoes in the collections (please see Plate 30); they are usually rather roughly carved, and are painted with red ochre. There are other, much fancier canoes in the collections as well, but these were carved as models of actual canoes in use, and were often made to be sold as tourist art. It is clear from Tens' description of such an ATIASXW that the carved canoe was a simple image of the "real" canoe, which existed only in his visions, providing him with any form of transportation or containment he required. (BF.727.8).

Some of the ATIASXW were not handcrafted at all, but were "found" objects from the natural or human world. These might be simple stones, crystals, pieces of scrap metal - anything could be used by a shaman as an ATIASXW. As Guédon points out (1984:200) some of these did not represent the supernatural aide itself, but were rather gifts from the aide to the shaman, to ratify their bond and serve as reminders to the shaman of the "very intimate" nature of their relationship. As such, "the ATIASXW becomes an extremely important part of the shaman's life. If one loses one's main ATIASXW, one loses one's self".

Other ATIASXW were intermediate between the "natural" and the "crafted", and usually were also not visually beautiful: the stuffed animals, the necklaces made of skins and feathers and cedar bark, birds' heads and animals feet (see for example Plates. 20, 22, 24, 25, and 28. The craftsmanship of these assemblages is artistically primitive and the visual impact is sometimes outright repulsive. And yet these may have been some of the shaman's most powerful ATIASXW, as they shared in the actual physical essence of another being, not just in its image. They also represented the actual giving of that being's life for the benefit of the shaman's work, which death effected the transformation of that being into a dweller within one of the non-mundane realms of existence, where it could most usefully assist the shaman.

It is quite possible, however, that the difference between the animal, a piece of the animal, and an image of the animal was not relevant for the Tsimshian shaman. This will be explored more fully when we discuss the nature of the ATIASXW.

The ATIASXW were used in many different ways. As mentioned in the previous section, I believe that they were used as deliberate meditation devices, and as triggers for the shaman's portalling and transformational experiences (based on the concepts of symbolic penetration as presented in the biogenetic structuralism theory of Laughlin (1990) and illustrated in MacDonald et al (1989)). I also recognize that this is an etic explanation that does not have any clearly emic corollary.

ATIASXW were reported by the Tsimshian to have had several functions: they were pressed against injured or painful parts of the patient's body to effect a healing or removal of pain. The shaman might have the patient hold the ATIASXW, and then dream, talk or sing about what the patient experienced. The shaman might personally hold the ATIASXW, either in the hands or in the mouth, increasing the level of union between the supernatural aide represented and the shaman.

Occasionally the shaman would give the patient an ATIASXW to wear as an amulet; more often he or she would give instructions for a specific amulet to be made, and later charge it with protective power, or in some other way activate its ability to aid the patient. ATIASXW were reported to be left as the equivalent of perimeter guards around a patient when the shaman had to leave (Emmons in Cove 1987). As symbols of the supernatural world and the transformational powers of the shaman, the ATIASXW would have had a strong psychological effect on both the patient and the shaman - and any witnesses as well. When left as guards, the ATIASXW, like the cane mentioned earlier, might have served to physically create a SPANAXNOX for the shaman's supernatural aide(s).

The ATIASXW were sometimes seen by shamans as the disease itself; at other times the cure. The ease of such a transformation was implicit in the Tsimshian language, where

the expression "to cure" meant also "to make ill", and the ability to do one was analogous with the ability to do the other.⁶³

According to Guédon (1984), the ATIASXW served for the shaman as a "point of view". The shaman would, in trance, dream the patient's dream, determine what the problem was, then visualize some "material" way of representing this problem. From this new point of view, the shaman would transform into something appropriate to counteract this problem, or use an ATIASXW form, and work on the mentally-constructed vision until it was restored to a normal condition. An example given was that of a shaman who envisaged a patient's painful leg as a rope with a knot in it, and herself became a rope which worked against this knot until it was undone. Several of these visualizations might be required, as the shaman worked his or her way through various levels of problems, newly exposed as the more surface problems were fixed.

As mentioned in an earlier section, the significance of shaping "reality" by having or changing a point of view was inherent in the Tsimshian belief system. McNeary (1984:11) points out that the narratives reinforce the idea that there are "complementary realities, with truth in the eye of the beholder ... In both visual and oral arts there seems to be a pleasure in showing that what appears to be one thing may, from another point of view

⁶³ This becomes especially clear in the shaman's songs where "that which is making me sick" and "that which is making me well" are the same thing, with the expression used varying with the translator - see for example the KSEM HAESIPK stories referenced previously, or Ten's healing songs, both within the BF files and as published in Barbeau (1958).

be part of something quite different... the transformations do not involve physical change at all, but are matters of perception". Things are as they are, but what is realized by the individual can change as the point of view changes.

This change in perception, however, was not a superficial one; rather it was in the nature of a complete transformation of the shaman's concepts of self, other and reality. Whenever the shaman, in this transformed state, encountered something he or she simply could not handle alone, the supernatural aides were called to lend assistance. According to the shamans' descriptions (some of which are given below) around the use of their ATIASXW, these supernatural aides were not seen as simply another perspective on a problem; there is a definite sense of dealing with another being.

The nature of the ATIASXW themselves, as representatives of either these bonds or of the actual supernatural aides, is at best ambiguous. Guédon has explored the nature of symbol, image and representation from a Tsimshian perspective, and concluded that (1984:144) dramatizations, carvings or other images or representations of beings were "sufficient to re-create the event, to bring the powers taking part in it 'back to life', or at least back into action... images and costumes, are not containers of powers; but means through which the powers can be evoked". Thus ATIASXW are not just symbols of a being or reminders of a situation, establishing a mindset or triggering an experience for the shaman; nor are they "magic wands", with powers that can be tapped by any user; they are portals through which the being manifests, and the being and the shaman interact.

This applies whether the ATIASXW is a piece of fur, a carving, or an image held in the shaman's mind.

One way of approaching an understanding of the nature of the ATIASXW is by using Armstrong's criteria, by which the ATIASXW would clearly be "works of affecting presence", (1981:5-6):

[they] exist in a state of ambiguity, for if they own presence, if they are of the nature of person - which is what our behaviour towards them argues - they are also of the nature of a thing [being artifacts] ... such works exist in a state of tension between these two poles: being subject and being object. It is perhaps in the energy of such interplay that a fundamental "power" - or energy - of the work of affecting presence is to be found.

As Armstrong further points out, these objects owe their power to WHAT they represent, not how aesthetically-perfect they are, and to the similarities between their various representations (rather than the uniqueness of that particular representation) - a system of belief he terms "the aesthetic of invocation". Characteristic of this aesthetic of invocation, as applicable to the Tsimshian, are three points:

- . the work exists "in an ambient of time; what has happened to it in the past is a portion of its being".
- . "the invoked work exists only in performance. Some works ... exist forever envoked - always, in effect, in performance".
- . "the power in a sculpture of invocation is, thus, not only absent or present, but when present is likely to be variably so".

Thus, the more a shaman used an article, the more powers would accrue to it (making it also a work of "syndesis" in Armstrong's terms); shamans' reports would seem to confirm this increase in power for their ATIASXW. Also, the article would not be as powerful when lying around in the shaman's box as when removed and invoked into action, although the Tsimshian behaved as if the shamanic articles were "forever envoked" to some degree, as they were considered "forever" dangerous to approach.

Many of the shaman's articles also represented the "aesthetic of virtuosity" in that they were finely crafted and beautiful to behold. To the extent that Armstrong notes (1981:11) "The task of the virtuosic work is not to move immortals but to move man", the beautification of some but not all shamanic articles can be explained. The shaman, as his or her wealth allowed, would have some articles beautifully made for the patient and the audience to see - to attract their attention, to increase the article's impact, and to enhance the status of the shaman. For those ATIASXW created only for the shaman to see (or for shamans who weren't so concerned with affecting their audience in that manner), beauty was not a factor. Shamans interacted directly with the "immortals" in realms of power where physical beauty was irrelevant, as the "physical" was transformed or abandoned.

These classifications, however, are still etic ones. To the Tsimshian shaman, donning a bear-claw crown and a bear-skin robe meant in some way becoming one with the powers of that supernatural aide, which itself was not just "symbolized" by these articles, but was immediately manifested through them. Likewise with the ATIASXW; when a shaman held

an ATIASXW either in the hand or in the mind, that supernatural being became present, united in some way with the shaman through the ATIASXW.

I found the closest approximation to the Tsimshian descriptions of the nature of the ATIASXW came from seeing them as portals. This nature as a portal, a point of contact between two realities, could account for the unusual way that ATIASXW were treated by the Tsimshian. In many respects they were treated as if they were living beings. They were considered to be dangerous, capable of causing death to any but the shaman, and were stored in their own place of safety, to be removed only when needed, and contacted only by the shaman. Yet, they were also not treated as beings: they were not, that we know, ever cared for in any way, worshipped, sacrificed to or "fed" as were, for example, sacred masks in other cultures. When used, they were treated with respect, but when not used, they were simply stored away. This treatment would not be consistent with a concept of ATIASXW as a powerful being, but would be consistent with the concept of ATIASXW as a portal connecting one with a powerful being.

Again applying terminology from modern technology for ease of explanation, I believe that the ATIASXW, like a smart security or operating system, were always sensitive to contact, but were in "sleep" mode when stored. Once handled, they would "wake up" and re-activate the connection with the supernatural being with whom they were associated. It is quite possible that one of the functions of the rattle, the name for which Guédon (1984) has associated with the word meaning "to wake up", was specifically to "wake up"

all the shaman's ATIASXW (particularly those that had no physical manifestation to "touch"). It is also particularly appropriate then that shaman's received their ATIASXW through "dreams".

However, as evoked portals, the ATIASXW worked in both directions, not only one: the shaman could leave, and other beings could enter. It was the responsibility of the shaman to control those portals, both during life and after death, and maintain the requisite separation of realms of power, for the protection of all beings.

Working from my contention that the lasting value of a thesis such as this lies not so much in theoretical speculations advanced, but in basic information documented, I offer at length some of the more detailed and insightful descriptions from Tsimshian shamans on their ATIASXW.

"Otter charm (WAWTSERH):... was carved [from maple] about three years ago by Solomon Johnson. When the doctor [Mrs. Samuel Johnson] lies down on his back, he places this charm on his chest near his neck, its face towards his. As the doctor goes on singing and shaking his rattles, the little otter may jump, its face upwards: and this is taken to mean that the patient will recover." (Barbeau 1929, CMHM/ROM HN 1216).

"A charm, chief corpse (HALAIDEM-LULEQ). It was used by the medicine-man on the chest of the patient, in the manner indicated above [this record was missing]. The medicine-man had to locate the disease first, which was usually in the form of spirits, evil spirits, in the body. This was a most important operation. Then he would capture it by means of his songs and incantations and expel it. Hair of a dead person on the charm. Acquired from Louis Wesley, AMAYGET, of the Wolf phratry, Kispiox. Small wooden figure of a man. Top of head flat and set around edge with tufts of hair from a human corpse. Back concave. Wrapped in miniature,

brownish woollen blanket, fastened in front." (Barbeau 1929, CMHM/ROM HN 1219).

"Mink charm (NES'IN). Carved long ago, supposedly at Qaldo, the uppermost village of the Gitksan. It formerly belonged to Jonah Ksemqahl (Wolf phratry, Kispiox), who had "seen" it in a "dream". He was a medicine-man. Acquired from Louis Wesley, Kispiox. A small carved wooden head is fastened to a stuffed body of grey fur with hind legs attached, probably a mink skin". (Barbeau 1929, CMHM/ROM HN 1228).

"A charm made from the head (PALATO) of an otter and the skin of another (a young otter), was placed on the chest of a patient, like the otter charm above [HN 1216]. It was obtained from UAWRHS-WEAI, of the family of KHLEEM-LARHAE, at Kitwanga". (Barbeau, 1929, CMHM/ROM HN 1252).

"Canoe charm, called Canoe-of-the-Otter ('MALEM'WATSERH). It is placed on the stomach of the patient like the Otter charm above and is used in a like manner. It formerly belonged to NAW'AWSU (of the family of CALDIHGYET, LARHSE'L) of Hazelton, and was acquired by the wife of Johnson at his death. Resembles a whale, with large tail. Two holes in bottom. Acquired at Kispiox, but formerly used at Hazelton". (Barbeau, 1929, CMHM/ROM HN 1260).

THE MORAL OF THE STORY...

RE-VIEW

Now that we have examined the artifactual data, we can revise our understanding and provide a few more details on the nature of the diagnostic and healing process as undertaken by a Tsimshian shaman. First we can look at the "bare bones", the obvious "facts" of a healing ceremony. Then we can flesh out this picture, relying on the limited experiential information gleaned from shamans, and from the interpretations of observers and ethnographers. Ultimately, of course, this flesh is only *my interpretation* of all I have read and understood, while attempting to be as emic in my approach as possible. It is knowingly presented as my truth, not the truth..

Healing ceremonies are normally conducted in the home of the patient, or in a house reserved for ceremonial gatherings, and are communal events where limited audience participation is required. The shaman wears special clothing and decoration and uses artifacts and goods that are restricted in their use to only these such situations, and by only the shaman and his or her assistants. The shaman may arrive on site fully garbed in shamanic regalia, or may prepare at the side of the patient - physical preparation need not be occulted. There may in fact be several shamans present, so work plans are developed.

Once everything is in readiness - the patient is examined and prepared (painted, covered with down etc. as necessary), the audience is seated around the periphery and equipped with noisemakers, the fire is lit and the drums tuned - the ceremony begins. The shaman appears to enter a trance state, and rattles, dances and sings, sometimes to the point of exhaustion, at which point another shaman takes the lead or they all confer. The assistants beat the drums, in tune with the shaman's needs, and lead the audience in singing the shaman's songs when necessary.

The shaman may massage, knead, stroke or fan the body of the patient, and may frequently appear to pull something out of the patient, grasp it and blow it out the smoke hole. Or the shaman may suck blood or some visible or invisible foreign matter out of the patient, and throw it into the fire or blow it out the smoke hole. The shaman may press small carvings, animal parts or stones against parts of the patient's body, or lay an artifact on the patient's chest. The shaman may rub the patient's head, and blow something into the head or the chest of the patient. The shaman may fully expose part or all of the patient's body, rubbing the skin with warm fat or blowing air or cold water upon it. The patient may be "buried" under mats. The shaman may also lie down and "sleep" beside the patient (possibly also buried under mats), then awaken and begin another attempt at curing. The shaman may help the patient to stand up, walk about and sing as well.

Healing ceremonies may go on for hours, days, perhaps even weeks, until one of the shamans pronounces the patient cured, or until all available shamans pronounce the patient incurable or dead.

So goes a typical healing ceremony, as observed, a "bare bones" description. But of course there is much more going on than can be known from simple observation. Using the information now available to us, from the reports and interpretations of shamans and others, my own "fleshed out" understanding is thus:

The clothing and the articles that the shaman uses in a healing ceremony are not part of the mundane world. The objects themselves (or the need and goods to create them) were provided as material manifestations of the shaman's relationship with beings and places in another dimension of reality - be that a parallel world, or the other dimensions of this world which human beings normally are unable to perceive. These objects are seen as dangerous, as they allow for these experiences and beings to be ever-present. In preparation for a healing ceremony, the shaman removes these goods from their place of safekeeping, and begins a deliberate process of physical and mental transformation.

Special clothing is donned - a crown of great claws encircles the shaman's head; the protective skin of a powerful animal enfolds the back and shoulders; the neck and chest are covered by necklaces of skins, cedar bark, charms (the ATIASXW, each highly personal and strongly evocative of past experiences); a fringed and decorated dancing

apron provides an auditory component to the shaman's body movements. The soul catcher, the quintessential symbol of the shaman's power over the unseen, hangs suspended around the shaman's neck (that point of union between the head - the seat of the soul - and the body - a being's physical manifestation). The skin of the shaman's face and body may be painted with simple or elaborate designs, or left unadorned. Eagle down, making the persons, the place and the occasion sufficiently clean and pure to please other-worldly beings (the NAXNOX), is piled within the crown of claws, clinging to the long hair and the clothing of the shaman, falling over the patient, and marking the space within which the shaman will perform.

These physical preparations both illustrate and help effect the internal mental transformations occurring as the shaman changes from ordinary human to SWANASU, another being with another name and another range of abilities. The ordinary human may live in a mental world of relatively unfocussed existence; the SWANASU must deliberately enter an intensely focussed existence, where alertness to unexpected possibilities, whether wondrous, horrifying or simply unusual, is essential, not only for success, but for survival.

Once the shaman is fully prepared, and the stage is set, the specific work begins.⁶⁴ The

⁶⁴An description of this process from a "states of consciousness" perspective, particularly based upon tenets of the biogenetic structuralism paradigm, would be that the shaman and assistants use known physiological drivers (light, heat, noise, rhythmic, rhythmic movement, hyperventilation) to entrain the shaman, the patient, the assistants and (continued...)

shaman uses the sound of the rattles to mentally enter another realm of existence, to awaken all the shaman's supernatural aides (including those that do not manifest in any way within the mundane realm) and to more fully activate his or her own personal shamanic potentials. As the firelight flickers, the assistants beat the drums to guide the shaman on his or her journey (or to serve as sonic pathways to "home" for the shaman in his or her travels), and to unite all members of the audience and focus their attention on the task at hand - helping the shaman to help the patient. The shaman sings and dances, perhaps manipulates selected ATIASXW, and through these acts accesses other dimensions of reality, sees what is normally hidden, and communicates with the spirit-beings encountered. It is within the realities and possibilities accessed in this trance/vision/dream/sleep state, which the shaman has learned to control, that the shaman's supernatural aides, who have access to information and abilities not directly available to the shaman, help him or her to see the nature of the patient's illness.

⁶⁴(...continued)

the audience to the beat of the drum and the shaman's songs, and thus to do a group alteration of consciousness. The shaman uses the rattles, dance, specific breathing techniques, songs, portalling devices and other experiential triggers to induce personal visualizations and further alter, in a controlled manner, both the shaman's and the patient's state of consciousness. It is thought the use of visualizations induced in specific altered states of consciousness that shamanic work is accomplished.

This, however, is still a strongly *etic* description. "Altered states of consciousness" were not a part of traditional Tsimshian discourse as they are in ours. There was a differentiation made between some of these states, but the "alpha cuts" (Laughlin, 1993) in these "fuzzy" categories were made in different places: the Tsimshian used only one term to describe what we differentiate as sleep/dream/vision/trance. They also seem to have believed that the shaman did not only "have visualizations", he or she directly participated in other realities.

If the patient is suffering from soul loss or soul capture, the shaman (usually in very deep "sleep", with the aides acting as scouts) will travel to wherever the soul is to retrieve it. Such retrieval might necessitate negotiations with other spirit-beings, or might include doing some form of battle if the soul has been captured by ghosts or NAXNOX who wish to keep it. The shaman, if successful, captures and transports the soul, usually in the soul catcher, strengthens it and blows it back into the patient.

If the illness is caused by witchcraft, the shaman's aides identify the culprit and the location of the witchbox or other implement of the witch's power, and tell the members of the patient's family what they must do to break the witch's spell.

If the illness is caused by the presence of foreign spirits in the body, sometimes manifesting as foreign objects, the shaman draws heavily upon the assistance of the ATIASXW. The shaman's aides discover and report back on the nature of the spirits inhabiting the body, their original home, and their personal power songs. The shaman works with these images and this knowledge, applying the material manifestations of ATIASXW to the patient's body, singing the ATIASXW songs of power, singing the invading spirit's song, massaging and sucking on the patient's body, until the spirit submits, through either force or enticement, to leaving the body. The shaman then blows the spirit back to its original home. When all the songs have been sung and all the spirits have been removed, the patient is pronounced cured.

The illness might itself be caused by a song. When seeing this, the shaman realizes that this patient is being chosen by the spirits to become a shaman. The song is a gift of shamanic power from the spirit-beings, and must be accepted and expressed, or the becoming-shaman cannot recover. The practicing shaman, usually working as part of a team, then helps the patient to express this spirit song and "grasp" it, and gradually to come to an understanding of shamanic experience. Carried by song, supported by allies, the new shaman passes through into a lifetime of challenge and learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Anthropologically, the Tsimshian are one of the most extensively documented and analyzed cultures in the world, including descriptions of peoples and practices from explorers, traders and missionaries dating back to the times of first "historical" contact with Westerners. Two aspects of the Tsimshian culture which receive mention in almost every account are their impressive material culture, and the appearance and activities of their SWANASU. Thus it is surprising that this thesis is, to my knowledge, the first detailed study to approach an understanding of Tsimshian shamans through an examination of their specific material culture.

This is no doubt due in part to the changing nature of the discipline, and to the personal interests of the anthropologists involved. It has only been within the past few decades that shamanism has received serious anthropological attention at all, and only the present generation of ethnographers have devoted any extensive amount of time to exploring the realms of meanings hinted at by the previously recorded shamanic practices. The insights provided by their explorations were the stimulus for my research.

My general area of interest was in shamanism. I chose to explore the nature of shamanism within the Tsimshian culture because there was such a wealth of intriguing information available. I then chose to approach this study of Tsimshian shamanism by focussing on

their material culture (from the general theoretical perspective of consciousness explorations, and informed ethnographically and from more general historical and descriptive documentation). My initial premise was that the material goods created and used by a people generally, and by shamans in particular, was a reflection of how they conceived of reality and their place within it. Thus examining those goods said to be shamanic in nature should provide fresh insights into the Tsimshian shamanic complex.

This approach necessitated determining what was and was not part of shamanic material culture, and that necessitated determining in what ways Tsimshian shamans did and did not match the general ethnographic descriptive template of "shaman". This determination in turn required a detailed and discriminating review of the various sources of information about Tsimshian shamans and other Tsimshian HALAIT practitioners, as it soon became evident that the ethnographic "shaman" template and the Tsimshian shaman were not isomorphic. The nature and the results of this complex process of discovery and re-examination are presented in the "methodology" and "contextualization" chapters.

One of the more significant results of this exploration was that I chose to privilege the emic perspective as much as possible when dealing with descriptions and analysis of the data. This was partly because this was the only sensible way to achieve any understanding of their worldview and their ritual practitioners. However, I also believed it was proper to give Native opinions and descriptions serious attention. So much of anthropology, particularly around shamanism, seems still to be done by using our explanations (based

on whatever is the latest analytical fashion), not to *translate* (which is acceptable) but to *legitimize* Native concepts. The fact that Western empiricism now incorporates Jungian psychology, neuroscientific discoveries and the challenging views of being and the universe derived from quantum mechanics, (all of which are liberally applied to explain the nature and workings of shamanism), does not mean that they are better explanations or that they are correct explanations - just that they are Western explanations. Why should a shaman's statement that his soul travelled through time and space to effect an action in another realm that would have import in this realm be quite unacceptable fifty years ago when such was considered scientifically impossible, and quite acceptable, (and even illustrative of impressively advanced scientific knowledge!) now that such things are considered possible within the explanatory framework of quantum physics? What the shaman did hasn't changed.

Accordingly, as much as was reasonably possible (within the confines of a thesis and not a book), the section on "the things themselves" deals primarily with the nature of the artifacts themselves and first-hand descriptions of how they were used, and only secondarily with speculations drawn from other ethnographic or ethnological works. It is unlikely that any particular shaman used all of these types of artifacts, and even the core items (crown, robe, rattle, ATIASXW) varied over a wide range between practitioners. But each was used in shamanic work by some shaman, for some specific reason (although that reason may still remain unknown to us). From the shaman's descriptions, I concluded that these artifacts held a rather unique position: while they were

not themselves alive, nor themselves containers of particular powers, yet they were dangerous to touch or to use - because they could allow contact between beings in this realm and experiences or spirit-beings which existed in another realm, beyond the confines of space and time. I have tried to convey my understanding of the nature of these artifacts as the shamans conceived of them by translating the concept as "portal" - a point of contact between one reality and another.

Finally, insights gleaned from this examination are applied in the "review" section to present a new and somewhat different picture of the Tsimshian shaman, one which incorporates the shaman's perspective.

Several conclusions clearly present themselves. One is that the information we have on shamanism from the perspective of either the patient or the shaman is sadly deficient. The statements of a small handful of practitioners must be used as a basis for knowledge about a large and potentially very diverse group - not a satisfactory situation. Yet, even using such a small representative group, there were surprisingly high levels of consistency around the type of core regalia used, and particularly around the patterning of shamanic experiences and the nature of the shamanic universes.

There is a clear indication that Tsimshian shamans operated within a distinct worldview, and practiced a form and range of shamanizing that was unique. However, much more research is necessary, both on the Tsimshian and on shamans from other cultures, before

such a conclusion can be substantiated. Furthermore, such research must encompass the shaman's experiential explanations, and attempt a presentation of the emic perspective, for comparisons to be useful. Such research would also have to control very closely for time, as equating the comments and experiences of a shaman practicing in the eighteenth century with one practicing in the twentieth century would be of doubtful validity - but comparing them would certainly be interesting.

Finally, a warning can be taken: shamanism, despite its worldwide distribution in numerous cultures, is a culture-specific phenomenon by its very nature. Concepts, practices and meanings derived from the study of the practice of shamanism in one culture can only be applied with the greatest caution to any other culture's shamanic practice. Surface similarities can mask profound differences in beliefs and experiences, and the indiscriminate application of concepts from one group to another (examples being "mana", "tabu", "possession", "spirit") can lead to profound misunderstandings.

Words have power. Anthropologists must therefore be very careful with how we use words, and which words are used. The Tsimshian shaman know ATIASXW and NAXNOX, and are amongst the HALAIT. The meaning of these terms for us may be enriched by understandings of similar terms from other cultures, and our understanding of other culture's explanations may be equally enriched by these concepts from the Tsimshian world. But to enrich understand should not be to obliterate uniqueness. The Tsimshian HALAIT are unique, and the Tsimshian SWANASU are unique HALAIT

practitioners. I hope this thesis has helped to highlight this uniqueness, and to clarify our knowledge of the Tsimshian SWANASU.

REFLECTIONS

The prime functions of a thesis are twofold: to contribute in a scholarly manner to a body of knowledge, and to develop a certain mastery, both theoretical and practical, of one's discipline. In what manner have these functions been fulfilled through this thesis?

The most obvious contribution has been to gather and bring forward both a depth and breadth of detailed information which is either unpublished or unpublishable and thus not readily available to non-local researchers. With this aim of helping other researchers, I have attempted to make both the artifact descriptions and the photographs as useful as possible, while remaining within the confines of my project. Perhaps others, with a more experienced eye or more specific interest, will be drawn to examine these collections and answer some of the questions I could not: Who made this? When, how and why was it used? Did it derive from ancient times, or was it somebody's new inspiration? What does it say to us of the life and times of its people?

What I found particularly interesting were the descriptions by practising shamans of how the songs and the ATIASXW were used. These detailed insights added a whole new range of meaning to such cryptic cataloguing comments as "used in healing ceremony", allowing at least a peek into the nature of a power demonstration or a healing ceremony from the shaman's conceptual or experiential point of view.

This search for understanding of meaning and experience, as illustrated by first-hand descriptions whenever possible, or by my own or other ethnographers' speculations, was driven by my own belief that humans are creatures ill-disposed to meaningless activity - although sometimes meaning can be difficult to identify, and certainly varies between members of the same culture. These comments and speculations were informed from a much broader research base than a simple artifact review might warrant, and were largely intended not to provide answers so much as to inspire question.

An additional feature that I hope will prove useful to other researchers was the emphasis put on the degree of circumspection required when dealing with information from museums about their artifacts. There is a tendency, similar to that regarding the Human Relations Area Files as a data source for cross-cultural research, to want to view cataloguing information as correct. Conclusions are sometimes drawn based upon the seeming unquestionability of the accuracy and "truth" of artifact documentation. I hope this thesis has shown that, despite the best efforts of all involved, errors or omissions in the attribution, classification or interpretation of artifacts are more common than not, and "truth" can be hard indeed to find.

Which leads directly into my own learning experiences in executing this research. Perhaps the hardest lesson I learned was that anthropological categories are cultural constructs rather than supposed scientific realities, and often simply cannot be fitted onto the real world. This is a thing I "knew" in theory, and thought I was quite sensitive to, until I

encountered it in practice. It took me a very long time to realize that much of the difficulty inherent in the classification of artifacts as shamanic or non-shamanic stemmed not from the ignorance or carelessness of the researchers, but from the fact that the subjects, these Tsimshian people, did not divide their world according to our categories. They divided their world according to their own categories, where there were a variety of HALAIT practitioners whose activities crossed into those classically ascribed to "shaman". I finally realized that by imposing my academically informed conceptions of shaman onto this world I had effectively been trying to pound a square peg into a round hole without clearly seeing the lack of fit - only complaining about all the work involved, and the mess of the wood chips lying all around. This realization has made me wonder about how much violence might still be done to cultures, unwittingly, by coming to see them first with our classificatory templates held firmly in the fore. It is an aspect of cultural research to which I will try to direct more conscious attention.

Another theoretical tenet that received practical substantiation was that there is often not a good match between what people say they do and what they really do. The example of this that comes most immediately to mind is around the inheritance of shamanic regalia: it was said to have not been inheritable, to have been unique to each individual, even untouchable by others - and yet several articles were clearly inherited, some over many generations of shamans.

The flexibility and rapidity of change possible within a belief system also came clearly evident, when artifacts which had been considered too powerful to even be handled became, often within the space of one generation, simply household collectibles. This indicated to me that there was either an incredibly profound change in the belief system, or my understanding of the original system was incomplete or inadequate. I suspect it is more the latter than the former.

Deriving from the earlier point about the accuracy of museum documentation, reading of the Barbeau-Beynon files (particularly the "historical" stories of Bini the Prophet, and Kitwancool Jim), along with the vast numbers of published and unpublished Tsimshian myths, clearly presented the case that right and wrong interpretations are seldom so absolutely the case - reality does seem to exist as experienced in multiple interpretations. Rather than representing "incorrect" versions of a story, these multiple variations provided rich illustrations of the Tsimshian contention that reality exists in the points of view of the participants.

On a somewhat more pragmatic route, I learned through grim experience the frustrations that result from not recognizing important aspects or details until extensive amounts of research have already been done, and time or circumstances do not allow for backtracking. This is inevitable to some extent in any research, and I am sure will be even more pronounced and even more frustrating in a "live" fieldwork situation. I have thus come to admire the skills and the wisdom of researchers such as Boas, who aimed to record as

much as possible on site since one never knew what might prove to be important in the future. This is directly tied to the other frustrating experience of working with archival data and field notes, which is "Why didn't they ask ...? Why didn't they specify ...?" - and the recognition that, in yet another way, there are now some things that have passed and will never be known. While acknowledging that it is impossible to record everything, even if one is only recording it from one's subjective point of view, I shall now tend to be a little more lateral, a little less linear, in my research and observations.

Finally, I learned that carving is very skilled and very difficult work. My admiration for Tsimshian artists, which was high to begin with, has increased immeasurably, and I appreciate even more this beauty they have left in the world.

Thus, from my point of view, the functions of this thesis have been fully realized. I hope it in some way challenges, stimulates or enriches some other's point of view.

CLOSING COMMENT

Although from the Ojibway rather than the Tsimshian culture, these closing comments from the shaman Ron Geyshiuk (1989:174) felt most appropriate, as I reflected upon the stories I had read and the belongings I had touched:

"TE BWE WIN means 'truth', based on what I've heard from my Grandmothers, my Dad and Grandfather, and lots of other Elders. In these stories, I can almost hear their voices. I sat around with them for hours, listening, and sometimes I didn't understand much at all. Not until years later did I get the meaning, but I liked to visit them and help out, and they helped me a lot. Some of these stories are my own, things I've discovered myself because I wanted to know.

... I also hope this book will help the readers, by bringing some kind of belief and acknowledgement, although the spirits I've asked for help through vision quests and dreams do not give powers through this book.

It's just an ordinary book that people might like to read and get something out of. I'm glad."

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Plate 1:
Shaman's crown, used by the shaman MAICHL-LAT-QUOR ("Mystic Dancer"), Mrs. Amy Campbell-Johnston, of the Wolf clan. This crown was donated to the Vancouver Museum by the Campbell-Johnstons in 1911. (VM display and records).

Plate 2:

Two shaman's crowns: note quills, down and beadwork on upper thong of # 6549, and red cloth on headband of #14958. (RBCM).

Plate 3:
Shaman's crown, with abalone inserts and fur decoration.(9686,RBCM).

Plate 4:

Shaman's wolf skin robe. This robe, along with the other shamanic articles pictured here from the Vancouver Museum, were used by the Tsimshian shaman MAICHL-LAT-QUOR, and donated to the museum in 1911. (VM display and records).

Plate 5:
Close-up of shoulder decoration on same shaman's robe. (VM display).

Plate 6:
Wooden soul catcher. Although described as being Tsimshian, this was not listed as part of the MAICHL-LAT-QUOR collection. (VM display).

Plate 7:

Tsimshian soul catcher; intricate carving, but no inlay. (MOA display).

Plate 8:

Two old soul catchers. #8797 (left) was found while doing excavations for a basement; #9619 has an unusual full-body portrait of the human figure in the middle. (RBCM).

Plate 9:
Three views, rotating back to front, and enlargement of "face in face" detail, of soul catcher. (CMHM/ROM).

Plate 10:
Four views of soul catcher and attached fish
charm, with enlargement of central human face.
(CMHM/ROM).

Plate 11:
Three views of the soul catcher "Across Rhubarb" and it's associated bear charm
(enlarged).(HN 1235 and HN 1234 CMHM/RBCM).

Plate 12:

Two views of soul catcher, of very white bone (possibly ivory) and abalone inserts in eyes and nostrils. Note the very atypical grin on face of human in middle, and unusual treatment of "whale's" teeth.(CMHM/ROM).

Plate 13:

Two soul catchers (8797, 9619), and two bone unusually large "charms", one of bone (4123), the other (humanoid) of whale's tooth (4122). (RBCM).

Plate 14:
Several shaman's "charms" made from pieces of soul catchers; one enlarged to show detail of eye and mouth carving.(9547, RBCM).

Plate 15:

Several types of shaman's charms, made from tooth or bone, depicting birds, wolves, whales, sea-lions, otters or lizards. (9547, RBCM).

Plate 16:

Two beautiful bone charms. That on the left (#9681) depicts a bird/human transformation theme. The charm on the right (#10034) is a most unusual rendition of a woman. (RBCM).

Plate 17:
ATIASXW depicting a man holding mask. (RBCM).

Plate 18:

Two stone ATIASXW. The one on the left is a black stone styled like a soul catcher/killerwhale (#9544), with red ochre in the incising; the eagle (#1585) on the right is of reddish stone, also with red ochre.(RBCM).

Plate 19:

Shaman's ATIASXW of skin bear "stuffed with medicine" (#1567). (RBCM).

Plate 20:

Two stuffed skin ATIAXW (upper, #1578), and two stuffed necklace-style charms (#1580 and #1579). Note the various forms of probe/pin/scratcher, and bone sucking tube or whistle on the lower necklace (#1579). (RBCM)

Plate 21:

Two views of the "dog" charm (HN 1231), stuffed mink skin charm with carved head (HN 1228) and small skin circlet (HN 1252). (CMHM/ROM).

Plate 22:

Shaman's necklace of skins bound with cedar bark. Note two salmon charms attached. (HN 1255, CMHM/ROM).

Plate 23:

Sometimes called a "bone sucking tube", or a "soul catcher", this artifact is probably a shaman's whistle. This one is from the same Kispiox shaman's kit as other artifacts shown in Plates 24 and 25. (MOA).

Plate 24:

A shaman's leather carrying bag and some of its contents. The long bag in the lower front was filled with red ochre: the tip of a powder horn is also visible.(A7961, MOA).

Plate 25:

The middle necklace of skins and paws (#1761) is from the same shaman's bag. The swan's head necklace is #9074, and the cedar bark/wing necklace is #9075. All are part of the MOA shamanic collection.

Plate 26:

Shaman's tools: two pins or probes (1 carved), one charm resembling soul catcher mouth, one pair of copper tweezers. (CMHM/ROM).

Plate 27:

Shaman's tools: lancet. (HN 1218, CMHM/ROM).

Plate 28:
Claw ATIASXW, brooches, and wing fans from previously shown shaman's bag.
(7961, MOA).

Plate 29:
Examples of sets of shaman's brooches, worn across the bear-claw crown. (HN 1244,
HN 1245 CMHM/ROM).

Plate 30:

Another set of shaman's brooches (HN 1227), and an example of a shaman's wooden canoe ATIASXW, carved to also resemble a fish and stained with red ochre (HN 1260). (CMHM/ROM).

Plate 31:

Two views of a clapper (one with design highlighted). This clapper is completely unpainted, and may have been unfinished. (RBCM).

Plate 32:

Rattle, stained completely black, depicting a human male being carried on the back of a raven, but not a 'classic" style raven rattle. (CMC).

Plate 33:

Side and back views of two identical rattles. Although attributed (with reservations) to the Tsimshian, these rattles are almost identical to other Haida examples. Probably chief's rattles. (VII-C-339, VII-C-340, CMC).

Plate 34:

A set of two small, carved and painted "woodpecker" rattles. Although identified by the collector (I.W. Powell, 1879) as being "medicine rattles", these HALAIT rattles would not have been used in shamanic work (CMC).

Plate 35:

Two small rattles that reportedly were used in shamanic healing work. (#10289 and #4117, RBCM).

Plate 36:

Three views of a carved, globular "face" rattle, of a style that might or might not have been used by a shaman. One side of this unusual rattle depicts a human, the other side a frog.(VII-C-2324 CMC).

Plate 37:
Rattle carved with face of a bear - HALAIT, but probably not shamanic. (MOA).

Plate 38:

A classic style of raven rattle, often attributed to shamans, but used by chiefs. In use, this rattle was held upside down - supposedly so the raven would not fly away. Note the "U" join in the handle. (VII-C-2321, CMC).

Plate 39:

A somewhat less common interpretation of a raven rattle, having a bear in the place normally filled by a human figure. Note the very complex double joint of the handle to the head of the rattle. (VII-C-2322, CMC).

Plate 40:

Two more views of the "bear" raven rattle from the previous page (VII-C-2322, CMC).