CARRIER AND TRADER: AMBIVALENCE IN CROSS-CULTURAL RELATIONS

For NATIVE STUDIES 221

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The purpose of this paper is to examine Carrier acculturation and cross-cultural relations during the period of exclusive fur trade contact.

The Carrier, Pacific Drainage Athapaskan people in north central British Columbia (see Appendix I for schematic map), are an important group to be considered in studies of acculturation because of their contact with unknown series of acculturative pressures in continuum from pre-contact times up to the present day (Goldman 1940:334).

The traditional wisdom concerning Carrier acculturation is enunciated by the Reverend A. G. Morice O.M.I., a scholarly missionary who spent nineteen years among the Carrier and who had contributed important work on Athapaskan ethnography. Morice (1892) and other scholars such as I. Goldman (1941:364) maintain that the Carrier are characterized by an especially eclectic nature and a "susceptibility" to extra-cultural influences. They assert that the "susceptibility" of these initially Sub-Arctic Athapaskans was the basis for their adoption of various external cultural elements such as the coastal matrilineal and potlatch-rank systems. In another paper this writer found reason to question this simplistic interpretation. The implication that carrier culture was particularly hollow and weak and therefore "susceptible" to acculturative change ignores the theory of culture change as well as the fundamental structural conduciveness inherent to the Carrier's Proto-Athapaskan base culture. It also ignores the relatively long and intense period of direct contact with coastal groups.

A corollary of the Morice/Goldman argument (supported by many others such as Steward 1960:732-5, Duff 1964:58) is that it was the "fortuitous historic circumstance" of the European fur trade, beginning in the mid to late eighteenth century, which provided the major stimulus for Carrier adoption of coastal culture.

Of course, these arguments have an inherent weakness in that, on one hand, the Carrier are characterized as particularly susceptible" to change, yet it took major stimulus from the incipient European traders to cause them to adopt cultural elements from a
group with whom they had been in direct contact since at least 1000 B.C. and probably even earlier. Although perhaps tangential to the present task, this question will be dealt with in more detail below because the issue of the actual effects of the European fur trade on the Carrier clouded by the theory that the incipient trade caused the introduction of the coastal culture among the Carrier.

Archaeologically the evidence for Carrier occupation of their historic homeland stretches back to 2400 B.C. (Dohahue 1975:26, 28). The material culture, particularly in the northern Carrier areas near Moricetown and Hagwilget, began to show a coastal orientation by approximately 1000 B.C. (Donahue 1975:52-3). This indicates contact and cultural exchange between the Carrier and coastal groups. Wilmeth (1975:13) has radio-carbon dated coastal style rectangular plank houses, a strong indication of the integration of the potlatch-rank system, in Carrier territory between A.D. 80 and 1240.

This convincing evidence for early pre-historic adoption of coastal culture elements by the Carrier is supported by their own oral history. Morice (1906:7) see also Jenness 1943:275-7 reports that the Ackwilgate (northern Carrier) and their coastal neighbours, the Tsimshian, recount oral traditions placing their respective origins within sixteen miles of each other. Direct contact and intermarriage between the two was said to have occurred quite frequently as a result.

Such marriage relations were based on well-established aboriginal trade patterns. The Carrier were situated astride two of the three major trade routes from the Pacific to the interior, at the Bulkley-Skeena confluence and at strategic Gatcho Lake on the route to the Bella Coola area of the coast (Donahue 1975:175).

When Mackenzie (1801:310) encountered them in 1793, the Carrier were engaged in a profitable middleman role bringing moose skins (note that this was not a commodity important to the maritime traders, but highly valued by the coastal people themselves) to the Rocky Mountain "Indians (Sekani?). The fact that such trade routes were referred to as "grease trails" (Goldman
1940:340) indicates that they had major pre-historic importance in the fish oil commodity trade between the Carrier and the coastal groups. Another commodity of course was dried salmon, especially important in times of famine (Goldman 1940:353).

Goldman (1940:341) argues that this pre-contact trade would not alone account for the adoption of coastal cultural complexes. However, in T. McFeat's (1966:xii) terms,

The ecological model of diffusion is this: unless barriers occur which prevent the exchange of information, its movement will be continuous and unbroken (emphasis added).

In other words, in the absence of factors preventing it, we must assume that diffusion took place in Carrier/coast direct and continued contact. Goldman fails to establish any indications that barriers to cultural exchange between coastal and Carrier groups were operating during this extensive pre-historic contact and trade.

As a matter of fact, the Carrier often spent entire winters among the Bella Coola, Kitimt and Tsimshian (Jenness 1943, 480, 478, Goldman 1940:339). Such contact, beyond mere trade led inevitably to social alliances and attendant cultural transfer through marriages (Smith 1972:8). We have already seen above that such alliances were said to be common in the pre-contact period. Goldman (1940:342) himself maintains that intermarriage eventually was the key to Carrier acculturation to coastal models. It is obvious then that this "key" must have been operating well before European contact.

Further, J. H. Steward (1955:174) and V. Kobrinsky (1972:48) present strong arguments that the salmon ecology was an important (although not sufficient) factor in the adoption of the coastal potlatch-rank system as well as basis coastal matrilocal patterns (Steward 1941:496). It is obvious of course, since the fur trade introduced no significant change in the salmon ecology, (Steward 1955:175), that this ecological stimulus to culture change occurred not with the introduction of the European fur trade, both with the original pre-historic migration of the Carrier into the Pacific Drainage approximately 2400 B.C.

The argument is made be Goldman (1940:346) that in order for the potlatch-rank complex of the coast to be integrated, it i
was necessary to have an expanding economy. There can be no argument that the incipient European trade provided the economic stimulus to help to expand the Carrier economy. However, Goldman fails to consider that trade with the Tsimshian, even in the absence of European goods, would have also stimulated the Carrier’s pre-contact economy, enough at least to adopt some of the trappings of the potlatch.

Goldman (1940:343) also argues that it was the lack of European technology which resulted in only a bare subsistence economy among the Carrier, an economy which could not support the surplus based potlatch complex. This too does not stand up to reason. European technology had no effect in the major economic activity among the Carrier, ie fishing. Early weapons were less efficient than traditional means and trapw were employed primarily for non-food fur animals. Thus the ecological/economic conditions for adopting the coastal complexes did not magically appear with the arrival of the European, but were in existence traditionally. In the traditional subsistence pattern salmon did allow the amassing of surplus and the aboriginal trade with the Tsimshian would have allowed the necessary expansion of the Carrier economy.

Therefore, the archaeological, ethnographic and historic evidence point to a pre-contact adoption of coastal culture elements by the Carrier. The incipient European fur trade seems only to have caused a so-called "flourescence" of existing patterns here, not to have given rise to major new inovations from the coast. Having disposed of this red herring, we can now begin to examine the actual effects of the European fur trade on the Carrier.

The proto-historic and historic periods in the northern interior of British Columbia are relatively sharply defined. Alexander Mackenzie, first European to pass throught Carrier territory, on his way to the Pacific coast in July of 1793, noted not only coastal style plank houses (Mackenzie 1901:264) although Goldman 1940:340 denies it), but the presence of iron tools (Donahue 1973:155). Of course, the Russians under Bering and Cherekov had been making tentative probes into the new market on the Pacific coast since 1741. Quadrs’s Spanish expedition arrived in 1775 and Cook reached the coast in 1778 (McClellan 1964:10). Accordigg to Duff (1964:55) and Fisher (1977:2)
and Fisher (1977:2), the real rush to the coast had built up after the publishing of Cook’s journal in 1784. By Mackenzie’s time, scores of ships had been visiting the coast yearly and the traditional “grease trails” had spread these good into the interior to the Carrier and beyond (Fisher 1977:31, 33). Morice (1906:9) reports a Carrier tradition which recounts a p'ttlatch given by a Fraser Lake nobleman, Na’Kwoel, approximately 1730 to show off the first iron axe obtained in trade from the Skeena route. It is quite apparent then, that the Carrier were well acquainted with European goods, if not with the strange appearance of the new-comers themselves.

In 1793 MacKenzie (1802:306) states:

European fur traders were the major agents of contact among the Carrier until miners began to infiltrate the area in the early 1860’s along with Union Telegraph line construction gangs in 1865-6 (Morice 1906:303, 321-2). The presence of full time missionaries after sporadic beginnings in the 1840’s started to have effects in 1861. Morice himself arrived to do his major work only in 1885 (Duff 1964:91). The Carrier were isolated from settler and government intrusion until much later. Encroachment of traditional trapping territories by white trappers and by settlers who now realized that good agricultural land lay between Babine and Stuart Lakes was delayed until the mid-1920’s. Between 1926 and 1939 all formerly collectively controlled trapping territories were registered to individual families (Steward 1955:145, 1960:740). However, this paper will not consider the effects of these groups on the Carrier, but concentrate on the fur trader as agent of contact.
found the Carrier to be very cautious and somewhat hostile in their initial contacts with his party. This may relate in some manner to Morton's (1939:416) assertion the intruder Mackenzie encountered a strong concept of land ownership. Soon, however, the Carrier were indicating their pleasure at having Mackenzie accompany them to the coast and as a preview of relations in the future, more than once provided the desperate party with fish (Wade 1927:168).

Another indication of things to come occurred on Mackenzie's way back from the coast. In recovering a canoe left on the trip west, Mackenzie's men determined that some articles had been stolen. After noting that the Carrier had shown great restraint in leaving the majority of goods intact and, in fact, rewarding them, Mackenzie wrote in his journal

...and as I was very anxious to avoid a quarrel with the natives, in this stage of our journey, I told them who remained near us, without any appearance of anger, that their relations who were gone, had no idea of the mischief that would result to them from taking our property. I gravely added, that the Salmon, which was not only their favourite food, but absolutely necessary to their existence, came from the sea which belonged to us white men; and that, as, at the entrance of the river, we could prevent these fish from coming up it, we possessed the power to starve them and their children. To avert our anger therefore, they must return all the articles that had been stolen from us. This finess succeeded. Messengers were dispatched to rid the relations of everything that had been taken. We purchased several large salmon from them and enjoyed the delicious meal which they afforded (Mackenzie 1801:381).

The Europeans to follow Mackenzie again and again adopted
this paradoxical attitude toward the Carrier. In the face of their near total dependence on the Carrier, not only for fur, but for their very subsistence and, indeed, their physical safety, the Europeans maintained a wildly unrealistic and arrogant conception of their position in New Caledonia. The type of coercive behaviour exhibited here by Mackenzie became a "stock in trade" for the European in relations with the Carrier. It becomes problematical how the traders reconciled the above paradox and, too, why the Natives accepted these attitudes given their strength and independence (to be illustrated below).

Simon Fraser on his way to the coast in 1801 is the next agent of contact to pass through Carrier territory. Fraser returned in 1806 to build the first post among the Carrier, Fort St. James on Stuart Lake, a post which was to become the major trade centre in New Caledonia.

Again, major patterns of cross-cultural relations are established early. In his reconnaissance of the Stuart Lake area in the previous year, James McDougal had invested a local Carrier by the name of Toeyen with a swatch of red cloth symbolizing a special relationship to the Northwest Company, and enlisting his aid as an intermediary with his people. In effect the Company had appointed its first so-called "trading chief" (Morice 1906:55). When Fraser and his party arrived in 1906, the Carrier were reported to be fearful and unsure of just how to approach the Europeans, but Toeyen smoothed over the difficulties and Fort St. James was established without incident. Therefore, a shift in leadership patterns was supposedly one of the major impacts of the fur trade on the carrier. It then becomes necessary to examine traditional patterns of leadership in order to assess the effects of the new influences here.

Previous to direct contact with traders Carrier leadership had been an amalgam of Sub-Arctic (arising from their Proto-Athapaskan origins) and coastal models. Traditionally, according to Steward (1960:734) and Grossman (1965:255), in the Fort St. James area the postion of village "chief" and/or extended family headman (called "detsa") was distinct from the nobility or "aegetas" positions. Goldman (1940:363) maintains however that that of the prestigious "detsa" also became "aegetas". The former was patri-
lineally inherited on the basis of primogeniture, while the crest group nobility positions were inhereted matrilineally. This mixture was due to the Carrier combining influences from various areas on the coast (primarily Bella Coola and Tsimshian). The village or extended family headman called "detsa" role was mainly to exhort people to increased economic production aimed at self-sufficiency, to arbitrate disputes over hunting territory and personal affairs (Steward 1960:735). The "a eatas" had control over the matrilineal crest groups, regulated the ceremonial activities and the hunting territories assigned to his group by the "detsa" (Goldman 1940:334-5, Harmon 1820:249). Real political authority however was lacking (Jenness 1943:513, Goldman 1940:349) as the Carrier operated to a great extent under rule by consensus and leaders maintained their positions only through demonstrated prowess and generosity and continued success.

Despite the fact that Mackenzie (1801:382) reported that "...there is no regular government among them; nor do they appear to have sufficient common understanding with each other, to defend themselves against an invading enemy, to who they fall easy prey...", it is clear that Mackenzie did not recognize the essential village solidarity (Morton 1939:361) which later gave rise to much of the Europeans' anxiety over their own safety.

The traditional wisdom has it that the establishment of trader hegemony and their selection of "trading chiefs" gradually supplanted the aboriginal forms of leadership (McClellan 1964:12). There is evidence however that rather than supplanting traditional leadership, traders were merely reinforcing and adding new dimensions to aboriginal patterns. A case in point here is 'Kawah, chief of the Stuart Lake Carrier for nearly forty years, who, according to Bishop (1978), became the single most important Indian in New Caledonias.

*Kawah was a leader in traditional term since he held the village headman's position as well as the highest "a eatas" rank (Morton 1939:736). He had already attained his preeminent position through traditional means, ie an exemplary war record (Bishop 1978, Harmon 1820:144, Morice 1906:27), matrilineally inherited honourific titles (Steward 1960:741) and by exhibiting conspi-
cuous generosity. Again, this generosity is even directed toward the traders. In August 1806 Simon Fraser reports 'Kwah's donation of a dozen beaver and a few rabbits to the depleated larder of the newcomers (Harmon 1820:237).

Morice (1906:88) explains that McDougall had actually mis-calculated by originally investing Toeyen with the red badge of authority with the traders. It took the newcomers two years to finally recognize that, at the traditional village headman, 'Kwah was the best candidate for the position of trading chief' as well. It became the policy of the Company to continue to reinforce this traditional leadership by showing deference, allowing special privileges and by bestowing New Years favours in order to ensure their help in the coming year's trade (Fisher 1977:46, Morice 1906:151).

Nonetheless, 'Kwah's preeminent position was entirely predictable in traditional terms and in fact had bery little to do with the European trade influence. The key here lies in the dichotomous cultural elements which the Carrier had earlier adoptes from their two major coastal contacts, the Bella Coola and the Tsimshian. Following Bella Coola patterns the extended family or village "detsa" position was patrilineally inherited within the local group called "sadeku". The "aetegas" positions of the crest groups ("netsi") were matrilineally inherited (Duff 1951:29, Steward 1960:734).

It is therefore only logical, since the "detsa" controlled the village's hunting and fishing territory and therefore the major resources (Goldman 1940:357), that the crest group nobility, which depended on resource distribution for validation of high status, would necessarily be forced to ally itself with those who controlled those resources (see Grossman 1965). Very soon after the development of such a system, especially since the local land owning group ("sadeku") was exogamic (Goldman 1940:335), the "detsa" would naturally seek out women from high status crest groups for marriage. Conversely members of high status "netsi" (or crest groups) would be seeking out husbands for their women belonging to the major resource based, land-owning groups, the "sadeku".

Thus, 'Kwah had patrilineally inherited his headman's position, while his high status titles had been passed down from hi
mother's side. Such a process had little or nothing to do with the introduction of the European fur trade since adoption of the applicable coastal cultural patterns was pre-historic. Goldman (1940:334) bases his arguments to the contrary on the testimony of an informant who reported that "in the old days" there were no "chiefs". Considering the above argument it is quite likely that the informant is referring to the "Company chiefs" or "tribal" chief position in Euro-Canadian terms rather than the "aegetas" or "detsa" positions in traditional terms. In their alteration of leadership patterns of the Carrier, the traders merely reinforced traditional patterns rather than supplanting them with new forms of leadership.

The argument is made by those such as Steward (1960:742) that the European-based fur trade gave the traditional chiefs even more power than they had wielded traditionally. This influence derived from the increased wealth stimulated by the European trade. As well, in the early stages of the trade, contact was experienced only among trading men (Goldman 1940:373). Goldman (1940:375, 377) reports that this contact actually increased the prestige of these men along with providing them with economic advantages (eg steel traps and later horses). Such a trend however is not really a new influence on Carrier leadership patterns. As argued above, wealth and status had been closely connected traditionally through the pre-historic adoption of the coastal culture model. This trend was apparent until individuals began to seek out their own relationships with the traders thus undermining tee chief's authority. According to trader John McLean (1932:177) writing in the 1830's,

Their chiefs have still considerable authority, but much of the homage they claimed and received in former times is now transferred to the chieftains, or traders, whom they all esteem the greatest men in the universe.

Allowing for the obvious bias in such a statement, it does appear as if the trader was ascribed a relatively high status in Carrier terms. Again, McLean (1932:177) reports "Kwah's estimation of chief trader Dease..."After the Man of Heaven/a concept introduced by the Company/you are the next in dignity." It must be remembered here however, that, if reported accurately,
in making this statement. 'Kwah was attempting (as he was constantly) to get an extended line of credit and most likely was engaging in outrageous flattery to obtain his goal.

Another indication of the status afforded to the trader can be found in Harmon's (1820:140, 252) report that the Carrier believed that he had power to control the weather, to divine the extent of salmon runs and to real the sick by merely glancing at them. Although Morice (1926:67) denies this, McLean (1932:177) also reports that Carrier chiefs were believed to possess magical powers. Goldman (1940:365-66) confirms that shamanistic powers and wellth, and hence leadership) were closely interrelated concepts. He states...

For the Alkatcho Carrier supernaturalistic practices had one main function, the arming of the individual with another tool for acquiring wealth. It therefore becomes obvious to the Carrier that the trader, a man with seemingly unlimited access to wealth, should necessarily also possess powerful connections with the supernatural.

It is also interesting to note that in the Carrier animistic theodicy and ethos the efficacy of technology depended to a large degree on the metaphysical aspects of the materials themselves (see Goldman 1940:383). The obvious superiority of the European's iron tools would in Carrier eyes, initially at least, invest the Europeans with the mantle of metaphysical superiority. Therefore, it seems as if some of the status of leadership was indeed ascribed to the traders. However, rather than supplanting aboriginal patterns, the traders were merely participating in traditional forms of leadership.

There is a paradox evident here however. In concert with Jaenen's (1971) analysis of Native attitudes toward Europeans, the Carrier, according to McLellan (1964:12) held little awe for the early newcomers and met them on more or less equal terms (see also Goldman 1940:371). In fact, 'Kwah considered himself to be the equal of Harmon in all but the skills of literacy (Bishop 1978, Harmon 1820:143-4). This is in contrast to Ralph Linton's comments on Goldman's (1940:389) essay to the effect that in the acculturative process...
The factors of prestige were still operating, for the Carrier seem to have accepted the superiority of the Whites as unquestioningly as they had that of the Bella Coola...

The key to this apparent contradiction is the Carrier concept of status which along the coastal model, was based on wealth. To the Carrier the chief traders such as Fraser, Harmon and Ogden held a high status because of their apparent unlimited wealth and authority. On the other hand, the Company servants were seen as no better than slaves (Fisher 1977:51).

For example, 'Kwah refers to Harmon's men as slaves (Harmon 1820:149-50). Prior to his later exaltation to chief factor and Governor of the New colony, James Douglas in the position of head fisherman at Fort St James, was held in low regard. Morice (1906:145) reports...

To them he was but a poor young man in such straitened circumstances that he consented to attend to the most menial of occupations, fishing for a living, which they themselves left to their women.

Thus the Carrier perceived the structure of the traders' society along the lines of their own and as a result had ambivalent opinions concerning the status of the Europeans as a group.

On their part the traders also exhibited a marked ambivalence in their attitude toward the Carrier. On one hand they were dependent and almost entirely at the mercy of the Carrier while on the other they exhibited a high-handed arrogance and lack of tact which served only to antagonize their hosts.

In the first place, the traders were obviously dependent on Carrier labor for their raison d'être, -- fur. In addition however, given the difficult and expensive nature of transportation in New Caledonia (Cullen 1978) the traders were also dependent on the Carrier to provide the vast quantities of fish needed to provision the forts. This is more than apparent from Fraser's inception of Fort St. James (Lamb 1860:237) through Ogden's report in 1842 that the New Caledonia posts were almost entirely dependent on the Babine Carrier for salmon each fall (Morice 1906:212). This dependence lasted at least up until 1855 when the posts were reduced to eating their dogs and horses (Morice 1906:177). The Company servants began to hunt themselves and do some of their own fishing.
Douglas (Morice 1906:131). However, since resource harvesting areas were "sadeku"-owned and controlled, the Frasers Douglas and Ogden's were dependent on the good will of headmen such as 'Kwah who supplied the posts with meat and allowed them to utilize the sadeku"-owned fishing wiers (Morice 1906:197).

It is also quite apparent that the Carrier had clearly demonstrated to the traders that they were quite independent of the posts in the interior of New Caledonia. Fisher (1977:33) states...

As long as trade routes remained open and a competitive market on the coast stimulated prices, the Indians of the interior could maintain a degree of independence from the forts in the territory. Both conditions persisted until at least 1840.

Upon the first year of his establishment at Stuart Lake, Simon Fraser (Lamb 1960:232) notes in a letter to the Gentlemen Proprietors in August of 1806...

But they are independent of us, as they get their necessities from their neighbors (Babine) who trade with the Natives of the sea coast (Tsimmian).

Upon the first penetration into the territory of the Babine Carrier in 1812, Harmon and McDougal encountered much in the way of European goods which had been obtained (at cheaper rates) from the Tsimmian (Morice 1906:92). Even after having been established at Fort Kilmers among the Babine since 1822, McKay (1935:186) reports that the Company was still, in 1836, losing trade to the Tsimmian. Morice (1906:243) reports that as late as 1845 the Lower Carrier were still travelling to the Bella Coola to trade. The Carrier simply were not dependent on the presence of posts in the interior.

In addition, there is ample evidence that the traders were apprehensive about their perilous strategic position among the Carrier. After early good relations began to break down (Morton 1939:473) journals begin to refer to concerns about their physical safety of the traders. In 1829 Todd (Pethick 1969:19) reports...

...yet notwithstanding the justice of our cause (retaliation for a murder), things have come to that pitch which makes it necessary for us to be continually on the alert in order to take every precaution so as to guard ourselves against either the open attacks or insidious advances of our savage neighbours, many of whom seem considerably irritated at the late examples...
Peter Skene Ogden writes in 1841 to all the officers in the New Caledonia District...

...to warn you gentlemen, how cautious and how guarded we ought to be on all occasions with Indians, and the most melancholy event (a murder of a Company servant at Ft. Thompson), independently of long experience, teaches us never to place any trust or confidence in them. We are well aware that in this country our lives are constantly exposed... (Morice 1906:181)

Further expression of this concern is expressed in an Ogden reprimand to the abrasive Thew at Fraser Lake...

It is not only our duty, but our interest also, so far as circumstances will admit, to avoid coming to extremes with the Indians. Look at our numbers compared to theirs; look at the any opportunities they may have of committing murder; look at their treacherous character/which however, exists only in Ogden's mind (Morice); look also at the weakness of our establishments in the summer (when many of the men were on outfitting expeditions) and the impossibility of obtaining assistance, and then judge for yourself if it is not more prudent to avoid quarrels than to engage in them (Morice 1906:204).

Well realizing the isolation of his outlying post, Fort Kilmers, (up to a forty-three day return trip from Fort St. James) McLean makes this desperate plea, in 1846...

It is however, reported that the Indians of the Fallen Rock (Hagwilget) have no good will towards the whites, and threaten to give us some trouble. God help me!
I am little able to contend against them with my force of three men should the rascals... make their appearance with evil intentions (Morice 1906:222).

Rev. James Douglas, 1850 (former Governor) James Douglas believed the entire Colony to be in danger of Indian depredation. In retrospect, this must have been all the more serious to the Europeans since they were in the minority until the 1880's (Fisher 1977: xii, 53). This situation of course pertained much longer in the interior. Numbers were such that even well-armed Company servants could not have to defend themselves in New Caledonia (Morton 1939:621). The Chilcotin Uprising in 1864 was bloody testimony to the vulnerability of non-Natives in the territory.

As illustrated by the Chilcotin Uprising, the fears over the safety of establishments in the interior were no mere paranoia born of isolation although Morice (1906:211-9) has established a case for the mental imbalance of Babine post trader D. E. Cameron. The historical record is fraught with murders
and full-scale attacks on Europeans and their establishments. For example, the above concerns expressed by Todd and Ogeen were the result of the death of Company servants at the hands of the Carrier.

Although Fisher (1977:54) maintains that the Indian violence in the fur trade west of the Rockies was primarily individual incidents, there are also numerous reports of mass attacks, the most famous of course, being 'Kwah's confrontation with James Douglas while the latter was stationed at Fort St. James. Douglas' continued poor relations with the Carrier as a whole (also assaulted at Fort Fraser (Pethick 1969:19) ) eventually forced his removal from new Caledonia in 1830. As early as 1819, Harmon (1920:150) had reported a "near massacre" at the Fraser Lake post in a confrontation with 80-90 armed Carrier. In 1841 as a response to trader Thew's beating of a headman, the Fraser Lake Carrier broke into the fort and only a potlatch prevented a violent ending. (Morice 1906:204).

Nevertheless, despite these events, the traders seemed not to have considered their own arrogant attitudes and actions in the light of their perilous strategic position. Harmon (1820:137) provides an excellent example of this tunnel vision as he writes in 1811, after having threatened the Carrier of Stuart Lake concerning petty thievery...

...they might depend upon being severely punished -- and I then returned to our house (for as yet we have not Palisades about them.

Much later during a conflict with 'Kwah's son and successor, Prince, chief trader Manson realizes his real vulnerability after earlier dismantling of the palisades at Fort St. James (Morice 1906:284).

James Douglas, who seems to be constantly at the forefront of the violence first as perpetrator and then as Colonial administrator, takes note of the significance of the Cayuse war in Oregon in 1846 which stretched the resources of that new territory to the breaking point (Fisher 1977:53). Closer to home, the Chilcotin, southern neighbours and co-ethnics of the Carrier, gave substance to the trader's fears of Indian uprisings.

In April 1864 the Chilcotin staged an uprising and fourteen road workers were killed at Bute Inlet. Although the pressures facing
facing the Chilcotin were more intense, being above and beyond those of the fur trade (gold rush, settlement etc (Goldman 1940;372)), there are a number of parallels with the situation faced by the Carrier themselves.

The Chilcotin Uprising had been sparked by a dispute over a food credit (Hewlet 1973:55). According to Morice (1906:219), haggling over credit was one of the major sources of conflict between the Carriers and the traders. The major conflagration between "Kwah and Harmon (Morice 1906:88-9) which ended in 'Kwah being severely beaten at the hands of the trader was over this very matter. Morice attempts to explain the origin of this conflict as follows:

...we should not lose sight of the fact that, very acute under the appearance of the greatest simplicity, he (the Indian) fully realizes that the fur traders live at his expense and without any great labour. For that reason, he considers them as being in reality his debtors. Hence, in his estimation, any favour showing from them is more part payment of an obligation than gratuitous bene

Hewlet (1973:62-3) indicates that the chief motivating cause from the viewpoint of the Chilcotin had been fear of the supernatural powers of the Europeans. One trader had threatened to bring down sickness upon them, and their experiences in 1862 with small pox added to the weight of this threat. Consider again Harmon's report noted above on Carrier ideas of traders' supernatural powers. Such conceptions coupled with the attitudes of many of the traders could and did lead to conflict. Company servants were not beyond using such ploys; in fact, one Jonh M McIntosh (at one time in charge of Fort Chilcotin) was eventually murdered by the Sekani for threatening powerful "bad medicine" (Morice 1906:185).

Other "predisposing causes" of the Chilcotin uprising identified by Hewlet (1973:63-5) were that a history of feuding had developed a behaviour of confronting rather than retreating from threats. The Carrier themselves had a similar history. Although on the margins of the gold rush encroachment by the early 1860's (Morice 1906:291-303), the Carrier too were beginning to have contact with miners/who had raised the ire of the Chilcotin. Neither the Chilcotin nor the Carrier had extensive contact with white intermediaries such as missionaries (Morice 1906:333) who
according to Hewlet (1973:52, 61), might have had an ameliorating influence. The Chilcotin had direct grievances as laborers. So too did the Carrier.

As Hewlet (1973:72) concludes, there was great potential for "violence resulting from the clash of two mutually unintelligible cultures". This situation applied equally as well with the Carrier/trader relations in their own right.

Such mutual unintelligibility was due in large part to the intolerant, arrogant attitudes of the European traders coupled with their lack of patience and tact in dealing with the Carrier. To the former, the latter were "indolent", "thieving", treacherous" scoundrels", "vagabonds" and "wretches". On close examination, however, these assessments of character were reserved for those Carrier who were acting in their own self interest rather than the exclusive interest of the Company. In addition, McClellan (1964:12) mentions the cross-cultural misunderstanding involved in the Carrier custom of haggling over transactions with which we might couple the above comments of Morice. Morice (1906:218) had given the following analysis of the situation:

Nevertheless, we can boldly confirm that most of the difficulties which ever arose between the white and red races can be traced to mutual misunderstandings, and a misconception of each other's characteristics. The natives did not understand their white brothers or their way, any more than the latter could see the reason of so many to them, uncalled-for outbursts and incomprehensible actions. Language is here the great barrier which separates races into so many antagonistic camps, each of which lives in perpetual suspicion of its neighbour's intentions.

Morice (1928) continues this theme in his criticism of the dependence on Harmon's journal for information of the Carrier.

An excellent example of the cross-cultural difficulties encountered is the case of Douglas' rash execution of "frontier justice on a suspected murderer who was a guest in "Kwah's village. Douglas had failed to realize that in killing the suspect, he was actually violating traditional concepts of sanctuary. Chiefs provided protection to any fugitive who might present himself, extending even to the wearing of a garment belonging to a chief. If this sanctuary was violated, the chief was obligated to avenge the affront (Harmon 1820:249-50) and of course 'Kwah did so. The life of Douglas was spared only by the distribution of property.
The traders' responses to these misunderstandings was hardly in keeping with their precarious position in New Caledonia. Strong-arm tactics became the order of the day. The journals are replete with accounts of the severe beatings meted out to the carrier who had the misfortune of raising the ire of the traders (Harmon 1820:190, Morice 1906:203, 284).

This sort of approach began early in the contact period when Fraser, writing in September 1806, commends Stuart for the beating of a thief...

I certainly approve of the method you took to punish them and to restore the articles they had stolen. They are a thievish forward inconsiderate set of bagabonds / vagabonds /, of course they require to be kept at a proper distance (Lamb 1960:240).

Such beatings were not reserved only for the poor and lowly whose offendedness was unlikely to cause reprocussions, economic or otherwise, but important figures also fell under the traders' bludgeons. *Kwah himself was severely beaten by Harmon (1820:143-4) as the latter lost patience during a bout of haggling.

Alcohol was employed by the traders to aid them in their retributions. At the New Year's revel in 1829, Douglas' men deliberately set out to intoxicate the Carrier headmen and, having done so, proceeded to beat them "unmercifully" (Pethick 1969:17, Morice 1906:151). Such attacks on the Carrier lasted well unto the 1850's when Prince, *Kwah's son, was maltreated by Mason who was then in charge of Fort St. James. Furious at this indignity, Prince began calling on all his neighbours to anihilate the whites. Luckily, the conflict was again settled through the distribution of presents (Morice 1906:234-5). Several similar incidents kept the tension between the two groups at the breaking point throughout much of this period.

Besides frequent beatings, the Company servants often engaged in vigilante, "lynch-mob" retaliation for murders which followed from such incendiary behaviour. Sometimes the innocent suffered as well as the guilty (Morice 1906:270). The Company employed strong-arm specialists such as the likes of Waccan (J.B. Boucher) to serve as "enforcer and chief executioner". Alternatively, they coaxed and coerced the Carrier to do the dirty work themselves (Morice 1906:273).
Contrary to their Charter responsibilities for law and order, the Company merely exacerbated the traditional blood feud system. Having involved the Company in this system, they were also forced, as we have seen above to engage in traditional "wergild" practices in order to extricate themselves from ever escalating feuds. (see also Begg 1894:37, McLean 1932:164, Pethick 1969:48). Although seen through his particular bias, Morice (1906:115) does note this important example of European accommodation to Carrier culture...

Instead of lifting the lower race up to the standard of Christianized Europeans, the latter in too many cases, stooped to the level of the savages they had come to as the representatives of a wonderful civilization.

The rampaging of this so-called "club law" in New Caledonia was fierce enough to cause ripples as far away as London. The subject of "club law" came up before the 1857 inquiry of the Select Committee into the Hudson's Bay Company's stewardship of their monopoly. Company Governor George Simpson testified...

I scarcely know a case, there may have been perhaps a few cases, in which our servants have retaliated for murders at the hands of natives...the Indians are usually punished by the tribe to which they belong... (Morice 1906:270 adds...an assertion which could certainly not be construed as applying to New Caledonia).

In rebuttal to this statement Morice (1906:118) replies...

But there is not one instance on record of a person having been tried for an offense and punished accordingly. When the victim of a foul deed belonged to the Company's personnel, prompt action was, indeed, invariably taken; but even then there was not the semblance of a trial. He who had killed was killed, sometimes the innocent sharing the fate of the guilty, exactly as practiced by the Indians themselves.

It is interesting to note here that, the "benevolent Canadian" myth to the contrary, trader attitudes very closely approximated those of the American "the only good Indian..." school. In March 1850, already smirking under criticism of Company club law, Manson (whom Morice accuses of actually being an American) states...

I wish the glib-tongued speaker and ready-penned writers against the Company were placed for a few years in the unchristianized Indian country. They would, I suspect, change their sentiments. I know my own, and shall not easily be induced to change them...most assuredly if my will only was concerned, the black, ungrateful, blood-thirsty, treacherous and cowardly scoundrels...should have prompt justice for it; hanging first, and then call a jury to find them guilty or not guilty (Morice 1906:271).
Such attitudes were present not only among the traders, but as we might more readily expect, among the settler group. Mainland Governor Seymour who succeeded Douglas (who had been widely criticised for pursuing conciliatory weregild policies) wrote to the Colonial Office on October 4, 1864 during the Chilcotin crisis...

...in event of a real emergency, I may find myself compelled to follow in the footsteps of the Governor of Colorado...and invite every white man to shoot each Indian he may meet (Fisher 1977:151).

In reality therefore, it becomes clear that the Europeans had only themselves to blame for the violent tenor of relations with the Carrier. The history of antagonistic attitudes and arrogant actions belies the supposed "singlemindedness" of the trader acting in the sole "best interests" of the commerce. It is quite clear that they failed to connect their lack of understanding and tolerance of the Carrier with consequent poor cross-cultural, not to mention strained business relations.

In summary therefore, the fur trade in New Caledonia seems to have rested on a very precarious balance between Carrier deference to, yet independence from the European via a via trader arrogance untempered by any real acceptance of their tenuous strategic position. However, we must question the arguments of those such as Fisher (1977:39) that...

The Indians probably had the power to destroy them yet refrained, not because they feared the white traders but because they valued their presence.

To the contrary, in New Caledonia as has been demonstrated above, the Carrier were definitely not dependent on interior posts, but could, and indeed did continue, with coastal trade patterns.

As a result the traditional wisdom concerning Carrier acculturation and cross-cultural relations must be re-examined. The "dependence" explanation is not an acceptable (at least not a sufficient) one here. New No definitive violent reaction occurred despite extreme irritations provided by the traders. This writer would like to suggest that this paradoxical situation may have to do with the Carrier's conception of the chief traders within the traditional status system. It must be remembered that Kwah did not hesitate to use violence against Douglas, a mere Company fisherman (a slave in Carrier terms). But yet, Kwah allowed
Harmon to beat him with impunity, in fact assuming in public the role of the latter's wife. Note that Harmon at the time was chief trader at Fort St. James and thus had attained high status in Carrier terms as a result of his apparent wealth and power.

Again, following Walker's (1971) analysis of the Indian in Canadian historical writing, scholars in examining the Carrier case to date have been ethnocentrically ignoring the significance of Native-specific factors in their analysis of the contact situation. The Carrier did not necessarily adopt elements of coastal culture just because European trade began, nor did they refrain from annihilating the whites because of some all-encompassing dependence. The Carrier were in fact responding to the Europeans in their own interests and with traditional strategies. These tradition-based adaptive responses must not be ignored as they have been in the literature to date.

The fur trade of course did have its typical effects on the Carrier in such areas as the move, during Governor Simpson's time toward individual rather than "sadeku"-owned trapping territories (Fisher 1977:47). The Carrier were also effected by the introduction of a more abundant European technology. However, it must be remembered here that this new technology had little or no influence on major subsistence patterns involved in the salmon economy. As Steward (1941:128) maintains, the effects of early white contact, almost entirely limited to the fur trade, merely intensified rather than altered the motivating and structure of Carrier society.

It is the contention of this paper that these motivations and structure of the change that did occur in the fur trade period were already deeply rooted in a coastal potlatch-rank structure and it was on this basis that the Carrier met with new influences from the white trader. Steward (1941:501) asserts that the Carrier's economy rooted in the surplus of the salmon ecology allowed the Carrier the "luxury of choice" between accepting or rejecting new influences and ideology. They were not being forced by the economic exigencies of the fur trade to accept change as was the case with so many woodland peoples.

The essentially non-directed culture change engendered here (referred to as "mutually beneficial symbiosis" by Linton (Fisher 1977:47) ) was not as traumatic as was later miner, mission, set-
tler and government contact was to prove. Fisher (1977:96-7) maintains the following:

During the fur trade Indians had been able to select items they wanted to incorporate into their social fabric according to their own priorities and to reject others that were not acceptable. With settlement, this freedom was lost. The Indians were moving from a non-directed acculturative experience to a situation in which culture change was directed from outside.

The key here, as Goldman (1940:373) asserts, was that...

None of the White traders was consciously concerned with changing the native forms of life, beyond attempting to develop in them a taste for the trade commodities in which they dealt.

Ralph Linton's theory of culture change marks Fisher's "directed" culture change of major proportions occurs in situations where the agents of contact interfere actively and purposefully with the culture of another group. Since the traders had neither the desire nor the influence to influence Carrier culture change (Fisher 1977:47), major effects of contact did not begin to be felt until the fur trade was no longer the sole factor in the contact setting.

In conclusion then, Carrier/trader cross-cultural relations were paradoxically ambivalent. Traders reinforced traditional leadership patterns with the "Company chief" system, while the Carrier afforded high status to the traders in charge. On the other hand the Carrier were conscious of their independence from the interior posts and they considered Company servants as slaves. They realized their own power and exercised their strategic advantage to control lower echelon servants such as Douglas while deferring to the chief traders such as Harmon. On their part, the ambivalence of the traders toward the Carrier is illustrated by their dependence on the latter for fur, food and safety. On the other hand, "club law" and its attendant attitudes illustrated an interesting isolation in trader thinking.

The above arguments have indicated that there is cause for a re-evaluation of the traditional interpretations concerning Carrier acculturation and cross-cultural relations. To date, these interpretations seem heavily coloured by an ethnocentric assumption of the paramountcy of non-Native factors in Native culture change.
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