Chinook Jargon Placenames as Points of Mutual Reference: Discourse, Intersubjectivity, and Environment Within an Intercultural Toponymic Complex

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Chinook Jargon, a pre-historic trade language in northwestern North America, became the primary means of communication between native and white speakers during European exploration and settlement in this region. At this time, many descriptive names taken from Chinook Jargon were assigned to landscape features. Some placenames persist as artifacts of this exchange; assessed in the light of historical and ethnographic sources, they illuminate the character of intercultural discourse on the northwestern frontier. Chinook Jargon placenames exhibit a restricted semantic range, providing intersubjective and utilitarian descriptions of the landscape to facilitate navigation and the location of particular resources. Descriptive vehicles, such as toponymic metaphors, are also reduced to certain "lowest common denominators" between the cultures in contact. It is thus suggested that, in intercultural contexts, speakers must divine certain linguistic and cultural points of mutual reference in order to discuss salient physical points of mutual reference in the landscape.

As European settlement spread across North America, native and colonial peoples found themselves in contact, attempting to communicate for the first time. Often, out of necessity, arriving colonists engaged in discourse with native peoples regarding the landscape as they attempted to navigate the land and assess the resources of an unfamiliar place. In the process, these culturally disparate speakers found linguistic and conceptual points of mutual reference with which to discuss salient physical points of mutual reference within their environment. While this search for intersubjective landscape terminology is both directly and indirectly manifested in many contemporary North American placenames, there are regrettably few cases in which toponyms unambigu-

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ously reflect such exchanges. However, the Chinook Jargon placenames of northwestern North America represent a noteworthy exception. Chinook Jargon placenames represent perhaps the most extensive toponymic complex in North America which consists of terminology from a language, now essentially dead, that existed solely as a means of speaking across the cultural divides of the North American frontier, particularly those which existed "between Indian and white worlds" (Szasz 1994).

Placenames, Dialog, and Cultural Intersubjectivity

In all parts of the world, people have generated names for the features of the land. While the practice of naming is widely shared, the general content of placenames tends to vary considerably, reflecting idiosyncrasies in the cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts of placename genesis and use. The names which people apply to the land reflect culturally grounded orderings of space and certain assumptions, commonly though not uniformly shared, about the physical, social, or cosmological significance of features of the environment (Sapir 1912; Richardson 1981). Each culture, then, has its own placename "complex." All placename complexes may be said to reflect a certain conceptual domain, defined by culturally intersubjective assessments of the land among a particular linguistic community at given points in their history (Ford 1991). Each such complex addresses different features of the landscape, uses different vehicles of expression to define particular landscape features, and exhibits varying degrees of institutionalized permanence.

It has long been recognized that a given culture could be said to have its ethnobotany, its ethnomedicine, and any number of other "ethnosciences," in which elements of the world are ordered into culturally meaningful patterns (Sturtevant 1964; Geertz 1973). Placenames can likewise tell us much more about a people than their mere areal distribution at some past point in time; the range of ideas expressed in a culture's toponymy may be said to reflect a distinctive ethno*geography* of a people, embodying their commonly held lore, values, agendas, and assumptions, particularly as they relate to the features of the land (Harrington 1916; Blaut 1979). By exploring a people's placenames, we can take significant steps toward an understanding of this ethnogeography.

It is important to emphasize here that placenames do not simply appear on the land, nor are they simply deposited on the land by a culture: people create their placenames. Arguably, among both literate and non-literate peoples, placenames exist as authored creations of human actors, generated within the process of discourse between people, within the landscape. I emphasize discourse here since it is, in the terms of Sherzer (1987, 296), the expressive "nexus, the actual and concrete expression of the language-culture-society relationship." Within such discourse, placenames often emerge for the benefit of particular audiences, real or imagined: they may provide a selective description of the attributes of a place, to facilitate navigation, to sell land, to encourage immigration, to shape or respond to the political will of the masses, to appease a vigilant god (Zelinsky 1955; Ilyin 1993; Deur 1996). Often, a placename serves a combination of these functions within dialogs between people, in the landscape. Significantly, as Voloshinov (1973) suggested, dialog serves as a two-way bridge between interlocutors; and to serve any of these functions, the placename must be intelligible, in some manner, to those who employ the name. A placename thus emerges and gains its significance in the ongoing exchanges between people, in relation to the physical features of the landscape, and therefore reflects and embodies the shared presuppositions of these people (Geertz 1973; Tuan 1991).

The process of naming, however, tends to crystallize dialog as it has existed in a discrete point in time. We are thus inheritors of institutionalized placenames which represent fragmentary relics of past discourse, frozen in time on the landscape. Though these relics enter into our contemporary discourse, they are not commonly used in the way they were at their creation. Thus a placename originating as a descriptive term for a site may be subject to semantic shift and semantic bleaching, becoming simply nominal, and providing a negligibly descriptive label as the placename's original significance is widely forgotten. If dialog is a bridge, as Voloshinov (1973) suggests, then dialog regarding the landscape is a bridge on a physical footing.

A great deal of naming takes place during the contact period, as colonial peoples expand into new territories, encountering new lands, peoples, ideas, and objects. The placenames which date from the earliest periods of colonial settlement are inextricably rooted in the milieu of the contact period, and provide considerable amounts of information

regarding this pivotal historical moment. For example, the content of contact-era placenames reflects colonial assessments of landscape features and their utility, as well as cross-cultural discourse regarding the technologies, utilized resources, and cosmology of both the colonizer and the colonized (Booker et al. 1992).

Though authors such as Harrington (1916) and Boas (1934) early recognized the value of native American placenames as a means of accessing indigenous knowledge and perceptions of the environment, the study of these placenames has, as Basso (1984, 25) suggests, "fallen on hard times." This is regrettable, not only because of the ethnographic significance of placenames, but also because they reveal much about the milieu of the contact period, when many such names were first recorded. At contact, each native culture possessed its own toponymy, reflecting distinctive relationships between its subsistence, society, cosmology, and the land; but this toponymy was seldom intelligible or salient to arriving Europeans. Native placenames which entered English-speaking placename complexes were mediated in some manner by both native and colonial peoples—selectively chosen, decontextualized from native cultural knowledge, and recontextualized into a largely nominal pattern of landscape reference. Still, a great many informal names were employed conversationally, in the languages of conversation, as whites (with the help of Indians in many cases) navigated and imputed conceptual order to the landscapes of North America; many of these names became institutionalized toponyms. In the case of northwestern North America, a new toponymic complex emerged within the context of intercultural dialog, in a trade language with largely native etymology, defining the landscape in terms which were intelligible to both indigenous and colonial peoples.

Second-Language Placenames as Crystallized Intercultural Dialog

There exists one noteworthy category of placenames which is inextricable from the context of intercultural contact. These are the placenames which are not of a single language, but are instead expressed through the intercultural languages which have emerged for use in trade and negotiation among people who speak two or more languages. Generally, the presence of such placenames indicates the genesis of a placename within intercultural dialogs. If placenames which emerge

within one culture can be said somehow to reflect a people's shared conceptualizations of space and environmental features, then how might one classify placenames which have emerged within the context of intercultural discourse? In these cases, there is a complex obstacle to communication: the culturally bound orderings of environment, manifested in language, do not readily speak across linguistic and cultural divides. Through the ongoing exchange of discourse, speakers experimentally discern linguistic and cultural common ground in order to facilitate communication (Asher 1979; Sherzer 1987; Ackerman et al. 1990). Thus, within certain limits, exploring the toponymic complexes which are generated in these languages allows us to discern the somewhat truncated, intersubjective ethnogeography of a multi-lingual speech community—an ethnogeography which is manifested within the concrete, expressive nexus of discourse.

Several categories of second languages have emerged in cultural contact situations, along multi-cultural trade routes, plantations, and expanding colonial frontiers, used to facilitate communication across linguistic divides. These languages are sometimes referred to as "trade languages," "contact languages," or "plantation languages," depending upon the context of their genesis (Holm 1988). Lingua francas, such as the Swahili of east Africa, are one type of intercultural language which emerges in such contexts. The lingua franca is composed of elements derived from one primary language; but it has a grammar, lexicon, and phonology which have been gradually simplified within the process of discourse in order to facilitate its rapid learning and use as a second language. Pidgins, such as the Pidgin Hawaiian which emerged on multi-lingual plantations, serve a similar function within intercultural contexts, but are composed of elements derived from two or more languages. Pidgins develop within brief, experimental verbal exchanges between speakers; they ordinarily possess a very limited lexicon, a much restricted or variable phonetic range, and a highly variable grammatical structure (Adler 1977; Holm 1988). These features of the language often reflect certain "lowest common denominators" between languages; e.g., phonemes or grammatical devices not present in one or more of the languages in contact may be eliminated altogether from the pidgin, simplifying its learning and use by all parties (Dutton 1983). Occasionally, pidgins become elaborated and regularized, evolving into creoles, such as the hybrid English creoles of the Caribbean, as they become the

primary language of a community (Hancock 1980). On the North American frontiers, the Chinook Jargon of the Northwest coast and the Mobilian Jargon of the South functioned as intercultural trade languages; both originated as pidgins and served as primary means of communication between Indians and whites prior to intensive colonial settlement. These languages were used for functionally constrained communication in those contexts which brought native and colonial peoples together on the early frontier, such as trade and negotiation, and were no one's mother tongue.

Placename complexes that have emerged within such contact languages are somewhat distinctive, as the context of intercultural dialog constrains both the functional basis of naming and the linguistic realm in which salient features can be expressed. The referential domain of these names is largely restricted to those terms which are relevant to the functional basis of intercultural encounters. Subtle distinctions made in the descriptions of place are omitted. Vehicles of expression such as toponymic metaphors are limited to a narrower conceptual range than is found within the toponymy of the parent languages, as there are few metaphorical expressions which are readily transmitted across broad cultural divides. Second-language placenames thus provide a unique opportunity to study the creative attempts to find both physiographic and conceptual points of mutual reference within the context of intercultural dialog of the contact period.

Chinook Jargon

The historical use of Chinook Jargon provides valuable insights into this process, as this is one of the very few North American languages used strictly within intercultural contexts. Chinook Jargon is a trade language employed extensively by indigenous and European speakers during the contact period along the northwest coast of North America. The range of Chinook Jargon usage, at its maximum extent, reached from northern California to Alaska, and from the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky Mountains. Linguists have recognized Chinook Jargon as "a peculiar linguistic phenomenon," in part because of the number and dissimilarity of its parent languages (Silverstein 1972, 378). The majority of Chinook Jargon's lexicon is derived from the Chinook language, as spoken by the Lower Chinook peoples, who lived at the estuarine mouth of the Columbia River. However, a considerable

proportion of the lexicon of the Jargon was derived from the Nootkan, Salish, and other indigenous language families of the northwest coast. In part, this lexical admixture reflected the significant geographical position of the Chinook, who functioned as "middlemen in aboriginal trade north and south along the coast, and between the coast and the interior" in a network of trade linkages extending to Alaska, California, the Great Plains, and beyond (Ruby and Brown 1976; Drucker 1963, 18; Wood 1980). The emergence of (at the very least) a prototypical form of Chinook Jargon is widely, but not universally, agreed to have predated European contact, developing within the trade in such items as slaves and dentalium shells along the coast,[1] and between the coast and the interior along a route which followed the Columbia River (Thomason 1983; cf. Samarin 1986).[2] Following the emergence of the fur trade on this coast, the Jargon became the primary means of expression, allowing French- and English-speaking Europeans to communicate with the linguistically diverse indigenous peoples of the Northwest. At this time, terms of French and English origin entered the lexicon. Like most trade languages, Chinook Jargon differed from its parent languages in that it possessed a simplified syntax, a relatively small lexicon, and a variable but reduced phonetic range (Jacobs 1932; Boas 1933; Grant 1945). While Chinook Jargon is generally referred to as a pidgin language in the linguistics literature, its syntax and lexicon exhibited a degree of structural stability which exceeds those of most pidgins; it might be more accurately defined as a "second language creole."

A strong case could be made that Chinook Jargon was established before contact as the language used to address strangers who spoke another language, since Jargon was initially recorded during some of the first contacts between Europeans and the peoples of the northwest coast during the late 18th century by such early explorers as John Meares, James Cook, Lewis and Clark, and John Jewitt (cf. Jewitt 1815; Fee 1941; Walker 1982; Thomason 1983; Moulton 1990). Some heard the peoples they encountered speaking two languages and initially assumed that this reflected a form of ceremonial code-shifting (Fee 1941, 176-77). The Jargon was subsequently recorded on numerous occasions and in numerous places by people traveling through the area by land and sea, as the fur trade, missionary activity and other frontier pursuits brought a few men (and fewer women) to this coast between the late 18th and mid 19th centuries (Parker 1838; Swan 1857; Winthrop 1863; Walker 1982).

While Jargon contained a large lexical component of Chinook proper, these were very different languages (Harrington 1942). Indeed, in his attempts to record the Chinook language, Franz Boas (1894) used Chinook Jargon as his means of communicating with his Chinook informant, Charles Cultee: Boas was well versed in the Jargon, but found the Chinook language largely unintelligible. By the time Boas was conducting his field work at the mouth of the Columbia River, the Chinook language was nearly extinct, but Chinook Jargon was spoken throughout the region by people of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Because of the widespread use of Jargon within intercultural discourse, Boas was able to extensively utilize Chinook Jargon within his ethnographic field work from the northern coast of British Columbia to the northern coast of Oregon; he used it among the "Bella Coola, Tillamook, Clatsop, Chinook proper, Lower Chehalis, Songish, Kwakiutl, Bella Bella, Tsimshian, and Haida" between 1885 and 1933 (Boas 1933, 209).

The European settlers who began to arrive in this region in the mid 19th century seldom learned the diverse native languages of the area, almost invariably finding them "guttural, very difficult for a foreigner to learn, and equally hard to pronounce" (Ross 1849, 101). In contrast, Chinook Jargon was by all accounts relatively easy to learn, with its simplified grammar, small vocabulary, and intelligible phonetic range. Chinook Jargon was thus adopted and utilized as a second language by the European colonists who arrived in the Northwest; they found Jargon a necessary tool for survival, indispensable for communicating with the native peoples of the region regarding the navigation of the land and the availability of resources. Brief Jargon phrase books appeared in many of the guides sold to people setting out on the Oregon Trail; its use was claimed to be "as necessary as ox, or ax, or firearm" for the survival of colonists (Parker 1838; Palmer 1847; Fee 1941, 178). A number of authors compiled Chinook Jargon dictionaries during the late 19th century, oriented towards travelers, government officials, and businessmen (Gibbs 1863; Hale 1890; Coombs 1891). Missionaries also preached in and translated biblical texts and hymns into the Jargon; this proved much more convenient than learning each of the region's many languages (Demers et al. 1871; Collison 1915). By the late 19th century, Chinook Jargon had become the ubiquitous language of negotiation and trade between Indian and white speakers in the northwestern hinterland.

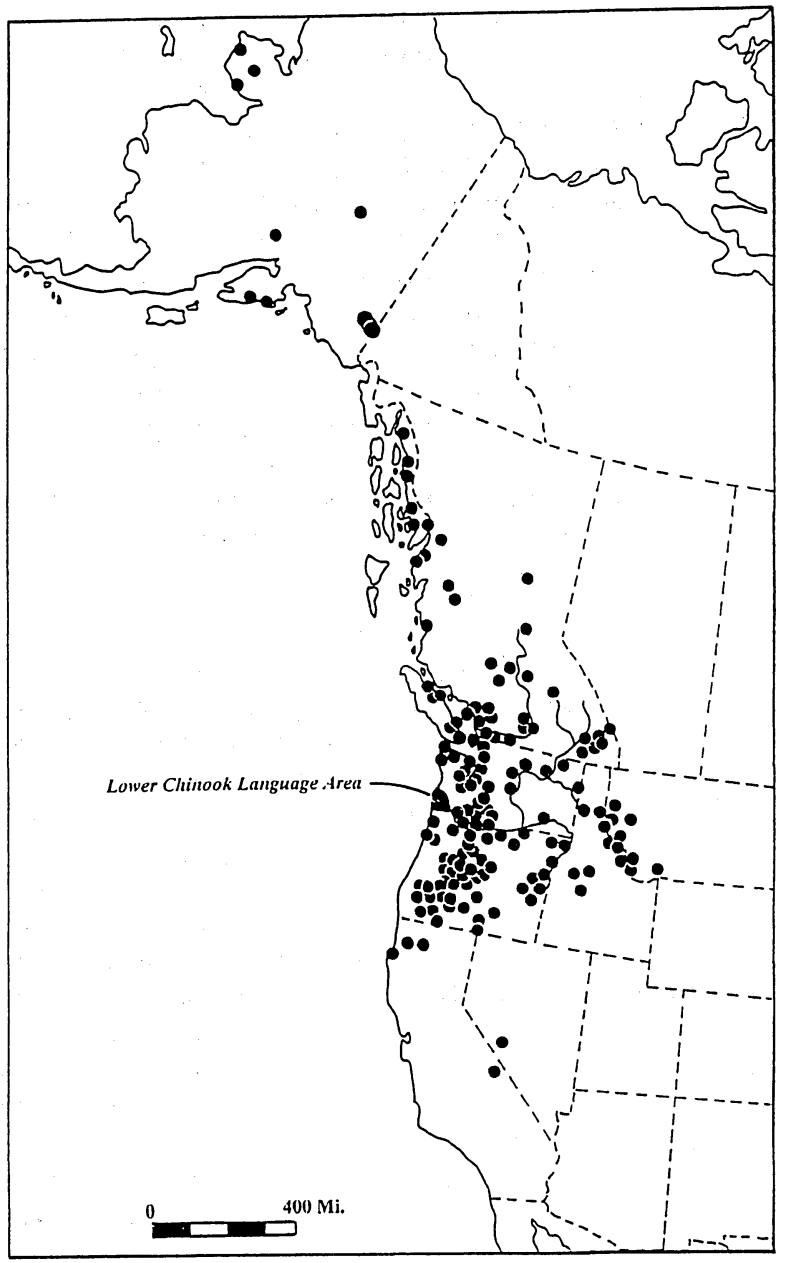
When it was used as the primary vehicle of cross-cultural discourse, misinterpretations were common; nonetheless, the Jargon facilitated the basic exchange of ideas across the cultural divides of the frontier (Swan 1857, 316-17).[3]

Over time, English came to replace Chinook Jargon as the region's intersubjective language; by the early 20th century, Jargon was disappearing from much of the hinterland of Oregon and Washington (Jacobs 1932). Gradually, Jargon use shifted northward, into the remaining frontier in remote corners of British Columbia and Alaska, where it was also replaced by English as that region's intersubjective language during the 20th century. At present, Chinook Jargon is spoken infrequently, in a small number of contexts, in remote segments of north coastal British Columbia and Alaska—when linguistically diverse and (usually) elderly native peoples must communicate. Chinook Jargon terms have also persisted within English as slang forms, in both national and regional cases, perhaps the best known national examples including *muckymuck* and *potlatch*.[4]

Chinook Jargon Placenames as Remnants of Past Discourse

During the period of contact between native and European peoples on the northwest coast, the landscape was being continuously discussed and defined in Chinook Jargon. While regrettably little of this discourse was recorded at the time of its utterance, the character of remaining Jargon placenames, when investigated in light of available historical and ethnographic materials, indicates much of the nature and content of these exchanges. From an almost infinite range of possible referents within their environment, the native and white speakers of Chinook Jargon chose to discuss very restricted categories of environmental phenomena; and they did so in ways that reflect the lack of consensus which existed between speakers regarding the ways in which these features were to be conceptualized or described. Chinook Jargon placenames thus manifest the limitations placed on native/white discourse by their mutually unintelligible languages and cultures, the obstacles and possibilities posed by the physical environment, and the discontinuous and utilitarian character of the majority of intercultural encounters on the northwestern frontier.

Map 1. Present Distribution of Common Chinook Jargon Placenames



Each dot represents an occurrence of *Cultus*, *Memaloose*, *Skookum*, *Skookum-chuck*, or *Tyee* in Canada Department of Energy, Mines and Resources (1985) and United States Geological Survey (1993). No attempt has been made here to differentiate between placenames applied during or after the contact period.

The general distribution of Chinook Jargon placenames reflects proto-historical trade routes, corresponding with paths of movement and nodes of encounter along the navigable coastline of the Pacific Ocean, the Columbia and Fraser Rivers and their tributaries, a few of the region's smaller navigable rivers, and along primary passes through the Cascade, Klamath, Bitterroot, and northern Rocky Mountains (map 1). These terms reflect attempts to navigate both the land and the resources of this region: few contemporary towns bear Chinook Jargon names, but many physical features do, still outlining the distribution of these contact-era routes. The objects, resources, and experiences encountered in these places functioned as the physical "common ground" for much of the intercultural dialog in Chinook Jargon. Significantly, most Jargon placenames represent information supplied to the colonizer by the indigene. Simply put, newly arrived colonists and traders in an unfamiliar environment needed information (Moore 1983). They were consistently compelled to seek information from those who knew how to navigate and subsist in this unfamiliar place, using Chinook Jargon.

Though most of these placenames reflect an indigenous etymology, they are not the names used by the indigenous peoples within their own speech communities. Chinook Jargon placenames used at contact almost never correspond, phonetically or conceptually, to tribal terms recorded for the same places by early ethnographers, even deep within that tribe's territory (Boas 1934; Powell et al. 1972; Palmer 1990). Jargon terms are found distributed widely throughout the linguistic mosaic of the indigenous Northwest, but were not derived directly from endemic toponymic complexes. With very few exceptions, these names represent appellations that emerged within dialogs between Euro-American settlers and the native peoples of the Northwest at contact, and were subsequently recorded and formally inscribed by the former in the post-contact period. The institutionalization of Jargon placenames was a gradual process, in which the regularized use of a term in reference to a given place became part of the everyday speech of speakers of English.[5] In many of these places, descriptive terms gradually took on restricted referential scope as the common use of Chinook Jargon diminished, and the region was settled by successive waves of immigrants with no knowledge of the Jargon. Through semantic shifts and semantic bleaching in the use of descriptive and referentially flexible Jargon designations, these terms took on nominal functions, applied to

a discrete set of referents in the landscape. Today these names are still used, though their original meanings are seldom known to the contemporary inhabitants of northwestern North America.

Chinook Jargon Placenames as Points of Mutual Reference

Jargon placenames show evidence of a distinctive pattern of conceptual ordering of the environment and serve as evidence of those features of the environment which were identified as salient within dialogs between peoples who used the Jargon. While it was linguistically possible to use the Jargon lexicon to express a wide range of concepts and sentiments regarding the land, the Jargon placenames exhibit a restricted semantic domain which manifests the functionally constrained basis of discourse between native and colonial peoples regarding the landscape. Importantly, Jargon placenames appear to manifest such patterns in ways significantly different from either the European or indigenous placenames of the northwest coast. Jargon placenames adhere to a much reduced scheme, providing in essence a reflection of creative, experimental attempts to express certain cultural "lowest common denominators" among people of markedly different cultures—reflecting points of mutual reference, physical and conceptual, between linguistically and culturally disparate speakers.

To illustrate this, drawing on gazetters and other sources for the toponymy of the northwest coast (Canada 1985; USGS 1993), I have compiled Chinook Jargon placenames which persisted into the early 20th century. Jargon placenames have received little consideration in the literature regarding northwest coast toponymy; sometimes these placenames are merely identified as "Indian words." Terms are occasionally identified as Chinook Jargon and translated, but they are seldom explained in terms of intercultural discourse, or as a reflection of the salience of the site features indicated during the contact period (Walbran 1909; Meany 1923; Orth 1967; Phillips 1971; McArthur 1982). In an historical analysis of these names, there is considerable "noise" from post-contact additions and alterations of Chinook Jargon placenames—particularly by the US Forest Service, which added several Jargon names to landmarks on lands under their jurisdiction—as well as eliminating others, for various reasons (Smith 1989; Ilyin 1993). Further, there are several cases in which a term used in reference to a

single site has been subsequently applied by official placename directories to an expanded area, such as the mountain or river on which the originally named site appeared. In my subsequent discussion, I shall emphasize only those placenames which appear to date from the contact period. While the discussion below does not address all the Jargon placenames which can be found on the contemporary landscape, it does include all those for which there is strong evidence of contact-era origin and which cannot be traced to a singular, idiosyncratic historic event, based upon available documentary sources.

Generic terms, including *illahe* meaning 'land' and less commonly 'island', as well as *chuck* 'water', often appeared in conjunction with descriptive terms within the original discourse between native and colonial peoples; and though such generic terms sometimes still appear in the toponymy, they have more commonly been dropped or replaced by English generic terms, while retaining the formerly descriptive Jargon term. The English generic term is seldom a direct translation of the Jargon generic. For example, the phrase *memaloose illahe* 'dead land' was commonly used in reference to contact-era burial sites, but the generic term *illahe* was usually dropped from this placename as it became an institutionalized part of the post-contact toponymy. Thus a place designated by the descriptive phrase *memaloose illahe* in the Jargon might become *Memaloose Point* in the post-contact toponymy. The resulting placename is a linguistic hybrid many times over, containing a semantically restricted, nominal Jargon term plus an essentially descriptive English generic. In the following discussion, I do not include the English generics, but limit my discussion to the formerly descriptive Jargon names.

The Navigational Contexts of Chinook Jargon Toponymy

The many descriptive terms within Chinook Jargon names encompass the physiographic contexts of intercultural encounter, and provide a fragmentary picture of the social and geographic dimensions of the landscape of the contact period. Navigational terms reflect the rather narrowly defined assessments of the immediate utility of the landscape within the utilitarian exchanges of cultures in contact, reflecting the dialog surrounding trade, the asking of directions, the search for foodstuffs and other needed resources (Dutton 1983). These terms

appear abundantly in two types of physical environments: navigable waterways and mountain passes. These two zones were, at contact, places of intense intercultural contact and of relatively severe navigational challenges.

The prevalence of transportation by boat and canoe during the contact period made a discernible impression upon Jargon placenames. Potential navigational hazards are reflected in such common placenames as *Skookumchuck*, *Lemolo*, *Tumtum,* and *Tumwata*, which indicated waterfalls and river cataracts of varying degrees of severity. Portaging around falls on the Columbia River with native guides, the Reverend Samuel Parker (1838, 178) spoke of the significance of such falls, which "the Indians call the *tum tum*; the same expression they use for the beating of the heart." The onomatopoeic names *tum* and *tum tum* were applied to several powerful or rumbling things; but in the landscape, they were primarily used in reference to such water features. A variant of this theme, indicating less imposing sites, is the onomatopoeic *wawa* 'talk' referring to stream riffles, a metaphor comparable to English *babbling brook*. Additional navigational terms which appeared in placenames within coastal settings include *Lapush* 'mouth' and *Mi-mie* (or *Miami*) 'downstream', indicating populated sites at the estuarine mouths of navigable waterways.

The navigational terms reflected in Chinook Jargon toponymy are somewhat more varied in mountain settings, reflecting the orientational demands of topographic complexity. Prominent mountains sometimes bear the names *lemiti* or *lamonta*, phonetically derived from French *la montagne* 'mountain', while the term *tatoosh* 'breast' appears in association with breast-shaped peaks (and, occasionally, in coastal environments, sea stacks). Such words as *sahalie* 'highest', *kawak* 'to fly', and *koosah* 'sky' frequently appear in association with points and peaks which appear to be at the highest elevation among all others from viewpoints along contact-era mountain passes. Other names applied to peaks and other features in mountainous terrain include *katsuk* 'between', applied to features between prominent peaks; *ipsoot* 'to hide, hidden', usually applied to visually significant features which are obscured by peaks and other features along portions of land routes; and *klak* 'flat', applied to flat-topped mountains and hills. Numbers, including *mokst* 'two' and *klone* 'three', appear in conjunction with clusters of two or three peaks, respectively.[6] Features such as gorges

and streams were categorized with names like *kiwa* 'bent, crooked', *delate* 'straight' (probably from French *droite*), and (occasionally in reference to straight features) *kaleetan* 'arrow'. Alpine glacial depressions and valleys bear such names as *klawhop* 'hole', *tamolitch* 'tub, bucket', and *ooskan* 'cup, bowl', while *tenino* 'vagina' appears in association with canyons and crevasses. *Hiyu* 'large, much' and *tyee* 'large, chief' were frequently applied to distinctively large features, such as peaks or streams; *tenas* 'small' and *sitkum* 'half' appear in association with distinctively small ones. Distinctive colors also appear in the Jargon toponymy, most notably *pil* 'red', which was applied to features such as red, rocky slopes. Sections of contact-era trails bear such names as *chako* 'to come' and *lola* 'to carry (over distance)', while *klip* 'deep (water)' occasionally appears in association with treacherous stream fording points along these trails. *Cupit* 'to stop' appears in association with campsites, while *winopee* 'to wait' appears at more than one location where there appear to have been campsites below high mountain passes.

Settlements are also invoked within the navigational terminology, as in *Boston* 'American', which sometimes appears at the contact-era sites of white settlements or trading posts. *Dutchman*, a term which frequently bewilders amateur toponymists, was used in Chinook Jargon to refer to any whites besides the English and the Americans; it was sometimes, for example, applied to German or Scandinavian settlements. *Siwash* 'Indian' (from French *sauvage* 'savage') was applied to some native encampments. As suggested above, burial sites, almost always native, were referred to with the name *memaloose* 'dead'. The term *Tillicum* 'people' was also applied to various settlements.[7]

The Restricted Domain of Resource-Specific Toponyms

The dialog regarding the availability of resources provides a somewhat expanded picture of intercultural dialogs regarding the northwestern landscape. Some scholars have suggested that divergences between the terms applied to a particular landscape feature by two cultural groups reflects divergences in the perception and use of the landscape (Spoehr 1956; Gordon 1984). Conversely, terms which emerge within the context of intercultural dialog likely reflect certain points of similitude—or, at the very least, the mutually shared recog-

nition of certain properties of landscape features. Chinook Jargon placenames include descriptions of various resources, while including many cases of the contrasting term *cultus* 'useless'. *Cultus* appears to indicate a place which the interlocutors could agree was of no immediate utility or significance. The name appears in correlation with such places as landlocked streams, which would have lacked salmon and been of limited navigational value. A related but less common name is *halo* 'no, none', applied to such features as intermittent streams.

Again, the "lowest common denominators" of this dialog regarding resources were defined by the functionally bounded bases of communication, including inquiries regarding the location of resources needed for subsistence and trade. A variety of animals, primarily those which were sought and used by both indigenous and European interlocutors, are represented in the list of Jargon placenames, including *mowitch* 'deer', *moolack* 'elk', *eena* 'beaver', *quannat* 'salmon', *chetlo* 'oyster', and *ona* 'clam'. These names correlate with the locations of highly probable contact-era sites of abundant populations of these animals, though the specific genesis of these placenames is unclear in several cases. Importantly, while the Jargon did have terms for a wide range of animals, the vast majority of toponymic references to animals mention those which were sought and utilized by both native and European peoples.[8] Significantly, there are many animals in the region which appear prominently in both native and European placenames for the region, but do not appear in the Chinook Jargon names. Animals commonly included in both English and indigenous placenames in northwestern North America and which can be translated into Chinook Jargon include clam, deer, eagle, elk, frog, heron, mouse, owl, oyster, and salmon. Some of these occur frequently in Chinook Jargon placenames, others not at all (table 1).

Table 1. Frequent and Non-occurring Animal Elements in Jargon Placenames

Not Known to Occur	Frequently Occur
chakchak 'eagle'	ona 'clam'
wakik 'frog'	mowitch 'deer'
kelok 'heron'	moolack 'elk'
hoolhool 'mouse'	chetlo 'oyster'
kwelkwel 'owl'	quannat 'salmon'

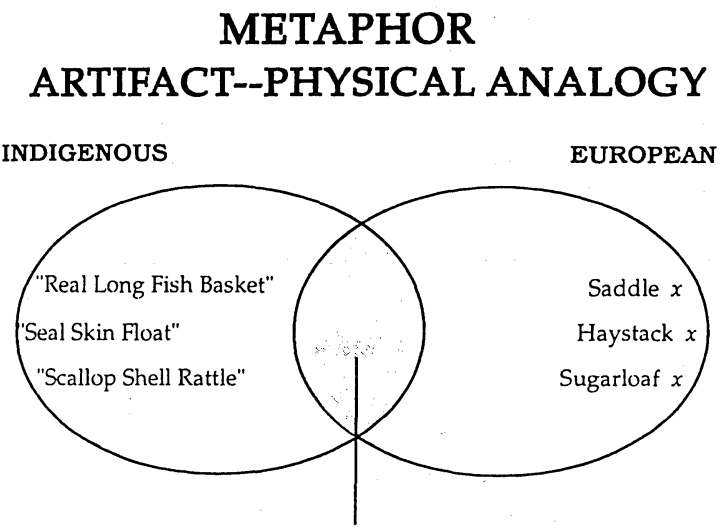
A similar pattern emerged in the case of plant references within placenames, with only *olallie* 'berries' being mentioned frequently; both indigenous placenames and European placenames commonly mention specific plants and types of berries. The most prolific or desired native berries, such as salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), were unfamiliar to the Euro-American colonists and salal patches were often the referents of these placenames. However, it is worthy of mention that one of the few berries which would have been known to arriving colonists—*amota*, the native strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*)—is the only berry specifically and commonly named in Chinook Jargon toponyms.[9] Another plant term identified within Chinook Jargon placenames is *tipsoo* and *yakso*, both translating literally as 'hair', a metaphorical expression for grass. This name appears in correlation with grassy clearings in the northwestern forests; these were a vital resource during the contact period when most long-distance land transport was on horseback and forest clearings were often scarce. One last resource term worth mentioning here is *chickamin* 'metal' and its cognates, a name applied to sites where copper and other metals were visible at the ground surface at contact. This name reflects the presence of early prospectors who arrived during the contact period, asking the native peoples for directions to sites where such metals could be located; they were sometimes called *ticky chickamin*, literally 'want metal', by the native peoples of the region.

The Restricted Domain of Toponymic Metaphors

As in most trade languages, the speakers of Chinook Jargon developed a wide range of metaphorical terms which allowed for the expression of complex ideas with a limited lexicon. These terms were defined by contextual cues; a person would determine whether the *tipsoo* being discussed was 'hair' or 'grass' depending upon whether the topic of conversation was one's body or one's landscape.[10] Metaphorical expressions were used extensively within Chinook Jargon discourse regarding the land; in the process, Jargon speakers generated an expressive, metaphorical toponymy. Like all metaphors, these placenames had to come from conceptual points of mutual reference, and the lexical range of Chinook Jargon placenames is restricted to those concepts which were common to both native and white speakers. The aforementioned use of the name *tum tum* 'heart' in reference to things in the landscape that were noisy and powerful, such as waterfalls, is

among the most abstract Chinook Jargon toponymic metaphors. In the vast majority of cases, these metaphors, generated to speak across cultures, alluded to features of the landscape in widely intelligible terms, often employing physical analogies that would have been visually apparent to all speakers.

Figure 1



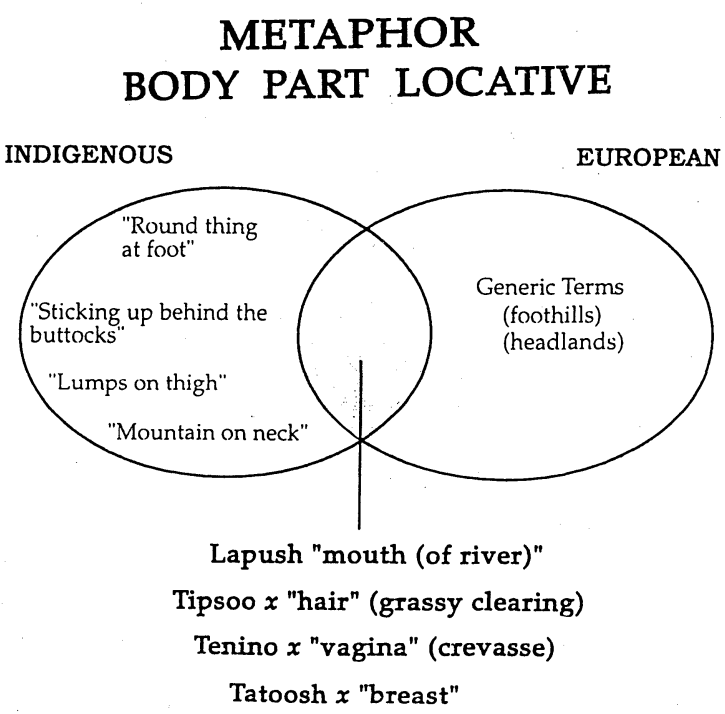
One common use of metaphor within Chinook Jargon placenames involved the invocation of particular, human-constructed material objects, based upon some resemblance or other connection agreed upon by speakers. Indigenous material culture was sometimes invoked in the native toponymy of the northwest coast—including names which, when translated, compared environmental features to such objects as a 'real long fish basket' among the Kwakiutl (Boas 1934), or a 'fur seal-skin float' or 'scallop shell rattle' among the Quileute (Powell et al. 1972). European artifacts represented in contemporary English toponymy from the late contact period include such now antiquated artifacts as the "Haystack," "Saddle," and "Sugarloaf," objects which lacked descrip-

tive value among the native peoples of the region at contact, and which over time have lost their descriptive value somewhat among English speakers as well. The objects used for placename metaphors in Chinook Jargon represent a narrow range of artifacts which were familiar to all involved interlocutors at contact (figure 1). Certainly, the invocation of artifacts foreign to any of the groups in contact would not have achieved the desired descriptive effect. Thus, as suggested, crater-like depressions in the ground are labeled *tamolitch* 'tub, bucket' and *ooskan* 'cup', while other, linear landscape elements are sometimes called *kaleetan* 'arrow'; but sugarloaves and scallop shell rattles, for example, are notably absent.

Another means by which Chinook Jargon speakers appear to have described the landscape in metaphorical terms was through the use of a restricted range of physiological or "body part locative" metaphors. Body part metaphors are commonly found in English generic landscape terms, e.g., headlands, foothills, and river mouths; but they are relatively rare in proper placenames of the English language. However, body part metaphor is very common within the toponymy of many indigenous North American languages. Abstract cosmological schemata are found at the roots of physiological metaphor in many of the indigenous languages of North America, and in these cases there often exists little outwardly apparent similarity between the physical form of many named objects and the body part described. Rather, these terms will, for example, reflect juxtapositions within a mythological physical body representing the earth, in part or in whole (MacLaury 1989; Palmer 1990). The native peoples of the Northwest used a wide range of body part metaphors within placenames; but these names embodied culturally idiosyncratic understandings of the land, rooted in native folklore and cosmology. Needless to say, indigenous names with such translated meanings as 'round thing at foot', 'sticking up behind the buttocks', 'lumps on thigh', or 'mountains on neck' may have been profoundly expressive among certain native peoples within the region, but these names had little salience or expressive value in the discourse between these native peoples and arriving European settlers (Boas 1934; Powell et al. 1972, 109-12). Therefore the context of intercultural dialog represented by the use of Chinook Jargon resulted in a more restricted application of body part locatives than found in these other languages; terms reflected exclusively physical analogies, based upon similarities

of form or appearance which seem to have been intelligible to interlocutors of dissimilar backgrounds (figure 2). As suggested, *tipsoo* and *yakso* were used to indicate both 'hair' and 'grass', *tatoosh* 'breast' was applied to breast-shaped peaks and sea-stacks, and *tenino* 'vagina' was used in association with crevasses or canyons, though the term is sometimes given the sanitized definition 'junction' in local accounts.[11] *Lapush* 'mouth', from French *la bouche*, indicated the mouths of both humans and rivers; this metaphor, perhaps reflecting less a visual similarity than a physiologically structural one, has parallels in both European and northwest native toponymy.

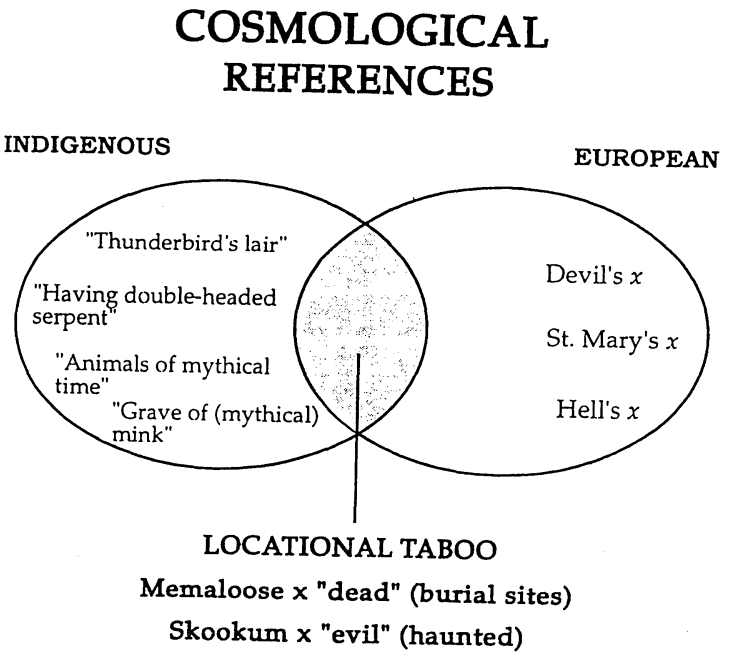
Figure 2



Boas (1934) noted that indigenous northwest coast placenames reflect culturally idiosyncratic interpretations of landscape features, which often invoked cosmologically-based place imagery and the significance of landmarks within the folklore of native peoples. But without detailed folkloric and ethnographic information, early colonial

peoples would likely be unable to grasp the locational, functional, prescriptive, or proscriptive significance of such Quileute names as (in translation) 'Thunderbird's lair' or 'grave of (mythical) mink' (Powell et al. 1972), or such Kwakiutl toponyms as 'animals of mythical time' and 'having double-headed serpent' (Boas 1934) which emerge from site-specific creation myths. This information would be nearly impossible to translate in its full significance within the context of brief, intercultural encounters such as occurred at contact. Equivalent terms are largely absent from European toponyms on the northwest coast, though terms like *Devil's*, *St. Mary's,* and *Hell's*, when attached to generic terms such as *peak* or *canyon*, represent indirect and metaphorical references to cosmological variables—as do, arguably, the large number of personal names used in European toponymic complexes, reflecting a cosmology partially defined in terms of humanistic individualism.

Figure 3



Here, too, Chinook Jargon placenames represent a compromise, a "lowest common denominator" of cultural expression. While generally representing a common form of placenames, strictly "cosmological" features of Chinook Jargon placenames are essentially absent (figure 3). This seems a predictable response to a lack of shared cosmological or religious schemata between interlocutors at contact. Instead, landscapes of likely cosmological significance to indigenous peoples are indicated in terms which bespeak a pragmatic response to these significant places, such as warnings of particular spatial taboos, based upon cultural knowledge which would have been provided by the local and unknown to the neophyte. These functions appear to have been reduced to only a small number of terms. In some cases, historical accounts suggest that the term *skookum* 'powerful', often 'sinister' or 'haunted', was used in the Jargon to express such spatial taboos, correctly or incorrectly; it was often explained by white authors as naming sites believed by the indigenous peoples to be haunted by malicious spirits.[12] The common appearance of the term *memaloose* 'dead' for burial sites can best be understood in terms of spatial taboos, as there would be few other contexts in the intercultural discourse in which the location of native burial sites would be relevant or willingly revealed by the indigenous population. This is, of course, a radically truncated depiction of indigenous cosmology; but this geographical manifestation may have been all that was expressed within the context of brief intercultural dialog. In some cases, these names may reflect native attempts to protect colonists from site-specific external threats, corporeal or mythical; but in most cases, the terms seem to provide a warning for arriving colonists—an attempt by native peoples to minimize the violation of their sacred or proprietary spaces.

Conclusions

Once a prominent linguistic feature of the American Northwest, Chinook Jargon has now largely disappeared from the region. Continued Euro-American settlement in the late 19th century reduced colonial dependence upon endemic resources and native knowledge of the land, and made English the region's uncontested intersubjective language. Ultimately, this settlement brought about the elimination of many of the native peoples and landscape features which had served as the subjects and objects of Chinook Jargon discourse regarding the land. Still, certain Chinook Jargon placenames persist as traces of this intercultural

discourse, frozen in time upon the land. They provide a fragmentary record of the tripartite relationship among colonial peoples, native peoples, and the northwestern landscape during a time when both the land and the knowledge of that land were being transmitted, both voluntarily and involuntarily, from one set of occupants to another. Rooted in past discourse, these placenames reveal some of the features which were salient within intercultural contexts, and allow us a glimpse of the ways in which such features were discussed.

As trade languages are reduced to shared phonetic and grammatical themes, so too is the content of discourse in these languages reduced to shared conceptual and referential domains (Dutton 1983). Within the case of Chinook Jargon, the placename evidence tentatively suggests that such dialog reflected a need to find *conceptual* points of mutual reference in order to invoke *physical* points of mutual reference. These placenames are clustered around spaces shared by cultures in contact; they identify features which are mutually salient for navigation, subsistence, and trade; and they use expressions which readily translate across cultural divides. Less mundane aspects of each culture's ethnogeography tend to be eliminated by selective pressures brought forth by the mutual unintelligibility of alien languages and cultures, as well as the brief, utilitarian character of encounters between disparate peoples in contact. It seems likely that such forces have shaped placename complexes within other contexts, particularly those which have been multi-cultural, and that similar selective pressures have become manifested within the institutionalized toponymies of colonial peoples elsewhere around the world as such peoples have selectively incorporated indigenous placenames.

Long after Chinook Jargon dialogs have ceased, the comparatively restricted semantic domain of Jargon placenames still embodies the interactive search for intersubjectivity between Indian and white speakers on the North American frontier. The study of such second-language placenames thus allows us to speculate on the process by which environments are imputed with conceptual order, not within a particular culture, but rather among people of distinct cultures in contact. In the process, we gain a better understanding of what was and was not shared—geographically, linguistically and culturally—between the colonial peoples and the native peoples of North America at this pivotal point in history.

Notes

I would like to thank Dr. M. Jill Brody for her comments on an earlier version of this manuscript.

1. Dentalia (*Dentalium* spp.) are the long, thin, conical money shells of the Northwest coast; they were primarily harvested on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Ironically, dentalia shells may perhaps be most commonly known from the paintings and photographs of Plains Indians who used these shells for personal ornamentation. Trade in these shells from the coastal Northwest into the Great Basin and over the Rocky Mountains into the Plains was well documented by authors such as Alexander Maximillian and Lewis and Clark at contact, and appears to be a practice of some antiquity (Neuman 1967, 479; Griswold 1970; Wood 1980).

2. Contrary to prevailing opinion, Samarin (1986) has suggested that Chinook Jargon emerged following the advent of European exploration in the region, despite evidence of the widespread use of Jargon at contact and the scale and antiquity of pre-contact inter-tribal trade networks (Wood 1980; Mitchell and Donald 1988). For a rebuttal of Samarin's post-contact hypothesis regarding another North American trade language, see Wurtzburg and Campbell (1995).

3. Chinook Jargon discourse was an almost exclusively intercultural means of communication, but there were a few exceptions during the late contact period. Zenk (1988) and others have chronicled one case in which a linguistically elaborated variety of Chinook Jargon served as a first-language creole on a multi-tribal reservation in Oregon.

4. As an intercultural spoken language, Chinook Jargon exhibited wide phonetic variability. When the Jargon was recorded in written form, the spelling of a given term varied widely, depending on who was speaking and who was recording. Myron Eells (quoted in Thomas 1935, 32) reports, for example, that the term *ooahut* 'road' was variously recorded as *ooahut*, *hooihut*, *wayhut*, *wehkut*, and *oyhut*. For the purpose of this article, I use the dictionary standard developed in colonial-era documents and dictionaries, using Anglicized spellings (Gibbs 1863; Hale 1890; Thomas 1935; Jacobs 1936). These spellings are presently the standard for institutionalized Chinook Jargon placenames (see McArthur, this volume).

5. Still, in some cases, Chinook Jargon placenames reflected the dialog surrounding single events, where the resources sought were a temporary feature of the place. For example, William Clark named a coastal stream *Ecola* 'whale' after bargaining with the Tillamook Indians for oil from a beached whale at its mouth (Moulton 1990, 183). Similarly, Archibald McLeod of the Hudson's Bay Company recorded the name *Siskiyou* 'bob-tailed horse' for the area, after traveling through these mountains asking Indians of multiple language backgrounds if they had seen his lost horse (McArthur 1982: 676-77).

6. Numbers, e.g., *ikt* 'one', *mokst* 'two', and *klone* 'three', are among the more common Chinook Jargon names applied to features by post-contact land management agencies, such as the US Forest Service; they are often used in reference to peaks or other features in the order they would appear while traveling along primary roads

or rail lines. A related pattern in Chinook Jargon placenames includes the familial terms *kwohl* 'aunt' and *tot* 'uncle'. Though familial terms applied to peaks are common in both European and Northwestern native toponymy, identified cases of these names appear to have been applied by the Forest Service (see McArthur 1982).

7. By the close of the 19th century, the term *tillicum* had taken on the additional meaning of 'friend' within the Jargon. During the early and mid 20th century the term became one of the most common post-contact additions to Chinook Jargon toponymy, applied to such places as public campgrounds by people looking for a phonetically and semantically appealing name with a Native American flavor. Other terms applied for this purpose include *sahalie* (which, through its use in missionary texts, had expanded from its earlier definition of 'high' to also suggest 'heavenly') and the Jargon greeting *klahowya*.

8. This excludes *siskiyou* 'bob-tailed horse' and *ecola* 'whale', appearing in reference to singular animals, as discussed above. Two animal terms, *talapus* 'coyote, fox' and *kokostick*, literally 'knock wood', a term used in reference to woodpeckers, are not included here, as these names may have been post-contact toponymic additions. It is nonetheless conceivable that these names date from the contact period and cohere with the general argument presented here. Coyotes and foxes were significant to early colonists, both as predators of small livestock and as sources of pelts. The woodpecker would prove an interesting case of an animal which served as a resource primarily for the native peoples of the region; throughout much of the area where Jargon was spoken during the early contact period, the red feathered scalps of certain woodpeckers were a very important component of ceremonial regalia. Ethnographic accounts mention hats, belts, and capes made of these scalps, and some authors have speculated that the cultivation of these birds was sufficient to cause local extinctions (Jacobs n.d.). It is unclear whether these scalps would have been traded or discussed extensively between whites and Indians, but it is quite likely that the location and characteristics of woodpeckers would have been addressed within intercultural discourse. *Hamma* or *hum* 'foul-smelling' was a name commonly applied, especially to streambanks where dead salmon washed up after spawning. The term probably functioned both as an indicator of potentially abundant living salmon and as a single navigational cue associated with points where large rivers entered bays and inlets.

9. *Tukwilla,* a term applied to the edible wild hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*), is another plant name which fits this model; but the genesis of this placename may possibly date to the post-contact period.

10. Based upon placename evidence, the metaphorical expansion of Chinook Jargon appears to have been quite significant in the generation of landscape terminology. However, these multiple, metaphorical uses of Chinook Jargon terms were rarely documented effectively within Jargon dictionaries from the contact period (see Powell 1990).

11. It is important to note that almost all Chinook Jargon discourse on the early frontier was male discourse, reflecting the demographic and cultural character of the

early colonial population. As authors such as Fiske (1991) have suggested, white colonists often undercut the status of the native women of the northwest coast by transacting business with men only, by encouraging prostitution, and simply by imparting aspects of the European social order, intentionally and unintentionally. It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that these somewhat graphic metaphorical references to the female body—a toponymic pattern which apparently lacked its male counterparts—reflects the tone of this all-male discourse at contact. A related point can be made in reference to the placename *Klootchman* 'woman' and cognate terms: some of the occurrences of this name appear to reflect singular incidents, while a small number of cases appear to correlate with probable sites of contact-era prostitution. Predictably, little evidence of the specific histories of this name remain within the written historical record.

12. Interestingly, through a metaphorical form of semantic broadening, the placename *Skookum* came to have two general toponymic functions, indicating both a 'supernatural' or sinister site and a site which was unusually large or dangerous. The most common example of the latter is *Skookumchuk* 'powerful water', in other words, a waterfall or cataract in a river, a landform which was conceivably viewed as similarly threatening or sinister by peoples who often traveled by boat or canoe.

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