Halcomelum is the Coast Salish language spoken on Vancouver Island from Malahat to Nanoose, around the mouth of the Fraser, and upriver as far as Yale. There are three main dialect groups: Island (on Vancouver Island), Downriver (on the mainland below Matsqui), and Uplriver (in the Fraser Valley from Matsqui upstream to Laidlaw). The name Halcomelum is Hill-Tout's (1902: 5) invention for the place name of the Uplriver form halкомел, which is halкомел in Downriver and halкомел in Island dialects. On the Fraser, as reported by Duff (1921b: 42) and Galloway (1977:vill), the name is said to be derived from ḥalkemel (in Downriver ʰalkomel), the name of a village on Nicomen Slough near Deroche. I do not know if Island speakers would agree with this etymology. The name language seems to be a progressive verb form with a sense like 'be Nicomening', presumably 'be talking Nicomen'. But why Nicomen should have been the basis for the name of the language seems to me (a right-handed male of Northwestern European descent) to be the natural way to do it. Long exposure to cultural relativism makes me question whether anything is natural. In this case at least, the words suggest my nature and the first time I see them in a dictionary I associate them with feeling un-wound. The winter dancers moving clockwise around the house is one of these extensions in meaning of 'bind oneself' and 'free oneself' must come from the practice of binding something— as a feather to an arrow shaft—with a clockwise motion, requiring that it must be freed with a counterclockwise motion. Although this seems to me (one-handed male of Northwest Coast Indian origin) to be the natural way to do it, long exposure to cultural relativism makes me question whether anything is natural. In this case at least, the words suggest my nature and Coast Salish nature are the same. (One might test this conclusion by unwinding museum specimens, but I do not recommend that one try it to find out.) There is another reason for moving counterclockwise around the house, especially when you are entering for the first time and greasing people. If you turn to the right, you have the people seated along the wall at your right (the honored side) and you can (in the modern tradition) shake their hands. Although notions of unwinding and winding and of right and left may not
account for the original choice (assuming there was one) of moving counterclockwise, they may have inhibited the spread into our region of going the wrong way.

3. Going In Other Directions, the Regional Axis, and Canoe Types

In Halkomelem, as in neighboring languages, there are no terms for compass directions, no terms truly corresponding to 'north', 'south', 'east', and 'west'. It is easy to elicit terms that Halkomelem or Straits speakers identify as 'north wind', 'south wind', etc. But checking actual usage, it is clear that the regional orientation and movement, which is quite variable and generally off the cardinal points, is only one component of meaning. Others are season, temperature, and precipitation. Thus a Musqueam identified ılıh'ə' as a wind coming northeast into the north at night. They identified ılıh'ə' as a wind coming northwest into the north in the summer, bringing clear, warm weather, and they identified ılıh'ə' as a wind coming southeast into the north, winter and bringing freezing cold weather. A Musqueam couple identified ılıh'ə' as a 'west wind' coming from over Point Dick (northwest of the village) at Musqueam and bringing fair weather in summer. Further up the Fraser, they said, during fish-drying season it generally blows upstream from about mid-morning through the day, while another wind, called ılıh'ə' ni' əl, blows downstream at night. They identified ılıh'ə' as a 'north wind' coming over North Vancouver (roughly northeast of the village) and bringing cold weather in winter. Upriver at Laidlaw (between Chilliwack and Hope) a Tait speaker identified ılıh'ə' as a 'south wind' (while indicating a northwesterly direction) and said it brings dry weather, and she identified ılıh'ə' as a cold winter wind from upriver. Thus ılıh'ə' can blow from the north or west or east or south from the north or east. Season and temperature are more constant than direction. These are terms for meteorological conditions specific to a place. (I have collected wind names from several places in Halkomelem and Straits and hope eventually to get wind zones or equivalents from the same places, for comparison.)

Direction of motion (outside the house) is commonly specified by terms that relate it to shore and the flow of water, e.g., Musqueam lık'ə' 'go/come toward the shore (when on land)', ıkk'ə' 'go/come inland', ılıh'ə' 'go/come toward shore (if on water)', ıkk'ə' 'go/come seaward', ıkk'ə' 'go/come downstream', ıkk'ə' 'go/come upstream'. Location can be specified, as ılıh'ə', ıkk'ə' 'in the bush', ılıh'ə' 'in (but not ıkk'ə' in (in Cowichan) ıkk'ə' 'in' or [Cowichan] ıkk'ə' 'in'. Derived forms express 'shore side', 'bush side', 'upstream side', 'downstream side'. Because the house was invariably built along the shore, these terms were often used with reference to the 'inland upstream corner', 'shore downstream corner', etc. Inside the house, movement toward the fire can be equated with movement upstream, while movement away from the fire is downstream. However, the term used to refer to the fire was most commonly made and used by the Straits and salt-water Halkomelem people, where it was the most common term for canoe, craft, vehicle. But to distinguish it from the other style it was also called ılıh'ə' 'southern' or of Point's sk'ə' 't'a ılıh'ə', 'it's kind of red in the west.' The name of the wind that comes from the west or north, and it seems to share an element with ılıh'ə' 'move upstream' and ıkk'ə' 'the (located) upstream'. An 'upstream' meaning would make sense; in Cowichan (though perhaps not in Musqueam) you say you're going ıkk'ə', 'downstream' when you set out for Victoria or La Conner. The word ıkk'ə' is usually glossed 'south', but I do not know of any reason to relate it to any meaning 'downstream'.

Each of these two terms has a derivative referring to people inside the canoe, the canoe is the 'inland upstream corner', 'shore-side downstream corner', as from those Deep Bay, Comox, and Cape Mudge northward. The ıkk'ə' are the people from around La Conner southward, that is, the people of Puget Sound. Thus a Cowichan identified ıkk'ə' as a winter wind from over Point Dick (northwest of the village) at Musqueam and bringing fair weather in summer. Further up the Fraser, they said, during fish-drying season it generally blows upstream from about mid-morning through the day, while another wind, called ıkk'ə' ni' əl, blows downstream at night. They identified ıkk'ə' as a 'north wind' coming over North Vancouver (roughly northeast of the village) and bringing cold weather in winter. Upriver at Laidlaw (between Chilliwack and Hope) a Tait speaker identified ıkk'ə' as a 'south wind' (while indicating a northwesterly direction) and said it brings dry weather, and she identified ıkk'ə' as a cold winter wind from upriver. Thus ıkk'ə' can blow from the north or west or east or south from the north or east. Season and temperature are more constant than direction. These are terms for meteorological conditions specific to a place. (I have collected wind names from several places in Halkomelem and Straits and hope eventually to get wind zones or equivalents from the same places, for comparison.)

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The Puget Sound was a cultural subdivision of the Coast Salish that persisted well into the 20th century. Puget Sound Salish, also known as Salishan, is a group of languages that were spoken on the western coast of North America. The Puget Sound Salish languages are part of the Salish language family and are closely related to the other Salishan languages, such as the Bella Coola, Coast Salish, and Kutenai languages.

Puget Sound Salishic languages have a rich cultural history and are known for their complex and expressive gestures. The Puget Sound region was home to several tribes, including the southernmost tribes of the Salishan-speaking peoples, such as the Olympic, Tsimshian, and Coast Salish tribes.

Puget Sound Salishic languages are known for their unique sounds and vocabulary, which are often used to express emotions and cultural traditions. The Puget Sound Salishic languages have a strong emphasis on the natural world and the importance of the environment in daily life.

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Halkomelem, Straits, Squamish, and Nooksack languages (Suttles 1968; Kew 1960).

I would like to thank Yvonne Hajda and Henry Zenk for guiding me to these Chinookan and Kalapuyan terms and Yvonne Hajda for commenting on a draft of this paper.

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