

of Catalan speakers to accept them as such—are likely to define the long-term health of the national language movement in Catalonia.

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### **Papers of the Nineteenth Algonquian Conference**

William Cowan, ed.

Ottawa: Carleton University, 1988. v + 234. np (paper)

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The 19th Algonquian Conference was hosted by the Smithsonian Institution at the Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., October 23-25, 1987. Of the 48 papers presented, 23 are included in this volume. William Cowan's introduction attributes much of the Conference's success to the conveners, Ives Goddard and Thomas Vennum, both of the Smithsonian. We are also told that the conference was "rich and varied in content." The papers remind me why it is that anthropological linguistics and ethnography are worth getting up every morning to go off and do. There is such a variety of topics and breadth of approach here that our trade can be seen in cross-section—from rigorously technical description and reconstruction to generalizations that make the recondite understandable and the commonplace fascinating.

The papers seem much more engaging than conference papers presented, one after another in a room full of folding chairs, ever seemed. (Would it be *all* bad if academic conferences were carried on as learned-society reunions with banquets and scholarly elbow rubbing, and a set of printed papers to digest later?) But it is the sharing of research, understandings and inspiration that one takes home from a conference, and one gets the same rush of energizing ideas from reading conference proceedings in a volume such as this.

The papers can best be discussed in groups though the book presents them alphabetically by author's name. Five papers involve textual analysis, though their results could hardly be more different. George Augin provides careful transcription, morphemic breakdown and translation (as he did with three other texts at the previous year's meeting) of Golden Lake Algonquin usage. Sarah Preston works with English narrative accounts to distinguish Cree groups on the basis of how the concept of "control" is expressed in them. (Those on the west coast of James Bay demonstrate control and avoid being controlled by expressing aggression; this contrasts with the East Cree concept of competence, which is expressed in non-interference, reticence and emotional control.) George Fulford compares three versions of the Menomini origin myth with descriptions of the ritual in which they were performed, attempting to capture the essence of the rituals from the insider's perspective. Richard Rhodes uses texts in Great Lakes Ojibwa to reveal matters of culture (concerning politeness) and social structure which lie behind the words of the texts. And Roger Spielman borrows Gail Jefferson's English conversational tactic of "laughing together" to discuss how laughter is used tactically to accomplish a variety of social activities such as topic closure and expressing appreciation in Winneway Algonquin texts.

As in the tradition at Algonquian conferences, many of the papers focus on linguistic data and description: Peter Bakker discusses the historical evidence for (and scant description of) a Basque-based pidgin used by the coastal Algonquian peoples from as early as the mid-16th century. Diane Daviault does an interesting analysis of the obviative (referring to a different third person than the topic, e.g., he likes his son) in 17th century Algonquin as seen in Fr. L. Nicolas' grammar. She compares that with the obviative in contemporary Ojibwa and Algonquin. Audrey Dawe-Sheppard discusses the Micmac verb and Micmac historical morphology with careful paradigmatic tables. Stephanie Inglis discusses the {ew}, a Micmac morpheme that appears to signal various types of change in grammatical status. Frank Siebert concisely examines tag-questions in Penobscot. Pierre Swiggers reviews theoretical implications of Uhlenbeck's Algonquian studies, all 26 of them.

There are also articles on semantic, cognitive and symbolic issues. Emmanuel Desveaux starts out mauling about the meaning of a native monster story and concludes that, contrary to Sperber's claims, monsters reflect what is symbolically unthinkable; they are like signals of the limits of symbolic animality. Janice Graham convincingly looks at Cree assumptions of the possibility of cognitive control with regard to death. Carlo Krieger compares native Penobscot and Western concepts of the yearly cycle using sources that allow him to reconstruct early native assumptions about the lunar calendar and time reckoning.

Ethnographic studies include David Ezzo's discussion of women in native Northeastern societies in which he suggests a model for understanding their role and the social institutions that maintained their status in these societies. David Gidmark discusses the birchbark canoe and its disappearance, and gives a narrative ethnography of the experience of watching Jim Jerome, a Rapid Lake artisan, make one.

A few articles are ethnohistorical. Tim Holzkamm discusses Ojibwa knowledge of minerals, using historical records extending back into the 18th century. Elizabeth Little, using archival evidence, discusses Nantucket whaling during the 18th century, including native involvement. Toby Morantz looks at the fur trade since 1700 and, focussing on the credit system, asks questions about the role of culture, ethos and personality in the eastern James Bay Cree's accommodation to the traders. Pauleena Seeber provides a readable discussion of the Maine Indian Guide in historical documents and current folklore. Nicholas Smith fills a lacuna in Passamaquoddy history by looking at the dissolution of the Caughnawaga Grand Council in the mid-19th century. John Strong shows how the Indian Biographies Project recently set up at the Southampton Campus of Long Island University has potential to provide ethnographic as well as historical insights.

I cannot help but compare published conference annals such as these to *Festschriften*, another type of compiled publication. I realize that the disparate nature of articles in collections discourages systematic reading. But the papers in conference annals like the *Papers of the Nineteenth Algonquian Conference* have a coherence that makes for readability and encourages browsing for fun and profit.