

Haa Tuwuunáagu Yís, for Healing our Spirit: Tlingit Oratory

Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer, eds.

Seattle and London: University of Washington Press; Juneau: Sealaska Heritage Foundation, 1990. xxxv + 569 pp. U.S.\$35.00 (cloth), U.S.\$17.50 (paper)

Reviewer: Margaret Seguin Anderson

University of Northern British Columbia

Haa Tuwuunáagu Yís is the second volume produced by Richard and Nora Marks Dauenhauer in the series Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature. It complements the first volume, *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives*, and improves considerably on the production quality of that earlier work. The Sealaska Heritage Foundation has obviously put substantial resources into this long-term project and is now being handsomely rewarded. This book, and the promised future volumes in this series, will be a treasure for anthropologists, linguists and students of comparative literature as well as for general readers who appreciate elegance of expression.

Haa Tuwuunáagu Yís begins with a lengthy preface establishing the goals of the series and of this volume and a 150-page introductory essay outlining issues in the study of oral literature in general and Tlingit oral literature in particular (such as the nature of crests and the use of extended complex metaphors and similes based on them to structure speeches). Examples for this section are selected from the corpus included in the volume, so that by the time the reader has worked through the introduction the content and form of the speeches is apparent. The introduction provides quite extensive and integrated treatment of aspects of Tlingit culture and spirituality that are germane to understanding the speeches; this section is well illustrated with 35 figures and photographs. The core of the book is the third section, the speeches themselves with facing translations; these are organized into three sections: a set of examples of different types ordered by level of complexity so that readers can become familiar with the patterns involved; a set of speeches from a traditional memorial in 1968; and a set of 10 speeches from a modern elders conference in 1980 (p. xii). Each of the speeches is thoroughly annotated. A well-organized glossary includes examples of the use of each word or stem selected from one of the speeches, a useful feature for both linguists and language learners, given the complex morphology and phonology involved. Finally, the volume is rounded out by one or two-page biographies of each of the people whose speeches are included, with photographs of each; a full volume of lengthier biographies is a proposed addition to the series.

The most significant contribution of this volume for anthropologists will be the new understanding of "potlatch" developed by the editors; they argue that from the Tlingit point of view it is the central ritual in traditional Tlingit ceremonial life for spiritual healing and removal of grief (p. xi); the evidence they adduce is in the speeches that they have carefully transcribed, translated and annotated. It is encouraging to note that they have managed to speak incisively to academic readers without compromising their commitment to a native audience; indeed the work is strengthened by the respect that the editors have for both the academic and Tlingit traditions. The texts themselves are also of interest to anthropologists, though they are even more crucial for linguists and for members of the Tlingit community. Most were recorded during actual performances over several decades, and the excellent transcriptions by Nora Marks Dauenhauer will be of immense value to specialists interested in the

structure of the Tlingit language and/or patterns of discourse organization and other aspects of language. The editors are characteristically modest about their own contribution to the volume, emphasizing that they are merely trying to explain and interpret the words of the elders as they understand them (p. ix). The magnitude of their efforts, and the significance of their success, will be readily apparent to those who have attempted similar work; few have succeeded so well.

Localizing Strategies: Regional Traditions of Ethnographic Writing

Richard Fardon, ed.

Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990. x + 360 pp. \$39.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: Michael Levin

University of Toronto

Questioning the integrity of ethnography has become a mini-industry in our field. This collection offers a welcome change of tone, addressing the issues in a restrained way, from within anthropology, as it were. Using the convention of regionalism the papers discuss the presuppositions which have framed and shaped ethnographic writing: the common ethnographic experience, the specific representation of analytical problems, the contrasting of one region with another, even the presentation of one region as the negation of the representations of another.

From the fourth occasional conference in social anthropology at the University of St. Andrews in January 1987, introduced by Richard Fardon, the 13 papers cover Africa, Melanesia, Asia and include two "exemplars" of hunter-gatherer ethnography on Australia and "Eskimology." Conceived as examinations of "the dialectic between regional and theoretical factors in . . . monograph writing . . . sensitive to . . . both time and place," the papers focus on major ethnographic "regions." Many contributors, however, used the occasion of the conference to comment on the "new ethnographic criticism," in particular, the narrowing of the debate to discussion of the "simplified dichotomy between 'Self' and 'Other.'" Offering an antidote to the excesses of the new criticism this collection demonstrates convincingly the achievements and complexity of ethnographic writing.

No reader will be fully satisfied with this collection, but none will put the book aside in disinterest. The emphasis on "past British ethnographic concerns" is admitted in refreshingly frank terms in the Preface. Educational locality is one dimension overemphasized recently, but the papers here happily concentrate more on the literature than on "the schools" and the teachers. A specialist lucky enough to find a paper on her/his area will have a point of departure for reflection on, and perhaps critical reconstruction of, the political history of that regional ethnography. But all anthropologists who open this collection will, I am sure, find a permanent place for it on their shelves. One can skip quickly through ethnographic regions, across continents and inter-continentially. . . . The very best papers are those whose authors avoided indulging themselves too deeply in the debates of the new ethnographic criticism and kept closest to the original brief of recognizing the importance of time and place in regional ethnographic writing.

The value of this collection as a resource is complemented by the stimulus it should give to discussion of the political, temporal and spatial context of anthropology and