

research into our earth environment and a place that is under great pressure because of the search for minerals and energy resources.

The earth's nations recognized that the Antarctic was a special place, important to the whole world. This was recognized by the 12 participating nations who, working through the United Nations, drew up the Antarctic Treaty signed in 1959. The negotiations for the treaty took place during one of the most extensive global cooperative studies ever carried out, the International Geophysical Year 1957/58. During the IGY, 50 scientific stations were set up over the Antarctic continent. The motivation for the Antarctic Treaty was to ensure that territorial claims should not retard comprehensive scientific research. Hence the signatories agreed that "freedom of scientific investigation in Antarctica and co-operation to that end, as applied during the IGY, shall continue."

This year (1988) agreements have been negotiated and signed to regulate the exploitation of the Antarctic Minerals Regime. Will history repeat itself, or have we progressed? What role can scientists play in conserving the Antarctic? With the development of atomic weapons the scientists' warnings were ignored by the politicians. Will the present scientific community be able to play a positive role in seeking to protect the Antarctic region from the potential catastrophic effects of mining and oil spills, or even tourism, or will scientific knowledge and ethics be ignored in the face of potential profits and strategic advantage?

Some scientists are playing their part. Following a conference organized by the British Institute of International and Commercial Law in London in April 1985, it was decided to share the information presented by the production of this book. In it they have set out their knowledge and the prime questions facing the future of the Antarctic in this sound, authoritative book. The contributors are all highly qualified, very experienced and, in some cases, strategically placed to make their views known. The topics covered by the book include: the history of scientific research in the Antarctic and some of its major conclusions; the Antarctic Treaty regime as it relates to legal issues, protecting the marine environment and minerals regulation; and looks to the future of this great continent.

It is clear that the Antarctic plays a vital role in the earth's weather, marine environment and biological environment. For those concerned to understand the present and issues in international decision making on the Antarctic this book is highly recommended.

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HAA SHUKA, OUR ANCESTORS: TLINGIT ORAL NARRATIVES.

Edited by NORA MARKS DAUENHAUER and RICHARD DAUENHAUER.
Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987. 532 p., notes, biographies, bib. Hardbound, US\$35. Softbound, US\$17.50.

Not so long ago, native American oral traditions were regarded by cultural outsiders as colourful legends suitable for the amusement and edification of children. Since the early 1970s, though, linguists and literary scholars have been analyzing indigenous North American oral narrative as complex adult literature. George Steiner, quoted by the Dauenhauers in their preface (p. xi), points out that part of the enduring greatness of classical Greek and Hebrew literature results from the introduction of literacy at a critical time in their histories, enabling these narratives to outlive their original performances and to contribute to world literature some 3000 years later. This serious attention to oral literature is exciting; however, scholars influenced by theories from structural linguistics and literary criticism sometimes have an irksome tendency to treat texts as though they can be hermetically isolated from cultural context and studied in terms of internal narrative relationships.

Nora Marks Dauenhauer, Richard Dauenhauer and those with whom they collaborate have given us a remarkable volume of Tlingit oral

narrative that speaks directly to this debate. *Haa Shuka: Our Ancestors* is a bilingual book, centred on clan stories recorded in Tlingit and then meticulously translated into an English that captures the flavour of the original telling. It is a book written both for the Tlingit community where the Dauenhauers work and live and for others interested in Tlingit literature and willing to work at understanding a culture through the lens of its narrative. The preface makes it clear that, in these stories, the thematic coherence comes in the narrative exploration of what membership means, of how everyone is connected to community; individuals will always have lonely decisions to make, but they are made in a social context.

The 15 narratives in this book come from 12 elder storytellers. The majority of the texts are recorded, transcribed and translated by Nora Dauenhauer, herself Tlingit; others were recorded by individuals who have been involved in the documentation of Tlingit language and tradition over many years. The Dauenhauers affirm that context is critical to any understanding of the narratives: they provide it in their introduction, in detailed end notes for each story and in short biographies and photographs of each storyteller. They stress that their notes are not intended to give definitive interpretations of the narratives; rather, they furnish readers with the kinds of background context a storyteller would expect from an intelligent listener.

The introduction has six distinct sections: three written for general readers and three for readers with more specialized interests in Tlingit language and translation. The Dauenhauers begin by pointing out that the style they use is now standard in ethnopoetics; however, theirs is one of the clearest descriptions I have seen of how decisions are made about line length, pauses and intonation. They go on to discuss characteristics of Tlingit oral style, showing how it contrasts with written English, and illustrating the kinds of translation problems that arise when one is interpreting not only from one language to another but also from oral performance to written text. Next, they introduce cultural concepts and themes a listener/reader needs to begin to understand how these narratives are used and what they mean.

The problem of what is lost in form and style when stories learned in a native language are rendered into English has troubled linguists and ethnographers since the time of Boas; in their section on translation, the Dauenhauers are able to specify precisely *what* is lost, rather than just noting that loss occurs, and to show how they try to resolve these issues in their translations. Their discussions of Tlingit alphabet and grammar are again unusually clear presentations of complex material, accessible for a reader with a basic understanding of linguistic concepts and a particular interest in Tlingit language.

As one only able to read the translations of these stories, I am impressed by the density they retain even in English. Some are migration narratives, telling how particular clans came to live where they do now. Others are accounts of the first meetings of Tlingits with whites, presenting the Tlingit perspective of events recorded in accounts by La Perouse in 1786 and Izmailov and Bocharov in 1788. Still others explore more universal issues: frequently they dramatize the journey of a protagonist whose display of human arrogance results in a significant encounter with spiritual forces — Bear, Killer Whale or Ice — calling into question conventional ways of thinking and fostering new knowledge.

Those that excite me most are ones I have heard from elder storytellers who still tell them many miles inland in the Yukon Territory. The story of *Kaax'achgók* is only one example: it tells of an ancestor of the Kiks.ádi clan swept to sea in a storm and able to use the sun as a navigational aid to chart his way home a year later, there to face changes that had occurred in his absence. Mrs. Angela Sidney, a Yukon Elder of Tlingit and Tagish ancestry, has explained to me how her Deisheetaan clan once acquired the right to sing this song, and how she held a party for her son, Peter, when he came home to the Yukon after being stationed in Europe during World War II. To honour his long voyage, she told this story and sang the song of *Kaax'achgók* as his welcoming gift.

The logistics of developing computer software for fluent word processing of Tlingit has been an important part of this project, and the Dauenhauers acknowledge the assistance of others who have helped them tackle this problem. Tlingit is one of the most complicated languages in

the world, having 24 sounds not found in English as well as high and low tones on vowels. They use the popular alphabet designed by Gillian Naish and Constance Story (who also recorded two of the narratives in the book). This book provides an important model for linguists working on the production of bilingual texts elsewhere in Alaska and in northern Canada because it suggests that accurate transcription can be printed at reasonable cost. The cover by JoAnn George adds greatly to the visual attractiveness of the volume.

The title page notes that this is volume I in a series to be called *Classics in Tlingit Oral Literature* (also to be edited by the Dauenhauers), but there is no clear indication of what other volumes are planned. Royalties from this first volume are to go to the Sealaska Heritage Foundation, to be used in the publication of additional ones. If Richard and Nora Dauenhauer have made their objective the recording of literary classics, they have done so in a way that provides us with a classic work of scholarship written in a clear, accessible style. Anyone interested in native American oral literature or in the development of bilingual texts in indigenous languages will appreciate this volume and will welcome future ones in the series.

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LABRADOR BY CHOICE. By BEN W. POWELL. St. John's, Newfoundland: Jespersen Press, 1984. 2nd printing. 200 p., intro., map, 5 poems, 1 letter, and a comment by the author's wife. Softbound. No price indicated.

Today's world can no longer experience the lifestyle that Ben Powell loved to the depth of his soul and which is now virtually extinct. If Powell wrote this story strictly for the historical record, that in itself would make the book a success. He went beyond that. He describes, in detail, the compelling attraction of the hazardous, hunger-filled and bitterly cold occupation of hunting and trapping in the wilds of Labrador. Despite these apparent drawbacks, this kind of life got into Ben's blood and drove him to love every minute of it. "The most [intriguing] thing that is on a trapper's mind is wondering what will be in the traps tomorrow just around the bend of the river. This is what makes the game so interesting. It's not what you've got, but what you expect the next day or week." Many years later, after he had pretty well given up hunting and trapping, he spent a nostalgic day following his old, familiar traplines on a newly designed machine — a snowmobile. Writing of that trip, he said, "This was far better to me than a trip to the Holy Lands. It was like someone being away from home for a long time and then returning."

Powell has included a map with his story, which provides a ready reference to the area in which he carried out his hunting and trapping. It brings to his story a better understanding of the total district that he learned to love so well. One detail shown on the map is the location of his "tilts." These were shelters where he kept some of his supplies and where he would sleep under some sort of protection against the bitter cold, snow and wind. Some were much more sturdy than others, but none were large — only big enough for his rough bed made of poles, his backpack and his stove. On arrival at each tilt, the most pressing requirement was to prepare sufficient firewood to heat the tilt and his meals. This was an everyday activity and was carried out at whatever tilt he found himself at the end of the day.

Powell was first introduced to Labrador and hunting and trapping by one of his brothers. The first couple of years were difficult, until he became accustomed to carrying the very heavy loads that had to be carried, and this over difficult trails. The weather seemed to have no significant negative effect on him, even though temperatures would hover around 40 below zero, or he would be stranded in a tilt for several

days, or thin ice would provide instant icy showers. While he seldom met another human being on his trails, he was never lonely. The excitement of finding good fur-bearing animals in his traps provided the incentive for him to carry on. If he did meet someone, it was cause for a great conversation.

Powell was only 17 when his brother became sick and could no longer work the trapline. By this time he had been thoroughly bitten by the trapping bug and took over the responsibilities of running the trapline by himself. Right from the start, he wanted to get better organized. One project was to build more tilts and locate them one day's walk apart (leaving a little time for trapping and hunting during each day). This took him three years. There was a good reason and incentive to complete this project — he had heavy loads of supplies that had to be carried from tilt to tilt. The supplies and equipment that he needed for each trip give a good idea of the load he had to carry while on the trapline. Flour (into which baking powder had been sifted), sugar, butter, baking soda for burns, pork, rice and beans made up the grocery list. Add to that the spare mittens and socks, a watertight can containing matches, ammunition, needle, thread, a few buttons and some white cloth in case of cuts. The last items in the bag would be molasses buns, a bundle of wax candles and a bag of tea. "With your game bag full of food and a bundle of traps tied on the outside of it, your camp, stove, and a little strip of caribou skin to lie on at night, you would be ready to strike the trail." He never knew when he would be back home. He could always get game to supplement his diet while on the trail. One of his favorite foods was porcupine meat, which he would prepare by boiling in a pot or tin can.

Powell says very little of his activities during the summer. He indicates that fishing was standard procedure but he seems to dwell on the season from September to about April. In September, vast open stretches of water permitted him to travel in his 14-foot boat. As winter approached, and ice started forming on the lakes and rivers, travel became much more difficult. He would try a shortcut across a body of water that was frozen over, only to find that the ice was not thick enough, and he would wind up thoroughly soaked in frigid water, miles from his closest tilt. Depending on the weather, he might arrive at the tilt totally exhausted, yet having to gather enough wood for his fire before he could go about thawing out and drying out. Many times he was so tired he fell asleep before eating anything. During the winter this hazard didn't exist. When spring came, it started all over again. On at least two occasions, his whole tilt burned down around him while he slept, after building up a roaring fire to ease his misery.

Life for the trappers and their families along the east coast of Labrador was not easy when Powell first took up trapping. The communities varied in size from one to five families. Communication with the outside world, and among themselves, was almost non-existent, access to medical assistance was extremely hazardous and distant, and schooling didn't exist. As Powell grew older and less able to continue his trapping, he started directing his energies to improving the living conditions for his family and his fellow Labradorians. He was the prime mover in establishing a sawmill, a new community (near the sawmill), including the construction of homes for workers in the mill, the establishment of a school and finally the development of a medical clinic. The new village of Charlottetown was a concept dreamed up by Powell and one of his long-time friends one night out on the trapline. From the time of the dream to the completion of the village with its amenities, 25 years passed. By the end of those 25 years, trapping and hunting was no longer a viable occupation, and the world that had meant so much to Powell came to an end.

Labrador by Choice, by Ben Powell, is a very readable book that will appeal to everyone interested in life in remote places — the hardships, the joy, the satisfaction of being able to do what you want without watching the clock or obeying someone else's orders.

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