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century. Nevertheless, he is able to avoid the jargon that has become vogue in some academic quarters—there is no “liminal,” “hegemonic,” or “chthonic” here. His work demonstrates exhaustive historiography, an understanding of the historical context, and a keen comprehension of the larger history in which Indian-white relations played out. In addition to its fine historical analysis, this is a reference book that will be of substantial use for graduate students and scholars working in the area of Indian-white relations.

Little material has been written on Indian-white relations from a North American comparative perspective. What little has been produced has anatomized aboriginal peoples. This is a lucid, intelligent guide to the straightforward business of analyzing the historical material available to scholars. Nichols has written a good book about an important subject matter that has implications for the ethnic myriad that now confront Canadians and Americans alike. There are occasional fumbles, particularly in the more contemporary portion of the book, but the reader will come away deeply affected by a writer who faithfully crafts his story based upon historical evidence.

Indians in the United States and Canada is a worthwhile and necessary addition to the small body of comparative work now emerging in Native studies. It is definitely a book that anyone interested in the historical relationships between Indians and whites should acquire. He makes a significant contribution to our understanding and assists in re-imaging the historical contacts between the two cultures.

James S. Frideres
University of Calgary

Life Woven with Song. By Nora Marks Dauenhauer. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. 135 pages. \$29.95 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

Life Woven with Song recalls both Luci Tapahonso's *Blue Horses Rush In* and some of the essays in Carter Revard's *Family Matters, Tribal Affairs*. Like Tapahonso's work, Dauenhauer's book reflects a deep rootedness in indigenous language and traditions; like Revard's, it draws attention to political as well as familial contexts. All three voice a sustaining responsibility to their people's past and commitment to their future. But these very commonalities assure that *Life Woven with Song* also differs from Tapahonso's and Revard's books. With them, it expands our sense of what it has meant to be Indian in the twentieth century. At the same time, it joins such works as *Life Lived Like a Story*, Julie Cruikshank's 1990 collaboration with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned, as well as Elizabeth Nyman's and Jeff Leer's 1993 *Gágiwdul:àt: Brought Forth to Reconfirm: The Legacy of a Taku River Tlingit Clan*, offering another distinctive piece of the story of Tlingit continuance in the century just past.

These three books have much in common. Each demonstrates the inseparability of traditional culture, knowledge of a particular place, and personal experience. But each centers on a different part of traditional Tlingit territory, which includes most of Southeast Alaska and parts of northwestern British

Columbia and the southern Yukon. Only Dauenhauer, for example, focuses on coastal subsistence fishing as the source of life and culture. Ned, Sidney, and Smith all claim both Tlingit and Athabascan ancestry, and grew up speaking both Tlingit and an Athabascan language. Dauenhauer is a full generation younger than they, and half a generation younger than Nyman, whose story is in part that of an orphan. Further, unlike the other women, Nora Dauenhauer is not the speaker of an oral history and, though her writing may suggest the influence of the oral, it does not aim to replicate the spoken word.

Dauenhauer's previous writings form another part of this book's context. Her work with Richard Dauenhauer in Tlingit linguistics and oral culture is an important contribution to the survival of her people's language and stories. The knowledge gained through her traditionally conservative Tlingit upbringing is the knowledge of elders, including some of those who speak in *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives* (1987), *Haa Tuwunáagu Yís, for Healing Our Spirit: Tlingit Oratory* (1990), and *Haa Kusteeyí, Our Culture: Tlingit Life Stories* (1994). Readers of her book of poetry, *The Droning Shaman* (1988), have already discovered the delicacy, humor, and power of her creative voice.

Life Woven with Song is divided into three parts: prose, poetry, and plays. The first essay, "Some Slices of Salmon," establishes the centrality of salmon to identity, spirit, sense of place, and stories, as it moves from a "conceptual . . . academic, and anthropological" introduction, to step-by-step accounts of her family's subsistence methods. The section called "Trolling" is the bridge between these perspectives: it recounts the excitement of the most abundant salmon run in memory, which was also the young Nora's first experience as a salmon cleaner on her family's boat. It is an emblematic moment: everything is magnified, becoming memorable not only for the family, but also for the reader.

Next come three short prose pieces, each shaped by a different focus on childhood. "Egg Boat" tells the story of the young Keixwnéi's (Nora's) first boat and her growing participation in her family's subsistence work. We see her anticipation, her disappointment when she fails to catch anything the first day out, and finally the exhilaration of accomplishment. "Magic Gloves" celebrates her grandchildren's participation in traditional dancing, and the making of their dance regalia by extended family and friends from outside the community. In "Chemawa Cemetery: Buried in Alien Land," Dauenhauer recalls her father's stories of his escape from the Chemawa Indian School, and the torments and deaths of other Indian children far from home. The presence of these exiled children reminds us that Indian children's lives are still undermined by racism.

The final, title essay is woven of history and art. Both are part of the traditional subsistence culture, and are essential to the continuance of Tlingit life in the contemporary world. Thus Dauenhauer writes of struggles to regain lost land, of racism, and of ambivalence about attending school. The essay begins by evoking memories associated with her earliest awareness of her aunts' and grandmother's basketry. Her grandmother, "seemed to have the grass tangling around her fingers and hands. I could smell the strong, fresh grass. I could also hear the snapping as she broke the stalks of grass against her thumbnail" (pp. 31–32). The memory embraces raw materials, the process of creation, and the artists. From basket-weaving the essay moves

through carving, storytelling, boat-building, and music. Song becomes an image of both continuance and evanescence. While many Tlingit songs composed by an uncle are still sung, the family has been able to save only two composed by another relative. This loss illuminates the importance of her own work of recording and translating oral literature. Such work of art and history must be done because of colonialism's assaults on language, culture, and memory. Finally Dauenhauer reflects on her first childhood experience of racism, and affirms the continuing sustenance of family and culture through art: "We will keep singing my uncle's songs. We will wear my mother's beadwork" (p. 53). Structurally, these essays embrace the children within the culture, reminding us how important that life-sustaining embrace can be.

Some of Dauenhauer's short, image-rich poems are portraits of relatives, while others allude to experiences suggested in the prose pieces. Still others introduce new themes and new modes of attending to the familiar. Important as place is, the essays include virtually no scenic description, but some of the poems vividly evoke places or natural phenomena. For example, "White, like fog: / blueberry blossoms / along the old Marks Trail . . ." (p. 72), and trees "coated with snow / as if robed in Chilkat blankets" (p. 92).

Because the book as a whole creates a rich context, the poems offer layers of implication. "Willie," in memory of the writer's father, combines transparency and density: "Don't worry, daughter," he said when she visited him in the hospital,

"I will be like *Xakúch'* when the octopus
came up under him."
I was lost,
adrift on an ocean of tears
with no solid place
to beach my boat. (p. 66)

In the last four lines the context of the whole book transforms an otherwise ordinary metaphor. Because the reader knows that Willie Marks was a fisherman and master boat-builder, and since the reader has seen the daughter in her "egg boat," he or she feels the intensity of her sorrow. Out of context, a non-Tlingit might wish for a footnote to identify *Xakúch'*, but we can sense the significance of the father's words because Dauenhauer has clued us in to the power of Tlingit oral culture's meanings for her people. That power is rendered more directly in a poem for two of her granddaughters. As the little girls jump over the foam of ocean breakers on the beach, the poem chants lessons about the place and history to which they belong:

This is your ancestors' beach.

Your ancestors' village
is in Kunaagaa, Dry Bay.
Your river is the Alsek
we rafted down. (pp. 76-77)

Every poem suggests the shaping presence of traditional culture in Dauenhauer's sensibility. The culture's ongoing vitality is perhaps the central truth of the Raven plays that make up the book's final section.

In order to bring "the theater closer to the traditional dramatic and ceremonial forms of the Native people of the Northwest Coast," Dauenhauer includes only one speaking role, that of the storyteller, who in a staged production will interact with the dancers who perform the stories (p. 99). Based on stories told by Tlingit elders whom she credits individually, these are her own retellings: "I want to help the stories continue by telling them again and encouraging others to do so as well" (p. 102).

The three plays use many familiar storytelling devices and blend Tlingit words and expressions with contemporary allusions. For example, in "Raven Loses His Nose," Raven, characteristically hungry, hallucinates about the fish he might catch, then about the treats available at McDonald's or Taco Bell (p. 123). When he is ignored by fishermen from whom he tries to beg bait, his plight prompts an aside from the storyteller: "Have you ever felt like that in a store? / Raven felt terrible. / But even this didn't damage / his self-esteem" (p. 124). Of course Raven's robust self-esteem (like his constant hunger) is well-known, but this does not diminish the likelihood that a listener, having been similarly ignored, might find encouragement along with laughter here. Dauenhauer gives Raven's experiences more explicit political meanings when he realizes that his lost nose could be "an object of cultural patrimony" and, disguised as a consultant, rescues it from the museum where it is on display (p. 130). Making the stories contemporary in these ways is well within the possibilities, even the necessities, of oral tradition, especially with reference to Raven and other tricksters. After all, a large part of Raven's power and appeal is that he is always around and always busy. As Dauenhauer says, "a little bit of Raven lurks in all of us" (p. 101). The mix of traditional and colloquial, serious and humorous, gives these plays a vitality on the page that makes one wish to see and hear them performed.

Dauenhauer's voice is clear, engaging, and inviting. In the prose pieces most transparently, it is the voice of a teacher sharing the memories, values, and hopes that inspire her. The poems' images and brevity make for a different kind of intensity, deepened by poetry's implicit invitation to the reader to read it aloud and discover its possibilities. With the storyteller's voice, she lures us into Raven's world, makes us laugh (how could we not?) and think. Always, her Tlingit language is present, reminding us that it is still alive in the world, although endangered. This book is an important work of preservation and continuance. We should all say, as she does at the end of "How to Make Good Baked Salmon from the River" (in *The Droning Shaman*), *gunalchéesh*, thank you.

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