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REVIEWS

Being and Place among the Tlingit. By Thomas F. Thornton. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. 247 pages. \$24.95 paper.

Thomas F. Thornton, in *Being and Place among the Tlingit*, has written a compelling monograph about place among the Tlingit. It is well researched and well written, and although at times it lacks something, in the main it is a much needed addition to anthropological studies of place and to understanding Tlingit material uses of places and conceptions of place (through linguistic structures).

For Thornton, an anthropological investigation needs four components, or “key cultural structures that are fundamental in mediating human relationships to place”: social organization, language and cognitive structures, material production, and ritual process (8). Thornton defines *place* as “a framed space that is meaningful to a person or group over time” (10). This definition allows Thornton to focus on three interlocking features of his definition: time, space, and experience. Chapter 1 is a detailed and thoughtful discussion of a useful analytic perspective on conceptions of place. However, there is a component that Thornton seems to be missing. One can gain a sense of Thornton’s perspective by returning to the phrase “language and cognitive structures.” This is language that appears abstracted from use. What one is missing, and what is often not clearly defined, is how Tlingits actually use languages to talk about place.

However, as Thornton points out, “Tlingits have a term for genres of place that take on sacred status as possessions: *at.óow* (literally ‘owned things’)” (29). According to Thornton, genres of place and *at.óow* become crucial sites for understanding Tlingit conceptions of place. Places are, as *at.óow*, owned by the various matrilineages among the Tlingit. Place-names, stories, songs, and crests are all genres of place, and they are also all *at.óow*. Chapter 2 discusses the relationship that Tlingits have to their matrilineal clans, placedness, and *at.óow*. Among the Tlingit, clan names are often built from place-names. For example, Thornton gives the matrilineal clan names: Chookaneidí (People of Chookanhéeni) and Taneidí (People of Tanahéen), where Chookanhéeni glosses as Straw Grass Creek and Tanahéen glosses as Jumping Fish Creek (48–51). The linking of place and social grouping is thus an important component of Tlingit ethnogeography. Furthermore, as Thornton notes, when Tlingit orators use specific place-names that are associated with clan histories they “promote solidarity . . . among . . . dispersed . . . clans,” link themselves to their “historic, collective dwelling place,” and “metaphorically

transport the listeners to this sacred landscape so that they may be reunited with their ancestors” (65). There is a complication, as Thornton notes at the end of chapter 2, namely that “nearly all those under age seventy” no longer speak Tlingit (66).

Chapter 3 begins with a debate regarding the naming of a middle school in Juneau, Alaska, that took place in 1994. In the end, Dzántik’i Héeni (Flounder at the Base of the Creek) was chosen “as the name for the new middle school and paved the way for a renaissance of Tlingit place naming” (68). Here we see an example of a Tlingit place-name being used for a non-Native exclusive middle school that challenges Western naming practices. However, the naming of Dzántik’i Héeni seems to be dismissed shortly after when Thornton writes, “unlike Dzántik’i Héeni Middle School, most indigenous place-names have arisen out of organic processes of experience rather than bureaucratic processes involving nominations, committee meetings, and votes” (69). I would have been interested in reading about the contemporary struggles concerning place naming in Alaska.

Chapter 3 goes on to compare Tlingit place-naming strategies with Euro-American place-naming strategies, especially around Glacier Bay National Park. As Thornton notes, “aboriginal place-names are fragile linguistic artifacts.” They are fragile in the sense that local place-names are “not widely shared” (72). Such local place-names are the mark of locality, which are the makings of local knowledge. Much of chapter 3 concerns the syntactic and semantic construction of Tlingit place-names. One of the crucial distinctions between Tlingit and English place-naming practices is that Tlingit place-names are “ecological” and suggest the ways that various landscape features interact. As Thornton argues, “Cultural interests may differ, however, even among cultures inhabiting the same or similar environments. Glacier Bay, being a wilderness park in American consciousness rather than a place of human dwelling, does not inspire habitation names. It does for the Huna Tlingits, however, who refer to Glacier Bay as ‘our homeland’ and ‘our icebox’” (89–90). Likewise, Tlingit place-names, although being linked with social histories, are not normally named after individuals.

Although Tlingit place-names are overwhelmingly visual in nature, there are suggestive hints at other ways that Tlingits conceive of place. As Thornton notes, “Tlingit topographical referents in place-names are synesthetic. Tlingit names reflect not only the visual sense (what things look like) but also the auditory (Dàalagàaw, or Hollowed Sound), olfactory (Téey Chan Géeyah’w, or Little Bay Smelling of Yellow Cedar) and even gustatory senses (X’alinukdzi x’áa, or Sweet Tasting Point)” (102). It is unclear from Thornton’s discussion if Dàalagàaw is based on sound symbolism or whether it only describes a sound without evoking the sound. It is to Thornton’s credit that he attends to the synesthetic features of Tlingit place naming.

Chapter 3 concludes with a portion of a poem by Kake Tlingit poet Robert Davis that laments the loss of Tlingit place-names and the social histories they evoke. Like the discussion of the middle-school naming in Juneau, this poem hints at the contemporary discussions and uses of Tlingit place-names within a larger social field. Thornton provides suggestive hints at such issues. One

wishes, however, that more attention had been paid to the contemporary politics of Tlingit naming practices.

Chapter 4 deals with resource production (harvesting and processing) and the paths connected with such resource production for Tlingit places. Tlingit places are *at.óow*, and as such the resources available at specific places are restricted to those with legitimate claims—legitimate through kin ties—to those places. Some of Thornton's discussion in this chapter is based on testimony that Tlingits gave concerning "their possessory rights." Thornton notes that witnesses tended to describe the place, the route taken to get there, and what one did at the place. It was often based on "the traditional seasonal path" (127). One senses in the testimony of Tlingit witnesses the playing out of a Tlingit view that "proper ancestral links were a prerequisite for speaking authoritatively on place" (134). As Thornton notes, Tlingits "challenged the legitimacy of the U.S. government's claims to the land, asking rhetorically, 'Can any government official name his grandfather or grandfathers that have occupied any of our land, like we can?'" (135). According to Tlingits, the US government lacks the social histories, the "ancestral links" with place, that aid in the authorization of epistemic knowledge about those places. Lacking such links, the US government cannot speak authoritatively about place. Here we sense the politics of knowing place-names, a politics that continues apace among many Native groups and their relations with the US government. Places could be used that one did not have matrilineal rights to, but in such a case, one would ask permission to use such a place. The lack of asking permission suggested a lack of respect for Tlingit clan structures.

Later in chapter 4, Thornton reminds us that Tlingit oral tradition often presents a world that is not static in which "things are not always what they seem" (145). Here one is reminded of Julie Cruikshank's recent book, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (2005), which also deals with Glacier Bay. Thornton's book and Cruikshank's book are usefully read together. Thornton lays out the cultural groundwork, and Cruikshank discusses the implications of place making in encounters between Tlingits and Euro-Americans.

The second half of Thornton's chapter 4 also deals with Euro-American and Tlingit encounters concerning place making, with Thornton focusing on resource production. This includes an insightful discussion concerning bird-egg harvesting among the Tlingit. Here Thornton is at his best when he usefully critiques a naive ecological Indian view (Indians as overly "in-touch with nature") and the critique of the ecological Indian (Indians as "destroyers of nature"), both of which miss the on-the-ground practices of Native Americans—the ethnographic accounting of Native American resource management—and attempt to understand Native American practices as caricatures of Western ideologically driven desires. Whether it be berry picking or the harvesting of bird eggs in Glacier Bay, Tlingits have "a wide range of . . . resource practices" that are "conservation oriented" (169). The massacre of Aleuts in the nineteenth century, who after receiving permission to harvest seals then went on to overharvest the seals, speaks to an ongoing concern by Tlingits about resource management (140–41).

Chapter 5 connects knowledge of place with ritual action. It is the shortest of the substantive chapters. Here Thornton links the ways that language, kinship, and production are all emplaced through ritual action, especially through *ku.éex'*, or the potlatch. Again, among Tlingits, place-names, songs, stories, and crests or *shagóon* are *at.óow*. In such rituals, oratory is highly valued, and, like the use of place-names to create an image of specific place and their ancestors, good oratory is said to be a form of "imitating their ancestors" (181). The use of place-names and oratory to evoke ancestors' images seems an especially salient aspect of Tlingit aesthetics (it is also reminiscent of things that Navajos have told me about the aesthetic value of Navajo verbal genres).

Thornton notes that "Tlingit place intelligence cannot be reduced to a set of facts because it is a complex, relational way of knowing" (191). Knowing a place is both a group and an individual experience among the Tlingit. It is also a lived experience. With the shift in language from Tlingit to English, Tlingits are losing an important way of orienting to their world. However, Tlingits are actively engaging with the world through their use of Tlingit names for middle schools, contemporary Tlingit poetry, or the testimony of elders during the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the various land agreements that have ensued. Thornton is at his best when he is disputing naive views of Tlingit traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and for that alone this book is to be recommended. His discussion of Tlingit social structure and its relationship with Tlingit place-names is also fascinating and highly readable. One wishes that more attention had been paid to how contemporary Tlingits talk about place and place-names today. Languages, as Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf both noted, are more than abstract systems; they are also habitually used and, as Sapir noted, they become invested with "feeling-tones" (*Language*, 1921, 40). This seems especially important as we attempt to understand the ways that TEK crosses a wide variety of sensory domains. These domains are not limited to, but rather are linked with, languages. Thornton's book is an excellent first step. More, as always, needs to be done.

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The Cultivation of Resentment: Treaty Rights and the New Right. By Jeffery R. Dudas. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 224 pages. \$50.00 cloth.

As Indian gaming has increased in prominence, so have anti-Indian-casino movements and scholarly work tracking related changes in American interethnic relations. Political scientist Jeffery R. Dudas's *The Cultivation of Resentment: Treaty Rights and the New Right* attempts to navigate the rich intersection among race, class, ethnic identity, and national political culture that Indian gaming has created by examining countergaming social movements.

Much previous research focused on Native and non-Native relations. One could safely assume that most Native American studies introductory-level