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Surviving Through the Days: Translations of Native California Stories and Songs, A California Indian Reader. Edited by Herbert W. Luthin. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 651 pages. \$60.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Herbert Luthin has done us all a great favor in assembling this anthology of California Native stories and songs. It is a comprehensive collection of songs, creation myths, stories, reminiscences, and anecdotes drawn from the large number of Native cultures in the state. It is not exhaustive, but his sampling of a far bigger body of literature offers interest to just about everyone.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century when Indian populations were declining everywhere, many interested people, amateurs and scholars alike, feared that Native oral literature would disappear with “the vanishing American.” So, trained and untrained linguists went into the field with their pencils and paper, occasionally their primitive recording devices, and sometimes a camera to collect everything they could. The Department of Anthropology was founded at the University of California in 1902 more or less specifically to forward this effort. There was a sense of desperate urgency: When the house is on fire, says Luthin, using J. P. Harrington’s metaphor, you have to rescue what best can be saved.

There was no time then to “process” the material, to translate it properly, to explicate the linguistic, cultural, historical allusions imbedded in the songs and stories, to evolve an aesthetic that would help us understand and appreciate the literature. Consequently, much of what was collected was cataloged and stored in archives. Much of it is still there.

A great deal was published, of course, often in “raw” form. A good example is the old University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology (UCPAAE). In its pages, the collectors frequently offered their field notes, hoping someone at some future time would be able to interpret what they had acquired. One often finds, for example, a phonetic transcription of a Native-language song or story as collected, followed by a literal translation or gloss of the words and their fragments, and followed by an attempt to give the sense of the song or story in readable English. Part of Luthin’s example from a Hupa story, “The Boy Who Grew Up at Ta’k’imiding”:

Ta’k’imiding nat’tehdichwe:n
at Ta’k’imiding he grew up
He grew up at Ta’k’imiding;

xontah nikya:w me’ ts’isla’n— kile:xich.
House Big in he was born a boy
He was born in the Big House— a boy.

Hawa:ł ang’ łahxw na’k’iwing’ash wchst’e’
then it was nothing but he sang continuously
He would do nothing but sing all the time.

Such a presentation derives from the firm belief that the center of interest is in the native-language text (a legacy of Franz Boas). And thank goodness, some of those old scholars shared that belief! Otherwise, we would have lost a great deal, not only of the languages themselves, but of qualities of the aesthetic presentation. Luthin quotes a number of examples where particles meaning “he said” or “it is said” were in the phonetic transcription but not in the gloss or the free translation. Sometimes, he shows us how a phrase boundary or a line break affects the story. Such small things, of course, change the relationship of the teller to the tale, add an element of performance, and thus enhance the aesthetic and literary effect.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a group of researchers emerged, led by Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock, who focused on collecting such “ethnopoetic” values, as well as the language. These men and women recorded dramatic gestures, intonation patterns, emphasis, pauses for dramatic effect, all those literary and rhetorical devices that give the song or story both meaning and enjoyment.

Usually, these ethnopoetic devices make the song or story much more accessible to English speakers. For example, consider the question-answer repetitions in this passage from “Grizzly Bear and Deer” (from Edward Sapir, *Yana Texts*, 1910):

“Where are they?” she said.
 She asked a poker; it didn’t answer.
 She asked a stone; it didn’t answer.
 She asked the earth;
 She asked the stick;
 She asked the fire;
 [a pause, which conveys “They didn’t answer.”]
 She asked the coals;
 “Yes, indeed,” they said;
 “They have run south,” they said.

The narrative device of looking everywhere (Native narratives often search north, east, south, west; and some add “up” and “down” as well), delaying the discovery for dramatic effect, patterning the elements in threes with a pay-off in the fourth repetition— these are almost universal features of narratives found in almost all cultures. And the rhythms that the repetitions of intonation patterns generate are not far removed from the verse devices of:

Gonna wash that man right out of my hair,
 Gonna wash that man right out of my hair,
 Gonna wash that man right out of my hair,
 And send him on his way.

This is not far removed from Mississippi blues, or the bluegrass traditions that were behind them, or the English folk ballads behind them, or the biblical and Hebraic prosodies at the root of much of our rhetoric; listen to

Lincoln at Gettysburg or Kennedy at the Berlin Wall, and you will hear them again. Part of Luthin's point (and a great deal of his effort) is to show us that, if or when we approach the Indian songs and stories with some sensitivity to their inherent qualities, most of the strangeness of a language and culture far removed from us begins to disappear.

All this and more is the extended subject of *Surviving Through the Days*. Luthin seems very familiar with the archives, both used and unused. He has selected a rich variety from those archives, including some old familiar favorites, but also introducing many new pieces. Each of the selections comes with considerable notes about the singer and/or narrator of the song or story, notes about the collector and translator, notes regarding analysis and transcription. In addition, Luthin gives us an extensive general introduction and, at the end, several essays on Native California languages and oral literatures. This "apparatus" of notes and perspectives helps us understand and appreciate these Native California literary treasures.

The organization of the book is more or less spatial. Luthin starts with stories from the most northwestern of California tribes and works his way down to the most southeastern tribe. In between, we get a healthy representation of the literary traditions of California before contact with the whites.

Readers somewhat familiar with the subject will meet the work of many an old friend: Ishi, William Benson, Jaime de Angulo, J. P. Harrington, Dell Hymes, Alfred Kroeber and his amazing corps of anthropologists and linguists. He or she will also see work by much younger people, many of them Natives or mixed-bloods with advanced degrees: Leanne Hinton, Greg Sarris, and others. We hear singers like Grace McKibbin, Mabel McKay, and others unfamiliar to most of us but legendary in their tribes.

The book gives me an almost cosmic perception of the interconnectedness of a subject that is by its nature multifarious. Those old collectors by and large knew each other and had evolved a vast network of information, tips, native contacts, methods, and even avenues of publication. One begins to see that it was no accident that Kroeber sent his best graduate students to study Karuk and Mojave, Yana and Chumash, bracketing the state from one end to the other and from side to side. It is a little more astonishing that so many of them became the titans of studies in oral languages and literatures.

They gave us a glimpse of the world before the present people, back in the days when only spirits inhabited the earth. There were giants in the earth in those days, when animals talked. But they weren't really animals, not just animals. They were the pure spirits who later became animals. The stories of their interactions taught the Native people an ethic of how to treat the world and each other, a psychology of being, an epistemology, a worldview. *Surviving Through the Days* is a fine introduction to that world. Libraries, amateurs and professionals alike will be interested in this book.

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