



THOMAS F. THORNTON

**BEING
AND
PLACE
AMONG
THE
TLINGIT**

CULTURE, PLACE, AND NATURE • STUDIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

CULTURE, PLACE, AND NATURE

STUDIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

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BEING AND PLACE
among the TLINGIT

Thomas F. Thornton

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TLINGIT SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

The spelling of Tlingit words conforms to the accepted popular orthography first developed by Constance M. Naish and Gillian L. Story and revised by Jeff Leer and Nora Marks Dauenhauer in 1972 (see Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987:38–46). Important Tlingit concepts and names for places are italicized within the text. Personal and social group names, however, are not.

Coastal Tlingit has four long vowels and four short vowels, represented and pronounced as follows:

<i>Tlingit vowel</i>	<i>As in the English</i>	<i>Tlingit example</i>
A	Was	tás (thread)
Aa	Saab (a Swedish automobile)	taan (sea lion)
E	Ten	té (stone)
Ei	Vein	yeis (horse clams)
I	Hit	hít (house)
Ee	Seek	s'eeek (black bear)
U	Push	núkt (male grouse)
Oo	Moon	xóots (brown bear)

Vowels may be pronounced with either a high (á) or a low (à) tone. In northern Tlingit the low tone is unmarked. In southern Tlingit both tones are marked.

Consonants in Tlingit include more than two dozen sounds not found in English. The technical sound chart below (see Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987; Leer 1991) provides a basic guide to the spelling and pronunciation of consonants in Tlingit words.

Tlingit Consonantal Sound Chart

				<i>Velar</i>		<i>Uvular</i>		<i>Glottal</i>	
				<i>Plain</i>		<i>Plain</i>		<i>Plain</i>	
	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Lateral</i>	<i>Palatal</i>	<i>Round</i>		<i>Round</i>		<i>Round</i>	
Stop									
plain	d			g	gw	g	gw	.	.w
aspirated	t			k	kw	<u>k</u>	<u>kw</u>		
	t'			k'	k'w	<u>k'</u>	<u>k'w</u>		
glottalized									
Affricative									
plain	dz	dl	j						
aspirated	ts	tl	ch						
	ts'	tl'	ch'						
glottalized									
Fricative									
plain	s	l	sh	x	xw	<u>x</u>	<u>xw</u>	h	hw
	s'	l'		x'	x'w	<u>x'</u>	<u>x'w</u>		
glottalized									
Nasal									
	n								
Glide									
			y	w					

PREFACE

I first became interested in researching Tlingit concepts of place during the summer of 1989, when, as a young graduate student, I was employed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, to study the historical and contemporary use of a famous but dwindling red salmon fishery in northern Southeast Alaska, known as Sitkoh Bay. Sitkoh Bay lay on the border between Sitka and Angoon, two Tlingit communities with historical ties to the place and stakes in its management. Upon my first visit to Angoon, I was directed to see Matthew Fred Sr. and Mary Willis, elders of the Deisheetaan clan, which was said to have “owned” and “taken care of” that bay. Approaching the leaders of the right social group was extremely important; indeed, as I was to learn, the social and physical geography are inseparable in Tlingit concepts of place. This was my first lesson. I shall not soon forget the first thing Matthew Fred Sr. said to me, for it was perhaps the singular lesson not only about Sitkoh Bay but about Tlingit geography as a whole: “You have to understand. There’s a history about that place. We’ve got stories on it.” My first encounter with Mary Willis was similarly poignant. I knocked on her door and, after introducing myself, nervously stated my desire to learn something about the sockeye salmon fishery at Sitkoh Bay. She simply nodded and, leaving the door open, turned and walked back toward the kitchen table and began to narrate: “I’ve been worried about it. I don’t like what’s happening to that place. . . . My uncle used to take care of it.” Mary Willis had Sitkoh Bay on her mind. And the rest was history—literally. For this reason, history and social groupings have remained central to my inquiry into Tlingits’ senses of place.

After returning to Alaska the following summer for a short stint of fieldwork, I joined the Division of Subsistence as a resource specialist.

I was fortunate in that this work took me to communities throughout Southeast Alaska and enabled me to become familiar with the people and geography of the Southeast region from Yakutat to Saxman. Although most of the projects I was involved in concerned fish and wildlife harvest patterns, this research led quite naturally into discussions of place. Tlingits tend to hunt and fish in areas that they know and to which they have social ties. In addition to housing desirable natural resources, these places have other cultural values, which people invoke in myriad ways. Through this work, I learned another valuable lesson: hunting and fishing in particular and production in general are fertile contexts for learning, thinking, and speaking about places. Conversely, just as subsistence is central to place-making, so too is place central to Alaska Native subsistence lifeways, although federal and state subsistence laws protect only “customary and traditional uses” of resources, not places.

My knowledge of the multifaceted relationships among Tlingit subsistence, history, social organization, and landscape was further developed when I became involved, along with the Division of Subsistence, the Hoonah Indian Association, and the National Park Service, in a formal attempt to map Tlingit place-names in the vicinity of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. This map spawned tremendous interest in the Tlingit names placed on the land and what they mean and helped the Huna Tlingits and the Park Service move their relationship from one of contention over resource rights to one of increasing collaboration (see HIA 2006).

In the course of this work, and in my own studies, I continued to record and analyze Tlingit place-names with support from numerous institutions, organizations, and individuals to whom I am exceptionally grateful. My fieldwork in Angoon, Sitka, and Yakutat was supported from grants from the Jacobs Fund of the Whatcom Museum and the Phillips Fund of the American Philosophical Society. Additional research on place-names was funded through three generous grants by the Language and Heritage grant program of the National Park Service through the Southeast Native Subsistence Commission under the leadership of Harold Martin and Gordon Jackson; the results of this region-wide survey are being published separately through the Sealaska Heritage Institute and the University of Washington Press. I also benefited from a

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship in 1997 and received support on a range of place-related projects from the following: University of Alaska Southeast, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, Sealaska Corporation, Sealaska Heritage Foundation (now Institute), Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Hoonah Indian Association, Auk Kwáan Tribe, Angoon Community Association, Chilkat Indian Village, Chilkoot Indian Association, Skagway Traditional Council, Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Ketchikan Indian Association, Douglas Island Indian Association, Juneau Tlingit and Haida Community Council, Pelican Tlingit and Haida Community Council, Tenakee Springs Indian Community Association, Native Village of Saxman, Organized Village of Kake, Organized Village of Kasaan, Hydaburg Cooperative Association, Klawock Cooperative Association, Craig Community Association, Petersburg Indian Association, Wrangell Cooperative Association, Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, Alaska Native Language Center, Portland State University, Saint Lawrence University, and Trinity College.

An earlier version of chapter 2 was published in *Ethnology* (Fall 1997) by the University of Pittsburgh and appears herein with permission in revised form. Parts of the central arguments in chapters 3, 4, and 5, also reprinted with permission, appeared in summary form in an essay titled “The Geography of Tlingit Character,” in *Coming to Shore* (2004), edited by Marie Mauzé, Michael Harkin, and Sergei Kan and published by the University of Nebraska Press in Lincoln.

In analyzing names I was fortunate to have some formal linguistic training from the late Richard Newton and Dr. Walter Soboleff and plenty of assistance with “unpacking” names from linguists Jeff Leer and Nora and Richard Dauenhauer, and a host of Tlingit speakers, most especially, Herman Kitka Sr. and John Marks.

In 1993 this project took an exceptionally enriching and embracing turn when Herman Kitka Sr. agreed to work with me on compiling a personal geography—a survey of his knowledge of named places and their associations. He proved to be my greatest teacher, friend, and brother. Through his extraordinary intellect, memory, patience, humor, and wisdom he taught and continues to teach me what Tlingit places mean and how they fit into the order of things. When I asked for a les-

son in Tlingit geography, he taught me a course, which continues. His geographic life history proved so rich that I became interested in it as a text itself. I compiled and analyzed a preliminary version of that text as part of my 1995 dissertation, but since then this project has continued to grow considerably and will culminate in a separate publication. In recognition of his status as teacher, Herman Kitka Sr. was invited to participate in my thesis defense at the University of Washington in Seattle. In the spring of 1996 we taught a course together at the University of Alaska Southeast, providing further opportunity for collaboration and understanding of the ways Tlingits construct and relate to landscapes in Southeast Alaska. In a ceremony during that semester Herman bestowed upon me the ultimate gift: adoption into his family as his brother, giving me the name *Yaan Jiyeet Gaax*, carried by his late brother David and many distinguished Kaagwaantaan before him. For this exceptional embrace I am eternally grateful, humbled, and indebted.

My thinking on place-names and senses of place has been greatly enhanced by Eugene Hunn, my mentor at the University of Washington, and by the exceptional work of a wide range of scholars and artists inside and outside of anthropology, especially David Abram, Keith Basso, William Bright, Robert Bringhurst, Julie Cruikshank, Nora and Richard Dauenhauer, Robert Davis, Susan Fair, Walter Goldschmidt, A. I. Hallowell, Michael Harkin, Dell Hymes, Stephen Jett, Leslie Main Johnson, Miriam Kahn, Sergei Kan, James Kari, Steve Langdon, Michael Krauss, Jeff Leer, Frederica de Laguna, Marie Mauzé, Dan Montieth, Fred Myers, Richard Nelson, Priscilla Schulte, Brian Thom, Anthony F. C. Wallace, Thomas Waterman, Gary Witherspoon, and others.

I would also like to thank colleagues, associates, and former students at the University of Alaska, Saint Lawrence University, and Trinity College, especially Rosita Worl, Wallace Olson, Ginny Mulle, Clive Thomas, Judy Andree, Pat Fitzgerald, Robin Walz, John Pugh, Hans Chester, Yarrow Vaara, Deborah McBride, Mary Kapsner, Norio Matsumoto, Nikki Morris, Ali Pomponio, Richard Perry, John Collins, Eve Stoddard, Celia Nyamweru, Margaret Bass, David Katz, Saurabh Gupta, Fred Errington, Jane Nadel-Klein, Beth Notar, Hugh Ogden, and Jim Trostle. Finally, I thank the expert staff at the University of Washington Press, especially Lorri Hagman, Pam Canell, Marilyn Trueblood, and Jane Lichty.

Like all contemporary ethnographers of the Tlingit, I labor in the shadow of Frederica de Laguna, whose classic works have laid the foundation for nearly all subsequent work. It was her Boasian attention to ethnogeographic detail that first drew my attention to Tlingit places and place-names and to the role of the past and of the clan in shaping Tlingit conceptualizations of space and place. She also graciously furnished me with copies of her unpublished notes on Tlingit place-names.

In Alaska I would like to extend a *tlein gunalchéesh* (a big thank-you) to all those people who taught me something of Tlingit places, especially Mary Willis, Amy Marvin, Richard Dalton, Jessie Dalton, Vesta Dominicks, Charlie Joseph, Oscar Frank, John Bremner, Cecelia Kunz, Paul James, Charles Johnson, Richard Sheakley, Kelly St. Clair, Wilbur “Jumbo” James, Mary Johnson, Gilbert Mills, Edith Bean, Kelly James, Richard Newton, Frank Gordon, George Jim, Matthew Fred, Martha Kitka, Esther Shea, and Mark Jacobs, who have all walked into the forest. In addition, I would like to thank Harold Martin, George Davis, Ruth Demmert, Clarence Jackson, Mike Jackson, Lydia George, Gabriel George, Jimmy George, Matthew Kookesh, Joe Hotch, Marsha Hotch, Tom Jimmie, Paul and Marilyn Wilson, Lance Twitchell, Wanda Culp, Mary and Paul Rudolph, Charles Jack, Ken Grant, Sam Hanlon, Pat Mills, Frank White, Lilly White, George Ramos, Elaine Abraham, Judy Ramos, Ray Sensemeir, Walter Johnson, John and Roby Littlefield, Ethel Makinen, Vida Davis, Nels Lawson, Dan Marino, Andy Hope, Fred and Margaret Hope, Richard Stokes, Walter Soboleff, and others too numerous to mention. For intellectual and logistical support, I am especially grateful to Nora and Richard Dauenhauer, Nancy Yaw Davis, Andy Hope, Bob Schroeder, Robi Craig, Martha Betts, Rob Bosworth, Herman Kitka Jr., Harvey Kitka, Mike Turek, Karl Gurcke, Wayne Howell, Theresa Thibault, Dick and Rosemarie Isett, Margo Waring, and Doug Mertz.

Finally, in addition to my Tlingit brother Herman Kitka Sr., I thank the rest of my family for their invaluable assistance, herculean tolerance, and unwavering support, especially my wife, Tia, whose understanding and intelligence informs this project in so many ways, and our children, Mariah, Liam, and Roan. In me you hold a special place.

BEING AND PLACE AMONG THE TLINGIT

1 INTRODUCTION

Place and Tlingit Senses of Being

These lands are vital not only to our subsistence, but also to our sense of being as Tlingit people. —GABRIEL GEORGE

In the summer of 1990, I attended a public hearing staged by the U.S. Forest Service in Angoon (*Aangóon*, Isthmus Town, in Tlingit), a predominantly Tlingit village of some six hundred residents located on Admiralty Island in the center of the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska. The “810 subsistence hearing,” referring to section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-487), was designed to solicit public response to a proposed commercial timber harvest in nearby Kelp Bay and its potential impacts on subsistence fish and wildlife users. A number of Tlingits testified at the hearing, as did some non-Natives. Most Angoon residents opposed the proposed logging and in general were critical of Forest Service logging practices and resource management. Others spoke more broadly on the concept of subsistence, which extends to many dimensions beyond its legal definition, and on the meaning of Kelp Bay to Angoon residents.

A simple statement by Gabriel George, a middle-aged fisherman, particularly struck me. He said, “These lands are vital not only to our subsistence, but also to our *sense of being* as Tlingit people.” He did not elaborate on what he meant by that statement or by the phrase “sense of being,” for it seemed self-evident to the mostly Tlingit audience (and painfully irrelevant to the professional planners assembled on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service). But the phrase has echoed in my mind ever since. In many ways this project is an ethnographic attempt to understand that statement.

THE PROBLEM

In a fundamental sense, the landscape is part of every individual's sense of being, not just that of Tlingits, or Native Americans, or indigenous peoples. Historically—and even in the contemporary age of globalization and generic “non-places” (Auge 1995)—landscape and place have been central to culture in all societies, from the production and maintenance of cultural materials, knowledge, and values, to the formation of individual and group identity. Place can be said to constitute a cultural system (cf. Geertz 1973; Kruger 1996). As geographer Edward Relph (1976:43) puts it, “There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security.” Archeologist Christopher Tilley (1994:15) echoes this sentiment: “Personal and cultural identity is bound up with place; a topoanalysis is one exploring the creation of self-identity through place. Geographical experience begins in places, reaches out to others through spaces, and creates landscapes or regions for human existence.”

At the same time, one cannot deny the special relationships that indigenous peoples maintain with the landscapes they have inhabited for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Especially among indigenous hunting and gathering peoples, the importance of these relationships is exemplified in their basic metaphysics, which posits a cosmos that is alive, sentient, empowered, and moral. This animated, enchanted view of the universe as inhabited by a community of beings constantly in communication and exchange with human beings underlies processes of *interanimation* (Basso 1996) that define and enliven people in places and places in people. Thus, for Tlingits, and perhaps all indigenous peoples, place is not only a cultural system but *the* cultural system on which all key cultural structures are built.

How, then, does one analyze and understand a people's sense of being in a particular geographic environment? Clearly this enterprise involves a topoanalysis not only of the particular physical environment and people's interactions with specific places but also of how individuals

and social groups define these places and express their being in relationship to them. As Arturo Escobar (2001:143) suggests, “From an anthropological perspective, it is important to highlight the emplacement of all cultural practices.”

Studies of place represent old and venerable domains of inquiry in both the humanities and the social sciences, and recently they have undergone a renaissance. The philosopher Aristotle emphasized the remarkable, fundamental power of place and characterized it as “prior to all things,” an indispensable aspect of every substance, and a “vessel” or container that frames and holds things—perceptions, memories, feelings, and so on (cf. Casey 1993:13–16; 1997:ix–xi). Aristotle’s theory of the primordially of place has been expanded by phenomenologists, such as Martin Heidegger (1962, 1977), Edward Casey (1993, 1997), and David Abram (1996), who have explored perceptual aspects of sensing place. Similarly, humanistic geographers (e.g., Tuan 1974, 1975, 1977; Relph 1976, 1987; Meining 1979; Buttner and Seamon 1980; Pickles 1985; Agnew and Duncan 1989; Entrikin 1991; Sack 1997), noting the shortcomings of purely quantitative and positivist analyses of specific environments, have charted a more experientialist approach to the study of place.

In sociology, this new interest in place prompted E. V. Walter (1988:215) to launch an ambitious new subfield called “topistics,” which he defines as “a holistic mode of inquiry designed to make the identity, character, and experience of place intelligible.” Similarly, psychologists have begun to formulate a “social psychology of place” based on factors contributing to place identity and place attachment (cf. Altman and Low 1992; Stedman 2002). And within anthropology are found attempts to formulate an anthropology of landscape (Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995; Bender and Winer 2001), space and place (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003), and senses of place (Feld and Basso 1996). At the same time, postmodern studies across the disciplines have underscored the importance of recognizing multiplicities of location and place in cultural analyses, the inextricable connections between space, power, and knowledge in human societies, and the enduring significance of localization and place-based struggles amid the flows and seemingly homogenizing processes of globalization (cf. Appadurai 1996; Rodman 1992; Gregory 1994; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Low 2000; Escobar 2001).

A basic assumption underlying all this work is that to understand places one must understand the people who inhabit them. The dialectic between physical and cultural landscapes was well laid out by the geographer Carl O. Sauer (1927), who rejected the environmental determinism of his day in favor of a cultural historical approach that recognized human transformations of the land over time. Thus, landscapes and places are human constructions and relational fields, not just geographic determinants. A corollary to this idea is the notion that relationships between individuals and places are unique, complex, and dialectical. People affect places, and places affect people in countless ways. While it is still constructive to generalize about “a culture’s” views of space and place, it is also true that individuals within cultures do not view or relate to the landscape in exactly the same ways. For example, if one were to map the land-use biographies of individuals within the same culture, even within the same village or household, as Hugh Brody (1981) did with Beaver Indians of northeast British Columbia, one would find that no two map biographies are alike. This is because the configuration of every individual’s place experiences is unique. Similarly, as Margaret Rodman (1992:643) suggests, “places, like voices, are local and multiple” such that “for each inhabitant, a place has a unique reality, one in which meaning is shared with other people and places.” Thus, to speak about a Tlingit’s sense of being in relation to place is not to suggest a monolithic image tied to a single geographic landscape. On the contrary, as shall be shown, Tlingits relate to places through a variety of cultural processes that mediate activity and shape meaning. The means by which relationships with place are forged, maintained, and broken are the focus of this study.

If places are largely human constructions, then it should follow that, in order to understand people, one must know something of their places. Unfortunately, however, anthropologists have not always been as attentive to this side of the equation. As Rodman (1992:640) points out, “anthropologists, who take pains to lead students through the minefields of conceptualizing culture often assume that place is unproblematic,” not a determinant but a given, simply the setting or location “where people do things.”¹ But to decouple culture from place is to ignore the rich roles that place and landscape play in cultural systems. As I sus-

pect is true in all indigenous cultures, when certain elements of social life among the Tlingit—their names, stories, songs, and art—become abstracted or otherwise wrenched from their geographic moorings, they lose a vital part of their meaning and wholeness. Much of what I have witnessed among Tlingits in Southeast Alaska and elsewhere involves just the opposite process, namely, one of binding and rebinding themselves and their culture to specific places and landscapes. This book, then, is also an attempt to understand the anchoring role of place in Tlingit identity and being.

Relationships with place are a matter not just of living and evolving in specific environments but also of imagining them. Humans not only study the land in order to make a living but also theorize about their ontological relationships to it. These musings and bits of empirical knowledge about the landscape accumulate over generations and become part of oral traditions, traditions that make people and place inseparable. As writer Barry Lopez points out (1986:244–45), “Even what is unusual does not become lost and therefore irrelevant. . . . The perceptions of any people wash over the land like a flood, leaving ideas hung up in the brush, like pieces of damp paper to be collected and deciphered.” If, as a newcomer, one views the landscape as a “wilderness” to be learned and experienced only directly and anew, then one misses these bits and pieces of place knowledge and thought that have evolved and become sedimented in indigenous cultures. However, if one only studies maps or photos, or reads narratives about the geography, culture, and folklore of a place, without experiencing it directly, then one is similarly lost. In this sense anthropology, with its emphasis on cultures and on “being there,” seems especially well suited to the study of place.

Most of the popular literature on indigenous peoples’ conceptions of places has tended to contrast implicitly or explicitly “their” intimate, enchanted union with the landscape with “our” (Euro-American) mechanistic or estranged view. Obviously, such an approach is limited, if not flawed, and often yields a superficial or one-dimensional view of the complex and unique relations of peoples to the places they inhabit throughout the world. Here again, I believe an anthropological approach can help by providing conceptual tools and a framework for ethnographic studies of place.

CULTURAL STRUCTURES OF EMPLACEMENT

As a general framework for an anthropological analysis of place making, I have identified four key cultural structures that are fundamental in mediating human relationships to place. These are (1) social organization, which groups and distributes people on the landscape and helps to coordinate their spatial world and interactions with place; (2) language and cognitive structures, which shape how places are perceived and conceptualized; (3) material production, particularly subsistence production, which informs how places are used, not used, or misused to sustain human life; and (4) ritual processes, which serve to symbolize, sanctify, condense, connect, transform, and transcend various dimensions of time, space, and place in ways that profoundly shape human place consciousness, identity, and experience. Each of these cultural structures is at once a response to the physical environment and a constitutive element of the human environment. As such, they are fundamental to understanding the relationship between people and places across cultures.

As analytical frames for the study of place-making processes, the four cultural structures are especially useful for two reasons. First, they constitute discrete variables that can be examined independently over time. Second, and more significantly, they are the four most important means by which Tlingits themselves “reciprocally appropriate” the landscape, to borrow Scott Momaday’s (1974:80) felicitous phrase. It is through these media that Tlingits “invest themselves in the landscape” and, at the same time, “incorporate” the landscape into their “most fundamental experience” (80). How Tlingits use each of these structures to culturalize space and spatialize culture and to construct and maintain social, intellectual, material, and spiritual ties to places will be taken up in detail in subsequent chapters.

Changes in language, material production, social organization, and ceremonial life have affected both the quantity and quality of Tlingit interactions with place, particularly in the postcontact era since 1800. Understanding these changes requires a diachronic and ethnohistoric perspective on place. In the case of language and cognition, these changes, particularly the displacement of the Tlingit language by English in public

and private discourse, have led to a loss of the rich and sensuous information content embedded in traditional linguistic domains, such as place-names. However, many of the cognitive and symbolic principles that inform the Tlingit views of place and the environment have been maintained and even enhanced despite competing worldviews and pressures to assimilate and develop. Continuity and changes in cognitive orientations toward place, while difficult to evaluate, are evident in expressive cultural forms—stories, songs, art, ritual, and the like—the mythopoetics through which Tlingits articulate their relationships to the land. For example, chapter 3 examines Huna Tlingits' continuing ties to Glacier Bay as expressed through clan legends, names, and iconography. As the discussion shall show, these cultural forms represent the foundation of Huna clans' identification with and sense of belonging to Glacier Bay, as well as their legal "title" to it.

Changes in material production have been more varied. While fish and wildlife harvests remain an integral part of rural economies, other aspects of production, such as the manufacturing of tools, have been largely abandoned in favor of imported technologies. Modern transportation and extractive technologies in particular have often profoundly altered the relations of production and, hence, the nature of interactions with places. For example, a shift in transportation from canoes and hand-powered boats to powerboats with room to dwell and carry cargo allowed people to exploit resources in areas more remote from their permanent homes without establishing seasonal camps or settlements. Similarly, the development of roads and use of motor vehicles on the archipelago have altered patterns of engagement with upland resources, such as deer. These shifts have affected not only the way that places are inhabited and utilized but also the way they are conceptualized.

Economic production and relations to place have been affected greatly by changes in social organization, specifically the transformation from a localized matrilineal clan structure to a community and regional tribal structure more consistent with non-Native socioeconomic organizations and subject to American law. These socioeconomic changes have severely undermined traditional Tlingit land and resource tenure systems, displacing the traditional *communal* systems with alien structures for managing *common* property resources (Langdon 1989). At the same

time, among Tlingits there remains a strong allegiance to some aspects of traditional social organization and an implicit belief that Native management of their own places is in the best interest of both the resources and the people.

Similarly, despite more than a century of Christian missionizing, the ritual life of Tlingits remains strong (though not unchanged), especially the memorial *ku.éex*' (literally "to invite"), or potlatch, the central ritual in Tlingit ceremonial life (Kan 1989). Each fall and winter, dozens of memorial potlatches are mounted, involving thousands of Tlingits in lavish ceremonial feasts and exchanges to honor recently deceased relatives, while at the same time celebrating Tlingit personhood, social identity, and sense of place.

While the cultural means by which Tlingits experience place have undergone considerable change, they continue to invest themselves in the land and to bind places to their identity and sense of being in very distinctive ways. It is tempting and all too common for observers to overestimate the impacts of technological change and overlook the ways Tlingits continue to relate themselves to places. "The most effective technology for nomadic people is one that can be carried around in their minds," Robin Ridington (1990:12) reminds us; I term this cognitive technology "place intelligence." Unfortunately, technology has too often been reduced to artifact, when it also involves artifice—place-based strategies and ways of knowing—that endure despite the adoption of new material technologies (see also Goulet 1998; Sharp 2001).

DEFINING PLACE

It is surprising how many studies of place proceed without a definition of the central term, leaving *place* itself a rather "unclarified notion" (Casey 1997:xii). Admittedly, defining what philosophers have described as "the first of all things" can be difficult. The primary, phenomenal, and processual character of place seems to defy essentialist definitions. With these caveats in mind, I offer the following definition: *A place is a framed space that is meaningful to a person or group over time.* In some ways this definition is deceptively simple. But in analyzing it one finds that it contains three critical elements: space, time, and