

*Text, Play, and Story: The Construction
and Reconstruction of Self and Society*
Edward M. Bruner, ed.
Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1984

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“Stalking with Stories”:
Names, Places, and Moral
Narratives among the
Western Apache

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Shortly before his death in 1960, Clyde Kluckhohn made the following observation in a course he gave at Harvard University on the history of anthropological thought: “The most interesting claims people make are those they make about themselves. Cultural anthropologists should keep this in mind, especially when they are doing fieldwork.” Although Kluckhohn’s comment seemed tenuously connected to the topic of his lecture (he was speaking that day on the use of statistical methods in culture and personality studies), few of his students were distracted or annoyed. We had discovered early on that some of his most provocative thoughts were likely to come in the form of brief asides delivered casually and without apology at unexpected moments. We also learned that these ostensibly offhand remarks frequently contained advice on a topic that we were eager to know more about: ethnography and ethnographic research. Rarely, however, did Kluckhohn see fit to elaborate on his advice, and so it was only later, after some of us had become ethnographers ourselves, that we could begin to assess it properly.

I think that in this particular instance Kluckhohn was right. Attending carefully to claims that people make about themselves, and then trying to grasp with some exactness what they have claimed and why, can be a perplexing and time-consuming business. But when the work goes well—when puzzling claims are seen to make principled sense and when, as a consequence of this, one is able to move closer to an understanding of who the people involved imagine themselves to be—it can be richly informative and highly worthwhile. Indeed, as Kluckhohn implied in his textbook *Mirror for Man* (1949), it is just this sort of work that makes ethnography the singu-

larly valuable activity—and, he might have added, the singularly arresting and gratifying one—it very often is.

This essay focuses on a small set of spoken texts in which members of a contemporary American Indian society express claims about themselves, their language, and the lands on which they live. Specifically, I am concerned here with a set of statements that were made by men and women from the Western Apache community at Cibecue, a dispersed settlement of 1100 people that has been inhabited by Apaches for centuries and is located near the center of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in east-central



Figure 1. Map showing location of the community of Cibecue on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona.

Arizona (see Figure 1). The statements that interest me, which could be supplemented by a large number of others, are the following.

1. The land is always stalking people. The land makes people live right. The land looks after us. The land looks after people. [Mrs. Annie Peaches, age 77, 1977]
2. Our children are losing the land. It doesn't go to work on them anymore. They don't know the stories about what happened at these places. That's why some get into trouble. [Mr. Ronnie Lupe, age 42; Chairman, White Mountain Apache Tribe, 1978]
3. We used to survive only off the land. Now it's no longer that way. Now we live only with money, so we need jobs. But the land still looks after us. We know the names of the places where everything happened. So we stay away from badness. [Mr. Nick Thompson, age 64, 1980]
4. I think of that mountain called "white rocks lie above in a compact cluster" as if it were my maternal grandmother. I recall stories of how it once was at that mountain. The stories told to me were like arrows. Elsewhere, hearing that mountain's name, I see it. Its name is like a picture. Stories go to work on you like arrows. Stories make you live right. Stories make you replace yourself. [Mr. Benson Lewis, age 64, 1979]
5. One time I went to L.A., training for mechanic. It was no good, sure no good. I start drinking, hang around bars all the time. I start getting into trouble with my wife, fight sometimes with her. It was *bad*. I forget about this country here around Cibecue. I forget all the names and stories. I don't hear them in my mind anymore. I forget how to live right, forget how to be strong. [Mr. Wilson Lavender, age 52, 1975]

If the texts of these statements resist quick and easy interpretation, it is not because the people who made them are confused or cloudy thinkers. Neither is it because, as one unfortunate commentator would have us believe, the Western Apache are "mystically inclined and correspondingly inarticulate." The problem we face is a semiotic one, a barrier to constructing appropriate sense and significance. It arises from the obvious circumstance that all views articulated by Apache people are informed by their experience in a culturally constituted world of objects and events with which most of us are unfamiliar. What sort of world is it? Or, to draw the question into somewhat sharper focus, what is the cultural context in which Apache statements such as those presented above find acceptance as valid claims about reality?

More specifically, what is required to interpret Annie Peaches's

claim that the land occupied by the Western Apache is "always stalking people" and that because of this they know how to "live right"? And how should we understand Chairman Lupe's assertion that Apache children sometimes misbehave because the land "doesn't go to work on them anymore"? Why does Nick Thompson claim that his knowledge of place-names and historical events enables him to "stay away from badness"? And why does Benson Lewis liken place-names to pictures, stories to arrows, and a mountain near the community at Cibecue to his maternal grandmother? What should we make of Wilson Lavender's recollection of an unhappy time in California when forgetting place-names and stories caused him to forget "how to be strong"? Are these claims structured in metaphorical terms, or, given Western Apache assumptions about the physical universe and the place of people within it, are they somehow to be interpreted literally? In any case, what is the reasoning that lies behind the claims, the informal logic of which they are simultaneously products and expressions? Above all, what makes the claims make sense?

I address these and other questions through an investigation of how Western Apaches talk about the natural landscape and the importance they attach to named locations within it. Accordingly, my discussion focuses on elements of language and patterns of speech, my purpose being to discover from these elements and patterns something of how Apache people construe their land and render it intelligible. Whenever Apaches describe the land—or, as happens more frequently, whenever they tell stories about incidents that have occurred at particular points upon it—they take steps to constitute it in relation to themselves. Which is simply to say that in acts of speech, mundane and otherwise, Apaches negotiate images and understandings of the land which are accepted as credible accounts of what it actually is, why it is significant, and how it impinges on the daily lives of men and women. In short, portions of a world view are constructed and made available—bits and pieces of what Erving Goffman (1974) has called a "primary framework" for social activity—and a Western Apache version of the landscape is deepened, amplified, and tacitly affirmed. With words, a massive physical presence is fashioned into a meaningful human universe.

This universe of meanings comprises the cultural context in which the Western Apache texts presented earlier acquire their validity and appropriateness. Consequently, if we are to understand the claims set forth in these statements, portions of that context must be explored and made explicit. We must proceed, in other words, by relating our texts to other aspects of Western Apache thought—in effect, to other texts and other claims—and we must continue doing this, more and more comprehensively, until, finally, it is possible to confront the texts directly and expose the major premises on which they rest. As we shall see, most of these premises are grounded in an unformalized native model of Western Apache storytelling

which holds that oral narratives have the power to establish enduring bonds between individuals and features of the natural landscape, and that as a direct consequence of such bonds, persons who have acted improperly will be moved to reflect critically on their misconduct and resolve to improve it. A native model of how stories work to shape Apaches' conceptions of the landscape, it is also a model of how stories work to shape Apaches' conceptions of themselves. Ultimately, it is a model of how two symbolic resources—language and the land—are manipulated by Apaches to promote compliance with standards for acceptable social behavior and the moral values that support them.

Should it appear, then, that these Western Apache texts lack substance or complexity, we shall see that in fact both qualities are present in ample measure. Should the aim of interpreting such modestly worded documents seem unduly narrow, or my strategy for trying to accomplish it too tightly bound up with an examination of linguistic and ethnographic particulars, it shall become evident soon enough that wider and more general issues in anthropology are very much involved. Of these, I suggest, none is more pressing or conspicuous than the reluctance of cultural ecologists to deal openly and in close detail with the symbolic attributes of human environments and the effects of environmental constructions on patterns of social action.

But I am getting ahead of myself. The problem is how to get started, and for advice on that matter I turn here, as I actually did in Cibecue seven years ago, to a gifted and unusual man. Teacher and consultant, serious thinker and salacious joker alike, he has so strongly influenced the content and organization of this essay that he has become, with his permission, a part of it himself—and so, too, of the interpretation it presents.

"Learn the Names"

Nick Thompson is, by his own admission, an old man. It is possible, he told me once, that he was born in 1918. Beneath snow-white hair cut short, his face is round and compact, his features small and sharply molded. His large, black, and very bright eyes move quickly, and when he smiles he acquires an expression that is at once mischievous and intimidating. I have known him for more than 20 years, and he has instructed me often on matters pertaining to Western Apache language and culture. A man who delights in play, he has also teased me unmercifully, concocted humorous stories about me that are thoroughly apocryphal, and embarrassed me before large numbers of incredulous Apaches by inquiring publicly into the most intimate details of my private life. Described by many people in Cibecue as a true "Slim Coyote" (*ma' ts'ósé*), Nick Thompson is outspoken, incorrigible, and unabashed. He is also generous, thoughtful, and highly intelligent. I value his friendship immensely.

As I bring my Jeep to a halt on the road beside the old man's camp, I hear Nick complaining loudly to his wife about the changing character of life in Cibecue and its regrettable effects on younger members of the community. I have heard these complaints before and I know they are deeply felt. But still, on this sunny morning in June 1977, it is hard to suppress a smile, for the image Nick presents, a striking example of what can be achieved with sartorial *bricolage*, is hardly what one would expect of a staunch tribal conservative. Crippled since childhood and partially paralyzed by a recent stroke, the old man is seated in the shade of a cottonwood tree a few yards from the modest wooden cabin where he lives with his wife and two small grandchildren. He is smoking a mentholated Salem cigarette and is studying with undisguised approval the shoes on his feet—a new pair of bright blue Nike running shoes trimmed in incandescent orange. He is also wearing a pair of faded green trousers, a battered brown cowboy hat, and a white T-shirt with “Disneyland” printed in large red letters across the front. Within easy reach of his chair, resting on the base of an upended washtub, is a copy of the *National Enquirer*, a mug of hot coffee, and an open box of chocolate-covered doughnuts. If Nick Thompson is an opponent of social change, it is certainly not evident from his appearance. But appearances can be deceiving, and Nick, who is an accomplished singer and a medicine man of substantial reputation, would be the first to point this out.

The old man greets me with his eyes. Nothing is said for a minute or two, but then we begin to talk, exchanging bits of local news until enough time has passed for me to politely announce the purpose of my visit. I explain that I am puzzled by certain statements that Apaches have made about the country surrounding Cibecue and that I am anxious to know how to interpret them. To my surprise, Nick does not ask what I have been told or by whom. He responds instead by swinging out his arm in a wide arc. “Learn the names,” he says. “Learn the names of all these places.” Unprepared for such a firm and unequivocal suggestion (it sounds to me like nothing less than an order), I retreat into silence. “Start with the names,” the old man continues. “I will teach you like before. Come back tomorrow morning.” Nodding in agreement, I thank Nick for his willingness to help and tell him what I will be able to pay him. He says the wage is fair.

A few moments later, as I stand to take my leave, Nick's face breaks suddenly into a broad smile and his eyes begin to dance. I know that look very well and brace myself for the farewell joke that almost always accompanies it. The old man wastes no time. He says I look lonely. He urges me to have prolonged and abundant sex with very old women. He says it prevents nosebleeds. He says that someday I can write a book about it. Flustered and at a loss for words, I smile weakly and shake my head. Delighted with this

reaction, Nick laughs heartily and reaches for his coffee and a chocolate-covered doughnut. Our encounter has come to an end.

I return to the old man's camp the following day and start to learn Western Apache place-names. My lessons, which are interrupted by mapping trips with more mobile Apache consultants, continue for the next ten weeks. In late August, shortly before I must leave Cibecue, Nick asks to see the maps. He is not impressed. “White men need paper maps,” he observes. “We have maps in our minds.”

Western Apache Place-names

The study of American Indian place-name systems has fallen on hard times. Once a viable component of anthropology in the United States, it has virtually ceased to exist, the inconspicuous victim of changing intellectual fashions and large amounts of ethnographic neglect. There are good reasons for advocating a revival. As early as 1900, Franz Boas, who was deeply impressed by the minutely detailed environmental knowledge of the Baffin Land and Hudson Bay Eskimo, suggested that one of the most profitable ways to explore the “mental life” of Indian peoples was to investigate their geographical nomenclatures (Boas 1901–07). In 1912, Edward Sapir made the same point in more general terms, saying that Indian vocabularies provided valuable insight into native conceptions of the natural world and all that was held to be significant within it. Later, in 1934, Boas published a short monograph entitled *Geographical Names of the Kwakiutl Indians*. This essay is essentially a study of Kwakiutl word morphology, but it demonstrates beautifully Boas's earlier ideas concerning the Eskimo: namely, that the study of place-name systems may reveal a great deal about the cognitive categories with which environmental phenomena are organized and understood. This tradition of research, which also included J. P. Harrington's (1916) massive treatise on Tewa place-names, began to falter in the years preceding World War II. A few brief articles appeared in the 1950s, and Floyd Lounsbury contributed an important paper on Iroquois place-names in 1960. Since then, however, little work has been done. Indeed, with the notable exception of Frederica de Laguna's (1972) long-delayed monograph on the Tlingit, I know of not a single study written by a linguist or anthropologist in the last 20 years that deals extensively or in depth with the place-name system of a North American tribe.²

One can only imagine how Boas or Sapir or Harrington might have reacted to Nick Thompson's interest in Western Apache place-names. They would have been intrigued, I think, but probably not surprised. For each of them had come to understand, as I am just beginning to at Cibecue, that American Indian place-names are intricate little creations and that studying their internal structure, together with the functions they serve in spoken

conversation, can lead the ethnographer to any number of useful discoveries. All that is required is sound instruction from able native consultants, a fondness for mapping extensive areas of territory, and a modest capacity for wonder and delight at the large tasks that small words can be made to perform. And one more thing: a willingness to reject the widely accepted notion that place-names are nothing more than handy vehicles of reference. Place-names do refer, and quite indispensably at that; but in communities such as Cibecue, they are used and valued for other reasons as well.

Located in a narrow valley at an elevation of 1507 m, the settlement at Cibecue (from *deeschii' bikoh*, "valley with elongated red bluffs") is bisected by a shallow stream emanating from springs that rise in low-lying mountains to the north. Apache homes, separated by horse pastures, agricultural plots, and ceremonial dancegrounds, are located on both sides of the stream for a distance of approximately 8 km. The valley itself, which is bounded on the east and west by a broken series of red sandstone bluffs, displays marked topographic diversity in the form of heavily dissected canyons and arroyos, broad alluvial flood plains, and several clusters of prominent peaks. Vegetation ranges from a mixed Ponderosa Pine-Douglas Fir association near the headwaters of Cibecue Creek to a chaparral community, consisting of scrub oak, cat's-claw, agave, and a variety of cactus species, at the confluence of the creek with the Salt River. In between, numerous other floral associations occur, including dense riparian communities and heavy stands of cottonwood, oak, walnut, and pine.

Together with Michael W. Graves, I have mapped nearly 104 km² in and around the community at Cibecue and within this area have recorded the Western Apache names of 296 locations; it is, to say the least, a region densely packed with place-names. But large numbers alone do not account for the high frequency with which place-names typically appear in Western Apache discourse. In part, this pattern of regular and recurrent use results from the fact that Apaches, who travel a great deal to and from their homes, habitually call on each other to describe their trips in detail. Almost invariably, and in sharp contrast to comparable reports delivered by Anglos living at Cibecue, these descriptions focus as much on *where* events occurred as on the nature and consequences of the events themselves. This practice has been observed in other Apachean groups as well, including, as Harry Hoijer (personal communication, 1973) notes, the Navajo: "Even the most minute occurrences are described by Navajos in close conjunction with their physical settings, suggesting that unless narrated events are *spatially anchored* their significance is somehow reduced and cannot be properly assessed." Hoijer could just as well be speaking of the Western Apache.

Something else contributes to the common use of place-names in Western Apache communities, however, and that, quite simply, is that

Apaches enjoy using them. For example, several years ago, when I was stringing a barbed-wire fence with two Apache cowboys from Cibecue, I noticed that one of them was talking quietly to himself. When I listened carefully, I discovered that he was reciting a list of place-names—a long list, punctuated only by spurts of tobacco juice, that went on for nearly ten minutes. Later, when I ventured to ask him about it, he said he "talked names" all the time. Why? "I like to," he said. "I ride that way in my mind." And on dozens of other occasions when I have been working or traveling with Apaches, they have taken satisfaction in pointing out particular locations and pronouncing their names—once, twice, three times or more. Why? "Because we like to," or "Because those names are good to say." More often, however, Apaches account for their enthusiastic use of place-names by commenting on the precision with which the names depict their referents. "That place looks just like its name," someone will explain, or "That name makes me see that place like it really is." Or, as Benson Lewis (example 4) states so succinctly, "It's name is like a picture."

Statements such as these may be interpreted in light of certain facts about the linguistic structure of Western Apache place-names. To begin with, it is essential to understand that all but a very few Apache place-names take the form of complete sentences. This is made possible by one of the most prominent components of the Western Apache language: an elaborate system of prefixes that operates most extensively and productively to modify the stems of verbs. Thus, well-formed sentences can be constructed that are extremely compact yet semantically very rich. It is this combination of brevity and expressiveness, I believe, that appeals to Apaches and makes the mere pronunciation of place-names a satisfying experience.

By way of illustration, consider the pair of place-names shown in examples 6 and 7 below, which have been segmented into their gross morphological constituents.

6. *tséká' tú yahilíí'*: *tsé-* ("rock"; "stone") + *-ká'* ("on top of it" [a flat object]) + *tú* ("water") + *ya-* ("down"; "downward") + *-hi-* ("in successive movements"; "in regularly repeated movements") + *-líí'* ("it flows").
Gloss: "water flows downward on top of a series of flat rocks"
7. *t'íis bitl'áh tú 'olíí'*: *t'íis* ("cottonwood"; "cottonwood tree") + *bitl'áh* ("below it"; "underneath it") + *tú* ("water") + *'o-* ("in"; "inward") + *-líí'* ("it flows").
Gloss: "water flows inward underneath a cottonwood tree"

Notice how thoroughly descriptive these place-names are and how pointedly specific in the physical details they pick out. The two names presented here are not unique in this respect. On the contrary, descriptive specificity is characteristic of most Western Apache place-names, and it is

this attribute, almost certainly, that causes Apaches to liken place-names to pictures and to comment appreciatively on the capacity of place-names to evoke full and accurate images of the locations to which they refer. And these images are accurate, as can be seen by matching the place-names in examples 6 and 7 with photographs of their referents (Figures 2 and 3).

Further evidence that Western Apaches value descriptive specificity in place-names comes from a distinction that is drawn between “long names” (*bízhí' ndeez*) and “shortened names” (*bízhí' igod*). In this connection, it is important to note that most Apache place-names consist minimally of a noun marking the subject, an imperfective neuter verb that functions as an adjectival modifier, and a perfective neuter verb that describes some aspect of the position, posture, or shape of the subject. However, some Apache place-names lack a perfective neuter verb and consist exclusively of a noun and an imperfective adjectival. In my sample of 296 place-names, 247 names (83 percent) belong to the former type, while 49 (16 percent) belong to the latter. Examples of both types are given below.

Type 1: Place-names containing a perfective neuter verb.

8. *tsé' tígai dah sidil*: *tsé* (“rock”; “stone”) + *tígai* (“it is white”) + *dah* (“located above ground level”) + *sidil* (“three or more objects lie in a compact cluster”).

Gloss: “white rocks lie above in a compact cluster”



Figure 2. *tséká' tú yahilíí'* (“water flows downward on top of a series of flat rocks”).



Figure 3. *t'íis bitl'áh tú 'olíí'* (“water flows inward underneath a cottonwood tree”).

9. *gosht'ish tú bit-sikáá*: *gosht'ish* (“mud”) + *tu* (“water”) + *bit* (“in association with”) + *sikáá* (“a container with its contents lies”).

Gloss: “muddy water lies in a concave depression”

Type 2: Place-names lacking a perfective neuter verb.

10. *nadah nch'íí'*: *nadah* (“mescal”) + *nch'íí'* (“it is bitter-tasting”).

Gloss: “bitter-tasting mescal”

11. *ch'o'ot ntsaaz*: *ch'o'ot* (“juniper”; “juniper tree”) + *ntsaaz* (“it is big and wide”).

Gloss: “big wide juniper tree”

I draw attention to this typological difference among Western Apache place-names because it coincides closely with, and probably provides the grammatical basis for, the “long” versus “shortened” distinction that Apaches themselves recognize and comment on. Place-names containing a perfective neuter verb were consistently identified by a group of 12 Apache consultants from Cibecue as belonging to the “long” category of names, while those lacking a perfective neuter verb were consistently assigned to its “shortened” counterpart. In addition, and more revealing still, all but one consultant maintained that the “long names” were “better” than the “shortened” ones because they “told more” or “said more” about

the physical properties of their referents. It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that place-names containing a perfective neuter verb are appreciated by Apaches as being more fully descriptive of their referents than place-names in which a perfective neuter verb is absent. And so, in fact, the former usually are. The difference can be easily grasped by comparing a photograph of the referent of a "long name," such as *tsé ligai dah sidil* ("white rocks lie above in a compact cluster"; see Figure 4), with that of a "shortened name," such as *nadah nch'ii'* ("bitter mescal"; see Figure 5).

Given these observations, it should come as no surprise that the large majority of Western Apache place-names present descriptions of the locations to which they refer. All of the place-names considered so far belong to this dominant type, as do 268 (90 percent) of the 296 names in my sample. Apaches observe, however, that some place-names do not describe their referents and are derived from other sources. These include: (1) place-names that allude to activities that were formerly performed at or near the sites in question; (2) place-names that refer to "dangerous" (*bégódzig*) locations; and (3) place-names that allude to historical events that are known to have occurred at or near the sites they designate. Examples of these three types, together with brief descriptions of their sources, are given here.

Type 3: Place-names alluding to former activities.

12. *ndee dah naazííh*: *ndee* ("man"; "person"; "Apache") + *dah* ("located above ground level") + *naazííh* ("three or more animate objects stand about").

Gloss: "men stand about above"

(This name refers to a point on a low ridge that commands an excellent view of the southern portion of Cibecue Valley. Prior to 1872, Apache men were stationed here as lookouts to guard against surprise attacks from Pima, Papagos, Navajos, and troops of the United States Sixth Cavalry.)

12. *gowq dahitáq*: *gowq* ("camp"; "wickiup") + *dahitáq* ("crescent moon"; literally, "a slender solid object appears").

Gloss: "crescent moon camp"

(This is the name of a large meadow where a four-day religious ceremonial called *hándín 'aldee* ("pollen is placed") was formerly performed. The ritual began with the appearance of the first new moon in April or May. The temporary brush dwellings of the participants were arranged side by side in the shape of a crescent.)

Type 4: Place names referring to "dangerous places" (*bégódzig goz'aaq*).

14. *dahzíné sidaa*: *dahzíné* ("porcupine") + *sidaa* ("an animate object sits").

Gloss: "a porcupine sits"



Figure 4. *tsé ligai dah sidil* ("white rocks lie above in a compact cluster").

(This name refers to the upper end of a large arroyo near the community of Cibecue where porcupines used to gather in early winter. Western Apaches hold that direct contact with porcupines, or with anything contaminated with porcupine urine or feces or hair, may result in serious illness.)

15. *ma' bichan 'o'áá*: *ma'* ("coyote") + *bichan* ("its feces") + *'o'áá* ("a solid object sticks up").

Gloss: "a pile of coyote feces sticks up"

(This name designates a large meadow where coyotes congregate to hunt field mice and jackrabbits. Like porcupines, coyotes and their exuviae are regarded by Apaches as a source of sickness.)

Type 5: Place-names alluding to historical events.

16. *tá'ke godzig*: *tá'ke* ("field"; "farm") + *godzig* ("rotten"; "spoiled").

Gloss: "rotten field"

(This is the name of a small flat where a group of Western Apaches planted corn many years ago. One spring, after the corn had sprouted, the people left their camps nearby to search for mescal in mountains to the south. They returned to discover that all their corn had been killed by a black, foul-smelling blight.)

17. *tíí' tēhíilzh*: *tíí'* ("horse") + *tēhíilzh* ("it fell down into water").



Figure 5. *nadah nch'ii'* ("bitter-tasting mescal").

Gloss: "horse fell down into water"

(This name refers to a site where a young Apache woman, returning home after gathering mescal, allowed the horse she was riding to walk too close to a rocky ledge above Cibecue Creek. The horse lost its balance and fell with its rider into the stream below. The horse survived; the woman did not.)

Of the 296 Apache place-names in my sample, only 28 (less than 11 percent) were assigned by consultants from Cibecue to the three types exemplified above (Type 3 = 9; Type 4 = 6; Type 5 = 13). This finding would seem to lend added support to the view that Western Apaches favor place-names that provide precise and accurate information about observable features of the natural landscape—and the more information the better.³

Why should this be so? The reasons, no doubt, are multiple, but one of them may be closely linked to the stylistic functions served by place-names in Western Apache storytelling. Place-names are used in all forms of Apache storytelling as situating devices, as conventionalized instruments for locating narrated events in the physical settings where the events have occurred. Thus, instead of describing these settings discursively, an Apache storyteller can simply employ their names and Apache listeners, whether they have visited the locations or not, are able to imagine in some detail how they might appear. In this way, to borrow Hoiijer's felicitous phrase, narrated events are "spatially anchored" at points on the land, and the evocative pictures presented by Western Apache place-names become indispensable resources for the storyteller's craft.

"All These Places Have Stories"

When I return to Cibecue in the spring of 1978, Nick Thompson is recovering from a bad case of the flu. He is weak, despondent, and uncomfortable. We speak very little and no mention is made of place-names. His wife is worried about him and so am I. Within a week, however, Nick's eldest son comes to my camp with a message: I am to visit his father and bring with me two packs of Salem cigarettes and a dozen chocolate-covered doughnuts. This is good news.

When I arrive at the old man's camp, he is sitting under the cottonwood tree by his house. A blanket is draped across his knees and he is wearing a heavy plaid jacket and a red vinyl cap with white fur-lined earflaps. There is color in his cheeks and the sparkle is back in his eyes. Shortly after we start to converse, and a propos of nothing I can discern, Nick announces that in 1931 he had sexual intercourse eight times in one night. He wants to know if I have ever been so fortunate. His wife, who has brought us each a cup of coffee, hears this remark and tells him that he is a crazy old man. Nick laughs loudly. Plainly, he is feeling better.

Eventually, I ask Nick if he is ready to resume our work together. "Yes," he says, "but no more on names." What then? "Stories," is his reply. "All these places have stories. We shoot each other with them, like arrows. Come back tomorrow morning." Puzzled once again, but suspecting that the old man has a plan he wants to follow, I tell him I will return. We then discuss Nick's wages. He insists that I pay him more than the year before as it is necessary to keep up with inflation. I agree and we settle on a larger sum. Then comes the predictable farewell joke: a fine piece of nonsense in which Nick, speaking English and imitating certain mannerisms he has come to associate with Anglo physicians, diagnoses my badly sunburned nose as an advanced case of venereal disease.⁴ This time it is Nick's wife who laughs loudest.

The next day Nick begins to instruct me on aspects of Western Apache storytelling. Consulting on a regular basis with other Apaches from Cibecue as well, I pursue this topic throughout the summer of 1978.

Western Apache Historical Tales

If place-names appear frequently in ordinary forms of Western Apache discourse, their use is equally conspicuous in oral narratives. It is here, in conjunction with stories Apaches tell, that we can move closer to an interpretation of native claims about the symbolic importance of geographical features and the personalized relationships that individuals may have with them. As shown in Figure 6, the people of Cibecue classify "speech" (*yat'i*) into three major forms: "ordinary talk" (*yat'i*), "prayer" (*'okqahli*), and "narratives" or "stories" (*nagoldi'é*). Narratives are further classified into

four major and two minor genres (see Figure 7). The major genres include "myths" (*godiyihgo nagoldi*; literally, "to tell of holiness"), "historical tales" (*'ágodzaahí* or *'ágodzaahí nagoldi*; literally, "that which has happened" or "to tell of that which has happened"), "sagas" (*nlt'éégo nagoldi*; literally, "to tell of pleasantness"), and stories that arise in the context of "gossip" (*ch'idii*). The minor genres, which do not concern us here, are "Coyote stories" (*ma' highaatyü nagoldi*; literally "to tell of Coyote's travels") and "seduction tales" (*biníima' nagoldi*; literally, "to tell of sexual desires").

Western Apaches distinguish among the major narrative genres on two basic semantic dimensions: time and purpose. Values on the temporal dimension identify in general terms when the events recounted in narratives took place, while values on the purposive dimension describe the objectives that Apache narrators typically have in recounting them (see Figure 8). Accordingly, "myths" deal with events that occurred "in the beginning" (*'godiyaaná*), a time when the universe and all things within it were achieving their present form and location. Performed only by the medicine men and medicine women, myths are presented for the primary purpose of enlightenment and instruction: to explain and reaffirm the complex processes by which the known world came into existence. "Historical tales" recount events that took place "long ago" (*doo 'áníiná*) when the Western Apache people, having emerged from below the surface of the earth, were developing their own distinctive ways and customs. Most historical tales describe incidents that occurred prior to the coming of the white man, but some of these stories are set in postreservation times, which began for the Western Apache in 1872. Like myths, historical tales are intended to edify, but their main purpose is to alarm and criticize social delinquents (or, as the Apache say, to "shoot" them), thereby impressing such individuals with the undesirability of improper behavior and alerting them to the punitive consequences of further misconduct.

Although sagas deal with historical themes, these narratives are chiefly concerned with events that have taken place in "modern times" (*dííjijigo*), usually within the last 60 or 70 years. In contrast to historical tales, which always focus on serious and disturbing matters, sagas are largely devoid of them. Rather than serving as vehicles of personal criticism, the

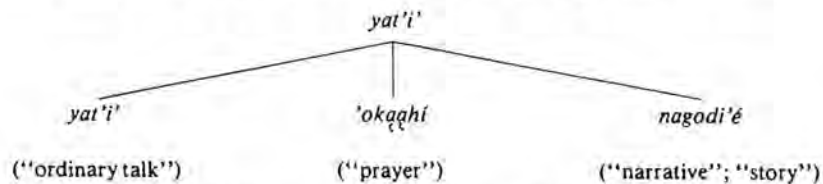


Figure 6. Major categories of Western Apache speech.

primary purpose of sagas is to provide their listeners with relaxation and entertainment. Stories of the kind associated with gossip consist of reports in which persons relate and interpret events involving other members of the Western Apache community. These stories, which embrace incidents that have occurred "now" or "at present" (*k'ad*), are often told for no other reason than to keep people informed of local developments. Not uncommonly, however, narratives in gossip are also used to ridicule and malign the character of their subjects.

Nowhere do place-names serve more important communicative functions than in the context of historical tales. As if to accentuate this fact, stories of the *'ágodzaahí* genre are stylistically quite simple. Historical tales require no specialized lexicon, display no unusual syntactical constructions, and involve no irregular morphophonemic alternations; neither are they characterized by unique patterns of stress, pitch, volume, or intonation. In these ways *'ágodzaahí* narratives contrast sharply with myths and sagas, which entail the use of a variety of genre-specific stylistic devices. Historical tales also differ from myths and sagas by virtue of their brevity. Whereas myths and sagas may take hours to complete, historical tales can usually be delivered in less than five minutes. Western Apache storytellers point out that this is both fitting and effective, because *'ágodzaahí* stories, like the "arrows" (*k'aa*) they are commonly said to represent, work best when they move swiftly. Finally, and most significant of all, historical tales are distinguished from all other forms of Apache narrative by an opening and closing line that identifies with a place-name where the events in the narrative occurred. These lines frame the narrative, mark it unmistakably as belonging to the *'ágodzaahí* genre, and evoke a particular physical setting in which listeners can imaginatively situate everything that happens. It is hardly surprising, then, that while Apache storytellers agree that historical tales are "about" the events recounted in the tales, they also emphasize that the tales are "about" the sites at which the events took place.

If the style of Western Apache historical tales is relatively unremarkable, their content is just the opposite. Without exception, and usually in very graphic terms, historical tales focus on persons who suffer misfortune as the consequence of actions that violate Apache standards for acceptable



Figure 7. Major categories of Western Apache narrative.

Narrative Category	Temporal Locus of Events	Purposes
<i>godiyihgo nagoldi'</i> ("myth")	<i>godiyaaná'</i> ("in the beginning")	to enlighten; to instruct
<i>'ágodzaahí</i> ("historical tale")	<i>doo 'ánliná'</i> ("long ago")	to criticize; to warn; to "shoot"
<i>nlt'éeego nagoldi'</i> ("saga")	<i>díijjigo</i> ("modern times")	to entertain; to engross
<i>ch'idii</i> ("gossip")	<i>k'ad</i> ("now")	to inform; to malign

Figure 8. Major categories of Western Apache narrative distinguished by temporal locus of events and primary purposes for narration.

social behavior. More specifically, *'ágodzaahí* stories tell of persons who have acted unthinkingly and impulsively in open disregard for "Apache custom" (*ndee bi 'at'ee'*) and who pay for their transgressions by being humiliated, ostracized, or killed. Stories of the *'ágodzaahí* variety are morality tales pure and simple. When viewed as such by the Apaches—as compact commentaries on what should be avoided so as to deal successfully and effectively with other people—they are highly informative. What these narratives assert—tacitly, perhaps, but with dozens of compelling examples—is that immoral behavior is irrevocably a community affair and that persons who behave badly will be punished sooner or later. Thus, just as *'ágodzaahí* stories are "about" historical events and their geographical locations, they are also "about" the system of rules and values according to which Apaches expect each other to organize and regulate their lives. In an even more fundamental sense, then, historical tales are "about" what it means to *be* a Western Apache, or, to make the point less dramatically, what it is that being an Apache should normally and properly entail.

To see how this is so, let us consider the texts of three historical tales and examine the manner in which they have been interpreted by their Apache narrators.

18. It happened at "big cottonwood trees stand spreading here and there."

Long ago, the Pimas and Apaches were fighting. The Pimas were carrying long clubs made from mesquite wood; they were also heavy and hard. Before dawn the Pimas arrived at Cibecue and attacked the Apaches there. The Pimas attacked while the Apaches were still asleep. The Pimas killed the Apaches with their clubs. An old woman woke up; she heard the

Apaches crying out. The old woman thought it was her son-in-law because he often picked on her daughter. The old woman cried out: "You pick on my child a lot. You should act pleasantly toward her." Because the old woman cried out, the Pimas learned where she was. The Pimas came running to the old woman's camp and killed her with their clubs. A young girl ran away from there and hid beneath some bushes. She alone survived.

It happened at "big cottonwood trees stand spreading here and there."

Narrated by Mrs. Annie Peaches, this historical tale deals with the harmful consequences that may come to persons who overstep traditional role boundaries. During the first year of marriage it is customary for young Apache couples to live in the camp of the bride's parents. At this time, the bride's mother may request that her son-in-law perform different tasks and she may also instruct and criticize him. Later, however, when the couple establishes a separate residence, the bride's mother forfeits this right and may properly interfere in her son-in-law's affairs only at the request of her daughter. Mrs. Peaches explains that women who do not abide by this arrangement imply that their sons-in-law are immature and irresponsible, which is a source of acute embarrassment for the young men and their wives. Thus, even when meddling might seem to serve a useful purpose, it should be scrupulously avoided. The woman on whom this story centers failed to remember this—and was instantly killed.

19. It happened at "coarse-textured rocks lie above in a compact cluster."

Long ago, a man became sexually attracted to his stepdaughter. He was living below "coarse-textured rocks lie above in a compact cluster" with his stepdaughter and her mother. Waiting until no one else was present, and sitting alone with her, he started to molest her. The girl's maternal uncle happened to come by and he killed the man with a rock. The man's skull was cracked open. It was raining. The girl's maternal uncle dragged the man's body up above to "coarse-textured rocks lie above in a compact cluster" and placed it there in a storage pit. The girl's mother came home and was told by her daughter of all that had happened. The people who owned the storage pit removed the man's body and put it somewhere else. The people never had a wake for the dead man's body.

It happened at "coarse-textured rocks lie above in a compact cluster."

Narrated by Mr. Benson Lewis, this historical tale deals with the theme of incest, for sexual contact with stepchildren is considered by Western Apaches to be an incestuous act. According to Mr. Lewis, the key line in the story is the penultimate one in which he observes, "The people never had a wake for the dead man's body." We may assume, Mr. Lewis says, that because the dead man's camp was located near the storage pit in which his body was placed, the people who owned the pit were also his relatives. This makes the neglect with which his corpse was treated all the more profound, since kinsmen are bound by the strongest of obligations to care for each other when they die. That the dead man's relatives chose to dispense with customary mortuary ritual shows with devastating clarity that they wished to disown him completely.

20. It happened at "men stand above here and there."

Long ago, a man killed a cow off the reservation. The cow belonged to a Whiteman. The man was arrested by a policeman living at Cibecue at "men stand above here and there." The policeman was an Apache. The policeman took the man to the head Army officer at Fort Apache. There, at Fort Apache, the head Army officer questioned him. "What do you want?" he said. The policeman said, "I need cartridges and food." The policeman said nothing about the man who had killed the Whiteman's cow. That night some people spoke to the policeman. "It is best to report on him," they said to him. The next day the policeman returned to the head Army officer. "Now what do you want?" he said. The policeman said, "Yesterday I was going to say HELLO and GOOD-BYE but I forgot to do it." Again he said nothing about the man he arrested. Someone was working with words on his mind. The policeman returned with the man to Cibecue. He released him at "men stand above here and there."

It happened at "men stand above here and there."

This story, narrated by Nick Thompson, describes what happened to a man who acted too much like a white man. Between 1872 and 1895, when the Western Apache were strictly confined to their reservations by U.S. military forces, disease and malnutrition took the lives of many people. Consequently, Apaches who listen to this historical tale find it perfectly acceptable that the man who lived at "men stand above here and there" should have killed and butchered a white man's cow. What is not acceptable is that the policeman, another Apache from the same settlement, should have arrested the rustler and contemplated taking him to jail. But the policeman's plans were thwarted. Someone used witchcraft on him and made him stupid and forgetful. He never informed the military officer at

Fort Apache of the real purpose of his visit, and his second encounter with the officer—in which he apologized for neglecting to say "hello" and "good-bye" the previous day—revealed him to be an absurd and laughable figure. Although Western Apaches find portions of this story amusing, Nick Thompson explains that they understand it first and foremost as a harsh indictment of persons who join with outsiders against members of their own community and who, as if to flaunt their lack of allegiance, parade the attitudes and mannerisms of white men.

Thus far, my remarks on what Western Apache historical tales are "about" have centered on features of textual content. This is a familiar strategy and certainly a necessary one, but it is also incomplete. In addition to everything else—places, events, moral standards, conceptions of cultural identity—every historical tale is also "about" the person at whom it is directed. This is because the telling of a historical tale is always prompted by an individual having committed one or more social offenses to which the act of narration, together with the tale itself, is intended as a critical and remedial response. Thus, on those occasions when *'ágodzaahí* stories are actually told—by real Apache storytellers, in real interpersonal contexts, to real social offenders—these narratives are understood to be accompanied by an unstated message from the storyteller that may be phrased something like this: "I know that you have acted in a way similar or analogous to the way in which someone acted in the story I am telling you. If you continue to act in this way, something similar or analogous to what happened to the character in the story might also happen to you." This metacommunicative message is just as important as any conveyed by the text of the storyteller's tale. Apaches contend that if the message is taken to heart by the person at whom the tale is aimed—and if, in conjunction with lessons drawn from the tale itself, he or she resolves to improve his or her behavior—a lasting bond will have been created between that individual and the site or sites at which events in the tale took place. The cultural premises that inform this powerful idea are made explicit presently; but first, in order to understand more clearly what the idea involves, let us examine the circumstances that led to the telling of a historical tale at Cibecue and see how this narrative affected the person for whom it was told.

In early June 1977, a 17-year-old Apache woman attended a girls' puberty ceremonial at Cibecue with her hair rolled up in a set of pink plastic curlers. She had returned home two days before from a boarding school in Utah where this sort of ornamentation was considered fashionable by her peers. Something so mundane would have gone unnoticed by others were it not for the fact that Western Apache women of all ages are expected to appear at puberty ceremonials with their hair worn loose. This is one of several ways that women have of showing respect for the ceremonial and also, by implication, for the people who have staged it. The practice of

presenting oneself with free-flowing hair is also understood to contribute to the ceremonial's effectiveness, for Apaches hold that the ritual's most basic objectives, which are to invest the pubescent girl with qualities necessary for life as an adult, cannot be achieved unless standard forms of respect are faithfully observed. On this occasion at Cibecue, everyone was following custom except the young woman who arrived wearing curlers. She soon became an object of attention and quiet expressions of disapproval, but no one spoke to her about the cylindrical objects in her hair.

Two weeks later, the same young woman made a large stack of tortillas and brought them to the camp of her maternal grandmother, a widow in her mid-60s who had organized a small party to celebrate the birthday of her eldest grandson. Eighteen people were on hand, myself included, and all of us were treated to hot coffee and a dinner of boiled beef and potatoes. When the meal was over casual conversation began to flow, and the young woman seated herself on the ground next to her younger sister. And then—quietly, deftly, and totally without warning—her grandmother narrated a version of the historical tale about the forgetful Apache policeman who behaved too much like a white man. Shortly after the story was finished, the young woman stood up, turned away wordlessly, and walked off in the direction of her home. Uncertain of what had happened, I asked her grandmother why she has departed. Had the young woman suddenly become ill? “No,” her grandmother replied. “I shot her with an arrow.”

Approximately two years after this incident occurred, I found myself again in the company of the young woman with the taste for distinctive hairstyles. She had purchased a large carton of groceries at the trading post at Cibecue, and when I offered to drive her home with them she accepted. I inquired on the way if she remembered the time that her grandmother had told us the story about the forgetful policeman. She said she did and then went on, speaking in English, to describe her reactions to it. “I think maybe my grandmother was getting after me, but then I think maybe not, maybe she's working on somebody else. Then I think back on that dance and I know it's me for sure. I sure don't like how she's talking about me, so I quit looking like that. I threw those curlers away.” In order to reach the young woman's camp, we had to pass within a few hundred years of *ndee dah naaziih* (“men stand above here and there”), the place where the man had lived who was arrested in the story for rustling. I pointed it out to my companion. She said nothing for several moments. Then she smiled and spoke softly in her own language: “I know that place. It stalks me every day.”

The comments of this Western Apache woman on her experience as the target of a historical tale are instructive in several respects. To begin with, her statement enables us to imagine something of the sizable psychological impact that historical tales may have on the persons to whom they are presented. Then, too, we can see how *'ágodzaahí* stories may produce

quick and palpable effects on the behavior of such individuals, causing them to modify their social conduct in quite specific ways. Lastly, and most revealing of all, the young woman's remarks provide a clear illustration of what Apaches have in mind when they assert that historical tales may establish highly meaningful relationships between individuals and features of the natural landscape.

To appreciate fully the significance of these relationships, as well as their influence on the lives of Western Apache people, we must explore more thoroughly the manner in which the relationships are conceptualized. This can be accomplished through a closer examination of Apache ideas about the activity of storytelling and the acknowledged power of oral narratives, especially historical tales, to promote beneficial changes in people's attitudes toward their responsibilities as members of a moral community. These ideas, which combine to form a native model of how oral narratives work to achieve their intended effects, are expressed in terms of a single dominant metaphor. By now it should come as no surprise to learn that the metaphor draws heavily on the imagery of hunting.

“Stalking with Stories”

Nick Thompson is tired. We have been talking about hunting with stories for two days now and the old man has not had an easy time of it. Yesterday, my uneven control of the Western Apache language prevented him from speaking as rapidly and eloquently as he would have liked, and on too many occasions I was forced to interrupt him with questions. At one point, bored and annoyed with my queries, he told me that I reminded him of a horsefly buzzing around his head. Later, however, when he seemed satisfied that I could follow at least the outline of his thoughts, he recorded on tape a lengthy statement which he said contained everything he wanted me to know. “Take it with you and listen to it,” he said. “Tomorrow we put it in English.” For the last six hours that is what we have been trying to do. We are finished now and weary of talking. In the weeks to come I will worry about the depth and force of our translation, and twice more I will return to Nick's camp with other questions. But the hardest work is over and both of us know it. Nick has taught me already that hunting with stories is not a simple matter, and as I prepare to leave I say so. “We know,” he says, and that is all. Here is Nick Thompson's statement:

This is what we know about our stories. They go to work on your mind and make you think about your life. Maybe you've not been acting right. Maybe you've been stingy. Maybe you've been chasing after women. Maybe you've been trying to act like a Whiteman. People don't like it! So someone goes hunting for you—maybe your grandmother, your grandfather, your uncle. It doesn't matter. Anyone can do it.

So someone stalks you and tells a story about what happened long ago. It doesn't matter if other people are around—you're going to know he's aiming that story at you. All of a sudden it *hits* you! It's like an arrow, they say. Sometimes it just bounces off—it's too soft and you don't think about anything. But when it's strong it goes in *deep* and starts working on your mind right away. No one says anything to you, only that story is all, but now you know that people have been watching you and talking about you. They don't like how you've been acting. So you have to think about your life.

Then you feel weak, real weak, like you are sick. You don't want to eat or talk to anyone. That story is working on you now. You keep thinking about it. That story is changing you now, making you want to live right. That story is making you want to replace yourself. You think only of what you did that was wrong and you don't like it. So you want to live better. After a while, you don't like to think of what you did wrong. So you try to forget that story. You try to pull that arrow out. You think it won't hurt anymore because now you want to live right.

It's hard to keep on living right. Many things jump up at you and block your way. But you won't forget that story. You're going to see the place where it happened, maybe every day if it's nearby and close to Cibecue. If you don't see it, you're going to hear its name and see it in your mind. It doesn't matter if you get old—that place will keep on stalking you like the one who shot you with the story. Maybe that person will die. Even so, that place will keep on stalking you. It's like that person is still alive.

Even if we go far away from here to some big city, places around here keep stalking us. If you live wrong, you will hear the names and see the places in your mind. They keep on stalking you, even if you go across oceans. The names of all these places are good. They make you remember how to live right, so you want to replace yourself again.

A Western Apache Hunting Metaphor

Nick Thompson's model of Western Apache storytelling is a compelling construction. To be sure, it is the formulation of one Apache only; but it is fully explicit and amply detailed, and I have been able to corroborate almost every aspect of it with other Apaches from Cibecue. This is not to imply that all Apache people interpret their hunting metaphor for storytelling in exactly the same fashion. On the contrary, one of the properties of any successful metaphor is that it can be refined and enlarged in different ways. Thus, some Apaches assert that historical tales, like arrows, leave

wounds—mental and emotional ones—and that the process of “replacing oneself” (a striking concept, that one) is properly understood as a form of healing. Other Apache consultants stress that place-names, rather than the sites to which the names refer, are what individuals are unable to forget after historical tales have done their primary work. But differences and elaborations of this kind only demonstrate the scope and flexibility of the hunting metaphor and do nothing to alter its basic contours or to diminish its considerable force. Neither does such variation reduce in any way the utility of the metaphor as an effective instrument of Western Apache thought.

Although I cannot claim to understand the full range of meanings that the hunting model for storytelling has for Western Apache people, the general premises on which the model rests seem clear to me. Historical tales have the capacity to thrust socially delinquent persons into periods of intense critical self-examination from which (ideally, at least) they emerge chastened, repentant, and determined to “live right.” Simultaneously, people who have been “shot” with stories experience a form of anguish—shame, guilt, perhaps only pervasive chagrin—that moves them to alter aspects of their behavior so as to conform more closely to community expectations. In short, historical tales have the power to change people's ideas about themselves: to force them to admit to social failings, to dwell seriously on the significance of these lapses, and to resolve, hopefully once and for all, not to repeat them. As Nick Thompson says, historical tales “make you think about your life.”

After stories and storytellers have served this beneficial purpose, features of the physical landscape take over and perpetuate it. Mountains and arroyos step in symbolically for grandmothers and uncles. Just as the latter have “stalked” delinquent individuals in the past, so too particular locations continue to “stalk” them in the present. Such surveillance is essential, Apaches maintain, because “living right” requires constant care and attention, and there is always a possibility that old stories and their initial impact, like old arrows and their wounds, will fade and disappear. In other words, there is always a chance that persons who have “replaced themselves” once—or twice, or three times—will relax their guard against “badness” and slip back into undesirable forms of social conduct. Consequently, Apaches explain, individuals need to be continuously reminded of why they were “shot” in the first place and how they reacted to it at the time. Geographical sites, together with the crisp mental “pictures” of them presented by their names, serve admirably in this capacity, inviting people to recall their earlier failings and encouraging them to resolve, once again, to avoid them in the future. Grandmothers and uncles must perish but the landscape endures, and for this the Apache people are deeply grateful.

"The land," Nick Thompson observes, "looks after us. The land keeps badness away."

It should now be possible for the reader to interpret the Western Apache texts at the beginning of this essay in a manner roughly compatible with the Apache ideas that have shaped them. Moreover, we should be able to appreciate that the claims put forward in the texts are reasonable and appropriate, culturally credible and "correct," the principled expressions of an underlying logic that invests them with internal consistency and coherent conceptual structure. As we have seen, this structure is supplied in large part by the hunting metaphor for Western Apache storytelling. It is chiefly in accordance with this metaphor—or, more exactly, in accordance with the symbolic associations it orders and makes explicit—that the claims presented earlier finally make sense.

Thus, the claim of Annie Peaches—that the land occupied by the Western Apache "makes the people live right"—becomes understandable as a proposition about the moral significance of geographical locations as this has been established by historical tales with which the locations are associated. Similarly, Wilson Lavender's claim—that Apaches who fail to remember place-names "forget how to be strong"—rests on an association of place-names with a belief in the power of historical tales to discourage forms of socially unacceptable behavior. Places and their names are also associated by Apaches with the narrators of historical tales, and Benson Lewis's claim—that a certain mountain near Cibecue is his maternal grandmother—can only be interpreted in light of this assumption. The hunting metaphor for storytelling also informs Ronnie Lupe's claim that Western Apache children who are not exposed to historical tales tend to have interpersonal difficulties. As he puts it, "They don't know the stories of what happened at these places. That's why some of them get into trouble." What Mr. Lupe is claiming, of course, is that children who do not learn to associate places and their names with historical tales cannot appreciate the utility of these narratives as guidelines for dealing responsibly and amicably with other people. Consequently, he believes, such individuals are more likely than others to act in ways that run counter to Apache social norms, a sure sign that they are "losing the land."

Losing the land is something the Western Apache can ill afford to do, for geographical features have served the people for centuries as indispensable mnemonic pegs on which to hang the moral teachings of their history. Accordingly, such locations present themselves as instances of what Mikhail Bakhtin calls *chronotopes*. As Bakhtin (1981:7) describes them, chronotopes are:

points in the geography of a community where time and space intersect and fuse. Time takes on flesh and becomes visible for human

contemplation; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time and history and the enduring character of a people. . . . Chronotopes thus stand as monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members' images of themselves.

Whether or not one is pleased with Bakhtin's use of the term "chronotope" (it is more widely known, but in a very different sense, as a concept in Einstein's theory of relativity), his observations on the cultural importance of geographical landmarks apply nicely to the Western Apache. The Apache landscape is full of named locations where time and space have fused and where, through the agency of historical tales, their intersection is "made visible for human contemplation." It is also apparent that such locations, charged as they are with personal and social significance, work in important ways to shape the images that Apaches have—or should have—of themselves. Speaking to people like Nick Thompson and Ronnie Lupe, to Annie Peaches and Benson Lewis, one forms the impression that Apaches view the landscape as a repository of distilled wisdom, a stern but benevolent keeper of tradition, an ever-vigilant ally in the efforts of individuals and whole communities to put into practice a set of standards for social living that are uniquely and distinctively their own. In the world that the Western Apache have constituted for themselves, features of the landscape have become symbols of and for this way of living, the symbols of a culture and the enduring moral character of its people.

We may assume that this relationship with the land has been pervasive throughout Western Apache history; but in today's climate of accelerating social change, its importance for Apache people may well be deepening. Communities such as Cibecue, formerly isolated and very much turned inward, were opened up by paved roads less than 20 years ago, and the consequences of improved access and freer travel—including, most noticeably, greatly increased contact with Anglo-Americans—have been pronounced. Younger Apaches, who today complain frequently about the tedium of village life, have started to develop new tastes and ambitions, and some of them are eager to explore the outside world. Older members of the community understand this desire and do little to try to stifle it, but they are concerned—and not without good reason—that as younger people learn more and more of the "Whiteman's way," they will also lose sight of portions of their own. Let the pink plastic curlers at the girls' puberty ceremonial stand as a case in point. What can be done to guard against this unsettling possibility? Perhaps, in the long run, nothing. But for now, and probably for some time to come, the landscape is doing a respectable job. It is there, "stalking" people all the time. To the extent that it remains not

merely a physical presence but an omnipresent moral force, young Apaches are not likely to forget that the "Whiteman's way" belongs to a different world.

Having pursued Western Apache ideas about the land this far, it is worth inquiring if similar conceptions are held by other groups of American Indian people. Although ethnographic materials bearing on this question are in short supply (I identify some of the reasons for this shortage further on), there is highly reliable evidence from another source—the published work of modern Indian writers—that general similarities do exist. Consider, for example, the following statement by Leslie M. Silko, poet and novelist from the pueblo of Laguna in New Mexico. After explaining that stories "function basically as makers of our identity," Silko (1981:69) goes on to discuss Pueblo narratives in relation to the land:

The stories cannot be separated from geographical locations, from actual physical places within the land. . . . And the stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose the stories because there are so many imposing geological elements . . . you cannot *live* in that land without asking or looking at or noticing a boulder or rock. And there's always a story.

A number of other American Indian authors, among them Vine Deloria, Jr. (Sioux), Simon Ortiz (Acoma), Joy Harjo (Creek), and the cultural anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz (San Juan), have written with skill and insight about the moral dimensions of Native American conceptions of the land. No one, however, has addressed the subject with greater sensitivity than N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa). The following passages, taken from his short essay entitled "Native American Attitudes to the Environment" (1974), show clearly what is involved, not only for the Western Apache but for other tribes as well.

You cannot understand how the Indian thinks of himself in relation to the world around him unless you understand his conception of what is appropriate; particularly what is morally appropriate within the context of that relationship. [1974:82]

The native American ethic with respect to the physical world is a matter of reciprocal appropriation: appropriations in which man invests himself in the landscape, and at the same time incorporates the landscape into his own most fundamental experience. . . . This appropriation is primarily a matter of imagination which is moral in

kind. I mean to say that we are all, I suppose, what we imagine ourselves to be. And that is certainly true of the American Indian. . . . [The Indian] is someone who thinks of himself in a particular way and his idea comprehends his relationship to the physical world. He imagines himself in terms of that relationship and others. And it is that act of imagination, that moral act of imagination, which constitutes his understanding of the physical world. [1974:80]

"Goodness Is All Around"

The news sweeps through Cibecue like brush fire: Nick Thompson must have purchased a wheelchair because he was seen this morning *racing* in one, against his four-year-old grandson. The little boy, shrieking with glee and running as fast as he could, won the contest, but the old man finished close behind. Nick's wife was horrified and his oldest daughter (the one who hardly ever raises her voice) yelled twice to him to stop. But he kept going, wheeling himself along with his one good arm and paying no attention whatsoever. That old man will do anything! He doesn't care at all what people think! And what if he *crashed*!

Nick Thompson has no intention of crashing. Seated now in his familiar place beneath the cottonwood tree near his house, he says that racing his wheelchair is perfectly safe. He says he plans to do it again; in fact, he has already challenged his six-year-old granddaughter. He says he is tired of the women in his camp telling him what to do. He is also tired of not being able to move around freely, which is why he bought the wheelchair in the first place, and people should understand this and stop making such a fuss. And besides, the old man observes, the wheelchair has good brakes. That's what he likes best—getting up some real speed and jamming on the brakes.

The summer of 1980 is almost gone and soon I must leave Cibecue. I have walked to Nick's camp to tell him good-bye. This is never easy for me, and we spend most of the time talking about other things. Eventually, I move to thank him for his generosity, his patience, and the things he has taught me. Nick responds by pointing with his lips to a low ridge that runs behind his home in an easterly direction away from Cibecue Creek. "That is a good place," he says. "These are all good places. Goodness is all around. I'm happy you know that now."

The old man pauses. Then he reaches beneath the seat of his chair and produces a blue and white cap which he places, slightly askew, on his head. The embossed emblem in front, which is in the shape of a car, reads "Ford Racing Team." We both begin to laugh . . . and laugh and laugh.

Language and Environment

Anthropologists have long been interested in the relationships that link American Indian communities to their ecological settings. In the great majority of cases, however, these relationships have been described and interpreted exclusively in materialist terms; that is, in terms of demographic patterns, subsistence strategies, and forms of social organization that facilitate the exploitation of environmental resources and function in this way to assure the biological survival of native populations (Anastasio 1972; Castetter and Bell 1951; Dozier 1970; Helm 1968; Steward 1955). While this approach is useful for certain purposes, it is clear nonetheless that materialist models are one-sided and incomplete. Such models ignore the fact that American Indians, like groups of people everywhere, maintain a complex array of symbolic relationships with their physical surroundings, and that these relationships, which may have little to do with the serious business of making a living, play a fundamental role in shaping other forms of social activity (Opler 1941; Ortiz 1969; Parsons 1939; Rappaport 1979; Witherpoon 1977). What is ignored, in other words, are the cultural instruments with which American Indians fashion understandings of their environments, the ideational resources with which they constitute their surroundings and invest them with value and significance. We need not go far to seek the reasons for this neglect. Having committed themselves to a search for statistical regularities and functional interdependencies, human ecologists are usually obliged to regard the semiotic dimensions of human environments as "epiphenomena" that lie outside the proper sphere of their concern (Flannery 1972; Vayda 1969). And so, ironically enough, human ecologists have become largely disinterested in what human beings take their environments to mean. This is unfortunate because, as Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981:1) have recently written,

to understand what people are and what they might become, one must understand what goes on between people and things. What things are cherished, and why, should become part of our knowledge of human beings. Yet it is surprising how little we know about what things mean to people. By and large social scientists have neglected a full investigation of the relationship between people and objects.

We should not proceed too hastily, however. There is no doubt in the minds of many anthropologists, including a substantial number who have worked with American Indians, that studies in ecology have made a valuable contribution. In particular, these investigations have shown that indigenous populations may adapt with exquisite intricacy to the physical conditions of their existence (including, of course, the presence of other

human populations), and that modifications in these conditions may have a range of dynamic effects on the structure and organization of social institutions. But the fact remains that ecological models have been consistently formulated at a "systemic" level of abstraction that is well removed from the level of the individual—and it is individuals, not social institutions, who make and act on cultural meanings (Geertz 1973; Turner 1969). Here, then, is the problem. Conventional ecological studies proceed on the tacit premise that what people think about the environment—how they perceive it, conceptualize it, or, to borrow a phrase from the ethnomethodologists, "actively construct" it—is basically irrelevant to an understanding of man-land relationships. If this premise is accepted as correct, we must conclude that cultural meanings are similarly irrelevant and that the layers of significance with which human beings blanket the environment have little bearing on how they lead their lives. But the premise is not correct, for American Indians or anyone else; and to suppose otherwise would be a serious mistake.

Accordingly, and by way of illustration, I show here that Western Apache conceptions of the land work in specific ways to influence Apaches' conceptions of themselves (and vice versa), and that the two together work to influence patterns of social action. To reject this possibility—or, as many ecologists would be inclined to do, to rule it out a priori as inconsequential—would have the effect of "removing" the Apache from the world as they have constructed it. This, in turn, would obliterate all aspects of their moral relationship with the land. For reasons that should now be apparent, this relationship is crucial to Apaches—quite as crucial, I expect, as any that deals with subsistence or economics—and for us to lose sight of it could only have damaging consequences.

Societies must survive, but social life is more than just surviving. And cultural meanings are "epiphenomenal" only for those who choose to make them so. I would like to contribute to the development of a cultural ecology that is cultural in the fullest sense, a broader and more flexible approach to the study of man-land relationships in which the symbolic properties of environmental phenomena receive the same kind of care and attention that has traditionally been given to their material counterparts. The Western Apache of Cibecue understand their land, and act on their understandings of it, in ways that standard ecological approaches would overlook. Does this mean that such understandings are unimportant? for the Western Apache? for a stronger and more rounded anthropology? I suggest that on both counts it does not.

Cultural constructions of the environment, whether those of American Indians or of peoples elsewhere in the world, will remain largely inaccessible unless we are prepared to sit down and listen to our native consultants talk—not only about landscapes, which of course we must do, but

about talking about landscapes as well. And since spatial conceptions, like temporal ones, are so often found expressed in figurative language, this is almost certain to lead to a consideration of metaphor. Paul Radin (1916:137), writing some years ago of the Winnebago Indians of the Great Lakes, described a particular case that is probably typical of many others:

Ideas about the habitat are frequently set forth in elaborate similes and metaphors which equate disparate objects in a fashion that at first seems quite unfathomable. Yet once these tropes are uncovered, it can be seen that they rest upon firm assumptions about the workings of nature which, though different from our own, fit together intelligibly.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980:1) have recently stated that the essence of metaphor is "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." Although this definition departs relatively little from the classical one given by Aristotle ("metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars"), it points to a problem in the study of language and culture that is deeply ethnographic. Where metaphor is concerned, the question always arises, On what *grounds* is one kind of thing understood in terms of another? In other words, what must individuals believe about themselves and their surroundings for their metaphors to "work"?

This question focuses attention on the large body of implicit cultural assumptions that the members of any speech community rely on to interpret instances of situated discourse. Such assumptions, which have been variously described as comprising a speaker's "presuppositions," "background knowledge," or "beliefs about the world," present difficulties for all theories of language which seek to restrict the idea of linguistic competence to a speaker's tacit knowledge of grammatical rules. As I demonstrate elsewhere (Basso 1976), metaphor threatens both the validity of this distinction and the utility of maintaining it, because the ability to interpret even the simplest forms of metaphorical speech cannot be accounted for with grammatical rules alone; presuppositions are also fundamentally involved (Friedrich 1979; Tyler 1978). This is clearly illustrated by Nick Thompson's statement on the Western Apache hunting metaphor for storytelling. As he explicates the metaphor, thereby enabling us to interpret a set of claims that Apaches have made, he articulates the cultural assumptions that make these claims possible in the first place. In other words, he makes presuppositions explicit. Storytellers are hunters for the Western Apache—and stories, arrows; and mountains, grandmothers—by virtue of shared beliefs about the world. Culturally wrought and culturally specific, such beliefs provide the

conceptual materials with which competent Apache speakers locate the similarities in metaphorical dissimilars and, in so doing, are able to experience one kind of thing in terms of another. Such beliefs make metaphors "work."

What all of this implies (obviously for many anthropologists, less obvious for many linguists) is that grasping other peoples' metaphors requires ethnography as much as it does linguistics. Unless we pursue the two together, the full extent to which metaphorical structures influence patterns of thought and action is likely to elude us. "To inhabit a language," Samuel Johnson wrote, "is to inhabit a living universe, and vice-versa." That "vice versa" is critical because it suggests, correctly I believe, that linguistics and ethnography are integral parts of the same basic enterprise, one of whose purposes is to construct principled interpretations of culturally constituted worlds and to try to understand what living in them is like. I am not certain where the theoretical line between language and culture should be drawn; there are times, in fact, when I wonder if it can be sharply drawn at all. But this much seems reasonably clear: if anthropology stands to benefit from an approach to cultural ecology that attends more closely to the symbolic forms with which human environments are perceived and rendered significant, so too there is a need for an expanded view of linguistic competence in which beliefs about the world occupy a central place. If it is the meaning of things that we are after—the meanings of words, objects, events, and the claims people make about themselves—language and culture must be studied hand in hand. Our knowledge of one can only enhance our knowledge of the other.

"We Know It Happened"

If the thoughts presented here have a measure of theoretical interest, recent experience persuades me that they can have practical value as well. During the last four years, I have authored a number of documents for use in litigation concerning the settlement of Western Apache water rights in the state of Arizona. Until a final decision is reached in the case, I am not permitted to describe the contents of these documents in detail, but one of my assignments has been to write a report dealing with Apache conceptions of the physical environment. That report contains sections on Western Apache place-names, oral narratives, and certain metaphors that Apache people use to formulate aspects of their relationship with the land.

Preliminary hearings resulted in a judgment favorable to Apache interests, and apparently my report was useful, mainly because it helped pave the way for testimony by native witnesses. One of these witnesses was Nick Thompson; and according to attorneys on both sides, the old man's ap-

pearance had a decisive impact. After Nick had taken his place on the stand, he was asked by an attorney why he considered water to be important to his people. A man of eminent good sense, Nick replied, "Because we drink it!" And then, without missing a beat, he launched into a historical tale about a large spring not far from Cibecue—*tú nchaa hal{t}* ("lots of water flows up and out")—where long ago a man was mysteriously drowned after badly mistreating his wife. When Nick finished the story he went on to say: "We know it happened, so we know not to act like that man who died. It's good we have that water. We need it to live. It's good we have that spring. We need it to live right." Then the old man smiled to himself and his eyes began to dance.

Notes

Acknowledgments. This essay has been several years in the making, and a number of people have contributed to its completion. Michael W. Graves, whose careful work on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation laid an essential cartographic foundation for our research, knows already how grateful I am to him. And so too, though for different reasons, do Priscilla Johnson, William Longacre, Bridget Sullivan, and Jefferson Reid. I presented a preliminary version of the essay to members of the Department of Anthropology at Yale University in March 1982. On that occasion Harold Conklin, Floyd Lounsbury, and M. G. Smith made valuable comments which I incorporated into a second draft. For useful suggestions on how to improve the latter I am pleased to offer my thanks to Judith Aissen, Roger Abrahams, Richard Bauman, A. L. Becker, Karen Blu, Edward Bruner, Roberto DaMatta, Joseph Errington, Larry Evers, James Fernandez, Morris Foster, Bruce Kapferer, William Kelly, Louise Lamphere, Michael Lieber, Ellen Messer, Lita Osmundsen, Gayle Potter, Joel Sherzer, and especially to Dell and Virginia Hymes, N. Scott Momaday, Robert Netting, Alfonso Ortiz, Dennis Tedlock, and Sir Edmund Leach. The prose of the essay was much enhanced by the editorial skills of Sue Allen-Mills and Theresa L. Sears, the photographs that accompany it were generously provided by John Hoffman, and the final manuscript was typed in expert fashion by Elizabeth Kyburg; I thank them, respectively, for their words, pictures, and patience. The Western Apache people of Cibecue have aided and instructed me in countless ways during the last 20 years, and the time has long since passed when I could satisfactorily express in writing my indebtedness to them. So, following the suggestion of Nick Thompson, I shall simply list here the names of those persons with whom I have collaborated most closely: Nashley Tessay, Calvert Tessay, Sr., Darlene Tessay, Robert and Lola Machuse, Morley Cromwell, Roy Quay, Benson Lewis, Annie Peaches, Nelson Lupe, Sr., and Ronnie Lupe. And how, finally, to thank Nick Thompson himself? Reluctantly, I shall comply with his request and say nothing. There is, he says, no need.

Note on Western Apache Texts. Statements 1, 3, 4, 18, 19, and 20 were

recorded in Western Apache and translated by the author. Interested readers may contact the author for copies of the original Western Apache texts.

1. A prominent figure in Western Apache oral literature, Slim Coyote is appreciated by Apache people for his keen and crafty intelligence, his complex and unpredictable personality, and his penchant for getting himself into difficult situations from which he always manages to extract himself, usually with humorous and embarrassing results. Short collections of Western Apache Coyote tales may be found in Goddard (1919) and Goodwin (1939).

2. One consequence of this neglect is that few Native American groups living today in the United States and Canada possess maps representing the lands that formerly belonged to them. This has become a source of major concern to Indian people. As Vine Deloria, Jr. (personal communication, 1981) observes, "To name the land was for many Indians a way of claiming it, a way that proved more than adequate until Europeans arrived and started to claim the land with more harmful methods. Now, in litigation over the land, Indian claims can be disputed (and sometimes rejected) because many of the old names that marked tribal boundaries have been forgotten and lost."

3. Other aspects of the Western Apache place-name system are described and discussed in Basso (in press).

4. Jokes of this type are intended to poke fun at the butt of the joke and, at the same time, to comment negatively on the interactional practices of Anglo-Americans. An extended treatment of this form of Western Apache humor is presented in Basso (1979).

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