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WISDOM SITS IN PLACES

Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache

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Designed by Sue Niewiarowski

For the grandchildren of Cibecue,
and Gayle

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Quoting the Ancestors

Place is the first of all beings, since everything that exists is in a place and cannot exist without a place.

—*Archytas, as cited by Simplicius,* Commentary on Aristotle's Categories

If, as L. P. Hartley (1956:1) proposed, "the past is a foreign country"—"they do things differently there," he added to make the point—it is everywhere a land that attracts its share of visitors. And understandably so. Passage to the past is easy to come by (any reminder of bygone times can serve to launch an excursion), getting there is quick and efficient (a quiet moment or two is usually sufficient to make the transition), and restrictions on local travel are virtually nonexistent (memory and imagination, the most intimate and inventive of traveling companions, always see to that). And however the trip unfolds, one can proceed at an undemanding pace, exploring sites of special interest or moving about from place to place without feeling harried or rushed. Which may account for the fact that returning abruptly to the country of the present, where things are apt to be rushed enough, is often somewhat jarring.

Just where one ventures in the country of the past sometimes depends on where one has ventured before, on personal predilections, nurtured over time, for congenial pieces of experiential terrain: the terrain of one's youth, perhaps, or of where one's forebears lived, or of decisive events that altered the course of history; the possibilities are endless. Yet whatever these preferences are, and no matter how often indulged, the past has a way of luring curious travelers off the beaten track. It is, after all, a country conducive to wandering, with plenty of unmarked roads, unexpected vistas, and unforeseen occurrences. Informative discoveries,

pleasurable and otherwise, are not at all uncommon. Which is why it can seem, as William Chapman (1979:46) has written, that "the past is at its best when it takes us to places that counsel and instruct, that show us who we are by showing us where we have been, that remind us of our connections to *what happened here*" (italics in the original). And why it is as well, for the same set of reasons, that this ever-changing landscape of the active heart and mind rewards repeated visits. For wherever one journeys in the country of the past, instructive places abound.

Many of these places are also encountered in the country of the present as material objects and areas, naturally formed or built, whose myriad local arrangements make up the landscapes of everyday life. But here, *now*, in the ongoing world of current concerns and projects, they are not apprehended as reminders of the past. Instead, when accorded attention at all, places are perceived in terms of their outward aspects—as being, on their manifest surfaces, the familiar places they are—and unless something happens to dislodge these perceptions they are left, as it were, to their own enduring devices. But then something *does* happen. Perhaps one spots a freshly fallen tree, or a bit of flaking paint, or a house where none has stood before—any disturbance, large or small, that inscribes the passage of time—and a place presents itself as bearing on prior events. And at that precise moment, when ordinary perceptions begin to loosen their hold, a border has been crossed and the country starts to change. Awareness has shifted its footing, and the character of the place, now transfigured by thoughts of an earlier day, swiftly takes on a new and foreign look.

Consider in this regard the remarks of Niels Bohr, the great theoretical physicist, while speaking in June of 1924 with Werner Heisenberg at Kronberg Castle in Denmark, Bohr's beloved homeland.[1]

> Isn't it strange how this castle changes as soon as one imagines that Hamlet lived here? As scientists we believe that a castle consists only of stones, and admire the way the architect put them together. The stone, the green roof with its patina, the wood carvings in the church, constitute the whole castle. None of this should be changed by the fact that Hamlet lived here, and yet it is changed completely. Suddenly the walls and ramparts speak a different language. The courtyard becomes

> an entire world, a dark corner reminds us of the darkness of the human soul, we hear Hamlet's "To be or not to be." Yet all we really know is that his name appears in a thirteenth-century chronicle. No one can prove he really lived here. But everyone knows the questions Shakespeare had him ask, the human depths he was made to reveal, and so he too had to be found in a place on earth, here in Kronberg. And once we know that, Kronberg becomes a quite different castle for us. (quoted in Bruner 1986:45)

Thus, by one insightful account, does the country of the past transform and supplant the country of the present. That certain localities prompt such transformations, evoking as they do entire worlds of meaning, is not, as Niels Bohr recognized, a small or uninteresting truth. Neither is the fact, which he also appreciated, that this type of retrospective world-building—let us call it *place-making*—does not require special sensibilities or cultivated skills.[2] It is a common response to common curiosities—what happened here? who was involved? what was it like? why should it matter?—and anyone can be a place-maker who has the inclination. And every so often, more or less spontaneously, alone or with others, with varying degrees of interest and enthusiasm, almost everyone does make places. As roundly ubiquitous as it is seemingly unremarkable, place-making is a universal tool of the historical imagination. And in some societies at least, if not in the great majority, it is surely among the most basic tools of all.

Prevalent though it is, this type of world-building is never entirely simple. On the contrary, a modest body of evidence suggests that place-making involves multiple acts of remembering and imagining which inform each other in complex ways (Casey 1976, 1987). It is clear, however, that remembering often provides a basis for imagining. What is remembered about a particular place—including, prominently, verbal and visual accounts of what has transpired there—guides and constrains how it will be imagined by delimiting a field of workable possibilities. These possibilities are then exploited by acts of conjecture and speculation which build upon them and go beyond them to create possibilities of a new and original sort, thus producing a fresh and expanded picture of how things might have been. Essentially, then,

instances of place-making consist in an adventitious fleshing out of historical material that culminates in a posited state of affairs, a particular universe of objects and events—in short, a *place-world*—wherein portions of the past are brought into being.[3]

When Niels Bohr went with Heisenberg to visit Kronberg Castle, he thought instantly of Hamlet and recalled the famous play in which this figure comes to life. Then, seizing on possibilities inherent in Shakespeare's drama, Bohr went on to imagine a darkly compelling place-world in which the walls of the castle echoed an alien tongue, a shaded courtyard nook gave notice of the troubled human soul, and Hamlet uttered his anguished cry, "To be or not to be." And probably, considering it was Bohr, there was much more besides: other fancied elements, wrought in compatible terms, which endowed his somber place-world with added substance and depth. Within this foreign universe Bohr could briefly dwell, and until it started to fade, as every place-world must, the imaginative Danish physicist and a bit of Danish history breathed life into each other.

But there is more to making place-worlds than living local history in a localized kind of way. In addition, place-making is a way of constructing history itself, of inventing it, of fashioning novel versions of "what happened here." For every developed place-world manifests itself as a possible state of affairs, and whenever these constructions are accepted by other people as credible and convincing—or plausible and provocative, or arresting and intriguing—they enrich the common stock on which everyone can draw to muse on past events, interpret their significance, and imagine them anew. Building and sharing place-worlds, in other words, is not only a means of reviving former times but also of *revising* them, a means of exploring not merely how things might have been but also how, just possibly, they might have been different from what others have supposed. Augmenting and enhancing conceptions of the past, innovative place-worlds change these conceptions as well.

By way of illustration, and returning once more to Denmark, Bohr's remarks to Heisenberg could have provided Heisenberg with novel possibilities for building his own version of Hamlet's castle in Hamlet's time, a place-world that would have been different from any he might have fashioned working by himself. And if Heisenberg had then returned the favor, describing in some detail his own construction to Bohr, the same would be true in reverse. Which is simply to say that discussing the stuff of place-worlds—comparing their contents, pursuing their implications, assessing their strengths and weaknesses—is a regular social process, as common and straightforward as it is sometimes highly inventive.

In this discursive fashion, even in societies where writing and other devices for "preserving the past" are absent or devalued, historical knowledge is produced and reproduced. And in this manner too, even in societies which lack the services of revisionary historians, historical understandings are altered and recast. It is well to keep in mind that interpreting the past can be readily accomplished—and is every day—without recourse to documentary archives, photographic files, and early sound recordings. It cannot be accomplished, readily or otherwise, without recourse to places and the place-worlds they engender. Long before the advent of literacy, to say nothing of "history" as an academic discipline, places served humankind as durable symbols of distant events and as indispensable aids for remembering and imagining them—and this convenient arrangement, ancient but not outmoded, is with us still today. In modern landscapes everywhere, people persist in asking, "What happened here?" The answers they supply, though perhaps distinctly foreign, should not be taken lightly, for what people make of their places is closely connected to what they make of themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth, and while the two activities may be separable in principle, they are deeply joined in practice. If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of *doing* human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities. We *are,* in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine.

But these and related matters are only broadly discerned and loosely understood, and the main reason why is easy to identify. A widespread form of imaginative activity, place-making is also a form of *cultural* activity, and so, as any anthropologist will tell you, it can be grasped only in relation to the ideas and practices with which it is accomplished. And because these ideas and practices may vary considerably both within and among particular social groups, the nature of the activity can be understood only by means of sustained ethnography. Yet little ethnography of place-making has in fact been undertaken, and what is known about

place-making—Navajo or Norwegian, Sinhalese or Soviet, Mexican or Moroccan—is therefore sharply limited. There is work to be done, and now is as good a time as any to see what it may involve.

This chapter, which offers an example of the work I have in mind, is soon to cross over the border into an American Indian version of Hartley's foreign land. The time has come to travel, first to Arizona and the village of Cibecue, home since the beginning to groups of men and women known to themselves as *ndee* (people), to others as Western Apache (fig. 1).[4] And then to some of their places not far away—places with names such as Widows Pause For Breath, She Carries Her Brother On Her Back, and Bitter Agave Plain—places made memorable, and infinitely imaginable, by events that happened long ago when the people's distant ancestors were settling into the country. So let us be off, stopping here and there with one Charles Henry, age sixty or thereabouts, skilled herbalist, devoted uncle, and veteran maker of place-worlds. Niels Bohr, I like to think, would have enjoyed his company. For both men understood, though in very different ways, that castles come in a great many shapes and need not be wrought with mortar and stone.

Water Lies With Mud In An Open Container

Early morning, late May 1979, the night's redemptive chill rapidly receding before the rising sun. Silence deep and full, a blanket upon the land. I am standing with Charles Henry and one of his cousins, Morley Cromwell, at the edge of a circular swale some forty feet across. Ringed by willows and filled with luxuriant grass, it lies near a spring-fed creek which flows southeast to the gardens and cornfields of Cibecue. The earth at our feet is marked with the tracks of deer, and from high in a cottonwood tree comes the liquid call of a raven. A chipmunk creeps to the swale, secures a nervous drink, and darts away behind a rotting log covered with patches of green and orange moss. The air is heavy and moist. A small white butterfly dances in place in a shaft of golden sunlight.

Charles and Morley have brought me here at the outset of a long-range project in Western Apache cultural geography. Authorized and endorsed by the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council, the project's main objective is to record on topographic maps the approximate location of each and every place that bears an Apache name within a twenty-

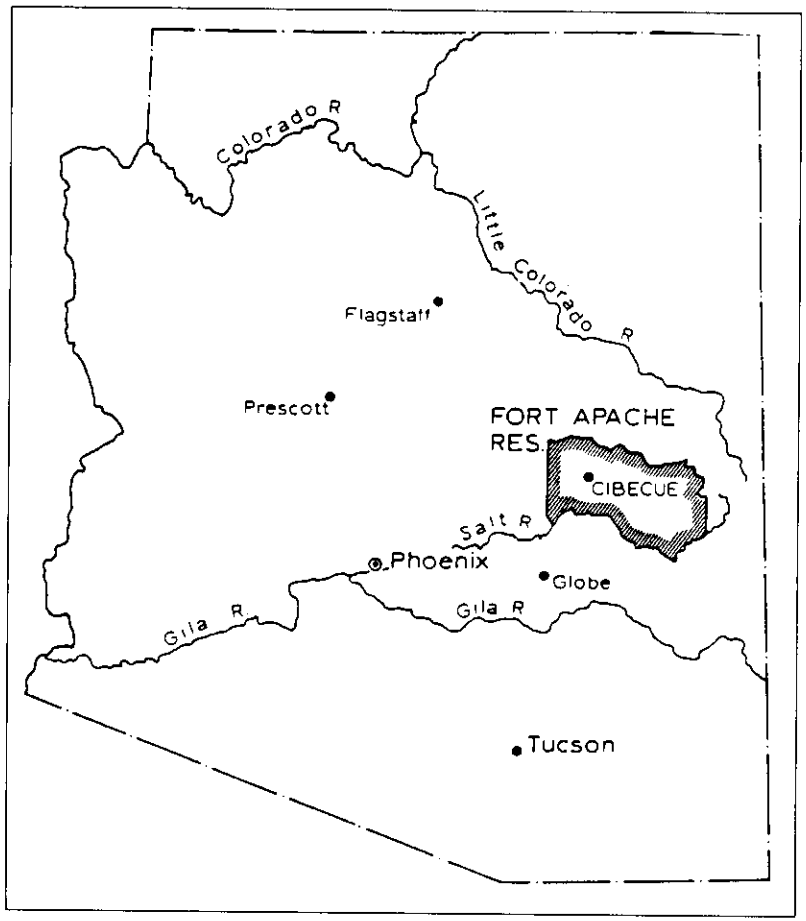

Figure 1 *Location of the community of Cibecue on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona.*

mile radius of the Cibecue community. Residents of the community have never known maps they considered their own (those in their possession show but a handful of places with extraneous names in English and Spanish), and the work we have started, which is intended to lay the foundation for a local Apache atlas, is regarded by some as long overdue. A couple of weeks ago, before the work began, the three of us agreed

on a simple division of labor. Charles, who is in charge, will guide us from place to place, supply each place's proper name, and comment as he chooses on its past and present significance. Morley will translate as necessary (Charles speaks English reluctantly, and my own Apache is stiff and uneven at best) and offer additional insights. My job is to drive the Jeep, provide plenty of coffee and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups (Morley has a serious weakness for them), and try to get everything down on paper and audiotapes. It seems like a sensible plan, balanced and loosely efficient, and all of us believe it will serve our purpose well.

But already, on only our second day in the country together, a problem has come up. For the third time in as many tries, I have mispronounced the Apache name of the boggy swale before us, and Charles, who is weary of repeating it, has a guarded look in his eyes. After botching the name a fourth time, I acknowledge defeat and attempt to apologize for my flawed linguistic performance. "I'm sorry, Charles, I can't get it. I'll work on it later, it's in the machine. It doesn't matter."

"It's matter," Charles says softly to me in English. And then, turning to speak to Morley, he addresses him in Western Apache:

> What he's doing isn't right. It's not good. He seems to be in a hurry. Why is he in a hurry? It's disrespectful. Our ancestors made this name. They made it just as it is. They made it for a reason. *They spoke it first, a long time ago!* He's repeating the speech of our ancestors. He doesn't know that. Tell him he's repeating the speech of our ancestors!

Charles's admonition, which Morley proceeds to translate without dulling its critical edge, leaves me unsettled and silent. That Charles has taken me for someone in a hurry comes as a surprise. Neither had I foreseen that my failure to pronounce the stubborn Apache place-name would be interpreted by him as displaying a lack of respect. And never had I suspected that using Apache place-names might be heard by those who use them as repeating verbatim—actually quoting—the speech of their early ancestors. This is a fair amount to take in at once, and as the quiet of the morning asserts itself again, I fear that my actions, which were wholly unwitting but patently offensive, may have placed in jeopardy the future of our project. Charles and

Morley, put off by my incompetence, may now decide they have better things to do. Dammit!

But then, unexpectedly, in one of those courteous turnabouts that Apache people employ to assuage embarrassment and salvage damaged feelings, Charles himself comes to the rescue. With a quick corroborative grin, he announces he is missing several teeth and that my problem with the place-name may be attributable to his lack of dental equipment. Sometimes, he says, he is hard to understand—his nephew Jason recently told him that and he knows he tends to speak softly. Maybe the combination of too few teeth and too little volume accounts for my falling short. Morley, on the other hand, is not so encumbered. Though shy a tooth or two, he retains the good ones for talking, and because he is not afraid to speak up—except, as everyone knows, in the presence of garrulous women—no one has trouble hearing what he says. Maybe if Morley repeated the place-name again, slowly and with ample force, I would get it right. It's worth a try. Cousin?

"GOSHTŁ'ISH TÚ BIŁ SIKĄNÉ!" Rising to the spirit of Charles's playful teasing, Morley booms out the place-name, word by constituent word, with such exuberance as to startle into flight a pair of resident robins. All of us laugh as the birds wheel away, but for me the tide has turned. Instantly, the form of the name and its meaning assume coherent shape, and I know that at last I've got it: Goshtł'ish Tú Bił Sikąné, or Water Lies With Mud In An Open Container. Relieved and pleased, I pronounce the name slowly, then a bit more rapidly, and again as it might be spoken in normal conversation.[5] Charles listens and nods his head in approval. "Yes," he says in Apache. "That is how our ancestors made it a long time ago, just as it is to name this place." And then, keeping to his own language and speaking at times like an observer on the scene, he fashions a place-world in which the making and naming occurred.

> They came to this country long ago, our ancestors did. They hadn't seen it before, they knew nothing about it. Everything was unfamiliar to them.
>
> They were very poor. They had few possessions and surviving was difficult for them. They were looking for a good place to settle, a safe place without enemies. They were

searching. They were traveling all over, stopping here and there, noticing everything, looking at the land. They knew nothing about it and didn't know what they would find.

None of these places had names then, none of them did, and as the people went about they thought about this. "How shall we speak about this land?" they said. "How shall we speak about where we have been and where we want to go?"

Now they are coming! They are walking upstream from down below. Now they are arriving here, looking all about them, noticing everything about this place. It looked to them then as it looks to us now. We know that from its name—its name gives a picture of it, just as it was a long time ago.

Now they are happy. "This looks like a good place," they are saying to each other. Now they are noticing the plants that live around here. "Some of these plants are unknown to us. Maybe they are good for something. Maybe they are useful as medicines." Now they are saying, "This is a good place for hunting. Deer and turkey come here to eat and drink. We can wait for them here, hidden close by." They are saying that. They are noticing everything and talking about it together. They like what they see about this place. They are excited!

Now their leader is thinking, "This place may help us survive. If we settle in this country, we must be able to speak about this place and remember it clearly and well. We must give it a name."

So they named it Goshtł'ish Tú Bił Sikąné [Water Lies With Mud In An Open Container]. They made a picture of it with words. Now they could speak about it and remember it clearly and well. Now they had a picture they could carry in their minds. You can see for yourself. It looks like its name.

When Charles has finished speaking, he reaches down and takes from the marshy ground a heaping handful of mud. He squeezes it firmly, causing little jets of water to spurt from between his fingers. "There," he says with evident satisfaction. "Water and mud together, just as they were when our ancestors came here." He then excuses himself, explaining that he needs to procure a certain medicinal plant for use in his work at Cibecue; he will not be gone long and will join

us back at the Jeep. Walking along with Morley, I cannot contain my appreciation for all that Charles has said. "That was great!" I exclaim. "It's like we were *there,* watching them when they came!" Morley concurs, adding matter of factly that Charles is a vigorous thinker and has done this sort of thing on numerous occasions. "Do you think he'll do it again?" I ask. "It's up to him," says Morley. "I think he probably will."

Snakes' Water

It turns out Morley is right. In the slow-moving week that follows (June is now upon us, the heat a relentless foe) we travel with Charles to twelve more places, and at two of these—an open expanse named Nadah Nch'íí' Golgaiyé (Bitter Agave Plain) and a dispersion of vertical boulders called Tséé Naadadn'áhá (Scattered Rocks Stand Erect)—he slips into the past and constructs ancestral place-worlds. Much as before, and speaking often in the same eyewitness voice, he imagines his forebears arriving on the scene, studying it intently, and assessing its potential for helping them survive. Looking out on Bitter Agave Plain, the ancestors marvel at all the grass, tall and thick and laden with edible seeds, and praise it as a sign of ample summer rainfall. Pausing at Scattered Rocks Stand Erect, they wonder with a mixture of fear and curiosity why the boulders are upright, as if rammed into the earth by some gigantic hand. At both localities they make and bestow a place-name, a name describing the place itself, just as it looked a long time ago, just as it looks today. And Charles, having lodged himself in the present again, says that much is contained in Apache place-names, preserving as they do both the words of his ancestors and their graphic impressions of an unfamiliar land.

But more is contained in Apache place-names than frozen ancestral quotes and ageless images of a new and striking landscape. In addition, place-names can offer evidence of changes in the landscape, showing clearly that certain localities do not present the appearance they did in former times. More interesting still, some of this evidence points to major shifts in local climatic patterns, thus allowing inferences to be drawn about how—and possibly why—the environment of the ancestors differed in key respects from that of their modern descendants. And were this not enough, the theme of places' changing even as they endure sometimes finds expression in gripping Apache place-worlds.

I knew nothing of these things until I accompanied Charles and Morley to Tłiish Bi Tú'é (Snakes' Water), an inactive spring at the foot of a sandstone bluff some miles west of Cibecue. Hidden from view by manzanita bushes, the spring is survived by a cluster of hand-cut rocks, flat and rectilinear, which encircle a pool of whitish sand, now the home of delicate purple wildflowers and a motley assortment of weeds. A Budweiser beer can, faded and pock-marked with rust, lies on the ground nearby. Standing alone a few feet away, Charles gazes at the rocks for several minutes, as though waiting for them to speak. And perhaps somehow they do, for he suddenly declares that the spring has long been dry, that at some point in time its water went away, and that the result of this is an absence of fit (a "lack of match" is what he says in Apache) between the place itself and the way its name describes it. The name it was given a long time ago shows that it has changed. Snake's Water, as anyone can see, is no longer the way it was when the ancestors saw it first and made it their own with words.

Motionless in denim shirt and sweat-stained Stetson hat, Charles again falls silent. Then, with his eyes still fixed on the barren circle of rocks, he begins to fashion a place-world in which they served an important purpose.

> Now these rocks are lying alone. No one comes to them anymore. Once this wasn't so. Long ago, people came here often. They squatted on these rocks when they filled their containers with water. They knelt on these rocks when they drank water from their hands. Our people were very grateful for this spring. It made them happy to know they could rely on it anytime. They were *glad* this place was here.
>
> Now they are coming to get water! They have been working—maybe they were digging up agave—and now they are thirsty. A man is walking in the lead with women and children behind him. The women are carrying their containers. Some have water jugs on their backs. No one is talking. Maybe there are snakes here, lying on these rocks. Yes! Now the man in front can see them! There are snakes lying stretched out on these rocks. They are the ones who own this spring, the ones who protect it.

> Now that man is speaking to the people. "Listen to me," he is saying. "All of you must wait here. Don't go any closer. Don't approach Snakes' Water until I talk to them and ask them to move away." The people obey this man, knowing that he will do things correctly. Now they are waiting together in a group, just as he told them to do.
>
> Now that man has come here. He is talking to those who protect Snakes' Water, using words they understand and doing things correctly. Soon they move off the rocks. They keep going, unalarmed, until they are out of sight. Now that man is sprinkling something on the water. It is a gift to the ones who own it. He is giving thanks to them and Water, informing them that he and the people are grateful. "This is good," he is saying to them. "This is good."
>
> Now he is beckoning to the people to come and get water. Some of them are still concerned, holding back with their children. Others are arriving now, nervously looking around. Now they see they have nothing to fear—everything was done correctly—and they start to fill their containers. Now they are happy and grateful, talking amongst themselves. "This water is good," they are saying. "It is good that it is here for us." Some of the women are smiling. They know they have nothing to fear. Now they are kneeling on these stones, relieving their thirst, drinking from their hands.

Charles says no more—there is nothing to be said. The three of us turn from the barren spring and together walk slowly away, lost in thought and the deepness of time, sojourners still in a distant world that casts a powerful spell. A short while later, seated in the shade of a juniper tree, Charles explains that what we observed at Snakes' Water is not at all uncommon; there are more places like it, scattered throughout Apache country, that have undergone physical changes and no longer conform to the way their names describe them. Many of these places, he says, were named for sources of water—springs, seeps, bogs, seasonal pools at the bases of canyon walls—which now are permanently dry. Snakes' Water is a case in point, as are Dlǫ́' Bi Tú'é (Birds' Water), another dry spring, and Tú Nłchǫ́'é (Foul Water), a former

seep, probably sulfurous, located far to the west. Other localities, according to their names, once gave life to species of plants that thrive under moist conditions, and these plants have either vanished or persist in stunted form. Tł'ohk'aa Sikaadé (Stand Of Arrow Cane), where today no cane exists, offers a telling example; so does T'iis Sikaadé (Grove Of Cottonwood Trees), where one small tree remains. And these are only a few.

Judging from what happened at these and other places, Charles goes on to say, there can be no doubt that the country was wetter and greener when the ancestors first explored it. This was one of the reasons, if not the major reason, they found it to their liking and decided to make it their home. For they were farmers as well as hunters—they had corn they wanted to plant—and they searched everywhere for water and its tell-tale signs. In this they were not disappointed, as their place-names plainly reveal. "The names do not lie," Charles states emphatically. "They show what is different and what is still the same." Like so many faithful photographs, he says, they record the look of the land as it was in ancestral times—and the look of the land was lush. It is less so today. Something must have happened. Water, obviously, began to go away.

After lighting a cigarette and pouring a cup of coffee from the thermos we carry with us, Charles volunteers that no one really knows (he implies with a shrug that no one really cares) when the water began to go away. It was sometime in the past, he says, and whether it happened slowly or fast, the people would have noticed and would have been concerned. There was water enough for life to go on—the streams still flowed and rains still came in the summer and fall—but it was definitely less abundant and its sources were less predictable. And this would have been interpreted as a punitive response, wrought by Water itself, to something the people had done. There *had* to be a reason for what was taking place, and the one most likely adduced, because it was the simplest and farthest-reaching, was that Water had been offended by acts of disrespect. Charles has wondered often what kinds of acts these were. Maybe, he says, the people were greedy, taking from springs and streams more water than they needed; maybe they were wasteful, throwing water away they should have been careful to save; or maybe they ceased doing everything correctly, neglecting in haste or forgetfulness to give repeated thanks to Water for giving of itself.

No one knows for sure, Charles says again, but no one doubts that the people were greatly alarmed to learn that they were at fault. He then travels back in his mind to the place from which we have come, imagining there the difficult day when a group of his ancestors, thirsty and eager to drink, discovered to their dismay that the spring at Snakes' Water was dry.

> The people came again to get water and saw that there was none. They were expecting it to be there. They were shocked! The women began to wail. The men stood silent and still. "Why has Snakes' Water dried up? Why has this happened? What have we done to cause this to happen? Water must surely be angry at us." This is what they are thinking.
>
> Now they are walking away, thirsty and shaking with fear. The women are wailing, louder and louder. Their children are crying, too. They are wailing as if a relative had died. "What if this happens elsewhere?! What if this happens everywhere?! What if Water takes all of itself away?!" They are deeply frightened because of what they have done.
>
> "Our holy people must work on this for us." This is what they are saying as they walk away from Snakes' Water. "Our holy people must help us by making amends to Water. They must help us so we may live! They must ask Water to take pity on us! What if this happened everywhere!" This is what they are thinking. This is what they are praying. They do not understand. They are terribly afraid. The women are wailing louder, as if a relative has died. Already they have started to pray.

Charles stands up and drinks the last of his coffee. The day is done. We return to the Jeep. On the drive back to Cibecue, no one says a word.

Juniper Tree Stands Alone

All ethnographers occasionally lose their snap, and so, of course, do those with whom they work. Rarely does the problem reach epic proportions, but it can happen. On a Saturday late in June, with nothing more in store than a quiet weekend in Cibecue, I was stung twice

on the nose by hornets, broke my last pair of eyeglasses, and got bitten on the hand by an aggravated centipede while playing Aggravation, a locally popular board game, with three Apache enthusiasts; I also managed to run out of gas, which in Cibecue is taken as evidence of dangerously low intelligence. During the same eight-hour period, Morley received a very unfortunate haircut, tore his pants on a barbed-wire gate, and bought beer for a lady from out of town who responded to his kindness by trying to lift his wallet; he later sat down on a monstrous wad of bubblegum belonging to his six-year-old niece, who flew into a rage and attacked him with a dustpan. For his part, Charles woke up with a nasty stomach flu, sliced his hand on a can of Spam, and failed to amuse his wife when he wrapped the wound in one of her favorite dish towels; he later misplaced his pocketknife, a fairly worrisome loss, only to discover it in the pocket of his jacket. Taken all together, as more and more people rushed to observe, it was little short of hilarious, and when evening finally came, with Morley nursing a tender ego and me a bulbous nose, we went to call on Charles to see how he was doing.

Charles seemed happy to see us, proclaiming as we entered his house that everyone has uneven days, one might as well expect them, and that next to pails of Crisco and double-bladed axes—his wife, he supposes, would strongly favor dish towels—the whiteman's best invention may be Pepto-Bismol. He chuckles at the thought. Ensconced on a couch with his nephew Jason, he inquires whether I am pleased with the work we have done so far. When I tell him I am, he replies that more lies ahead because places and their names are important to Apache people in many different ways. Jason here, who just turned eleven, is learning this already, and once we resume our trips into the country—Jason, by the way, will be joining us when we do—he and I can learn together; soon, perhaps, we will take up the matter of Apache social lines, those close-knit groups of kin known to outsiders as "clans," whose names for themselves are really the names of places. Charles then changes the subject by beaming a smile at Morley. "I know my wife can't hear me," he says loudly in Apache, knowing that Mrs. Henry, who is close by in the kitchen, will pick up every word. "Speak to me, cousin, and don't leave anything out. What's this I hear about a beautiful widow from Whiteriver who made you tear your pants?"

Three days later, with Jason Henry in tow and the rest of us feeling revived, we are back upon the land. Rain has fallen the night before, steady and hard for more than an hour, and the colors of the countryside, no longer dull beneath layers of dust, look clean and freshly restored. The air smells sharp and fragrant. It is cool for the first time in weeks. The sky is a robust blue. On the northern outskirts of Cibecue we stop near a place named Gad 'O'ááhá (Juniper Tree Stands Alone), a large flat encompassing four Apache homes, two horse corrals, and at least a dozen acres planted in corn and beans. With coffee cup in hand, Charles surveys the scene, which could hardly be more peaceful. The morning light is soft and full, and the tilled red earth, darkened by the rain to a deep maroon, provides a striking backdrop to the bright green rows of maize. A dog barks. A door slams. A young sorrel mare rolls in some mud to keep away the flies. The land is fairly glowing in calm and radiant gratitude for the blessings brought by rain.

I cannot see a juniper tree, standing alone or otherwise, anywhere on the flat of Juniper Tree Stands Alone, a small but notable absence which prompts me to think that Charles may speak again about how the country has changed since his ancestors took it over. He does not. Reaching out his hand to the fields of growing corn, he performs a scooping motion that seems to gather them up, drawing them together as though cradled in his palm and setting the stage for a place-world about farming and the origin of clans.

> They had wandered all over this country, looking at everything, searching for good places to live. They searched for places that would protect them from enemy people—the Navajo were one—so they made their homes high on the sides of valleys, nestled among the rocks. They also searched for places where they could plant their corn. They looked for these near streams or where there was runoff from rain.
>
> By now they knew the country well. They had given names to many places—like this one, Juniper Tree Stands Alone—and they thought they would survive and raise their families here. This country is where they would live and raise their children.

Now they are settling at different places. Some of them settled here—not right here on the flat, it would have exposed them to enemy people—but fairly close by, somewhere higher up, somewhere well concealed. This was long ago.

Now they are planting their corn here, not far from the stream, here on the flat. "Corn grows plentifully here," they are saying. "We have enough to eat and also to store away." They are grateful to Corn and to this place for helping them survive. They prayed often. Their prayers were strong. They did everything correctly. They were happy and grew confident.

They didn't stay here all the time. Some would make journeys to hunt for deer. Some would make journeys to dig and roast agave. Some would go off to collect seeds and cactus fruits. Some would go off for salt. But they would always return here in plenty of time to harvest their corn. They would roast and dry it. They saved its seeds to plant again. They kept dried corn to eat in winter and early spring, when they knew they would be hungry.

Now, long ago, those people who planted corn at Juniper Tree Stands Alone are coming back to harvest it. They have been off looking for acorns but have gathered only a few. Two or three older people have been left behind to watch over the corn. They are coming nearer now, the ones who have been away, praying and singing as they approach. They are praying that nothing has happened to injure or harm their corn. "What will we do if there is no corn?" they are thinking—but they are reluctant to say this out loud.

Now they can see their cornfields. There is much corn! There is corn in abundance! They are excited and happy. They know they will not go hungry. They know their prayers have been strong. "Juniper Tree Stands Alone has looked after us again."

Later, after getting their homes in order again, their leaders are talking. "This is where our women first planted corn. They have planted it again and again. Each year we have harvested

enough to roast and dry and store away. These fields look after us by helping our corn to grow. Our children eat it and become strong. We eat it and continue to live. Our corn draws life from this earth and we draw life from our corn. This earth is part of us! We are *of* this place, Juniper Tree Stands Alone. We should name ourselves for this place. We are Gad 'O'ááhń [Juniper Tree Stands Alone People]. This is how it shall be.

Now the people spoke among themselves and agreed with what their leaders had said. They agreed to be known for the place where they first planted corn. Now they spoke of themselves to other people that way. "We are Juniper Tree Stands Alone People," they would say to them.

This would happen elsewhere, at many different places throughout the country. Groups of people named themselves for the places where their women first planted corn. That is why our lines [clans] go through women. That is why we belong to the line of our mother. We are *of* our mother's line and *for* the line of our father. It has always been that way.

You see, their names for themselves are really the names of their places. That is how they were known, to others and to themselves. They were known by their places. That is how they are still known, even though they have scattered and live now in many different states, some in cities far from here.

Many of the old cornfields are no longer planted. The people have forgotten about them. They say it's too much work to plant them as before. But some, like those Juniper Tree Stands Alone People, have not forgotten. They still plant their corn in the same place, as they have always done. Their corn still makes their children strong. This place still looks after them. It shows them where their ancestors returned, year after year, to harvest their corn and store it away for the winter.

As Charles is speaking, a woman who lives at Juniper Tree Stands Alone walks from her house to the edge of one of the cornfields, carrying over her arm an empty burlap sack and a folded canvas ground cloth. She is wearing a capacious blouse and a flowing, full-length skirt, both a shade of brilliant pink, and her loosely braided hair is

generously streaked with gray. Her name is Ellen Josay Tessay. She is the leader of her clan, the oldest member and primary spokesperson of the Juniper Tree Stands Alone People. Charles watches in silence as she enters the cornfield, seats herself on her ground cloth, and begins to pull up weeds, placing them one by one inside the burlap sack. He then resumes his account, treating what he sees as a model of the past and transforming the figure of Ellen Tessay, carefully tending her corn, into a fully present symbol of what happened long ago.

> The women looked after their corn, they looked after it well. The older people who stayed behind did this. They would go to their fields in the morning and stay there most of the day.
>
> Now they are clearing the fields of unwanted plants, putting them in something to later take them away. "I am looking after you, just as I would my children," they are saying. "Because of this you will grow strong and tall and give us much to eat. I am praying this will happen."
>
> They were careful to do everything correctly. They didn't rush or try to hurry their work. They depended on their corn, so they treated it with respect. This would help it to grow. They did everything correctly.

When Charles is done, Morley remarks that he owes two dollars to Ellen Tessay's husband, which he might as well give to her now. We follow Morley along a path to the cornfield where she is working. She greets our approach with a genial smile, inquiring of no one in particular, "What brings you here?" Morley explains the reason for our presence and goes on to settle his debt. He then delivers a compliment on the vigor of her corn. "It seems to be growing well," she modestly replies. "Last night's rain will help it even more." Moments later, she addresses Jason Henry, who is standing half-hidden behind his grandfather. "Young one, do you know what I am doing?" Caught off-guard by the directness of her question, Jason stares hard at the ground. "You are helping your corn," he responds in a faltering voice. Ellen Josay Tessay smiles again. "Yes," she says gently. "I'm looking after my children."

Shades Of Shit

It is now mid-July and our topographic maps of the Cibecue region are getting increasingly crowded. Dozens of dots and shaded areas mark the locations of places bearing Apache names, and numbers next to these index the names themselves, which are listed in separate notebooks. Morley says admiringly that some of the maps look like they were blasted with a shotgun—and more than once! Charles, modulated as always, expresses his approval in less effusive ways. Jason, who studies the maps whenever he gets a chance, has yet to voice an opinion. I am struck by the mounting number of named localities—we have charted 109 in only five weeks—and the consistent manner in which they cluster, mainly around sources of water and past and present farmsites.

But what impresses me most of all is the rich descriptive imagery of Western Apache place-names. Lately, with ear and eye jointly enthralled, I have stood before

> Tséé Dotł'izh Tęnaahijaahá (Green Rocks Side By Side Jut Down Into Water; a group of mossy boulders on the bank of a stream)
>
> Tséé Ditł'ige Naaditiné (Trail Extends Across Scorched Rocks; a crossing at the bottom of a canyon)
>
> T'iis Ts'ósé Bił Naagolgaiyé (Circular Clearing With Slender Cottonwood Trees; a meadow)
>
> Túzhį' Yaahigaiyé (Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water; a sandstone cliff next to a spring)
>
> Tséé Yaaditł'ishé (Line Of Blue Below Rocks; a mineral deposit)
>
> Yaahiłbigé (Stunted Rising Up; a small mountain)
>
> Kaiłbáyé Bił Naagozwodé (Gray Willows Curve Around A Bend; a point on a stream)

and a number of other places whose handsomely crafted names—bold, visual, evocative—lend poetic force to the voices of the ancestors.

Just as expressive are other Apache place-names, different from these, that do not give close descriptions of the places to which they refer. Commemorative in character and linked to traditional stories,

they allude instead to historical events that illuminate the causes and consequences of wrongful social conduct. And in this important capacity, as I would discover at a place named Shades Of Shit (Chąą Bi Dałt'ohé), they invest the Apache landscape with a sobering moral dimension, dark but instructive, that place-makers can exploit to deeply telling effect.

The shades, or brush-covered ramadas, are no longer standing. They collapsed, Charles says, a long time ago. Yet the place where they stood, a tree-covered knoll southwest of Cibecue, is avoided to this day. "No one wants to come here," he explains, as we slowly approach a vantage point a hundred yards away. "The people who lived here had farms down below, probably next to the creek. This was long after they settled in this valley. Then they did something bad, very bad, and they came close to dying. There is a story about it I was told by my grandfather. It's short." And it is . . .

> It happened here at Shades Of Shit.
>
> They had much corn, those people who lived here, and their relatives had only a little. They refused to share it. Their relatives begged them but still they refused to share it.
>
> Then their relatives got angry and forced them to stay at home. They wouldn't let them go anywhere, not even to defecate. So they had to do it at home. Their shades filled up with it. There was more and more of it! It was very bad! Those people got sick and nearly died.
>
> Then their relatives said, "You have brought this on yourselves. Now you live in shades of shit!" Finally, they agreed to share their corn.
>
> It happened at Shades Of Shit.

An uneasy silence settles over our group. Jason looks suddenly wan. Morley spits in disgust. A soft breeze, recalling a terrible stench it could not possibly carry, ruffles the morning air. When Charles speaks again, he says that he wonders what really happened here: it couldn't have been as simple as the story suggests. And even if it were, he adds, the story gives no sense of why events unfolded as they did or how the people involved might have reacted to them. "What were they *thinking*?" he asks rhetorically in a tone of disbelief. "How must they have *felt*?" Charles would like to know these things, he says, though he doubts he ever will. And then, speaking as if he knew them very well, he tells his grandfather's story again, fleshing it out at length and constructing for us an astonishing world as surely revealing of Apache social values as it is violently offensive to their most basic sensibilities.

> It must have been late in the summer. Those people had harvested their corn and were drying it and roasting it. They must have been grateful and happy. "Now we have much to eat," they are saying.
>
> Their relatives envied them. Their own corn had not grown well. (Sometimes it happens that way. Some fields produce a lot, and those right next to them do not. It happens that way, and no one knows why, and sometimes they talk of witchcraft prompted by revenge for something that was done to them in the past.) Their own corn was meager and small but they were not yet afraid or angry. "Our more fortunate relatives will help us," they said, speaking among themselves. "They have more than enough corn. They will want to share it with us. We have always helped each other. That is how it should be."
>
> Then they waited for their relatives to help them. They waited in vain. Their relatives kept their corn to themselves, eating it every day and making big shits when they went off into the brush. They did nothing for their relatives, although they noticed their plight. "They have enough food, even though they harvested little corn. They probably have plenty of beans and squash. Some of them are skilled hunters. Soon they will have plenty of deer meat to eat. We will keep our corn for ourselves, so that our children will not be hungry during the winter."
>
> Now their poor relatives are becoming scared and puzzled. "Why do they not offer to help us?" they said. "They're treating us like we don't exist, as if we are nothing to them. We will have a hard time unless they change their minds and give us some of their corn."
>
> Then they sent someone to talk to the people who lived here. "We are your relatives," he said to them. "We must help

each other. You have plenty of corn. We have seen it. But we have only a little and soon it will be gone. Soon our children will be crying because they have nothing to eat. Give us some of your corn. Give us some of your corn. We will be grateful. This is how it should be."

Then they waited again, and still their relatives did nothing for them. They talked again among themselves. "Our relatives are not going to help us," they said. "They have become greedy and stingy. They think only of themselves. They have put themselves above us, ignoring us like we don't exist. We have waited long enough. We must do something!"

Then they became angry at their own relatives. "We will make them stay at their homes. They will not go anywhere. We will make them live with their own big shits!" This is what they decided to do.

Then they came over here and surrounded their relatives' homes. They told them to stay there. They did this day and night. "We will harm you if you try to leave," they said. "You have brought this on yourselves. You can eat all you want. Only now you will shit at your homes. This is not how it should be, but we are doing it anyway," they said.

Then those people must have thought they were joking. "They don't really mean what they say," they said. "They will not harm us," they said. So they chose a man to leave his home. He was forced back by his relatives. Another man tried to leave. He was also forced back. "They mean what they say," they said. "Now we are in for trouble," they thought.

Then they started to shit in their shades. Some of them said, "This is very bad. We should share our corn and put an end to it." Others said, "No! If we give away some of our corn, they will want it all. We must not give in to them. This is their way of leaving us with nothing."

Then they ate less and less but still they fouled their shades. There was more and more of it! It was visible everywhere! The sight and smell could not be avoided! There were swarms and swarms of flies! Huge swarms! They no longer cooked in

their shades. Eating became something they detested. It was terrible!

Then they started to get sick from the sight and smell of their own filth. Some of them were constantly dizzy. Others had trouble walking straight. Their children started moaning. They themselves were moaning. "We could die from this!" they said. "We could die from our own filth."

Then a man of the people who had little corn went and talked to them. "You have brought this on yourselves," he said. "You should have shared your corn with us as soon as you knew you had more than enough. You didn't do this! You gave us nothing at all. You were greedy and stingy, thinking only of yourselves. Because of this we had to beg you to share your corn with us. Even then, you did nothing. You just kept on eating, more and more, knowing that we had little food of our own. You ignored us—your own relatives—as if we were nothing! This is not how it should be. As relatives we make each other rich because we help each other in times of need. It has been this way since the beginning. What made you forget this? What made you ignore us? Well, I don't know. But now you live in shades of shit! Now you are getting sick!"

Then he laughed at them. He laughed at them.

Then those people talked among themselves. "What he says is true," they said. "*Look what has become of us!* We were thinking only of ourselves. Our greed is responsible for our trouble. We looked down on our own relatives and gave them nothing. Look what has become of us!"

Then they shared their corn. Finally, they did this. Their relatives took the corn away, saying nothing, saying nothing. Now those people were allowed to leave their homes.

Then those people said, "We must leave here and go somewhere else to live. This is a bad place. It stinks with signs of our stinginess and greed."

"It could have happened that way," Charles says almost casually. And then, a bit sternly, "Let's move on. We've been here long enough."

During the next two weeks, we visit other places with Apache commemorative names, and Charles relates the stories that explain their origins and supply their cultural backing. At several of these places, as at Shades of Shit, he finds the stories threadbare and proceeds to enlarge upon them, building historical place-worlds with ease and consummate skill. Each story is concerned with disruptive social acts, with everyday life gone out of control, and each concludes with a stark reminder that trouble would not have occurred if people had behaved in ways they knew they should. Each depicts the anguish of those who erred and the depth of their regret. For me, riveted and moved, the country takes on a different cast, a density of meaning—and with it a formidable strength—it did not have before. Here, there, and over there, I see, are places which proclaim by their presence and their names both the imminence of chaos and the preventive wisdom of moral norms. "Don't make mistakes," these places seem to say. "Think sensibly and do what is right. For therein goodness lies, the goodness inherent in established patterns of social order, and therein lies survival."

These are my thoughts at Widows Pause For Breath ('Istaa Hadaanáyołé), a grassy flat with sunflowers, where three Apache sisters keened for several days after learning that their husbands, with whom they had violated sexual proscriptions, had died in a raid against some Navajos. And again at They Piled On Top Of Each Other ('Iłk'eejijeedé), a former gambling ground where a man was killed and others injured in a furious brawl triggered by unfounded accusations of cheating during a high-stakes match for horses. And again at Navajos Are Coming! (Yúdahą́ Kaikaiyé), a winding draw where four Apache families avoided certain ambush when an alert young woman heard a horse whose nicker she did not recognize; a complacent sentry, supposedly on guard, was asleep at his post, having drunk too much *túłibai* (literally, 'gray water'), a native beverage made from corn.

The commemorative place-names, accompanied by their stories, continue to accumulate, each one marking the site of some sad or tragic event from which valuable lessons can be readily drawn and taken fast to heart. And these names too, like their more descriptive counterparts, have a poetry of their own, a song they sing, haunting and provocative, in a voice as old as Apaches on the land. Place-names such as

Sáan Łeezhiteezhé (Two Old Women Are Buried; a hill)

Tú 'Ahiyi'ee Nzį́né (They Are Grateful For Water; a small flat close to an arroyo)

Na'ishǫ́ Bitsit'iiyé (Lizards Dart Away In Front; the eastern face of a mountain)

Kolah Dahch'ewoołé (She Carries Her Brother On Her Back; a steep slope)

Są́ Silį́į́ Sidáhá (She Became Old Sitting; a cornfield)

Ták'eh Godzigé (Rotten Field; another cornfield)

'Ihi'na' Ha'itin (Trail To Life Goes Up; a butte)

Chaghášhé Biké'é (Children's Footprints; a rock in an evanescent stream)

Dǫ́' Bigową́né (Fly's Camp; an ephemeral spring)

and many more besides.

On the second day of August, while drinking coffee near a sandstone formation named Tséé Łitsog Deez'áhá (Yellow Rocks Jut Out), Charles announces that he will work with us no more. There are plants he needs to collect, medicines he must make, and he is counting on Jason to help him until the start of school. He also notes that Morley and I have yet to translate some of the tapes he made during the summer, and this, of course, will take time; it would not be wise for us (he means me) to do it in a hurry. Charles seems relieved with his decision to leave our project, glad that his time will again be his own to do with as he chooses. Autumn is not far off—the clouds have told him that—and now is none too soon to begin to prepare for winter. He is obviously eager to get on with other things.

But Charles is not finished teaching. Fingering his hat and looking at the ground, he recalls the day in May when he explained to me that Western Apache place-names were created by his ancestors, that they were—and are—his ancestors' very own words. Now, he believes, I know this to be so. He also wants me to know that our travels together were planned by him to reflect the changing conditions under which the names were conferred. Descriptive place-names came first,

he reminds me, bestowed at a time when his ancestors were exploring the land and deciding to make it their home. The names of clans, which are based upon descriptive place-names, came later, when the land was being settled and people had gathered in the vicinity of farms. Commemorative names were awarded last, after the Apaches had made the land their own and were experiencing the rewards—and also the painful problems—that come with community living. (Additional names, he goes on to say, have been coined in recent times, in English as well as in Apache, but these are fairly few and of relatively minor consequence.) The point Charles wishes to make is one he made before—that whenever one uses a place-name, even unthinkingly, one is quoting ancestral speech—and that is not only good but something to take seriously. It is something, he says, to think about.

And now it is time to go. Morley looks downcast and I am feeling sad. We will miss our days in the country with Charles. Stumbling over my words, I try to thank him for all he has done. He listens, nods, and once again takes steps to relieve an awkward moment. "Jason needs to drink pop," he says brightly. "Maybe Orange Crush. Morley, you need a Reese Cup!" And then, adjusting his well-worn hat, Charles Henry smiles and turns to walk back to the Jeep.

Place-worlds and Western Apache History

In 1962, the distinguished anthropologist Edward N. Spicer observed somewhat wistfully that Western Apache people, while plainly interested in their own tribal history, showed very little interest in becoming tribal historians.

> Curiously enough, the Western Apache are one of the most written about peoples of the Southwest and yet they remain, in my opinion, the most poorly understood by whitemen. Apaches complain constantly that all the history in print misrepresents them, yet so far no Apache autobiographer or even a rough chronicler has emerged. Perhaps we may expect that development within the next few years. (Spicer 1962:593)

Today, more than thirty years later, one could still maintain that the Western Apaches have yet to produce a tribal historian—but only

were one to judge, as Spicer did, by Anglo-American standards of what historians are and how they practice their craft. And there, of course, is the rub. For by now it should be clear that Apache standards for interpreting the past are not the same as our own, and that working Apache historians—Charles Henry among them—go about their business with different aims and procedures. It may also have been surmised that few Apache people would wish to change these procedures, much less abandon them, and that Spicer's call to adopt another approach will probably go unheeded for quite some time to come. But why? Why the resistance? What is it about established Apache practices for exploring tribal history that Apache men and women find so attractive and rewarding? And why are certain Anglo-American practices, such as crafting extended chronicles and presenting autobiographies, tangential to their interests and unsuited to their tastes? What, in short, creates the evident gulf between these two conflicting perspectives on making useful visits to the country of the past?

As conceived by Apaches from Cibecue, the past is a well-worn 'path' or 'trail' (*'intin*) which was traveled first by the people's founding ancestors and which subsequent generations of Apaches have traveled ever since. Beyond the memories of living persons, this path is no longer visible—the past has disappeared—and thus it is unavailable for direct consultation and study. For this reason, the past must be constructed—which is to say, imagined—with the aid of historical materials, sometimes called 'footprints' or 'tracks' (*biké' goz'ą́ą́*), that have survived into the present.[6] These materials come in various forms, including Apache place-names, Apache stories and songs, and different kinds of relics found at locations throughout Apache country (the hand-cut stones surrounding the spring at Snakes' Water provide a good example). Because no one knows when these phenomena came into being, locating past events in time can be accomplished only in a vague and general way. This is of little consequence, however, for what matters most to Apaches is *where* events occurred, not when, and what they serve to reveal about the development and character of Apache social life. In light of these priorities, temporal considerations, though certainly not irrelevant, are accorded secondary importance.

For people like Charles Henry and Morley Cromwell, the country of the past—and with it Apache history—is never more than a narrated place-world away. It is thus very near, as near as the workings of their own imaginations, and can be easily brought to life at almost any time. It is history constructed in spurts, in sudden bursts of imaginative activity, and it takes the form of stories delivered in spoken Apache, the language of the ancestors and most of their modern descendants. Answering the question "What happened here?", it deals in the main with single events, and because these are tied to places within Apache territory, it is pointedly local and unfailingly episodic. It is also extremely personal, consistently subjective, and therefore highly variable among those who work to produce it. For these and other reasons, it is history without authorities—all narrated place-worlds, provided they seem plausible, are considered equally valid—and the idea of compiling "definitive accounts" is rejected out of hand as unfeasible and undesirable. Weakly empirical, thinly chronological, and rarely written down, Western Apache history as practiced by Apaches advances no theories, tests no hypotheses, and offers no general models. What it does instead, and likely has done for centuries, is fashion possible worlds, give them expressive shape, and present them for contemplation as images of the past that can deepen and enlarge awareness of the present. In the country of the past, as Apaches like to explore it, the place-maker is an indispensable guide.

And this in a powerful sense. For the place-maker's main objective is to speak the past into being, to summon it with words and give it dramatic form, to *produce* experience by forging ancestral worlds in which others can participate and readily lose themselves. To this engrossing end, as Charles Henry showed repeatedly, the place-maker often speaks as a witness on the scene, describing ancestral events "as they are occurring" and creating in the process a vivid sense that what happened long ago—right here, on this very spot—could be happening *now*. Within this narrative frame, all is movement and animated talk: the ancestors come and go, voicing their thoughts and feelings, always engaged in pressing activities (naming places and clans, cultivating corn, guarding against enemies), occasionally elated, often subdued, constantly concerned with staying alive. Leaders lead, followers follow, and most of the time

things are done correctly. But now and again mistakes are made, serious trouble ensues, and social life is shattered. Pathos reigns and the air is charged with suspense. What will happen next? What will the ancestors do? How will they survive?

Thus performed and dramatized, Western Apache place-making becomes a form of narrative art, a type of historical theater in which the "pastness" of the past is summarily stripped away and long-elapsed events are made to unfold as if before one's eyes. It is history given largely in the active present tense ("Now they are arriving. . ."), and it makes extensive use of quoted speech to enter the hearts and minds of those whom it portrays ("Our relatives will not harm us," they said; "Now we are in for trouble," they thought). It is typically concise, tends to be closely plotted, and rarely becomes redundant. It thrives on verisimilitude ("There were swarms and swarms of flies. Huge swarms!"), and what it may lack in subtlety is more than offset by moments of intense urgency and involvement with its subjects ("*Look what has become of us now!*"). Its principal themes are the endless quest for survival, the crucial importance of community and kin, and the beneficial consequences, practical and otherwise, of adhering to moral norms. Accordingly, one of its basic aims is to instill empathy and admiration for the ancestors themselves—they came, they settled, they toiled, they endured—and to hold them up to all as worthy of emulation, except, of course, when they fail to do what is right and threaten by their actions the welfare of the group; then they are punished or killed.

By comparison, Western Apache history of the Anglo-American variety strikes many Apache people as distant and unfamiliar.[7] Unspoken and unanimated, it lies silent and inert on the printed English page; it is history without voices to thrust it into the present. Removed from the contexts of daily social life (reading, Apaches have noticed, is an isolating activity), it also seems unconnected to daily affairs and concerns; it is history without discernible applications. Detached from the local Apache landscape, it has few spatial anchors, and when places are identified, as often they are not, their names are not their own; it is history loosely situated, geographically adrift. Obsessed with dating historical events, it packs them into tightly ordered sequences which it then may try to explain by invoking abstract forces ("mounting tribal aggression" and

"outbreaks of cultural disarray" were two of Morley Cromwell's favorites) in which no one can quite believe; it thus becomes remote, intangible, divorced in suspect ways from the forces of human agency. Commonly qualified and sometimes hotly debated by persons who construct it, it appears to be in search of final historical truths, of which Apaches believe there are very few indeed; it can therefore seem arrogant and misguided, pretending to large discoveries it could not possibly make. And it does go on and on, persistently uninformed by the views of Apache people, suggesting quite improbably that useful accounts of history can and should be fashioned without consulting those whose history it is. Add to this that it has almost nothing to say about the people's early ancestors, and that recognizable place-worlds are virtually nonexistent, and you have a set of practices which by Western Apache standards rather miss the mark. Apache tribal history as crafted by Anglo-Americans proceeds on different assumptions, produces a different discourse, and involves a different aesthetic.[8] Mute and unperformed, sprawling in its way over time and space alike, it strikes Apache audiences as dense, turgid, and lacking in utility. But far more important is the fact that it does not excite. It does not captivate. It does not *engage* and provoke a measure of wonder. As Charles Henry said once in English, summing up quite a bit, "It's pretty mainly quiet. It stays far away from all our many places."[9]

Staying away from places is something that Western Apaches would not recommend, and in this pervasive conviction they are not alone. As Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux), has observed, most American Indian tribes embrace "spatial conceptions of history" in which places and their names—and all that these may symbolize—are accorded central importance.[10] For Indian men and women, the past lies embedded in features of the earth—in canyons and lakes, mountains and arroyos, rocks and vacant fields—which together endow their lands with multiple forms of significance that reach into their lives and shape the ways they think. Knowledge of places is therefore closely linked to knowledge of the self, to grasping one's position in the larger scheme of things, including one's own community, and to securing a confident sense of who one is as a person. With characteristic eloquence, N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa) suggests that this has been so for a very long time.

> From the time the Indian first set foot upon this continent, he centered his life in the natural world. He is deeply invested in the earth, committed to it both in his consciousness and in his instinct. The sense of place is paramount. Only in reference to the earth can he persist in his identity. (Momaday 1994:1)

In the Western Apache case, this is certainly true. The people's sense of place, their sense of their tribal past, and their vibrant sense of themselves are inseparably intertwined. Their identity has persisted. Their ancestors saw to this, and in the country of the past, where the ancestors come alive in resonating place-worlds, they do so still today. Their voices are strong and firm—and sometimes it is unclear who is quoting whom.[11]

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 past decade I have written 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; apparently my report was useful, mainly because it helped to 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 appearance 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 Halíné (Much 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 too. We need it to live right." Then the old man smiled to himself and his eyes began to dance.

3

Speaking with Names

What we call the landscape is generally considered to be something "out there." But, while some aspects of the landscape are clearly external to both our bodies and our minds, what each of us actually experiences is selected, shaped, and colored by what we know.

—*Barrie Greenbie,* Spaces: Dimensions of the Human Landscape

An unfamiliar landscape, like an unfamiliar language, is always a little daunting, and when the two are encountered together—as they are, commonly enough, in those out-of-the-way communities where ethnographers tend to crop up—the combination may be downright unsettling. From the outset, of course, neither landscape nor language can be ignored. On the contrary, the shapes and colors and contours of the land, together with the shifting sounds and cadences of native discourse, thrust themselves upon the newcomer with a force so vivid and direct as to be virtually inescapable. Yet for all their sensory immediacy (and there are occasions, as any ethnographer will attest, when the sheer constancy of it grows to formidable proportions) landscape and discourse seem resolutely out of reach. Although close at hand and tangible in the extreme, each in its own way appears remote and inaccessible, anonymous and indistinct, and somehow, implausibly, a shade less than fully believable. And neither landscape nor discourse, as if determined to accentuate these conflicting impressions, may seem the least bit interested in having them resolved. Emphatically "there" but conspicuously lacking in accustomed forms of order and arrangement, landscape and discourse confound the stranger's efforts to invest them with significance, and this uncommon predicament, which produces nothing if not uncertainty, can be keenly disconcerting.

Surrounded by foreign geographical objects and intractable acts of speech, even the most practiced ethnographer becomes diffident and cautious. For the meanings of objects and acts alike can only be guessed at, and once the guesses have been recognized for the arbitrary constructions they almost always are, one senses acutely that one's own experience of things and events "out there" cannot be used as a reliable guide to the experience of native people. In other words, one must acknowledge that local understandings of external realities are fashioned from local cultural materials, and that, knowing little or nothing of the latter, one's ability to make appropriate sense of "what is" and "what occurs" in another's environment is bound to be deficient. For better or worse, the ethnographer sees, landscape and speech acts do not interpret their own significance. Initially at least, and typically for many months to come, this is a task that only members of the indigenous community are adequately equipped to accomplish; and accomplish it they do, day in and day out, with enviably little difficulty. For where native men and women are concerned, the external world *is* as it appears to them to be—naturally, unproblematically, and more or less consistently—and rarely do they have reason to consider that the coherence it displays is an intricate product of their own collective manufacture. Cultures run deep, as the saying goes, and all of us take our "native's point of view" very much for granted.

In this way, or something roughly like it, the ethnographer comes to appreciate that features of the local landscape, no less than utterances exchanged in forms of daily discourse, acquire value and significance by virtue of the ideational systems with which they are apprehended and construed. Symbolically constituted, socially transmitted, and individually applied, such systems operate to place flexible constraints on how the physical environment can (and should) be known, how its occupants can (and should) be found to act, and how the doings of both can (and should) be discerned to affect each other. Accordingly, each system delineates a distinctive way of being-in-the-world (Ricoeur 1979), an informal logic for engaging the world and thinking about the engagement (Geertz 1973), an array of conceptual frameworks for organizing experience and rendering it intelligible (Goffman 1974). In any community, the meanings assigned to geographical features and acts of speech will be influenced by the subjective determinations of the people who assign them, and these determinations, needless to say, will exhibit variation. But the character of the meanings—their steadier themes, their recurrent tonalities, and, above all, their conventionalized modes of expression—will bear the stamp of a common cast of mind. Constructions of reality that reflect conceptions of reality, the meanings of landscapes and acts of speech are personalized manifestations of a shared perspective on the human condition.

Mulling over these apparent truths, the ethnographer is likely to notice that members of the local community involve themselves with their geographical landscape in at least three distinct ways. First, they may simply observe the landscape, attending for reasons of their own to aspects of its appearance and to sundry goings-on within it. Second, they may use the landscape, engaging in a broad range of physical activities which, depending on their duration and extent, may leave portions of the landscape visibly modified. Third, native people may communicate about the landscape, formulating descriptions and other representations of it that they share in the course of social gatherings. On many occasions, community members can be observed to alternate freely among these different modes of involvement (they may also, of course, combine them), but it is obvious that events in the last mode—communicative acts of topographic representation—will be most revealing of the conceptual instruments with which native people interpret their natural surroundings. And though such representations may be fashioned from a variety of semiotic materials (gestural, pictorial, musical, and others), few are more instructive than those which are wrought with words.

Ordinary talk, the ethnographer sees, provides a readily available window onto the structure and significance of other peoples' worlds, and so (slowly at first, by fits and starts, and never without protracted bouts of guessing) he or she begins to learn to listen. And also to freshly see. For as native concepts and beliefs find external purchase on specific features of the local topography, the entire landscape acquires a crisp new dimension that seems to move it more surely into view. What earlier appeared as a circular sweep of undifferentiated

natural architecture now starts to emerge as a precise arrangement of named sites and localities, each distinguished by a set of physical attributes and cultural associations that mark it as unique. In native discourse, the local landscape falls neatly and repeatedly into *places*—and places, as Franz Boas (1934) emphasized some years ago, are social constructions par excellence.

It is excessive to claim, as George Trager (1968:537) has done, that "the way man talks about the physical universe is his only way of knowing anything about it." Nonetheless, most ethnographers would agree that Trager's claim contains a large amount of truth, and some have suggested that this can be seen with particular clarity where language and landscapes are concerned. For whenever the members of a community speak about their landscape—whenever they name it, or classify it, or tell stories about it—they unthinkingly represent it in ways that are compatible with shared understandings of how, in the fullest sense, they know themselves to occupy it. Which is simply to note that in conversational encounters, brief and lengthy alike, individuals exchange accounts and observations of the landscape that consistently presuppose mutually held ideas of what it actually is, why its constituent places are important, and how it may intrude on the practical affairs of its inhabitants. Thus, if frequently by implication and allusion only, bits and pieces of a common worldview are given situated relevance and made temporarily accessible. In talk about the landscape, as Martin Heidegger (1977:323) so aptly put it, cultural conceptions of "dwelling together" are placed on oblique display.

At the same time, however, and often just as obliquely, persons who engage in this sort of talk also exchange messages about aspects of the social encounter in which they are jointly involved, including their framings of the encounter itself (i.e., "what is going on here") and their morally guided assessments of the comportment of fellow participants. Consequently, the possibility arises that as speakers communicate about the landscape and the kinds of dealings they have with it, they may also communicate about themselves as social actors and the kinds of dealings they are having with one another. Stated more precisely, statements pertaining to the landscape may be employed to convey tacit messages about the organization of face-to-face

relationships and the normative footings on which those relationships are currently being conducted. Indirectly perhaps, but tellingly all the same, participants in verbal encounters thus put their landscapes to work—interactional work—and how they choose to go about it may shed interesting light on matters other than geography. For example, when a character in a short story by Paul Gallico (1954:69) says to his chronically unfaithful lover, "Go make a nest on Forty-Second Street," it is altogether clear that he is drawing upon the cultural meaning of a place to communicate something important about their relationship.

From the standpoint of the ethnographer, then, situated talk of geographical landscapes is more than a valuable resource for exploring local conceptions of the surrounding material universe. It may, in addition, be useful for interpreting forms of social action that regularly occur within that universe. For landscapes are always available to their seasoned inhabitants in more than material terms. Landscapes are available in symbolic terms as well, and so, chiefly through the manifold agencies of speech, they can be "detached" from their fixed spatial moorings and transformed into instruments of thought and vehicles of purposive behavior. Thus transformed, landscapes and the places that fill them become tools for the imagination, expressive means for accomplishing verbal deeds, and also, of course, eminently portable possessions to which individuals can maintain deep and abiding attachments, regardless of where they travel. In these ways, as N. Scott Momaday (1974) has observed, men and women learn to *appropriate* their landscapes, to think and act "with" them as well as about and upon them, and to weave them with spoken words into the very foundations of social life.[1] And in these ways, too, as every ethnographer eventually comes to appreciate, geographical landscapes are never culturally vacant. The ethnographic challenge is to fathom what it is that a particular landscape, filled to brimming with past and present significance, can be called upon to "say," and what, through the saying, it can be called upon to "do."

But where to begin and how to proceed? How, in any community, to identify the conceptual frameworks and verbal practices with which members appropriate their geography? One promising approach, as I have been suggesting, is to attend to native place-names and the full

variety of communicative functions served by acts of naming in different social contexts. It may be noted in this regard that place-names, or toponyms, comprise a distinct semantic domain in the lexicons of all known languages, and that the formal properties of place-name systems, together with their spatial correlates and etymological histories, have long been objects of anthropological inquiry. But the common activity of placenaming—the actual use of toponyms in concrete instances of everyday speech—has attracted little attention from linguists or ethnographers. Less often still has placenaming been investigated as a universal means—and, it could well turn out, a universally primary means—for appropriating physical environments.

The reasons for this innocuous piece of scholarly neglect are several, but the main one arises from a widespread view of language in which proper names are assumed to have meaning solely in their capacity to refer and, as agents of reference, to enter into simple and complex predications. Many of the limitations imposed by this narrow conception of meaning have been exposed and criticized in recent years, most ably by linguistic anthropologists and philosophers of language who have shown that reference, though unquestionably a vital linguistic function, is but one of many that spoken utterances can be made to perform. But despite these salutary developments, and unhappily for students who seek to understand linguistic meaning as an emergent property of verbal interaction, the idea persists in many quarters that proper names, including toponyms, serve as referential vehicles whose only purpose is to denote, or "pick out," objects in the world.[2]

If a certain myopia attaches to this position, there is irony as well, for place-names are arguably among the most highly charged and richly evocative of all linguistic symbols. Because of their inseparable connection to specific localities, place-names may be used to summon forth an enormous range of mental and emotional associations—associations of time and space, of history and events, of persons and social activities, of oneself and stages in one's life. And in their capacity to evoke, in their compact power to muster and consolidate so much of what a landscape may be taken to represent in both personal and cultural terms, place-names acquire a functional value that easily

matches their utility as instruments of reference. Most notably, as T. S. Eliot (1932) and Seamus Heaney (1980) have remarked, place-names provide materials for resonating ellipses, for speaking and writing in potent shorthand, for communicating much while saying very little. Poets and songwriters have long understood that economy of expression may enhance the quality and force of aesthetic discourse, and that place-names stand ready to be exploited for this purpose. Linguists and anthropologists would do well to understand that in many communities, similar considerations may influence common forms of spoken interaction, and that in this arena too, place-names may occupy a privileged position. For these and other reasons, an ethnographic approach to the activity of placenaming seems well worth pursuing. The present chapter, which now takes a sharp ethnographic turn, is offered as an illustration of where such an approach may lead, and why, beyond the illumination of specific cases, it may also shed light on matters of general interest.

Speaking with Names

The Western Apache residents of Cibecue are not averse to talking about each other, and some of them—like Lola Machuse—seem to enjoy it immensely. "I'm intress in evybody!" Lola will exclaim in her distinctive variety of English, and everyone in Cibecue knows she speaks the truth. Just over sixty, she is a handsome woman with large brown eyes, a sharply defined nose, and splendidly shaped hands that are hardly ever still. The mother of eight children, she divides her time between caring for the needs of her family, collecting plants for use in herbal medicines, participating in ceremonial activities, and farming. She also keeps fully informed on what happens in her village and, like other Apache women who have led exemplary lives, is frequently invited to comment on current events. And comment on them she does—intelligently, insightfully, usually sympathetically, and with a lively enthusiasm for nuance and detail that is sometimes as amusing as it is mildly overwhelming. Western Apache communities, like small communities everywhere, operate largely by word of mouth, and people from Cibecue have suggested more than once that Lola Machuse is practically a community unto herself. Unfailingly cheerful

and completely at ease with herself, she is a compassionate person with a spirited zest for life.

It is a hot afternoon in the middle of July and Lola Machuse is working at home. Seated in the shade of a large brush-covered ramada, she is mending clothes in the company of her husband, Robert, two Apache women named Emily and Louise, and another visitor, myself, who has come to settle a small debt and get a drink of water.[3] The heat of the afternoon is heavy and oppressive, and there is little to do but gaze at the landscape that stretches out before us: a narrow valley, bisected by a stream lined with stately cottonwood trees, which rises abruptly to embrace a broken series of red sandstone bluffs, and, beyond the bluffs, a flat expanse of grassy plain ending in the distance at the base of a low range of mountains. Fearsome in the blazing sun, the country around Cibecue lies motionless and inert, thinly shrouded in patches of bluish haze. Nothing stirs except for Clifford, the Machuses' ancient yellow dog, who shifts his position in the dust, groans fitfully, and snaps at a fly. Silence.

The silence is broken by Louise, who reaches into her oversized purse for a can of Pepsi-Cola, jerks it open with a loud snap, and begins to speak in the Cibecue dialect of Western Apache. She speaks softly, haltingly, and with long pauses to accentuate the seriousness of what she is saying. Late last night, she reports, sickness assailed her younger brother. Painful cramps gnawed at his stomach. Numbness crept up his legs and into his thighs. He vomited three times in rapid succession. He looked extremely pale. In the morning, just before dawn, he was driven to the hospital at Whiteriver. The people who had gathered at his home were worried and frightened and talked about what happened. One of them, Louise's cousin, recalled that several months ago, when the young man was working on a cattle roundup near a place named Tsį Biyi'itiné (Trail Extends Into A Grove Of Sticklike Trees), he had inadvertently stepped on a snakeskin that lay wedged in a crevice between some rocks. Another member of the roundup crew, who witnessed the incident, cautioned the young man that contact with snakes is always dangerous and urged him to immediately seek the services of a 'snake medicine person' (*tł'iish bi diiyin*). But Louise's younger brother had only smiled, remarking tersely that he was not alarmed and that no harm would befall him.

Louise, who is plainly worried and upset by these events, pauses and sips from her drink. After a minute or so, having regained her composure, she begins to speak again. But Lola Machuse quietly interrupts her. Emily and Robert will speak as well. What follows is a record of their discourse, together with English translations of the utterances.[4]

Louise: Shidizhé . . . (My younger brother . . .)

Lola: Tséé Hadigaiyé yú 'ágodzaa. (It happened at Line Of White Rocks Extends Up And Out, at this very place!)

[Pause: 30–45 seconds]

Emily: Ha'aa. Túzhį' Yaahigaiyé yú 'ágodzaa. (Yes. It happened at Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water, at this very place!)

[Pause: 30–45 seconds]

Lola: Da'aníí. K'is Deeschii' Naaditiné yú 'ágodzaa. (Truly. It happened at Trail Extends Across A Red Ridge With Alder Trees, at this very place!)

Louise: [laughs softly]

Robert: Gozhǫǫ doleeł. (Pleasantness and goodness will be forthcoming.)

Lola: Gozhǫǫ doleeł. (Pleasantness and goodness will be forthcoming.)

Louise: Shidizhé bíni'éshid ne góshé? (My younger brother is foolish, isn't he, dog?)

Following this brief exchange, talk ceases under the brush-covered ramada and everyone retreats into the privacy of his or her thoughts. Louise drinks again from her can of Pepsi-Cola and passes it on to Emily. Lola Machuse returns to her sewing, while Robert studies a horse in a nearby corral. Only Clifford, who has launched a feverish attack on an itch below his ear, seems unaffected by what has been said. Silence once again.

But what *has* been said? To what set of personal and social ends? And why in such a clipped and cryptic fashion? If these questions create problems for us (and I think it can be assumed that they do), it is because we are dealing with a spate of conversation whose organiza-

tion eludes us, a strip of Western Apache verbal doings whose animating aims and purposes seem obscure. But why? The problem is not that the literal meanings of utterances comprising the conversation are difficult to grasp. On the contrary, anyone with a passing knowledge of Western Apache grammar could attest that each of the utterances is well-formed in all respects and that each presents one or more simple claims whose positive truth-value no Apache would presume to dispute. It is not, then, on the surface of the utterances—or, as linguists prefer to say, at the level of their propositional content—that our interpretive difficulties lie.

What is puzzling about this snippet of Western Apache talk is that we are unable to account for the ways in which its constituent utterances are related to each other. Put more exactly, we lack the knowledge required to establish sequential relations among the utterances, the unstated premises and assumptions that order the utterances, just as they occur, into a piece of meaningful discourse. It is by no means evident, for example, how Lola Machuse's statement ("It happened at Line Of White Rocks Extends Up And Out, at this very place!") should be related to Louise's narrative about her ailing brother. Neither is it clear how Emily's assertion ("Yes. It happened at Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water, at this very place!") should be interpreted as a response to the narrative or to Lola's prior statement. What are we to make of Lola's response to Emily ("Truly. It happened at Trail Extends Across A Red Ridge With Alder Trees, at this very place!")? And why should it be, as things are coming to a close, that Louise sees fit to address the Machuses' dog? Our puzzlement persists throughout, causing us to experience the text of the conversation as fragmented and disjointed, as oddly unmotivated, as failing to come together as a whole. In short, we are unable to place a construction on the text that invests it with *coherence,* and so, in the end, we cannot know what the conversation itself may have been about. Lola Machuse and her companions have surely accomplished something with their talk. But what?

The episode at the Machuses' home exemplifies a venerable practice with which Western Apache speakers exploit the evocative power of place-names to comment on the moral conduct of persons who are absent from the scene. Called "speaking with names" (*yaʔti' bee'íʔzhí*),

this verbal routine also allows those who engage in it to register claims about their own moral worth, about aspects of their social relationships with other people on hand, and about a particular way of attending to the local landscape that is avowed to produce a beneficial form of heightened self-awareness. And as if this were not enough, much of what gets said and done is attributed to unseen Apache ancestors who are prompted by the voices of conversational participants to communicate in a collective voice that no one actually hears. All in all, the practice of "speaking with names" is a subtle and subterranean affair.

To gain an understanding of this practice and the sources of its coherence for Western Apache people, I shall assume that spoken discourse is a cooperative activity in which individuals seek to accomplish a range of communicative purposes. I shall also assume that participants in many kinds of discourse use language to explore with each other the significance of past and potential events, drawing from these examinations certain consequences for their present and future actions. Finally, I shall assume that speakers pursue such objectives by producing utterances that are intended to perform several speech acts simultaneously, and that hearers, making dexterous use of relevant bodies of cultural knowledge, react and respond to these acts at different levels of abstraction. Spoken discourse, then, is more than a chain of situated utterances. Rather, as William Labov and David Fanshel (1977:26–28) have shown, discourse consists in a developing matrix of utterances and actions, bound together by a web of shared understandings pertinent to both, which serves as an expanding context for interpreting the meanings of utterances and actions alike. More a matter of linguistic function than of linguistic form, coherence in discourse is achieved when participants put their utterances to interlocking forms of mutually recognizable work. More a matter of implicit doings than of explicit sayings, coherence is what participants hear (though generally they fail to notice hearing it) when their work is going well.

In Lola Machuse's somnolent yard, where the work of discourse went off without a hitch, coherence was never in question. Neither was the smooth implementation of a Western Apache technique for appropriating the natural landscape, a distinctive cultural framework for interpreting the landscape and turning it by means of speech to

specific social ends. Never in question, that is, to anyone but myself—a superfluous, slightly stupefied, and roundly perplexed outsider. What did Lola Machuse and those other Apaches imagine themselves to be up to as they sat around swapping place-names? How were they making sense, and what sort of sense were they making? What manner of thinking informed their utterances and the actions their utterances performed? What, in short, was the culture of their discourse?

"We Gave That Woman Pictures"

If the discourse at Lola Machuse's home is to be usefully understood, steps must be taken to enter the conceptual world of the people who produced it. Needless to say, we cannot recover their experience of their discourse as it actually occurred, what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1969:89) called the "inner experience of language-spoken-now." But we can explore, retrospectively and therefore in reconstructive terms, what participants in the encounter took their discourse to be about, why they saw fit to contribute to it as they did, and how they interpreted the utterances and actions that composed it. In addition, we can explore the culturally based assumptions and beliefs that made these interpretations possible, the "linguistic ideology" with which persons from Cibecue rationalize for themselves and explain to others what spoken words are capable of doing when used in certain ways.[5] In short, we can construct an ethnographic account of the speech event itself, an interpretation of Apache interpretations that relates the event to the body of thought that made its occurrence meaningful and to the particular social circumstances that made its meaning unique.

All such undertakings profit from the guidance of experienced native instructors, and no one living at Cibecue is more capable or willing in this regard than Lola Machuse herself. So let us begin, as in fact I did shortly after the episode at her camp took place, by considering her account of what transpired as the women drank their Pepsi and Clifford snapped at flies.

> We gave that woman [Louise] pictures to work on in her mind. We didn't speak too much to her. We didn't hold her down. That way she could travel in her mind. She could add on to them [the pictures] easily. We gave her clear pictures with place-names. So her mind went to those places, standing in front of them as our ancestors did long ago. That way she could see what happened there long ago. She could hear stories in her mind, perhaps hear our ancestors speaking. She could recall the knowledge of our ancestors.
>
> We call it speaking with names. Place-names are all we need for that, speaking with names. We just fix them up. That woman was too sad. She was worried too much about her younger brother. So we tried to make her feel better. We tried to make her think good thoughts. That woman's younger brother acted stupidly. He was stupid and careless. He failed to show respect. No good! We said nothing critical about him to her. We talked around it. Those place-names are strong! After a while, I gave her a funny story. She didn't get mad. She was feeling better. She laughed. Then she had enough, I guess. She spoke to the dog about her younger brother, criticizing him, so we knew we had helped her out.

Lola Machuse recorded this statement two days after the speech event at her home took place, and four days later, having discussed her account with all parties involved, I determined to treat it as a guide for subsequent inquiries. Everyone to whom I presented Lola's account agreed that it was encompassing and astute; it touched, they said, on everything that was essential for getting a proper sense of what "speaking with names" might be used to accomplish. But they also agreed that it was rather too highly condensed, a bare bones sort of interpretation, adequate for persons familiar with the practice but understandably opaque to a neophyte such as myself, and that it could profit from explication and fleshing out. Never one to be outdone, Lola Machuse agreed instantly with the agreers, saying she was well aware of the problem, thank you very much, and had understood all along that further instruction would be necessary. Sometimes talk is complicated, she observed, and one must move slowly to get to the bottom of it. So with all of us scrambling to agree with Lola, and with Lola herself firmly in charge, the fleshing out process began. Our work took longer than I had expected, but now, with much of it done, Lola Machuse's original account seems better to me than ever; it provides, as one of

my older Apache consultants told me it would, a "straight path to knowing." And so I have used Lola's interpretation here, partitioned into convenient segments, as a model, a path of a different kind, for organizing and presenting my own.

> We gave that woman pictures to work on in her mind. We didn't speak too much to her. We didn't hold her down. That way she could travel in her mind. She could add on to them easily.

Western Apache conceptions of language and thought are cast in pervasively visual terms. Every occasion of 'speaking' (*yałti'*) provides tangible evidence of 'thinking' (*natsíkęęs*), and thinking occurs in the form of 'pictures' (*be'elzaahí*) that persons 'see' (*yo'íį*) in their minds. Prompted by a desire to 'display thinking' (*nil'íį natsíkęęs*), speaking involves the use of language to 'depict' (*'e'ele'*) and 'convey' (*yo'áát*) these images to the members of an audience, such that they, on 'hearing' (*yídits'ag*) and 'holding' (*yotą'*) the speaker's words, can 'view' (*yínel'íį'*) the images in their own minds. Thinking, as Apaches conceive of it, consists in picturing to oneself and attending privately to the pictures. Speaking consists in depicting one's pictures for other people, who are thus invited to picture these depictions and respond to them with depictions of their own. Discourse, or 'conversation' (*'iłch'į' yádaach'ilti'*), consists in a running exchange of depicted pictures and pictured depictions, a reciprocal representation and visualization of the ongoing thoughts of participating speakers.

But things are not really so neat and tidy. According to consultants from Cibecue, the depictions offered by Western Apache speakers are invariably incomplete. Even the most gifted and proficient speakers contrive to leave things out, and small children, who have not yet learned to indulge in such contrivances, leave out many things. Consequently, Apache hearers must always 'add on' (*'ínágodn'aah*) to depictions made available to them in conversation, augmenting and supplementing these spoken images with images they fashion for themselves. This process is commonly likened to adding stones to a partially finished wall, or laying bricks upon the foundation of a house, because it is understood to involve a 'piling up' (*łik'iyiłt'ih*) of new materials onto like materials already in place. It is also said to resemble the rounding up of livestock: the 'bringing together' (*dalaházhį'ch'indíłt*) of cattle or horses from scattered locations to a central place where other animals have been previously gathered. These metaphors all point to the same general idea, which is that depictions provided by Apache speakers are treated by Apache hearers as bases on which to build, as projects to complete, as invitations to exercise the imagination.

Western Apaches regard spoken conversation as a form of 'voluntary cooperation' (*łich'į' 'odaach'idii*) in which all participants are entitled to displays of 'respect' (*yińłsįh*). Accordingly, whenever people speak in cordial and affable tones, considerations of 'kindness and politeness' (*bił goch'oba'*) come centrally into play. Such considerations may influence Apache speech in a multitude of ways, but none is more basic than the courtesy speakers display by refraining from 'speaking too much' (*łąągo yałti'*). Although the effects of this injunction are most clearly evident in the spare verbal style employed by Apache storytellers, people from Cibecue insist that all forms of narration benefit from its application. And the reasons, they explain, are simple enough.

A person who speaks too much—someone who describes too busily, who supplies too many details, who repeats and qualifies too many times—presumes without warrant on the right of hearers to build freely and creatively on the speaker's own depictions. With too many words, such a speaker acts to 'smother' (*biká' yínłkaad*) his or her audience by seeming to say, arrogantly and coercively, "I *demand* that you see everything that happened, how it happened, and why it happened, *exactly* as I do." In other words, persons who speak too much insult the imaginative capabilities of other people, "blocking their thinking," as one of my consultants said in English, and "holding down their minds." So Western Apache narrators consistently take a different tack, implying by the economical manner of their speech, "I will depict just enough for you to see what happened, how it happened, and perhaps why it happened. Add on to these depictions however you see fit." An effective narrator, people from Cibecue report, never speaks too much; an effective narrator takes steps to "open up thinking," thereby encouraging his or her listeners to "travel in their minds."[6]

Figure 5 *T'iis Bitł'áh Tú 'Olíné (Water Flows Inward Under A Cottonwood Tree).*

We gave her clear pictures with place-names. So her mind went to those places, standing in front of them as our ancestors did long ago. That way she could see what happened there long ago. She could hear stories in her mind, perhaps hear our ancestors speaking. She could recall the knowledge of our ancestors.

Nothing is more basic to the telling of a Western Apache story than identifying the geographical locations at which events in the story unfold. For unless Apache listeners are able to picture a physical setting for narrated events—unless, as one of my consultants said, "your mind can travel to that place and really see it"—the events themselves will be difficult to imagine. This is because events in the narrative will seem to happen nowhere, and such an idea, Apaches assert, is preposterous and disquieting. Placeless events are an impossibility; everything that happens must happen somewhere. The location of an event

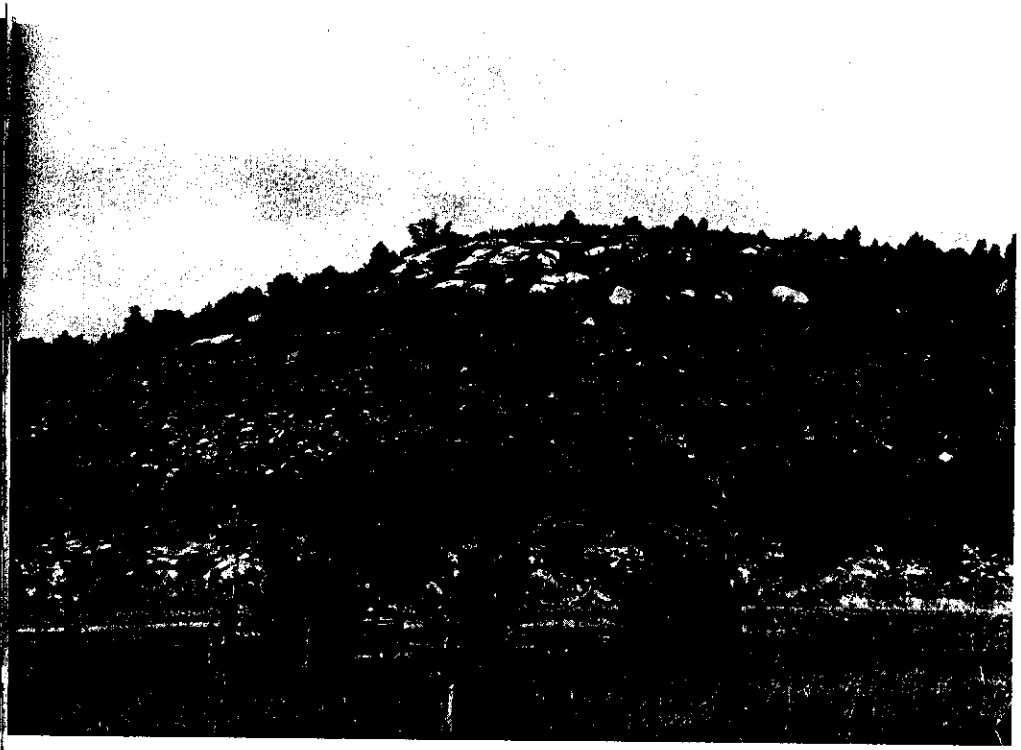

Figure 6 *Tséé Ligai Dah Sidilé (White Rocks Lie Above In A Compact Cluster).*

is an integral aspect of the event itself, and identifying the event's location is therefore essential to properly depicting—and effectively picturing—the event's occurrence. For these reasons, placeless stories simply do not get told. Instead, all Apache narratives are verbally anchored to points upon the land with precise depictions of specific locations. And what these depictions are accomplished with—what the primary spatial anchors of Apache narratives almost always turn out to be—are place-names.[7]

Some appreciation of the descriptive precision of Western Apache place-names can be gained by matching names with photographs of their geographical referents. By way of illustration, consider the three names listed below, which have been segmented into their constituent morphemes and whose referents are shown in figures 5–7.

Figure 7 *Tséé Biká' Tú Yaahiłįné (Water Flows Down On A Succession Of Flat Rocks).*

T'iis Bitł'áh Tú 'Olįné: *T'iis* (cottonwood tree) + *Bitł'áh* (under it; beneath it) + *Tú* (water) + *'O-* (inward) + *-łį-* (it flows) + *-né* (the one).
Translation: Water Flows Inward Under A Cottonwood Tree

Tséé Łigai Dah Sidilé: *Tséé* (rock; stone) + *Łigai* (white; whiteness) + *Dah* (above ground level) + *Sidil* (three or more form a compact cluster) + *-é* (the one).
Translation: White Rocks Lie Above In A Compact Cluster

Tséé Biká' Tú Yaahiłįné: *Tséé* (rock; stone) + *Biká'* (on top of it; a flattish object) + *Tú* (water) + *Yaa-* (downward) + *-hi-* (linear succession of regularly repeated movements) + *-łį* (it flows) + *-né* (the one).
Translation: Water Flows Down On A Succession Of Flat Rocks

As the photographs suggest, Western Apache place-names provide more than precise depictions of the sites to which the names refer. In addition, place-names implicitly identify positions for *viewing* these locations: optimal vantage points, so to speak, from which the sites can be observed, clearly and unmistakably, just as their names depict them. To picture a site from its name, then, requires that one imagine it as if standing or sitting at a particular spot, and it is to these privileged positions, Apaches say, that the images evoked by place-names cause them to travel in their minds.

Wherever the optimal vantage point for a named site may be located—east of the site or west, above it or below, near it or at some distance away—the vantage point is described as being 'in front of' (*bádnyú*) the site; and it is there, centuries ago, that ancestors of the Western Apache are believed to have stood when they gave the site its name. Accordingly, consultants from Cibecue explain that in positioning people's minds to look 'forward' (*bidááh*) into space, a place-name also positions their minds to look 'backward' (*t'ąązhi'*) into time. For as persons imagine themselves standing in front of a named site, they may imagine that they are standing in their 'ancestors' tracks' (*nohwizą́'yé biké'é*), and from this psychological perspective, which is sometimes described as an intense form of 'daydreaming' (*bił 'onaagodah*), traditional accounts of ancestral events associated with the site are said to be recalled with singular clarity and force.

The capacity of Western Apache place-names to situate people's minds in historical time and space is clearly apparent when names are used to anchor traditional narratives that depict ancestral life and illustrate aspects of 'ancestral knowledge' (*nohwizą́'yé bi kigoyą'íí*).[8] But the evocative power of place-names is most forcefully displayed when a name is used to substitute for the narrative it anchors, 'standing up alone' (*'o'áá*), as Apaches say, to symbolize the narrative as well as the knowledge it contains. On such occasions, a single place-name may accomplish the communicative work of an entire saga or historical tale, and sometimes, depending on the immediate social circumstances, it may accomplish even more. For when place-names are employed in this isolated and autonomous fashion—when, in other words, Apache people practice "speaking with names"—their actions are in-

terpreted as a recommendation to recall ancestral stories and apply them directly to matters of pressing personal concern. And in emotionally charged contexts like these, my consultants maintain, 'ancestral voices' (*nohwizą'yé bizhí*) may seem to speak directly to the individuals involved.[9]

> We call it speaking with names. Place-names are all we need for that, speaking with names. We just fix them up. That woman was too sad. She was worried too much about her younger brother. So we tried to make her feel better. We tried to make her think good thoughts.

Speaking with names is considered appropriate under certain conditions only, and these conditions tend to occur infrequently. Consequently, as people from Cibecue are quick to point out, place-names are usually put to other communicative ends. Most of the time, place-names are called upon to perform simple verbal chores: to indicate where one is going, for example, or to announce where one has been; to make plans for a forthcoming hunt, or to pinpoint the latest happenings gleaned from local gossip. When place-names are used for ordinary purposes such as these, Apache speakers typically produce the names in shortened or contracted forms. Thus, the name T'iis Bitł'áh Tú 'Olį́į́' (Water Flows Inward Under A Cottonwood Tree) is commonly heard as T'iis Tł'áh 'Olį́į́' or T'iis Tú 'Olį́į́', the name Tséé Biká' Tú Yaahilį́į́' (Water Flows Down On A Succession Of Flat Rocks) as Tséé Ká' Yaahilį́į́' or Tséé Tú Yahilį́į́', and so forth. In marked contrast to these abbreviated renderings, place-names intended to evoke mental pictures of the past are invariably spoken in full and are embellished, or 'fixed up' (*náyidlé*), with an optional suffix that imparts an emphatic force roughly equivalent to English "right here!" or "at this very place!" Accordingly, the place-name T'iis Bitł'áh Tú 'Olį́į́' is produced in traditional narratives as T'iis Bitł'áh Tú 'Olį́né, the name Tséé Biká' Tú Yaahilį́į' as Tséé Biká' Tú Yaahilį́né, and so forth. Although the optional suffix may be employed for purposes other than helping to summon ancestral images and voices, my consultants agree that this is one of its primary functions. And at no time is that function as readily apparent as when Apache men and women, bent upon speaking with names, dispense with narratives completely

and use place-names in the expression *X 'ágodzaa yú* (It happened at *X*, at this very place!).

This expression is normally reserved for social situations in which speaking of absent parties to persons closely connected to them must be accomplished with delicacy and tact. Specifically, the expression is used when ancestral knowledge seems applicable to difficulties arising from serious errors in someone else's judgment, but when voicing one's thoughts on the matter might be taken as evidence of arrogance, critical disapproval, or lack of sympathetic understanding. Instead, speaking with names enables those who engage in it to acknowledge a regrettable circumstance without explicitly judging it, to exhibit solicitude without openly proclaiming it, and to offer advice without appearing to do so.

But speaking with names accomplishes more than this. A traditional Apache narrative encapsulated in its own spatial anchor, the expression *X 'ágodzaa yú* is also a call to memory and imagination. Simultaneously, it is a call to persons burdened by worry and despair to take remedial action on behalf of themselves. "Travel in your mind," the expression urges those to whom it is addressed. "Travel in your mind to a point from which to view the place whose name has just been spoken. Imagine standing there, as if in the tracks of your ancestors, and recall stories of events that occurred at that place long ago. Picture these events in your mind and appreciate, as if the ancestors were speaking to you directly, the knowledge the stories contain. Bring this knowledge to bear on your own disturbing situation. Allow the past to inform your understanding of the present. You will feel better if you do."

And Western Apache people report that sometimes they do feel better. Having pictured distant places and dwelled on ancestral events, their worries become less acute: less 'sharp' (*ts'ik'ii*), less 'hard' (*ntł'iz*), less 'noisy' (*gońch'aad*) in their minds. Feelings of anxiety and emotional turbulence may give way to welcome sensations of 'smoothness' (*dilkǫǫh*), of 'softness' (*dédi'ilé*), of growing inner 'quiet' (*doohwaa gońch'aada*). And when this actually happens—when ancestral knowledge works to give beneficial perspective and fresh recognition that trying times can be dealt with successfully and eventually overcome—

persons thus heartened may announce that relationships characterized by 'pleasantness and goodness' (*gozhǫǫ*) have been restored between themselves and their surroundings. A psychological balance has been reestablished, an optimistic outlook born of strengthened confidence and rejuvenated hope, and people may also announce that a 'sickness' (*nezgaí*) has been 'healed' (*nábilziih*). 'Bad thinking' (*nchǫ'go natsíkęęs*) has been replaced by 'good thinking' (*nzhǫǫgo natsíkęęs*), and at least for a while the exigencies of life can be met with replenished equanimity.

"Those Place-names Are Strong"

The foregoing account of aspects of Western Apache place-name ideology supplies the basic conceptual framework with which to interpret the conversational encounter at the Machuses' home in Cibecue. But because the account has been formulated as Apache people themselves insist upon doing—that is, in abstract normative terms—it fails to elucidate what the practice of speaking with names served to accomplish on that particular occasion. In other words, we have yet to identify the social actions that participants in the encounter used their utterances to perform, and thus, necessarily, we have yet to grasp the coherence of their talk. So let us be about it. Having fashioned an account of the cultural logic on which speaking with names is understood to operate, attention may now be directed to an interpretation of how, and with what sorts of interpersonal consequences, this conversational practice was actually put to work. Once again, Lola Machuse.

[That woman's younger brother acted stupidly. He was stupid and careless. He failed to show respect. No good! We said nothing critical about him to her. We talked around it]

The social gathering at Lola Machuse's ramada was uncomfortable for everyone, but especially for Louise. Troubled by her brother's sudden illness, she was troubled even more by his apparent lack of common sense. Having come into contact with the snakeskin near the roundup camp, he should have gone directly to a ritual specialist for assistance in dealing with his contaminated state. That he failed to do so was disturbing enough, but that he treated the incident in such cavalier fashion was more disturbing still. Plainly, he was guilty of a grave lapse in judgment, and now, as surely he could have anticipated, he was suffering the painful consequences. Why had the young man acted so irresponsibly? In addition to being upset, Louise was sorely perplexed.

Louise's chronicle of her brother's misfortune created an opportunity for all on hand to comment on his conduct. But because her account portrayed him in a distinctly unfavorable light, it also presented him as a target for easy criticism. If criticism were to be forthcoming, it could only serve to embarrass Louise, for she would have no alternative but to try to defend her brother's actions—and this would be awkward and difficult at best. Yet refusing to defend him could be taken to mean that she was prepared to condemn him entirely, and condemning one's relatives, especially in the presence of nonrelatives, is a conspicuous violation of kinship loyalties that Western Apaches rarely see fit to excuse.[10]

For these reasons, Louise's candid statement placed her companions in a delicate dilemma. On the one hand, no one could assert that Louise's brother had not acted wrongly without casting serious doubt on his or her own good judgment. On the other hand, no one could openly censure the young man without adding to Louise's discomfort, thereby displaying a lack of consideration for her feelings and a lack of concern for the circumstances that had produced them. How, then, to respond? How to speak the truth—or something that could be heard as not denying the truth—without exacerbating an already sensitive situation?

Those place-names really helped us out! We gave her pictures with place-names. That way she started feeling better. Those place-names are strong!

After finishing her account, Louise paused, took a long drink of Pepsi-Cola, and started to speak again of her beleaguered brother. But Lola Machuse intervened at this point, saying softly but firmly, "Tséé Hadigaiyé yú 'ágodzaa" (It happened at Line Of White Rocks Extends Up And Out, at this very place!). Lola's utterance was intended to evoke a historical tale for Louise to picture in her mind, but it was also designed to change the topic of talk and set the conversation on a new and different course. Instead of Louise's brother, whom Lola was showing she had no desire to criticize, attention was shifted

to Louise herself and her troubled reactions to her brother's predicament. Instead of disapproval, Lola Machuse was exhibiting sympathy and concern.

As later told by herself, the historical tale that Lola Machuse wished to evoke for Louise was the following.

It happened at Line Of White Rocks Extends Up And Out.

Long ago, a girl lived alone with her maternal grandmother. Her grandmother sent her out regularly to collect firewood. She went to a place above her camp. She could get there quickly by climbing up through a rocky canyon. Many snakes lived there. So her grandmother told her always to go another way.

Then the girl went to collect firewood. The day was hot. Then the girl became thirsty. Then she thought, "This wood is heavy. I don't want to carry it too far." Then she started to walk down the rocky canyon. There were loose rocks where she walked. Then she slipped and fell down. The firewood she was carrying scattered everywhere! Then she started to pick it up. A snake bit her hand! Then she got scared. "My grandmother knew this would happen to me," she thought.

Then the girl returned to where she was living with her grandmother. Her arm and hand became badly swollen. Then they worked over her [performed a curing ceremony]. Later, the girl went to her grandmother. "My life is still my own," she said. Then her grandmother talked to her again. Now she knew how to live right.

It happened at Line Of White Rocks Extends Up And Out.

As Lola Machuse had reason to suspect, Louise knew this story well. She had heard it many times and on several occasions had performed it for her own children. Consequently, Louise reported later, her mind traveled instantly to a spot from which to view Line Of White Rocks Extends Up And Out, and images of the girl who was bitten by the snake appeared just as quickly. As a lengthy silence descended on the Machuse camp at Cibecue, Louise's thoughts moved along these lines.

A bad thing happened at that place. Very bad! I saw that girl. She was impulsive. She forgot to be careful. She ceased

showing respect. She was like my younger brother. She ceased thinking properly, so something bad happened to her. She became very scared but recovered from it. She almost died but held onto her own life.

Lola Machuse's evocative comment had a calming effect on everyone sitting beneath the ramada at her home. Her statement relieved Louise of any need to publicly defend her brother's conduct and, at the same time, charted a conversational path that others could easily follow. Acknowledging the felicity of that path, and taking steps to pursue it, Emily produced a similar statement of her own—"Ha'aa. Túzhį' Yaahigaiyé yú 'ágodzaa." (Yes. It happened at Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water, at this very place!)—and once again Louise was urged to travel in her mind and picture a historical tale.

Emily's version of this tale, which she said has been slightly abridged, is as follows.

It happened at Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water.

Long ago, a boy went to hunt deer. He rode on horseback. Pretty soon he saw one [a deer], standing on the side of a canyon. Then he went closer and shot it. He killed it. Then the deer rolled all the way down to the bottom of the canyon.

Then the boy went down there. It was a buck, fat and muscular. Then he butchered it. The meat was heavy, so he had to carry it up in pieces. He had a hard time reaching the top of the canyon with each piece.

Now it was getting dark. One hindquarter was still lying at the bottom of the canyon. "I have enough meat already," he thought. So he left the hindquarter where it was lying. He left it there.

Then he packed his horse and started to ride home. Then the boy got dizzy and nearly fell off his horse. Then his nose twitched uncontrollably, like Deer's nose does. Then pain shot up behind his eyes. Then he became scared.

Now he went back to the canyon. It was dark when he got there. He walked down to where the hindquarter was lying—but it was gone! Then he returned to his horse. He rode fast to where he was living with his relatives.

The boy was sick for a long time. The people prayed for him on four separate occasions. He got better slowly.

No deer would present themselves to him. He said to his children: "Look at me now. I failed to be careful when I was a boy and now I have a hard time getting meat for you to eat."

It happened at Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water.

The actions performed by Emily's utterance were readily apparent to Louise. Emily, like Lola Machuse before her, was attempting to distract Louise with constructive thoughts and comfort her with expressions of support. But Louise was not intimately familiar with the story of the boy and the deer, and though her mind went swiftly to a point near Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water, she had difficulty picturing all the events in the story. She did, however, have one vivid image—of the pain-ridden boy struggling to stay astride his horse—and this was sufficient to remind her of her brother. In addition, Louise said later, she could hear the boy, now an adult, as he spoke to his children about his fateful mistake.

It was like I could hear some old man talking. He was talking to his children. "I was impatient, so I left behind good meat from that deer. Then I became very sick and very scared. I failed to show respect." Even so, that boy lived on and grew up and had children. He learned to think right, so he talked to his children about it. Maybe my brother will learn to improve his thinking like that.

The historical tale evoked by Emily is similar in several respects to the tale evoked by Lola Machuse, and at this point in the proceedings, Louise probably sensed that a pattern was starting to form. In both of the stories, young people are depicted as irresponsible and disrespectful, but for reasons having solely to do with their innocence and naivete. In both stories, they suffer life-threatening consequences—serious illness and intense fright—from which they learn to avoid carelessness and impatience in the future. Finally, and most important of all, they regain their health and continue living, presumably for many years. Thus the unstated message for Louise, which is also a prominent aspect of Western Apache ancestral knowledge, was a positive one: in

effect, "Take heart. These things happen. Young people make foolish and dangerous mistakes, but they usually profit from them and the mistakes are seldom fatal. Be optimistic. There is reason to believe your brother will recover."

After a while, I gave her a funny story. She didn't get mad. She was feeling better. She laughed. Then she had enough, I guess. She spoke to the dog about her younger brother, criticizing him, so we knew we had helped her out.

Following another lengthy silence inside the brush ramada, Lola Machuse acted to affirm and consolidate the tacit messages communicated thus far with a place-name intended to evoke a third historical tale with similarities to the previous two. But with this utterance—"Da'anii. K'is Deeschii' Naaditiné yú 'ágodzaa." (Truly. It happened at Trail Extends Across A Red Ridge With Alder Trees, at this very place!)—she took a moderate risk. Although it deals with serious matters, the story Lola was thinking of presents a humorous aspect, and one of her purposes in evoking it was to lighten Louise's spirits (and everyone else's) by striking a note of reserved good cheer. The risk Lola ran was that her action would be perceived as intemperate, perhaps even playful, and thus inappropriate to the seriousness and solemnity of Louise's troubled circumstances.

This is the historical tale, as narrated by herself, that Lola Machuse had in mind.

It happened at Trail Extends Across A Red Ridge With Alder Trees.

A boy and a girl were newly married. He didn't know that he should stay away from her when her grandmother came to visit [when she was having her menstrual period]. Then he tried to bother her. "Don't! I'm no good for that," she said. He was impatient. Then he tried to bother her again. Then she gave in.

Then the boy got sick, they say. It was hard for him to sit down. Then his penis became badly swollen. Pissing was painful for him, too. He walked around clutching his crotch. He was deeply embarrassed in front of his wife and her

relatives. Then he got scared. "I wonder if I will be this way forever," he thought.

Then someone talked to him, saying "Don't bother your wife when her grandmother comes to visit. Stay away from her." Then that person gave the boy some medicine, saying "Drink this. It will make you well. Then you can stop being embarrassed. Then you can stop walking around clutching your crotch!" That is all.

It happened at Trail Extends Across A Red Ridge With Alder Trees.

Fortunately, Lola Machuse's lighthearted gamble did not misfire. Louise traveled in her mind to a vantage point from which to picture Trail Extends Across A Red Ridge With Alder Trees, viewed the crestfallen lad with his hand where it should never be seen in public, and returned from the journey mildly amused. Afterwards, Louise made these comments.

> Everyone knows that story. My mind went there. It's funny to see that boy in the story holding onto himself. He should have left his wife alone. He was impulsive. He didn't think right. Then he got scared. Then he was made well again with medicine. . . . I've heard that story often, but it's always funny to see that boy holding onto himself, so shy and embarrassed.

At the Machuses' home in Cibecue, Louise expressed her amusement by laughing softly. This was an auspicious sign! Though surely worried still, Louise had been moved to levity, and everyone could tell that her spirits had briefly improved. Here was evidence that the unspoken messages conveyed by Lola Machuse and Emily—messages of sympathy, consolation, and encouragement—had been usefully received. Here was an indication that ancestral knowledge was providing Louise with a measure of comfort and hope. Seizing the moment, Robert Machuse acted to make elements of these messages explicit, compressing their dominant thrust into one succinct statement. "Gozhǫǫ doleeł" (Pleasantness and goodness will be forthcoming), said Robert with quiet conviction. And moments later, endorsing his sentiments and adding conviction of her own, Lola Machuse repeated the same phrase: "Gozhǫǫ doleeł."

Touched by this display of friendly goodwill, and aware that some sort of acknowledgment of it was now in order, Louise responded by taking a deft and self-effacing step. In the form of a mock question addressed to Clifford, the Machuses' dog, she gently criticized her own brother: "Shidizhé bíni'éshid ne góshé?" (My younger brother is foolish, isn't he, dog?). This utterance accomplished several actions at once. First, by drawing attention away from herself, Louise gave notice that further evocations of traditional narratives could be politely dispensed with; in effect, "You have all done enough." Also, by directing her question to one who could not answer it, Louise indicated that additional discussion of her brother and his difficulties would serve no useful purpose; in effect, "Let the matter rest. There is nothing more to say." Finally, and most adroitly of all, by voicing the thought that had been on everyone's mind from the beginning—that Louise's brother had indeed acted foolishly—she contrived to thank them for their tact in not having voiced it; in effect, "This is the discrediting truth about my relative. I know it and I know that you know it. You were polite and thoughtful to refrain from expressing it."

As could have been predicted, Clifford did not respond to Louise's bogus query. Neither did anyone else. The speech event was over. A few minutes later, Louise and Emily rose to their feet, complained to each other about a sudden plentitude of flies, and set off together in search of a cold can of Pepsi-Cola. Lola Machuse resumed her sewing and Robert Machuse went to water his horse. The day was beginning to cool, and the landscape beyond Cibecue, its rugged contours softened now by patches of lengthening shadow, looked more hospitable than before.

Language, Landscape, and the Moral Imagination

The possibilities of human language are variously conceived and variously understood. Every culture, whether literate or not, includes beliefs about how language works and what it is capable of doing. Similarly, every culture contains beliefs about the kinds of social contexts in which these capabilities may be realized most effectively. That such beliefs are present in contemporary Western Apache culture should now be obvious, and that they may operate in telling ways to

influence patterns of verbal interaction should likewise be apparent. Moreover, it should now be possible to appreciate how aspects of Western Apache linguistic ideology contribute to perceptions of coherence in one form of Apache discourse, and also why, when contextual conditions are right, that same ideology may invest the briefest of utterances with ample meaning and substantial expressive force.

The episode at Lola Machuse's home suggests that while coherence in Western Apache discourse can be usefully described as a product of interlocking utterances and actions, the expressive force of Apache discourse—what people from Cibecue call its 'strength' (*nalwod*)—may be viewed as a product of multiple interlockings at different levels of abstraction. Put more exactly, it is my impression that those utterances that perform the broadest range of mutually compatible actions at once are those that Apaches experience as having the greatest communicative impact. In other words, the expressive force of an Apache utterance seems to be roughly proportionate to the number of separate but complementary functions it accomplishes simultaneously, or, as Alton Becker (1982) has intimated, to the number of distinguishable subject matters it successfully communicates "about."

The Western Apache practice of "speaking with names" manifests just this sort of range and versatility. Thus, as we have seen, an utterance such as "Tséé Hadigaiyé yú 'ágodzaa" (It happened at Line Of White Rocks Extends Up And Out, at this very place!) may be used to accomplish all of the following actions: (1) produce a mental image of a particular geographical location; (2) evoke prior texts, such as historical tales and sagas; (3) affirm the value and validity of traditional moral precepts (i.e., ancestral knowledge); (4) display tactful and courteous attention to aspects of both positive and negative face; (5) convey sentiments of charitable concern and personal support; (6) offer practical advice for dealing with disturbing personal circumstances (i.e., apply ancestral knowledge); (7) transform distressing thoughts caused by excessive worry into more agreeable ones marked by optimism and hopefulness; and (8) heal wounded spirits.

This is a substantial amount for any spoken utterance to be able to accomplish, and what provides for the capability—what the forceful activity of speaking with names always communicates most basically

"about"—is the cultural importance of named locations within the Western Apache landscape. Named places have long been symbols of rich significance for the Apache people, and place-names afford Apache speakers a ready means for appropriating that significance and turning it with brisk efficiency to specialized social ends. By virtue of their role as spatial anchors in traditional Apache narratives, place-names can be made to represent the narratives themselves, summarizing them, as it were, and condensing into compact form their essential moral truths. As a result, narratives and truths alike can be swiftly "activated" and brought into focused awareness through the use of place-names alone. And so it happens, on these occasions when Apache people see fit to speak with place-names, that a vital part of their tribal heritage seems to speak to them as well. For on such occasions, as we have seen, participants may be moved and instructed by voices other than their own. In addition, persons to whom place-names are addressed may be affected by the voices of their ancestors, voices that communicate in compelling silence with an inherent weight described by Mikhail Bakhtin as the "authoritative word":

> The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused on it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse. . . . It is given (it sounds) in lofty spheres, not those of familiar contact. Its language is a special (as it were, hieratic) language. (Bakhtin 1981:342)

When Western Apache place-names are called upon to serve as vehicles of ancestral authority, the knowledge thus imparted is not so loftily given as to inhibit its use in the mundane spheres of everyday life. On the contrary, as the episode at the Machuses' home illustrates clearly, such knowledge exists to be applied, to be thought about and acted upon, to be incorporated (the more so the better, Lola Machuse would have us understand) into the smallest corners of personal and social experience. And insofar as this kind of incorporation occurs—

insofar as places and place-names provide Apache people with symbolic reference points for the moral imagination and its practical bearing on the actualities of their lives—the landscape in which the people dwell can be said to dwell in them. For the constructions Apaches impose upon their landscape have been fashioned from the same cultural materials as constructions they impose upon themselves as members of society. Both give expression to the same set of values, standards, and ideals; both are manifestations of the same distinctive charter for being-in-the-world. Inhabitants *of* their landscape, the Western Apache are thus inhabited *by* it as well, and in the timeless depth of that abiding reciprocity, the people and their landscape are virtually as one.

This reciprocal relationship—a relationship in which individuals invest themselves in the landscape while incorporating its meanings into their own most fundamental experience—is the ultimate source of the rich sententious potential and functional versatility of Western Apache place-names. For when place-names are used in the manner exemplified by Lola Machuse and her friends, the landscape is appropriated in pointedly social terms and the authoritative word of Apache tribal tradition is brought squarely to bear on matters of social concern. Concomitantly, persons in distress are reminded of what they already know but may sometimes forget—that ancestral knowledge is a powerful ally in times of adversity, and that reflecting upon it, as generations of Apaches have learned, can produce expanded awareness, feelings of relief, and a fortified ability to cope. And because helping people to cope is regarded by Apaches as a gesture of compassion, the use of place-names for this purpose serves as well to communicate solicitude, reassurance, and personal solidarity. The primary reason that speaking with names can accomplish so much—the reason its expressive force is sometimes felt so strongly—is that it facilitates reverberating acts of kindness and caring. And the effects of kindness and caring, especially when spirits are in need of healing, can be very strong indeed.

As must now be apparent, the ethnographic account presented in this chapter has been shaped by a view of spoken communication which rests on the premise that languages consist in shared economies

of grammatical resources with which language users act to get things done. The resources of a language, together with the varieties of action facilitated by their use, acquire meaning and force from the sociocultural contexts in which they are embedded, and therefore, as every linguist knows, the discourse of any speech community exhibits a fundamental character—a genius, a spirit, an underlying personality—that is very much its own. Over a period of years, I have become convinced that one of the distinctive characteristics of Western Apache discourse is a predilection for performing a maximum of socially relevant actions with a minimum of linguistic means. Accordingly, I have been drawn to investigate instances of talk, like the one involving Lola and Robert Machuse, in which a few spoken words are made to accomplish large amounts of communicative work.[11] For it is on just such occasions, I believe, that elements of Apache culture and society fuse most completely with elements of grammar and the situated aims of individuals, such that very short utterances, like polished crystals refracting light, can be seen to contain them all. On these occasions, the Western Apache language is exploited to something near its full expressive potential, and even Apaches themselves, struck momentarily by the power of their discourse, may come away impressed.

Such powerful moments may not be commonplace in Western Apache speech communities, but they are certainly common enough—and when they occur, as on that hot and dusty day at Cibecue, robust worlds of meaning come vibrantly alive. Conveying these worlds, capturing with words both the richness of their content and the fullness of their spirit, requires an exacting effort at linguistic and cultural translation that can never be wholly successful. The problem, of course, is that verbally mediated realities are so densely textured and incorrigibly dynamic, and that one's own locutions for representing them fail to do justice to the numerous subtleties involved. Unavoidably, delicate proportions are altered and disturbed, intricate momentums halted and betrayed, and however much one explicates there is always more (or so one is tempted to suppose) that might usefully be done. Despite these persisting uncertainties, however, enough can be learned and understood so that we, like the people

of Cibecue, may come away from certain kinds of speech events instructed and impressed and sometimes deeply moved. Following its more accentuated moments, moments shaped by graciousness and the resonating echoes of a fully present past, the minimalist genius of Western Apache discourse leaves us silent in its wake—traveling in our minds, listening for the ancestors, and studying the landscape with a new and different eye. On the pictorial wings of place-names, imaginations soar.

4

Wisdom Sits in Places

To know who you are, you have to have a place to come from.
—*Carson McCullers,* The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter

In this unsettled age, when large portions of the earth's surface are being ravaged by industrialism . . . when on several continents indigenous peoples are being forcibly uprooted by wanton encroachments upon their homelands . . . when American Indian tribes are mounting major legal efforts to secure permanent protection for sacred sites now controlled by federal agencies . . . when philosophers and poets are asserting that attachments to geographical localities contribute fundamentally to the formation of personal and social identities . . . when new forms of "environmental awareness" are being more radically charted and urgently advocated than ever in the past—in these disordered times, when contrasting ways of living in the world are generating unprecedented attention on a worldwide scale, it is unfortunate that anthropologists seldom study what people make of places.[1]

Sensitive to the fact that human existence is irrevocably situated in time and space, and keenly aware that social life is everywhere accomplished through an exchange of symbolic forms, anthropologists might be expected to report routinely on the varieties of meaning conferred by men and women on features of their natural surroundings. Yet ethnographic inquiry into cultural constructions of geographical realities is at best weakly developed. Willing enough to investigate the material and organizational means by which whole communities fashion workable adaptations to the physical environment, ethnogra-