PART FOUR

NATIVE AMERICAN

LANGUAGES
SAM KENOI'S "COYOTE AND THE WHITEMEN": CONTACT IN AND OUT OF A CHIRICAHUA NARRATIVE

Anthony K. Webster
New Mexico State University

The purpose of this paper is to present an ethnopoetic analysis of Samuel E. Kenoi's "Coyote and the Whitemen." This endeavor is predicated on the seminal ethnopoetic work of Dell Hymes who has argued that narratives are organized into meaningful discourse units by means of initial sequential particles, quotative particles, and other linguistic devices. Accordingly, I suggest that Kenoi marshaled various linguistic devices to create a coherent poetic text. In doing this, I argue that Kenoi’s narrative is a literary creation and should be appreciated as literature.

A second purpose is to suggest that this narrative can be understood as the product of a real time interaction between Sam Kenoi, the narrator, and Harry Hoijer, the transcriber/audience of this narrative. In this respect, I am interested in what Michael Silverstein has called "the secret life of texts." I am concerned with what can be recovered from the real time, moment bound, fleeting narration. Specifically, I will assess this narration as a point of multiple contact.

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1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Graduate Research Symposium, May 2, 1997 at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM. I thank Scott Rushforth and an anonymous reviewer for useful suggestions on this paper. Mistakes that remain are, of course, my responsibility. Hoijer (1938) and Opler (1942) title this narrative "Coyote and the Money Tree". I have titled it "Coyote and the Whitemen" to highlight the key participants in the narrative. Essential to the argument of this paper is the notion that this story is not so much about the Money Tree, but Coyote's interactions with the Whitemen. It is also the title in Hoijer's notebook housed at the American Philosophical Society.

2 See Woodbury [1985] for an overview of these devices and their "functions."
Hymes has shown that narratives previously published in block prose are actually better represented as "measured verse." In doing this Hymes distinguishes between "metered verse", which is often identified by rhyme, meter, and alliteration, and "measured verse", which is often based on repetition, parallelism, and numerical constraints. By looking at a number of texts collected by previous generations of anthropologists and linguists working with languages of the Northwest Coast, Hymes has noted that these narratives are patterned into lines and groupings of lines. He identifies lines by adverbial and quotative particles, syntactic parameters, parallelism, and the intersection of form and content. Lines, which are often equivalent to clauses, are hierarchically organized into larger narrative units that Hymes calls verses, stanzas, and scenes. These units are often organized by numerical constraints of two types: 2/4 and 3/5. That is, for example, the satisfaction of expectation may require four attempts for the successful completion of an action. Four and two tend to go together and three and five tend to go together. However, a given narrator may use both patterns of numerical constraints to create suspense by breaking the routine satisfaction of expectation. By presenting narratives as hierarchically related lines, Hymes highlights the patterned and poetic organization of narratives. Implicit in this research, and often explicitly stated by Hymes, is that Native American oral narratives are literature and should be treated as such. It should be added that the organizing principles of a given narrative tradition need to be discovered because not all narrative traditions are organized by the same linguistic devices and to the same degree by those linguistic devices as Woodbury suggests.

Silverstein notes that narratives collected in volumes of texts can be understood as "interactional texts." By "interactional texts," Silverstein means the "structured doing-things-with-words in the sphere of meaningful, genred social action" (97). Silverstein is concerned with the social interaction that occurred during the text elicitation session and in recovering something of that interactional moment through careful attention to these narratives. In the elicitation session between Kenoi and Hoijer, we need to remember that this was a real moment that has been captured as a text artifact. What is left then is not the interaction, but the interactional text artifact that preserves traces of the interactional moment. The task, then, is to suggest something of the dynamic and dialogic interactional moment of narration.

I will now introduce the two protagonists in my narration. Harry Hoijer was born in 1904 in Chicago, Illinois. He attended the University of Chicago and was a student of the famed linguist Edward Sapir. He completed his Ph.D. dissertation on Tonkawa, a then dying Native American language in Texas--now a dead language. Like all students of Sapir, Hoijer's research program was to produce a grammar, a dictionary, and a set of texts of the
language under investigation. After completing his Ph.D., Hoijer began extensive study of the Athabaskan languages of the Southwest such as Navajo, Lipan, Western Apache, Plains Apache, Jicarilla, Mescalero, and Chiricahua. It was at this moment that Hoijer met Kenoi in the early 1930’s.

Kenoi, according to his own recollections, was born in 1875. He was a member of the Southern band of the Chiricahua, who lived in the Sonora, Chihuahua, Southeast Arizona, and Southwest New Mexico area. In 1886, after the surrender of Geronimo, all Chiricahuas, including those who had helped the United States government, were sent by the United States government to Ft. Marion, Florida. The government treated the Chiricahuas, including the then eleven year old Kenoi, as prisoners-of-war, and this included both those Chiricahuas who had acted as scouts for the government and those who had sided with Geronimo against the government. Both of these groups of Chiricahuas would be treated as prisoners-of-war for the next twenty-seven years. Kenoi attended the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, PA, where it was school policy to "kill the Indian to save the man." In 1893 the Chiricahuas were relocated to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. In 1913, when Kenoi was 38 years old, and after having spent his childhood and young adulthood as a prisoner-of-war, the United States Government offered to resettle the Chiricahuas at the Mescalero Reservation, otherwise, they could receive allotments of land and stay in Oklahoma. Kenoi, and two-thirds of the Chiricahuas, chose to go to the Mescalero Reservation. It was on the Mescalero Reservation that Kenoi and Hoijer met.

Hoijer, looking for linguistic data on, among other things, the complex Athabaskan verb structure, asked Kenoi to tell him some narratives in Chiricahua Apache. Kenoi told these stories using linguistic resources available to Chiricahua narrators, resources that make these stories poetic. Kenoi had at his disposal rhetorical-poetic devices by which he could create poetic texts that create and sustain narrative force and organization. When Hoijer published these texts in 1938, he did not translate all of the rhetorical features from the source language texts, specifically the narrative enclitic, because he felt they were repetitive and took up space (82). Let me add, though, that it is precisely

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4 See Roman Jakobson’s “Concluding Statement” and Dell Hymes’ In Vain I Tried To Tell You.
Hoijer's careful attention to transcription detail that allows later researchers to return to these texts and investigate ethnopoetic structuring. He deserves credit for his careful attention and willingness to transcribe various "repetitive" particles. Hoijer, like linguists of his time, was not overly concerned with the rhetorical structure that Kenoi employed in his narration, but he did seem to be interested in presenting Chiricahua texts as objects about "culture," as a window into "culture." He does not seem to take the narratives as "objects" of culture; he does not seem to take discourse in-and-of-itself as a cultural phenomenon.

These texts are not just about Chiricahua culture, they are Chiricahua culture, in that they are constructed and circulated according to "narrative aesthetics." For a narrator to tell a Coyote narrative in Chiricahua is to enter into a narrative tradition, a tradition that can be validated or invalidated by a person's specific narration by placing it within the context of received standards for a Coyote narrative. However, narration is both productive (emergent and situational) and fixed. All narration is real time emergent and a narrator can highlight or exclude specific aspects of a story. Nonetheless the narrator also is constrained by prior discourse, and it is here that we enter the realm of rhetorical poetic structuring. Woodbury reminds us that these are the narrative devices that anchor a given telling in prior discourse and thereby create frames by which narratives can be recognized as a given type such as a genre.

Hoijer's transcription policy, to publish these as block prose, is an interpretive maneuver (whether intentional or unintentional). In recent years it has become clear that no transcription is value free or neutral. Transcriptions are based on assumptions about narrative organization. Since Hoijer is not able to present Kenoi's narrative as the audible narration it was, Hoijer represented it as a written text for specific reasons: his intended audience were to be linguists and his research goals concerned the Athabaskan verb and ethnographic tidbits. The transcription policy I use highlights Kenoi's use of the narrative

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5 I do not wish to imply that Hoijer was uninterested with the relation of language to culture; that was certainly not the case. See Hoijer (1953) and Lucy (1992) for a useful review of Hoijer's perspective.

6 My audience in this paper is also somewhat different than Hoijer's. While the paper is targeted toward scholars in Native American studies (including linguistics, anthropology, and literary studies), it is also meant for Chiricahua Apaches as well. Thus, I have orthographically retranscribed this narrative from Hoijer's more technical orthography to the orthography that is (continued...)
enclitic and his creation of an extrasentential unit, a unit outside the sentence, called the line. Let me be clear here, Hoijer's goal was to present these narratives as linguistic data; my goal is to present this narrative in an ethnopoetic format highlighting Kenoi's use of various linguistic devices. Our goals are different, but both goals, I suggest, are worthwhile. Clearly, the present work could not have been done had it not been for the rigor of Hoijer's earlier work.

Hoijer called the texts "Chiricahua texts." These are, however, narratives told by real people not collectivities. Specifically, it is Sam Kenoi's take on a story he had heard from others and told to others, situated in the narrative context of telling these stories to Harry Hoijer. People, not surprisingly, tell stories in a particular way at a particular time for specific reasons. Kenoi, I argue, did just that.

I now turn to a discussion of the narrative (see Appendix). "Coyote and the White Men" is an interesting story on a number of counts. As Morris Opler reminds us, this story has been appropriated from European narrative tradition to Chiricahua narrative tradition. Indeed, Opler, another anthropologist who worked with the Chiricahua at the time Hoijer was doing his linguistic work, collected versions of this story from two other narrators (Myths, 49-50). Thus, the story was known by others; the story was in circulation. Here we have an interesting point of contact revealing the ways in which novel stories enter into a living tradition. Nor surprisingly, the stories have different protagonists—Coyote and the White Men—who are characters meaningful to Chiricahuas.

Elsewhere I examined a number of Coyote stories told by Sam Kenoi, attempting to discover poetic patterns within these narratives (Sam Kenoi's). Two of the most common patterns were: 1) the use of the sentence and clause final enclitic (stated simply, a bound unit that attaches to the end of a word), -ná'a 'so they say'; and 2) the use of the initial particle nágo 'then' by Kenoi to signal shifts in speakers, actors, actions, time, or location. I call the first narrative unit the line, following generally Hymes' 1981 terminology. This unit also is common in other Chiricahua narratives told by other narrators (Webster, Sam Kenoi's). The narrative enclitic is used outside quoted speech. Within quoted speech the narrative enclitic is absent at the ends of sentences or clauses.

6(...continued)
currently in use among the Mescalero and Chiricahua. My text is, I hope, more readily available to Apache readers.
The narrative enclitic serves three functions. (1) It acts as an epistemic distancing device indicating from the narrator's perspective that these stories are not his/her personal experience, and that s/he is reporting what s/he was told. In linguistic terms, this enclitic is a quotative particle. (2) It operates as the basic organizing principle of the narrative, creating narrative units I call "the line." (3) It indexes or indicates that this is a narrative or that a particular type of speaking event is occurring.

I call the second unit the stanza which may be more specific to Kenoi's verbal repertoire than Chiricahua in general. Stanzas are often based on overt lexical markers such as initial sequential particles (nágo 'then') or other changes in speaker, location, action, or some combination of all the above. I have underlined these devices in the narrative for ease of reading. Lines are numbered every fifth line and stanzas are marked by an upper case letter (A). It should be clear that Kenoi repeatedly and consistently used these two rhetorical devices. The narrative is also divided into two scenes on thematic considerations. Scene i ends when Coyote exits and scene ii begins with the white men waiting. Scenes are marked by lower case roman numerals flush left above the first line of the scene.

A third pattern is the use of a verb of motion -ghol-, here in the progressive form, in the opening line of a Coyote narrative. Kenoi often only identifies Coyote by Coyote's habitual motion, elsewhere termed the "trotting" Coyote (Toelken and Scott). The introductory phrase, here: Mai 'ánití holghol náá'a 'Coyote going along a road, so they say,' can be found verbatim in other Coyote stories told by Kenoi (Webster Sam Kenoi's). The formulaic opening indexes reflexively, pointing back on itself, that this is a Coyote story and also anchors or links it across narratives to other Coyote stories. My point here is that although the story originates outside Chiricahua tradition, the rhetorical-poetic devices appropriate the narrative into Chiricahua tradition. "Traditionalness" is thus partly content, one needs characters one can relate to—hence Coyote; and partly form, one needs the story to be structured in a recognizable form.

Let us return to the narrative and the unfolding of the plot. Stated simply, Coyote cons the White Men into buying a tree that they believe will grow money. It is not coincidental that there are two White Men. In a number of other narratives Kenoi uses twos or fours; in fact, events tend to happen twice within Kenoi's narratives. Four, it should be added, is a symbolically important

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This remains a question to be examined.
number among many Chiricahua and in the Southwest more generally as Opler has pointed out in *An Apache Way of Life*. The White Men, by being greedy and becoming easily angered, act in the opposite manner than is the ideal among Chiricahua at the time of the narration. The White Men behave in a socially inappropriate manner. Notice, Kenoi's use of -gool- [go- 'fourth person'-il-"to"] in lines 20, 24, 25, 41, and 42. According to Hoijer's article on "The Apachean Verb," this pronominal is used when referring to someone who is understood to be "psychologically remote" (197); Chiricahuas used the term when referring to in-laws and the deceased. Here Kenoi uses the term to refer to the White Men; White People seem to become increasingly "psychologically remote" from Kenoi in this narrative.

I should add that this is the only Kenoi Coyote story that Hoijer published in which Coyote behaves in a socially appropriate manner. Coyote gives away the things the White Men traded him to other Coyotes. Observe also in the final exchange between Coyote and the White Men, Coyote does not lie per se in response to the White Men's question. He was walking over there, and he did not see anyone else. Kenoi keys the listener, Harry Hoijer, into Coyote's identity in line 38. However, the White Men in the narrative do not realize that this is the same Coyote, marked linguistically in line 41 with the enclitic -ni- (aforementioned person) on ma'ye'n 'Coyote (the aforementioned one).' Coyote gets away with his con, precisely because White People cannot tell Coyotes apart. This notion is suggestively reminiscent of Kenoi's frustration with the United States government for not being able to tell Chiricahua apart and thus sending all Chiricahua to Florida as prisoners of war as Opler pointed out in his 1938 article.

Coyote also displays deictic distancing, i.e., those linguistic devices that point out relationships within actually occurring discourse (pronouns, this, that, here, now, then, etc.). Chiricahua Apache makes a four fold distinction between 'here' (position nearest speaker and inclusive-first position) and 'there' (position farthest from speaker and exclusive-fourth position). This can be diagrammed as follows (where movement leftward means greater inclusion and movement rightward means greater exclusion):

<--Inclusive          Exclusive-->  

First Position  Second Position  Third Position  Fourth Position  
įišhi           dqašhi       aashi          ghashi

The White Men ask about įišhi 'there' (position nearest speaker as culturally understood--first position). Coyote responds that he was over aashi 'there'
(third position, exclusive as culturally understood). Coyote could have said dzagash ‘here’ (slightly less inclusive than first position—second position). Coyote, in effect, excludes himself from the White Men by his choice of locational deictic. He removes himself from their ‘here’.

I began this paper by suggesting that this narrative could be conceptualized as a point of multiple contact. Now I would like to return to that theme. On one level this story is itself contact; it is a European story (Spanish-American according to French in Opler’s Myths) that has been appropriated into Chiricahua according to Chiricahua rhetorical structures. It is an icon of cultural contact. On another level, the content of the story is also about contact. Coyote and the White Men interact. Coyote cons the White Men and gets away with it. This narration also was a historical moment between two agents, therefore it is contact of yet a third order. One told the story, his telling of these stories indicated an asymmetrical knowledge relationship—Kenoi was the authority, the cultural authority. The other transformed the audible into the visual; his transcribing also indexed an asymmetrical power relationship—Hoijer had the power to come onto the Mescalero Reservation and be told these stories. Yet, Kenoi knew that these stories were being written down. Recall Kenoi had gone to the Carlisle Indian School; he knew these stories were being artificed—that is written for posterity as a "text artifact." Kenoi told this story and "Foolish People and the White Men" which explicitly criticized White People. Possibly, Kenoi was challenging Hoijer’s authority even in the act of seemingly obliging with Hoijer. Perhaps these were cautions for Hoijer: don’t be greedy and don’t become angry—be patient. However, we do not know.

When describing Chiricahua Apache history, the tendency has been to focus on the violent aspects of that interaction*. The Chiricahua often, but not always, appear as war-like people who are constantly fighting someone. Contact, of course, also took many other forms. How else do we explain the incorporation of a European story into Chiricahua narrative tradition? Likewise, just as contact has multiple levels and they do not all entail violence, resistance is not always violence. Keith Basso has shown how Western Apache imitations of White People are forms of resistance, for they resist the authority of White People. James Scott has argued that "everyday forms of resistance" are often subtle and kept hidden from those they are resisting; the malingerer is a resistor. These are non-violent forms of resistance. Perhaps, we can place Kenoi’s narration of ‘Coyote and the White Men’ in such company. Certainly, Kenoi’s

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* See Sweeney’s 1991 work, and for a response see my 1997 review of Sweeney.
narrative challenged the way the United States wanted to be understood. The story—Kenoi's narration—remains. We have here at least one voice that articulated a view of White Men, because of their greed, as easy dupes for Coyote; and anyone who knows these stories knows that it is no small task to be an easy dupe of Coyote. Resistance need not always be violent; we can also find resistance in discourse. Ultimately, this narrative is not just about contact; it is a point of multiple contact.

APPENDIX

Coyote and the White Men

i.
mai 'intér holghol ná'a.

'intérshí ditsi'óó'áf bitláshí neesdá ná'a.
ashí sidágo a'áál ná'a.

nágo ditsi'óó'áf bééso yaadahyesndil ná'a.

nágo 'intérshí indaa naaki xeéél yil'inayol ná'a.

aashí, 'intérshí ditsi'óó'áf bitláshí, sidá ná'a.

xeéél baabil'ínéíyoo ná'a.
indaañ 'ábiil ndi ná'a:
"iyáábáá dákodeshi síndá?" biil ndí ná'a.

"dooda," ndí ná'a.
"ádíí ditsi'óó'áf baasídá," ndí ná'a
"díí ditsií, bééso baanánt'i. áfaa, shitnzhó."ndí ná'a.

indaañ ábiil ndi ná'a:
"naanaahiuindii," biil ndí ná'a.

nágo ándi ná'a:
"dooda, da'ayátí'llí, " yiil ndí ná'a.

nágo indaañ ábiil ndi ná'a:
"ádídíf tìí dá'lk'eh daadahundéélgo 'áshí díf xeéél
bitnoodoziš díík'eh nanndíllgo aay ditsiní naahaadeen'aa,
"go' gondi ná'a.
"iiyaadu ditsii nghá; béeso naaniidá hálí," go' gondi ná'a.

nágo ma'yeen ágoöl ndi ná'a: 20 Ka
"ao, disii hishxá."

dákogo ditsii yooghá ná'a. 
béeso hiká dahyesndilni li' naaneesdaa ná'a. Kb

nágo beeja'ashní díík'eh baajíndil ná'a. L

nágo ma'yeen ágoöl ndi ná'a: 
"ághaft ghashi dzílnsaaí si'a'fíyéf bitis i'nóoyoogo, 
ándeeda ditsii haxá. ákoo béesoí naaneesdaago náhalá,"
 go'ol ndi ná'a. 25

ákoo ándeeda goch'a'ündeyoo ná'a. Mb
ágo jindini bitis i'jinóoyo ná'a.

ii.

nágo indaamí nádiit'áazh ná'a. Aa

ditsii yighagó yaanaa'ash ná'a. Ab

doo yáanoóts'ii da ná'a. 30

joojibáayégo, ditsii'óó'áí bitláhee naajiyeex'ash ná'a. Ac

googóotóó ná'a.

bike'shdiyeest'áazh ná'a.

ákoo ilk'idá tíza'yá i'nóoyo ná'a. Ad

ma'yeí lago bigoota ná'tee inéeyoo ná'a. 35

díík'eh goataadaisndii ná'a.

ákoo án indaamí ghashi ga'aash ná'a. Ae
án ma'ye ágoöl'inní íltsé godáhágho ná'a.

hishdíkí ná'a: 
"i'shi la'í xée'l híl'inayooli dooxaaogó'ída?" bi' jindi ná'a. Af

ma'yeen ágoool ndi ná'a 
"aashí ándeedeego hosháádí ndah doo yáahosh'i da. 
xaadeeni naadaagoka," goól ndi ná'a. B
Coyote and the White Men

i.
Coyote was going along a road, so they say.

He sat down under a tree that was standing by the road,
so they say.

   There he sat for some time, so they say.

Then he put several pieces of money upon the tree that
was standing there, so they say.

Then two white men came along the road driving a burden,
so they say.

There, under the tree that was standing there on the side
of the road, he sat, so they say.

They drove the burden to him, so they say.
The white men spoke thus, so they say:

   "Why are you sitting in this lonely place?"
   they said to him, so they say.

"No," he said, so they say.

   "I sit guarding this tree that stands here,"
   he said, so they say.

   "Money grows on this tree. For that reason, it is
   valuable to me," he said, so they say.

The white men spoke thus, so they say:

   "We will buy it from you," they said to him, so they say.

Then he spoke thus, so they say:

   "No, it is worth a great deal," he said to them, so they say.

Then the white men spoke thus, so they say:

   "We will give you both these horses with their
   burdens and all of these pack [animals] that we are
   driving if you will give us that tree," they said to
   him, so they say.

   "But shake the tree; let's see if money will
   fall," they said to him, so they say.
Then Coyote spoke thus to them, so they say:
"Yes, I'll shake the tree."
Right then he shook the tree, so they say.
Some of the money he had put upon it fell down,
so they say.

Then they gave him all of that with which they had been
traveling, so they say.

Then Coyote spoke thus to them, so they say:
"When I have driven across that big mountain that
lies at that place yonder, then you shake the tree.
And so pick up the money that has fallen off," he
said to them, so they say.
And so he began to drive away from them, so they say.
He drove it across as he had said, so they say.

ii.
Then the white men got up, so they say.
They shook the tree for a long time, so they say.
Nothing fell down, so they say.
In a pitiable state, they stood about under the tree
was standing there, so they say.
They became angry, so they say.
They started to go after him, so they say.
And so he had long ago driven far away, so they say.
He had driven to a camp of many Coyotes, so they say.
He had distributed all of it among them, so they say.
And so those white men were coming to that place, so they say.
The Coyote who had done so to them met them first,
so they say.
They asked him, so they say:
"You haven't seen someone over here who was
driving a pack?" they said to him, so they say.

Coyote spoke thus to them, so they say:
"I was walking over there recently but I saw no
one. What people went?" he said to them, so they say.
Works Cited


Crazy Horse is an extraordinary book in which the author created an intricate language form to tell the story. Mari Sandoz toiled diligently to write this book and it was the one always closest to her heart, relates Helen Stauffer, Sandoz's biographer. Based in historical fact, Crazy Horse was researched by Sandoz for close to twelve years, from 1931 until 1942, and, during this time, she traveled several times to the Pine Ridge Reservation to interview the last living relatives and friends of the great Lakota leader. Sandoz often camped with Lakota friends in the summer, and revisited sites significant to the Lakota people. Additionally, she journeyed to Washington, D.C., to review the Army records of the period.

As the book was nearing completion, Sandoz realized that it should be rewritten from an Indian point of view. Since a Native American perspective was of such major importance in this book, it became clear to Sandoz that she would need to use unconventional language to reflect that perspective. This was a major creative breakthrough for Sandoz, and it is one of the most interesting of the many narrative techniques she uses in the book to convey a striking sense of "Indian-ness" for the reader.

Sandoz believed the truly "creative writer gives [words] special meanings by unusual usages and arrangements," and that "rhythmic prose could be used for special connotations and emotional impact" (Stauffer, Letters 345). Sandoz was determined to employ these techniques in Crazy Horse so the Lakota's story could be told as if a Lakota were telling it. Sandoz revised endlessly in order to reflect this point of view, altering the language extensively so that the reader could develop a sense of closeness to, and appreciation for, the Lakota traditions.

This revision was time consuming; however, the effort was well worth it. The book is an eloquent tribute to Native American oral tradition, told from an Indian perspective on events. Sandoz included Lakota place names, and also simile, metaphor and imagery which relate directly to Plains Indian culture. Another interesting feature of the language Sandoz used in the story is the real
Lakota words she employed when there were no English equivalents. Although these are few, they add an important dimension to the narrative because they acquaint the reader with some unique concepts of Lakota culture during the late nineteenth century. This particular feature will be discussed in some detail later in the paper.

Throughout her narrative, Sandoz infuses the story with a powerful sense of an Oglala-Lakota experience, and achieves her goal of "[telling] some of the things of the Indian for which there are no white-man words, suggesting something of his innate nature, something of his relationship to the earth and the sky and all that is between" (Oates xxvi). Author and Sandoz scholar Laverne Harrell Clark says that in Crazy Horse "[Sandoz] had developed new powers in corolling and controlling words especially designed . . . to make us forget that we are outsiders of another skin, another time from the Indian atmosphere pervading her work" (275).

Because the entire story is told from a Lakota perspective, we as readers become spectators in the camp, and learn of events as the Indians did, piece by piece. The point of view could be termed limited omniscient and from a Lakota consciousness because we learn of others' actions (by whites and other tribes) only in terms of how those actions affect the Lakotas. Stauffer described the narrator as "a voice that never develops a body or individuality of its own . . . yet it is so close to Crazy Horse as to be his shadow . . ." ("Narrative Voice" 231). Occasionally the narrator knows what Crazy Horse is thinking, but this is rare. Also, this narrative voice hints at the ominous events to come, intertwining the narrative with foreshadowings; however, the voice is not specific about distant things to come. For example, the reader is warned of problems looming in this manner:

The morning sun came up over the breaks of the Platte into a sky that was red as the coals of the council fire. It touched the ridge above the Oglala camp, brightened the smoky tops of the lodges, and moved swiftly down their painted sides . . . Now the day had begun. But the cloud-streaked sky was still red, with the long, late red that speaks of a troubled day. (22)

A Lakota viewpoint is also apparent with regard to the actions of white men in their country. Much of the whites' behavior is impossible for the Lakota to comprehend. Sandoz is a master at showing how vastly different the Indian culture is from the white culture. For example, most puzzling to the Lakota were the gold-seekers in the Indian country:

Lately [miners] had started to run down into the country of the Black Men, the Utes. Even some married into the Oglalas
went . . . . The Cheyennes had found many of the gold-chasing white-men lost and starving along the Smoky Hill River. They fed them and showed them how to get back to their people, but they would go on, although the wisest chiefs said that the yellow earth was not worth as much as the turnips the women dig, for those a hungry man could eat. (112)

The Christian religion, too, appears suspect to the Lakota; for example, they cannot conceive of a place like Hell:
It was as if the shades of the dead ones were captured and kept in a burning place forever. Worm nodded, meaning they had heard of the story and seen pictures of a hairy-faced man in a blue blanket with a yellow ring around his head. It seemed the shades of the whites who did not touch the crossed trees that he carried were sent to the burning place by the Great Power. "It is indeed hard to understand—a great Power doing a bad thing—" (227)

White technology, as well, was a mystery to the Lakota, and the coming of the telegraph was a major event that affected their lives. Here we witness it from an Indian perspective, and we get a sense of the event in images of the Lakota:

But there was something really new and strange along the Holy Road that year, the talking wires. The Indians had seen the tall poles put up, with the wires strung along at the tops, and heard the singing that was in them. At first they whipped their horses along underneath, trying to get ahead of the good sound, and when it was always there, they cut down a few poles with their war hatchets to find it. But as soon as they were down there was nothing. The song had died. (128)

By interweaving the actions of "talking" and "singing" with the inanimate telegraph poles, Sandoz shows how the Lakota perceive all things as living; even the telegraph lines are perceived as being alive. In this way Sandoz helps the reader understand the Lakota concept that "Everything has a spirit" (Shaman qtd. Walker 118). Pam Doher, in an article entitled "Idioms and Figures in Cheyenne Autumn," says that in combining such images, Sandoz "form[s] a pattern of language . . . unifying the work, and maintaining a point of view" (122). Sandoz uses this method effectively in both Cheyenne Autumn, and Crazy Horse.
The language Sandoz chose to use in this book caused several skirmishes between the author and publisher. For instance, Sandoz had a difficult time trying to make her editors realize that the Lakota concept of white men had nothing to do with the color of the skin. In fact, according to some scholars, the word for whites in Lakota is wašiču, meaning "fat taker"—because it seemed the whites were only interested in taking the best from the Lakota.¹ Sandoz's correspondence to her editors, and her "author's proofs" of Crazy Horse found at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln), show her to be quite adamant about using certain words and phrases so that the expression used would truly represent what was meant. In the beginning, Sandoz used "whiteman," a naming word (noun), because that was how the Lakota would conceive it. But her editors insisted that she use "white man" (adjective plus noun), because that is how they thought it should properly be written. After arguments and explanations failed, Sandoz finally conceded to a compromise, and used the hyphenated "white-man" as an adjective in Crazy Horse, and the "proper" white and man as the noun. So, in the text we read there were "whiteman soldiers" and boots belonging to a "white man." It seems Sandoz reached this agreement because she desperately wanted the book published, and Knopf would not back down.

Places are identified according to their Lakota names within the book, as are the names of white characters. This technique allows Sandoz to further develop the Lakota perspective, and we come to know the Niobrara River as "the Running Water" (39); the Oregon Trail as "the Holy Road," so called because the travelers upon it were "sacred" and should not be harmed by the Indians (4). Custer's initial trail into the Black Hills is known as "the Thieves' Road" because the Lakota firmly believed the army had come to take these sacred mountains, which of course, they eventually did. Lake DeSmet is introduced as "the Medicine Water, where, in troubled times, many dreams had come ..." (283). Likewise, white characters are introduced with names translated from the Lakota language; these reflect a distinctive physical feature in most cases. For example, General Crook is referred to as "Three Stars" (321), George Armstrong Custer as "the Long Hair" (335), and General Miles as "Bear Coat" (343); Commander Harney, for whom Harney Peak is named, was known as "White Beard" or "the Hornet" (82). In order that the reader not become confused, Sandoz usually identifies these places and people with appositives within the text.

¹ See Erdoes & Lame Deer - Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions.
Native American oral tradition is evident throughout the text, though this is simulated, it is beautifully manifested in Lakota locution and the metaphors, similes, and figures of speech that Sandoz chose to use in the story. Helen Stauffer, in an article entitled "Narrative Voice in Sandoz’s Crazy Horse," says, "[Sandoz] has developed an impeccable language form, carefully integrated with the story material, different than that of her [other] books" (229). The Lakota phraseology and locution are central to the narrative. The reader feels as if the story were being told by an old-time storyteller of the Lakotas. For example, the increasing white population in the plains region is related in Indian terms:

So the trail started, with just a little stream of white men coming through . . . . But soon the little stream of whites turned into a great river, wider than a gun could shoot across, and the grass and the buffalo got so used up that the Indian ponies were poor into sundance time and the hunters had to travel many days, sometimes clear to the Crow country, just for a kettle of fresh meat. (4)

Sandoz uses phrases and figures of speech which most Lakotas would instantly recognize, but with which non-Lakotas might need some help. In many of these instances, Sandoz includes a bit of an explanation tagged onto the phrase. For example, when Crazy Horse is going off to fight, he is "leading the sorrel horse...the tail tied up for war with white buckskin" (131). Tying up the horse’s tail was an old custom among the Plains peoples and denotes a warrior’s intent and willingness to fight. In many instances, Sandoz relates a character’s emotional state by referring to the heart. For example, "his heart was still on the ground" tells the reader that the character is experiencing sorrow or sadness (131). Someone who feels "big in his heart" is feeling proud (236). Fighting with "new hearts" denotes bravery, where once fear reigned (170). This type of phraseology is quite common among some Lakota even today, according to Eleanor Charging Crow, a Lakota elder. And, this type of phraseology lends a particular tone to the work, one which seems distinctly Lakota.

Sandoz had an abiding appreciation for poetry, and this shows itself in Crazy Horse through her use of simile and metaphor. Again, her similes and metaphors are constructed in a phraseology that reflects Plains Indian culture. For example, a wounded chief lies dying, and his life "was melting as the winter snows from the Chinook’s breath" (40). Factions among the Oglala people begin to manifest themselves as "a slow separating as might come to a herd of wild horses" (141). The bounty of spring in the Lakota country is described by "chokecherry bushes bending like dark plumes in their shining fruit" (105). Soldier tents come up "like puffballs on the prairie after a thunderstorm" (159). A moon stands in the evening west "thin as a drawn bow" (126), but later, when
starving times are upon the Lakota, it is "a shrinking rib" (346). Many of these similes are based in natural phenomena of the Lakota world, natural entities and events they would be familiar with intimately.

Sandoz is equally eloquent with metaphor in Crazy Horse; these as well are reflective of elements of the Lakota world. For instance, rainstorms rage and "flaming braids of lightning whip the earth, the thunders falling upon it" (77). Indians lured into the agencies by gifts from the government are described as "tame winter colts" (83). After the battle on the Blue Water, the blood of the slain women and children is described as "a great red blanket lying on the ground" (70). This metaphor is uniquely symbolic because the Lakota buried their dead wrapped in red blankets whenever it was possible. These images leave the reader with a lasting impression because they relate to a Native American frame of reference and reflect a Lakota world view. Some metaphors Sandoz uses relate to the possessions of the Lakota. For instance, an "arrow of blame" is sent against a rival Oglala faction, or "three great spears of warriors" start out against an enemy (154, 156). Still, these metaphors carry a Native American image, which enhances the reader's perception of the Lakota world.

Sandoz also aspired to represent Native American speech patterns throughout the book. Undoubtedly, she relied on her many interviews with the Lakota people and her childhood memories of Lakota speech patterns to accomplish this end. Sandoz wanted to be sure that she used "the simplest words possible...hoping by idioms and figures [of speech] to say something of the Indian for which there are no white-man words" (Oates xxii). Stauffer relates that this particular feature of Crazy Horse again caused considerable problems with her editors and publishers:

[Paul Hoffman, her editor at Knopf] suggested she may have flattered her reading public by assuming it had previous knowledge of the Sioux wars and recommended that she define Indian expressions more clearly, since readers might not know the terms...he felt the book [was] too diffuse and discursive. (Mari Sandoz 155).

Still, she persevered, and this particular speech pattern feature of Crazy Horse is quite imaginative and fascinating. For example, some of the sentence structures are long, incorporating thoughts and ideas which were significant to the Lakota. In this particular section we see how the length of the sentence incorporates multiple ideas:

Afterward while the Indians broke into the warehouses at the station and loaded their pack horses so they could hardly move, some of the younger warriors galloped across the prairie unrolling bolts of red cloth to blow far behind them in
the wind, drove off big herds of stock or threw their ropes away, dragged the wire and the singing poles behind them. (153)

Using this method of the long, cumulative sentence, infused with much action, we get a sense of the confusion and intensity of the Lakotas' raiding warriors, as well as the storyteller's excitement during the recounting. This Sandoz pointedly contrasts with the shorter sentence regarding the white soldier's inaction, again from a Lakota point of view, "But no more soldiers came out of the stockade to fight" (153). Sandoz instinctively knew that these kinds of atypical language dynamics were necessary because the story of Crazy Horse could not "really" be told with typical American English sentence structures—the story required special dynamics, even if they were perceived as diffuse and discursive. Sandoz said of this method:

Instead of considering the possibilities of making a popular book, I tried to make one giving one way of life, bringing an experience to the reader that he could get no other way, a book that would be as authentic and worth reading ten, twenty, even fifty years from now as today. (Stauffer, Letters, 62)

Some passages even contain what I call "miniature lessons." This is reminiscent of oral tradition, in that something is learned from the telling and retelling of a story. Julian Rice, in his article "Narrative Styles in Dakota Texts," discusses many elements found in traditional oral texts of the Dakota people, "cousins" of the Lakota. One of the most basic thematic threads which run through these texts is the "virtues," which are significant to Indian people. Virtues are skills and strategies that ultimately help sustain tribal communities; they "help the people" by fostering characteristics in individuals that will benefit the community. Virtues might include such characteristics as honesty, bravery, generosity, or good hunting skills. Many traditional Lakota stories point out and praise these virtues, and promote them for the younger generations coming along (Rice 281).

Sandoz employs a technique like this as well in Crazy Horse. Interwoven throughout the narrative are "miniature lessons" of virtue, which may seem, to the uniformed reader, as extraneous. However, I believe they are used purposely, to further simulate the Native American oral tradition. For example, the reader gets a lesson about the importance of truthfulness thus:

Now there was a great thing happening, such as no man had ever seen, but the Indians of the north knew it was true, for the runners brought the news, and a runner who does not carry the straight word will fall as a horse that is worn out, and his bones will be left to whiten the prairie. (152)
Or, we are shown the virtues of good hunting skills, neatly and unobtrusively tucked into the narrative:

It was getting late, the geese coming out of the north, heading for the Platte, the whole country full of green-headed ducks, juicy from the roasting fire, and very easy to shoot with any boy's arrows if he had learned to make the little duck sounds well. (54)

But, it is not just the traditional lessons that are learned here. Sandoz incorporates special cultural lessons about the Lakota for non-native readers as well. She explains cultural practices of the Lakota as a Lakota perhaps would. For example, Sandoz gives the reader insight into the ancient Lakota Heyoka ceremony by telling about it in this way:

So [the heyokas] made the old, old ceremonials before the people, doing everything backwards and mixed up, as they must--wearing their clothes wrong side out or turned around, all singing together instead of one at a time, shivering in the heat of the sun, crawling through mud holes instead of jumping them, pointing their arrows at themselves and falling like dead when they missed, taking meat from the boiling kettles with their hands. (210)

Another device that Sandoz employs to simulate the oral traditions and speech patterns of the Lakota is by using markers in the text which reflect conversational tone. By utilizing this technique as well, Sandoz gives the reader a sense of immediacy, as if events were trying to put us in "the moment." For instance, in the midst of describing action on a battlefield, phrases like "Then something happened..." (97) are inserted into the text. These types of markers abound in Crazy Horse, and they truly do imitate the way in which stories are told orally. Single words, such as "Now" and "Soon," start off many sections of the text, serving to move the reader through the story episodically--as real stories are told in oral discourse. Additionally, to further capture this essence of orality, phrases such as "for it was known that" and "it is said" are placed within the narrative with a naturalness that could only result from Sandoz's having heard them many times--probably during the interviews she conducted among the old-time Lakotas such as He Dog, Short Bull, and Little Killer. This type of speech pattern is also found in the works of William Powers and James R. Walker, well known anthropologists who recorded many Lakota medicine stories and ceremonies.

Sandoz wanted to remain as true to the facts as she could, and when there were "no white-man words" for Lakota concepts, she used the Lakota
language within the narrative. Although Sandoz did not speak the Lakota language, she was quite familiar with some words and commonly used phrases. Sandoz gives the reader bits of the Lakota language by using terms such as "akičita" (a special member of a para-military society among the Lakota), "wasna" (high protein food, a mixture of meat, fat and chokecherries), and "Hou, kola" (the traditional greeting of the Lakota, meaning "Hello friend"). In addition, Sandoz uses other Lakota expressions which indicate concern, excitement, or surprise. For instance, when the Lakota warriors are giving their assent to battle plans, they cry out "Hoye" (the sound of approval); when they are anxious to leave on the war trail, they cry "Hoppol!" meaning "Let us go now" (314). By sprinkling these terms throughout the narrative, Sandoz further enhances the text with a sense of "Lakota-ness."

Sandoz’s innovative writing style and her ability to reflect the oral tradition of the Lakota in her narrative are the two techniques which make this particular book my favorite of her works. However, when the book was first published in 1942, it was not well received outside a small group of western fiction and biography buffs. One reviewer went so far as to mock Sandoz's writing style in his review (Oates xix). However, poet John G. Neihardt, author of Black Elk Speaks, called it admirable, and praised the author for the diligent research she had undertaken to produce the work. Perhaps the greatest admirers of the work were some of the Native Americans themselves. Sandoz related that Standing Bear, an Oglala Lakota from Pine Ridge, remarked that "she wrote just like the good old-time Lakotas spoke" (Mari Sandoz 162). Further, Stauffer indicates that in the years following the publication of Crazy Horse:

Indians, not always Sioux, called on Mari as a matter of respect. Once, after she had moved to New York, a group of young Flatheads and northern Lakotas, most of them soldiers, dropped by. While they sat in a circle, one gave a harangue in what she thought was Lakota; then they read bits of the book, using sign language. Before they took their formal leave, they gave her the double handshake of great respect, first the right hand on top, then the left. Mari said she was pleased, yet felt "terribly small and insignificant for a week." (Mari Sandoz 163)

This was perhaps the greatest praise Sandoz could receive for Crazy Horse; it truly touched her.

Sandoz once said in a letter to editor Ed Weeks, "I'll fight to the last ditch for the right to say something, but once said, it has to stand or fall on its own merit" (Stauffer, Letters 144). We as readers should be grateful for her
stance on this because it is her innovative use of language that makes Crazy Horse a truly meritorious book. Her range of knowledge about, and her concern for the Lakota and their culture, as well as her respect for their traditions truly speaks to the reader through the text of Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas.

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Works Cited


