

With regard to the latter topic, Grayson highlights several problems worthy of further study, and I find it exciting to know that we still have much to learn. These problems range from the well-known, such as the peopling of the Americas and the fate of the megafauna, to much less widely known issues, such as the origins of pupfish in Devil's Hole and the "Walker Lake-Carson Sink conundrum." Highlighting remaining questions relevant to the prehistoric Great Basin only serves to focus attention on where future research might proceed to fill in gaps in our present understanding of the region's prehistory.

The general rule for book reviews is compliment, content, and critique. I found the first two easy, but finding fault with *The Great Basin* is difficult at best. I might engage in some minor nitpicking over Grayson's critiques of a few of the reviewed archaeological studies, but these are better addressed in other venues. One place the author can make improvements is in the presentation. As mentioned above, Grayson has produced an extremely well written, easily read, and engaging book, especially for those of us working in the Great Basin. Because the book is so cleanly written, it has the potential to appeal to audiences well

beyond those found in dusty anthropology and natural science departments. To this end, my suggestion here would be to make improvements in the maps and illustrations. While the prose really draws the reader into the narrative, the graphics are generally bland and uninteresting, and when discussing flora and fauna, leave way too much to the imagination. Color photos would be nice, bearing in mind the added cost. Gains could also be made by adding pictures of the many plants and animals discussed in the text. Such additions would be great for the lay reader unfamiliar with marmots, mice, and Great Basin fishes.

Overall, though, this is a relatively minor critique, especially given the total informational value of the book. I must say that I can not recommend this volume strongly enough. *The Great Basin* is one of those rare publications that spans the space between academic tome and coffee table album. Only one question remains: if I have an earlier edition, do I need this one? If you have the first edition and are familiar with all Great Basin research since its publication, then perhaps not. However, if you want an up-to-date, one-stop source for all things pertaining to the Great Basin, then this book is a must.



## ***Telling Stories in the Face of Danger: Language Renewal in Native American Communities***

Paul V. Kroskrity (ed.)  
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012,  
288 pp., 3 illustrations, 2 maps, \$24.95 (paper).

### **Reviewed by Jared Dahl Aldern**

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For linguists, it may make little difference, generally, as to what particular language forms the object of their research. Whether focused on Azerbaijani, Algonquin, or Afrikaans, linguists' basic tasks are to rigorously

describe and explain such matters as morphology, phonology, semantics, and syntax, with an eye toward the generalizability of their findings, toward a better understanding of language as a fundamental category in the human sciences. Those linguists who study endangered, indigenous languages often encounter complications in these basic tasks, however, and they find themselves quantifying fragmentation and losses—of words, of meanings, of whole sets of narratives—and documenting shifts from rich linguistic variety toward the dominance of ever-narrower, socially and politically powerful languages and expressive modes. One of Paul V. Kroskrity's stated purposes for assembling the articles in *Telling Stories in the Face of Danger* is to take to task scholars who tally linguistic losses but who neither qualitatively describe the consequences

of these losses for indigenous nations nor take action to reverse the declines. With the chapters' authors and the collaborations they describe, Kroskrity has brought together a multitude of native and non-native voices to speak to these pressing issues.

Kroskrity writes that the "dangers" noted in the volume's title are dire, including threats of "heritage language death and erasure of indigenous culture" (p.4). Among the more provocative ideas discussed by several contributors is the risk sometimes posed to vibrant speech communities—to indigenous families, nations, and homelands—by linguistic study and by formal school- or museum-based language instruction itself. In other words, linguists and anthropologists who do take action to reverse language losses may succeed in only accelerating those losses. Kroskrity notes that the studies he has published in this volume "show what the performers are *doing* with their stories" (p.9). The studies show, as well, what *academics* are doing with the performers' stories. The ways in which scholars represent stories can have far-reaching consequences for indigenous lives and nations.

Several contributors address the issue of how tribes have sustained their cultural identities through careful control of the way native languages and stories are shared within communities. For example, in separate chapters Sean O'Neill and Margaret Field examine the highly localized storytelling practices of northwestern California and northern Mexico, respectively. Field notes that, among various Kumiai groups, both the content and the code of a story are specific to a tribe's local area. She points out that strongly localized forms of speaking tend to appear in areas that are rich with resources, where a "localist stance" in speech and story helps to distinguish groups and identify them with specific places, environmental rights, and resources. Thus the lessons and the specific forms of stories are critical to sustaining communities, and careful attention to distinctions is essential. Field calls on "academics who work with traditional texts and oral communities to find ways to build more bridges between existing bodies of scholarship and the needs of traditionally oral communities to assume the future of their identities" (p. 124). Borrowing a phrase from Kenneth Hale's publications on language revitalization in Australia, Field emphasizes that in building such bridges, academics

must "avoid any type of privileging of one dialect over another... In other words, they need to observe a 'policy of strict locality'" (p. 125).

Gus Palmer, Jr., grappling with similar issues in Kiowa communities, describes how cultural identity is at stake whenever significant narratives are shared. "Every Kiowa knows that it is dangerous to allow any stranger to know your deepest, truest thoughts," he writes, "which could only happen by way of or through spoken words" (p. 32). In this view, there are always dangers involved in telling a story: a risk of telling a story in the wrong way (thus distorting or completely losing history), or of telling a story at the wrong time, or to the wrong audience. Perhaps it is because writing stories down makes them more generally available—freezing them, in a sense, for consumption at any time—that many Kiowa people are ideologically opposed to putting stories in writing. As Palmer puts it, "Many Kiowas...think committing Kiowa artificially to a written form would be destructive of something innate and sacred" (p. 33).

Here we encounter a dilemma, because formal, funded language revitalization programs almost always involve written language. In their chapter on linguistic maintenance and revitalization efforts on the White Mountain Apache reservation, M. Eleanor Nevins and Thomas J. Nevins indicate that "language loss" can mean different things to different segments of a native community. Tribal schools and museums may organize, govern, and assess language loss and learning in ways that contrast with the reciprocal, intergenerational storytelling of families—forms of learning that may be "invisible...to those formulating maintenance efforts, because in many cases these are tacitly held, enacted through practice, but not talked about directly and codified" (p. 131). Thus a "maintenance" program may actually discontinue certain uses of language, or at least redirect them from dynamic oral communications to more formalized instruction and written communications. Linguistic "best practices" may conflict with storytelling traditions of extended families that are highly dependent on specific interrelationships among the people, their ancestors, and their land. "Put another way, there is a tendency toward erasure of the diversity of local discursive practices" (p. 147).

And what are the consequences of the erasure of diverse, local discursive practices? When Kroskrity asked Tewa storyteller Dewey Healing what he liked about

his people's stories, he was "stunned" at the answer: "I like the way they make the crops grow" (p. 160). Healing elaborated by adding that Tewa people "grow" their children with stories, also. "Our food makes them strong but our stories make them complete" (p.161). Thus responsibility to land—the responsibility to grow crops—includes a responsibility to employ the efficacious, discursive practices of storytelling, a style of education that "completes" children and helps them understand how they participate in local cycles of growth, use, and renewal. This may explain why elders "voice opposition to the use of Tewa stories in schools, and...oppose the making of written Tewa texts" (p. 173). Though many younger tribal members "strongly favor bringing the heritage language into the schools and adult education classes, preparing Tewa story textbooks, and creating bilingual texts and performances in Tewa and English," Kroskirty writes, "...the apparent intent of traditional leaders is not punitive as much as it is the rigorous maintenance of community values" (p. 174).

In the Apache context, Nevins and Nevins describe "the movement of stories from extended family and ceremonial contexts to school and museum" as a "radical translation" (p. 143), disrupting the life of the community by displacing "stories told in familial and ceremonial contexts [that] provide an opportunity for...ancestors to speak to people." This is why the storytelling style is "sparse." The storyteller deliberately avoids "directly interposing herself or himself between the ancestors and listeners' imaginations," using place names and quotative particles (e.g., "people say") to push the focus away from the storyteller and toward the ancestor's voices. "The task of the storyteller is to bring listeners into imaginative relation with ancestors so that they can see what the ancestors saw, hear their voices, stand where they stood" (p. 144). On the other hand, schools and museums, with their tendencies to focus on broadly defined cultural expertise and a standardized "authenticity," objectify intergenerational relationships and do not allow the ancestors to speak.

Thus the *forms* of stories and of storytelling practices are crucial. Citing the classicist Milman Parry, Gus Palmer, Jr. compares characteristics of Kiowa storytelling to what Greek storytellers of the Homeric era were doing with their stories. "Such features include rhyme, alliteration, parallelism, formulaic openings and closings, rhythm,

song, story framing, intertextualization, verisimilitude, and knowing when to tell a story in the midst of ordinary conversation" (p. 24). The radical translations of stories from their original languages and social contexts to different languages or institutional contexts lead to profound changes in these discursive features. As the anthropologist and graphic novelist Bernard C. Perley writes of his heritage language of Maliseet, "The gradual loss of the Maliseet language in Maliseet storytelling, the retelling of Maliseet stories by non-Maliseet storytellers and scholars, and the predominant use of English while *reading* Maliseet stories are key transformations in Maliseet storytelling that present several linguistic and cultural dangers for Maliseet communities" (p.185).

Yet there is reason for hope, even in the face of these dangers and transformations. Palmer writes that when Kiowa people read or tell an important story, "even in English or mixed English and Kiowa, they are transported in their minds and imaginations back to a cosmic place long ago" (p.40). "Many of the old stories cannot be told as they once were," he continues, "but there remains a resilience and belief within, a metanarrative recontextualized in another place and time perhaps" (p.42). Perley, who offers a detailed account of the historical stages of intextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization of Maliseet stories, writes, "I use the term 'representation' instead of 'transcription' to foreground the initial separation of Maliseet stories from Maliseet voices and Maliseet people through the process of writing down what Maliseet speakers and storytellers had said into a textual form *that can be reinterpreted at a later time*" (p. 187; emphasis added).

Anthony K. Webster suggests how "an imagined Navajo language community" (p. 205) is created by contemporary Navajo poets. "Spatially anchoring" the stories told within a poem by using place names and directional clues is essential, and so is "ideophony," or the vocal simulation of actions, events, and activities. Such symbolic use of sound makes the narratives "more aesthetically pleasing and hence more efficacious" for Navajo audiences (p. 205). The technique of ideophony, though often negatively evaluated by a "Western language ideology that finds such uses 'childish' or 'primitive'" (p. 218), is valued by Navajo listeners for its capacity to evoke images, to "give imagination to the listeners." Ideophony "reverberates" through

many Navajo poems, songs, and stories, challenging a “Western ideology overly fixated on reference” (p. 226), and helping the community to form an image of itself. Thus ideophony is part of an aural system that sustains Navajo nationalism.

Perley, the Maliseet graphic novelist, also transcends the borders of genre by representing stories in the multiple “texts” that together compose a graphic novel. “In the category of texts I include graphic images, framing devices, and type fonts. In short, it is not just the language that I am attempting to salvage; it is also the landscape, the stories, and the Maliseet peoples’ experience” (p. 198). Bringing these tools together, he creates an experience and, once again, places—Maliseet homelands—are indispensable elements of these experiences. “I do not

want members of the community merely to read the text. I want them to ‘experience the text,’ because place is critical as a meaningful part of the reading” (p.202). And by evoking experience, Perley seeks to perpetuate, to *provoke* more Maliseet storytelling.

Thus comes one answer to the question of what storytellers are doing with their stories: they are trying to provoke more stories. And—with varying degrees of success—what academics do is to aid in these provocations. The authors quoted above and the other contributors to this book have made a valuable contribution to the scholarly literature on indigenous language renewal. It should be of great use in graduate seminars and advanced undergraduate courses in anthropology, linguistics, and Native American studies.



## ***Hunter-Gatherer Behavior: Human Response During the Younger Dryas***

Metin I. Eren (ed.)  
Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2012, 281 pp., \$79 (cloth)

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The Younger Dryas (YD), popularly perceived as a 1,300-year-long return to glacial conditions at the close of the Pleistocene, is notable for its rapid onset, arguably extreme climatic effects, and contemporaneity with such game-changing developments in human prehistory as the proliferation of peoples and cultures across the Americas, the diversification and intensification of hunter-gatherer lifeways, and the initiation of the processes that led to animal and plant domestication at the dawn of the Holocene. It was consequently surprising to read Metin Eren’s introduction to this new edited volume, *Hunter-Gatherer Behavior: Human Response During the Younger Dryas*, in which he argues that the Younger Dryas was of little consequence to the hunter-

gatherer populations and behaviors then spanning the globe. David Meltzer and Ofer Bar-Yosef make similar claims in the volume’s concluding chapter. Needless to say, this perspective is strikingly counterintuitive, and if true, incredibly important to our overall understanding of human prehistory, the origins of the complex societies that developed during the Holocene, and the roles that climate change and ecological relationships play in the development of economic, social, and political behavior.

This volume addresses these issues (and ostensibly Eren’s claim) in eleven geographically-defined chapters written by many of the leading experts on YD archaeology across the Americas and Eurasia. The first two chapters following the introduction, by Tom Dillehay and Luis Borrero, respectively, focus on South America and set the format for the rest of the book—each starts with an overview of paleoclimatic and paleoenvironmental reconstructions from proxy records such as ice and pollen cores and then moves on to summarize archaeological research on Younger Dryas hunter-gatherers. Interestingly, indications of YD paleoenvironmental change in South America are at best equivocal and, perhaps not surprisingly, evidence for contemporaneous change in hunter-gatherer lifeways is scant (though I wonder if