
Andrew Cowell. *Naming the World: Language and Power Among the Northern Arapaho*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015. Pp. x + 296 pp.
<https://uapress.arizona.edu/book/naming-the-world>

Linguist Andrew Cowell's *Naming the World, Language and Power Among the Northern Arapaho* follows on the heels of his previous book *Arapaho Stories, Songs, and Prayers*. While *Arapaho Stories, Songs, and Prayers* will prove to be of utility to those Northern Arapahos striving toward strengthening their competency as speakers of Arapaho, *Naming the World* is a bit of a mixed bag. Linguists will find particular merit in it, though passive Arapaho speakers should also find some benefit, as might advanced second language learners, should they begin to emerge. This last comment finds its basis from Andy Cowell's introduction, regarding the concept of continuity and discontinuity being problematic. While Cowell points to the benefits that linguistic resources bring to the table, it is in fact elements of language discontinuity and a lack of language continuity that continues to fulfill the prediction of language demise and loss that Michael Kraus wrote about in the 1970s. Discontinuity is also reflected in what Cowell wrote about naming. Here it was noted how young people just want a name and how *neniisih'eih* (the one who names) stated that there was more to it than that, thus reflecting the discontinuity in understanding what it means to receive a name and to have a name. This was something I experienced firsthand when my son asked that I name his daughter (my granddaughter), and while I always call her *Yeiyinisei*, I have not once heard him call his daughter this. What then tends to happen with those who have been named is over time through a lack of continuity and use the name fades into disuse and the ability to say it forgotten. This concept of continuity and discontinuity is further raised when Cowell elaborates more with his discussion of a Northern Arapaho society in and around the reservation. Tangentially I found it odd that "Helen" was shown to use a man's word *hiiko* - no (page 20) instead of a woman's word *gus*, which may also add to the discussion about naming and how these examples illustrate that there is more to language than just naming words.

In chapter 1, readers are led through a series of topics that touch on pre-reservation era, importance of age, reservation era, band and tribe, ceremonialism and tribalism. In addition to this Cowell also introduces topics of Communities of Practice, and language shift, stating that a focus of the book is to investigate causality of language shift among the Northern Arapaho. A point Cowell brings up regarding language shift causality is a tension between language learners as performers of language, and Elders as speakers of Arapaho, an issue that has some complexity in a worldview where Elder speakers of Arapaho have shifted to become MTH (More Than Human) wielding power through language. Here Cowell proposes that language learners see symbolic capital (here I would prefer importance or significance) through language performance irrespective of grammatical errors while Elder speakers are viewed as having language capital that gives them control. Here I would also consider whether within a worldview where language has power and is Sacred, Elders may be more concerned about what might result from language spoke improperly. In support of this, I refer to chapter 2.

In chapter 2, Andrew looks at how metaphors have been used by speakers of Arapaho. Here he introduces the importance of maintaining exact phonological forms of names (p. 53), without which leads to loss of meaning and connection to language and history, and a concept of power. Drawing from "A Man and His Two Sons", which was the third story my daughter learned from me, Andrew discusses two words *no'otehiit*, and *no'o'* that he connects with power. Referring to

no'o', I have seen this word spelled three different ways; once as nooo', another as no'oo' and now as no'o'. Because Arapaho is tonal lacking written diacritics to show this can result with the word not being said properly by someone who has never heard it spoken. For instance, when teaching my daughter the story I came upon this word and "3iewono." I didn't recognize these words so I asked a few older speakers about them both, which they also didn't recognize. I eventually realized that I was pronouncing 3iewono as it was written and that it was misspelled, it should have been written 3iiwono. The same was true of nooo'. Without pronouncing a missing medial glottal and not rising tonally at the end, the word was mispronounced and unrecognizable. And, with the word spelled no'oo' not pronouncing the ending glottal and not rising the tone on the last vowel the word then sounds like no'oo (mom). Similar issues are presented near the end of the chapter under the heading of "Student Discourse on the Arapaho Language," where he gives mention to language shifts that move closer to European concepts of language (pg. 72).

In chapter 3, Cowell discusses names and power that connect to landscape. The chapter touches on areas such as: landscape descriptors; land areas and features that resemble a physical item - such as the north slope of Longs Peak of Colorado that is called ce'einoonoohoet (rawhide dish); names of areas based on some event acted upon by the Arapaho, or some aspect of use done by the Arapaho. While linguists should find this chapter particularly useful, it may also be found useful by Arapaho students as it discusses structural meanings and global patterns of place names. Here Cowell brings up an important point (p. 98) with regard to addressing Arapaho quests for knowledge, something that struck me while teaching my "Indian Culture as Expressed Through Language" class back in 2009. I had written on the board *niicoo'owu*. What struck me was the end sound, which referred to a state of liquidness or body of water. Weeks later while on the Wind River I asked an Elder speaker what the word meant and was told—salt. I responded, "I know that, but it carries another thought. At the end it refers to something in a liquid state." The Elder, getting a bit impatient with me stated it means salt. With my mind racing, when I asked "what is the name of that lake in Utah?", he dropped his head and quietly said *niicóð'ówu'*. This immediately gleaned the following. The word for pond is *coo'óðwúse'*, but if the front is a variant of *ní'coo'*, which refers to something that tastes good, then metaphorically it could refer to a body of water that carries some aspect of being good. It also means the transference of the word to apply to European's salt recognized some similar quality. Beyond this, the word suggests the Arapaho may have recognized the relevance of salt as something that was good for the body, which Dr. Batmanghelidj's recognizes in 22 different ways in his book, "Water: Rx for a Healthier Pain-Free Life".

Chapter 3 winds down with discussions on "Place Naming, Power, and Modern Arapaho Society", "The Ironic Response" and "Place Names in Contemporary Usage." With regard to an ironic response, but from a different perspective that Cowell would appreciate, is something Ambrose Brown told me back in 1994. In his generation the town of Dubois was said something along the lines of Niisoo honoh'ehih'o' (or shortened, Niisonoh'oho'), because they thought Whites were saying "two boys". Another thing Ambrose told me, which is similar to this but working the other way, was that Black Coal's name was actually Be'xou—Red Fox (fox = beexou), but when soldiers heard this they thought Arapahos were saying black coal, which provides a segue to chapter 4.

In chapter 4, Cowell delves into the topic of personal names and naming, name usage, and toward the end of the chapter sections on change, and Hollywood names. The chapter begins with some linguistic analysis of form and structure of names as they once were and how that

structure has been maintained through personal names. One of the topics brought up is “Change and Phonological Rigidification and how a non-speaker may often garble the pronunciation of their own name into something meaningless or something that has some similar nominative English sounding words. In this instance when Nii’eihii 3i’ok (Sitting Bird/Eagle) was asked what his name was, he said “Hey that buck.” Another example relates to rigidity of use to what one would think of in English as a nickname. This tends to happen when a person’s name has been shortened. When the individual, however, is told their full name they may insist that this was not the name given them. Several years back I was asked to tell a person what their name meant and the person pronounced the name as See3tei, I said it couldn’t make out what it meant. When I told person I thought the name was See3cei, the person insisted that wasn’t their name and that their grandmother had given them the name See3tei. This name unfortunately has no real meaning, where See3cei refers to pine pitch or sap, which makes sense as a name.

Chapter 5, Folk Etymology and Language Purism moves through several subjects, such as; “Practice and Ideologies”, “Trickster and the Whiteman”, “Creation and Origin Stories”, “Ethnicity and Identity”, “Being Arapaho”, “Etymology and Authority”, and “Power and Irony” that discuss how these areas symbolically and metaphorically connect to etymology. In the section on “Practice and Ideology” Cowell turns to an analysis of Hosei’oowu, which he informs readers means Offerings Lodge. While this meaning is also found among the Cheyenne, Cowell says the term derives from hoseino (meat), which we are informed gives reference to where one gives away or sacrifices (hosein). I find this analysis quite surprising because I never heard the Lodge as an Offerings Lodge but understood that the name derived from hoseikuutii, which means to toss or throw away. If hoseino’ were linguistically linked to the Lodge as Hoseino’oowu the meaning would more closely resemble flesh Lodge. With the completion of the Sun Dance marking the beginning of a new year, then the last thing that occurs before its completion is the Dancers throwing away the things that held them back in the old year to freshly begin the new one, something that often pledgers are reminded of by the Grandfathers.

In the section on “Trickster and the Whiteman,” Cowell examines the word for Whiteman (Nih’oo3oo). While much of the discussion revolves around the word meaning Spider, the question with regard to why it came to represent Whiteman has no hard fast reason. Here Cowell notes that the same person can invoke different meanings for the same word, leading to more than one etymology being seen as true. To this I would add one of the reasons I was told by an Elder when instructing me at an early age. When I asked why Whites are called Nih’oo3o, I was told it was because when Arapahos from a distance saw the tops of covered wagons stretching out across the plains as they moved, it reminded them of Spider filaments. Cowell then takes on a discussion about turtle (be’enuo). What is interesting here, from a comedic sense, is the question, which came first the chicken or the egg? This is raised because be’enuo also means fog, and to state it is foggy would be bee’enouni. Thus because be’ and bee’ both mean blood, and with the discussion of turtle’s etymology being linked with blood, an interesting discussion would be how the etymology of fog connects with blood. A sidebar adding to a discussion on etymology, are two words I’ve presented to students to see if they derive any imbedded meaning from how they sound, which is the word prayer “howoyeitit” and dragonfly (Cii’owoyeihii), a symbol that is used in Sun Dance, which they are not told. Often students will link Cii’owoyeihii to something in a state of prayer.

Chapter 6, “Neologisms, and the Politics of Language Maintenance,” begins with examining names of animals and plants relative to movement out onto the plains. The section concludes with Cowell pointing out (p. 204) something that I have noted in my classes over the past 15 years, that Arapaho, with its avoidance of incorporating foreign words, exceptions being cîis and ceebini (Germany), is an example of language purity. In the section that follows, “Sound

Correspondences, Analogical Think and the Ideology of Neologisms,” Cowell brings up my name, Neyooxet (one day he might be interested to learn how my uncle had me accept that as my name.) He also mentions Cooxuceneihii (Meadowlark) a name I once metaphorically used for a talk; “Teaching Meadowlark’s Children Their Songs,” that focused on the work of the Arapaho language revitalization preschool I started in 1994 on the Wind River reservation. While the sections in this chapter will draw the interests of linguists, they will be very useful for students of Arapaho in understanding connections and underlying meanings imbedded within the language. A footnote to Cowell’s discussion about Meadowlark that I’ve noted on other occasions and in my Meadowlark talk, a longstanding tradition that rests on the belief that Meadowlark speaks Arapaho was to feed the tongues of a Meadowlark to a child whose speaking Arapaho was delayed to bring on the onset of speaking. Unfortunately, the last time I remember this being done by a parent to bring the onset of their child to speak was done for English, which clearly the Meadowlark does not speak. In *Naming the World* readers will find a treasure trove of linguistic analysis blended with transcribed speech that will prove to be beneficial Algonquian scholars and students of Arapaho alike.

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