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Wisdom Sits in Places

Notes on a Western Apache Landscape

Keith H. Basso

Place is the first of all beings, since everything that exists is in a place and cannot exist without a place.
—*Archytas,* Commentary on Aristotle's Categories

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 (and even the odd sociologist or two) 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 on the planet are attracting unprecedented attention worldwide, it is unfortunate that cultural 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, ethnographers have been notably less inclined to examine the elaborate arrays of conceptual and

expressive instruments—ideas, beliefs, stories, songs—with which community members produce and display coherent understandings of it. Consequently, little is known of the ways in which culturally diverse peoples are alive to the world around them, of how they comprehend it, of the different modes of awareness with which they take it in and (in the words of Edmund Husserl) discover that it matters. Nor can much be said about the effects of such discoveries on the persons who make them, about why some localities matter more than others, or about why viewing a favored site (or merely recalling aspects of its appearance) may loosen strong emotions and kindle thoughts of a richly caring kind. In short, anthropologists have paid scant attention to one of the most basic dimensions of human experience—that close companion of heart and mind, often subdued, yet potentially overwhelming, that is known as *sense of place.* Missing from the discipline is a thematized concern with the ways in which citizens of the earth constitute their landscapes and take themselves to be connected to them. Missing is a desire to fathom the various and variable perspectives from which people *know* their landscapes, the self-invested viewpoints from which (to borrow Isak Dinesen's felicitous image [1979]) they embrace the countryside and find the embrace returned. Missing is an interest in how men and women dwell.[2]

As formulated by Martin Heidegger (1977), whose general lead I propose to follow here, the concept of *dwelling* assigns importance to the forms of consciousness with which individuals perceive and apprehend geographical space.[3] More precisely, dwelling is said to consist in the multiple "lived relationships" that people maintain with places, for it is solely by virtue of these relationships that space acquires meaning. (Thus, as Heidegger himself put it [1977:332], "Spaces receive their essential being from particular localities and not from 'space' itself.") As numerous as they are both singular and specific, and fully realizable across great distances, relationships with places are lived whenever a place becomes the object of awareness. In many instances, awareness of place is brief and unselfconscious, a fleeting moment (a flash of recognition, a trace of memory) that is swiftly replaced by awareness of something else. But now and again, and sometimes without apparent cause, awareness is seized—arrested—and the place on which it settles becomes an object of spontaneous reflection and resonating sentiment. It is at times such as these, when individuals step back from the flow of everyday experience and attend self-consciously to places—when, we may say, they pause to actively sense them—that their relationships to geographical space are most richly lived and surely felt. For it is on these occasions of focused thought and quickened emotion that places are encountered most directly, experienced most robustly, and (in Heidegger's view) most fully brought into being. Sensing places, men and women become sharply

aware of the complex attachments that link them to features of the physical world. Sensing places, they dwell, as it were, on aspects of dwelling.

Persons thus involved may also dwell on aspects of themselves, on sides and corners of their own evolving identities. For the self-conscious experience of place is inevitably a product and expression of the self whose experience it is, and therefore, unavoidably, the nature of that experience (its intentional thrust, its substantive content, its affective tones and colorings) is shaped at every turn by the personal and social biography of the one who sustains it.[4] Hence, as numerous writers have noted, places possess a marked capacity for triggering acts of self-reflection, inspiring thoughts about who one presently is, or memories of who one used to be, or musings on who one might become. And that is not all. Place-based thoughts about the self lead commonly to thoughts of other things—other places, other people, other times, whole networks of associations that ramify unaccountably within the expanding spheres of awareness that they themselves engender. The experience of sensing places, then, is thus both roundly reciprocal and incorrigibly dynamic. As places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed, and the movements of this process—inward toward facets of the self, outward toward aspects of the external world, alternately both together—cannot be known in advance. When places are actively sensed, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination, and where the mind may lead is anybody's guess.

This process of interanimation relates directly to the fact that familiar places are experienced as inherently meaningful, their significance and value being found to reside in (and, it may seem, to emanate from) the form and arrangement of their observable characteristics. A concise account of this phenomenon, couched in a broader discussion of how people interact with material things, appears in the philosophical writings of Jean-Paul Sartre (1965:87–91). Proceeding on the twin assumptions that "man can only mean what he knows," and that "things can reflect for individuals only their own knowledge of them," Sartre considers what happens when attention is directed toward physical objects.

> When knowledge and feeling are oriented toward something real, actually perceived, the thing, like a reflector, returns the light it has received from it. As a result of this continual interaction, meaning is continually enriched at the same time as the object soaks up affective qualities. The object thus obtains its own particular depth and richness. The affective state follows the progress of attention, developing with each new discovery of meaning . . . with the result that its development is unpredictable. At each moment perception overflows it and sustains it, and its density and depth come from its being confused with the perceived object. *Each quality is so deeply incorporated*

> *in the object that it is impossible to distinguish what is felt and what is perceived.* (Sartre 1965:89; emphasis added)

Thus, through a vigorous conflation of attentive subject and geographical object, places come to generate their own fields of meaning.[5] So, too, they give rise to their own aesthetic immediacies, their shifting moods and relevancies, their character and spirit. Even in total stillness, places may seem to speak. But as Sartre makes clear, such voices as places possess should not be mistaken for their own. Animated by the thoughts and feelings of persons who attend to them, places express only what their animators enable them to say; like the thirsty sponges to which the philosopher alludes, they yield to consciousness only what consciousness has given them to absorb. Yet this may be quite considerable, and so it is, as everyone knows, that places actively sensed amount to substantially more than points in physical space. As natural "reflectors" that return awareness to the source from which it springs, places also provide points from which to look out on life, to grasp one's position in the order of things, to contemplate events from somewhere in particular. Human constructions par excellence, places consist in what gets made of them—in anything and everything they are taken to be—and their disembodied voices, immanent though inaudible, are merely those of people speaking silently to themselves.

And on numerous occasions, audibly enough, the voices of people speaking to each other. Although the self-conscious experience of place may at base be a private affair, tangible representations of it are commonly made available for public consumption. Indeed, as any seasoned traveler can readily attest, locally significant places get depicted and appraised by established local citizens almost as often as suspicious marital upheavals, bad weather, and the shortcomings of other people's children. Surrounded by places, and always in one place or another, men and women talk about them constantly, and it is from listening in on such exchanges and then trying to ascertain what has been said that interested outsiders can begin to appreciate what the encompassing landscape is really all about. Stated more exactly, the outsider must attempt to come to grips with the indigenous cultural forms with which the landscape is experienced, the shared symbolic vehicles that give shape to geographical experience and facilitate its communication—its re-creation and re-presentation—in interpersonal settings. For it is simply not the case, as some phenomenologists and growing numbers of nature writers would have us believe, that relationships to places are lived exclusively or predominantly in contemplative moments of social isolation. On the contrary, relationships to places are lived most often in the company of

other people, and it is on these communal occasions—when places are sensed *together*—that native views of the physical world become accessible to strangers. And while attending to ordinary talk is always a useful strategy for uncovering such views, it is usually just a beginning. Relationships to places may also find expression through the agencies of myth, prayer, music, dance, art, architecture, and, in many communities, recurrent forms of religious and political ritual. Thus represented and enacted—daily, monthly, seasonally, annually—places and their meanings are continually woven into the fabric of social life, anchoring it to features of the landscape and blanketing it with layers of significance that few can fail to appreciate. Deliberately and otherwise, people are forever presenting each other with culturally mediated images of where and how they dwell. In large ways and small, they are forever performing acts that reproduce and express their own sense of place—and also, inextricably, their own understandings of who and what they are.

As I conceive of it, the ethnographer's task is to determine what these acts of expression purportedly involve (why they are performed, how they are accomplished, what they are intended to achieve) and to disclose their importance by relating them to larger ideas about the world and its inhabitants. In other words, naturally occurring depictions of places are treated as actualizations of the knowledge that informs them, as outward manifestations of underlying systems of thought, as native constructions wrought with native materials that embody and display a native cast of mind. And it is that cast of mind (or certain prominent aspects of it, anyway) that the ethnographer must work to grasp, intelligibly make out, and later set down in writing. Heaven, then, in a few grains of carefully inspected sand; instructive statements about places and their role in human affairs through the close contextualization of a handful of telling events.[6]

An assignment of this delicacy challenges the text-building pen as much as it does the insight-seeking mind. Mulling over imperfect field notes, sorting through conflicting intuitions, and beset by a host of unanswered questions, the ethnographer must somehow fashion a written account that adequately conveys his or her understanding of other people's understandings. As will shortly become apparent, my own preference is for chronological narratives that move from interpretations of experience raw to those of experience digested, from moments of anxious puzzlement ("What the devil is going on here?") to subsequent ones of cautious insight ("I think perhaps I see."). Because that, more often than not, is how ethnographic fieldwork actually unfolds. It is, to be sure, a discomfiting business in which loose ends abound and little is ever certain. But with ample time, a dollop of patience, and steady guidance

from able native instructors, one does make measurable progress. To argue otherwise (and there is a bit of that around these days) is to dismiss ethnography as a valid source of cultural knowledge and turn it into a solipsistic sideshow, an ominous prospect only slightly less appealing than the self-engrossed meanderings of those who seek to promote it. As Isaiah Berlin remarked somewhere, it is better to write of things one believes one knows something about than to anguish in high despair over the manifold difficulties of knowing things at all. And better as well, having taken the plunge, to allow oneself to enjoy it. Doing ethnography can be a great deal of fun, and disguising the fact on paper, as though it were something to be ashamed of, is less than totally honest. It may also be less than effective. Current fashions notwithstanding, clenched teeth and furrowed brow are no guarantee of literary success. In crafting one's prose, as in going about one's fieldwork, it is always permissible—and sometimes highly informative—to smile and even to laugh.

It is permissible, too, to be pleased—and sometimes downright impressed—with things one happens to learn. From time to time, when luck is on their side, ethnographers stumble onto culturally given ideas whose striking novelty and evident scope seem to cry out for thoughtful consideration beyond their accustomed boundaries. Making these ideas available in perusable form is a worthy endeavor on general principles, but where places are concerned it is apt to prove especially illuminating. For where places are involved, attendant modes of dwelling are never far behind, and in this dimly lit region of the anthropological world—call it, if you like, the ethnography of lived topographies—much remains to be learned. Places and their sensings deserve our close attention. To continue to neglect them would be foolish and shortsighted. Intriguing discoveries await us, and the need to consider them thoughtfully grows stronger every day.

> American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind.
> —*Vine Deloria, Jr.*, God Is Red

June 7, 1982. The foregoing thoughts would have mattered little to Dudley Patterson or the two other horsemen, Sam Endfield and Charles Cromwell, with whom he was speaking on a late spring day. Having spent nearly ten hours sorting steers and branding calves, the three were resting in a grove of juniper trees several miles from their homes at Cibecue, a settlement of eleven hundred Western Apache people located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in east-central Arizona.[7] The heat of the afternoon was still intense, and as the men waited for it to

subside their talk was of their trade: the habits and foibles of horses and the dozens of things one needs to keep in mind when working excitable cattle in rough and rocky country. Veteran horsemen all, and intimately familiar with the rugged lands they had explored together for more than forty years, they spoke quietly of such matters, exchanging observations about Dudley's bay mare (strong and quick but reluctant to trot through heavy stands of brush), Sam's roan gelding (gentle and cooperative but apt to bite when hastily bridled), and the spotted maverick bull with curled horns and faulty vision in one eye who could be safely approached from the left side but not from the right. Western Apache shop talk: relaxed, confident, endlessly informative, rising and falling on the soft phonemic tones of the Athapaskan language the horsemen speak with total fluency. As an aspiring speaker of the language and a would-be horseman myself, I am completely absorbed.[8]

A few minutes later, the group beneath the trees is joined by another man on horseback, Talbert Paxton, who is highly regarded as an accomplished roper and a fearless rider in pursuit of bolting cattle. Considerably younger than Dudley Patterson and his companions, Talbert has worked with them many times before, but for the past three weeks, painfully upset over the collapse of a month-long love affair, he has thrown himself into other sorts of activities—such as drinking prodigious quantities of beer, spreading unfounded rumors about the woman who rejected him, and proposing sex to several other women who either laughed in his face or promised to damage his testicles if he took one more step in their direction. Normally restrained and unquestionably intelligent, Talbert had lost control of himself. He had become a nuisance of the first order, an unruly bother and an irritating bore, and the residents of Cibecue were more than a little annoyed.

Nothing is said of this or anything else as Talbert dismounts, tethers his horse to a tree, and seats himself on the ground at a respectable distance from his senior associates. Charles nods him a wordless greeting, Sam does the same, and Dudley announces to no one in particular that it certainly is hot. Talbert remains silent, his eyes fixed intently on the pointed toes of his high-heeled boots. Charles disposes of a well-chewed plug of tobacco, Sam attacks a hangnail with his pocketknife, and Dudley observes that the grass is certainly dry. A long moment passes before Talbert finally speaks. What he says deals neither with the elevated temperature nor with the parched condition of the Cibecue range. In a soft and halting voice he reports that he has been sober for three days and would like to return to work. He adds that he is eager to get away from the village because people there have been gossiping about him. Worse than that, he says, they have been laughing at him behind his back.

It is a candid and touching moment, and I expect from the smiles that appear on the faces of the senior horsemen that they will respond to Talbert's disclosures with accommodating expressions of empathy and approval. But what happens next—a short sequence of emphatically delivered assertions to which Talbert replies in kind—leaves me confused. My bewilderment stems not from a failure to understand the linguistic meanings of the utterances comprising the interchange; indeed, their manifest semantic content is simple and straightforward. What is perplexing is that the utterances arrive as total non sequiturs, as statements I cannot relate to anything that has previously been said or done. Verbal acts without apparent purpose or interactional design, they seem totally unconnected to the social context in which they are occurring, and whatever messages they are intended to convey elude me entirely.

A grinning Dudley speaks first:
Hela! Gizhyaa'itiné dį' nandzaa né. (So! You've returned from Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills!)
Followed by a brightly animated Charles:
Hela! 'Iłs'ą́ą́ nadaahi niłhiyeeg né. (So! You got tired walking back and forth!)
Followed by Sam, on the verge of laughter:
Hela! 'Ilizh diłtł'ii daho'higo bił 'óóhindzii né. (So! You've smelled enough burning piss!)
Followed by Talbert, who is smiling now himself:
Dit'įį dogosh'įįda. (For a while I couldn't see!)
Followed once more by Dudley:
Dá'andii! Gizhyaa'itiné goyą́ą́go 'anilą́ą' doleeł. 'Iskąą da łaa naiłdziig. (It's true. Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills will make you wise. We'll work together tomorrow.)

The sudden burst of talk ends as abruptly as it began, and silence again prevails in the shady grove of juniper trees. Nothing more will be said. Still chuckling, Sam Endfield rises from the ground, walks to his horse, and swings smoothly into his saddle. Moments later, the rest of us follow suit. Talbert departs on a trail leading north to the home of one of his sisters. Sam and Charles and Dudley head northwest to a small pasture where they keep their extra mounts. I ride alone toward the trading post at Cibecue, wondering what to have for supper and trying to make sense of the events I have just witnessed. But to no avail. What the place named Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills has to do with too much walking back and forth, burning urine, and making young men wise are things I do not know. And why mentioning them succeeded in lifting everyone's spirits, including those of the beleaguered Talbert Paxton, remains an unanswered question.

Arriving that evening at the outskirts of Cibecue, I was unaware that I had been exposed to a venerable set of verbal practices whereby West-

ern Apaches evoke and manipulate the significance of local places to comment on the moral shortcomings of wayward individuals.[9] Neither did I suspect that I would soon develop an abiding interest in the system of ideas on which these practices rest. But that is how things turned out. During the past two decades, I have spent a fair amount of time exploring the physical and cultural territory from which these ideas derive their vitality and force, and it was Dudley Patterson, a man of generous intellect and unremitting kindness, who showed me how to begin.[10] For it was Dudley to whom I turned shortly after the incident with Talbert Paxton, and it was Dudley, sympathetic to my befuddlement and keen to supplement his income with some additional dollars, who explained what had happened and why.

June 12, 1982. Short of stature and trim of build, the 54-year-old horseman presents a handsome figure as he emerges from the small wooden house where he has lived by himself since the death of his wife in 1963. Dressed in freshly laundered Levis, a red-checked shirt, and a cream-colored straw hat, he moves with the grace of a natural athlete, and it strikes me as he approaches that nothing about him is extraneous. Just as his actions are instinctually measured and neatly precise, so is the manner in which he speaks, sings, and dances with friends and relatives at religious ceremonials. But he is also given to joking and laughter, and whenever he smiles, which is much of the time, his angular countenance lights up with an abundance of sheer good will that seems wholly irrepressible. Expert cattleman, possessor of horse power, dutiful kinsman without peer, no one in Cibecue is more thoroughly liked than Dudley Patterson. And few are more respected. For along with everything else, Dudley is known to be wise.

It was the merits of wisdom, Dudley informs me over a cup of boiled coffee, that Talbert Paxton needed to be reminded of earlier in the week. But before discussing that, Dudley inquires whether I have lately visited Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills, the place whose name is Gizh-yaa'itiné.[11] I tell him I have. Located a few miles north of Cibecue, its Apache name describes it well—two wooded knolls of similar size and shape with a footpath passing between them that descends to a grassy flat on the west bank of Cibecue Creek. And did I notice the big cottonwood tree that stands a few yards back from the stream? I did—a gigantic tree, gnarled and ancient, with one huge limb that dips to touch the ground before twisting upward and reaching toward the sky . And had anyone from Cibecue told me what happened long ago at Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills? No, only that the widow of a man named Blister Boy once planted corn nearby. Had I never heard the stories about Old Man Owl, the one named Mú hastiin? No, never. Well then, listen.

Figure 2.1. Keith H. Basso stands by the great cottonwood tree at Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills (Gizhyaa'itiné). Photograph © Gayle Potter-Basso.

Long ago, right there at that place, there were two beautiful girls. They were sisters. They were talking together.

Then they saw Old Man Owl walking toward them. They knew what he was like. He thought all the time about doing things with women. Then they said, "Let's do something to him."

Then one of those girls went to the top of one of the hills. Her sister went to the top of the other one. As Old Man Owl was walking between them, the first girl called out to him. "Old Man Owl, come here! I want you to rub me between my legs!" He stopped. He got excited! So he started to climb the hill where the girl was sitting.

Then, after Old Man Owl got halfway to the top, the second girl called out to him. "Old Man Owl, I want you to rub me gently between my legs!" He stopped! He got even more excited! So he turned around, walked down the hill, and began to climb the other one.

Then, after he got halfway to the top, the first girl called out to him again in the same way. He stopped! Now he was very excited! So Old Man Owl did

the same thing again. He forgot about the second girl, walked down the hill, and began climbing the other one.

It happened that way four times. Old Man Owl went back and forth, back and forth, climbing up and down those hills.

Then those beautiful girls just laughed at him.

Fairly beaming with amusement and delight, Dudley wastes little time beginning a second story about Old Man Owl at Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills.

Those same two sisters were there again. I don't know why, maybe they went there often to get water.

Then Old Man Owl was walking toward them. They decided they would do something to him.

Then one of the girls climbed into the branches of a big cottonwood tree that was growing there. The other girl went to the top of one of those hills.

Then the girl in the tree lifted her skirt and spread her legs slightly apart. She remained motionless as Old Man Owl walked beneath her. Suddenly, he looked up! He had noticed something!

Now he got very excited! "Hmm," he thought, "that tree looks a lot like a woman. I really like the way it looks! I'd best bring it home. I think I'll burn it down." His eyesight was very poor. Old Man Owl was very nearly blind.

Then, having piled some grass at the base of the tree, Old Man Owl set fire to it. The girl in the tree pissed on it and quickly put it out. Old Man Owl looked all around. "Where's that rain coming from?" he said. "I don't see any clouds." So he started another fire at the base of the tree and the girl pissed on it again and quickly put it out. Now he was very confused. The other girl, the one on top of the hill, could hear all that Old Man Owl was saying to himself. She was really laughing!

Then Old Man Owl did the same thing again. He started another fire and the girl in the tree pissed on it and put it out. He was looking around again. "Where's that rain coming from? Where's that rain coming from? I don't see any clouds! There are no clouds anywhere! Something must be wrong!"

Then he tried one more time and the girl in the tree did the same thing again. Old Man Owl stood there shaking his head. "Something must be very wrong!" he said. "I'd better go home." He walked away with his head hanging down.

Then those two beautiful girls joined each other and laughed and laughed. They were really laughing at Old Man Owl.

As Dudley Patterson closes his narrative, he is laughing himself. It is obvious that he relishes the stories of Old Man Owl. Moments later, after pouring us another cup of coffee, he as much as says so—the stories are very old, he has heard them many times, and they always give him pleasure. Besides being humorous, he says, they make him think of the ancestors—the wise ones, he calls them—the people who first told the stories at a time when humans and animals communicated without difficulty. These are thoughts I have heard expressed before, by Dudley and other Apache people living at Cibecue, and I know they are strongly felt. But I

have yet to learn how the tales of Old Man Owl played into the episode involving Talbert Paxton. If the point was to inform Talbert that beautiful women can be deceiving, or perhaps should not be trusted, or sometimes enjoy toying with the emotions of unsuspecting men, why hadn't the horsemen just come out and said so? Why had they beat around the bush?

Uncertain of how to ask this question in Apache, I attempt to convey it in English, which Dudley understands with more than fair success. He catches on quickly to the thrust of my query and proceeds to answer it with gratifying thoroughness. Speaking for Charles and Sam as well as himself, he explains that there were several reasons for dealing with Talbert as they did. To have criticized Talbert explicitly—to have told him in so many words that his recent behavior was foolish, offensive, and disruptive—would have been insulting and condescending. As judged from Talbert's apologetic demeanor, he had reached these conclusions himself, and to inform him openly of what he already knew would be to treat him like a child. In addition, because Talbert was unrelated by ties of kinship to either Dudley or Sam, and because he was related only distantly to Charles, none of them possessed the requisite authority to instruct him directly on matters pertaining to his personal life; this was the proper responsibility of his older matrilineal kin. Moreover, the horsemen were fond of Talbert. He was a friendly young man, quiet and congenial, whose undemanding company and propensity for hard work they very much appreciated. Last, and beyond all this, Dudley and his companions wanted Talbert to remember what they would urge upon him by attaching it to something concrete, something fixed and permanent, something he had seen and could go to see again—a place upon the land.

So the horsemen took a circuitous path—tactful, respectful, and fully in keeping with their status as nonrelatives—with Dudley leading the way. His opening statement to Talbert—"So! You've returned from Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills"—was intended to focus the young man's attention on the place where Old Man Owl encountered the two Apache sisters and to summon thoughts of what transpired there. Dudley's comment was also meant to suggest that Talbert, having acted in certain respects like Old Man Owl himself, would be well advised to alter his conduct. But in presupposing that Talbert was already aware of this—in announcing that he had *returned* from Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills—Dudley's comment also affirmed his friend's decision to refrain from drinking and resume a normal life. Thus, in a sidelong but deftly pointed way, Dudley was criticizing Talbert's misguided behavior while at the same time commending him for rejecting it as unacceptable.

The ensuing statements by Charles and Sam—"So! You got tired walking back and forth!" and "So! You've smelled enough burning piss!"—sharpened and consolidated these themes, further likening Talbert to

Old Man Owl by alluding to key events in the stories that recount his misadventures with the pair of beautiful girls. But these assertions, like Dudley's before them, were couched in the past tense, thereby implying that Talbert's resolve to behave differently in the future was a good and welcome development. The horsemen's strategy must have worked successfully because Talbert responded by tacitly admitting that his actions had indeed resembled those of Old Man Owl; simultaneously, however, he registered his belief that the resemblance had come to an end. In effect, his reply to the horsemen—"For a while I couldn't see!"—conveyed a veiled confession of improper conduct and an implicit declaration not to repeat it. But more was conveyed than this. At one level, Talbert's statement intimated a forcefully simple truth: he had been cold sober for three days and now, having recovered his physical senses, could once again see clearly. But at another level, and perhaps more forcefully still, the truth was allegorical. Unlike the myopic Old Man Owl, who never curbed his voracious sexual appetites and remained hopelessly at odds with everyone around him, Talbert was intimating that he had regained his social senses as well. Obliquely but sincerely, he was informing the horsemen that his moral vision had been restored.

Which was just what Dudley Patterson wanted to hear. As Dudley told Talbert before he left to go home, his imaginary visit to Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills would help make him wise. And maybe it would. With assistance from Old Man Owl and his two alluring tormentors, Talbert had been firmly chastised and generously pardoned, all in the space of a minute in which no one uttered a harsh or demeaning word. In a very real sense, involving at base a vividly animated sense of place, Talbert had been taken back into an important segment of the Cibecue community. He would return to work tomorrow, and that was why the horsemen, including Talbert himself, were still smiling broadly when they left the grove of juniper trees and went their separate ways.

Back at his house in Cibecue, Dudley Patterson drains his cup of coffee and leans forward in his chair. On the ground near his feet a band of red ants is dismantling the corpse of a large grasshopper, and within seconds the intricate patterns of their furious activity have riveted his attention. This does not surprise me. I have known Dudley for nine years and on other occasions have seen him withdraw from social encounters to keep counsel with himself. I also know that he is mightily interested in red ants and holds them in high esteem. I would like to ask him a few more questions, but unless he invites me to do so (and by now, I suspect, he may have had enough) it would be rude to disturb him. He has made it clear that he wants to be left alone.

We sit together for more than ten minutes, smoking cigarettes and

enjoying the morning air, and I try to picture the cottonwood tree that towers beside the stream at Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills. I am acutely aware that my perception of the tree has changed. Having heard the stories of Old Man Owl, its impressive size seems decidedly less important, and what strikes me as never before is its standing in the Cibecue community as a visible embodiment of myth, a leafy monument to Apache ancestral wisdom. I am also aware that the placename identifying the tree's location—Gizhyaa'itiné—has taken on a vibrant new dimension. Formerly nothing more than a nicely descriptive toponym, it has acquired the stamp of human events, of consequential happenings, of memorable times in the life of a people. As a result, the name seems suddenly fuller, larger somehow, endowed with added force. Because now, besides evoking images of a piece of local countryside, it calls up thoughts of fabled deeds and the singular cast of actors who there had played them out. Gizhyaa'itiné. Repeating the name silently to myself, I decide that Dudley Patterson's narratives have transformed its referent from a geographical site into something resembling a theater, a natural stage upon the land (vacant now but with major props still fully intact) where significant moral dramas unfolded in the past. How many other places are there like it? Gizhyaa'itiné. In my mind's eye, I can almost see the beautiful Apache sisters, really laughing at Old Man Owl.

Still engrossed in his ants, Dudley remains oblivious to the sights and sounds around him—a pair of ravens perched on his tool shed, the distant wailing of a distressed child, a vicious dogfight that erupts without warning in the tall grass behind his house. It is only when his older sister arrives on foot with a dishpan filled with freshly made tortillas that he glances up and sets his thoughts aside. He explains to Ruth Patterson that he has been talking to me about the land and how it can make people wise. "Wisdom," Ruth says firmly in Apache. "It's difficult!" And then, after inviting me to stay and eat with them, she enters Dudley's house to prepare a simple meal. Prompting a surge of ethnographic gloom, Ruth's remark forces me to acknowledge that I know next to nothing about Apache conceptions of wisdom. In what is wisdom thought to consist? How does one detect its presence or absence? How is it acquired? Do persons receive instruction in wisdom or is it something they arrive at, or fail to arrive at, entirely on their own? And why is it, as Ruth said, that wisdom is "difficult"? If I am to understand something of how places work to make people wise, an idea I find instantly compelling, these are matters I must try to explore.

And who better to explore them with than Dudley Patterson? He is known to be wise—many people have said so—and I have to begin somewhere. So without further ado I put the question to him: "What is

wisdom?" Dudley greets my query with a faintly startled look that recedes into a quizzical expression I have not seen before. "It's in these places," he says. "Wisdom sits in places." Hesitant but unenlightened, I ask again. "Yes, but what is it?" Now it is Dudley's turn to hesitate. Removing his hat, he rests it on his lap and gazes into the distance. As he continues to look away, the suspicion grows that I have offended him, that my question about wisdom (which now seems rash and impulsive) has exceeded the limits of propriety and taste. Increasingly apprehensive, I feel all thumbs, clumsy and embarrassed, a presumptuous dolt who acted without thinking. What Dudley is feeling I cannot tell, but in less than a minute he rescues the situation and I am much relieved. "Wisdom sits in places," he says again. And then, unbidden, he begins to tell me why.

> Long ago, the people moved around all the time. They went everywhere looking for food and watching out for enemies. It was hard for them. They were poor. They were often hungry. The women went out with their daughters to gather acorns, maybe walnuts. They went in search of all kinds of plants. Some man with a rifle and bullets always went with them. He looked out for danger.
>
> Then they got to a good place and camped there. All day they gathered acorns. The women showed their daughters how to do it. Now they stopped working for a little while to eat and drink.
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> Then one of the women talked to the girls. "Do you see that mountain over there? I want you to look at it. Its name is Dził ndeezé (Long Mountain). Remember it! Do you know what happened long ago close to that mountain? Well, now I'm going to tell you about it." Then she told them a story about what happened there. After she had finished she said, "Well, now you know what happened at Long Mountain. What I have told you is true. I didn't make it up. I learned it from my grandmother. Look at that mountain and think about it! It will help make you wise."
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> Then she pointed to another place and did the same way again. "Do you see that spring over there? Look at it! Its name is Dǫ́' bigowané (Fly's Camp)." Now she told them a story about that place, too. "Think about it," she said. "Someday, after you have grown up, you will be wise," she said. Everywhere they went they did like that. They gave their daughters placenames and stories. "You should think about this," they said.
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> The same was done with boys. They went hunting for deer with their fathers and uncles. They didn't come home until they had killed many deer. Everyone was happy when they came back. Now they had meat to eat.
>
> Then, when they were out hunting, one of the men would talk to the boys. "Do you see where the trail crosses the wash? Look at it! Its name is Ma' tę́ hilizhé (Coyote Pisses In The Water). Something happened there long ago. I'm going to tell you about it." Now he told the story to them. "Don't forget it," he said. "I want you to think about it. Someday it's going to make you wise."
>
> Then they would stop at some other place. "This place is named Tséé deeschii' ts'ǫ́sé (Slender Red Rock Ridge). Something happened here, also," he said. He told them that story. "Remember what I have told you," he said.

It was like that. The people who went many places were wise. They knew all about them. They thought about them. I've been all over this country. I went with my grandfather when I was a boy. I also traveled with my uncles. They taught me the names of all these places. They told me stories about all of them. I've thought about all of them for a long time. I still remember everything.

Sitting with my back to Dudley's house, I cannot see that Ruth Patterson has come to the door and is listening to her brother as he speaks of places and wisdom. I sense her presence, however, and when I turn around she is looking at me, her comely face arranged in what I interpret as a sympathetic smile. "It's true," she says in a bright tone of voice. "Everything he says is true. It happened that way to me."

One time—I was a young girl then—I went with my mother to Nadah nchii'é (Bitter Mescal). That was in 1931. We went there to roast mescal. There were other people with us, quite a few of them. They were all my relatives.

Then we made camp, right below that point at the north end of the mountain. We camped by the spring there. My mother was in charge of everything. She told us what to do.

Then we dug up a lot of mescal and brought it back to camp. It was hard work. It was hot. We were young girls then. We weren't yet strong and got tired easily. We really wanted to rest.

Then my mother talked to us. "You should only rest a little while. Don't be lazy. Don't think about getting tired. If you do, you'll get careless and something might happen to you."

Then she told a story. "Maybe you've heard this story before but I'm going to tell it to you anyway." She pointed to that mountain named Túzhį' yaahigaiyé (Whiteness Spreads Out Extending Down To Water). "It happened over there," she said to us.

"Long ago, on the east side of that mountain, there were lots of dead oak trees. There was a woman living with her family not far away. 'We're almost out of firewood,' she said to one of her daughters. 'Go up there and bring back some of that oak.'

"Then that girl went up there. She started to gather firewood. It was very hot and she got tired fast. 'I'm getting tired,' she thought. 'I've already got enough firewood. I'll go back home.'

"Then she picked up as much firewood as she could carry. She started walking down to her camp. She got careless. She stepped on a thin flat rock. It looked strong but she forgot she was carrying all that heavy oak. The rock broke when she stepped on it. She stumbled and fell down. She hit her head on the ground. For a while she was unconscious.

"Then she came to and noticed that she was bleeding from cuts on her cheek and chin. She walked unsteadily back to her camp. She told her mother what had happened.

"Then her mother talked to her. 'You acted foolishly but you're going to be all right. You failed to see danger before it happened. You could have fallen off the trail and gotten killed on those sharp rocks below it. You were thinking only of yourself. That's why this happened to you.'"

That's the end of the story. After my mother told it to us, she spoke to us

again. "Well, now you know what happened over there at Whiteness Spreads Out Extending Down To Water. That careless girl almost lost her life. Each of you should try to remember this. Don't forget it. If you remember what happened over there, it will help make you wise."

Then we went back to work, digging up more mescal. I got tired again—it was still very hot—but this time I didn't think about it. I just tried not to be careless.

Nowadays, hardly anyone goes out to get mescal. Very few of us do that anymore. The younger ones are afraid of hard work. Even so, I've told that story to all my children. I've told them to remember it.

I thank Ruth for telling me her story. She tries to muster a smile but her eyes have filled with tears. Unable to stem the rush of her emotion, she turns away and goes back inside the house. Dudley is not visibly concerned. He explains that Ruth is recalling her youth. That was during the 1920s and 1930s when Ruth and her sisters were still unmarried and worked almost daily under the close supervision of their mother and two maternal aunts. Back then, Dudley says, Cibecue was different. There were fewer people and life was less centered on the village itself. Whole Apache families, including Dudley's own, spent weeks and months away upon the land—tending cornfields, roasting mescal, hunting deer, and journeying to remote cattle camps where they helped the horsemen build fences and corrals. The families traveled long distances—old people and children alike, on foot and horseback, through all kinds of weather, carrying their possessions in heavy canvas packs over narrow trails that now have all but vanished. It was a hard way to live—there were times when it got very hard—but the people were strong and hardly ever complained. They had able leaders who told them what to do, and despite the hardships involved they took pleasure in their journeys. And wherever they went they gave placenames and stories to their children. They wanted their children to know about the ancestors. They wanted their children to be wise. Ruth is remembering all of this, Dudley reports, and it makes her a little sad.

The aging horseman leans back in his chair, crossing a boot across his knee, and spins the rowel of his spur. *Vrnnnn!* He does this from time to time when thinking serious thoughts. He rolls a cigarette and lights it with a battered Zippo he has carried for years. *Vrnnnn!* Spinning and smoking at the same time—his thoughts must be serious indeed. Several minutes pass before he speaks. When he does, he tells me that he has not forgotten my question: "What is wisdom?" He now intends to address it. He will use his own language, and to help me understand he will try to keep things simple. He stubs out his cigarette, rolls and lights another one, and then goes to work. *Vrnnnn!* What follows is poetry and a great deal more about wisdom.

The trail of wisdom—that is what I'm going to talk about. I'm going to speak as the old people do, as my grandmother spoke to me when I was still a boy. We were living then at Ták'eh godzigé (Rotten Field).

"Do you want a long life?" she said. "Well, you will need to have wisdom. You will need to think about your own mind. You will need to work on it. You should start doing this now. You must make your mind smooth. You must make your mind steady. You must make your mind resilient.

"Your life is like a trail. You must be watchful as you go. Wherever you go there is some kind of danger waiting to happen. You must be able to see it before it happens. You must always be watchful and alert. You must see danger in your mind before it happens.

"If your mind is not smooth you will fail to see danger. You will trust your eyes but they will deceive you. You will be easily tricked and fooled. Then there will be nothing but trouble for you. You must make your mind smooth.

"If your mind is not resilient you will be easily startled. You will be easily frightened. You will try to think quickly but you won't think clearly. You yourself will stand in the way of your own mind. You yourself will block it. Then there will be trouble for you. You must make your mind resilient.

"If your mind is not steady you will be easily angered and upset. You will be arrogant and proud. You will look down on other people. You will envy them and desire their possessions. You will speak about them without thinking. You will complain about them, gossip about them, criticize them. You will lust after their women. People will come to despise you. They will pay someone to use his power on you. They will want to kill you. Then there will be nothing but trouble for you. You must make your mind steady. You must learn to forget about yourself.

"If you make your mind smooth, you will have a long life. Your trail will extend a long way. You will be prepared for danger wherever you go. You will see it in your mind before it happens.

"How will you walk along this trail of wisdom? Well, you will go to many places. You must look at them closely. You must remember all of them. Your relatives will talk to you about them. You must remember everything they tell you. You must think about it, and keep on thinking about it, and keep on thinking about it. You must do this because no one can help you but yourself. If you do this your mind will become smooth. It will become steady and resilient. You will stay away from trouble. You will walk a long way and live a long time.

"Wisdom sits in places. It's like water that never dries up. You need to drink water to stay alive, don't you? Well, you also need to drink from places. You must remember everything about them. You must learn their names. You must remember what happened at them long ago. You must think about it and keep on thinking about it. Then your mind will become smoother and smoother. Then you will see danger before it happens. You will walk a long way and live a long time. You will be wise. People will respect you."

Vrnnnn! Rising to his feet without another word, Dudley walks away in the direction of his outhouse. His suspicions were correct: I have had trouble grasping his statement on wisdom. No one from Cibecue has broached this subject with me before, and few have spoken with

such eloquence and grace. I am moved by what I have heard but uncertain what to make of it. And understandably so. Dudley delivered his comments in a distinctive verbal register characterized by conspicuous grammatical parallelism, marked lexical redundancy, and the measured repetition of several dominant metaphors. All this resembles the language of Western Apache prayer, and therein lies one of my problems. While the economy of Dudley's speech rendered portions of his statement readily accessible, the metaphors that anchored it—boldly figured, densely compressed, and probably very old—stood far beyond my reach. What, for example, is a "smooth mind"? A "resilient mind"? A "steady mind"? There is another problem as well. I can safely assume that Dudley's account was supported throughout by a covert cultural logic that imbued its claims with validity and truth. Yet it is quite unclear to me what that logic is. What sort of reasoning supports the assertion that "wisdom sits in places"? Or that "wisdom is like water"? Or that "drinking from places," whatever that is, requires knowledge of placenames and stories of past events? Maybe I have gotten in over my head. Dudley's statement has caught me off guard and left me feeling unmoored. For a second I imagine myself as a small uprooted plant bouncing crazily through the air on a whirlwind made of ancient Apache tropes.

When Dudley returns he is smiling. "Did you understand?" I shake my head. "No, not much." Ruth is also smiling. She is standing in the doorway and looks fully recovered from her bout with nostalgia. She has combed her hair and is sporting the triumphant look of one who knew all along. "I told you!" she says sharply. "It's difficult! Now my brother has made you think too much. Now your brain is really tired! Now you look kind of sick!" Ruth's assessment of my mental and physical condition does little to improve it, and I look to Dudley for help. "I gave you too much at once," he says. "You just need to think about it." Ruth agrees. "That's right! You really need to think about it!" Then she flashes her broadest smile and tells us our food is ready.

But before we go inside Ruth presents us with a suggestion. On the coming weekend, when the horsemen will be off work, Dudley and I will catch up our horses and go for a ride. It might last all day, so we will need to take food. Ruth will provide the fresh tortillas. I will contribute two cans of sardines, a box of Ritz crackers, a slab of longhorn cheese, and four bottles of Barg's root beer. Dudley will take me to different places, teach me their names, and tell me what happened at them long ago. Then, maybe, I will understand something. When we get back home Dudley will speak to me in English—"Boy Keez, I'll see you sometime." Then he will leave me alone to think. In return for these services, he will receive two sacks of flour, two cans of MJB coffee, one sack of sugar, a

pail of Crisco, and twenty dollars cash. Now, what about it? For all her endearing qualities—and she has them in abundance—Ruth Patterson is not a person to challenge when her mind is made up, and Dudley, who on prior occasions has pointed this out himself, wastes no time in endorsing her plan. Neither do I. "Good!" says Ruth, whose reputation also embraces an unswerving willingness to capitalize on promising business opportunities whenever they arise. "Good!" she says again. "My brother will help you out. I think you'll really like it."

> As soon as we have the thing before our eyes, and in our hearts an ear for the word, thinking prospers.
> —*Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking"*

June 15, 1982. Even the most experienced horsemen get hurt. That is what people say as news of Dudley's accident circulates through Cibecue. Yesterday, trailing the spotted maverick bull with poor eyesight at the base of a rocky sloped named Tséé deeschii'é (Long Red Ridge), Dudley's mare lost her footing, went down hard, and abandoned her rider to walk home with bruised ribs, a dislocated shoulder, and a badly swollen lip. Dudley's first concern was for the welfare of the mare, who returned to her pasture later in the day with nothing more than a few minor scrapes and a glassy look in her eye. This morning, wrapped in a homemade sling that keeps slipping off, Dudley is stiff and sore and in excellent spirits. We sit on the porch of his house as visitors come and go. Ruth has launched a get-well campaign whose main objectives are to accumulate gifts of thick beef broth and to surround her brother with as many children as possible. The children come in shifts to stand beside his chair. He tells them the story of his mishap, and their eyes grow wide with excitement and fear, and he smiles his warmest smile and tells them to be careful around horses and cattle. A little girl steps forward and gives him her orange Popsicle. As I stand to leave, Dudley tells me to come back tomorrow—things will be less busy and we can speak again of matters raised before. I accept his invitation. A small boy approaches his chair and hands him a piece of bubblegum. Dudley is delighted. Ruth's campaign is already a success. Dudley will rejoin the horsemen in less than a week. Our ride together has been postponed.

June 16–19, 1982. For the next four days—drinking coffee, watching ants, and pausing occasionally to speak of other things—Dudley and I engaged in a series of conversations about his earlier statement on wisdom and places. At my request, we began by examining some of the statement's linguistic features, focusing attention on the morphology

and semantics of its several primary tropes. We then moved on to consider the internal logic of Dudley's account, exploring in some detail the culturally based assumptions that invested its claims with coherence and credible sense. Our discussions dealt with fairly abstract matters, and now and again, when Dudley sensed his pupil was getting muddled, he responded by telling stories that linked his generalizations to illustrative sets of particulars. It soon became apparent that Apache conceptions of wisdom differed markedly from those contained in Western ideologies. More interesting was the discovery that the Apache conceptions were grounded in an informal theory of mind which asserts that wisdom arises from a small set of antecedent conditions. Because these conditions are also qualities of mind, and because they vary from mind to mind, the theory explains why some people are wiser than others.

Stated in general terms, the Apache theory holds that "wisdom" —*'igoyą'í*—consists in a heightened mental capacity that facilitates the avoidance of harmful events by detecting threatening circumstances when none are apparent.[12] This capacity for prescient thinking is produced and sustained by three mental conditions, described in Apache as *bíni' godilkǫǫh* (smoothness of mind), *bíni' gonłt'iz* (resilience of mind), and *bíni' gonłdzil* (steadiness of mind). Because none of these conditions is given at birth, each must be cultivated in a conscientious manner by acquiring relevant bodies of knowledge and applying them critically to the workings of one's mind. Knowledge of places and their cultural significance is crucial in this regard because it illustrates with numerous examples the mental conditions needed for wisdom as well as the practical advantages that wisdom confers on persons who possess it. Contained in stories attributed to the "ancestors" (*nowhizą'yé*), knowledge of places thus embodies an unformalized model of *'igoyą'í* and an authoritative rationale for seeking to attain it. Although some Apache people embrace this knowledge eagerly and commit it to memory in exhaustive detail, others are less successful; and while some are able to apply it productively to their minds, many experience difficulty. Consequently, in any Apache community at any point in time, wisdom is present in varying degrees, and only a few persons are ever completely wise. By virtue of their unusual mental powers, wise men and women are able to foresee disaster, fend off misfortune, and avoid explosive conflicts with other persons. For these and other reasons, they are highly respected and often live to be very old. Likened to water because of its life-sustaining properties, wisdom is viewed first and foremost as an instrument of survival.

Although Western Apaches distinguish clearly between an individual's "mind" (*bíni'*) and his or her "brain" (*bitsighąą́*), both are described with a classificatory verb stem (*-áá*) that designates portable objects

whose shape is roundish and compact. However, only *bíni'* can be modified with adjectival constructions beginning with the prefix *go-* (space; area), an instructive bit of morphology which indicates that the mind is conceived as a region within the brain. This notion is illustrated by the expression *bíni' godilkǫǫh* (smoothness of mind), which identifies the primary mental condition required for wisdom. When the adjective *dilkǫǫh* is used without prefixes it serves to describe the texture of smooth and even surfaces, such as the surface of a pane of glass or a piece of varnished wood. But when *dilkǫǫh* is combined with *go-* it conveys the sense of "cleared space" or "area free of obstructions," such as an agricultural field from which all vegetation has been assiduously removed. This is the sense in which *godilkǫǫh* is used in the Apache metaphor of the smooth mind. Like cleared plots of ground, smooth minds are unobstructed—uncluttered and unfettered—a quality that permits them to observe and reason with penetrating clarity. Skeptical of outward appearances, smooth minds are able to look through them and beyond them to detect obscured realities and hidden possibilities. Unencumbered by obstacles to insightful thinking, smooth minds "see danger before it happens" and "trouble before it comes." Thus does wisdom flourish.

Mental smoothness is believed by Apaches to be the product of two subsidiary conditions—mental resilience and mental steadiness—which ward off distractions that interfere with calm and focused thought. These distractions are grouped into two broad classes according to whether their sources are external or internal to the individual. "Resilience of mind" (*bíni' gontł'iz*) combats those of the external variety, while "steadiness of mind" (*bíni' gonłdzil*) works to eliminate internal distractions. Turning to the first of these expressions, it should be noted that the adjective *ntł'iz* is used alone in the familiar sense of "hard," thus describing a wide array of objects whose rigid surfaces resist damage and destruction from outside forces. But when *ntł'iz* is combined with the spatial prefix *go-* the resulting construction, *gontł'iz,* takes on a meaning equivalent to "an enclosed space that holds its shape." A tightly woven basket, yielding but strong, is properly described as *gontł'iz,* as is an inflated vinyl ball or a flexible cardboard box that withstands the weight of a child. And so, too, is a resilient human mind. Resistant to the unnerving effects of jarring external events, resilient minds protect their interior spaces by shielding them against outside disruptions that threaten quiescent thinking. Mental smoothness is thereby promoted and preserved. According to Dudley Patterson, fear and alarm present the greatest threats to maintaining mental resilience. Being aware of this, resilient minds guard themselves against shock and consternation, keeping these reactions at bay by centering themselves on what must be done to deal

with the problem at hand. Resilient minds do not give in to panic or fall prey to spasms of anxiety or succumb to spells of crippling worry. Largely immune to emotional turbulence, they do not become agitated or disoriented. Even in terrifying circumstances, resilient minds maintain their ability to reason clearly and thus neither "block themselves" nor "stand in their own way."

While resilience of mind contributes to mental smoothness by blunting the effects of external distractions, "steadiness of mind"—*bíni'gonłdzil*—accomplishes this objective by removing the sources of internal ones. The sense of "steady" conveyed by the adjective *nłdzil* is that which one associates with a post driven firmly into the ground. The post is stable, it does not wobble, and therefore it is reliable. But the post itself is not responsible for these desirable attributes. As interpreted by Apaches, the post's steadiness is imparted by the hole in which it is lodged, and this is the notion—a "supportive and accommodating space"—that is evoked by the form *gonłdzil*. Conceived and described in analogous terms, steady human minds maintain themselves in a manner that ensures their own stability and reliability. This is achieved by relinquishing all thoughts of personal superiority and by eliminating aggressive feelings toward fellow human beings. As a result, steady minds are unhampered by feelings of arrogance or pride, anger or vindictiveness, jealousy or lust—all of which present serious hindrances to calm and measured thinking. Because the essence of mental steadiness lies in a capacity to do away with self-serving emotions that exploit or degrade the worth of other people, wise men and women rarely encounter serious interpersonal problems. Free of conceit and hostile ambitions, steady minds "forget about themselves" and conduct their social affairs in harmony and peace.

Except for the mentally impaired, every Apache who enters the world can legitimately aspire to wisdom. Yet none is born with the three conditions of mind required for wisdom to flourish. Cultivating these conditions, a long and uneven process involving much introspection and many disheartening setbacks, has a private and a public aspect. On the one hand, it is the responsibility of individuals to critically assess their own minds and prepare them for wisdom by cultivating the qualities of smoothness, resilience, and steadiness. On the other hand, instruction is needed from persons sympathetic to the endeavor who have pursued it themselves with a measure of success. Although instruction may begin at any age, it usually commences when preadolescent children become aware that adult life entails an endless flow of demands that need to be met with special skills and abilities. Young people who have reached this level of understanding are told to be constantly alert to what goes on around them, to remember everything they observe, and to report on

anything out of the ordinary. They are also urged to pay close attention to the words and actions of older people whose general demeanor is deemed worthy of emulation. And they are regularly invited to travel, especially in the company of persons who will speak to them about the places they see and visit. It is on these excursions that the relationship between places and wisdom is first made explicit. "Drink from places," Apache boys and girls are told. "Then you can work on your mind."

This view of mental development rests on the premise that knowledge is useful to the extent that it can be swiftly recalled and turned without effort to practical ends. A related premise is that objects whose appearance is unique are more easily recalled than those that look alike. It follows from these assumptions that because places are visually unique (a fact both marked and affirmed by their possession of separate names), they serve as excellent vehicles for recalling useful knowledge. And because the knowledge needed for wisdom is nothing if not useful, the adage that "wisdom sits in places"—*'igoyą'í goz'ąą sikąą*—is seen to make perfect sense. But there is more to the adage than truth and logical consistency. The verb *si-* (it sits) incorporates a classificatory stem (*-kąą*) which applies exclusively to rigid containers and their contents. The prototype of this category is a watertight vessel, and thus the adage creates an image of places as durable receptacles, and of the knowledge required for wisdom as a lasting supply of water resting securely within them. This same image supports the assertions that preparing one's mind for wisdom is akin to a form of drinking, and that wisdom, like water, is basic to survival. As Dudley Patterson remarked during one of our conversations, "You can't live long without water and you can't live a long time without wisdom. You need to drink both."

The knowledge on which wisdom depends is gained from observing different places (thus to recall them quickly and clearly), learning their Apache names (thus to identify them in spoken discourse and in song), and reflecting on traditional narratives that underscore the virtues of wisdom by showing what can happen when its facilitating conditions are absent. Drawn from different story genres, these narratives juxtapose a character whose mind is insightfully smooth with one or more characters whose minds are not. Distracted by troubling events or excited at the prospect of achieving selfish gains, characters of the latter type fail to understand the true nature of their situation and perform impulsive acts that bring them and others to the brink of disaster. In sharp contrast, characters of the former type remain calm and undisturbed, grasp the situation for what it really is, and avert misfortune by exercising the clear and wary vision that is the hallmark of wisdom. The social group survives, shaken but whole, and the qualities of mind responsible for its

continuation are made clear for all to see. Wisdom has triumphed over stupidity and foolishness, and the difference between them—a difference as large as life and death itself—cannot be ignored.

The two stories that follow were offered by Dudley Patterson to illustrate these themes. The first story deals with serious problems stemming from a lack of mental resilience; the second depicts a near catastrophe brought on by a lack of mental steadiness. In both stories, alarm and confusion run rampant until mental smoothness, accompanied by wisdom, comes to the rescue in the very nick of time.

> Long ago, some people went to gather acorns. They camped at Tséé názt'i'é (Line Of Rocks Circles Around). They gathered lots of acorns near Tséé ditł'igé naaditiné (Trail Goes Across Scorched Rocks). They almost had enough but they went on anyway. They were going to K'ai cho o'áhá (Big Willow Stands Alone). They stopped on their way where the trail crossed a shallow stream. They had been walking fast and were very thirsty. They wanted to drink. It was hot.
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> Then their leader said to them, "Don't drink until I tell you to. I want to look around here first." He went off. Their leader was wise. He saw danger in his mind.
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> Then, as soon as he was gone, a young woman said, "My children are very thirsty. They need to drink. This water looks safe to me. I'm going to drink it." The others agreed with her. "Yes," they said, "we must drink. This water looks good." So they started drinking.
>
> Then, pretty soon, they began to get sick. They got dizzy and began to vomit violently. All of them got sick, including the children. They got sicker. They vomited and vomited. They were scared that they were dying. They were crying out in pain, crying out in fear.
>
> Their leader was the only one who didn't drink. He walked upstream and looked on the ground. There were fresh tracks by the stream and he saw where Coyote had pissed on a flat rock that slanted into the water. Drops of Coyote's piss were still running off the rock into the water.
>
> Then he went back to the people. "Stop!" he told them. "Don't drink that water! It's no good! Coyote has pissed in it! That's why all of you are sick."
>
> Then one of those people said, "We didn't know. We were thirsty. The water looked safe. We were in a hurry and it didn't look dangerous." Those people trusted their eyes. They should have waited until their leader had finished looking around. One of those children nearly died.
>
> That's how that crossing got its name. After that, they called it Ma' tęhilizhé (Coyote Pisses In The Water).

And again:

> Long ago, here at Cibecue, just when the corn was coming up, an old man saw a black cloud in the sky. It was moving toward him. He watched the cloud come closer and closer. It was made up of grasshoppers, a huge swarm of grasshoppers. Soon they were eating the corn shoots. *Ch'iziid! Ch'iziid!* It sounded like that.
>
> Then that old man got worried. "If this is allowed to continue we will

have nothing to eat. All of our medicine men should work together on this for us." That old man was wise. He had seen danger in his mind. His mind was smooth. He knew what had to be done.

Then he spoke to some people and they went to the camp of a medicine man with strong power. The old man spoke to him. "Something terrible is happening to us. All of our medicine men should work together on this for us."

Then the medicine man said to them, "What you say is true but I will work alone. I will pray and sing. I will help you. I will bring a great rainstorm to kill these grasshoppers."

Then, that same evening, he started to sing. He sang throughout the night—but nothing happened! There was no rain. In the morning, there were no clouds in the sky. The grasshoppers were still eating the corn. *Ch'iziid! Ch'iziid!*

Then that medicine man sang alone again. He sang all night. "I will bring lots of heavy rain," he told the people. But still there was nothing! In the morning there were still no clouds in the sky. *Ch'iziid! Ch'iziid!*

Then another medicine man went to him and said, "We should work together on this. Something very bad is happening. If four of us sing together we can bring heavy rains and destroy these grasshoppers."

Then the first medicine man thought about it. "No," he said. "The people came first to me. I will bring heavy rain if I sing four times alone." So he started to sing again. He sang all night. It was the same as before—nothing happened. Those grasshoppers were still eating the corn. *Ch'iziid!*

Now the people were very frightened. Some were crying out in fear. They saw what was happening to their corn.

Then that medicine man sang one more time alone—and still there was no rain!

Then four medicine men got together. "That old man was right. We should have worked on this together. Let's get ready, we'll start tonight. That man who sings alone is far too proud. His mind is not smooth. He thinks only of himself."

Then those four medicine men started singing. They sang together throughout the night. They didn't stop to rest. They didn't stop to drink. They kept singing, singing, singing—all through the night.

Then, early in the morning, there was a loud clap of thunder! It started to rain. It rained hard. It rained harder and harder. It rained still harder! It rained for four days and four nights. The people were afraid. They thought their homes might be swept away.

Then it stopped raining. An old woman went outside and looked around. Everywhere there were dead grasshoppers. Their bodies covered the ground. The ground was dark with them. Then that old woman started to walk to her cornfield. To get there she had to cross a wide arroyo. When she got there she saw a long pile of dead grasshoppers reaching from one side to the other. "Grasshoppers piled up across," she said.

Then that old woman knew these four medicine men had worked together well.

Then that old woman went back and told the people what she had seen. "We have very little corn left," they said. "Most of it has been eaten. We will surely get weak from hunger. All of us will suffer because of one proud man."

Afterward, they called that place Naschagi naadeez'áhá (Grasshoppers Piled Up Across).

While cautionary narratives like these are appreciated by Apaches for their aesthetic merits (their hard-edged terseness, steady forward motion, and mounting suspense can be exploited by gifted storytellers to gripping effect), they are valued primarily as instruments of edification. For persons seeking wisdom, such stories provide time-honored standards for identifying mental flaws and weaknesses, thereby revealing where remedial work is needed and often instilling a desire to perform it. This kind of self-reflexive activity, which is described in Apache as *bíni' naayik'e'iziig* (working on one's mind), is understood to be a drawn-out affair that becomes less and less difficult as it becomes increasingly habitual. For it stands to reason that the more one scrutinizes one's mind—and the more one acts to improve it by reflecting on narratives that exemplify the conditions necessary for wisdom—the greater the likelihood that wisdom will develop. Disciplined mental effort, diligently sustained, will eventually give rise to a permanent state of mind.

Despite this encouraging premise, which for many Apaches is a source of early confidence, the trail of wisdom is known to be fraught with pitfalls. The human mind is a vulnerable space, and protecting it against obstacles that threaten incisive thinking is a formidable task. Life is full of alarming events—deaths, fights, illnesses, frightening dreams, the nefarious doings of ghosts and witches—and the forces of fear are hard to overcome. One tries to surmount them, and later one tries again, but repeated failures take their toll, and attaining the goal of mental resilience begins to look unlikely. Just as difficult is the challenge of ridding one's mind of self-centered thoughts that find expression in harsh and heated ways, antagonizing other people and causing them to retaliate with aggressions of their own. Again one makes determined efforts, and again they fall short, and again one must deal with uncertainty and doubt. Mental steadiness joins mental resilience in seeming out of reach. And then there is the never-ending problem of everything else. For someone caught up in the demanding swirl of daily life—caring for children, keeping peace with relatives, trying to get by on very little money—pursuing the trail of wisdom can become just another burden. There is enough to do already without thinking about places and working on one's mind! And so it happens, often with reluctance but also with a welcome sense of relief, that the work is abandoned. At different points on the trail of wisdom, Apache men and women decide to stop. They have traveled as far as they are able or willing to go. Wisdom, they have learned, is more easily imagined than achieved.

But a handful of persons resolve to persevere. Undaunted by the shortcomings of their minds, they keep striving to refine them—committing to memory more and more cautionary narratives, dwelling on their implications at deeper and deeper levels, and visiting the places with which they are associated as opportunities arise. Little is said of these activities, and progress reports are neither offered nor requested. But progress reports, as Dudley Patterson was quick to point out, are usually unnecessary. As people move forward on the trail of wisdom their behavior begins to change, and these alterations, which become steadily more apparent as time goes on, can be readily observed by relatives and friends. Most noticeably, inner strides toward mental smoothness are reflected in outer displays of poise and equanimity—signs of nervousness fade, irritability subsides, outbursts of temper decline. There is also to be detected a growing consistency among attitudes adopted, opinions expressed, and judgments proffered—personal points of view, built upon consonant themes, cohere and take definite shape. And there is increasing correspondence between spoken words and subsequent deeds—promises made are promises kept, pledges extended are pledges fulfilled, projects proposed are projects undertaken. As Apache men and women advance farther along the trail of wisdom, their composure continues to deepen. Increasingly quiet and self-possessed, they rarely show signs of fear or alarm. More and more magnanimous, they seldom get angry or upset. And more than ever they are watchful and observant. Their minds, resilient and steady at last, are very nearly smooth, and it shows in obvious ways.

And always these people are thinking—thinking of place-centered narratives, thinking of the ancestors who first gave them voice, and thinking of how to apply them to circumstances in their own lives. Having passed the point where cautionary narratives are useful mainly for disclosing mental weaknesses, they are consulted now as guides for what to do and what not to do in specific situations. As described by Dudley Patterson, what typically happens is this. Something unusual occurs—an event or a series of events—that is judged to be similar or analogous to incidents described in one of the stories. Unless these similarities can be dismissed as superficial, they stimulate further thought, leading the thinker to treat the story as a possible aid for planning his or her own course of action. This is accomplished by picturing in one's mind the exact location where the narrated events unfolded and imagining oneself as actually taking part in them, always in the role of a story character who is shown to be wise. If a powerful sense of identification with that character ensues—if, as some Apaches put it, thinker and character "flow swiftly together" (*ndǫhgo łeednlį́'*)—the experience is taken

to confirm that the narrative in question will be helpful in dealing with the situation at hand.[13] If this sort of identification fails to occur, the narrative is discarded and other stories, potentially more instructive, are consulted in similar fashion. It is important to understand that wise men and women are able to consult dozens of cautionary narratives in very short periods of time. Such concentrated effort is not required of them under ordinary circumstances, but when a crisis appears to be looming they set about it immediately. Serene and undistracted, they start drinking from places (in times of emergency they are said to "gulp" from them), and soon enough, often within minutes, they have seen in their minds what needs to be done. Wisdom has finally shown its hand. And when it does, as Dudley Patterson remarked in English the day he cast off his sling and prepared to rejoin the horsemen, "It's sure pretty good all right." "Yes," he said thoughtfully. "That's sure pretty good all right."

▮ These places are really very good!
—Dudley Patterson

August 10, 1982. But for a gate left carelessly open—and some thirty head of cattle that quickly passed through it to lose themselves in a tumbled maze of rock-strewn buttes, meandering arroyos, and dry box canyons—my instructional ride with Dudley Patterson might have proceeded as planned. The day began on a calm and peaceful note. We mounted our horses shortly after dawn, rode out of Cibecue on a trail leading north, and then turned east as the rising sun, a brilliant crimson ball, moved into view above a tree-covered ridge. The morning air was crisp and cool, and all one could hear was the comforting squeak of saddle leather and the hooves of the horses striking softly into the earth. A red-tailed hawk banked on the wind in a vast blue sky.

After lighting a cigarette with his antique Zippo, Dudley broke the silence.

> Do you see that ridge over there? We call it Tséé dotł'izhí deez'áhá (Turquoise Ridge). My grandmother took her family there when the smallpox came in 1922. So many people died—it was terrible. My grandmother was a medicine woman and knew what to do. She prayed each morning as the sun came up. Day after day she prayed. All of her children survived the sickness.
>
> And that ravine over there, the one with long white boulders on the far side? Its name is Naagosch'id tú hayigeedé (Badger Scoops Up Water). Badger lived there a long time ago, next to a spring where he went to drink. There was no daylight then and the people were having a hard time. Badger and Bear wanted to keep it that way—they liked the darkness—but Coyote outsmarted them. He gambled with them and won daylight for the people. They gambled up ahead where those four round hills sit in a row. Those hills are named Da'iłtąné (The Mounds).

> And way over there, that little clump of trees? We call it T'iis sikaadé (Cottonwood Stands Spreading Out). There's a spring there, too. It used to give lots of water but now it's almost dry. Nick Thompson's mother camped there with her parents when she was a young girl. One time an airplane went shooting by. She didn't know what it was. She crawled under a bush and covered her face with her hands. Her body was trembling all over. She stayed under the bush for two days, trembling.
>
> And that red bluff over there . . .

Dudley stops speaking. Two riders have appeared in the distance and are moving toward us at a fast trot. Minutes later, Sam Endfield and Charles Cromwell rein in their horses and deliver the troubling news. Someone forgot to close the gate near the top of Hayaagokizhé (Spotted Slope), and a large bunch of cattle—cows, calves, and the spotted maverick bull with one bad eye—has moved into the tortuous country behind Kįh dotł'izhé (Blue House). Judging from their tracks, the cattle crossed over yesterday afternoon. They should be rounded up without delay; otherwise they will scatter over a wider area and make the job more difficult.

Dudley listens quietly, points once with his lips in the direction of Blue House, and off we go to spend the next seven hours searching for wily creatures sorely uninterested in ever being found. A day of quiet learning turns into a punishing game of hide-and-go-seek, and no one finds it the least bit enjoyable. But slowly the work gets done, the open gate is wired shut, and by two o'clock in the afternoon most of the cattle are back where they belong. Only the spotted maverick bull is missing. His tracks disappear at the head of a narrow canyon. Dudley is unconcerned. The bull is strong and smart. He will rejoin the herd when it suits him. One day he will reappear. That is his way.

We have been working in land without water, and the heat of the day is hard upon us. Horses and men are edgy with thirst, so instead of returning directly to the village we ride southeast to the nearest accessible point of Cibecue Creek. As it happens, this is Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills, the place where Old Man Owl was shown to be a fool by the two Apache sisters. It is wonderfully cool beside the stream, and everyone drinks his fill. Sam Endfield, wearing his pants and hat, goes for a dip. Charles Cromwell, whose tender modesties preclude displays of unclad flesh, ambles off behind a thick stand of willows. And Dudley, having twice bathed his face and neck with his handkerchief, sits down beneath the cottonwood tree whose massive lower limb dips to touch the ground. Joining him under the tree, I glance upward into its shade-filled branches, a purely spontaneous act to which he responds by slapping the ground and bursting into peals of high-pitched laughter. Sam

stops splashing in the water, and Charles, looking mildly alarmed, comes stumbling out of the willows trying to button his fly. *What* is going on?

"Our ancestors did that!" Dudley exclaims with undisguised glee. "We all do that, even the women and children. We all look up to see her with her legs spread slightly apart. These places are really very good! Now you've drunk from one! Now you can work on your mind." Still laughing, the weary horseman takes off his sweat-soaked hat and places it on the ground beside him. Then he lies down, cradles his head in the crook of his arm, and goes soundly to sleep. Beneath the ancient cottonwood tree the air is alive with humming insects.

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

If nothing else, this truncated tale of congenial Western Apaches, a distinctive brand of wisdom, and a slightly infamous cottonwood tree should lend substance to the claim that sense of place—or, as I would prefer to say, *sensing* of place—is a form of cultural activity. Though commonly viewed in different terms—as instinctual need by human ethologists, as beneficial personality component by developmental psychologists, as mechanism of social integration by theoretical sociologists—sense of place, as I have made it out, is neither biological imperative, aid to emotional stability, nor means to group cohesiveness. What it is, as N. Scott Momaday (1976) has suggested, is a kind of imaginative experience, a species of involvement with the natural and social environment, a way of *appropriating* portions of the earth. While this perspective renders sense of place no less challenging to fathom or describe, it demystifies the notion by assigning it to the familiar province of everyday events. Removed from the spectral realm of scholastic reifications—needs, attributes, mechanisms, and the like—sense of place can be seen as a commonplace occurrence, as an ordinary way of engaging one's surroundings and finding them significant. Albert Camus may have said it best. "Sense of place," he wrote, "is not just something that people know and feel, it is something people *do*" (Camus 1955:88; emphasis added). And that realization brings the whole idea rather firmly down to earth, which is, I think, where a sense of place properly belongs.

A variety of experience, sense of place also represents a culling of experience. It is what has accrued—and never stops accruing—from lives spent sensing places. Vaguely realized most of the time, and rarely brought forth for conscious scrutiny, it surfaces in an attitude of enduring affinity with known localities and the ways of life they sponsor. As

such, it is greeted as natural, normal, and, despite the ambivalent feelings it sometimes produces, entirely unremarkable. Experience delivered neat (though not, as I say, always very neatly), sense of place is accepted as a simple fact of life, as a regular aspect of how things are; and if one were tempted to change it, which no one ever is, the effort would certainly fail. It is probable, of course, that your sense of place will center on localities different from mine, just as ours together will center on localities different from Ruth and Dudley Patterson's. But that each of us should be drawn to particular pieces of territory, for reasons we take to be relatively uncomplicated, is radically expectable. A sense of place, everyone presumes, is everyone's possession.

But sense of place is not possessed by everyone in similar manner or like configuration, and that pervasive fact is part of what makes it interesting. Like all the other "senses" we have invented for mankind (the aesthetic sense, the erotic sense, common sense, etc.), sense of place is inseparable from the ideas that inform it, and just for that reason, as Lawrence Durrell remarked in a letter to a friend, it is "everywhere parochial and everywhere specific" (Durrell 1969:283). Locked within the mental horizons of those who give it life, sense of place issues in a stream of symbolically drawn particulars—the visible particulars of local topographies, the personal particulars of biographical associations, and the notional particulars of socially given systems of thought. It is these last, of course, that are least available to conscious awareness, and perhaps for this reason writers on place rarely see fit to examine them. Yet it is just these systems of thought that mold and organize the experience itself, and to casually ignore them, as so often happens, is to suppose that matters are much simpler than in fact they really are. You can no more imagine an Apache sense of place without some notion of Old Man Owl, smooth minds, and what occurred at Grasshoppers Piled Up Across than you can fancy a native New Yorker's sense of place without comparable ideas of Woody Allen, subway rush hours, and strolling in Central Park on the first warm day of spring. Everything, or almost everything, hinges on the particulars, and because it does, ethnography is essential.[14]

For any sense of place, the pivotal question is not where it comes from, or even how it gets formed, but what, so to speak, it is made with. Like a good pot of stew or a complex musical chord, the character of the thing emerges from the qualities of its ingredients. And while describing that character may prove troublesome indeed (always, it seems, there is something ineffable about it), the elements that compose it can be selectively sampled and separately assessed. Which is what, in a roundabout way, I have tried to do here. Transformative spatial prefixes, disquisitions on wisdom, and cautionary stories of thirst-crazed women and puffed-

up medicine men do not "add up" to a Western Apache sense of place. But they can be used to construct one, and thus, taken together, they have something revealing to say about the quality of its tone and the substance of its style. They give us, in short, a sense of the Apache sense, an appreciation of what goes into it, an informed perspective on the angle of its thrust.

And also, I would add, a purchase of sorts on the wellsprings of its force. As vibrantly felt as it is vividly imagined, sense of place asserts itself at varying levels of mental and emotional intensity. Whether lived in memory or experienced on the spot, the strength of its impact is commensurate with the richness of its contents, with the range and diversity of symbolic associations that swim within its reach and move it on its course. In its more ordinary moments, as Seamus Heaney (1980) has observed, sense of place stays within the sphere of its own familiar attractions, prompting individuals to dwell on themselves in terms of themselves, as private persons with private lives to ponder. But in its fuller manifestations this separatist stance gives way to thoughts of membership in social groups, of participation in activities that transcend the concerns of particular people, of close involvements with whole communities and their enduring historical traditions. Experienced in this way—as what Heaney (1980:133) terms a "mode of communion with a total way of living"—sense of place may gather unto itself a potent religious force, especially if one considers the root of the word in *religare,* which is "to bind or fasten fast." Fueled by sentiments of inclusion, belonging, and connectedness to the past, sense of place roots individuals in the social and cultural soils from which they have sprung together, holding them there in the grip of a shared identity, a localized version of selfhood.

"Self and mind," Baruch Spinoza (1949:84) wrote, "are essentially one and the same." If we assume this claim to be true, it is hard to conceive of a cultural construct whose bearing on place is more intimately related to ideas of selfhood than the Western Apache theory of wisdom and its sources. Incorporating places and their meanings into a compact model of mental and social development, the theory of *'igoyą'í* proposes that the most estimable qualities of human minds—keen and unhurried reasoning, resistance to fear and anxiety, and suppression of emotions born of hostility and pride—come into being through extended reflection on symbolic dimensions of the physical environment. Accordingly, features of the Apache landscape, their richly evocative names, and the many tribal narratives that recall their mythical importance are viewed as resources with which determined men and women can modify aspects of themselves, including, most basically, their own ways of thinking. And because changes in ways of thinking are mirrored by changes

in patterns of conduct, these same individuals actually can be seen to alter who they are. As Apache men and women set about drinking from places—as they acquire knowledge of their natural surroundings, commit it to permanent memory, and apply it productively to the workings of their minds—they show by their actions that their surroundings live in them. Like their ancestors before them, they display by word and deed that beyond the visible reality of place lies a moral reality which they themselves have come to embody. And whether or not they finally succeed in becoming fully wise, it is this interior landscape—this landscape of the moral imagination—that most deeply influences their vital sense of place and also, I believe, their unshakable sense of self. For where the likes of Dudley Patterson are concerned—and Sam Endfield and Charles Cromwell and the stalwart Talbert Paxton—selfhood and placehood are completely intertwined. Having developed apace together, they are positive expressions of each other, opposite sides of the same rare coin, and their power to "bind and fasten fast" is nothing short of enormous.

At no time, I suspect, is this power more surely felt by Western Apache people than during those sudden flashes of acute intuitive insight that mark the presence of wisdom. In these clairvoyant moments, when wise men and women consult traditional stories and seek to identify with sagacious story characters, their sense of place (and with it, perhaps, their sense of self as well) may reach a kind of zenith. Yet such culminations of mind seem destined to occur with decreasing frequency in times that lie ahead. In communities throughout the Fort Apache Reservation—and Cibecue is prominent among them—fewer and fewer young people are currently embarking on the ancestral trail of wisdom. Caught up with other concerns and reluctant to appear old-fashioned before their watchful peers, they travel less extensively, learn smaller bodies of cautionary narratives, and subscribe with mounting conviction to the imported belief that useful knowledge comes mainly from formal schooling. This is not to imply that young Apaches fail to develop a robust sense of place—on the contrary, they do—but it is fashioned from new and different materials, and it points in fresh directions. And that may be all to the good, for as modern tribal leaders point out repeatedly, surviving in the contemporary world requires the acquisition of contemporary skills. It is doubtful, however, that future generations of Apache people will ever devise a more striking way to think about places—and by means of places to think about thinking itself—than the one made known to me by the horseman Dudley Patterson. To him, of course, the Apache theory of wisdom was as familiar as the land he knew so well, as familiar to him as himself. But to me, a peripheral outsider, the model of *'igoyą'í* was a wonderful discovery, an absorbing cultural form of large and subtle di-

mensions. And so it has remained, as moving in its way and somehow just as gripping as the largely unspoiled countryside from which it draws its strength. My own sense of place, which at times grows fairly fierce, rests in part upon it.

Time will tell what other cultural constructions await the ethnographer bent on an interest in place. But that such constructions are everywhere to be found—in deserts and savannas, mountains and rainforests, cities and rural towns—is altogether certain. We should begin to explore them with all deliberate speed, and not, I would emphasize, solely for the purpose of enlarging our knowledge of particular social groups. For as surely as place is an elemental existential fact, sense of place is a universal experiential genre, and therefore, as more and more work gets done, it may be found to exhibit transcultural qualities. In this connection, I have already touched on a few possibilities. Ubiquitously accepted as natural, normal, and unexceptional, sense of place is variously trained, variably intense, and, having grown to mature proportions, stoutly resistant to change. Its complex affinities are more an expression of community involvement than they are of pure geography, and its social and moral force may reach sacramental proportions, especially when fused with prominent elements of personal and ethnic identity. Requiring neither extended analysis nor rational justification, sense of place rests its case on the unexamined premise that being from *somewhere* is always preferable to being from *nowhere.* All of us, it asserts, are generally better off with a place to call our own. Places, it reminds us, are really very good.

That was his way.
—Ruth Patterson

November 7, 1992. Dudley Patterson joined the ancestors in the spring of 1983. His wake and funeral were attended by hundreds of people, some of whom came to Cibecue from many miles away. Sam Endfield, who no longer speaks of his absent friend and comrade, continues to work as a horseman. Charles Cromwell, hampered by arthritis and tired of herding cattle, recently called it quits at the age of sixty-six. After two or three more drinking sprees, Talbert Paxton settled down and became a model of sobriety. He later married a distant cousin and now is the father of three exuberant children. Ruth Patterson, invincible as ever, remains firmly and fully in charge.

On the evening Dudley was buried, not far from a place named Sǫǫ ch'íhi'oołé (Flakes Of Mica Float Out), the spotted maverick bull appeared on the point of a sandstone bluff overlooking the cemetery. He stayed there, an imposing silhouette drawn against the sky, for the next

two days and nights. Then he went away. He has not been seen again. Most people from Cibecue think the bull is dead. Ruth Patterson is not so sure. "No one found his bones," she told me not long ago over a cup of boiled coffee. "The horsemen looked all over and no one found his bones. I think that spotted bull could still be alive. There are many places he could be, many places." A gentle smile crossed her face. "He knew them all, you know. That was his way."[15]

NOTES

In thinking through some of the ideas presented in this essay, I have profited from suggestions offered by Sue Allen-Mills, Gayle Potter-Basso, Vine Deloria, Jr., Jerry Flute, Alfonso Ortiz, and Vincent Randall; it is a pleasure to thank them all. For other kinds of useful advice, I thank everyone who participated in the advanced seminar from which this volume grew, especially Steven Feld, Karen Blu, Edward Casey, Charles Frake, and Nancy Munn. Once again, as so often in the past thirty years, I express my gratitude to the Apache people of Cibecue and that remarkable group of horsemen who, at home and on the range, spoke to me of places and their lasting social importance: Dudley Patterson, Sam Endfield, Charles Cromwell, Joe Case, Morley Cromwell, Francis Dehose, Charles Henry, Robert Machuse, Nick Thompson, Emerson Patterson, and the man to whom I have given the name "Talbert Paxton." I am grateful as well to Nashley Tessay, Sr., who helped me prepare English translations of all the Apache placenames and narratives appearing in these pages. When Ruth Patterson gave me permission to write this essay, she asked if I was planning to put her in it. I said that I was. She then requested a two-pound can of MJB coffee, a sack of flour, one dozen eggs, and a slab of bacon. When Ruth's request was granted, she cheerfully announced that others like it would be forthcoming. And so they have been, which pleases me no end.

1. For information on battles now being waged by indigenous peoples to control ancestral territories, see any recent issue of *Cultural Survival Quarterly.* On efforts by American Indian groups to protect and preserve traditional religious sites, see Vine Deloria's essay, "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom" (1991). On the importance of place as formulated by contemporary poets, sociologists, and philosophers, see, respectively, the writings of Seamus Heaney (1980) and N. Scott Momaday (1974, 1976); Edward Shils (1981) and Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner (1983); and Edward Casey (1987, 1993).

2. I would not wish to imply by these remarks that all modern anthropologists are uninterested in cultural constructions of place. On the contrary, exemplary works by Nancy Munn (1973), Clifford Geertz (1980), Steven Feld (1982), Renato Rosaldo (1980), James Weiner (1991), Fred Myers (1991), and others have demonstrated that some ethnographers consider the topic worthy of close attention. The fact remains, however, that place is usually treated as an ancillary phenomenon, as something to deal with descriptively and analytically only when other concerns make this unavoidable. My own point of view, which owes much to the philosophy of Heidegger (1977), Sartre (1965), and Casey (1987), is that place is a crucial element in many forms of social experience and warrants careful ethnographic study in its own right. And the sooner the better, for reasons I take to be obvious.

3. Heidegger's conception of dwelling proceeds from the fundamental premise, articulated first by Husserl (1958), that all consciousness is consciousness of something.

4. Any doubt that this is so is dispelled when one considers that the same locality may be perceived and apprehended in very different ways according to the immediate intentions of those who observe it. Described by some writers as the individual's "current project," these situated aims and purposes guide awareness in specific directions, determining as they do what sorts of knowledge are relevant and applicable, and also, though perhaps less directly, what kinds of sentiments are suitable and appropriate. Thus, a professional oceanographer engrossed in a study of wave mechanics will make of the same secluded cove something quite different than will a rejected suitor who recalls it as the site of a farewell walk on the beach, and this will be true even if oceanographer and suitor are one and the same person.

5. A vivid account of this kind of subject-object conflation is given by Sartre (1965:59–67), who describes in moving detail his encounter with a chestnut tree.

6. This approach to ethnographic research is discussed and illustrated at greater length in Basso (1991).

7. Consistent with the definition proposed by Grenville Goodwin (1942:15), the term *Western Apache* is used here to designate "those Apachean peoples living within the present boundaries of the state of Arizona during historic times, with the exception of the Chiricahua Apache and a small band of Apaches, known as the Apache Mansos, who lived in the vicinity of Tucson." Goodwin's *The Social Organization of the Western Apache* (1942), together with his *Myths and Tales of the White Mountain Apache* (1939), provide definitive statements on these people during prereservation times. Studies by myself—on the girls' puberty ceremonial (1966), on witchcraft (1969), and on a revealing form of joking (1979)—address aspects of modern Apache life, as does a short ethnography of the community of Cibecue (1970a) and a collection of essays on Apache language categories and patterns of speech (1991).

8. Most of the empirical materials on which this essay is based were recorded on tape, with the prior consent of all Apache parties. Events described under the headings "June 7, 1982" and "August 10, 1982" were documented in writing and later checked for accuracy with Dudley Patterson, Sam Endfield, and Charles Cromwell.

9. Descriptions and analyses of some of these verbal practices are presented in Basso (1984b) and Basso (1988), both reprinted in Basso (1991). Other aspects of the Western Apache placename system are treated in Basso (1984a).

10. For any cultural system, what counts as a "place" is an empirical question that must be answered ethnographically. In this essay, I have restricted the notion of place to "localities on the surface of the earth," or what Apaches term *goz'ą́ą́ ni'gost'án biká' yó*. A fuller treatment of Apache conceptions of place would explore the fact that places are known to exist in the sky (*goz'ą́ą́ yáá biyi' yó*), under large bodies of water (*goz'ą́ą́ tú bitł'áh yó*), and deep within the earth (*goz'ą́ą́ ni'gost'án bitł'áh yó*). The fact that places in these categories are seldom seen by human beings makes them no less real, and certainly no less important, than places on the earth's surface. And in this, of course, the Apache are not alone. How many of us can volunteer eyewitness accounts of the North Pole, or the thirteenth meridian, or heaven and hell?

11. Western Apache placenames are distinguished from otherwise identical expressions by the presence of a phrase-final nominalizing enclitic. The enclitic takes different shapes according to the phonological environments preceding it: *é* following consonants; *'é* following all unnasalized vowels except *a; 'há* following *a;* and *'né* following all nasalized vowels.

12. Students of Apachean cultures will recognize that conceptions of "wisdom" (*'igoyą́'í*) bear some resemblance to those of "supernatural power" (*diiyi'*). According to some consultants from Cibecue, the resemblance is only apparent. Whereas wisdom is within the reach of everyone and results from mental discipline, supernatural

power is given to very few people and comes mainly from dreams and visions. It should also be noted that possession of supernatural power does not necessarily imply the presence of wisdom. As Dudley Patterson's story of the grasshopper plague at Cibecue illustrates clearly, persons with supernatural power sometimes act unwisely.

13. The idea that smooth-minded thinker and wise story character "flow swiftly together" is nicely consistent with other dimensions of the water imagery that pervades the Apache model of wisdom. The fact that wisdom is likened by Apaches to water—and that using wisdom, or drinking it, is considered basic to survival—seems more than appropriate for a people who have lived for centuries in a demanding desert climate.

14. It is just for this reason, I believe, that novelists and journalists are often more successful than academic writers in conveying to readers an unfamiliar sense of place. Rather than trying to describe sense of place, or somehow attempting to characterize it, the former seek to *evoke* it by presenting a host of local details and taking note of their own and others' reactions to them. An implicit aim of this essay is to suggest that similar strategies, suitably modified, can be usefully employed by cultural anthropologists and other social scientists interested in the problem.

15. For several years after Dudley Patterson's untimely death, I sought without success to discuss the subject of wisdom with other members of the Cibecue community. Everyone I approached gave the same reason for resisting my overtures, namely that he or she could add nothing to what Dudley had already taught me. "But how can you be so sure?" I asked one of my Apache friends in the summer of 1985. "I'm sure," Nick Thompson replied. "You had a good teacher. You know what you're supposed to know. Don't get greedy. It's not wise." On that unequivocal note, I let the matter drop and found other things to do.