

“The Greatest of Wrongs”: A Rhetorical Analysis of Narratives on the Death of Mangas Coloradas

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In 1863, Apache chief Mangas Coloradas was killed by the U.S. military in what Geronimo, another Apache war leader, describes as “perhaps the greatest wrong ever done to the Indians” (Barrett 119). As Union troops were pulled out of Arizona and New Mexico to fight in the Civil War, tensions between settlers and Apaches rose. Coloradas was an impressive warrior, leader, and diplomat, uniting multiple bands of Apaches by earning their respect as a warrior and leader, and through diplomacy by marrying his daughters to other chiefs. While Coloradas wanted to establish peace (Carleton to West, *The War of the Rebellion* 147-48)¹, the California Volunteers First Infantry saw him as a threat, and local miners saw him as an impediment to finding gold. Lured in under the guise of peace talks, Coloradas was seized and later killed, while allegedly “attempting to escape,” as the military record states (Shirland). The duplicity of Coloradas’s killing, and the subsequent mutilation of his body, spurred on the dwindling Apache wars for several more years (Hutton 103). To this day we still do not know exactly what happened leading up to Coloradas’s death; all accounts vary dramatically depending on who is telling the story, and so we are left with multiple conflicting narratives.

This project uses Fisher’s narrative paradigm, a form of rhetorical analysis, to examine the multiple accounts of the circumstances surrounding the death of Mangas Coloradas in order to assess the credibility of the various accounts. The narratives from military personnel are told by Brigadier General Joseph West, Clark Stocking, and William McCleave. The miner accounts are both from Daniel Ellis Conner, written at two different points in time, with changes from the first telling to the second. And the Apache accounts are from Geronimo, Kaywaykla, and Daklugie. This paper finds a lack of coherence and fidelity among accounts given by the military personnel and by Conner, casting doubt on their reliability as narrators. The Apache accounts, on the other hand, while not as comprehensive, coincide with what we know to be true. Though previous literature surrounding the death of Coloradas does not give these narratives much weight, the information they share is consistent and, through Fisher’s paradigm, appears to be credible.

¹ The letters referenced in this work come from a compilation of official records of the union and confederate armies that were published as *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.

The first section of this paper will strive to establish my own identity and introduction to this work, as well as position my argument in the context of the larger body of scholarship within Native American studies.² The second section will delve more in depth into the events directly preceding Mangas Coloradas's death, as well as the tensions that had been brewing between Apaches, the military, and the local miners for years and that contributed to these events. The third will discuss Fisher's narrative paradigm and the qualities of coherence, fidelity, and the logic of good reason. Finally, in the last section, the different narratives will be discussed and evaluated through the lens of Fisher's Paradigm.

Significance and Identity

The research for this project was done collaboratively with my professor and mentor, Dr. Regina McManigell Grijalva, an Apache woman who had worked on this topic prior to my involvement. I served as Grijalva's research assistant as we traveled together for grant funded archival research. Though we have now published separate works,³ we began by looking at the same questions about Coloradas; most of our findings are pulled from the same sources, and we worked cooperatively to analyze information. Dr. Grijalva's input and guidance were instrumental to my understanding of the nuance of this subject as a white woman and an outsider to the field of Native American studies. Throughout my involvement with this project Dr. Grijalva continuously engaged with my own work, encouraging me to write, rewrite, and submit this paper for publication in *Xchanges*.

On the topic of the death of Mangas Coloradas, one of the more cited works is by historian Lee Myers, who compiles several accounts of this event from the military and miner perspectives. Myers has done very important work in bringing together different narratives, but while he frames his work as presenting "a summary of the conflicting evidence" (2) so that readers may come to their own conclusions, he fails to mention any Apache accounts. Without including Apache narratives, an instrumental piece of that evidence, and all additional context that comes with it, is lost. This analysis will, first and foremost, bring Apache

² The rhetorical analysis of this paper, which seeks to highlight indigenous accounts, is situated in relation to a larger body of scholarship within Native American studies. This includes the work of Scott Lyons, Malea Powell, Ernest Stromberg, and Regina McManigell-Grijalva, which will be explored more fully below, as well as a larger body of literature including Kimberly G. Wieser's *Back to the Blanket: Recovered Rhetorics and Literacies in American Indian Studies*, Gerald Vizenor's *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance and Narratives of Native Presence*, and *Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story: Teaching American Indian Rhetorics*, edited by Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson.

³ Her paper from this project, "The Ethics of Storytelling: Indigenous Identity and the Death of Mangas Coloradas," was published in the September 2020 issue of *College Composition and Communication*.

narratives into the consideration of what happened leading up to Coloradas's death.

In addition to the overall exclusion or derision of an entire group of histories, the present body of literature surrounding these narratives, including by Myers, lacks in-depth rhetorical analysis. Furthermore, the analysis that does exist tends to fall victim to the "discipline's tendency to prioritize so-called objective approaches to knowledge and Euro-American narratives of rhetorical practice, a tendency that discourages the inclusion of American Indian voices or misrepresents them" (King et al. 4). Malea Powell expresses a similar sentiment to King et al., that typical rhetoric and composition studies draw too heavily off "The Rhetorical Tradition" (Powell 397). These Native American scholars, as well as many others, critique traditional rhetorical analysis for the way it leaves Indigenous peoples behind in its considerations.⁴ While Fisher's heuristic does not inherently depart from a Western, Eurocentric focus, it does provide a different form of analysis that employs tactics more similar to those called for by scholars of Native American studies discussed above, and it leads to the conclusion that Apache stories in this instance are largely credible in terms of their fidelity and coherence. The narrative paradigm puts stories into a rhetorical lens, a pedagogical practice also called for by King et al. in *Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story*, which argues that "by recognizing story as a meaningful, theory-full practice, we can responsibly engage indigenous rhetorical practices as we find them, not only as the genres Euro-American education might validate" (King et al. 9). Including Apache stories in the discussion surrounding Coloradas's death and engaging with them on a deeper level than just stating that they exist adds to our understanding of the event, while also giving Native voices sovereignty over their own narratives.

Though, as previously mentioned, Grijalva's paper and mine use the same primary sources to come to similar conclusions as to the credibility of Apache accounts, my paper provides a more detailed analysis of each narrative, and is primarily concerned with the specific event itself, whereas Grijalva uses the event as an example for ethical storytelling and its importance in teaching. My work uses the same rhetorical paradigm as Grijalva's, while also drawing from the structure of Myers' paper, to present the various narratives as to provide a comprehensive account of the event. More so than Grijalva or Myers, I focus my paper on weighing the various accounts in attempt to establish, if not what happened, at least a more accurate depiction of the death of Mangas Coloradas than currently exists, both through the incorporation of the Apache narratives and through the use of Fisher's heuristic to cast doubt on military and miner perspectives.

⁴ See Stromberg 2; Lyons *Rhetorical Sovereignty* 458-459; Kennedy 2-3; McManigell-Grijalva 34; Wieser 7-12; Womack 11-12; Powell *The X-Blood Files* 88-92 for critiques of traditional rhetoric and composition or calls to alternative approaches to rhetorical and literary analysis.

Context

Mangas Coloradas was killed in January of 1863 at the height of the U.S. Civil War, when Union troops were being pulled south to fight the Confederacy, leaving little to no military presence in Arizona and New Mexico (Hunt viii). In order to combat what the U.S. government viewed as the growing “Indian problem,” volunteer infantries were formed from the settlers in California (Hunt viv). These colonists were generally miners who travelled west to strike it rich in the gold rush, and they resented the local Native populations who were blamed for the miners’ failures.

An important ontological view held by Apaches was that gold was sacred and not to be touched (Ball, *In the Days of Victorio* 46). Mining, therefore, was an abhorrent practice to them, and Apaches had been trying their best for many years to sabotage mining efforts in the Arizona/New Mexico area (Hutton 4). One such incident came to a head in 1837, when Mexican miners at the Santa Rita mines noticed missing supplies and blamed the local Apaches. The miners hired a man named John Johnson to stop the theft, and Johnson called for a feast with the Apaches in the area. When they had gathered around the table, Johnson shot at them with a concealed cannon while miners pulled out guns and joined in attacking the unarmed Apaches. Many Apaches were massacred, and in retaliation the Apaches cut off all supplies to the mine by ambushing wagons (McClintock 174-76).

This massacre is thought to have fueled Coloradas’ intense hatred for Mexicans, and he went on to lead several raids against them in revenge for the Apache deaths (Sweeny, *Mangas Coloradas* 72). These revenge raids earned him the name “Mangas Coloradas” which is a Spanish translation for “red sleeves,” supposedly from the blood on his arms after killing so many Mexicans (73). While Native American bands typically acted independently from one another, they would occasionally unite under a strong leader, like Coloradas, to increase military strength. These attacks earned Coloradas great respect among Apaches, and this was when he was first able to bring multiple bands of Apaches together.

After enacting revenge for the Johnson massacre, Coloradas kept his political influence by marrying his daughters to different Apache chiefs to form alliances (McClintock 173). The actual number of bands he united is disputed, but he was still generally considered to be the “undisputed Apache leader throughout eastern Apacheria” (McClintock 173). This made Coloradas a prime target for the U.S. military who believed that killing him might subdue all Apaches in the area, as it had for Indians in other parts of the U.S. who were less aggressive toward colonial Americans (Hutton), freeing up the area to mine for gold that was desperately needed to fund the Civil War. Ironically, Coloradas was a huge proponent of peace with colonial Americans, as he believed an alliance with them could aid him in driving out the Mexicans, whom he hated much more than the U.S. settlers (Sweeny, *Mangas Coloradas* xv).

Towards the end of his life Coloradas advocated even more strongly for peace, sending messages to Brigadier General Henry Carleton asking to meet. Carleton, however, was not convinced, saying “Mangus Colorado [sic] sends me word he wants peace, but I have no faith in him” (Carleton to West, *The War of the Rebellion* 147-48). He claimed disbelief in Coloradas’s true intentions, insisting that Coloradas was likely to go back on any arrangement they made. This is supposedly why he ignored Coloradas’s requests for peace talks and what spurred him to start an expedition against Coloradas, as outlined below in General Order #1:

Brigadier General West ... will immediately organize a suitable expedition to chastise what is known as Mangus Colorado’s [sic] band of Gila Apaches. The campaign must be a vigorous one, and the punishment of that band of murderers and others must be thorough and sharp. (Hunt 64)

While his mistrust could have been genuine, it is important to note that Carleton had a vested interest in Coloradas’s removal from the area as an officer in the U.S. military, which was in desperate need of the gold in the area to fund the war. In a letter written to the Adjutant General, Lorenzo Thomas, just a few days before the issuance of General Order 1, Carleton discussed the future possibilities for the area, saying:

I shall organize and send into the country around the headwaters of the Gila an expedition to punish, for their frequent and recent murders and depredations, the band of Apaches which infest that region. The Pino [sic] Alto gold mines can then be worked with security. From all I can learn that is one of the richest auriferous countries in the world; one whose development will tend greatly to the prosperity of this Territory. Should I be so successful as to whip those Indians, I propose at once to establish a military post near the Pino [sic] Alto mines. (Carleton to Thomas, *The War of the Rebellion* 275)

Carleton’s end goal in this region was clearly to obtain access to the Pinos Altos gold mines for the U.S. military. At best, this campaign intended to aggressively confront Coloradas, weakening his band of Apaches enough that they could not stop the military from mining. At worst, Carleton intended for West to kill Coloradas and may have even pushed West towards this outcome so that the military could utilize the mines and establish a military post in the area.

Carleton’s statements that he will “punish” and “whip those Indians” are vague as to his specific plan but are likely said with the intention of killing Gila Apaches to enforce this punishment and could easily have been interpreted that way by his readers. As Mangas Coloradas was currently being given the “primary attentions

of the troops” (Myers 2) as the leader of the Apache, and as the primary factor inhibiting mining in Pinos Altos (in their minds), Carleton’s claim that after this expedition, “The Pino [sic] Altos mines can then be worked with security” implies that his plan includes either Coloradas’ capture or his murder. Either way, meeting to talk peacefully with Coloradas never appeared to be a serious option for Carleton. This calls into question the credibility of certain narratives discussed later, which mention peace talks or claim that Coloradas had expressed no desire for peace talks.

Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm

Fisher’s narrative paradigm is a rhetorical theory that aids in determining the believability of these accounts by looking at the character of and values held by each narrator. A good, credible story, according to Fisher, is one with narrative rationality, which is determined by the coherence and fidelity of the characters and narrators (88). *Coherence* is defined as the believability of characters as actors and as narrators and the degree to which the story does not contradict itself. *Fidelity* or truth qualities are how well a narrative accords with the logic of good reasons as determined by the soundness of its reasoning and the value, or worth, of its values. Good reason, Fisher argues, is something every human being can notice naturally; they are “those elements that provide warrants for accepting or adhering to advice fostered by any form of communication that could be considered rhetorical” (57).

The logic of good reason deals with the values presented by an argument and asks the audience to make decisions about the “good reasons” presented in a story. Good reasons are highly subjective and depend on an individual’s history, culture, and life experience, as well as the specific context of each story. The subjectivity of this is one of the major criticisms of Fisher’s paradigm, but Fisher argues that people will evaluate stories based on their own values and internal concepts of good reasons. Fidelity and Coherence are concepts that embody the logic of good reason. The narrative paradigm will be used to evaluate the accounts given on Mangas Coloradas’s death by various Apaches, military personnel, and miners.

The Death of Mangas Coloradas

While the narratives of Coloradas’ death vary significantly, there are some facts that we can say are almost certainly true based on historical record. The coherence of these narratives can then be evaluated on the basis of how much they contradict known fact, as well as by their internal coherence.

From the letters discussed above between military men posted in New Mexico and Arizona (Carleton and West, respectively), it is obvious that Coloradas was trying to establish peace talks with colonial Americans, and that West and

Carleton both knew of his desire for peace (Carleton to Thomas, *The War of the Rebellion* 275; Carleton to West, *The War of the Rebellion* 147-48). By West's own admission, and in accordance with every single narrative, Coloradas was killed by the U.S. military while under their guard. How he came into their possession and the exact reason why he was killed still remain somewhat disputed. Based on multiple testimonies from across these narratives, and from a book published by Orson Fowler entitled *Human Sciences or Phrenology* that includes sketches of Coloradas's skull, it can be said with reasonable certainty that Coloradas's head was removed after his death (which will be discussed later as something contradicted by certain narratives) and that it made its way to Fowler (Fowler 1196). Whether or not it was ever in the possession of the Smithsonian can be debated, and the Smithsonian vehemently denies this (Hutton 102), but it almost certainly was in Fowler's possession.⁵ These facts paint a basic picture of what happened the night Coloradas was killed; some of the missing pieces may never be established with certainty, but an assessment of the credibility of the following narratives, using Fisher's narrative paradigm, can provide better insight into these events.

Apaches

There are three main Apache accounts: Geronimo, Kaywaykla, and Daklugie. It is important to note that none of these narrators were present for Mangas Coloradas's death. They describe events leading up to Coloradas's capture and facts learned later from scouts. All three accounts are part of narratives recorded much later in their lives, and while this paper examines the sections about Mangas Coloradas, it is essential to understand that these sections are found within larger narratives of their life stories. Unlike the military narratives considered in this paper that are all written specifically about Coloradas's death, the Apache accounts of his death are recorded as part of larger narratives.

This distinction is necessary because the intentions with which the Apache narratives were written was to tell their own stories about their lives and identities. Mangas Coloradas's death is discussed not as the primary inspiration for the text, but as something that impacted their lives. If West had not been directly involved in the events surrounding Coloradas's death, he would not have written the report discussed in this paper. If Coloradas had not died, the texts recorded from Apaches would still exist, because Coloradas's death was not their primary focus. This makes the motivations of the Apaches as narrators much different than the others who wrote specifically about Coloradas's death.

⁵ A common Apache belief was that the body will forever be as it was when deceased. Therefore, removing Coloradas's head was dooming him to be headless for all eternity (Ball, *Indeh* 20; Ball, *In the Days of Victorio* 48). This is why the postmortem mutilation of Coloradas's body is so significant.

Geronimo provides a first-hand account of the events preceding Coloradas's capture, recorded 43 years later in 1906 by Stephen Barrett as part of an "authentic record of the private life of the Apache Indians" (Barrett i). Geronimo's story recounts that Coloradas had talked to someone who promised him government rations like food and blankets if he returned within a week. He unsuccessfully advised Coloradas not to go and then heard from scouts that Coloradas had been killed (Barrett 119-20).

Daklugie's and Kaywaykla's accounts were also recorded long after Coloradas had died. Both were recorded by Eve Ball, Daklugie's in *Indeh*, first published in 1980, and Kaywaykla's in *In the Days of Victorio*, published in 1963.⁶ These accounts are not first-hand, but were told to Daklugie and Kaywaykla by others. Kaywaykla prefaces this section of the text by saying, "I learned the history of my people about the fires at night. Word for word I could repeat many of the stories long before I understood the significance of them" (Ball, *In the Days of Victorio* 45).⁷ Daklugie's and Kaywaykla's accounts do not mention Coloradas going earlier and being promised rations, but they do both mention Coloradas going to the fort willingly, under the promise of peace and safety, and that he was killed there (Ball, *Indeh* 20; Ball, *In the Days of Victorio* 48). These accounts are coherent as they are in accordance with what we know from letters, that Mangas Coloradas was seeking peace. Daklugie even mentions Carleton by name as one of the military leaders in charge. They also both mention the mutilation of Coloradas's body, that they "dug up [Coloradas's] body, cut off his head, and boiled his head in a big black kettle" (Ball, *Indeh* 20). Geronimo's story does not mention the mutilation of Coloradas's body after his death. While it is possible that Geronimo did not know, especially as his narrative was recorded 60 years before the others, it does provide a strain of incoherence between their stories. The fact that the other two Apaches give much more specific details of the mutilation could also indicate the story being embellished over time, which would harm their credibility. However, Conner's testimony and the separate claims made by Fowler, years later, along with the information in his book, support the fact that Coloradas's head was, in fact, removed. Therefore, embellished or not, these accounts do coincide with what we can assume with reasonable certainty to be true.

While the Apache stories do not contain as much information about the events of Coloradas's death as the other narratives, the facts that they do provide are, by Fisher's narrative paradigm, relatively credible. The stories are coherent amongst each other and within themselves. All narrators agree that Coloradas went

⁶ It is not readily apparent the order in which the narratives in these books were written. The publication dates are given in lieu of the specific dates that sections about Mangas Coloradas were recorded.

⁷ While a full discussion of the topic is beyond the scope of this paper, I believe that part of the reason the Apache accounts have been generally considered less credible in this instance is due to Eurocentric prejudices against stories passed down orally, and in favor of written narratives. For a more detailed analysis and critique of the oral-written binary and its effects see Lyons *Rhetorical Sovereignty* 460; Hannah 2-22; Stromberg 149-162.

willingly to Fort McLean under the assumption that he was to discuss peace with the U.S. military, and that he was killed while in their captivity. Additionally, while there is always incentive to lie to shift blame or maintain reputation, the Apache accounts differ from the others because they were recorded under such different contexts. There is no job on the line or possibility of reprimand for their actions; there is no punishment that these men face by telling the truth.

Military

The military stories, conversely, are the least credible group. West's, Stocking's, and McCleave's stories all differ significantly from one another, and they are lacking in some degree of internal credibility and value. Additionally, they all leave out the removal of Mangas Coloradas's head, which does appear to have actually been in the possession of Orson Fowler.

West

Brigadier General Joseph R. West was sent to the area specifically to "chastise" Mangas Coloradas and his band of Apaches under the order of Carleton's General Order 1 (Hunt 64). West was there under orders that were specifically aggressive towards Coloradas, plausibly intending Coloradas's murder. Like Carleton, he had a vested interest by virtue of his position in the U.S. military, which would have influenced his values and his actions in this situation. West's actions were part of his job, and he could have been demoted or relieved of his command for acting poorly, or promoted or retained for acting well. This introduces two corrupting values to his character that would influence his credibility; he has reason to lie to avoid punishment or to gain professional benefit.

West's account of Coloradas's death is found in a letter reporting to Captain Ben C. Cutler (Assistant Adjutant General, Santa Fe) written January 28, 1863, 10 days after Coloradas's death (West to Cutler, *The War of the Rebellion* 296). This report is oddly situated: throughout the text, West speaks as if he is justifying his own actions to a supervisor, but a Brigadier General outranks a Captain, so West has no reason to justify his actions to Cutler specifically. It is plausible that this tone is due to the fact that this is an official military report, and while Cutler may not be able to hold him directly accountable, this letter would be a part of the record accessible to West's supervisors if there were questions about what happened or even a formal inquiry, as is suggested in at least one account.⁸ It is plausible that Carleton even asked West to report his progress

⁸ It appears that West did face charges of brutality for the death of Mangas Coloradas. Conner mentions a Governor Arny who brought up these charges, and a defense given by West in the Washington Republic (McClintock, 176-77). While finding the documents related to the charges and defense proved to be extremely difficult and beyond the scope of this paper, it is apparent that Carleton and West did know William Arny at the time (Murphy, 126-127; Arny, *Santa Fe Gazette*), and Conner's account does suggest that charges were made.

back to Cutler, as Carleton's letter to Thomas states that he was leaving on other military business soon after issuing General Order 1 (Carleton to Thomas, *The War of the Rebellion* 275).

West's report states that, in compliance with General Order No 1 (West to Cutler, *The War of the Rebellion* 296), he sent Captain Edmond D. Shirland to find Coloradas and use his best judgment on whether to kill or capture him. West makes two interesting and contradictory claims in his report that severely impact its fidelity, as seen below:

...[Coloradas's] expressed desire for peace was only instigated by fear of the chastisement which he saw was about to be inflicted upon him and his people. I determined at once that, although the circumstances under which he had voluntarily placed himself in my power would not permit the taking of his life as some retribution for his murders of our people, security for the future required that he never should have it again in his power to perpetrate such atrocities. (West to Cutler, *The War of the Rebellion* 296)

First, West claims that Coloradas only "expressed desire for peace..." out of fear of punishment, and then immediately afterwards, that Coloradas "voluntarily placed himself in [West's] power." It is difficult to imagine why the Apache chief would have surrendered to Shirland if peace talks were not already on his mind. If he did, as West claims, only begin to discuss peace after threat of punishment, why would he have surrendered to that possibility of punishment in the first place? This self-contradiction not only reflects a lack of fidelity within West's account, as it does not follow the logic of good reason, but the first claim also does not accord with what is known about Coloradas's actions leading up to this event, actions confirmed by multiple narratives.

From the messages given to Carleton where Coloradas expresses his desire for peace, it is obvious that Coloradas had this intention before talking with West. This is also in accordance with the statements from all three Apaches. Furthermore, it is readily apparent that West knew of this desire for peace from letters he had received from Carleton that mention the latter's distrust of Coloradas. West's statement that Coloradas had no previous desire for peace talks, therefore, is not only erroneous but intentionally deceptive. This discrepancy with what is known about Coloradas's actions reduces West's coherence, further challenging his credibility. While West could have argued that he was distrustful of Coloradas's desire for peace, he did not; he went out of his way to lie by saying that Coloradas had no desire for peace. His falsehood is contradicted by documented letters, and the falsehood is also obvious through the lack of fidelity and coherence in his story; this can be implied to be caused by corrupted values if West believed the true story would negatively impact his career. This statement is also called into question by the reference in the Order to taking Coloradas's life. The Order could easily be read to mean that while

“retribution for his murders of our people...” was not reason enough to take Coloradas’s life, providing “security for the future” was. West’s report, combined with what we know about West’s orders in the area, provides support to the idea that Coloradas’s death was understood as an objective of General Order 1.

West describes Mangas Coloradas’s death as taking place at 1:00 a.m. as he was shot by the guard on his third attempt to escape. Other narratives give us reason to doubt that he was killed “escaping,” as neither the other two military stories nor the miner account makes this claim. West also mentions nothing about the treatment of Coloradas’s body after his death. While West does not deny the removal and theft of Coloradas’s head, he does not make note of it either. This missing detail, that we know to be true, serves West by buttressing his claim that the U.S. military had done nothing wrong. It is possible that West left that particular detail out simply to keep his report short and to the point, rather than as a malicious attempt to cover it up. Additionally, West may not have known about this because, like the Apaches, he was not actually there for the event. However, unlike the Apaches who only had scouts to rely on for information about Coloradas’s death, West is much more likely to have been privy to this knowledge as it happened under a captain who was reporting to him. In the same vein, West has a larger motivation to hide this fact, as it is something that could jeopardize his job.

None of the military accounts agree with each other, but West’s particularly stands out as lacking in fidelity, as he is the narrator with the most to lose. Clark Stocking was not responsible professionally for the actions that took place, and McCleave likely recorded his story towards the end of his life when there were no real dangers of repercussions.

Stocking

Clark Stocking, a member of the California Volunteers, is the person who gives the clearest evidence that West wanted Coloradas dead. He attributes to West what became a relatively well-known quote, with West telling Coloradas’s guards, “I want him dead or alive tomorrow morning, do you understand? I want him dead” (Myers 9-10). Stocking describes the circumstances of Coloradas’s “attempted escape” as provoked by the guards, where a rock is thrown into Coloradas’s wall, and he is shot as he jumps up in alarm (Myers 9-10). This is similar to Conner’s story, which will be discussed later. Stocking also, interestingly, mentions the Walker mining party, which none of the other military stories nor any military records cite. While this does set this story apart from the other military stories, it aligns it with Conner’s stories mentioned later, so it does not completely represent a lack of coherence.

In fact, Stocking’s story appears to be the most credible of the military and miner stories. Unlike the other narrators, Stocking’s job was never on the line for his actions; he was simply a spectator. He did not change his story, and he had no identifiable corrupting values in telling his story.

McCleave

McCleave's account, on the other hand, is definitely the outlier of the bunch. The story does not mention any military orders to capture or subdue Coloradas; his story actually involves peace talks, which, as previously mentioned, these military officers would not have had the authority to hold. While peace talks with Indians often happened in this unofficial way—even entire treaties were made, discussed, and agreed upon, only to be ratified by Congress later, if ratified at all, based on the nature of General Order 1 and the intentions of Carleton discussed earlier, it is unlikely that even an unofficial peace treaty was on the table. McCleave's is the only military account that claims Coloradas was in Fort McLane before the day he was killed and the only account saying there were other Apaches in the encampment at the same time (5-8). The depiction of Coloradas's death is atypical as well, as McCleave claims Coloradas is drunk, taken under guard for his own protection, and then is killed trying to rush his guard, which does not accord with any of the other accounts (5-8).

This lack of coherence with the other stories, not only among the military narratives but overall, makes McCleave's account stand out as non-credible, and the tone in which it is written fully supports that assessment. In his work *The Enigma of Mangas Coloradas*, Lee Myers questions whether this account really is even written by McCleave due to the self-effacing writing which is unusual when compared to his other writings (3). This account was, however, found unfinished among McCleave's personal papers and donated to the Bancroft Library by his wife (Hammond 5-8), so although Myers offers up another potential author who was paid money for rights to the story in 1870, it is hard to see how an unfinished version of the account would end up in a box of McCleave's personal papers. Therefore, it seems likely that this account was, in fact, written by McCleave.

Though it was likely written by him, that does not make it credible. With the lack of coherence evidenced in two major contradictions with the other stories mentioned above, as well as the fact that McCleave is writing this narrative in such a figurative tone towards the end of his life, one is led to believe that he may be trying his hand at creative writing, and the fact that this account lay unfinished in a box for years makes it seem that he may not have meant for it to ever be published. Either way, the values with which this story was written do not lend credibility to McCleave's narrative, nor do the frequent contradictions with every other narrative studied here.

Miner Party

There is only one account from a miner, Daniel Elias Conner, but his is a unique case as he actually told two versions of the story of Mangas Coloradas's death.

For this reason, Conner merits his own section as to fully explore the implications of telling two differing narratives over time.

The “first” version, according to historian Lee Myers, was published in Conner’s manuscripts entitled *Joseph Reddeford Walker and the Arizona Adventure* in 1956, over 20 years after Conner died. When Conner actually wrote that account, whether it was right after the event or later in his life, does not seem to be known. Myers dubs the “second” account as one that was published in McClintock’s *Arizona Historical Review*, sent in as a “letter lately received by the Editor” where Conner asks that “history be put straight” (176). This historical review was published in 1916, but this letter could have been written earlier, making it extremely unclear as to the time difference between when Coloradas died, when Conner wrote his narrative about the Walker party, and when he sent this version as a letter to the editor. It could even be that the letter was written before the other account, and that the story Conner was setting straight was not his own, but the military record. With no definitive evidence to change the timeline, I will stick with Myers’ claim of calling the manuscript version one, and the letter version two.

It is also important to note with Conner’s accounts that he often misspells names, and he gives the wrong date for Coloradas’s death in both narratives. While Conner’s misspelling of names and incorrect dates would generally be indicative of a lack of coherence, historians working on his writings note in the introduction to *Joseph Reddeford Walker and the Arizona Adventure* that Conner had consistently poor spelling and grammar, and often recorded the wrong dates for events that he certainly was present for. Of course, this does indicate some level of a lack of credibility throughout, simply due to the possibility of unreliable narration, but it also means that his incorrect dates and spelling may not indicate a lack of coherence in the sense that they are not likely due to conscious misrepresentation of information. This also could lend credibility to the idea that *The Arizona Adventure* was written closer to his death, as he might have had trouble remembering dates.

Conner 1

Conner’s “first” version of this story claims that the Walker party was camped out at Fort McLane trying to decide how to get through Apache Pass. He says it was Walker who came up with the idea to capture Mangas Coloradas and hold him as a hostage for safe passage, putting Jack Swilling, one of the party members on the job. This is when West’s advanced guard, led by Captain Shirland, showed up and were invited to join the search expedition with Swilling. The combined party moved out to Pinos Altos and hoisted a white flag to draw out Coloradas. The next day Swilling and Coloradas talked, and Coloradas came into camp, only to be held at gunpoint and then taken back to Fort McLane. Coloradas then supposedly spent the night under charge of the Walker party before being handed over to West. That night Conner describes the soldiers pressing their heated bayonet ends against Coloradas’s feet until he jumped and was promptly

shot for “trying to escape.” Conner does also describe the mutilation of Coloradas’s body here, and to a more detailed degree than any other story, discussing how the skull was sent to a museum in New York (40-41).

Conner 2

The “second” version of Conner’s story is relatively similar to the first, the primary difference being that in this version they actually track down Coloradas rather than raising a white flag and waiting for him to approach and levelling their guns at Coloradas’s whole party to convince him to come with them. Conner describes some additional events on the night of Coloradas’s death, i.e., that West demanded to speak with Coloradas in private, that Conner robbed Coloradas’s body, that Coloradas’s skull was sent to Orson Fowler, and that West was brought up on charges of brutality years later by acting New Mexican Governor William Army. There is also no mention of Coloradas being under guard by the Walker party before the Volunteer infantry (McClintock 176-77).

Evaluation

The fact that Conner told two different versions of this story already severely reduces his coherence. While it might be reasonable to tell a story in a slightly different way if time has passed, these stories have some significant differences, meaning that one of them contains a lie, which calls into question the credibility of Conner as a narrator, and therefore the credibility of both stories.

In addition to that fact, both of these stories have other problems. Conner first states that Coloradas spent a night with the Walker party before being in the charge of West where he died. This detail does not coincide with any of the other stories (including Conner’s second account), almost all of which say Coloradas was killed the same night he came into Fort McLane. This account by Conner lacks coherence when compared to the rest of the narratives of Coloradas’s death. The first account also shows corruption of Connor’s values, which affect the credibility of his stories. Tricking Coloradas to come with them by hanging a white flag when there were obviously no intentions of peace talks is a duplicitous action. Regardless of the morality of this action, which could be debated, offering something that the party never intended to give is a form of deception. Fisher’s quality of coherence deals with the believability of narrators, and he claims that narrators lying reduces the coherence and credibility of the other things they say as well (47). However, Conner was not in a position of power or authority among the Walker party, and so it is likely he had no say in the matter. Though he went along with and helped carry out this plan, we cannot know if Conner had any disagreements about these actions because he does not make mention of it either way in his account.

Conner’s second account is no more credible than the first. While the story itself reveals less about Conner’s character, the circumstances of its telling call into question his values. While it is unclear when this letter was sent, the 1916 historical review claims it was “just sent” in, so it was likely not written any earlier

than 1914 if published in 1916. According to the introductory material of Conner's manuscript, he had been unsuccessfully trying to publish his writing for years. Writing a letter to "set the story straight" (McClintock 176) about a controversial topic could have been a publicity stunt, making him biased towards swaying the story to make it more interesting. Unfortunately, without conclusive dates for the writing of each narrative, that is only speculation.

Relevance

Depending on who is telling the story, the details surrounding Coloradas's death vary, and it is extremely unlikely that the true sequence of events will ever be known definitively. This study attempts to bring a new perspective on the credibility of these accounts through use of Fisher's narrative paradigm. Most work done on Coloradas's death primarily considers Conner's and military accounts in their depiction of this event. While the Apache stories are mentioned, generally it is only in passing, and rarely are they evaluated as credible compared to the other accounts and, indeed, are often held in greater suspicion. As McManigell-Grijalva writes, "the bar for disenfranchised people to (re)tell their own histories in juxtaposition with dominant narratives is set high" (54). The analysis in this paper seeks to give an account that is enriched by the fuller inclusion and evaluation of Apache narratives, and their evaluation through a non-traditional method of rhetorical analysis. Fisher's paradigm allows for the consideration of the Apache stories on equal footing with the others and can be used to show their greater reliability. It provides a new lens through which to view this event; one that, while perhaps still Eurocentric, differs from traditional rhetorical analysis in ways that coincide with what is called for from Native scholars in the field.

Fisher's paradigm gives us a means to discredit stories where the narrators are untruthful, incoherent, or have something to lose, as in all of the miner and military accounts, which are rife with inconsistencies; their narrators are not trustworthy, and the narrations are marred by professional self-interest. It is the opinion of this analysis that the Apache stories are, by far, more credible than the others, and that the telling of this story cannot be done ethically without giving priority to Native accounts. While readers of this paper may not come to that same conclusion, the importance of including Apache narratives in any analysis of this event cannot be denied. Their presence brings important context that must be present if readers are to fully "realize the enormity of the conflict and endeavor to form [their] own opinion as to what may have happened" (Myers 2). In future readings of the case of Mangas Coloradas's death, the Apache accounts should be viewed as at least as credible as the others, and arguably more so; the information that they provide should be given significant consideration when evaluating the details of Coloradas's death.

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