

**UCLA**

**American Indian Culture and Research Journal**

**Title**

Kiowa Humanity and the Invasion of the State. By Jacki Thompson Rand.

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8r72k79x>

**Journal**

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 33(3)

**ISSN**

0161-6463

**Author**

Palmer, Gus Pànthái:dê

**Publication Date**

2009-06-01

**DOI**

10.17953

**Copyright Information**

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

**Kiowa Humanity and the Invasion of the State.** By Jacki Thompson Rand. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. 234 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

Through historical documents and other sources, Jacki Thompson Rand presents a well-researched and intelligent study of how the US government employed policies to strip the Kiowas of their lands and human rights. The plan had a profound effect on many Indians who still feel and experience the trauma. But even as the invasion of the Americas took place, tribes gallantly managed not only to fight back to preserve their way of life but also to initiate a carefully orchestrated plan to maintain their tribal values. Rand writes in chapter 1 that “Traditional southern Plains diplomacy, politics, and economy centered on a principle of exchange. The law of revenge and specific types and levels of violence—taking horses, captives, and scalps—resolved conflict,” but the white man did not know these things (3). For the average American, acting and reacting to conflict came in the form of revenge. We are given the portrait of an invading people who did not know how to deal in the Indian world and who were viewed often by Indians, Kiowas in this case, as emotionally immature, unpredictable, and dangerous. Under what amounted to a religious edict of manifest destiny, Americans came to see themselves as a morally superior people. They thought quite frankly that they had the moral authority and responsibility to civilize and Christianize the indigenous people of the Americas no matter the cost. By thinking that this way they could quite justifiably do anything they pleased is essentially at the heart of Rand’s argument.

The Kiowas enjoyed a thriving economy and political system and alliances in the late nineteenth century. Chapter 2 details how the Kiowas were able to utilize the southern plains, described by Rufus B. Sage as “the Great American Desert” because of its dreary wasteland appearance. “During its course through the Great American Desert, not a tree or shrub graces its banks. It’s [*sic*] mountain valley, however, is ornamented with numerous and beautiful groves of cottonwood, that present among their underbrush a profuse abundance of plum, cherry, gooseberry, and current bushes, with grape vines; while the adjoining hills afford oak, pine, and pinion, and cedar” (13). This description details a complex region of the southern plains where the Kiowas traveled and lived. Perhaps the elaborate water systems of creeks and rivers attracted them. There were huge herds of buffalo, as well as numerous trade routes between the Staked Plains areas of southern Texas on the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west. Between these vast landscapes, the Kiowas cultivated a system of trade with Indians and non-Indians, because not only did they possess a unique political acumen, but also they were fine equestrians and known to own the biggest herds of horses in the region among Indians. They had been forced out of the Black Hills by the Dakota and other hostile tribes but not because they were interlopers in quest of territories like the Americans. Their withdrawal signaled certain combinations of strategy, which allowed them the least conflict with other tribes as well as a huge advantage to venture southward where they could trade more effectively. Therefore, at the same time that they were on the move to cultivate a better economy of

living, the Kiowas had to fend off the invasion of a force of people who were also determined to displace them and who largely succeeded in doing so. The irony is that, even with many odds against them, the Kiowas were still able to put into play an essential way of living as Kiowas. Moreover, Rand shows us that they were able to negotiate their unique human values that defined them as a people even as it does today. In short, we are given a determined American Indian people, not only proud to practice their own tribal traditions but also able to conduct their affairs within the hegemonic system that surrounds them on a daily basis.

At the same time we are given a dark history of the Kiowas on the plains in the first few chapters, we are also treated in later chapters to the new ways and opportunities that the Kiowas began to incorporate into their lifestyle. While the men tended to the huge herds of horses they now owned, the women took up the affairs of village life, harvesting and processing the numerous plants, berries, herbs, and wild vegetables. There was a fair distribution of work detail in the camps, and it had to be that way in order to economize the best living conditions the people faced in the places they lived. Moreover, a good systematic process of work would not only ensure daily living but also produce ways to extend the trade of foods, hides, and horses between Indians and non-Indians. There had to be a circulation of goods to maintain a solid trade economy while keeping good relations among other tribes. Rand writes that the Kiowas “relied on a diverse range of faunal and floral resources for use and exchange” (17). Each time the tribe moved, they found and produced different kinds of products to exchange or trade. If they were not producing new ways to consume resources, they invented a trade system across cultures. This becomes important because it shows us how men and women incorporated the resources and the collaborative system necessary to sustain life on the plains wherever they pitched their tipis.

*Kiowa Humanity and the Invasion of the State* is a fine and well-documented book that does not indict America as many history books have already done too often. Rather we are given a brief examination of the nineteenth-century colonization of an American Indian tribe confronting with courage and determination an emerging American empire whose government imposed countless policies and treaties, not all successful but with devastating results to many Indians. Rand (Choctaw historian) focuses on how the Kiowa men and women were able to negotiate an equitable way of work and living that helped to extend and assure tribal life, even as the land they once roamed was shrinking around them. What Rand argues is that Kiowa material and political economies adjusted and even thrived. One of the book’s highlights reminds us how colonialism exists now even as it did in the past, that there is an “ongoing theft of Native resources, poverty, health crises, youth suicide, insufficient services, and diaspora, all reinforced by isolation and the unfulfilled federal trust responsibility” that confirms “the continued existence of U.S. internal colonialism” (153). In this way Rand is not simply presenting facts we already know, but also shows us that, despite certain ruin, an American indigenous system survived and succeeded in a unique way that endures to the present day.

Another important and final point is Rand's treatment of the Kiowa woman, without whose contributions and support there certainly would have been a collapse of the Kiowa people. We have read all the historical accounts about Kiowa warriors and their war deeds, but have very little to nothing to read about the gallant Kiowa women who worked very hard to keep their home life going while protecting their families from the many perils on the nineteenth-century plains. This is perhaps the best contribution to us about the Kiowa people.

*Gus Pànthái:dê Palmer (Kiowa)*  
Oklahoma University

**Native American Language Ideologies: Beliefs, Practices, and Struggles in Indian Country.** Edited by Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret C. Field. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009. 353 pages. \$49.95 cloth.

Language ideology, the ideas and attitudes speakers have about language, has been considered a valid object of study for about thirty-five years. This edited volume employs twelve case studies of Native American communities to demonstrate how an understanding of the language ideologies of community members and language professionals impacts current efforts in language revitalization. Two chapters are about Canadian programs (languages of the Yukon and Maliseet in New Brunswick), one is about Mayan languages in Guatemala, and the rest are about communities within the United States. Authors include Native and non-Native linguistic anthropologists.

The introductory essay begins by explaining that language ideology includes what we think about language in general, as well as our attitudes toward the specific language (or languages) we speak and toward other languages that we know about. In Native communities that have experienced the profound impact of colonization, virtually none have escaped the inundation of English, Spanish, or French directly or indirectly. The processes of language shift, moving from an indigenous language to a colonial language, and of language loss have been profound, in some cases lethal, to language and to traditional knowledge more generally. A brief summary of Indian education in the United States shows that the effects of federal policies on eradicating indigenous languages have been uneven; but these policies nearly always have been effective.

The introduction outlines several themes central to this volume, including the ideology of iconization between language and ethnic or tribal identities; the potentially negative consequences of academic language ideologies; an understanding of the effects that researchers may have on their object of study; language as a performative, dynamic entity; and links between heritage language and religion, poetry, and storytelling. Jule Gómez de García, Melissa Axelrod, and Jordan Lachler argue that English is the dead language in their remarks on Sandia and Tesuque Pueblos, the Navajo Nation, and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. Perhaps one of the most perplexing ideas to non-Native