WILLIAM OLIVER BRIGHT

William O. 'Bill' Bright, polymathic Americanist, Indologist, typographer, toponomist, poet, teacher, editor (of this journal, for twenty-two years, and of two others), president of the Linguistic Society of America (in 1989), died on Sunday, October 15, 2006. His *New York Times* obituary located his death in Louisville, Colorado, the site of the hospice where he spent his final hours, but Bill was really at the end a Boulder person, with roots sunk so wide and deep in the community where he had lived since 1988 with his wife, Professor Lise Menn of the University of Colorado, that the Takacs String Quartet, the eminent quartet-in-residence of the University, played Brahms in his living room for him when he proved too weak to attend their last concert before his death. The January 2007 Boulder Bach Festival concerts were dedicated to Bill's memory.[1]

1. OVERVIEW. Bill was born August 13, 1928, in Oxnard, California, 'a small town facing the Pacific' (Bright 1979c) like the birthplace of his poet-hero Pablo Neruda. Overheard exchanges between his father, a butcher who had learned the local Spanish, and Spanish-speaking customers (the majority in the Oxnard of that day) led to Bill's life-long interest in Spanish and a familiarity with rustic *californio* usage that served him well when his scholarly interests turned to Spanish loans in the indigenous languages of California and the West. His mother was an enthusiastic gardener who included among her favorite flowers 'Sweet William' (*Dianthus barbatus*), which she and her eponymous son would jokingly exchange.

Even as a teenager Bill was fascinated by language. He studied Latin ('because of my adviser's erroneous belief that Latin was prerequisite for the premedical curriculum that I hoped to enter in college' (Bright 1980:121)) and, becoming an opera fan, worked on Italian, French, and German—all of which show up in his correspondence by his freshman year in college. Upon his graduation from Oxnard High School in 1945 he was awarded a full scholarship to attend the University of California at Berkeley. Perfecting his Spanish during a summer school stint at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma in Mexico City in 1947, Bill discovered Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. Back in Berkeley, he explored colonial grammars of Nahuatl (while he knew their work well, he never abandoned his structuralist's disdain for the colonial grammarians, whom he saw as slavish followers of the tradition of Latin grammar), along with Benjamin Whorf's (1946) sketch of Milpa Alta Nahuatl. Hoping to better understand Whorf's esoteric linguistic vocabulary, Bill enrolled in Murray B. Emeneau's course in linguistics. In 1947 he changed his major from pre-med to Spanish, but, finding it impossible to work within a linguistic framework in the Spanish department, he received permission to design his own major in linguistics. He received Berkeley's first A.B. in that discipline in 1949 (the Department itself was not chartered until 1953).

Emeneau and Mary Haas sent Bill, with his brand-new bachelor's degree, to the field to work on Karuk (at that time called 'Karok'), as the very first field worker

[1] I thank Lise Menn for permitting me unrestricted access to Bill's personal papers, and for fruitful discussions of his life. I also thank Susie Bright for her help with details of Bill's life.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

sponsored by what later became the Survey of California Indian Languages. Bill later reflected that, 'In retrospect, I am astounded that anyone as green as I was could have been sent on such a mission' (Bright 1980:122). Yet Karuk turned out to be a providential choice: an extremely interesting language, and a highly congenial community. In 1949 the language had about one hundred elderly speakers, many of them women who were both mindfully immersed in Karuk language and culture and delighted to stuff a very skinny young graduate student with the best baked goods their kitchens could produce. They nicknamed him *Uhyanapatánvaanich* 'Little Word-Asker', which must have been in the affectionate reading of the diminutive, since Bill was 6 feet 2 inches tall.

The Karok language, published in 1957 as Volume 13 of the University of California Publications in Linguistics, was the first publication from the Survey of California Indian Languages and the first monograph-length work from a graduate of the new Berkeley Department of Linguistics. The editorial board of the series (Douglas Chrétien, Madison Beeler, Murray Emeneau, and Mary Haas) stated in the preface to the work that it was intended to 'serve as a model of what the Survey will offer' (Bright 1957a:v). The role of 'model' was by then familiar to Bill. Bernard Bloch of Yale University, the biggest name of the day, had visited Berkeley to participate in the LSA Summer Institute in 1951. Emeneau and Haas invited him to join Bill's examining committee; Bill's assignment was to perform brilliantly and show Bloch what westerners could do. Unfortunately, as Bill recalled in unpublished notes on his career, he did not distinguish himself in the oral examination! He was awarded a pass, however, and told he would have to make up for his flawed exam in the dissertation. Since *The Karok language* did indeed become 'a model'—it is one of the pinnacles of the American structuralist tradition—he succeeded in this charge. In 1955 Bill received his doctorate, after a delay due to the military draft, which took him to Germany for two years of service in military intelligence from which he was discharged, in the rank of corporal, in 1954.

Bill returned to work on Karuk in 2000, completing with Susan Gehr a dictionary of the language (Bright & Gehr 2005). His life-long dedication to work with Karuk was rewarded when, a few days before his death, he was made the first Honorary Member of the Karuk Tribe, receiving tribal membership card H00001.

Bill saw himself as an anthropological linguist in the tradition of Edward Sapir, 'firmly committed, since my student days, to the Sapirian view of language as a part of culture, to be fully understood only in the context of other cultural phenomena' (Bright 1984:x). Both Emeneau and Haas had studied with Sapir, yet Bill recalled them as 'a bit defensive' (1980:125) about their background, never assigning Sapir's writings and emphasizing a neo-Bloomfieldian program. In a course with Emeneau in 1949–50, Bill read papers by Bloch, Charles Hockett, Zellig Harris, and Rulon Wells, which, he commented, was 'not a bad preparation for the ''formalist'' style of generative linguistics in later years' (Bright 2006:417). Bill's memories contrast with the findings of Murray (1998:31), that 'Berkeley was insulated from the radical neo-Bloomfieldianisms of Bloch, Trager, Harris'. Mary Haas told Murray in a 1978 interview that 'examiners were not exchanged [with the neo-Bloomfieldians] and national meetings rarely were attended'. Perhaps Haas preferred to forget Bill's awkward oral examination in front of Bernard Bloch in 1952, but Bill not only knew and greatly admired Bloch, he also certainly attended some national meetings. He heard Einar Haugen lecture on language contact, bilingualism, and loanwords at the 1949 Summer Linguistic Institute in Ann Arbor, Michigan, 'while everyone else was debating the definitions of the phoneme

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and the morpheme' (Bright 1997b:53), and recalled that Haugen's ideas stimulated his first published paper, 'Linguistic innovations in Karok' (Bright 1952a). Haas remembered that at Berkeley 'we considered some social phenomena—men's and women's speech, word taboos, play, and so on—but there was absolutely no interest in that' on the part of the East Coast neo-Bloomfieldians (Murray 1998:32). Bill, however, recalled that he was never assigned papers like Emeneau's 'Personal names of the Todas' (1938) or Haas's 'Men's and women's speech in Koasati' (1944), but had to discover these for himself.

In spite of these contradictions, the influence of both Emeneau and Haas is obvious throughout Bill's career, and Bill felt keenly the honor and responsibility of being a link in what Emeneau (1998:vii) labeled with the Sanskrit term *guruśiṣyaparaṃparā* 'the succession (*paraṃparā*) of pupils (*śiṣya*) and teachers (*guru*)'. However, Bill observed (1984:x) that his interest in areal phenomena and diffusion, inspired by both Emeneau and Haas, represented a departure from the 'strict Sapirian tradition', which emphasized genetic connections (although Bill published as well in that field from an early period, for example, Bright 1954b).[2]

In 1955 Bill, doctorate in hand, could find no academic position in the United States. Emeneau secured for him a two-year fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation, and Bill went to India to teach linguistics at Deccan College, Poona (now Pune), and to travel south to Mysore State (now Karnataka) to study colloquial Kannada, resulting in his *Spoken Kannada* (Bright et al. 1960), and Tamil on the side; see Ramanujan & Bright 1962a,b. Bill returned to India in 1967, as a Ford Foundation Fellow at the Central Institute of English in Hyderabad, and for brief visits in 1980 and 1996. In his 'Felicitation Lecture' for the Silver Jubilee of the *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* (Bill had an invited article, 'The enunciative vowel' (Bright 1972a), in that journal's inaugural issue), Bill described his visits to India as experiences of immersion, reading 'everything I could about Indian history and culture, and in general acquiring first-hand experience of Indian life' (Bright 1997a:138). He formed relationships with dozens of Indian scholars, and, haunting the bookshop districts of India's great cities, acquired a notable library of Indological linguistics and sociolinguistics. Encounters in India between Bill, John Gumperz, and Charles Ferguson are counted as critical moments in the history of sociolinguistics, and are discussed in more detail below.

Returning to the United States, Bill occupied stop-gap positions, teaching Hindi, Urdu, and French in Washington, DC, at the School of Languages of the Foreign Service Institute of the US State Department in 1957, and 'English as a Foreign Language' at Berkeley in 1958 in the rank of Assistant Professor in the Speech Department. In 1959 Bill was offered a position in the Department of Anthropology at UCLA, where he spent the rest of his teaching career, becoming also Professor of Linguistics when that department was founded in 1966. While the UCLA years were immensely productive, spanning some of Bill's major contributions as a scholar and his years as the editor of *Language*, his career continued after retirement to Boulder, Colorado. He became Professor Adjoint at the University of Colorado, and some of his most notable contributions were made during retirement, including the presidency of the Linguistic Society of America (in 1989), the editorship of the journal *Language in Society* (1992–2000), the founding of the journal *Written Language and Literature* (in 1998), and important publications, culminating in two edited volumes of the *Collected works of Edward Sapir*

[2] Notably, Bill's 1971 Ph.D. student Lyle Campbell became a major figure in comparative historical linguistics, especially of the languages of the Americas.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(Sapir 1990a,b) and three magisterial edited collections, the four-volume *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics* of 1992, *The world's writing systems* (Daniels & Bright 1996), and the 2004 *Native American placenames of the United States* (Bright 2004a).

2. CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICANIST LINGUISTICS. True to the Sapirian tradition in which he claimed a place, Bill's Americanist scholarship spanned diverse languages of California and Mesoamerica and included attention to every dimension of the history, structure, and use of these languages. His first years of field work focused on Karuk, culminating in his aforementioned dissertation (Bright 1957a), but included as well Shasta (Bright & Olmsted 1959) and Patwin (Bright & Bright 1959). Work on Yurok and Hupa led to a major publication (several times reprinted) with his second wife, Jane Orstan Bright (Bright & Bright 1965), on a classic problem in Americanist language and culture, the cultural convergence among speakers of these languages with Karuk (the three share no genetic relationship). Bill's first publication, 'Linguistic innovations in Karok' (Bright 1952a), initiates his lifelong interest in language contact (his extensive publications on loanwords and language contact in American Indian languages are treated in §4), and 'Some place names on the Klamath River' (Bright 1952b) begins his career in toponymy (treated in §5).

Moving to southern California to take up his position at UCLA, Bill immediately threw himself into field work on the languages of that region. He mastered the fine-grained details of family and friendship relationships among the Indian communities of southern California, knocking on doors and attending all-night ceremonies (Anderton 2006), scouting field sites for himself and his students.[3] He published pioneering work on the Takic languages, including Luiseño and Cahuilla (Bright 1965a,b, 1967, 1968a), on comparative Takic (Bright & Hill 1967), and on contact between Takic and other Southern California languages (Bright & Bright 1969). Studies in areal linguistics like 'Areal features in North American Indian languages' (Bright & Sherzer 1976) and 'Sibilants and naturalness in aboriginal California' (Bright 1978b) brought together his broad knowledge of the languages of California and beyond.

Throughout his life Bill published on the Nahuatl language, from his short paper on ' ''Accent'' in Classical Aztec' (Bright 1960b) to his LSA Presidential Lecture on Nahuatl poetics, ' ''With one lip, with two lips'': Parallelism in Nahuatl' (Bright 1990a). He took great care to keep up with the Latin American literature, traveling regularly to Mexico City to review and purchase the latest publications and forming collaborations and friendships with Latin American scholars. He provided abstracts and translations of Latin American publications to the *International Journal of American Linguistics* for several years in the 1960s, and contributed the monumental 'Inventory of descriptive materials' to the volume on linguistics of the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (Bright 1968b). This is only one example of Bill's work as a bibliographer; he published many bibliographies, contributing the 'American Indian linguistics' section to the annual *MLA International Bibliography* in several years. In addition to bibliographies, Bill was an indefatigable writer of 'Book notes', publishing during his career 134 contributions in this genre in *Language*, *Language in Society*, *American Reference Books Annual*, and other journals—this in addition to a nearly equal number of substan-

[3] Bill's untiring efforts to establish relationships from which colleagues and students might benefit was in striking contrast to the style of his predecessor in Californian linguistics, J. P. Harrington, who guarded access to consultants with paranoid zeal. Indeed, Harrington offered Bill two hundred dollars—a substantial sum at the time—not to work on Karuk! When Bill tried to meet him, Harrington refused to answer the door.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tial scholarly reviews. During his editorships, even the saddest little near-private publication on an American or South Asian language by an author toiling in obscurity in some provincial college in Paraguay or Pakistan, arriving in a shabby string-bound package with a hopeful note to the distinguished editor of *Language* or *Language in Society*, would be acknowledged by a kindly paragraph from Bill in the 'Book notes' section of the journal. He was invited frequently to contribute review and encyclopedia articles, and published in this genre in distinguished venues; see Bright 1963a, 1971, 1974.

Bill published extensively on oral literature in Native American languages, including both theoretical statements (see Bright 1982b) and studies of texts in many languages. Bill was especially fond of Coyote stories, publishing his first coyote text as a graduate student (Bright 1954a), editing a volume of these for the Native American Texts series of the *International Journal of American Linguistics* (Bright 1978a), and eventually editing *A Coyote reader* (Bright 1993a), which contained Bill's perhaps most-often-quoted poem:

> When you're trying to write about tricksters
> And you go downstairs at 6 A.M.
> and see Coyote padding up the road,
> don't think it's a good sign.
> He's not there to inspire you.
> Later that day, someone might steal your hubcaps.
> You might not write another line that week.
> Then you'll remember:
> Coyote the trickster, right?
> Coyote, the thief.
> (Bright 1993a:xviii)

3. CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIC AND DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS. Bill's contributions to the study of South Asian languages, like those on American Indian languages, range across the entire spectrum of linguistic and sociolinguistic concerns.[4] Bill arrived in India in 1955 with the well-prepared mind of a man who had studied Sanskrit with Professor Emeneau, but he was still astounded by the richness and diversity of South Asian languages and linguistic traditions. His classic sociolinguistic papers on differences between written and spoken languages and variation in the dialects of different castes are treated in §4. Bill early identified some enchanting analytical problems: 'Singing in Lushai' (Bright 1957b) took up the problem of singing in a tone language, and was the first of several contributions on language and music, music being one of Bill's great enthusiasms (see Bright 1963b). Throughout his life Bill published grammatical and phonological studies, ranging from *Spoken Kannada* (Bright et al. 1960) to phonological studies of both Indic and Dravidian languages, such as his work on the Dravidian enunciative vowel (Bright 1972a, 1975). Emeneau observed that his favorite paper of Bill's was 'Hindi numerals' (Bright 1972b), 'where . . . all is ''irregular'' up to ''99'', so un-universal a set of data' (Emeneau 1998:vii). Bill was intensely interested in the diverse writing systems of South Asian languages, including the Indus Valley script (see Bright 1982a and 'How not to decipher the Indus Valley inscriptions' in Bright 1990b:Ch. 9). He contributed the essays on Devanagari and on Kannada and Telugu writing to Daniels & Bright 1996, and an essay 'The Dravidian scripts' (Bright 1998a)

[4] The present writer, an Americanist, is singularly unqualified to comment in this area, and a proper assessment of Bright's contributions to South Asian linguistics and sociolinguistics must await the obituaries that will no doubt soon appear in specialist journals in those fields.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to a volume on these languages. Bill worked during the 1990s as a consultant on the design of computer fonts for South Asian languages, and delivered a keynote address on the western alphabets (and misconceptions about their supposed superiority to other writing systems) to the International Unicode Conference in San Jose in 2000 (Bright 2000c).

4. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIOLINGUISTICS. Bill was especially proud of his role in the formation of a new discipline, sociolinguistics, for which he organized one of the early landmark conferences, at UCLA in 1964 (Bright 1971). Language contact and areal phenomena loomed large in the languages of California, so from his very first publication (Bright 1952a) Bill had attended to loanwords, both from English and Spanish into the languages of California and among the indigenous languages themselves (e.g. Bright & Bright 1969, Bright 1993b). Bill's contributions to the study of Hispanisms in the languages of the Americas set a standard for this field, with landmark publications including *Animals of acculturation in the California Indian languages* (Bright 1960a, several times reprinted), and diverse notes on Hispanisms including Bright 1979a,b, Bright & Thiel 1965, and Bright 2000a.

Murray (1998) traces an important founding moment in sociolinguistics to the impact of the remarkable patterns of language variation in India on three of the founders of the field: Bill Bright, John Gumperz, and Charles Ferguson, all of them teaching or visiting at the Deccan College in Pune in the mid-1950s. Bill had been initiated into field linguistics through the study of languages for which 'no significant dialect differences are observable among surviving speakers' (Bright 1957a:1). In India, he encountered languages with populations of speakers ranging into many millions, with enormous differences between written and oral, formal and colloquial registers, and 'linguistic diversity even within villages' (Murray 1998:95), 'where the sociolinguistic phenomena of language variation were impossible to ignore' (Bright 1976:271). Thus Bill, having requested responses in 'a conversational style' from a consultant in Karnataka State, discovered that he had elicited instead 'pure literary Kannada' (Bright 1997b:54).[5] Bill, Gumperz, and Ferguson all remember their conversations about such experiences as having turned them into sociolinguists (see Murray 1998:95–97)—and in Bill's case, this stimulated a life-long interest in written versus oral language (see his paper on 'The virtues of illiteracy' in Bright 1984). Ferguson organized the first American conference of the group, on 'Language and culture dynamics in South Asia' at the 1957 meeting in Chicago of the American Anthropological Association, published as Ferguson & Gumperz 1960. During the academic year 1958–59, both Bill (teaching English as a foreign language) and John Gumperz (teaching Hindi) were in Berkeley. Beginning his new appointment at UCLA in the Fall of 1959, Bill found himself working with Harry Hoijer, 'the dean of Sapirians' (Bright 1997b:54), and teaching 'language and culture'. Unable to attend the meetings of the American Anthropological Association in 1963, where Dell Hymes had organized a landmark session, Bill put together a conference at UCLA in 1964, inviting what he called 'the usual suspects' (Bright 1997b: 55): Ferguson (by then at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC), and

[5] One of my own earliest experiences in elicitation was of what I hope was colloquial Tamil; Bill assigned me to a Mrs. Rajangam, with whom he had tried working himself. However, she simply could not bring herself to speak the colloquial language in front of 'Professor Bright', and he thought that sending in a second team of less exalted assistants might create a context in which she would produce the everyday language. Also assigned to this task in the same semester was another graduate student, Bill's 1968 Ph.D. Gerard Diffloth, who of course ended up having a very distinguished career in South and Southeast Asian languages. For me, the main benefit was that Mrs. Rajangam was a wonderful vegetarian cook.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Gumperz and Hymes from Berkeley, of course, but also distinguished senior figures like Einar Haugen and Raven McDavid, and a rising new star, William Labov. Bill recalled that he was instrumental in arranging for Labov to teach at the LSA Summer Institute at UCLA in 1966 'and this turned on a lot of younger people' (Bright 1997b: 58). Notable among the attendees was UCLA faculty member Harold Garfinkel, the first sign of a link to sociology that eventually gave rise to conversation analysis, a major component of sociolinguistics as it formed in the late 1960s (Hymes, and later Bill, insisted that the journal *Language in Society* provide a home for work in conversation analysis along with studies centered in linguistics and anthropology). However, Bill observed of Garfinkel's intervention in the 1964 meeting that 'I don't think anybody understood what he was saying' (Bright 1997b:57), and no chapter by Garfinkel appeared in the conference volume (Bright 1971). Anthropological linguists like John Fischer, Paul Friedrich, Madeleine Mathiot, and William Samarin, along with Dell Hymes, brought a comparative dimension to the conference that foreshadowed directions in that field.

A series of collections of work by leading scholars in sociolinguistics under the rubric 'Language science and national development', edited by Anwar S. Dil, were all in the 'must-read' category for graduate students of the era, and eventually included collections by Bill (Bright 1976) and both of his mentors (Emeneau 1980, Haas 1978). Four of Bill's most important papers on South Asian languages are reprinted in the 1976 volume, including work on linguistic change in caste dialects, caste stratification and cognitive orientation, and the phonological differences between literary and colloquial Kannada. In addition, Dil anthologized nine of Bill's papers on the sociolinguistics of American Indian languages, and four general programmatic and overview articles. The volume also includes an introductory assessment by Dil (1976) of the significance of Bill's work.

5. CONTRIBUTIONS TO TOPONYMY. Place names are the topic of the second publication in Bill's bibliography (Bright 1952b); a list of village names and a map appears in *The Karok language* (Bright 1957a), and a major paper on Karuk place names (Bright 1958) soon followed. Karuk place names were of special interest because so many were unanalyzable, contradicting the widely held view that American Indian place names are invariably transparent in meaning and therefore somehow 'primitive'. During Bill's later years he became 'perhaps the most prominent academic student of place names in the United States' (Cowell 2006:365). Early in his career he wrote scholarly reviews of those dictionaries on the 'Place names of [insert name of state]' that are so profitable for university presses, expressing his exasperation with the cavalier treatment of Native American etymologies even in volumes that otherwise observed careful historical and philological standards. A collection of three of his most scathing reviews of place-name dictionaries is assembled in Bright 1984. His reputation in this field led to requests that he edit existing works; exemplary is his fourth revised edition of Erwin G. Gudde's (1998) *California place names* (Bill was distressed by Gudde's treatment of Native American names in earlier editions; see the reprinted review in Bright 1984). Bill founded 'The placename department' of the *SSILA Newsletter* (Bright 1998b); his twenty occasional essays in this section were a highlight of the publication. Notable among eight papers that he published in the journal *Names* are Bright 2000b, on place names containing the slur *squaw*,[6] and his essay on the place names of the Lewis and

[6] The word is, of course, not a slur in its source language: Massachusett *skwa* 'young woman' (with cognates in similar meanings across the entire Algonquian language family). The word was borrowed into English at the dawn of scientific racism in the seventeenth century, as a 'technical' term for an American

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Clark route (Bright 2004b). He contributed place-name material as well to other journals, including a major essay on the Native American place names of the Louisiana Purchase in *American Speech* (Bright 2003). The culmination of this line of work is his monumental 2004 publication, *Native American placenames of the United States*, for which Bill coordinated the work of dozens of specialists to identify definitive etymologies for place names in American Indian languages throughout the US. At the time of his death Bill had well under way a similar project for indigenous place names in Mexico, now directed by Yolanda Lastra, his co-editor.

6. EDITING. Bill Bright was one of the giants of scholarly editing in twentieth-century linguistics. He enjoyed editorial work, and he was very good at it. He became abstracts editor of the *International Journal of American Linguistics* in 1963, and review editor of that journal in 1965. These, however, were minor chores, accomplished in what even in that day was a quiet backwater of scholarly publishing, so Bill was stunned (and grieved) and deeply honored when he was asked to become editor of *Language* upon the sudden death, in 1965, of Bernard Bloch. By that date the neo-Bloomfieldian legacy was very much on the decline, and deep divisions among the various theoretical schools in American linguistics were obvious and painful. Bill always modestly claimed that he had been called to *Language* because he was not associated with a particular theoretical school, but was rather a 'mugwump', which he defined as a creature with its mug on one side of the fence and its wump on the other. From this distance, a more suspicious view is perhaps in order: in 1965 the president of the Linguistic Society of America was Yakov Malkiel, of Berkeley; the publications committee included Bill's old friend David Olmsted of U.C. Davis, and of the two generativists on the nine-member executive committee, one was Bill's UCLA colleague Robert Stockwell (the other was Morris Halle). It seems most likely that the majority hoped that Bill would keep *Language* chugging along some version of an American structuralist track. Bill, however, had learned a very interesting lesson from reading Bloch's editorial archives. Bloch's notes, written for his own use, were unexpurgated in tone: a manuscript on morphology was 'written with really stomach-turning ineptitude'; a book review contained 'god-awful *Kauderwelsch*!'[7] (Bright notes).[8] But what really struck Bill was Bloch's entry on a manuscript received 17 December 1940, from Roman Jakobson. The manuscript, in French, was on 'The phonic laws of child language and their place in general linguistics'. Bill surmised that it was 'evidently a shorter version of [Jakobson's] famous book, *Child language, aphasia, and phonological universals* [published in German as *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze*, Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1941]'. Bloch's note observed, 'Utter drivel: Sent to Trager same day . . . Trager concurs fully: balderdash. E. H. Sturtevant suggests that I return the MS with a general statement

Indian female, that assigned such women to a realm somewhere between ordinary 'women' and female animals like does and mares. As Bright (2000b) showed, the word was clearly negative in its implications in English by the early nineteenth century. Bright had joined American Indian colleagues in an effort to eliminate place names containing the word from US English usage.

[7] *Kauderwelsch* 'jargon, double-talk'.

[8] 'Bright n.d.' is one of three manuscripts of a talk, all with handwritten notations. What is apparently the earliest version, 'The view from *Language*', bears the hand-written notation 'CSU Fullerton Fall 1985'. Selections from Bloch's card files accompanied these typescripts in a folder; these notes were apparently prepared on a different typewriter from the 1985 manuscript. An undated version is called 'The view from the editor's desk: 28 [struck, replaced by '30'] years of American Linguistics'; a second version of this, slightly shorter, is dated in a hand-written note '19 nov 94'. I don't know which is earlier. I cite them as 'Bright notes' (the Bloch selections), 'Bright n.d.', and 'Bright 1985 ms'.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that it is not according to the taste of the American Public' (Bright n.d.:3). Bill knew that Bloch was 'by no means a diehard conservative'. He had elicited Robert Lees's landmark review published in *Language* in 1957 (*Language* 33.375–408) of Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic structures* (The Hague: Mouton, 1957), as well as Chomsky's even more influential 1959 review (*Language* 35.26–58) of B. F. Skinner's *Verbal behavior* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957). But whenever Bill was tempted to reject a submission out of hand he would think of Bloch's tin-eared reaction to the Jakobson manuscript and proceed with caution. Bill saw himself as observing the principle (which he attributed to Jakobson)—*Linguistici nihil a me alienum puto*[9] (Bright 1984:xi)—and believed that he had tried his best to make *Language* open to the best work, regardless of theoretical persuasion. However, every rejection offended someone. Bloch had followed a very political line in his editing, accepting papers that he did not care for (some of the most scathing comments in his files were on work that he had seen through to publication) in order to avoid alienating important scholars and departments. Bill, of course, inherited *Language* at a time when the size of the field was exploding, and demand for journal space precluded accepting work merely on the basis of the author's reputation (or the reputation of the author's mentor).[10] Bill, steering between the Scylla of the neo-Bloomfieldians and the Charybdis of the generativists, managed to offend both more or less equally.[11] In 1982 Charles Hockett resigned from the Linguistic Society of America in protest of Bill's rejection of a paper by a Hockett protegé, submitting a letter that claimed that Bill was a 'captive of the MIT mafia' and had 'put adherence to the party line above the search for truth' (Bright 1985, ms. p. 11). This ended well: 'It was pointed out to Hockett that he had paid for a lifetime membership [in the LSA], which was not refundable, and that therefore it was impossible for him to resign; subsequently he resumed cordial relations both with me and with the Society' (Bright n.d.:9). Bill was not so lucky with Chomsky. Admiring Chomsky's work, and concerned that so few MIT-trained linguists were submitting articles to *Language* (*Linguistic Inquiry*, founded in 1970, had emerged as the major outlet for theoretical work in generative grammar, and *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, founded in 1983, would also have begun to attract work in that perspective), Bill wrote to him in 1984 urging him to consider submitting to the journal. Chomsky stunned Bill with an angry reply that he would never consider publishing in a journal that has published 'outright falsifications so scandalous that they raise serious questions about the integrity of the field . . . flat lies . . . couched in a rhetoric of a sort that might be appropriate to some criminal, but that one is surprised to find in a scholarly journal' (Bright 1985, ms. p. 11). Bill wrote that he 'gradually acquired a thick enough skin to protect me from the anger of authors whose work was rejected' (Bright n.d.:5). The thick skin, a genuine love for the work, and the skilled assistance of his editorial administrator, the late Lucy Stockwell, a superb specialist in linguistic copyediting, permitted Bill to continue to edit *Language* until 1987. Those who have not edited a journal, and who have perhaps focused more on the politics of the task than on its

[9] 'I consider nothing of linguistics (to be) alien to me.'

[10] In 1968 the executive committee of the LSA voted to open the journal to nonmembers, increasing the pressure on the editor (LSA Proceedings 1969:19).

[11] And of course there were other camps to offend as well; an Ann Arbor historical linguist of my acquaintance once informed me that Bill was an idiot with absolutely no understanding of that field.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

daily, inexorable, exhausting nuts and bolts[12]—reading new manuscripts, evaluating, revising, selecting and hounding referees and book reviewers, copyediting, proofreading, indexing—will not fully understand what a miracle it is that, throughout those years, the large and complex quarterly that is *Language* appeared with clockwork regularity and a minimum of follow-up *errata*. Bill's twenty-two-year term as editor of *Language* was probably the last such heroic career that that journal—or, indeed, any other—will see; the work is simply too demanding and is too severe an interruption of the kind of scholarly career that is expected today of American academics.

During his term as *Language* editor, Bill undertook other editorial work as well. He became editorial director in 1977 for the Malki Museum Press, founded on the Morongo Indian Reservation at Banning by his old friend and Cahuilla consultant Katherine Siva Saubel and other Indian colleagues. This work permitted him to develop his interests in typography and book design. In 1986 he became editor in chief of the Oxford *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, which was published in four volumes in 1992. In 1992 he succeeded Dell Hymes as editor of the major journal in sociolinguistics, *Language in Society*, and continued in that editorship until 1999. Even before finishing his term for *Language in Society*, he decided to found a new journal, *Written Language and Literacy*, now in its ninth year (Bill resigned as editor in 2004). He also for several years served as general editor of a monograph series, the 'Oxford studies in anthropological linguistics', which included by the end of his editorship nearly thirty books. I have already mentioned the other great editorial tasks of Bill's last years, the two volumes of Sapir's collected works, *The world's writing systems* (with Peter Daniels), and *Native American placenames of the United States*.

Bill's most widely read editorial contribution lay outside the field of linguistics altogether. Bill's daughter Susannah ('Susie') Bright is a prominent expert on sexuality and an author and editor of erotica. Bill consulted as copyeditor, translation guru, and advisor on every volume of Susie's annual *Best American Erotica* from 1993 until 2007. The complete run of the series could be found in the Bright-Menn household in Boulder (shelved, appropriately, in the master bedroom), and Bill was immensely proud of her career.

6. LIFE BEYOND THE CAREER. Bill Bright somehow combined an enormously productive scholarly career with what for many years was a turbulent and tragic personal life. He suffered crises of self-confidence and in dark moments tortured himself with the idea that his scholarship was a failure. From 1980 until at least the early 1990s he suffered from episodes of extreme fatigue, initially diagnosed as myasthenia gravis, but later suggested to be psychosomatic in origin (one wonders whether his skin truly thickened as much as he claimed during the contentious years of his *Language* editorship). Remarkably, he was able to remain very productive during years of severe illness, when at times he could barely sit up or walk. A bout with prostate cancer in 1999 and 2000 ended with remission (Bill used this scare as an impetus to put the files of his career in good order, with every one of his nearly 450 publications and nearly sixty years of his personal correspondence photocopied and bound in three-ring notebooks).

Bill was twice divorced and twice widowed. His first marriage, to Elizabeth Halloran Bright, mother of his daughter Susie, lasted from 1952 until their divorce in 1961. A second brief marriage to Jane Orstan Bright ended when Janie was killed in a traffic

[12] For instance, Bill immediately revised the *LSA style sheet* to forbid the use of 'Eaton's Corraseable Bond' (an unpleasant greasy paper that made it easy to erase typescript, but on which ink would smear) and 'white-out' correcting fluid! Such were the technological issues of 1967.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

accident on a country road near Bloomington, Indiana, during the 1964 LSA Summer Institute. Bill married again in 1964, to Marcia Kinnamon. Marcia died of cancer in 1971. In 1975 Bill married Debra Levy. Following a divorce, Bill married a linguist colleague, Lise Menn, in 1986. After the turbulent years, this last marriage was a long and satisfying one, marked both by passion and by the kind of mutual interests and regard best captured in the famous Shakespearean label, a 'marriage of true minds'. Bill took great joy in family: in Lise, in Susie, in his granddaughter Aretha Bright, in Lise's children, and in her grandchildren as they arrived.

Bill left behind not only a beloved family, but also an international network of students; Bill chaired or cochaired seventeen UCLA doctorates in linguistics and probably nearly as many in anthropology. Bill was a demanding supervisor of doctoral students, and set a high standard as editor and critic; if one had not thought through a claim, Bill was sure to notice.[13] But students remember him as an extraordinarily warm and supportive mentor, who not only didn't mind unannounced 'drop-ins' to his office, but would always welcome us to his home as well. Bill would take time from a packed schedule to drive a sick student to a doctor's appointment, to reassure a shy one about a presentation, to spend an hour insisting that a problematic dissertation was going to be a great success. Bill never left his students' lives; years after receiving the diploma, they could count on Bill's giving them a call or dropping by when he was in their neighborhood, or sending off a congratulatory e-mail upon the occasion of a major publication—and, of course, informing them of opportunities for service to linguistics (like refereeing, or serving as associate editor on some project of his) that it was probably their duty to undertake. Bill will live on, then, not only in his splendid body of work, but in the commitments to scholarly breadth and depth, to intellectual rigor, to service, and to love and kindness that he exemplified for us all. [JANE HILL, *University of Arizona*.]

REFERENCES

ANDERTON, ALICE. 2006. William Oliver Bright. *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 26.117–22.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1952a. Linguistic innovations in Karok. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 18.53–62.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1952b. Some place names on the Klamath River. *Western Folklore* 1.121–22.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1954a. The travels of Coyote, a Karok myth. *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 11.1–16.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1954b. Some Northern Hokan relationships. *Papers from the Symposium on American Indian Linguistics, held at Berkeley, July 7, 1951* (University of California publications in linguistics 10), 63–67. Berkeley: University of California Press.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1957a. *The Karok language*. (University of California publications in linguistics 13.) Berkeley: University of California Press.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1957b. Singing in Lushai. *Indic Linguistics* 17.24–28.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1958. Karok names. *Names* 6.172–79.

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1960a. *Animals of acculturation in the California Indian languages*. (University of California publications in linguistics 4.4.) Berkeley: University of California Press.

[13] And he expected us to be productive scholars. One of my favorite memories from Bill's habit of dropping in to visit former students was when he came to see me in the Women's Hospital at the University of Michigan on July 27, 1967, two days after the birth of my daughter Amy. Bill took a look through the glass at the new baby, and then reminded me that the manuscript of my dissertation had to be submitted to the University of California Press by December if I expected to publish it under the relatively forgiving regime for in-house doctoral theses. It didn't happen.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1960b. 'Accent' in Classical Aztec. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 26.66–68.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1963a. Language. *Biennial review of anthropology*, ed. by Bernard J. Siegel, 1–29. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1963b. Language and music: Areas for cooperation. *Ethnomusicology* 7.26–32.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1965a. The history of the Cahuilla sound system. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 31.241–44.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1965b. Luiseño phonemics. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 31.342–45.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1967. The Cahuilla language. *The ethnobotany of the Cahuilla Indians of southern California* (new edn.), by David P. Barrows, xxi–xxix. Banning, CA: Malki Museum.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1968a. *A Luiseño dictionary*. (University of California publications in linguistics 51.) Berkeley: University of California Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1968b. Inventory of descriptive materials. *Handbook of Middle American Indians, vol. 5: Linguistics*, ed. by Norman A. McQuown, 9–62. Austin: University of Texas Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1971. Language. *Anthropology today: An introduction*, 409–19. Del Mar, CA: CRM Books.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1972a. The enunciative vowel. *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* 1.26–55.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1972b. Hindi numerals. *Studies in linguistics in honor of George L. Trager*, ed. by M. Estellie Smith, 222–30. The Hague: Mouton.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1974. North American Indian languages. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, new edn., 13.208–13.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1975. The Dravidian enunciative vowel. *Dravidian phonological systems*, ed. by Harold F. Schiffman and Carol M. Eastman, 11–46. Seattle: South Asian Studies Program, University of Washington.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1976. *Variation and change in language: Essays by William Bright*. Selected and with an introduction by Anwar S. Dil. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM (ed.) 1978a. *Coyote stories*. (IJAL-Native American text series 1.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1978b. Sibilants and naturalness in aboriginal California. *JCA—Papers in Linguistics* 1.39–64.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1979a. Hispanisms in Cahuilla. *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology Papers in Linguistics* 1.101–16.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1979b. Notes on Hispanisms. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 45.267–71.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1979c. Eight poems. *Linguistic muse*, ed. by Donna Jo Napoli and Emily N. Rando, 53–60. Edmonton: Linguistic Research.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1980. American linguistics: A Western view. *First person singular: Papers from the Conference on an Oral Archive for the History of American Linguistics*, ed. by Boyd Davis and R. K. O'Cain, 121–30. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1982a. Review of *Studies in the Indus Valley inscriptions*, by John E. Mitchiner. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102.233–36.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1982b. Poetic structure in oral narrative. *Spoken and written language: Exploring orality and literacy*, ed. by Deborah Tannen, 171–84. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1984. *American Indian linguistics and literature*. Berlin: Mouton.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1985. The view from *Language*. Paper presented at California State University-Fullerton, Fall 1985.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1990a. 'With one lip, with two lips': Parallelism in Nahuatl. *Language* 66.437–52.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1990b. *Language variation in South Asia*. New York: Oxford University Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM (ed.) 1992. *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. 4 vols. New York: Oxford University Press.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1993a. *A Coyote reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1993b. The Aztec triangle: Three-way language contact in New Spain. *Berkeley Linguistics Society* 18.22–36.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1997a. Felicitation lecture, IJDL Silver Jubilee Celebrations. *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* 26.137–40.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1997b. Reminiscences: Beginnings of sociolinguistics. *The early days of sociolinguistics: Memories and reflections*, ed. by Christina Bratt Paulston and G. Richard Tucker, 53–60. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1998a. The Dravidian scripts. *The Dravidian languages*, ed. by Sanford Steever, 40–71. London: Routledge.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 1998b. The placename department. *SSILA Newsletter* 17.4.7.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 2000a. Notes on Hispanisms: California. *Functional approaches to language, culture and cognition: Papers in honor of Sydney M. Lamb*, ed. by David G. Lockwood, Peter H. Fries, and James E. Copeland, 481–98. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 2000b. The sociolinguistics of the 's-word': *Squaw* in American placenames. *Names* 48.207–16.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 2000c. Keynote address: The alphabet—a tyrant? *Proceedings, Seventeenth International Unicode Conference*, part 1. San Jose, CA: Unicode Consortium.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 2003. Native American placenames in the Louisiana Purchase. *American Speech* 78.353–62.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 2004a. *Native American placenames of the United States*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 2004b. A glossary of Native American toponyms and ethnonyms from the Lewis and Clark journals. *Names* 52.163–237.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. 2006. Obituary of Murray B. Emeneau. *Language* 82.411–22.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM. n.d. The view from the editor's desk: 30 years of American linguistics. Manuscript in files of the author.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and ELIZABETH BRIGHT. 1959. Spanish words in Patwin. *Romance Philology* 13.161–64.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and JANE O. BRIGHT. 1965. Semantic structures in northwestern California and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. *Formal semantic analysis* (Special publication of *American Anthropologist* 67, part 2), ed. by Eugene Hammel, 249–58.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and MARCIA K. BRIGHT. 1969. Archaeology and linguistics in prehistoric southern California. *University of Hawaii Working Papers in Linguistics* 1.10.1–26.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and SUSAN GEHR. 2005. *Karuk dictionary*. Happy Camp, CA: Karuk Tribe of California, Language Program.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and JANE H. HILL. 1967. The linguistic history of the Cupeño. *Studies in Southwestern ethnolinguistics*, ed. by Dell H. Hymes and William E. Bittle, 351–71. The Hague: Mouton.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and DAVID L. OLMSTED. 1959. A Shasta vocabulary. *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 20.1–55.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM; SHANTA RAU; and MEERA NARVEKAR. 1960. *Spoken Kannada*. Berkeley: Center for South Asian Studies.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and JOEL SHERZER. 1976. Areal features in North American Indian languages. In Bright 1976, 228–69.
BRIGHT, WILLIAM, and ROBERT A. THIEL. 1965. Hispanisms in a modern Aztec dialect. *Romance Philology* 18.444–52.
COWELL, ANDREW. 2006. In memoriam: William 'Bill' Bright, 1928–2006. *Names* 54.365–67.
DANIELS, PETER T., and WILLIAM BRIGHT (eds.) 1996. *The world's writing systems*. New York: Oxford University Press.
DIL, ANWAR S. 1976. Introduction. In Bright 1976, xi–xiv.
EMENEAU, MURRAY B. 1938. Personal names of the Todas. *American Anthropologist* 40.2.205–23.
EMENEAU, MURRAY B. 1980. *Language and linguistic area: Essays*, ed. by Anwar S. Dil. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
EMENEAU, MURRAY B. 1998. Foreword. *The life of language: Papers in linguistics in honor of William Bright*, ed. by Jane H. Hill, P. J. Mistry, and Lyle Campbell, vii–viii. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

FERGUSON, CHARLES, and JOHN GUMPERZ (eds.) 1960. *Linguistic diversity in South Asia.* (Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore & Linguistics publication 13.) Bloomington: Indiana University.

GUDDE, ERWIN G. 1998. *California place names.* 4th rev. edn. by William Bright. Berkeley: University of California Press.

HAAS, MARY R. 1944. Men's and women's speech in Koasati. *Language* 20.147–49.

HAAS, MARY R. 1978. *Language, culture and history: Essays*, ed. by Anwar S. Dil. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

MURRAY, STEPHEN O. 1998. *American sociolinguistics: Theorists and theory groups.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America at the 43rd Annual Meeting, New York 28–30 December 1968. *Language* 45.2, part 2: Bulletin No. 42, June, 1969, 9–33.

RAMANUJAN, A. K., and WILLIAM BRIGHT. 1962a. *Tamil phonemics.* Chicago: Committee on Southern Asian Studies, University of Chicago.

RAMANUJAN, A. K., and WILLIAM BRIGHT. 1962b. *A study of Tamil dialects.* Chicago: Committee on Southern Asian Studies, University of Chicago.

SAPIR, EDWARD. 1990a. *Collected works of Edward Sapir, vol. 5: American Indian languages*, part 1, ed. by William Bright. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

SAPIR, EDWARD. 1990b. *Collected works of Edward Sapir, vol. 7: Wishram Chinook*, ed. by William Bright. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

WHORF, BENJAMIN LEE. 1946. The Milpa Alta dialect of Aztec. *Linguistic structures of Native America*, ed. by Cornelius Osgood and Harry Hoijer, 367–97. New York: The Viking Fund.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2007.0121 Published online by Cambridge University Press