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Representing Changing Woman: A Review Essay on Navajo Women

JENNIFER NEZ DENETDALE

In 1866 an American military officer reported an encounter between Navajo peace chief Zarcillos Largo's wife and American soldiers. As other Navajos fled before the American military forces, the chief's wife sought her children who had been stolen by New Mexican slave raiders. "She is a woman well known and influential among her people, intelligent for an Indian, and though past middle age active and vigorous." The military officer writing the report went on to describe how the Navajo woman used her influence to encourage her Navajo people to surrender to American soldiers.[1] In contrast to popular stereotypes about Native American women that have cast them into the dichotomies of princess and squaw drudge, the few Navajo women in the historical record are noted as autonomous and self-assured.

Because the lives of Navajo women have been viewed within theoretical frameworks that have guided studies of both Western and Native women, it has been difficult to understand the continuity of Navajo women's roles. Navajo women are central forces in their families and communities. They enjoy a measure of autonomy and authority even though, beginning with the reservation era in 1868, economic and political institutions have favored Navajo men's participation. A critical review of the existing scholarship on Navajo women raises questions about the ways Navajo women's lives have been presented. Further, a re-reevaluation of the records demonstrates that Navajo women had and continue to have voices in economic, political, and social realms.

BACKGROUND

It is useful to point out issues that have preoccupied anthropologists and historians because their work has shaped Navajo women studies. In the late nineteenth century, anthropologist Washington Matthews began a study of Navajo

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culture and tradition.[2] These initial studies were driven by non-Indian concerns about an American society changing under industrialization as well as predictions that Indian cultures would soon be extinct.[3] With the Navajos nowhere near extinction, in the 1930s, Frank Reeve published the first Navajo histories, while feminist anthropologist Gladys Reichard initiated the first studies of Navajo women specifically.[4]

Prior to 1970, few studies of Navajo women, or any other Native women for that matter, were published.[5] During the formative years of women studies, beginning in the 1970s, research on Native women was guided by assumptions about the universal subordination of women. Questions about the process of colonization and its effect on Native women's status interested scholars like Karen Sacks who argued that the origins of patriarchy laid in the evolutionary rise of the state.[6] Further, as Michelle Rosaldo argued, Native women had experienced a measure of gender equality not seen in Western societies, but colonization had led to a decline in their status. This devaluation of Native women's roles evolved as a result of the categorization of female space as private and male space as public.[7] Others, such as Sherry Ortner, explained the reasons for the devaluation of women's roles by examining the associations of men with culture and women with nature.[8] Women's reproductive capacity bound them to domestic duties such as feeding and caring for children and overseeing their development to adulthood; men, not bound by their biology, were free to pursue culture. Further, according to Ortner, language as a social construct reinforced and reproduced women's subordinate roles.

By the 1980s and 1990s, critics pointed out the flaws in some of these 1970s studies and the critiques came from Native women, too. Some of the analyses noted that "women" as a category of analysis was assumed and that examinations were often limited to social organizations associated with women, methods that failed to address how gender shapes economic and political realms.[9] Critics suggested that studies also account for the historical changes that Native women have experienced.[10] Further, scholars raised questions about relationships between Western feminists and Third World women.[11]

In the 1990s, scholars utilized a number of approaches to illuminate Native women's lives. For example, Theda Perdue applied gender analysis to move beyond traditional notions of male dominance.[12] By viewing gender as a cultural construct, scholars learn how colonized men and women devise strategies to maintain social, economic, and political integrity. Once scholars realized that all institutions, from social to political to economic, are gendered and designed to reinforce the status quo, they began to revise the meaning of power. For example, Karen Anderson has observed that matrilineal kinship organization, symbol systems that revere fertility and female reproduction and production, and family systems that privilege women's domestic and economic contributions were and are sources from which Native women draw power.[13]

Significantly, Native women asserted that studies should be pertinent to their current needs and interests.[14] Insisting that their greatest problems derived from the effects of colonialism, Native women declared that research must have validity for their families and communities. Not surprisingly, Native women reaffirmed the value of indigenous traditions to define their places in

contemporary society, rather than allying themselves with universal womanhood. Frequently sources for cultural renewal and leadership, these women also spearhead resistance focusing on the restoration of land and natural resources.[15] Native women acknowledge their contributions to the continuing vitality of Native life and culture.

The remainder of this essay is devoted to a critical discussion of past and current studies of Navajo women with the intent of illuminating how Navajo women's lives have been represented. I also devote a section to the writings of Navajo women, for, as indigenous peoples all over the world claim, we are in a position to speak for ourselves.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND NAVAJO WOMEN

Although references to Navajo women occur in some of the earliest Spanish, Mexican, and American accounts of the Southwest, it was not until Gladys Reichard, a student of Franz Boas, arrived on the Navajo Reservation in the 1930s to record Navajo culture that studies on Navajo women appeared. Reichard was part of a community of female anthropologists that believed that they could effectively study Native women's roles to correct derogatory images of Native societies, fight ignorance and racism through education, and encourage "values of tolerance, curiosity, and openness in the face of cultural differences among whites and Native Americans."[16] As debates about the politics of cultural knowledge and questions about the representation of Native societies challenged anthropological methodology and theory, Reichard's ethnographies on Navajo women and weaving are also coming under scrutiny by scholars evaluating Anglo women's contributions to anthropology.[17]

While Reichard's studies on weaving have generated much interest, her fictional account, published in 1939, *Dezba: Woman of the Desert* has received less notice, even though this novel was instrumental in creating a "traditional" portrait of Navajo women that endures to the present.[18] *Dezba* illustrates the erosion of Navajo women's traditional high status after Navajos returned to their homelands from Bosque Redondo in 1868. With their return to Dinétah, unlike many displaced indigenous peoples, Navajos managed to retain a measure of self-sufficiency by rebuilding their livestock herds.[19] However, in the 1930s the US government's livestock reduction destroyed Navajo self-sufficiency. Because Navajo women dictated land use and owned livestock, they were affected by the US government's policy.

Dezba, Reichard's main character, enjoys a measure of authority and status within her household, which is reflected in the amount of her property, the size of her sheep flock, and the control she exercises over her children. Reichard highlights Navajo practices of matrilineality and matrilocality that continued to reflect Navajo women's high status in their society. Dezba provides for her home and children by weaving rugs that she exchanges with the local trader for foodstuff and other necessities.

As Reichard dramatized, the US government's livestock reduction program had a disastrous effect on women like Dezba who lost a substantial number of sheep and goats. But instead of quietly accepting her fate, Dezba

confronts government officials attempting to enforce the mandates. Dezba's physical resistance to livestock reduction is reflective of Navajo women's responses in general. Beyond Reichard's portrayal of a strong Navajo woman in her 1939 novel, for which she deserves credit, studies are only beginning to acknowledge Navajo women's important economic contributions to their families throughout the early twentieth century.

While Reichard's work served as the basis for future studies that recognized Navajo women's autonomy and authority in their own societies, it also became the basis from which decades of scholars would declare that Navajo women's high status had been severely diminished by a colonialism that emphasized patriarchal values. Significantly, Reichard's portrayal of Navajo women also essentialized a "traditional" Navajo woman whose garb and lifestyle were derived primarily from cultural exchanges and borrowings with nearby Pueblos, Spaniards, and Americans. Still the standard image of Navajo women, Dezba wore velveteen blouses, voluminous, three-tiered calico skirts, and moccasins. Silver and turquoise jewelry completed what would come to be perceived as the traditional Navajo woman's dress. Such a portrayal of Navajo women suggests that Navajos are primarily cultural borrowers and denies Navajo claims to indigenous roots in the Southwest.

Acceptance of Reichard's image of Navajo women convinced generations of scholars that Navajo women's status was in decline. Contemporary studies acknowledge Navajo women's high status and recognize that their experiences under colonialism have varied, but they still grapple with scholarship that has painted Navajo women's status as severely eroded. Contrary to these authors' bleak predictions, Navajo women have retained a strong measure of influence and authority. Moreover, Navajo women are moving into male-dominated arenas such as political and professional fields. Evidence of women's continued importance in Navajo society has forced anthropologists to reevaluate the essentialized portrait left by Reichard, but the reexamination has evolved slowly as evidenced by the following review.

Between the 1930s and 1950s, and into the 1980s, studies on Navajo women began with the "traditional Navajo woman" as the baseline to critique changes in women's status. Although early scholars predicted a diminution in Navajo women's status for each decade after 1930, they also noted that this phenomenon did not occur. In the early 1940s, Dorothea C. and Alexander Leighton arrived on the Navajo Reservation and initiated a trend in Navajo studies that focused on psychological analysis.[20] Dorothea Leighton also investigated Navajo women's roles.[21] Like Reichard, Leighton found that Navajo women enjoyed a place of respect and authority in their society. As mothers, Navajo women claimed resources and dictated land usage. Navajo society practiced flexibility in sex roles and strong bonds between women within their matrilineal kin, common especially in cases of polygamy where sisters were married to the same man. Leighton noted that the Kinaaldá, or puberty rite, a ceremony celebrating women's reproductive and regenerative powers, offered further evidence of Navajo women's authority and status. Women were absent from the public domain, but this did not necessarily mean that they lacked influence or power.

Leighton's impressions about Navajo gender roles have been reiterated by countless other observers of Navajo culture and life. Of Navajo marriages, Leighton reported, "The marriage bond was rather tenuous without children, and easily broken, even with children, if the partners could not get along with each other or with interfering relatives."[22] Leighton also noted men's frequent absences from their homes: "Men returned to their mother's home frequently and appeared to have little support within families and kin networks."[23] Instead of reflecting the closeness of the extended Navajo family, these assumptions fed white fears of overly strong nonwhite women who emasculated men.[24]

In 1957 Laila Shukry Hamamsy arrived in Fruitland, New Mexico, on the northeastern edge of the Navajo Reservation, to examine the changing status of Navajo women.[25] For her study, Hamamsy selected a community created through the Fruitland Irrigation Project in which Navajo families were settled on ten-acre lots to practice agriculture as their main means of subsistence. Begun in the 1930s, this US government experiment directed social change intended to create Navajo farming families. This project mirrored the attempts at Bosque Redondo seventy-five years earlier. Hamamsy examined the impact of the project, with its emphasis on farming and nuclear families, and on Navajo women's economic and social positions. Hamamsy concluded that Navajo women had lost economic status, significance in their family, and the sense of security and the bargaining position that came with such social and economic status.

Because the Fruitland Irrigation Project was an isolated effort to create nuclear Navajo agricultural families with male heads of household, any attempt to take Hamamsy's findings as an indication of a generalized decline in Navajo women's high and autonomous status is seriously flawed. Most Navajo families that live on lands their ancestors occupied did not adopt the experimental agricultural pattern at Fruitland. Many Navajos also continue to practice matrilocality. Taking an isolated social experiment not typical of most Navajo families' situations and then generalizing the results to the larger Navajo population represents a highly flawed methodology.

In 1982, the *American Indian Quarterly* devoted an issue to studies on Navajo women.[26] With the exception of Jennie Joe, all contributors were non-Navajo. While acknowledging Navajo women's high status, some scholars based their conclusions on Laila Hamamsy's work and predicted that Navajo women would suffer a decline in their positions. For example, Mary Shepardson, in "The Status of Navajo Women," examined the changing status of Navajo women before and after the livestock reductions of the 1930s and 1940s.[27] Poring over employment, health, and education statistics from 1951 to 1980, Shepardson concluded that, "traditionally, Navajo women held high status, a position lost with reduction," but had recovered their former high status with education and wage work. While Shepardson concluded that "Hamamsy's description of Navajo women's lowered status and insecure livelihood at this period is true," it is difficult to pinpoint a decade when Navajo women suffered a decline.[28] Predictably, Shephardson ended her study with a doomsday image that remains part of the literature on Navajo women: "It is

not intended . . . to present an idyllic picture of Navajo women today. Dark clouds have gathered over them."[29] Anthropological frameworks that assume the subordination of women with colonization make it difficult to understand how Navajo women played and continue to play central roles in Navajo life.

While many studies from the 1980s solidified the images of women offered by Reichard and Hamamsy, two studies, one by Charlotte Frisbie and the other by Nancy Parezo, offered different perspectives.[30] Frisbie's "Traditional Navajo Women: Ethnographic and Life History Portrayals" explored sources from which Navajo women experienced authority in their households and autonomy in their society. Flexible gender patterns allowed women to care for the household and children as well as practice animal husbandry. Women's domain extended outside the conventional sphere of the domestic and included activities associated with men's work, such as horsemanship and the ceremonial realm. Perhaps, as Frisbie observed, some kinds of work are not gendered: both men and women perform certain tasks and possess knowledge about these tasks.[31]

Frisbie also noted women's place in the Navajo cosmology and in ceremonial life. Ideal characteristics for Navajo women are modeled on those of Changing Woman, a major female deity. Although women's participation in ceremonies such as the Blessingway are not common, women are knowledgeable about various ceremonies and rituals. Frisbie's comments are especially insightful in describing the persistence of traditional patterns through women, since men were frequently absent due to raiding, herding, and trading, and, in contemporary times, employment patterns. Women retained a measure of status and authority because they adapted traditional gender roles to new economic realities. These economic changes included the continued absence of men from their homes; thus, Navajo women continued to take care of their homes and homeland as they have always done.

Nancy Parezo's "Sex Roles in Craft Production" offered another perspective by tracing the movement of sandpaintings from the sacred to the secular.[32] Sandpaintings have sacred meaning and are part of ceremonies; however, they have also become a craft made for the tourist trade. By utilizing gender as a tool of analysis, Parezo discovered that Navajo flexibility surrounding labor division was reproduced in the fairly new production of sandpaintings as crafts for the market. Further, her research illuminated the realities of reservation life where unemployment is higher than the national average and Navajos must be creative to sustain their families. As Parezo remarked, "Poverty does not recognize sexual differences."[33]

In 1995, Mary Shepardson returned to her previous study published in the 1982 *American Indian Quarterly* collection and reaffirmed Navajo women's high societal status.[34] She provided an index of places where she saw evidence of women's status, including traditional narratives, property and land privileges, and social customs such as clan identification. At the same time that Shepardson observed Navajo women's high status, she, like other non-Navajos, mistakenly imposed Western categories on Navajo life and cultural practices.[35] For example, Shepardson declared, "Divorce is easy for both men and women in the Navajo way."[36] Statements about "easy" divorces suggest that

decisions are readily made and that families do not suffer dysfunction or trauma as a result. On the contrary, marriages involve the entire family and clan relations. The social reorganizations that follow marriages or divorce are never easy. Thus, for Navajos, divorce means the end of many relationships.

Another instance in which Mary Shepardson imposes Western categories onto Navajo life and culture occurs when she compares the Bible to Navajo traditional narratives. Noting that Navajo women are discouraged from holding the highest office in the Navajo Nation, the presidency, Shepardson asserted, "I contend that neither of these sacred stories can do anything but lower the status of Navajo and Christian women."[37] Shepardson's contention is enmeshed in white feminists' beliefs about the nature of power and the meaning of equality, ignoring Navajo beliefs in the validity of these sacred narratives. Shepardson's conclusions raise questions about the ability of cultural outsiders to produce and translate adequately the epistemic values of other cultures.

Recent studies insist on the inevitability of the decline of Navajo women's status although they continue to acknowledge that Navajo women continue to be held in high regard among their people.[38] Contemporary studies also acknowledge changes in Navajo women's lives as they move across boundaries, including reservation lines and economic divides.[39] One study by Joanne McCloskey examined the responses of three generations of Navajo women to imposed changes brought about by a shifting economy that forced Navajos to depend on the federal government and federal Indian policy.[40] Since the beginning of the reservation period, Navajo women have faced extreme hardships that include chronic unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, and changing marriage and childbearing patterns. Women met these hardships by looking to cultural values highlighting an egalitarianism that promotes equality between men and women, matrilineality that traces descent through mothers, and a pronatal attitude toward children. Although the livestock reduction of the 1930s, the Navajo-Hopi Long Range Rehabilitation Act of the 1950s, and the implementation of the Navajo Family Planning Program in the 1970s brought directed change, women from all three generations developed strategies based on a culturally meaningful system of values with roots in traditional narratives. Navajo women expected to be significant contributors to their family's economic and social well being. They rely on traditional values that hold motherhood, extended families, and egalitarianism to be worthwhile. Navajo women have retained an authoritative place in their society.

ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND CHANGING WOMAN

While some scholars point to legislation such as the 1950 Navajo-Hopi Long Range Rehabilitation Act to explain the reemergence of women's positions of authority beginning in the 1950s, others look to traditional images of Navajo women, particularly those reflected in creation narratives, for answers.

Navajo women's status is reflected in the cosmological realm, especially as Navajos continue to revere Changing Woman, the most benevolent of the Holy People. Further, Navajo traditional stories are replete with images of

model female and male behavior, which is often referred to as complementarity, the notion that gender roles are different, but equal and necessary.[41] Charlotte Frisbie's *Kinaaldá: A Study of the Navaho Girl's Puberty Ceremony*, a classic ethnographic text, describes the four-day ritual that Navajos perform for their young women who have reached womanhood.[42] The Kinaaldá, a ceremony that recognizes and celebrates the reproductive and regenerative powers of women, is based on the traditional stories of Changing Woman, who grew to womanhood in four days or years (versions vary), experienced her first menses, and had a ceremony performed in honor of her new status. The ritual emphasizes behavior and actions that will mold the young woman into the ideal Navajo woman and mother. Culminating on the third day as the woman's matrilineal kin, notably women, mix a huge corn cake batter and then place it into a pit in the ground for overnight baking, the Kinaaldá ends with the performance of the Blessingway on the final night. Guests are fed and presented with portions of the corn cake.

Thirty years after Frisbie's initial study, the Kinaaldá retains its vitality and remains one of the most frequently performed Navajo ceremonies.[43] Even as other ceremonies have changed or are performed with less frequency, the Kinaaldá has kept its structure and function. As Frisbie noted: "Perhaps an explanation lies in the basic cultural perceptions of female pubescence and its worth, and perhaps this attitudinal difference itself, actually protects the ceremony and helps ensure its enduring viability."[44] By taking Frisbie's insight and looking for places where women's roles have exhibited continuity with the past, we might better understand how Navajo women have retained a measure of authority and autonomy.[45]

Gary Witherspoon's 1975 *Navajo Kinship and Marriage* offered additional insight into the primacy of women's roles within Navajo social organization and particularly the significance of matrilineal kinship.[46] The mother-child relationship is central to Navajo beliefs and values. For Navajos, the concept of motherhood is central: "Mother and child are bound together by the most intense, the most diffuse, and the most enduring solidarity to be found in Navajo culture."[47] Rooted in the traditional narratives, women's roles as mothers allow them to assert an authoritative position.

Frisbie's and Witherspoon's works provide valuable ethnographic information and remain some of the best sources in the field. By placing their findings in historical context, we may continue to investigate questions about how traditional gender roles inform contemporary ones. In 1981, Bruce Lincoln published an alternative interpretation of the Kinaaldá.[48] At best, his study, which positions the Navajo puberty ceremony as simply a ritual designed to bind Navajo women to the inferior domestic sphere, is a good example of how reliance on Western paradigms such as Marxism and white feminism can lead one astray.

NAVAJO WOMEN IN THE EARLY SOUTHWEST

Studies appearing in the 1980s and 1990s illuminated Navajo women's experiences before the arrival of Europeans and during the early colonial periods.

These studies historicized Navajo women's experiences and outlined cultural exchanges for the different peoples who lived in the Southwest. For example, Cheryl Foote and Sandra Schackel described Navajo women's roles with attention to the impact of the Spanish invasion.[49] David Brugge and James Brooks examined the trade in captives during the Spanish and Mexican occupations of New Mexico.[50] Carol Sparks deconstructed images of Navajo women to reveal American colonial practices and Western biases.[51]

Southwestern Native women's roles changed with the Spanish invasion, beginning in 1548 when the Native population decreased and the nature of relationships among tribal groups shifted. Navajos remained outside Spanish rule and were affected by Pueblo peoples who sought refuge with them as the Spanish tried to control their communities and appropriate their labor. Pueblo women, living with Navajos and often intermarrying with them, brought their knowledge of weaving, agriculture, and animal husbandry. Navajo women were responsible for the production of food and care of the children and the introduction of sheep and weaving added to women's tasks. However, Navajo women became so adept at weaving that their textiles were sought after as valuable trade items.

Today, Navajo women continue to be accomplished weavers. Foote and Schackel's study is an early attempt to bring Navajo women into history. While they referred to the sexual nature of the relationships between the Spanish and the Natives, they failed to address one of the major venues in which interactions between cultures occurred: the slave trade. The nineteenth-century wars between the Navajos and the Americans were the result of the slave trade, in which Navajos were primary targets.[52] While David Brugge's examination of colonial New Mexican Catholic church records revealed extensive slave raiding in the Southwest, James Brooks's study of the slave trade outlined the ways in which women, considered a valuable commodity, sometimes moved from powerlessness to positions of authority and stability in their new societies. Further, women were also at the heart of new-identity formation. In colonial Southwest societies, captive women forged new relationships within the limits set by their captors and achieved a measure of security and comfort for themselves and their descendants. Sexuality and reproduction were important components of establishing new social relationships.

Women, including Navajos, worked within the constraints set by their captors, sometimes married their captors, and provided security for their children. Navajos readily adopted captives and refugees into their societies, including Pueblos, Spaniards, and Mexicans. The Mexican clan of the Navajos is an example of how Mexican slaves were incorporated into Navajo social organization.[53] When Mexican women married Navajo men, their children took on their mother's identity, and thus, a new clan emerged in Navajo society. As Brugge and Brooks's study indicates, cultural identities are not simple matters of biology. Their studies challenge Western-constructed categories that collapse differences of ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and historical experiences into a single identity. The process by which Navajos adopted new members into their society contrasts sharply with Indian policy

that has created categories where an Indian's blood quantum is measured in fractions.[54] Further, an examination of relationships across cultures during the colonial period in the Southwest reveals that people not only fought with each other, but also interacted in more peaceful ways as well. It has served the colonial project of domination to create hierarchies that construct and separate "white" and "colored" races and also deny that people across all cultures interacted in ways other than through hostility and conflict.

Carol Sparks examined references to Navajo women in early trader and explorer accounts in order to understand how Navajo women were portrayed. Beginning with the occupation of the Southwest by Americans and ending with the conquest of Navajos (1821 to 1870), American characterizations of Navajo women mirrored the evolving colonialist relationship that Americans had with Navajos. Early American images of Navajo women portrayed them favorably; however, as Americans wrested the Southwest from Mexico in 1848 and Anglo settlers spilled into the area and coveted Navajo grazing lands, the images shifted negatively. As Americans competed for land and resources with Navajos, Navajo women were increasingly described as "squaw-drudges" and harridans. Their visibility in the public arena and exhibition of autonomy puzzled patriarchal Americans even as they tried to understand Navajo women in categories they associated with Indian women. Depictions of Navajo women shifted as American relationships with the tribe shifted. When Americans saw the Mexicans as the enemy, they portrayed Navajos favorably. Once they had defeated the Mexicans and claimed the Southwest as their territory, they saw Navajos as the new enemies.[55] Although it is difficult to ascertain the extent of their autonomy, reading the signs left by Navajo women indicates that they cannot be defined as less than actors in their own histories. Studies on the colonial Southwest and Navajo women deserve more inquiry.

SCHOLARS MEET SPIDER WOMAN

In 1999 Kathleen Howard published an article on the Navajo weaver Elle of Ganado who spent many years, between 1903 and 1923, working as an artist-demonstrator for the Fred Harvey Company. As a weaver for the Harvey Company, Elle, the "most recognizable icon" of the Southwest, is representative of how most people know Navajos and especially Navajo women.[56] The Navajo weaver is one of the most recognized southwestern figures; however, their textiles are better known, because, until fairly recently, attention centered on the textiles themselves, which were instrumental in the promotion of the Southwest as a tourist attraction that began in the late nineteenth century. However, recent reexaminations of Navajo women's roles as weavers and the significance of weaving are challenging conventional notions of domesticity and economics, of the nature of women's knowledge, and of women and social organization. As Kathy M'Closkey has asserted, Western definitions of the meaning of weaving have airbrushed weavers' economic contributions from history and have also denied their cultural value.[57]

Gladys Reichard's 1930s studies of weaving have been termed innovative because her methodology privileged women's experiences and her interactive

data-gathering system encouraged a holistic understanding of Navajo culture.[58] However, according to scholars such as Kathy M'Closkey, Roseann Willink, Paul Zolbrod, and Ann Helund, Reichard's work also disenfranchised Navajo weavers in several ways.[59] Western definitions, categorizations, and classifications of weaving have rendered invisible Navajo perspectives of weaving. Because weaving was primarily a woman's labor, it was considered a secular activity, with little or no sacred dimensions. Further, because women's work was considered subordinate to men's labor, weaving has been seen as making little or no economic contribution to family income or well-being. Today, scholars recognize that weaving was crucial to the economic survival of Navajo families, even as they became more impoverished, and that these textiles have deep cultural, even sacred, meaning.

Kathy M'Closkey questioned popular ideas about the role of traders in "Marketing Multiple Myths: The Hidden History of Navajo Weaving." According to popular beliefs, traders revitalized the weaving tradition by creating a national market, often dictating patterns that weavers used. Navajo women wove rugs to provide "pin money" for themselves, and textiles had little if any spiritual or symbolically significant meaning.[60] Examining traders' records, particularly those of J. L. Hubbell, the "'dean' of Navajo traders" from 1880 to 1930, M'Closkey discovered that Navajo women's textiles provided the bulk of many traders' profits, particularly after 1900.[61] No matter how little or how much money or trade women asked for their textiles, it was always too much.[62] Navajo women literally subsidized Hubbell's lifestyle as they became more impoverished and their textiles flooded the market.[63]

M'Closkey expanded her examination of weaving in "'Part-time for Pin Money': The Legacy of Navajo Women's Craft Production" by demonstrating how Navajos' sustained poverty is directly connected to globalization and free trade.[64] As M'Closkey has noted, although Navajo women produced prodigious volumes of profitable weaving beginning in the 1900s, the Navajo women and their families did not see the profits. While traders reaped the benefits, Navajo women experienced further "double jeopardy" when the market for historical textiles diverted interest from present-day Navajo weavings.[65] As collectors invest in historic Navajo textiles, contemporary rugs remain unsold. Further, copies of Navajo textiles from Guatemala, Peru, Hong Kong, and other places flood the market and further depress the demand for textiles woven by Navajo women. As M'Closkey observed, it is both puzzling and frustrating that even though Navajos are one of the most studied indigenous peoples in the United States, few investigators have interrogated the relationship among the history of weaving, how it benefited some traders and other non-Navajos, and why many Navajo families continue to live in poverty. M'Closkey also pointed out that Western categorizations of Navajo weaving—that it is part of the domestic realm and therefore economically insignificant, for example—have resulted in its dismissal as an important Navajo economic occupation.[66] M'Closkey's studies reconsider Navajo women's roles in history by challenging conventional notions about the relations between domesticity and economics, the nature of women's knowledge, and the role of women in the continuity of family and community.

Other studies have highlighted the significance of weaving to cultural survival and persistence and revealed their place in both artistic and sacred processes. First, Roseann Willink and Paul Zolbrod brought Navajo weavers from Crownpoint, New Mexico, and historical Navajo textiles (housed at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe) together to better understand the weavers' perspectives.[67] Upon listening to the Navajo weavers' viewpoints on the significance of these historical textiles, as well as on the weaving process itself, Willink and Zolbrod discovered that the process of weaving is associated with a rich oral tradition replete with symbolic and sacred meaning. Significantly, in revealing this connection, the Navajo weavers, many of whom belong to the oldest living generation, challenged assumptions about the nature of Native and Navajo women's knowledge, which has largely been categorized as domestic and, therefore, secular.

Finally, indicative of a time when research treating Natives as mere objects of study are increasingly scrutinized, Willink and Zolbrod shared equal authorship. Although many white researchers have cultivated relationships with Navajos and are mindful that their research and publications would not be possible without collaboration, there are still issues about power and the production of knowledge and its translation, especially as non-Navajo scholars continue to dominate Navajo studies. What is refreshing to me, as a Navajo scholar, is that Willink, a linguistics professor, and Zolbrod, a retired English professor, are perhaps more able to engage in a collaborative project because they both have the ability to research and publish. Their educational backgrounds equalize their partnership in ways that are not possible when white scholars retain authority because they have the education and access to the world of publications.

Both Kathy M'Closkey and Ann Hedlund enlarged the parameters of the study of Navajo weavers by delineating the significance of weaving to Navajo cultural survival, specifically how it maintains Navajo notions of K'e, concepts of ideal kin relationships, and how Navajo grandmothers as weavers reinforce social and economic relationships.[68] M'Closkey asked the question, "Given the magnitude and extent of production (and exploitation), why would Navajo women continue to weave?"[69] Weaving remains a significant activity because it defines meaningful social relationships among members of the community and between the community and the cosmos, and because it has roots in traditional narratives. Importantly, Navajo women are instrumental in the patterns of social relations. As weavers, Navajo grandmothers are respected and serve as the baseline from which culturally appropriate behavior is assessed. Navajo grandmothers, as such, remain productive members of their households.

An interest in Navajo women and their weaving has generated studies that are complicating simplistic portrayals of Navajo women. If these works are an indication of the trends in Navajo studies, then we might expect not only the dismantling of stereotypical images of Navajos but also more accurate representations of the Navajo past.

Finally, Carolyn Niethammer's *I'll Go and Do More: Annie Dodge Wauneka, Navajo Leader and Activist* is one of the latest and more significant additions to Navajo women studies.[70] Niethammer's biography chronicles the public life of

one of the best-known Navajo women. Born in 1910 to a mother who was the reluctant wife of Navajo leader and business man Chee Dodge, Wauneka was taken as an infant from her mother, who had returned to her maternal kin, to live with her father. Annie Dodge's early life was unusual for a Navajo woman in that her father lived like a financially well-off white man. She was introduced to politics when she traveled with her father to chapter meetings and listened to discussions that lasted late into the night. This introduction to public life helped her become the second Navajo woman elected to the tribal council, on which she served numerous terms. By the time of her death in 1997, Annie Dodge Wauneka was a nationally known Navajo leader who had won many awards and honorary doctorates, particularly for her work in eradicating tuberculosis and other diseases that plagued Navajos during the early twentieth century. Relying on grassroots approaches to problem-solving, Annie Wauneka became a powerbroker who was as comfortable in hogans as she was in the tribal council chamber and Washington, D.C., offices.

Carolyn Niethammer's biography focuses on Wauneka's public life. Very little is mentioned about her private life, although Niethammer notes that Annie's husband, George, with family and kin, cared for their children. However, Niethammer raises interesting questions about the intersection of Western notions of father-daughter relationships and the traditional respect and authority accorded to Navajo women in their society. In many ways, Niethammer paints Annie Dodge Wauneka as a product of both societies: a woman who yearned for the love and respect of her father and a Navajo woman who used the powerful societal position of mother and grandmother to move from grassroots organizer to powerbroker. Finally, Annie Dodge Wauneka's life story demonstrates the power and authority that Navajo women claim as mothers. In Navajo, the definition of mother expands into the economic, public, and political realms and Wauneka's story illustrates this clearly. As Wauneka's grandson, Milton Bluehouse Jr., reminisced, "I didn't know she was famous until about my senior year in school. . . . I figured that she was just my grandmother. I thought, grandmothers do these things. They jump in their trucks and go every where."[71]

NAVAJO WOMEN WRITING THEMSELVES

Navajo women have always been a powerful presence in Navajo life. In 1848, peace chief Narbona's wife questioned the American invasion of Dinétah. In 1866, Juanita remained alongside her husband, Manuelito, when he surrendered to American troops after they were starved into submission. In the 1930s, Annie Dodge Wauneka almost single-handedly eradicated diseases such as tuberculosis from the Navajo Reservation.[72] In contemporary times, Roberta Blackgoat and other women of Big Mountain continue to resist relocation from their homelands while LeNora Fulton became the first Navajo woman to run for president of the Navajo Nation. The first Navajo surgeon, Lori Arviso Alvord, struggled to become part of the medical community while retaining her commitment to the integration of traditional Navajo healing methods with medical knowledge.[73]

Today Native peoples grapple with chronic unemployment, domestic violence, and environmental degradation, among other issues. Native women struggle with the legacy of paternalistic structures imposed upon Native political, economic, and social organization that attempted to undermine Native women's authority in their societies. The relationships between Native men and women have raised questions about the extent of sexism as a result of colonialism.[74] However, Annette Jaimes asserted that Native women often find it more important to address the larger issues of colonialism and that white feminism is yet another form of cultural imperialism.[75] As Navajo writer Laura Tohe noted, "When Indian women joined the feminist dialogue in the 1970s, we found that equality for women was generally directed toward white women's issues."[76] Like Native women in other parts of the world, Navajo women actively work on behalf of their families and communities.

In 1982, the *American Indian Quarterly* published a bibliography of publications by Navajo women, the bulk of which focused on Navajo language texts.[77] Navajo women remain committed to reclaiming not only the language but also traditional culture and history. Interested in illuminating Navajo experiences, they experiment with genres such as autobiography, oral history, as well as poetry and prose. They subvert traditional notions of genres and undermine linguistic norms by using a mixture of English, Navajo, and Navajo-English. As feminist theorist Caren Kaplan has suggested, non-Western writers challenge and resist Western assumptions about the meaning of writings and acceptable forms:

> Out-law genres renegotiate the relationship between personal identity and the world, between personal and social history. Here, narrative inventions are tied to a struggle for cultural survival rather than purely aesthetic experimentation or individual expression.[78]

Navajo women are interested in reclaiming Navajo culture and history, grappling with issues of Navajo identity, and addressing issues they face today.

In 1970, Ethelou Yazzie published a Navajo history text, which was a retelling of the creation narratives.[79] That Yazzie named her version of the narratives a "history" rather than a "myth" or "story" is indicative of Navajo challenges to non-Navajo versions of the tribe's past. Navajos arrived on the earth's surface after a journey through several worlds. Today, reexaminations of creation narratives have led to configurations in which "myth" and "history" are manifestations of different historical consciousnesses, and thus, multiple perspectives of the past.[80] Such studies affirmed Native peoples' stories about their origins and challenged conventional American histories that privilege white takeover of Indian lands.

Ruth Roessel, a Navajo educator and author of *Women in Navajo Society*, placed Navajo women at the center of her society, in contrast to other scholars who predicted a decline in Navajo women's formerly high status.[81] A blend of genres, including ethnography, autobiography, and oral history, *Women in Navajo Society* explains women's roles as mothers, wives, and sisters, detailing how the significance of these roles are rooted in traditional narratives.

While Roessel placed Navajo women in central positions, she also reminded Navajo women that they must continually work to keep their marriages vital: "We, as Navajo women, often drive our husbands either out of the home or to the bottle because we do not understand and love them and do not make them No. 1 in our lives."[82] Privileging the relationship between husbands and wives seems to run counter to values in a society that highlights matrilineal kinship. Blending Navajo tradition and Anglo feminist assertions about the proper relationship between men and women, Roessel echoed some white feminists' arguments that women have different, but valuable, moral sensibilities. As Nancy Woloch observed, "A trend within feminism since the early 1970s, cultural feminism affirmed and championed women's unique nature and qualities."[83]

Ruth Roessel's commitment to include Navajo perspectives in the written record is evident in her collaboration with Broderick Johnson, a non-Navajo, published as *Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period* and *Livestock Reduction: A National Disgrace.*[84] These oral histories focus on two of the most catastrophic events leading to Navajo poverty and dependency on the US government. In contrast to other studies on the Long Walk and livestock reduction that highlighted US government policy and American military actions, Roessel and Johnson's interviews illuminated Navajo responses. The interviews reflect the ways stories are often told: time is collapsed as interviewees move between the past and present. Readers must acquire a background in Navajo history and culture to fully understand the stories. While there are no analyses of these two oral histories, they indicate that women often acted decisively and physically resisted slavery and the ranger riders who enforced government regulations for livestock reduction.

Perhaps one of the most compelling oral histories, and my personal favorite, Tiana Bighorse's *Bighorse the Warrior* has provided much spirited discussion among my students, for it not only challenges our ideas about writers and genres, but also questions our notions about the meaning of the Navajo past.[85] *Bighorse the Warrior*, a biography of Bighorse's father, Gus Bighorse, is a testimony not only to the brutal treatment of Navajos by the United States from 1863 to 1868, but also to the spirit of Navajo resistance and survival.

Gus Bighorse's life spanned portions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Witnessing the war and subsequent imprisonment of Navajos and becoming accustomed to life on the reservation after 1868, Bighorse told his stories to his daughter as a way to heal and to remind coming generations of Navajo of the sacrifices of their ancestors. Vivid with images of violence and brutality, Bighorse's stories relay how many Navajos were starved into submission while others sought refuge in the northern parts of Dinétah. Over 8,000 Navajos endured harsh winters and died of starvation and disease at the prison camp. Bighorse's stories impressed upon a young Tiana the meaning of the word *warrior*. To be a warrior means to be compassionate and loving and to defend Dinétah. Tiana's goal, to impress upon the present and future generations of Navajos the courage of their ancestors, is a lesson that many of my students have taken to heart. *Bighorse the Warrior* demonstrates the central place of storytelling in resistance and spiritual revitalization.

Tiana Bighorse's primary language is Navajo but she is determined to use English to relay the importance of cultural traditions and history to the coming generations of Navajos. As a Navajo speaker, Tiana Bighorse wrote her oral history in a form that might be called Navajo-English, or "ungrammatical." In her introduction, Bighorse's editor, Noël Bennett wondered if she should edit the writing to conform to standard English usage. If she does, is the import of the meaning lost? She finally resolved to leave Tiana's voice unmodified. The resulting publication offers a rare opportunity to listen to a powerful voice that in no uncertain terms lets the reader know that America's Indian policy has been brutal and serves to make readers ponder America's continuing refusal to acknowledge its colonial past.

Largely edited by non-Navajos, Navajo women's autobiographies illustrate their experiences, particularly the way their lives have been shaped by US Indian policies. In contrast to the ways in which other women fashion their autobiographies, Navajo women, like many other American Indian women, define themselves in relation to land, tribe, community, and family.[86] Further, the theme of loss runs throughout these autobiographies, although there is a difference between those by Native women who live in their Native communities and those outside Native communities. According to Hertha Wong:

> More than genetic inheritance or cultural practice, Native American identity, for many of the autobiographers, demands an act of will and creativity; an act or reinterpretation and reclamation to assert a lost or threatened but felt relationality. Memory and relationship to place are central to this process.[87]

The sense of loss can be associated with dispossession and destruction of land, broken lineages, and lack of access to the histories and stories of their own people.[88] Autobiographies, then, become tools to reaffirm a sense of community with one's own people or a sense of pan-Indianism. They are yet another method by which Native/Navajo women have resisted imposed concepts of what it means to be Native/Navajo.

One early autobiography, Irene Stewart's *A Voice in Her Tribe: A Navajo Woman's Own Story*, was written under the direction of anthropologist Mary Shepardson and edited by Doris Dawdy.[89] In the 1920s, under the direction of the US government, a Navajo tribal government was created. Although this tribal government was initially created to facilitate the extraction of oil discovered on the Navajo Reservation, by the 1950s Navajos were actively defining tribal government for themselves.[90] While Navajo men dominated the political scene, Navajo women struggled to make their voices heard. Irene Stewart was the third woman, after Annie Wauneka, to run for a tribal delegate position. Although she tried several times for a council position and failed, she worked on behalf of her community as a chapter secretary. Relaying stories about the changes in her life as a result of exposure to American education and Christianity, Stewart felt that her Western education had enabled her to live in a world increasingly dominated by American values.

Stewart's narrative dwells on her efforts to participate in the Navajo tribal government. Relaying her efforts to claim a seat on the tribal council on which Anna Wauneka was the only woman delegate, Stewart noted the strong voices, male and female, that insisted Navajo women should not seek the highest leadership position in the nation. According to these people, the creation narratives hold that should a woman ever hold the highest leadership position in the nation, Navajos will experience chaos. While Stewart was no doubt concerned about the question of women and leadership, it should be noted that Shepardson's views on feminism and gender equality have shaped Stewart's life story. As I have noted elsewhere, Shepardson is of the opinion that creation stories, like the Bible and the Navajo narratives, can only oppress women and keep them subordinate to the patriarchy. Autobiographies have been used to validate and endorse anthropologists' interpretations of Native life as well as to further their own hidden agendas. Importantly, scholars are beginning to recognize the consequences of colonialism.[91] Although Navajos may have such views about women's roles in political life, it should be noted that traditional political structures were nonhierarchical and organization was based on kin-related bands. While men were appointed leaders in these bands, they were chosen by their abilities that included knowledge and their abilities to act on behalf of the people. Women were part of the decision-making process. It must be kept in mind that the concept of Navajo nationalism is a contemporary one and that the application of creation narratives to interpret the meaning of nation and women's roles in the political body needs to be handled critically.

Contemporary autobiographies like Yvette Melanson's *Looking For Lost Bird: A Jewish Woman Discovers Her Navajo Roots* and Lori Arviso Alvord's *The Silver Bear and the Scalpel* were written with the assistance of journalists.[92] It would be interesting to compare autobiographies that have been shaped and edited by anthropologists and journalists, especially as journalists seem to be writing American Indian nonfiction today.[93] Melanson's and Arviso Alvord's autobiographies illustrate many of the issues that other Native women face today. They convey a sense of what it means to be a modern Navajo woman.

In the 1950s, Yvette Melanson and her twin brother were kidnapped from the Indian Health Services hospital in Winslow, Arizona. After giving birth to the twins, their mother took them to the Winslow hospital because one of the twins was sick. Told by the hospital staff to leave her infants in their care and return the following week, Carrie Yazzie went home. When she returned to the hospital as instructed, her infants had disappeared. Yvette Melanson's story illustrates the theft of Native American children who were subsequently put up for adoption. Whites justified the theft of Indian children by saying that reservation life was harsh and adoption would provide these children with better lives. Unaware of her Navajo background for more than forty years, Melanson's search for her natural parents led her to the Southwest. Published during a period when Native Americans were working to reform adoption procedures for Indian children, Melanson's story explores issues of Indian identity and cross-cultural interaction.

Lori Arviso Alvord touches upon issues of Navajo identity differently than Melanson. Alvord, a Navajo woman of mixed-blood descent, was raised on the Navajo Reservation. Against a backdrop that reveals the often harsh reality of reservation life—alcoholism, chronic unemployment, poor education, and violence—Alvord detailed how she became the Navajo nation's first surgeon. While she focused on integrating Navajo traditional healing methods with Western medical knowledge, other issues such as tension about Navajo identity surface. As Jennie Joe noted in a recent review, Alvord's story is also one of marginalization.[94] However, Native women have experienced a cultural resilience and sense of power in the face of catastrophic social, economic, and political changes. Contemporary Native women see themselves as the link between the past and the future even though different experiences and generations may separate them. This link, a "single spiritual current more ancient than tribal memory or degree of blood," is demonstrated by a tenacious attachment to and an appreciation for tribal heritage.[95] This sense of being a link between the past and present is evident in both Melanson's and Alvord's autobiographies.

Another addition to the literature on Navajo women, Rose Mitchell's autobiography *Tall Woman: The Life Story of Rose Mitchell, A Navajo Woman, c. 1874–1977*, was written and edited by Charlotte Frisbie. Tall Woman provides an insider perspective on women's places in Navajo society. Beginning with narratives about her grandmother who survived the Long Walk and Bosque Redondo, Mitchell relays the reestablishment of Navajo life in Dinétah. Her narrative illuminates the nature of women's knowledge, including preparing meals, cleaning the hogan, caring for the livestock, and instructing children. Rooted in traditional practices, Mitchell gives readers access to the significance of ceremony and ritual in daily Navajo life. Mitchell ends her life story with a chapter directed at her grandchildren. She hopes that they will learn about Navajo values and take them to heart. Though it might appear that Navajo women, because they were confined to the home, did not wield much influence, Mitchell's account demonstrates otherwise. In many ways, Mitchell was no less powerful than Annie Dodge Wauneka.

As writer and editor of *Tall Woman*, Charlotte Frisbie directed much of its creation. *Tall Woman* follows Frank Mitchell's *Navajo Blessingway Singer: The Autobiography of Frank Mitchell, 1881–1967*, which was edited by Frisbie and David P. McAllester.[96] In her introduction to Tall Woman, Frisbie recounts the process by which she came to write and publish Rose Mitchell's life story. It is an impressive process that took years of interviewing, transcribing, and traveling across reservation roads to consult with the children and grandchildren of Rose Mitchell. Frisbie lets her readers know that her collaboration with Rose Mitchell and her family was one that attempted to equalize the relationship as much as possible.

Fairly recently, several Navajo women have published creative nonfiction.[97] Luci Tapahonso is perhaps the best known and loved. Author of several volumes of poetry, prose, and children's literature, including *A Breeze Swept Through* and *Sáanii Dahataał: The Women Are Singing*, Tapahonso elucidates the meaning of being Navajo in the late twentieth century.[98] As she related during

an interview, "The main thing you have to remember is that you're Navajo."[99] Transcending the boundaries of cultures and appealing to Navajos and non-Navajos, Tapahonso acknowledges the effects of colonialism but characterizes the ways we have retained many of the beliefs and values that sustained our ancestors. Her work, reaffirming the significance of women in Navajo life and culture, demonstrates that Navajo women continue to rely on traditional narratives to inform and shape their lives.

Tapahonso presents complicated portrayals of women struggling to retain cultural integrity. For example, women are presented in situations that underscore women's struggles. In "Raisin Eyes," a Navajo woman laments her attraction to Navajo men who are more interested in rodeos than in commitment. In "Yes, It Was My Grandmother," the narrator praises her horse-taming grandmother who gave her the spirit to pursue her own dreams outside male-female relationships that are deemed the most important.[100] As Rebecca Tsosie has noted of non-Indian categorizations of Natives, "The primary factor in perceptions of both European women and Indian women became their definition in terms of their relationships with males."[101] Navajo social organization, with its focus on matrilineality, continues to confuse non-Navajos who privilege males and can only interpret women's experiences in relation to the patriarch.

Asked about her rhetorical strategies for writing stories and poems, Tapahonso has explained that she often works in Navajo and then translates into English.[102] As a Navajo woman who understands my language, I often find myself retranslating the stories and poems back into Navajo. Tapahonso has the gift of retaining elements of the Navajo language and form. Like many other Navajo readers, I am restored by Tapahonso's stories. They remind me of what is important about being a Navajo woman.

CONCLUSION

Until fairly recently, writings on Native women reflected an ideology that ascribed racial and cultural inferiority to American Indian women. Because European and then American society relegated women to a subordinate position in relation to men, many scholars assumed that Native women also occupied this status in their societies. Glimpses of Navajo women in historical records belie the simplistic portrayals of Native women as second class citizens. A re-reevaluation of these written accounts demonstrates that Navajo women had and continue to have voices in economic, political, and social realms. Navajo women continue to find significant their roles as mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters. As grandmothers, mothers, and daughters, Navajo women claim authority, dictating, in many cases, land use. They retain primary care of children and seek formal education for the purpose of sustaining family and community. As Laura Tohe has noted, Navajo women's stories are not about "'those poor' Indian women who were assimilated, colonized, Christianized, or victimized." These tales are about "how these women cling to the roots of their female lineage despite the many institutional forces imposed on Indian communities and how they continue to

survive despite five hundred years of colonialism."[103] Navajo women writers celebrate the continuity of Navajo life and culture. As Annette Jaimes Guerrero has declared, "The Native North American woman has a long and life-sustaining legacy of respect and empowerment among her own people, in her traditional indigenous societies."[104]

NOTES

1. Captain E. Butler, Fifth Infantry, USA, to Brevet Major Cyrus H. DeForrest, July 29, 1866, Frank McNitt Collection, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico (quoted in *Santa Fe Gazette*, August 4, 1866).

2. Washington Matthews, comp. and trans., *Navaho Legends* (Boston: American Folklore Society, 1897). See also Katherine Halpern Spencer and Susan Brown McGreevy, eds., *Washington Matthews: Studies of Navajo Culture, 1880–1894* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

3. Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1996).

4. See William H. Lyon, "The Navajo Histories: The Surveys of the Navajo Past," *New Mexico Historical Review* (July 1993): 247–268. Lyon lists Frank Reeve's Navajo histories in *The New Mexico Historical Review* in the 1940s and 1950s.

5. Glenda Riley, "The Historiography of American Indian and Other Western Women," in *Rethinking American Indian History*, ed. Donald L. Fixico (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 43–70.

6. Karen Sacks, "Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production, and Private Property," in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, eds. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 207–222.

7. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, "Woman, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, eds. Rosaldo and Lamphere, 17–42.

8. Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, eds. Rosaldo and Lamphere, 67–87.

9. Sherry B. Ortner, "The Problem of 'Women' as an Analytic Category," in *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 116–138; and Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 116–138.

10. Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine, *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women* (New York: University Press of America, 1983); and Eleanor Leacock and Mona Etienne, eds., *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives* (Brooklyn: Praeger Publishers, 1980).

11. Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," in *Native American Voices: A Reader*, eds. Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot (New York: Longman, 1998), 182–192; id., "Review Essay: Native American Women," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 6 (Winter 1980): 248–267; and Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (1988): 61–88.

12. Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700–1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); id., "Writing the Ethnohistory of Native Women," in *Rethinking American Indian History*, ed. Donald L. Fixico (Albuquerque:

University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 73–86; and id., "Women, Men and American Indian Policy: The Cherokee Response to 'Civilization,'" in *Negotiators of Change,* ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 1995), 90–114.

13. Karen Anderson, *Changing Woman: A History of Racial Ethnic Women in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

14. Green, "Review Essay."

15. M. Annette Jaimes with Theresa Halsey, "American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary America," in *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance,* ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 311–344.

16. Deborah Gordon, "Among Women: Gender and Ethnographic Authority of the Southwest, 1930–1980," in *Hidden Scholar: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest,* ed. Nancy J. Parezo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 132.

17. See William H. Lyon, "Gladys Reichard at the Frontiers of Navajo Culture," *American Indian Quarterly* 8 (Spring 1989): 137–163; Louise Lamphere, "Gladys Reichard among the Navajo," in *Hidden Scholars: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest,* ed. Nancy Parezo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 157–181; Gordon, "Among Women," 129–145; Barbara A. Babcock and Nancy J. Parezo, *Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest, 1880–1980: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).

18. Gladys A. Reichard, *Dezba: Woman of the Desert* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1939).

19. Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

20. Dorothea Cross Leighton and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Children of the People: The Navaho Individual and His Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947).

21. Dorothy C. Leighton, "As I Knew Them: Navajo Women in 1940," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 34–51.

22. Ibid., 37.

23. Ibid., 48.

24. In her study of the history of black women and slavery, Deborah Gray White argued that black women have found it difficult to escape the stereotypes of black womanhood, which include the Jezebel and the Mammy, black women whose sexuality and nurturing qualities are emphasized. White noted the emergence of a new image, Sapphire, the black woman who has emasculated the black man. According to White, Daniel Moynihan's 1965 study explained strong black women and black female-headed households by arguing that the experiences of slavery had created rigid black women who drove off their men (Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* [New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Ltd., 1985]).

25. Laila Shukry Hamamsy, "The Role of Women in a Changing Navajo Society," *American Anthropologist* 59 (1957): 101–111.

26. Charlotte J. Frisbie, "Traditional Navajo Women: Ethnographic and Life History Portrayals," *American Indian Quarterly* 9 (Spring/Summer 1982): 11–42; Dorothy C. Leighton, "As I Knew Them: Navajo Women in 1940," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 45–51; Ann Wright, "An Ethnography of the

Navajo Reproductive Cycle," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 52–70; Ann Metcalf, "Navajo Women in the City: Lessons From a Quarter-Century of Relocation," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 71–89; Joyce Griffen, "Life Is Harder Here: The Case of the Urban Navajo Woman," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 90–104; Christine Conte, "Ladies, Livestock, Land, and Lucre: Women's Networks and Social Status on the Western Navajo Reservation," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 125–148; Mary Shepardson, "The Status of Navajo Women," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 149–169; Nancy J. Parezo, "Sex Roles in Craft Production," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 125–148; and Jennie R. Joe, "Cultural Influences on Navajo Mothers With Disabled Children," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (Spring/Summer 1982): 170–190. See also Scott C. Russell and Mark B. McDonald, "The Economic Contributions of Women in a Rural Western Navajo Community," *American Indian Quarterly* 6, numbers 3 and 4 (Fall/Winter, 1982): 262–282.

27. Shepardson, "The Status of Navajo Women."

28. Ibid., 152.

29. Ibid., 167.

30. Frisbie, "Traditional Navajo Women"; Parezo, "Navajo Sandpaintings."

31. Frisbie, "Traditional Navajo Women," 140.

32. Parezo, "Navajo Sandpaintings."

33. Ibid., 140.

34. Mary Shepardson, "The Gender Status of Navajo Women," in *Women and Power in Native North America*, eds. Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 159–176.

35. Questions about representation and the politics of this representation have been directed toward the relationships between scholars and Native women. As scholars of color have pointed out, anthropologists and other academics have imposed Western values on other cultures, thereby distorting the realities of Native people's lives, cultures, and histories. Others, like Julie Cruikshank, point out that the past is culturally constructed and Native perspectives and uses of the past counter and challenge nationalist viewpoints that tend to glorify white expansion and settlement. See Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Julie Cruikshank, "Discovery of Gold on the Klondike: Perspectives from Oral Tradition," in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, eds. Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, Ltd., 1998), 433–459.

36. Shepardson, "The Gender Status of Navajo Women," 160.

37. Ibid., 172.

38. Robert McPherson, "From Dezba to 'John': The Changing Role of Navajo Women in Southeastern Utah," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 18, number 3 (1994): 187–209; Betty J. Harris, "Ethnicity and Gender in the Global Periphery: A Comparison of Basotho and Navajo Women," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 14, number 4 (1990): 15–38.

39. See also Christine Conte, "Changing Woman Meets Madonna: Navajo Women's Networks and Sex-Gender Values in Transition," in *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West*, eds. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 533–552.

40. Joanne McCloskey, "Three Generations of Navajo Women: Negotiating Life Course: Strategies in the Eastern Navajo Agency," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 22, number 2 (1998): 103–129.

41. I refer to Susan Kellogg's definition of *gender complementarity* (see Susan Kellogg, "Tenocha Mexica Women, 1500–1700," in *Indian Women In Early Mexico,* eds. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 125.

42. Charlotte Johnson Frisbie, *Kinaaldá: A Study of the Navaho Girl's Puberty Ceremony* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993).

43. Ibid., xvii.

44. Ibid.

45. Maureen Schwarz's recent study of the relationship between Navajo sense of self, or "personhood," and the Navajo philosophical system includes analysis of the continuing significance of the women's puberty rite ceremony for Navajo society (Maureen Trudelle Schwarz, *Molded in the Image of Changing Woman: Navajo Views on the Human Body and Personhood* [Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997]).

46. Gary Witherspoon, *Navajo Kinship and Marriage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

47. Ibid., 15.

48. Bruce Lincoln, *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Studies in Rituals of Women's Initiation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

49. Cheryl Foote and Sandra Schackel, "Indian Women of New Mexico, 1535–1680," in *Women of the New Mexican Frontier, 1846–1912,* eds. Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1990).

50. James F. Brooks, "'This Evil Extends Especially to the Feminine Sex': Captivity and Identity in New Mexico, 1700–1846," in *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West,* eds. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 97–121.

51. Sparks, "The Land Incarnate."

52. Frank McNitt, *Navajo Wars: Military Campaigns, Slave Raids, and Reprisals* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990). See also David M. Brugge, *Navajos in the Catholic Church Records of New Mexico, 1694–1875* (Tsaile, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1985).

53. Franciscan Fathers, *An Ethnologic Dictionary of the Navaho Language* (Saint Michaels, Arizona, 1910); Broderick Johnson and Ruth Roessel, eds., *Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period* (Tsaile, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1973).

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57. Kathy M'Closkey, "Marketing Multiple Myths: The Hidden History of Navajo Weaving," *Journal of The Southwest* 36 (Autumn 1994): 185–220.

58. Lessie Jo Frazier, "Genre, Methodology and Feminist Practice," *Critique of Anthropology* 13, number 4 (1993): 368.

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63. Ibid., 119. See also Martha Blue, *Indian Trader: The Life and Times of J. L. Hubbell* (Walnut, CA: Kiva Publishing, Inc., 2000).

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