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The Worlds of P'otsGnG: Geronima Cruz Montoya of San Juan Pueblo. By Jeanne Shutes and Jill Mellick

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matic expression for many important issues facing Native America. But her attempt demands attention, for where she makes mistakes she teaches others.

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The Worlds of P'otsúnú: Geronima Cruz Montoya of San Juan Pueblo. By Jeanne Shutes and Jill Mellick. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. 252 pages. \$37.50 cloth.

Receiving a review copy of Jeanne Shutes and Jill Mellick's *The Worlds of P'otsúnú: Geronima Cruz Montoya of San Juan Pueblo* filled me with anticipation. Literature about the experiences of Native American women in contemporary society is sketchy and rather uneven in quality. This book attempts to fill some of this vacuum by documenting the experiences of a prominent Pueblo woman. In addition, it tries to weave together the many threads that make up the tapestry of life of so many contemporary Indian women: family, community, religion, work, and activism. Based on extensive oral interviews over a period of eighteen years with Geronima Cruz Montoya—or Jerry, as the authors affectionately refer to her—and her family, the book utilizes a pivotal research tool in both Native American and women's history. Unfortunately, what results is not a tapestry of Jerry's life but a patchwork of experiences without a clear thread to hold them together.

True to feminist research methodologies, the authors open with a chapter on narrative content, context, and structure. They have done their reading, including such path-breaking works as Julie Cruikshank's *Life Lived Like a Story* and Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Woman Native Other*. What baffles this reader is why they chose to discuss this important methodological framework in an appendix at the very end of the book, almost as an afterthought. The introduction, instead, concentrates on legitimizing this book as Jerry's story. The authors make an analogy of Jerry's life as resembling her livingroom: an interweaving of cultures represented by artifacts from the various influences. "For us to organize Jerry's living room according to categories would seem as strange as our organizing this narrative. However, we did" (p. 1). And herein lies the fundamental dilemma for the authors. Despite their efforts to give voice to Jerry, they impose their con-

ceptual framework on her life. The life is Jerry's, but the book is not. Furthermore, in their efforts to present the story as Jerry's, the authors fail to provide a historical context for her life. Jerry's life thus remains isolated from the historical forces that shaped it.

Geronima Cruz Montoya is, indeed, a remarkable woman. Born in 1915, she grew up in the San Juan Pueblo, embedded in a mixture of Pueblo and Christian traditions. She attended Santa Fe Indian School, graduating in 1935 as valedictorian. At Santa Fe she also became acquainted with Dorothy Dunn, who was instrumental in the school's pilot program for arts and crafts and in developing the Southwest style of Indian painting. After graduation, Jerry joined Dunn's Studio as an apprentice teacher, the beginning of a teaching career that was to last for thirty-eight years.

Shutes and Mellick document Jerry's years at the Studio in three chapters at the core of the present volume. These pages offer a unique opportunity to explore issues related to the development of Indian art, relying on Dorothy Dunn's papers as well as personal insights from Jerry Cruz Montoya. Furthermore, her life as a professional woman at a time when there were few is a story worth telling. In her work, Jerry translated her spiritual and cultural values as well as her identity into action in accordance with what she defines as traditional, "a woman with conservative Pueblo, Catholic, and educational values" (pp. 83-84). The authors also point to important issues of definition in traditional Indian art, how labor at the school was divided between Indians and non-Indians, and what role the Indian service played in the program. Unfortunately, Shutes and Mellick do not pursue any of these issues at length, nor do they offer any explanation of the significance of these years in Indian education. Instead, they rely on extensive quotes from the Dunn papers and from their interviews with Jerry. The protagonist thus remains a figure isolated from her historical context.

It appears that Jerry's "traditionalism" eventually proved to be her undoing as an art instructor at Santa Fe. In 1962, the Indian School was terminated and replaced by the Institute of American Indian Arts with a philosophy radically different from the Studio's. Jerry left the Institute, but not the Indian service, the following year. Between 1963 and 1973, she worked as an adult education teacher in the northern pueblos. She also participated actively in the community and was instrumental in organizing a crafts cooperative in the San Juan Pueblo. Undoubtedly, the availability of federal funding under the Great Society influ-

enced these activities. The decade was also instrumental in creating the framework for Indian self-determination and the continued involvement of women in tribal affairs. It would be constructive if the authors explored these connections and placed Jerry's experiences within this historical context.

Retirement from the Indian service in 1973 allowed Jerry Cruz Montoya to concentrate on painting. The latter part of the book discusses her accomplishments as an artist, allowing the authors to return to the main theme that they never clearly articulate. *The Worlds of P'otsúnú* is really a book about one woman's life in Indian art. Jerry's story reveals fascinating aspects of the development of Indian art at the Santa Fe Indian School and the controversies surrounding these events. The black-and-white photographs and color plates help readers to visualize her career in art, although this reader would like to see more direct references in the text to the photographs. Unfortunately, the authors fail to pursue Jerry's experiences in this context. Their attempt to present a holistic glimpse into the life of Jerry Cruz Montoya does not work in the end. The occasional diversions into her spiritual life, her family, and her community involvement remain separate from the core of this book: her life in art.

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Woven by the Grandmothers: Nineteenth Century Navajo Textiles from the National Museum of the American Indian. Edited by Eulalie Bonar. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

The great irony in the study and marketing of Navajo weaving is that they have occurred almost exclusively from an Anglo point of view. Unquestioningly, whites have written the history of weaving according to their vision of the past, applied their nomenclature to it, and overestimated their influence on its development. The result is a detailed understanding of technique with little deep regard for process and none for meaning. Until now, virtually all published commentary has come from a narrow perspective that precludes any recognition of native thought.