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**Author**

Zolbrod, Paul G.

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participation in Maine state politics is outlined in the beginning of the book. This could easily be the starting point for a much more in-depth study of the phenomenon of tribal representatives in Maine, particularly as to their selection (internal and external roles families play in politics), effectiveness (particularly when contrasted with federal events and policy), and tenure (reasons they left or were reappointed).

In conclusion, *In the Shadow of the Eagle* is a worthwhile contribution to the field of American Indian studies, both as a diachronic study of state-tribal relations and as the perspective of one of the key Native actors in an important era of policy making. One of its great strengths is its conversational tone and accessibility, and this also may prove to be its weakness, as many contemporary scholars prefer more theory-laden or polemical works. Still, this should be used by instructors who teach classes on contemporary Native Americans, tribal-state relations, or even Maine state politics. The general public and undergraduates will benefit from this volume, as long as they possess a basic understanding of state government and tribes as contemporary political actors.

*J. Cedric Woods*

Independent Scholar

**Weaving Is Life: Navajo Weavings from the Edwin L. and Ruth E. Kennedy Southwest Native American Collection.** Edited by Jennifer McLerran. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006. 79 pages. \$19.95 paper.

It's good to see the addition of one more title to the long list of works devoted to Navajo weaving—in this case marking the 2005 opening of the Ohio University's Kennedy Museum semipermanent exhibit, *Weaving Is Life*. Only someone unfamiliar with the capacity of this Native art to remain dynamic yet faithful to its roots would question the publication of still another volume on the subject. No matter how much attention it receives, Navajo textiles remain forever compelling by combining wide-ranging innovation with a steadfast allegiance to a tradition uniquely their own, as this book demonstrates.

The exhibit features the work of four generations of Navajo weavers, including not only items drawn from the museum's existing collection but also newly commissioned works. Particularly because it reflects—in the words of the Kennedy Museum's curator of education, Sally Delgado—"first voices rather than museum interpretation," this volume demonstrates why the subject is virtually inexhaustible (56). In so doing it represents a recent but overdue trend of having the weavers speak for themselves rather than leaving commentary to traders, scholars, and curators removed from the sheep corral, the household loom, the weaver's immediate family, and, above all, the ceremonial hogan.

In that regard it resembles two 1996 publications focused on what weavers had to say: *Woven by the Grandmothers* (edited by Eulalie Bonar, Smithsonian Institution Press) and *Weaving a World* (Paul Zolbrod and Roseann Willink,

Museum of New Mexico Press). What distinguishes this volume from those two titles as well as its long list of predecessors, however, is the way it demonstrates how today's most cosmopolitan weavers innovate on a world stage while preserving their unique identity as Navajo artists.

Following a brief foreword by Museum Director Dareth A. Gerlach, the book features six sections—amply embellished by photos reproduced from the exhibit or taken in the field—and a bibliography: two essays by non-Navajo commentators, two by Navajo weavers represented in the exhibit, a capstone discussion by a museum educator, and nineteen color plates coupled with statements by their representative artists.

The first of the two opening essays by Kennedy Museum curator and the book's editor, Jennifer McLerran, transcends the more conventional notion of Navajo weaving as a consumer-oriented, decorative craft "providing evidence of the homemaker's good taste." From the Navajo perspective, however, it remains a deeply functional art, going clear back to its seventeenth-century roots. First used as clothing and for ceremonial purposes, it eventually became an item of trade so that families would be provided for. Less widely recognized, it "has remained an important form of cultural production" serving to preserve an ongoing collective identity largely ignored alike in marketplace and museum. Overlooked as well has been the individual weaver's self-awareness as the inheritor of a sacred tradition. Yet, as McLerran goes on to demonstrate by citing those whose work is represented in the color plates, weavers consider their work an expression of an inherited vision of the world and their place in it. She thus accepts individual pieces as personal texts, which is something traders, collectors, buyers, and even scholars neglected to do in the past.

In the second piece, art historian Janet Catherine Berlo explores "threads of continuity" in an ever-widening cosmopolitanism among contemporary weavers while at the same time holding fast to their abiding worldview. She reiterates McLerran's point that for all their apparent geographical remoteness, Navajos flourished adjacent to a crossroad of cultures during the centuries, opening so-called traditional weavers to outside influence from the beginning. Relative latecomers to the Southwest, Navajos have been an eclectic people, adopting sheep from the Spaniards, borrowing the standing loom from Pueblos, purchasing Germantown wool and aniline dyestuffs from trading posts, incorporating graphic motifs from sources ranging from the Pueblos and their Anasazi ancestors to dictates of traders and the taste of random buyers—all of which they absorbed seamlessly into an identity very much their own, defined by an abiding ceremonial practice, storytelling customs, and a distinct pastoral economy that distinguish them among Native American tribes.

Together, then, the two essays rightly articulate what generations of Navajo weavers have known but were never encouraged to assert because traders largely took credit for the development of a medium not really theirs. Thus, although today's weavers might employ motifs and abstraction introduced by artists elsewhere, at the same time they maintain symbols and designs together with ancient techniques of carding, spinning, dyeing, and

working the standing loom to safeguard their traditional identity. Even in the most seemingly modern and modernist abstraction evident in the work of contemporary weavers such as D. Y. Begay or Gloria Begay, a careful observer can recognize perceptions and design components rooted in a fixed Navajo way of seeing. Likewise careful scrutiny of a seemingly more standard work by weavers such as Irene Clark or Glenabah Hardy subtly reflects influence from the outside knowingly transmuted into something characteristically Navajo, as many of the featured color plates demonstrate, especially to the reader willing to examine them carefully.

In their two subsequent statements, Navajo weavers D. Y. Begay and Diane Taylor Beall articulate such invariables in their own words. In her testimony, "A Navajo Weaver's Perspective," the former explains that although her more innovative designs might be somewhat derivative, they still manifest her sensitivity to the "sacred design elements and images from the various healing ceremonies," along with her enduring embrace of kinship and clan structure in everyday life and the stories that underscore their importance. In her statement, "Where I'm From," meanwhile, Diane Beall asserts her awareness of an enduring lineage as a Navajo weaver whose identity is secured by the rising sun at the place of her birth where her umbilical cord is buried, even when she is far off where she can hear the sound of airplanes overhead and trucks passing from all directions.

In the volume's final statement by the Kennedy Museum's curator of education, Sally Delgado shows sensitivity hitherto rare among non-Native museum educators: openness to the personal stories of and a spirit of collaboration with those whose work is on display. "What do the weavers themselves want to convey?" she has learned to ask, whether related to the stories they have learned from their elders, their personal dedication as weavers, their labor in the sheep corral and at the loom, and their sense of place in Navajo country no matter whether they might be living or traveling on or away from the reservation. This openness, too, is a relatively new one, inasmuch as museum officials had until recently regarded Navajo textiles from the more limited perspective of outside "experts" who could tabulate the thickness of yarn, analyze dyes, classify styles by their own system, and appraise market value, but who failed to listen to what the weavers had to say.

A recollection of my own underscores the needed shift in perspective offered in this volume. Soon after I began interviewing weavers, once Roseann Willink and I set out to determine how so-called rugs and blankets reflected the stories and songs allied with traditional Navajo ceremonial practice, I surprised a weaver by asking what she thought about while at the loom. Her reply resonated for me as we completed our project, and again as I worked my way through this fine volume. "You're the first person to ask me that," she declared. "Traders don't see us as people with ideas of our own. To them we're just weaving machines whose works they can buy and resell."

If Navajo textiles—especially those now being woven by today's master weavers with their growing worldliness—are to be appreciated for their true artistry, that old attitude needs to be overturned by hearing at last the voices of those who work at the loom much as their grandmothers did. With its finely

reproduced photographs and color plates and its well-assembled testimonies by the weavers whose works are featured, this book will allow its readers to listen, as it were, with an admiring eye.

*Paul G. Zolbrod*

Pacifica Graduate Institute and New Mexico Highlands University

**The Women's Warrior Society.** By Lois Beardslee. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2008. 138 pages. \$29.95 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

Whereas Ojibwe artist and author Lois Beardslee's *Rachel's Children: Stories from a Contemporary Native American Woman* (2004) focuses on a single family's stories, and *Not Far Away: The Real Life Adventures of Ina Pipig* (2007) presents a semifictional first-person memoir, her latest, *The Women's Warrior Society*, merges a variety of community voices and stories all fighting to preserve traditions against colonial oppression and racism or "privilege induced abuse" (61). In the tradition of Native authors as social activists, Beardslee uses her imaginative voice to speak out against continuing institutionalized colonial oppression with a sense of humor and passion akin to Sherman Alexie's short fiction, Eric Gansworth's *Mending Skins* (2005), and Stephen Graham Jones's *Bleed Into Me* (2005), but she does so with an indigenous feminist agenda in the spirit of Joy Harjo's poetry, Lee Maracle's *I Am Woman* (1988), and Anna Lee Walters's *The Sun Is Not Merciful* (1985). Like these other pieces of short fiction and poetry, this collection exposes the various sites where politics meets the personal and reveals the author's defeat of institutionalized oppression through the storytelling tradition.

The book begins with two poems and a prose piece revolving around "Baby Stealers," the historical conquerors and modern-day abusers embedded in institutions such as the public education system. By using a mythic-meets-realistic theme in an oral-poetic style that informs all the stories and poems in the collection, Beardslee places the stories within a pan-tribal historical context of conquest, genocide, and, most importantly, survival amidst such conflict. Responding to such a history in the final prose part of the initial trilogy, Beardslee introduces her archetypal character Ogitchidaakwe, a woman warrior who subversively and ironically resists the baby stealers and abusers by simply existing outside of and simultaneously mocking expectations and stereotypes and those who believe them. With cunning and perhaps biting coercion, Beardslee leads the reader into "Da Wimin's Warrior Society," a sweat lodge ceremony promising inside knowledge of real Indian spirituality held in a public library on tribal land. The stories that follow capture various individual women's lives and the struggles they face as mothers, daughters, lovers, and sisters, but all are versions of Ogitchidaakwe, a student-warrior learning about history and culture while resisting historical and cultural oppression. Beardslee's collection thus becomes one book in the virtual library of women warriors' stories of survival and an act of resistance to the lack of such stories within the actual library.