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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.

Welcome relief from such a limited viewpoint comes with this highly readable volume, with its array of essays, its 42 full-page color plates, its 28 illustrating figures, its more than two dozen color and black-and-white photographs, and its rich annotations complete with comments by native weavers—all assembled to declare Navajo ownership, regardless of who may possess various rugs at what appraised dollar value. Published in conjunction with an exhibit of nineteenth century pieces opening in the fall of 1996 at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York, it was edited with care and foresight by the curator, Eulalie A. Bonar. Forging a partnership with D. Y. Begay, a weaver then living in New Jersey, she invited a host of active weavers to the Ned A. Hatahli Museum at the main campus of Navajo Community College to preview twenty four of the displayed items during the summer of 1995. She also solicited essays from Navajo weavers Wesley Thomas and Kalley Keams in addition to Ms. Begay, and from scholar/curator Harry Walters, also a Navajo. She thus breaks new ground by giving Navajos themselves a voice in introducing an art patiently their own to produce a volume as much theirs as hers.

In the book's foreword, Museum director W. Richard West, Jr., himself a Southern Cheyenne, calls for attention "not so much to the works themselves, but rather to the process that led to their creation" (p. xi). And in her introduction, Bonar specifies her desire to share "the aesthetics of historic Navajo weaving, the range and variety of the textiles, information about materials, dyes, and construction techniques, and—most critically—the cultural significance of the weaving" from a largely Navajo perspective.

Implicit in the book is my own desire to refute the notion that everything there is to say about Navajo weaving has already been said," she writes in her introduction, "in part because Navajo people have had little voice in the discourse" (p. 2). Refute it she does, thanks to the candor of the Navajo contributors, to the commentaries elicited by active weavers that accompany the volume's color plates, and to the bold use of Navajo nomenclature in place of the tired and often misleading terms Anglo traders, dealers, collectors and scholars had come to employ, as if the weavers had no taxonomy of their own to apply.

In discussing their involvement as natives, D.Y. Begay, Harry Walters, Wesley Thomas and Kalley Keams virtually regain ownership of a heritage that the marketplace had insidiously taken away—helped by a prevailing insensitivity to an abiding oral tradition and a deep-seated unwillingness to grapple with the

inner workings of what it expresses. Uniquely preserved in underlying stories, songs, prayers and ceremonial chants, that tradition richly supplements what has been achieved at the Navajo loom and what it continues to produce. Indeed, one hopes that a ground-breaking volume like this one might prompt renewed inquiry into the true nature of Navajo weaving of the sort that Ann Lane Hedlund has initiated, even if she does fall short of exploring in depth how verbal discourse can inform the artifacts of a living culture that strongly endures as it adapts to change.

At the heart of this volume stand the essays by Begay, Walters, Thomas and Keams. Until now, such commentary has been virtually non-existent because it was never sought. In two separate essays, commercially successful weaver D. Y. Begay gives a personal account of her own development at the loom in the context of a secure Navajo identity and its enduring values. While she acknowledges that her training has not been typical of weavers who live reservation lives, she adds to her account a brief statement by her father, who alerts readers to the loom's deep roots in an old and intricate tradition that Anglo aficionados have yet to explore fully on its own terms.

Harry Walters, director of the Navajo Community College Museum at Tsalie and an presiding authority on Navajo culture, cautions that Navajo textiles cannot be seen in a vacuum, and explains why they must instead be integrated into the whole culture. Among other things, that means understanding weaving's close relationship with nature—"male and female rainclouds; rain and straight and zigzag lightning; sunbeams and rainbows"—and realizing that beauty does not exist without substance in the Navajo scheme of aesthetics (p. 29). Woven into many rugs are male and female principles, for instance. Delineated by the intricate narratives which underlie an ongoing ceremonial practice, but which have gone largely overlooked in the study and marketing of the weaving product, those principles add up to "balance" and "equal power," and nothing less than a Navajo sense of "natural order," which demands informed observation that conventional Anglo histories and descriptive accounts have not offered.

Wesley Thomas provides the volume's best and most provocative essay. A native-speaking, reservation-raised male weaver trained by his mother and grandmother and now completing his Ph.D. in anthropology, he unites traditional teachings with western scholarship to bring a unique outlook to the exhibit. In his piece he accounts literally for the individual weaver's

voice in what she produces. Songs and stories are indeed integrated into a traditionally made rug, he asserts, which adds a comprehensive vision that complements what is seen with vast knowledge and deep belief. Along with a shared conception of the sacred, that vision, adds weaver Kalley Keams, can include "personal expression of life," which combines "tangible materials with fibers of the soul" (p. 44). Textiles thus combine collective vision with personal voice.

Unfortunately, these necessarily short essays offer a mere sampling of what remains to be learned once the textiles are pried loose from the grip of a heretofore exploitive and short-sighted market. Many an assertion by each Navajo commentator emerges as a proposition awaiting further investigation with open-minded receptivity to Navajo thought. Indeed, one hopes that Navajo scholars especially will participate in the exploration this volume invites, especially those who for one reason or another find themselves isolated from traditional teachings.

Less satisfactory are the essays by Joe Ben Wheat and Ann Lane Hedlund, who have also contributed, and to whom the editor rightly pays tribute for their valuable work: the former for updating the story of weaving in the framework of standard western historiography—a necessary enterprise even without the native voice; the latter for placing contemporary weaving in an ethnographic context that adds timely information about the state of Navajo weaving today. Wheat's essay serves as a useful introduction to the history of Navajo weaving for the uninitiated, even if it is limited to the standard Anglo point of view. What Navajos themselves say does not altogether preclude the historical facts framed within the familiar Anglo-European timeline, and he is the presiding authority in assembling that account. All the same his essay merely summarizes what has been written and rewritten from that limited vantage point, and I for one would have been gratified to see this venerable scholar pay tribute to what Reservation Navajos themselves might add to an art essentially theirs in the first place.

Hedlund's essay, however, does make room for new inquiry. Perhaps the first scholar to apply an ethnographer's methodology even-handedly to the weaving process, she does heed what Navajos tell about work at the loom, and from her one gains a keen sense of the craft's abiding place in today's adaptive Navajo community. Like her predecessors, however, she focuses on technique and all but overlooks content as it can be gleaned by matching individual pieces with the formal dis-

course of recitation and ceremony. In the abstract she recognizes that for traditional weavers language invests the rugs, but without exploring that relationship as Begay, Thomas, Walters and Keams clearly indicate it should be explored, thus leaving too much unsaid.

In this regard, she repeats the error commonly made in many a study of material culture. The assumption prevails that Navajo rugs have no referential value. A parallel assumption is that Navajo songs, prayers, chants and stories obtain as "folklore" "myths" or "legends," but are not discourse of a higher sort that might predicate rugs the way Europe's written masterpieces inform so many of its great works of art. Sensitively monitored, however, that array of verbal constructs can justifiably be called poetic, and it imbues material culture with a comprehensive world view and an articulated set of values preserved alike in ceremonies and recitations still performed. That was our working hypothesis as I and my Navajo collaborator Roseann Sandoval Willink undertook to examine textiles from the collection at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe, and invited elders from the Eastern Navajo Agency to comment on them.

The argument, of course, awaits further refinement, especially since ours was but a precursor to further investigation. To be explored, for example, is how a broader sampling of Navajos might respond to collected items, or whether traditional thought is absorbed unintentionally in what younger, non-traditional weavers bring to the loom, the way a young Anglo artist might inadvertently bring western values to a work while sidestepping his or her own culture's past. One thing is clear, however, as the Navajo contributors to in this volume aver: a depth of meaning resides in the loom that draws from a distinct Navajo world view. "If you look at [our] art only for its beauty, it will be misleading," Harry Walters cautions. "Our songs, prayers, and rituals are very important for this reason because they give art substance" (p. 29). As for the stories, Wesley Thomas verifies that traditionally they "are shared at every stage of a weaver's development" (p. 35).

To ignore what Navajos articulate in the study of their weaving is to isolate them from their identity as producers of an art and conflate it into our identity as its consumers. To do otherwise, on the other hand, provides a matchless opportunity to explore the relationship between the poetry of a tribal people and its material culture. A capable innovator in the study of contemporary Navajo weaving such as Professor Hedlund might lead the way in further investigating such a possibility. One hopes that she will alert her

students to the initiative that Ms. Bonar orchestrates, for example, and seek new methods to “hear” what the rugs can “say.” Meanwhile, the general reader and the weaving aficionado alike can begin to explore the loom’s more deeply Navajo dimensions by enjoying this evocative book.

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