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catalog and exhibit of this magnitude focuses on him, his family, and his associates.

Marianne Jones's essay sheds light on Davidson's career and leadership that balances nicely with the other articles. She describes in straightforward, personal terms the kinds of adaptations, new motivations, and continued developments that Haida art—and Davidson's in particular—has undergone in the time since first contact. This perspective from one of Davidson's contemporaries (talented in her own right as a speaker and actor in numerous film productions) perfectly complements the other articles and brief quotes contained in this volume and fills in the picture of Haida art and Robert Davidson's place in it.

Steven C. Brown
Seattle Art Museum

Sáanii Dahataal: The Women Are Singing: Poems and Stories. By Luci Tapahonso. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993. Volume 23, Sun Tracks. 100 pages. \$19.95 cloth; \$9.95 paper.

Luci Tapahonso's work possesses a truly authentic voice, and for that reason alone it sets some refreshing standards in today's multicultural reality of emerging alternative poetic traditions. This book—volume 23 of the redoubtable Sun Tracks Series—illustrates that point exceptionally well. These poems alternately sing and speak with poetic purity and linguistic authority, as they describe the full spectrum of everyday Navajo life on and off the reservation.

Let me first explain why I call Tapahonso's voice authentic: Her language rings true; it is that of Diné people employing *bilagáanaa bizaad*, or Anglo speech, in their own peculiar way. By employing singular phonic configurations, distinctive patterns of syntax, and a disarmingly unpretentious diction, these poems display a uniquely Navajo brand of English capable of transmitting complex ideas and deft word play characteristic of that tribe's own *dinébizaad*.

"The combination of song, prayer, and poetry is a natural form of expression for many Navajo people," Tapahonso declares in her introduction. This statement reaffirms their love for language and their special way of using it to generate the power that accompanies knowledge, awareness, and feeling. "The value of the spoken

word is not diminished, even with the influences of television, radio, and video" (p. xi). That is true not only of traditional old-timers speaking their native language exclusively, and of bilingual Navajo people comfortable with it as well as English; it also applies to youngsters who know only the latter. For the elders still manage to transmit to children and grandchildren the established values and perspectives that set the Diné apart from mainstream Americans, and from other tribes. So the English of young folk remains that of their bilingual parents and grandparents, not only for its sounds and cadences but for the ideas it conveys. Thus, it exists as a distinct dialect, complete with its own idiomatic worldview. In strict linguistic terms, that dialect contains certain broad syntactical features—sometimes subtle and sometimes obvious—that surface with particular clarity on formal occasions, as when an elder admonishes a younger group; a medicine man addresses a patient's family; a storyteller recites for non-native speakers; or an official addresses a mixed or non-Navajo audience. More narrowly still, the Navajo dialect also displays unique phonic traits that help form a cadence nonexistent in standard English. As the raw material of Luci Tapahonso's poetry, these qualities coalesce in her book, demonstrating how the Navajo manage to transfer traditional thinking from their native language to English.

With regard to syntax, Tapahonso's sentence structure is generally simple. In the original Navajo, when subordinate clauses occur they are fixed clearly to the terms they modify, often building a pattern of structural repetition. Common in both chants and formal spoken discourse, such repetitive phrasing functions to highlight small contrasts existing in a larger field of similarities, often to the point where grammatical patterns merge with spatial ones and more abstract patterns of reflective thought. In English, such phrasing transforms as a tightly parallel structure, not common to the standard dialect of the dominant culture. Navajo people frequently employ this parallel structure even when speaking English, especially to emphasize a point rhetorically. Tapahonso often utilizes it in these poems. In "They Were Alone in the Winter," for example, after braiding her daughter's hair during a time of separation from husband and kin, the speaker says of "the frozen night,"

It glimmers in her night dreams: a fusing of music, laughter, talk of boys and clothes.

It glimmers here in the fibers of my bed sheets,
there above the old roar of the Kaw River.
It glimmers in the western sky where he thinks of me and
smiles (p. 11).

Throughout the three lines, with their repeated stem, the play of *here* against *there*—both as the locus of the solitary bed versus the distant sky, and as the place where she lies alone versus the distant western place where he looks at the heavens and thinks of her—bespeaks the steady Navajo undercurrent of geographical awareness, especially during the pain of affinal absence or separation from kin. Whether at home or away, in dreamscape or in the landscape of wakefulness, a sharp sense of directionality remains constant in Navajo thought and finds unique expression when verbalized formally. That sense defines relationships with specific locations, or between individuals, in ways uncommon to mainstream Euro-American thinking; This expression of directionality can even permeate the way words and phrases are layered. Phonetically, the glottal stops so abundant in Navajo sharpen the juncture between phrases and clauses when English is used, and the tonal system common to Navajo vowels adds breadth to their English counterparts. Tapahonso reflects that too in her poems. Thus a passage such as the following, with its particular succession of vowels from “The Weekend Is Over,” insinuates the sound of English spoken by Navajo people, especially when accompanied by the native word for nephew:

Do good in school, baby,
don't forget to pray, be good to yourself, shiyázi (p. 3).

As each relative similarly bids farewell in this poem about a nuclear family leaving for their distant home after a brief visit back to the reservation, the emotional force of returning to what will always be an alien place is underscored by the combination of frequent pauses and dental or bilabial stops, whether voiced or unvoiced. Using traditional kinship terms, aunts, uncles, and grandparents hug each departing child and issue a parting message punctuated with a heavily emotional subtext, underscored phonetically. In such plays of sound and syntax, then, this poem, like others in the volume, conveys the force of intimacy with linguistic features characteristic of Navajo people speaking En-

glish while remaining true to who they are by maintaining traditional bonds of kinship.

Authentic, too, is how the subjective self is subordinated to a collective awareness—especially in recognition of the sacred—in many of the selections. This is not the poetry of mundane, first-person preoccupations that arouse simple emotions; rather, one voice speaks sublimely for many in terms common to all, reflecting the more complex Navajo system of mode and number (with such properties as three degrees of perfective and two levels of distributive plural). Thus, ancient mythic time can more easily be invoked as something at once personally immediate and uniformly familiar to all.

“Before this world existed,” Tapahonso begins in the first stanza of one selection, “the holy people made themselves visible by becoming the clouds, sun, moon, trees, bodies of water, thunder, rain, snow, and other aspects of this world we live in. That way, they said, we would never be alone.” Titled “*Sháá Ako Dahjiníleh*: Remember the Things They Told Us,” this six-stanza piece traces a shared Navajo identity to an ancient cosmic vision, sustained in spite of the pressure of massive cultural change. Upon first looking, a reader is at pains to decide whether to consider such a passage verse or an ordinary discourse—at least until the words are actually sounded and each stanza is reckoned in the context of the entire work. Then it emerges as a shared declaration framed in speech to transcend the conventional, print-driven distinction between poetry and prose. Furthermore, the first-person singular is subsumed into a fully collective, tribal *we* by parallel phrases, which produce the effect of a plurality verbalizing common perceptions:

within us the tumbling winds that precede rain,
within us sheets of hard-thundering rain,
within us dust-filled layers of wind that sweep in from
mountains,
within us gentle night flutters that lull us to sleep.

Even where Tapahonso describes a deeply autobiographical moment, her emphasis ultimately falls more on the public plurality than on the private singularity. The selection titled “In 1864” (p. 7), for example, invokes her personal memory of hearing about the infamous “Long Walk,” when the Navajo were rounded up and endured four years of forced exile at Fort Sumner. But she quickly subordinates her own recollection to a wider Navajo identity, in an

idiom that allows Anglo readers to identify with the experience itself, rather than acceding to an abstract anger.

As a volume of poems that universalize the Navajo experience through a subtle play of English as a second language, then, this book is exemplary. But it sets a valuable example for a broader concern as well. If the reality of a multicultural America is to take hold, we must all rise above the rancor and divisiveness of today's culture, which set race against race, gender against gender, or the dogma of one extreme in opposition with another. In that effort, Lucy Tapahonso can help.

Tapahonso is no ideologue bent on intensifying the current preoccupation with power in the narrower political sense. Nor does she indulge in what Edward Said calls the "rhetoric of blame." This volume is no easy denunciation of the Columbian intrusion or ongoing racism. Without sidestepping yesterday's outrageous conquests or today's lingering injustice, it instead celebrates a cultural presence that simply will not go away, in spite of history or contemporary realities.

To be sure, there are pieces here that acknowledge bitter pain. Conjoined with explanations of how the four cardinal directions inform the Navajo way of seeing and interacting, Tapahonso speaks candidly of poverty and prevailing racism. She can write about alcoholism and violence with raw, unsullied honesty. Nothing she does or says seeks to deny the dark side of being Indian in a predominantly white society—a society at pains to transcend the moral shortcomings of its history. But she emphasizes what is enduringly, triumphantly Navajo. In the long view, then, this is the voice of survival, not of victimhood. Instead of hankering after raw vengeance, she summons the innate power of poetic expression to bind people within the tribe, while at the same time inviting outsiders to fathom its deeper ways.

Ultimately, Tapahonso seems intent on putting language to work—something her people have always done—to assert the reality of a culture whose survival is assured no matter what. By celebrating Navajo practices and beliefs, both linguistically and spiritually in an impressively accurate idiom, she secures the importance of a tribal presence in the broader American fabric with a subtlety and a linguistic poise that only pure poetry can effect. In the long run, that example will do more to bring us together than conventional indignation or easy posturing can do. For that reason, this book should circulate broadly; it will

be useful to scholars investigating the intricacies of Navajo thought, to critics examining how authentic voice can be put to work in behalf of an enlarged multicultural awareness, and to general readers who enjoy transcendent poetry within or away from academia.

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The Spanish Frontier in North America. By David J. Weber. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992. 592 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

Occasionally a new book updates us on the best literature in a field and establishes a new standard by which future work will be gauged. This is such a book. Well known to students of the Spanish Borderlands, David J. Weber tackles the monumental task of providing an overview of the Spanish experience north of Mexico. He begins on the eve of Ponce de León's infamous landfall in 1513, proceeds to trace Spanish successes and failures across three centuries in Florida, Texas, New Mexico, the Pimería Alta (Sonora and Arizona), and California, and ends by assessing "The Spanish Legacy" beyond 1821 for American culture writ large.

The information throughout is accurately reported, and the analysis is convincing, in large measure because the author has mastered the historical literature of this subject. His sources derive from a mixture of archives, printed documents, and, most importantly, the best secondary works available in this field. Most of the latter is directly associated with Herbert E. Bolton and his students, who authoritatively canvassed the region from the 1920s through the 1980s to cull out Spanish institutional achievements and shortcomings. A third generation Boltonian, Weber gives special credit to his mentor, Donald C. Cutter, and the late John Francis Bannon, whose *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (1970) is updated and complemented by this expanded discussion on the same subject.

In most of the book, Weber cautiously sticks to the themes and terminology one finds in Borderlands writing a generation ago. Occasionally, he breaks out, bridging subject areas with methods endorsed by ethnohistorians. Reminiscent of Gary B. Nash's path-breaking *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America* (1974),