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The Scalpel and the Silver Bear: The First Navajo Woman Surgeon Combines Western Medicine and Traditional Healing. By Lori Arviso Alvord and Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt.

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obtain, however, the spirits can do their work. The conclusion gives us some of Eagle Elk's thoughts in the last days of his life, when he knew his death was close. It may have been possible for such material not to have been included in the text, and co-author Mohatt is to be commended for retaining it and providing a fuller view of Joe Eagle Elk as a person, and as a practitioner in the Lakota tradition.

The substantial epilogue to *The Price of a Gift* makes for interesting reading. It is a record of a conversation among a group of psychologists, including Gerald Mohatt, psychotherapists, and members of the Rosebud tribe described by the co-author as "recognized leaders engaged in traditional rituals" (p. 160). All participants in this conversation met and worked with Joseph Eagle Elk, and in it they reflect on the ways in which their relationship with him influences their own work. The chapter will be of interest to everyone concerned with understanding healing across cultures. It deepens the reader's sense of Joseph Eagle Elk as a person. The issue of cultural appropriation is touched upon briefly here as well.

A substantial virtue of *The Price of a Gift* is the insight it provides into one contemporary Lakota healer, his life, and his world. The title is to be taken seriously. The work as a whole makes it clear that it is the spirits who provide the power and decide who will be given the ability to understand how to use it. These gifts come with substantial obligations. A further strength of the book is that it conveys this point without being heavy-handed. Perhaps some of those who might seek to appropriate Lakota spirituality for their own purposes will read *The Price of a Gift* and be dissuaded from their foolishness. Yet clearly Joseph Eagle Elk worked with people from many cultural backgrounds. Co-author Gerald Mohatt is to be congratulated for assembling a fine portrait of his friend Joseph Eagle Elk. The reader has the sense that he is presented as he actually lived. *The Price of a Gift: A Lakota Healer's Story* is a welcome addition to the literature.

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The Scalpel and the Silver Bear: The First Navajo Woman Surgeon Combines Western Medicine and Traditional Healing. By Lori Arviso Alvord and Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt. New York: Bantam Books, 1999. 205 pages. \$23.95 cloth.

Alvord and Van Pelt are listed as co-authors, but Alvord's is the only voice heard throughout the book. She is the central figure, and it is her abbreviated biography that serves as the backdrop for the sampling of cultural information about Navajo tribal philosophy, cultural teachings, and selected tribal health beliefs and healing practices. The personalizing of the cultural information with medicine does make for an interesting reading, but the sketchy biographical background leaves the reader realizing they learn less about Alvord, the physician, and more about her message: modern medical practi-

tioners can learn from Navajo healing practices and use this knowledge to improve their bedside manners and doctor-patient relations. In the introductory chapter, Alvord notes that this is one of the reasons for writing the book.

As the subtitle indicates, Alvord identifies herself as the first Navajo woman trained as a general surgeon, although this was not originally her career goal while growing up on the Navajo Reservation. There is mention about ethnic identity, and the experiences of growing up part-Indian in an isolated rural reservation community with an Anglo mother, a frequently absent Navajo father, an older sister, and a grandmother. When Alvord speaks of Navajo culture, it is clear that it was her grandmother, not her father, who served as her key source of Navajo cultural knowledge and her link to the Navajo side of her biracial family. Alvord notes that her racial mixture and her limited knowledge of the Navajo language kept her on the margin of the Navajo community as it did her Anglo mother. Issues of marginality resurfaced again while an undergraduate at Dartmouth, where Alvord experienced some cultural shock as she attempted to master a place for herself.

Upon graduation, however, Alvord finds that a Dartmouth diploma in sociology and psychology was not helpful in securing high-paying employment. Instead, she took a job as a research assistant on a research project in New Mexico. It was the investigator on the project who first suggested that Alvord consider a career in medicine. This encouragement, coupled with successful completion of several science courses, led to her admission to Stanford Medical School and eventually to a career in medicine.

Much of Alvord's ideas on blending Western and Navajo elements of healing began after she encountered different Navajo patients as a surgeon at the Gallup Indian Medical Center. Interestingly, it was also in the Gallup operating room where she first met her future Anglo husband. Subsequent chapters mention two Alvord weddings (a Navajo and a non-Navajo wedding) and the birth of the couple's first child. Both the Navajo wedding and the birth of the child incorporate elements of traditional Navajo cultural practices. The book also includes Alvord's own journey to seek services of a traditional Navajo healer to help safeguard her own pregnancy. Alvord's cultural strand in the story ends in the final chapter when she returns to Dartmouth Medical School to be the associate dean of minority and student affairs. Optimistically, Alvord hopes that this new role will provide her an opportunity to teach medical students about blending elements of Navajo healing practices with modern medicine. The need to incorporate elements of traditional Navajo healing practices into modern medicine is described by Alvord, who provides examples of her own mistakes and instances where she allowed her Western training to overshadow her cultural intuition.

Blending elements of Navajo healing practices with modern medicine will not be new to health care providers who have worked with Navajo patients as well as scholars well-versed in the literature of traditional Navajo healing practices. Such recommendations have been promoted since the early 1900s, when traditional Navajo healers were consulted on how best to improve acceptance of trachoma treatment and how to convince Navajo patients with tuberculosis to remain in sanatoriums. In the 1950s, tradi-

tional Navajo healers were also very active in the first endeavors by Cornell University to establish a new health care delivery model at Many Farms, Arizona. Over the next decades, most new health facilities built on the Navajo Reservation have included a place or a room designated for use by traditional healers when consulting or treating patients. Since the 1960s, the tribal mental health program and substance abuse programs on the reservation have had on their staff at least one consultant or member who is a trained traditional healer. In addition, social scientists and health providers working on the Navajo Reservation have also expressed ideas similar to those advocated by Alvord. Despite these efforts, however, it appears, at least according to this book, that the incorporation of these ideas is yet to be realized. Why this is so is not clear.

What is new in Alvord's and Van Pelt's book, however, is that these recommendations are coming from a member of the tribe who also happens to be a physician. Alvord's next book may tell us if her recommendations were integrated into Dartmouth Medical School's curriculum and how her ideas changed her students' medical practices. Revisiting some of these ideas is also timely, especially with the increased national interest on issues such as health disparities among minorities and the need for culturally competent health care providers and/or culturally competent health care delivery systems.

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Throwing Fire at the Sun, Water at the Moon. By Anita Endrezze. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. 203 pages. \$29.95 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

If any one concept could characterize Native American autobiographies of the twentieth century, perhaps the idea of recovery would suffice. From the Iktomi stories of Zitkala-Ša to Leslie Silko's *Storyteller*, Native American authors have sought to put into writing the vanishing myths, legends, and histories of their people that have significantly shaped their tribal and individual identities. Often this work has not been easy, as the oral tradition, to paraphrase N. Scott Momaday, is perhaps always one generation from extinction. In putting together *Throwing Fire at the Sun, Water at the Moon*, Anita Endrezze faced a similar challenge in recovering vanishing stories and piecing together the cultural knowledge of the Yaqui half of her mixed Euro-Native heritage. To do such work, she listened to family, traveled to Sonora, Mexico, read Spanish and Mexican colonial texts, and researched anthropological studies about the Yaqui. In this respect, *Throwing Fire* shows how to quilt together the past from the fragments that remain. Endrezze's text poses and tackles other challenges as well in what might be called a postmodern Native American autobiography that is many things: a recovery, a historical rewriting, and a decentered, even self-reflexive text.