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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/91m3d2sm>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 19(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1995-06-01

DOI

10.17953

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The Delivery of Power: Reading American Indian Childbirth Narratives

SUSAN L. ROCKWELL

I have often been told that a pregnant Squaw will turn aside & deliver herself, & take up the Infant and wash it in a Brook, & walk off. They do not lye by the Month; but make little more about Pregnancy and Lying in than Cows.

—Ezra Stiles¹

I still often hear of the stereotyped Indian mother who has her child alone, out in some field, and then comes back home and continues her work as if nothing happened. If there were Indians who did this, they were sure not my grandmothers. As soon as my grandmothers of the past knew that they were pregnant, they slowed down their work and began a disciplined period during which they were forbidden to do many things.

—Beverly Hungry Wolf²

Childbirth narratives appear frequently in the literature by and about American Indian women. Many ethnographers have written about Indian women and childbirth. Similarly, many American Indian women have written about childbirth experiences in their autobiographies. These two modes of discourse have different foundations for representations of childbirth practices, yet

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both hold value for scholars concerned with the lives of American Indian women.³

The general conception among most ethnographers is that bearing children is the primary duty of Indian women within their societies. M. Jane Young states, with regard to Hopi women, that they are "directly responsible for reproduction" and that "the primary role of women is to produce children."⁴ She further finds that "in the estimation of the community they have fulfilled their role as adults once they have married and given birth to children."⁵ Young does explain, however, that "reproduction is the key metaphor of Western Puebloan life . . . a term that encompasses the bearing of children and the growth of crops."⁶ It is through women that both of these functions are successfully deployed, because women are considered the repositories of fertility. Veronica Evaneshko also finds that an Indian woman "was exalted for her fertility,"⁷ while Carolyn Niethammer states that "being a mother and rearing a healthy family were the ultimate achievements for a woman in the North American Indian societies."⁸ Finally, Anne Wright comments that "it was practically inconceivable to these women not to be a mother."⁹ Thus, according to these ethnographers, a woman's role was defined by her ability to propagate the society.

The second general conception among ethnographers is that, historically, many taboos applied to the pregnant Indian woman. Niethammer states that, in general, "pregnant Indian women were almost universally warned against looking at or mocking a deformed, injured, or blind person for fear their babies would evidence the same effect."¹⁰ Evaneshko also comments on the fact that "laughing [at] or mocking a deformed, ugly, or blind person would make [the] baby the same."¹¹ Lorene Farris finds similarities in different taboos, including prohibitions against "stepping over a gun, over a snake trail, or over a deep ravine" in addition to "injunctions against tying knots and using sharp instruments such as knives, needles, and nails."¹² Evaneshko states that "women were seemingly inundated with behavioral taboos," including injunctions against sewing, standing in doorways, leaning out windows, and sleeping crosswise in bed.¹³ Marla Powers and Beverly Horn both find that women were expected to keep busy and continue with their chores during pregnancy, or their children would be fat and lazy.¹⁴ Horn also comments that women were not to make "visible preparation for the coming baby."¹⁵ According to the ethnographers' data, these taboos were rigidly

enforced, with all members of society ensuring that pregnant women obeyed.

Ethnographers state that food taboos also existed among the various Indian cultures. Powers reports that, when pregnant, Oglala women "should eat a lot of meat" but that "rabbit meat should be avoided lest the baby be born with a hairlip [sic]" and that "she should not eat duck or the baby might have webbed feet."¹⁶ Evaneshko finds that "eating strawberries produced birthmarks,"¹⁷ and Niethammer agrees, finding a general belief that berries of any kind would cause birthmarks.¹⁸ Niethammer also claims that "typical dietary restrictions" during pregnancy included prohibitions against "eating the feet of an animal to avoid having the baby born feet first; the tail of an animal, to prevent the child's getting stuck on the way out," and "liver, which would darken the child's skin."¹⁹ It is interesting that, in regard to behavioral and food taboos listed by all of these ethnographers, no behaviors or foods are listed that were considered especially good for pregnant women; only those considered to be bad or dangerous to the baby are reported.

Finally, the ethnographers were extremely interested in the practice of segregating women during childbirth. Horn finds that "the process of labor occurred in a small lodge, away from the communal house,"²⁰ while Powers comments that the birth takes place "inside a special tipi."²¹ Niethammer reports that "many of the Native American cultures insisted that . . . both mother and newborn child remain in seclusion, particularly away from all men."²² Horn agrees, claiming that "a mother was secluded" with her baby and that only her husband and other women "were allowed in her presence and the presence of the infant."²³ Evaneshko's research into Seneca traditions finds that women "retired to the woods to give birth," accompanied by other women.²⁴ Only Niethammer reports evidence of men being around at childbirth, and that is only the presence of medicine men, who might be asked to assist during an emergency.²⁵ Little detail of what actually happened during the act of childbirth is provided by these ethnographers, except to state that women knelt or squatted to give birth while hanging onto some sort of strap and that they were "expected to endure the pain without crying."²⁶

Ethnographers are specifically concerned with how childbirth defines women's social roles. To them, this definition is achieved through such practices as behavioral and food taboos associated with pregnancy, and the segregation and seclusion of women

during and after the childbirth. On the other hand, in their autobiographies, American Indian women are not concerned with how they are defined within their society as much as with defining the self.²⁷ The following childbirth narratives are from four different women from four different tribes. Two of the women experienced childbirth in the latter part of the nineteenth century, while the other two women relate childbirth experiences from the early part of the twentieth century. Placed in chronological order of the births, the narratives reveal to what extent these women are concerned with the taboos and the segregation practices that the ethnographers relate.

Truman Michelson included a brief "autobiography" of an unnamed woman in the Bureau of American Ethnology's *40th Annual Report* in 1925. The information contained had been collected in 1918 by an assistant of Michelson's, Harry Lincoln, who, with the assistance of his wife, a Mesquaque herself, recorded the narrative in the woman's native language. It was then translated into English by another of Michelson's assistants. This narrative is one of the earliest recorded of an Indian woman's life from her own perspective.

Narrated in 1918, the childbirth experience the Fox Woman relates would have occurred in the latter part of the 1800s and is possibly one of the earliest childbirth accounts to appear in print. Commenting on the importance of bearing children, the Fox Woman says, "If I had had a child I should have never married again," and "If I had a child I should have it to do things for me."²⁸ She does not emphasize the importance of bearing a child for the security of her tribe or society but for her own personal well-being. Additionally, this personal well-being is not for social acceptance but for her own individual comfort and security. The Fox Woman sees childbearing not as a social role but as a necessity for keeping loneliness at bay and for remaining independent. "Well, I shall never marry again," she ends her narrative, "for now these children of mine will help me (get a living)."²⁹ To her, children are an economic necessity, for without them she cannot survive. Thus she emphasizes the important role that childbearing plays in her life, not as a fulfillment of social expectations or a necessity for tribal survival but as a way to achieve economic freedom and independence from an unwanted husband.

The Fox Woman had her first child at the age of nineteen. Upon discovering her pregnancy, she received instruction from other women on behavioral and food taboos. She reports some of these

taboos, stating, "[T]here are a number of things one is forbidden to do."³⁰ These behavioral taboos include

in winter, one is not to warm their feet, so that the babies will not adhere (to the caul). And (women) are not to join their feet to those of their husbands, so that (the babies) will not be born feet first.³¹

In addition,

no corpse should be touched. If it is touched the babies would die after they are born, by inheriting it. And if the dead are looked at, they are to be looked at with straight eyes. Also it is said that if they are looked at slantingly, the babies will be cross-eyed. And if cranes are touched, the babies will always look upward. The children will not be able to look upon the ground. And when any one drowns, if he is touched, the babies will die.³²

The Fox Woman includes a small list of food taboos, stating that burned food should not be eaten or the mother will have a difficult time with the expulsion of afterbirth. Also, nuts are not to be eaten by pregnant women "so that the babies will be able to break through the caul."³³ Further, a pregnant woman should not eat the feet of animals. Finally, the Fox Woman was warned not to touch crawfish, for to do so would cause her baby to be born feet first.

Although the Fox Woman repeats these behavioral and food taboos, she also includes one behavior that a woman should cultivate for a safer birth: "One should carry wood always on one's back so that the babies will be loosened (i.e., born easily)."³⁴ Further, she comments that these taboos and other instructions regarding behavior during pregnancy are not solely for the protection of the child but for the health and welfare of the mother. "The ones who do not do as they are told," she states, "are the ones who are injured by their children."³⁵

At the time of childbirth, the Fox Woman retired to "the little wickiup," where blankets were spread on the ground and a strap was hung from above.³⁶ This strap, she was told, was for her to hold onto when she began to feel pain. The Fox Woman comments about this segregation during labor and birth matter-of-factly, as she does the fact that her only companions were women. She gives no description of the birthing lodge beyond the blankets and the strap mentioned above. She informs us that both her mother and

mother-in-law were in attendance, as were other women. No mention is made of her husband or any other man during this time, reinforcing the fact that childbirth was women's work alone. Even when she was unable to deliver, a "woman skilled in obstetrics" was brought in to help, not a medicine man.³⁷ In contrast to ethnographers' reports that Indian women squatted or knelt to give birth, the Fox Woman was told to lie down while the women held her knees straight up.

The Fox Woman's only comment regarding seclusion after the birth of her son was that she "lived outside for thirty-three days."³⁸ However, Michelson footnotes this comment: "The Indian text at this point is too naive for European taste, and so has been deled [sic]. The only point of ethnological interest is that during the period named carnal intercourse is not allowed."³⁹ We can only speculate as to what the Fox Woman had to tell about traditions or rituals that are now lost due to her editor's puritanical attitude. Conversely, many of her frank statements regarding labor and birth survived the editing process.⁴⁰ She reveals her belief that childbirth was hard and states that she made use of the strap to pull against because she felt "intense pain."⁴¹ She relates that, after hours of difficult labor, her situation even frightened her experienced attendants. When her son was finally born, she states, "[t]hen I knew how painful childbirth was."⁴² This emphasis on the pain and difficulty of childbirth is one point that ethnographers in general do not address.

Maria Chona related the narrative of her life in the early 1930s to Ruth Underhill, who was working on an anthropological study of the Papago of Arizona. Chona told her narrative in her native language, which was translated by a Papago girl who spoke English. Underhill, who had managed to learn some Papago over the years and was able to handle some of the translation herself, claims that the narrative is Chona's, while the arrangement is hers. She also says that she deleted "unimportant details."⁴³ Again, as with the Fox Woman's narrative, one wonders what the editor might have left out.

Chona was ninety years of age when she spoke with Underhill, which would have made her a peer of the Fox Woman. Since the Fox Woman's age is unknown, it is even possible that Chona's narrative covers an earlier period in the late nineteenth century. Chona understands the important role of women, claiming that the bearing of children is a sign of power. "We have power," she states, adding that "without us, there would be no men."⁴⁴ Chona's

belief that childbirth is the ultimate delivery of power for the tribe bears major societal importance.

Chona briefly mentions some behavioral taboos during pregnancy, but the majority of these are taboos the husband must follow. The father of the baby must avoid killing an enemy, or "his child will die a violent death."⁴⁵ Further, Chona's husband did not hunt rabbits during her pregnancy, to prevent the baby from experiencing a "choking sickness," and he avoided rattlesnakes so the baby "should not have convulsions."⁴⁶ The only taboo Chona states that she observed was to be "kind to the people in our village who looked sick or ugly, and I never laughed at them, so that my baby should have a good body."⁴⁷ Chona made no mention of food taboos, nor did she mention any behaviors necessary to make the mother stronger or the birth easier.

Segregation of the mother during actual birth was a practice followed by Papago women, and Chona states, "I would not like such a dreadful thing to happen as for me to be caught inside the house in childbirth."⁴⁸ She relates her disappointment that she waited too long to go to the "Little House" and had to bear her child in a gully in order "to do the right thing."⁴⁹ After the birth, she moved into the Little House, where she obeyed the injunction to avoid her house "until the moon comes around again."⁵⁰ She remained secluded for one month, where she cooked her own food instead of eating the food prepared by other women for her family. Cooking for herself is the only ritual of seclusion she describes, but she mentions the injunction against eating salt until the baby's navel healed. She makes no mention of visitors of either sex during this seclusion.

Chona goes into no detail about her actual labor. With regard to the pain of childbirth, she reports that, when asked by her sisters-in-law why she laughed during her labor instead of telling them she was in pain, she replied, "Well, it wasn't my mouth that hurt. It was my middle."⁵¹ Later, she explains that she "never had any trouble in childbirth."⁵² Her childbirth narrative is short, terse, matter-of-fact, and lacking in emotion, reinforcing the belief that it was just another duty in the life of a Papago woman, albeit an important duty, full of power.

Born in 1898, Helen Sekaquaptewa narrated her autobiography to Louise Udall, a friend and employer, during the 1960s. She experienced childbirth at about the time Chona was describing her experiences to Underhill. Like Chona, Sekaquaptewa related the narrative of her life over a period of time, while working and

visiting. Unlike Chona, however, Sekaquaptewa spoke and read English, and she reviewed Udall's manuscript, making changes when necessary and rewriting portions she found unacceptable.⁵³ In a terse explanation of how much of the narrative is Sekaquaptewa's and how much was her representation, Udall quotes Sekaquaptewa as saying, "I am talking. She is writing."⁵⁴

Sekaquaptewa makes no direct comment about the importance of childbearing with regard to a woman's place in Hopi society. As part of her autobiography, she just matter-of-factly brings up the subject of childbirth by stating that "in due time my first baby, a little girl, was born."⁵⁵ Like Chona's, Sekaquaptewa's childbirth narrative is short and terse. She makes no reference to behavioral or food taboos and practices during pregnancy, but her descriptions of the actual birthing process are quite detailed.

"When a birth is imminent, all the Hopi family leave the house" Sekaquaptewa explains.⁵⁶ This is a different form of segregation, with the woman staying in her own home while the others leave. A further unique practice she relates is that "the prospective mother is left with a male relative as her helper."⁵⁷ While a male assists the mother, the midwife stands outside awaiting the child, whom she cares for. Sekaquaptewa also gives detailed instructions on the seclusion after the birth. The new mother remains in bed for three days and fasts for a total of nineteen days, "that is, she eats no salt or meat, just corn and well-cooked vegetables."⁵⁸ She is not allowed to perform chores, and "the mother-in-law will come in every day for a period of twenty days, to care for her son's wife."⁵⁹ If the mother-in-law lives in another village, "she comes in every fourth day" and "a midwife or sister will care for the mother on the days she does not come in."⁶⁰ The mother-in-law bathes both the mother and baby, and Sekaquaptewa gives details about the daily steam bath the mother receives during her confinement:

Cedar twigs are placed in a wash basin and covered with water. A good-sized, heated rock is put on the twigs. The mother stands over the pan with legs on each side of it. A thick blanket is draped over her to form a tent. The heat from the rock fills the tent with steam which penetrates the body. As one rock cools another hot one is added until four rocks are used. It really makes you feel good.⁶¹

Sekaquaptewa states that a new mother is "isolated from her husband for forty days after the first baby comes; twenty-five for

succeeding births."⁶² She explains that the reason for this isolation is to keep the mother from having babies too close together.

Sekaquaptewa relates the actual birthing experience with little emotion but with great detail. A special place is set aside in a warm corner of the house, with a chair and a sheepskin on the floor. The woman may roam about freely, but "when a pain comes on, the mother goes to this place and sits in a squatting position or on her knees during the duration of pain."⁶³ The male helper sits behind her, bracing her and supporting her back, in a manner resembling modern-day Lamaze birthing practices. Both the mother and the helper will exert pressure on the abdomen, but "no one is to touch the woman internally."⁶⁴ Sekaquaptewa comments that women are "exhorted, 'Don't open your mouth to yell or cry or scream and let the air out. Keep the air in to help expel the baby.'"⁶⁵ After the baby is born, the mother and helper press on her stomach to expel the afterbirth, and then the mother takes a sponge bath with cedar water.

Sekaquaptewa calls childbirth a "joint project of labor for both the man and woman."⁶⁶ Yet her narrative is more clinical than personal. Although this could be Udall's style of presentation, Sekaquaptewa changed portions of which she did not approve; therefore, she must have approved of this style of presentation of her childbirth experiences. The entire description of the actual birth, the segregation, the seclusion, and the care of the mother during and after birth are told in third person narrative, almost like an informative obstetrical lecture. Sekaquaptewa has objectified it into a passionless event. Although this type of presentation belies the joy or the importance of childbirth beyond its being a biological event, such a didactic style explains the belief that childbirth "just happens."

A Navajo born at Sheepsprings Trading Post, New Mexico, in 1922, Kay Bennett wrote her own autobiography, which was published in 1964. The work, *Kaibah: Recollection of a Navajo Girlhood*, includes illustrations by the author and covers her childhood from 1928 through 1935. Rayna Green finds *Kaibah* to be a "romanticized" version of Navajo life,⁶⁷ but it is mostly a series of vignettes of a fondly remembered childhood. The childbirth experience related by Bennett in this autobiography is not her own, of course, but that of her older sister, Tesbah. Although Bennett does not reflect on the level of importance childbirth held in the matrilineal Navajo society, it is obvious that the birth Bennett witnessed as a child made a large impression on her. The

chapter dedicated to this birth is entitled "The Death of Tesbah" and recounts the death of Bennett's sister after a difficult pregnancy and delivery.

Behavioral and food taboos are not discussed in this narrative; however, when the pregnant and sick Tesbah faints after washing her hair, her mother expresses the belief that sick people should not wash their hair. Traditional belief in spirits and ceremonies is also mentioned with regard to Tesbah's pregnancy, for a family friend claims that Tesbah is having a difficult pregnancy because the spirit of her first husband "will not let her go."⁶⁸ The friend recommends that "a medicine man perform a chindee ceremonial soon, to get rid of him."⁶⁹ Tesbah refuses to have the ceremony and continues to be unwell for the duration of her pregnancy.

Young Bennett was given the chore of caring for her sister during the pregnancy and was drafted to assist in the delivery. Instead of moving to a segregated birthing structure, Tesbah remained in her own hogan. Bennett and her mother prepared a special "circle about three feet in diameter, and about three inches high at the west side of the hogan," made of dirt.⁷⁰ This mound was covered with a piece of sheepskin that had been sheared to about one inch. A sash was hung from the ceiling to which Tesbah could cling during contractions. Only women and the child Bennett were in attendance, and they assisted in the delivery by gently pushing down on Tesbah's stomach. Bennett is the only one of the four narrators to mention the state of dress of the birthing mother: Apparently, Tesbah was fully dressed, for "quick as the baby fell, Mother Chischillie brought it out from beneath Tesbah's skirt."⁷¹

Tesbah's delivery was difficult and painful, similar to that of the Fox Woman. Tesbah was pregnant with twins; although the first baby came relatively quickly, the second baby would not be born. Bennett comments that Tesbah "was in great pain" and that "sweat was rolling down her face." "Women kneaded her stomach to no avail."⁷² The labor lasted three days, the "midwives were tired, and their patient was exhausted."⁷³ This is the only childbirth experience discussed in this paper which takes place partially in a hospital. Eventually, Tesbah was taken by ambulance to an emergency room, where she finally gave birth to the second baby. Tesbah died the next day from the complicated birth of her twins.

Bennett's childbirth narrative is emotional, concluding as it does with Tesbah's death, because it is told from the perspective

of a child who "stood by helplessly" as she watched her sister struggle for three days to give birth. It is possible that, because this event made such an impact on the child, Bennett was able to evoke the same emotion when recalling it as an adult. This is the opposite of the other narrators, particularly the Fox Woman, who passionlessly comments that childbirth sometimes results in women being "killed by the babies."⁷⁴

Although some of these women do occasionally mention taboos and segregation, they do not find these practices to be the major components of interest when discussing their childbirth experiences. Because they were raised in cultures that saw such practices as ordinary expectations for pregnant women, they did not see a need to emphasize or enhance such practices. The information regarding taboos and seclusion/segregation is dispersed among narratives regarding other events that were occurring during their lives. Therefore, this paper's presentation could be misleading, for these practices were in no way cataloged in a manner similar to this synopsis. Being pregnant, although important, was only a small portion of these women's lives and received a pro rata amount of attention in the overall representation of their narratives.

Generally, ethnographers are comparing American Indian childbirth practices to those of their own dominant culture, attempting to make "the foreign familiar," while "preserving its very foreignness."⁷⁵ Whereas ethnography represents the "other" or "foreign" culture as a social entity, autobiography is not representative of the society but of an individual within that society. Autobiographers are not representing their society, nor are they trying to make "the foreign familiar." Instead, autobiography is the representation of the individual's lived experience within a society that is normative to the one living it.

By reading ethnography, we learn about a community. By reading autobiography, we learn about an individual within a community. Autobiography expresses the experience of living an ordinary life within a particular culture and tradition, while ethnography tries to explain a culture and tradition that does not seem ordinary. Ethnographers see culture from the outside, but autobiography is an insider's view of the culture. Neither discourse is of more value than the other. Both have value when it comes to understanding another culture. While ethnography helps one understand a society as a whole, autobiography helps one understand what it is to live in that society.

The discourse of ethnography should be conjoined with other representational discourses like autobiography. Michael M.J. Fischer states that, when studying other cultures, one must take care "against assimilating the other to the self, seeing only what is similar or different."⁷⁶ By studying autobiography alongside ethnography, we will "avoid comparison by strict dualistic contrast."⁷⁷ However, care must be taken not to prioritize one discourse over the other. The autobiographies of the Fox Woman and Maria Chona are included as part of larger ethnographic studies. On the surface, this would appear to endorse the argument for studying the two discourses together. Unfortunately, both autobiographies were subsumed to larger ethnographic projects and put aside as supplementary information. It is only recently that these chronicles have been retrieved to be studied as documents with intrinsic value. Conversely, we must be careful not to take these autobiographies too far out of the context for which they were recorded, for, unlike the autobiographies by Sekaquaptewa and Bennett, these narratives were purposely recorded for more than just one individual's life story.

Although the two discourses are different, they are complementary. Ethnography provides the frame, and autobiography provides the detail. As we have seen in the narratives outlined above, the full picture of what it was like to be a pregnant woman among the American Indian tribes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is exciting and interesting, different from the experience of many of the readers of the narratives. Ethnography explains the differences, while autobiography puts those differences in perspective. Thus, in order to get closer to the "truth" of what it was like to be a pregnant woman in any given tribe, both discourses should be studied in conjunction. To value one discourse above the other is to do a disservice not only to the scholar but to those women who live in the cultures being studied.

NOTES

1. Reprinted in Virgil J. Vogel, *American Indian Medicine* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 233.
2. Beverly Hungry Wolf, *The Ways of My Grandmothers* (New York: Quill, 1982), 190.
3. The use of ethnographic studies performed only by women was done in order to narrow the point of view. Although no two women—especially those

from different race, class, and cultural backgrounds—view experiences in the same manner, removing the filter of gender makes for a cleaner study of an experience that is, unarguably, gender specific.

4. M. Jane Young, "Women, Reproduction, and Religion in Western Puebloan Society," *Journal of American Folklore* 398 (1987): 437, 441.

5. *Ibid.*, 441.

6. *Ibid.*, 437.

7. Veronica Evaneshko, "Tonawanda Seneca Childbearing Culture," in *Anthropology of Human Birth*, ed. Margarita Artschwager Kay (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1982), 397.

8. Carolyn Niethammer, *Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of American Indian Women* (New York: Collier Books, 1977), 1.

9. Anne Wright, "Attitudes Toward Childbearing and Menstruation among the Navajo," in *Anthropology of Human Birth*, ed. Margarita Artschwager Kay (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1982), 381.

10. Niethammer, *Daughters of the Earth*, 4.

11. Evaneshko, "Tonawanda Seneca Childbearing Culture," 407.

12. Lorene Farris, "The American Indian," *Culture/Childbearing/Health Professionals*, ed. Ann L. Clark (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1978), 32.

13. Evaneshko, "Tonawanda Seneca Childbearing Culture," 407.

14. Marla N. Powers, *Oglala Women: Myth, Ritual, and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 54; and Beverly Horn, "Northwest Coast Indians: The Muckleshoot," in *Anthropology of Human Birth*, ed. Margarita Artschwager Kay (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1982), 370.

15. Horn, "Northwest Coast Indians," 365.

16. Powers, *Oglala Women*, 54.

17. Evaneshko, "Tonawanda Seneca Childbearing Culture," 407.

18. Niethammer, *Daughters of the Earth*, 4.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Horn, "Northwest Coast Indians," 372.

21. Powers, *Oglala Women*, 54.

22. Niethammer, *Daughters of the Earth*, 10.

23. Horn, "Northwest Coast Indians," 373.

24. Evaneshko, "Tonawanda Seneca Childbearing Culture," 408.

25. Niethammer, *Daughters of the Earth*, 9.

26. *Ibid.*, 8.

27. For fully developed arguments concerning the role autobiography plays in developing a woman's sense of self, see Leigh Gilmore, *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994) and Margo Culley, ed., *American Women's Autobiography: Fea(s)ts of Memory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

28. Truman Michelson, "The Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman," in *Bureau of American Ethnology Fortieth Annual Report* (1925), 335.

29. *Ibid.*, 337.

30. *Ibid.*, 317.

31. *Ibid.*, 316.

32. Ibid., 317.
33. Ibid., 315.
34. Ibid., 317.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 319.
38. Ibid., 321.
39. Ibid., 342.
40. The question of whether the Fox Woman's narrative is less "true" or "valid" due to the levels of interpretation and editing it received is beyond the scope of this paper. However, this issue has been argued by others (e.g., Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands, *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984]).
41. Ibid., 317, 319.
42. Ibid., 319.
43. Ruth M. Underhill, *The Autobiography of a Papago Woman* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1979), 33.
44. Ibid., 92.
45. Ibid., 66.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., 71.
53. Bataille and Sands, *American Indian Women*, 100.
54. Helen Sekaquaptewa, *Me and Mine*, told to Louise Udall (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969), np.
55. Ibid., 178.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 180.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 181.
62. Ibid., 184.
63. Ibid., 179.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Rayna Green, *Native American Women: A Contextual Bibliography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 26.
68. Kay Bennett, *Kaibah: Recollection of a Navajo Girlhood* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1964), 191.
69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., 192.
71. Ibid., 193.
72. Ibid., 192, 193.
73. Ibid., 193.
74. Michelson, "The Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman," 317.
75. Vincent Crapanzano, "Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 52.
76. Michael M.J. Fischer, "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 201.
77. Ibid.