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Photographing the Navajo: Scanning Abuse[1]

JAMES C. FARIS

This essay derives from the simple fact that the Navajo seldom have had much input into their imaging in photography. But this fact has many more implications than might initially appear—some implications common to all minority groups subject to a powerful and very aggressive majority with a discursively saturated Western technology at its disposal, and some implications peculiar to the Navajo and their experiences with the West. Photographers of Navajo derived from Western conventions, registers, tropes, photographic practices, and constitutions that dictated their project—whatever their intentions and however much they might have assumed or argued or quite genuinely felt they were representing Navajo.[2] So we will be examining something of what it means to be Navajo, *in photographs*. The essay is also but a scan—more detailed treatment may be found elsewhere in an extended volume devoted specifically to a critical history of the photography of Navajo.

Despite the tenacious classic view, no one would now argue that photography is simply transparent,[3] and photographers present themselves and their cultural history in the exercise, by the exercise; the assumption that somehow we can learn much about Navajo culture (rather than literally the Western view of Navajo culture) from these images is indeed bizarre. How could such images present Navajo if they were not Navajo presentations?[4] Of course, all kinds of other things may be learned, mostly

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about the discourse guiding the photographers and Navajo in Western history and in interaction with the West.

The object here is not to condemn photography nor photographers of Navajo, but simply to indicate how very Western such projects must be; and to briefly examine some of the registers and means by which Navajo have been imaged by photography since its inception to capture Navajo, first in the 1860s (when, in bitter coincidence, Navajo themselves were first captured). This might seem a rather straightforward exercise—sort of a list of the types, models, conventions, "spaces" by which Navajo have been constituted photographically, how they have been situated by cameras and by non-Navajo photographers—that is, a type of archaeology of the photography of Navajo. But, as noted, it is more than this, for there is now an established discourse (albeit changing slightly over time) on Navajo by non-Navajo, and photography in various forms has been one of the methods by which such discourse is maintained, indeed evidenced.

This discourse is one with which Navajo specialists are familiar: The Navajo are people who entered the Southwest late (essentially just in time to greet the Spanish), who arrived with very little in the way of culture, who borrowed just about everything by which they are identified today from someone else—their silverworking and herding from Mexico and the Spanish, their weaving from the Pueblo people or from Mexico and the Spanish, their great religious system from the Pueblo, and so forth. They were savages who were compared unfavorably to their peaceful Pueblo neighbors, and eventually they had to be punished for raiding Euro-Americans and interfering with the latters' expansionist aims. This culminated in the infamous Long Walk—the incarceration at Bosque Redondo in the 1860s, from which the first photographs of Navajo date. What has come to represent Navajo (as late-arriving borrowers, as adapters, as *bricolour,* as troublemakers to the peaceful people of the Southwest, as colorful occupants of an area in which the West very much likes to see them [velvet and silver against red rocks, etc.], but which Western history denies them) is very commonly photographed, and photography is very important to that discourse. It may be seen all around us—it is National Park Service orthodoxy, Southwestern archaeological truth. This is a discourse that has increasing problems empirically (but, more importantly, ethically and politically), and certainly it is a discourse with which most Navajo have problems.[5] The Navajo regard their presence in the Southwest as

ancient, their ancestors having emerged in roughly what is today Navajoland a very long time ago. It is not the point to get into a competition of tears, but the Navajo are one of the indigenous peoples of this continent whose own histories contrast most dramatically with the European-American histories of them. Consequently, nothing the West has to say about Navajo history (and thus little of what anthropology has had to say about Navajo culture) bears much relationship to Navajo views.

Now to some disclaimers and qualifications. The title of this article might suggest to some that its intention is to tell people how to photograph Navajo in some better fashion, more ethically, or in a nonabusive fashion. On the contrary, it presents no advice about photographing Navajo peoples at all, except possibly not to, unless requested to do so by them. Do not inaugurate the project, do not lean on friendships, noble causes (like telling their story for them, documentating their abuse, preserving their culture, exposing their beauty, or bringing to the West how much it can learn from them), all well-known and worn excuses for photographic appropriation. Everyone must understand that Navajo culture does very well on its own, and could certainly exist without photography. Thus, what is examined here are some of the sorts of photographic images that for westerners (Euro-Americans in particular) have come to represent Navajo culture, and some of the photographic registers situating Navajo—the various representational conventions, models (and even archetypes, as the Navajo have been a favorite focus of Jungians).[6]

Readers will be familiar with many of the registers discussed, but it will be argued these registers can be seen again as exemplars of a specific Western discourse. And thus a chronological or strictly historical approach (although there will be some historical digressions) will be avoided, for one of the things that becomes clear after having seen all the significant historical collections is just how little things have changed, and how very much Navajo imaging today looks just as it did one hundred years ago. Of course, some of the props have changed, but hardly the photographic motivations, the motifs, and the registers. The project of the West remains, and there is surprisingly little new after the first themes were established a century ago. There are limited ways in which the Navajo can appear to the West.

Ubiquitous in all collections is perhaps the most common means by which Navajo are imaged (though not deliberately)—trying to avoid the photograph. Only the more honest of photog-

raphers, however, actually save these pictures. This is not a sought-after Euro-American image of Navajo; it is something that happens when cameras are pointed at people who do not wish to be photographed, or from whom no permission has been sought, and it thus enters the archive inadvertently. Everyone who has photographed Navajo people has a photograph where someone is trying to avoid the camera, trying to prevent the photograph, or otherwise attempting to disguise her or his face. From the earliest classic Wittick to contemporary "realist" photography, people very commonly do not want the camera pointed at them. Dozens of these avoidances and resistances exist in archives, although only a few get published. And it tells us something. There is certainly a notion widely prevalent in Navajoland that a photograph can be dangerous, can be used to cause harm, even if inadvertently. Certainly this is clear with sacred materials, such as photographs of sandpaintings being used in healing practices, for a photograph preserves something that is to be consumed in the healing. This did not stop Curtis, McCombe, or Gilpin, who thought it was just a matter of greater payment, firmer access to authorities or brokers, or a closer friendship with a medicine man. Navajo also feel that harm can result if a subject is uncertain of who is to be viewing the photograph and to what use it might be put. Indeed, this has been the basis of several lawsuits, including an important one leveled at the estate of Laura Gilpin.[7]

To begin, look at an early motif for photography in general (but particularly relevant for the photography of native peoples) that might be here labeled the surveillance mode, or register. Indeed, some photographs of Navajo at the turn of the century illustrate this dramatically—whether *in situ* or in delegation photography in Washington, D.C. Anthropology has made particular use of this, as have military and police forces. It has both control and more sinister implications. These are commonly (but not always) the profile-and-*en face* photographs we know so well. They are sometimes quite grand, but it is not a permissible posing register for people with power. Today it is usually confined to police arrest procedures, and it actually first appeared somewhat later than those photographs from and immediately after the Bosque Redondo internment. This is not an appropriate model for subjects who have succeeded; it implies control, supervision, command, rule, test, defeat, arrest.

Next consider a derivation of a common motion, one with which all are familiar—a motif that came into being after the

PHOTO 1. *"Making free drawings at a sheep camp. Three Ramah children draw for the testing project." A mother cautiously watches her children at work on a projective test administered by the Harvard Value Studies Project, Ramah, New Mexico. The investigator's briefcase, charts, and bag are to the right. This is not simply a photograph of distracted or busy children inside a summer shelter; it is a specific surveillance. Photograph courtesy of Ramah Research Collection, Archives of the Laboratory of Anthropology/Museum of Indians Arts and Culture, Santa Fe, Photo no. D.L.-1. Dorothea Leighton, photographer, n.d.*

Navajo had been conquered and were no longer a threat to the West. This is the aestheticizing register, with a submotif or subdivision in photography of Navajo that might be called "body parts." It is a persistent means of imaging that is quite popular, and one that makes them (or parts of them) creatures of turquoise, velvet, sky, feathers, silver, sheep, blankets, red rocks. The graphic gesture from which this is derived is that of pornography or fashion photography—where body parts are isolated, but also where the agreement is clear and payment is normally substan-

tial. But the body parts submotif is persuasive and pervasive. A clear feature of this subgenre or secondary discourse is that it commonly involves a very intrusive camera technique. Few would tolerate cameras this close to their bodies (or body parts) without extraordinary preparation and or payment. Note the end papers of Laura Gilpin's very popular book, *The Enduring Navaho.*[8] From these body parts illustrations of Gilpin's, another theme or popular motion can be seen as well, one of important social consequence: Navajo doing what Euro-Americans think they had ought to do. This is a motion very popular with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), but with a strong historical component as well, in that the body parts or people illustrated are all doing acceptable things:

PHOTO 2. *"Marie Martin instructing weavers in pattern design. Hunter's Point Day School, St. Michaels [AZ]. One of the services rendered by the Navajo Arts and Crafts Guild." Note the commands and the rigorous, gendered schedule. These women, since they most likely are accomplished weavers, are quite familiar with the patterns here displayed; thus the instruction probably is redundant. Photograph courtesy Navajo Tribal Museum, Snow Collection NC-3-56. Milton Snow, photographer, 30 April 1943.*

PHOTO 3. *"Birth and Growth of the American Flag." During the Crownpoint Bicentennial Project, these Navajo children were oddly costumed as colonists. Courtesy of New Mexico State Records and Archives, New Mexico Bicentennial File, no. 33882. Photographer unknown, about 1976.*

Navajo as successful adapters, Navajo in their place, Navajo no longer a threat to Western expansion. There are no fists in the air in defiance, no hands holding guns pointed at the photographer, no hands threatening the camera, no hands around a liquor bottle.

Figure 4. "Ready for the Enemy." The man in this photograph taken near Carriso is Bishoshi, a leader in the Beautiful Mountain Rebellion of 1913. There is a bitter irony in the impotence of this old Navajo man now posing—armed—for silly photographs; earlier he had been arrested for resisting BIA assimilation and educational policies of the time. Photograph courtesy of Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cat No. H4227, received through A.V. Kidder, 1914. Negative no. 27773. (This photograph, with the same title, also appears copyrighted by William Carpenter in Library of Congress collections.) Pennington and Rowland, photographers, about 1914.

Aestheticizing motifs obviously are one of the most abundant of motions in situating Navajo visually. Readers are familiar with these, since they grace every tourist brochure in one way or another, every bookstore in the Southwest, as well as many coffee tables elsewhere. These images, which have been around since the Navajo were conquered, appear on every postcard rack, leaning on the shallow gestures of nostalgia and sentiment. There is, indeed, a veritable industry of Navajo in such postures. They may be set in or near hogans, on red rocks or in canyons, against Anasazi ruins (it matters not that these structures are denied to the Navajo by Western history, despite what might be in the tourist mind), with dramatic sky, sunset, dawn, horse, sheep, or cloud. They come in black-and-white, but more commonly in color, so that the turquoise and velvet and silver can be more theatrically realized. Weaving, sheep herding, and riding are activities that are secondary to the aesthetic but add a sort of "still-Navajo" reality to the photograph, and Pendletons as well as Navajo weavings are in abundance. These are so omnipresent that there is no need to illustrate them, but sometimes there is such compulsion in this motion that photographers try to do it all and set up everything in a single photograph: Navajo women are posed to weave in brilliant sunshine; at the same time, one woman is combing another's hair with a grass brush, carding, spinning, and tending sheep. Indeed, such photographs are so ubiquitous that they have come to caricature the Navajo. It is, however, somewhat ironic that these commonplace aestheticizing images today are such a popular, pervasive, and universally characterizing model of timeless Navajo culture, for science (anthropology) has denied the Navajo much in the way of antiquity in the areas of Navajoland. These motions also present the clean Navajo, the washed and arranged, such as the hogan with nothing in front of it or, commonly, with nothing in it.[9] Of course, if Navajo have a choice and there is consideration of their values, there is no doubt that the hogan with all the evidence of success and past wealth—old cars, refrigerators, etc.—is the preferred. But the Gilpin tradition of washed and clean and in-their-place Navajo continues, and even the latest large coffee table volumes on Navajo contain all the clichés.[10]

This tangentially bears on another variation of the aestheticizing register, indeed, not even a photographic gesture peculiar to photography of Navajo, which is the discourse of sentiment. It comes in every guise, from photographs of the aged and weath-

Figure 5. "Navajo impersonators at Cochiti. Christmastime dance spoofing Navajo." Courtesy of New Mexico State Records and Archives, Sally Wagner Collection no. 8458. Sally Wagner, photographer, about 1958.

ered (also ubiquitous on postcard racks) to special photographs of ostensibly Navajo practices that are no longer very relevant, such as extensive sheep herding and, especially, battle regalia and weapons. This nostalgia has been around since Edward Curtis and the beginning of the century (after Native Americans had all been successfully conquered), but it was not always so popular. Twenty-five years earlier the public clamored for their conquest and annihilation. Indeed, some of the same practices that are now photographically celebrated and sentimentalized were earlier photographically condemned, especially by assimilationist bureaucrats and BIA officials.

It is clear that the camera was considered vital in agendas of an explicit governmental nature. Navajo are photographed volunteering to go to war, buying war bonds, being instructed to speak English (see figure 2) and wash their hands, participating in arcane pageants (see figure 3), and hosting irrelevant dignitaries. Such government agencies often arranged photos of Navajo with persons for whom the Navajo might have had little regard, and the camera here is more evidential than situating, except to situate them as people with little choice. (The Navajo Nation Museum Archives contain many photographs of Navajo with people such as Harry James, George Wallace, visiting Saudi Arabians, and, of course, hosts of visiting politicians—each of whom undoubtedly had to be given silverwork or weaving by Navajo officials.)

This juxtaposition of Navajo with extremes of non-Navajo, or of tradition with modernity or antitradition, is, of course, a persistent image theme (again not specific to Navajo) of what might be called the pastiche mode or, occasionally, a postmodern gesture (which, however, is so old it dates from the very earliest Navajo photography), since the Navajo are, in the scientific scheme, only borrowers of tradition. What else is new—indeed, is this not the core of the West's understanding of the Navajo?[11] This register often had intended irony and humor. But the very irony preserves the old hierarchies so dear to Western social sciences—those of traditional/modern, sedentary/nomadic, savage/civilized—all gestures designed to totalize Navajo experience. It then skates along the thin edge of caricature, or even oppression and racism. As noted, this global shopping mall type of approach is in vogue even with postmodernists. For example, Skeet McAuley, in a celebrated and much-lauded book (but in my view a confused and theoretically incoherent volume),[12] stresses this juxtapositioning and this pastiche. For McAuley these are not, as they were earlier, evidences of change—of modernity combined with tradition—so much as they are of wit and irony. The irony is conspicuously ignored by Navajo medicine man Mike Mitchell, whom McAuley has persuaded to comment on his photographs. Mitchell comments on the physical setting, the meaning of the place in Navajo culture, ignoring altogether the other photographic information, the pastiche, the juxtapositioning—McAuley's little conceits. The Navajo commentary is not a parallel text, but serves as a sort of moral or authenticating insulation for McAuley's otherwise quite unremarkable photographs.

The last common motif to be noted in this brief scan of abuse is that of dignified (or sometimes undignified) victim, or stoic

victim. This image discourse runs all the way from journalistic photographs of the drunk and disturbed and dying,[13] to the reformer FSA (Farm Security Administration) types of images of poverty and/or tragedy, such as those of McCombe.[14] As most readers are now well aware, many of these images are hardly documentary. Sometimes they even are posed, more in aid of directed and supervised change than from any serious objection to conditions. They are deliberate band-aids and quite often contrast with alternatives, especially those that threaten the power structure. This is certainly true of Gilpin and others of the New Deal era. Even though Gilpin objected to those who photographed the Navajo drunk—and at least one source says she herself never photographed them—in the Gilpin archives at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth sit Gilpin's photographs of drunks. Where are the photographs of Navajo people who are able to have a drink like anyone else, as television advertisements urge for "real" Americans? Where are the confident photographs of Native American people with a beer, such as in Rick Hill's warm photographs of friends and family?

The dignified victim trope reaches its zenith in the very problematic (but very extensive) photographic book *Navajo Means People*, with text by Clyde Kluckhohn and Evon Vogt of Harvard, and photographs by *Time/Life* staffer Leonard McCombe. This volume, a social administration propaganda piece that is, in many ways, a very offensive book, focuses on and emphasizes what the West considers maladjustment. Unlike Gilpin's photos, these do not present the Navajo as washed, idyllic, cooperative, and in-their-place. Instead, every aspect of their lives is subjected to surgical photographic scrutiny, and it is clear that permission and/or payment could not have been a consideration in most circumstances.

It is worth noting that every attempt was made to get local photographers to take the photographs accompanying the Kluckhohn-Vogt text. For example, George Hight, a long-time Gallup studio photographer, was approached. On learning that the book was to focus on social problems in such a visual and intrusive way, Hight refused to be part of the project. After all, he had many Navajo friends, lived in the area, and, as a studio photographer, was used to Navajo coming in to ask for and pay to have their photographs taken. So McCombe was contracted. His photojournalistic style—the photography of the moment—yielded the offensive photographs so important to propagandists and reformers. Readers will be

familiar with the ideologies here—the passive victim, the dignified casualty, the stoic Navajo in defeat, and the implicit notion that it is a Navajo problem to be overcome by them. Nowhere in this work is there an indictment of what has brought this situation about, never any commentary about getting Euro-Americans out of the hair of indigenous Americans. Indeed, in their commentary to accompany McCombe's photographs, Kluckhohn and Vogt reserve their greatest contempt for the Native American Church and, amazingly, for the perceived dangers of communism, both of which are equated with Navajo resistance! The conclusions (labeled "The Problem of Cultural Adjustment") to McCombe, written by Kluckhohn and Vogt, are astonishing:

> [W]e may ask: after we have assisted the "backward" or "underdeveloped" area of the world to obtain what we call a "decent standard of living" by helping their people to establish improved technologies and by creating in them a desire for the manufactured products of our own industrial system, what then? Do we supply the material goods and improved technology and allow the communists to supply them with a new "religion" and set of values? These are certainly far from merely academic questions in the modern world. One important consequence . . . if carried out too rapidly upon a "backward" people, is a period of social and political disorganization in which individuals are caught "between two worlds" and are chronically dissatisfied. But human beings will not tolerate such a state of affairs for long. If solutions are not found in the development of new coherent sets of values, they are sought by nativistic returns to the old values, or by a psychological flight from the realities of the intolerable situation by using alcohol or peyote.[15]

An equally disturbing book of victims is one by Mark Gaede—frequently simply photographs of dead Navajo, in which the Western discursive project is not recognizable, except to shock and to patronize, for there is no suggestion of alternative, little determinable outrage, no explicit discursive critique, no insertion of another project. Gaide apparently is disturbed by the carnage, but not so much that he would not publish the book. Without an explicit political critique, his motivations are not very clear.

Each generation of photographers of Navajo is usually quick to distance itself from earlier Navajo photographers, but this gesture has been playing now for almost one hundred years. These comments are available for Vroman,[16] for Gilpin,[17] for McAuley,[18]

for Keegan,[19] for Page,[20] for Running.[21] But non-Navajo photographers are far more like those who came before than they are different. Of course, photographers are not responsible for what is said after them, for their biographers or later commentators, but in some cases such commentators are either blind, poor scholars, or simply wrong. There has been little change, because apart from technical innovations and slight change in commodity forms, the discourses about Navajo have not changed. Each subsequent photographer of Navajo critiques previous photographers because their work is too intrusive, or insufficiently detailed, or posed, or candid, or long focused, or close up, or too preservational, or too celebratory of change. There is no way Navajo can avoid the camera.

In this brief essay we have examined photographs of Navajo that indicate that if they avoid photographs, they are shy or uninformed or superstitious; image them aged (but they cannot be aboriginal); collaborate in telling a story (always the West's story, not their own); picture them in postures never required of the powerful; show them as beautiful and inspiring only when they are in their place (a place denied them in ancient history as well as in the insidious more recent land claims settlements—cf. Kammer, Redhouse, Benedek),[22] subject them to ridicule, ostensibly in good fun (but there would be everything from editorials to war if the same were done to Jews or Hopi [see figure 5]); force them into the most arcane of Euro-American customs (presumably in aid of assimilation or proof of their Americanness [see figure 3]); favor them as victims (but preferably dignified victims); show them as irredeemable *bricolour*, adapters, borrowers, exemplars of pastiche.

From a very small range of photographs of Navajo, a few photographic discourses have been outlined that order some of this photography. The issues of photographic theory and the nature of visual representation have been avoided, but certainly it is clear that cameras are not neutral technologies. This essay has avoided ciné or video production, for these commonly add a verbal or narrative discourse that complicates dimensions beyond the task here. Because I am not a photographer or a photo historian, I have avoided aesthetic commentary and formal photographic analyses in order to focus more on context. This is also why I have avoided the distinction between documentary and some other kind of photography.

There are many very competent photographers whose works involve Navajo people, but they could not be included in this

short essay. Although in most cases one or another of the classical photographic discourses discussed above dictate the photograph, there are commonly some very nice photographs indeed. Parkhurst, Coolidge, Schwemberger, Frasher, Willis, Snow, James, Kawano, Craig, and lesser-known photo collections, such as the collections of trader families, have not been discussed, and some of the great materials of older photographers such as Vroman and Wittick have not been touched.[23] But perhaps more than the explicit critique and the ethical and political objections put forward here, I have encouraged, through this paper, a more critical attitude toward received photographic wisdom from Euro-Americans about Navajo, and even some suggestions about the photography of minority peoples in general.

NOTES

1. This essay is an abstracted piece from a much larger project—James C. Faris, *Navajo and Photography* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996)—on the photography of Navajo. I have published preliminary materials on some of the classic inscriptions, such as on McCombe, on Gilpin (Faris, "Photography and the Navajo: Some Preliminary Comments on Classical Inscriptions," *exposure* 29:1 [1993]: 34–43), and some quite extensive material on the Navajo photography of Curtis (Faris, "The Navajo Photography of Edward S. Curtis," *History of Photography* 17:4 [1993]: 377–87). There is an enormous archive—containing more than one thousand known photographers of Navajo, and today some eighty Navajo photographers are at work in various ways. Hundreds of thousands of images are contained in dozens of sources. And as everyone knows, archives have a sinister way of establishing what Sekula (Allan Sekula, "Reading an Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capital," in *Photography/Politics: Two,* ed. Patricia Holland, Jo Spence, Simon Watney [London: Methuen & Co., 1986], 155) calls "abstract visual equivalence."

2. As a quick example, one only has to compare some of the Navajo photographers of Navajo (to see what is not photographed), or even the studio photographers of Gallup, Farmington, or Flagstaff (to see how different are the images when Navajo asked to have their photographs taken and paid for them), with that vast majority of photographs in which Navajo had little or no choice. This does not mean that studio conventions escape the West, or that there were not registers of acceptance in studio traditions that differed dramatically from Navajo presentations—simply that Navajo, if they sought out a photographer, normally wore what they wanted to wear for the photograph and had at least minimal input. Certainly in this circumstance, they were somewhat aware of the conventions of studios and posing. And they probably willingly participated.

3. See, for example, Richard Bolton, ed., *The Contest of Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989); Carol Squires, ed., *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography* (Seattle: The Bay Press, 1990); Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

4. It does not necessarily or automatically follow that Navajo photographers somehow do a better job of presenting or representing Navajo than non-Navajo photographers. On the contrary, the history, technology, and practice of photography itself cannot be so easily divorced from its Western heritage. Navajo photographers of Navajo perhaps may be discriminated from non-Navajo photographers of Navajo most importantly (this was passed on to me in an interview with Navajo photographer Monty Roessel when I asked him to distinguish himself from non-Navajo photographers) by the "graphic silences"—that is, what they do not photograph, what is not to be visually imaged by chemical or electronic means. It is a matter of what they know about Navajo culture and how this informs their imaging. Navajo photographer Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie is somewhat exceptional in this regard, since she uses her images as rather explicit political documents (Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, "Proving Nothing," *Crosswinds* 5:9 [1993]: 13; "Artist's Statement," *exposure* 29:1 [1993]: 27–28; "Compensating Imbalances," *exposure* 29:1 [1993]: 29–30). But Navajo photographers are frequently subject to a type of "multiple" or "dual" vision, and one view of themselves must always be as others see them. After all, this is the most common image they may have of themselves from the blitz of media sources.

5. Somehow this does not matter a great deal. I once tried to have a conversation with a young Euro-American ranger at the headquarters of Canyon de Chelly National Monument (which exists technically and formally, as I understand it, at the pleasure of the Navajo Nation, which owns all the land on which it stands) about Navajo truths, about the Navajo view of their history and their culture, as opposed to what is museumed there. This young woman, a dozen earrings running up the side of one ear, a very large pistol strapped around her waist, finally told me that "the National Park Service was interested in the scientific, in the evolutionary view, not in politics." She dismissed the Navajo view as political and unscientific!

6. Notice, I do not speak of *caricature* or *stereotype* or *misrepresentation,* all terms that point to a distortion, a distance from truth or reality or verity. This would imply that I know a greater truth or reality (which I do not), or that photography could somehow, if done properly, reveal or record truth (which, except in the most trivial sense, I do not think it can). What is being argued here is another history of the photography of Navajo, another attitude toward the discourses of the West about Navajo, another perspective on the imaging of human subjects.

7. The Gilpin lawsuit was a complicated case with several facets over time; it was finally settled out of court, with a gag order on the parties concerned. It is an interesting case, for, in substantial portion, the details are unknown. To this date the Amon Carter Museum will say nothing about it whatsoever. From

what I can gather, the courts eventually decided that objection to photographic exposure, and the publication of the photographs that followed, hinged on the clause *people of reasonable sensitivity* governing the tort on privacy. The courts argued that publication of the photographs of Lilli Benally and her son Nelson did not violate privacy, since the argument goes that people of "reasonable sensitivity" would not have objected to their publication. That potential harm might befall Ms. Benally and her son from this exposure was considered a sensitivity that was unreasonable. Navajo culture, in this reckoning, is unreasonable. See Sally Eauclaire, "Proof of Who We Are: An Interview with Writer and Photocurator Martha Sandweiss," *Southwest Profile* 12:7 (1989): 44–51; William J. Moreland, "American Indians and the Right to Privacy: A Psycholegal Investigation of the Unauthorized Publication of Portraits of American Indians," *American Indian Law Review* 15:2 (1991): 237–77; Faris, "The Endearing Navajo—Laura Gilpin's Navajo Photography," *History of Photography* 21:1 (forthcoming 1997).

8. Laura Gilpin, *The Enduring Navaho* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

9. See ibid., passim; and Joel Grimes, *Navajo: Portrait of a Nation* (Englewood, CO: Westcliffe Publishers, Inc., 1992), 34–35.

10. See Grimes, *Navajo;* Susanne Page, *A Celebration of Being* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing Co., 1989); and Susanne Page and Jake Page, *Navajo* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995).

11. It should be clear that some of these registers permeate others, and there is seepage between them—pastiche modes may also be aestheticizing.

12. Skeet McAuley, *Sign Language* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1989).

13. See Marc Gaede, *Bordertowns* (La Cañada, CA: Chaco Press, 1988).

14. Leonard McCombe, text by Clyde Kluckhohn and Evon Z. Vogt, *Navaho Means People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951).

15. Ibid., 159.

16. William Webb and Robert A. Weinstein, *Dwellers at the Source: Southwestern Indian Photographs of A.C. Vroman, 1895–1904* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

17. Martha A. Sandweiss, *Laura Gilpin: An Enduring Grace* (Fort Worth, TX: Amon Carter Museum, 1986).

18. McAuley, *Sign Language.*

19. Marcia Keegan and Frontier Photographers, *Enduring Culture: A Century of Photography of the Southwest Indians* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 1990).

20. Page, *A Celebration of Being.*

21. Noel Bennett, *Halo of the Sun: Stories Told and Retold* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1987).

22. See Jerry Kammer, *The Second Long Walk* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980); John Redhouse, *Geopolitics of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute* (Albuquerque: Redhouse/Wright Publications, 1985); and Emily Benedek, *The Wind Won't Know Me* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

23. See Faris, *Navajo and Photography,* for details.