The Nightway Questions American Literature

Kenneth Roemer

In 1987 a graduate student came to me with what seemed to be an ingenious excuse for avoiding a reading assignment. She explained that she came from a rural background and was raised in a superstitious family. After reading John Bierhorst's introduction to Washington Matthews's translation of parts of the *Diné* or Navajo Nightway,[1] she was afraid to read the text. She called my attention to Bierhorst's comment about Navajo who believed that Matthews's deafness and paralysis were related to the reversed healing powers of the ceremony that could have caused his illness (288–89). I tried to reassure her by indicating that my class and Bierhorst's greatly condensed version of Matthews's book *The Night Chant* (1902) certainly made no pretense of teaching the ceremonial (or chantway or "sing") itself. That would take years, even if we all knew Navajo. Furthermore, such an endeavor would be blasphemous, since only a select group of highly trained Navajo chanters (*hataałii*) could lead a Nightway. We would only be examining English translations of some of the songs and chants and would treat those parts of the ceremonial with the same degree of respect we would accord the ritual dramas and liturgies of other great world religions.

The student left my office ready to read and satisfied with my explanation. I thought that I too was satisfied with my response until I walked into our next class meeting and overheard several other students admitting

American Literature, Volume 66, Number 4, December 1994. CCC 0002-9831/94/$1.50.

they had had reservations about reading Matthews's translations. This atmosphere of group confession jarred me. Despite my strong appreciation for the artistic, therapeutic, and spiritual beauty of the Nightway, and despite my strong belief that introducing students to Native American ceremonial literature should be an essential element of an American literature curriculum, I also approach the reading and teaching of the Nightway with trepidation. My comments reassured but also surprised the students. Within the same week they had to admit for the first time that they had been afraid of the potential physical effects of reading an assigned text and had witnessed a teacher confess his fears about teaching that text.

This story of shared revelations, to which I will return later, dramatizes my primary focus: how encounters with American Indian texts can raise fundamental questions about the nature of literature, about how we perceive literature, and about student-teacher roles. Introducing translated portions of ceremonial literature into an American literature curriculum can, for instance, initiate patterns of questions about periodization. The Nightway can be placed as a pre-Columbian text; or, as the editors of the fourth edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* (1994) indicate, as a late nineteenth- early twentieth-century text (the best known translations were published during this period—Matthews's *Navaho Legends*, 1897, and *Night Chant*, 1902); or as a contemporary text, since the Nightway is performed frequently today. A multiple historicizing of the Nightway can invite professors and students to break away from conventional period pigeonholing and to explore the aesthetic and cultural implications of multiple placings of the least to the most canonized of American texts. Obvious examples of the latter include Melville, as rehistoricized by Paul Lauter in the recent "New Melville" issue of *American Literature*,[2] and Dickinson, who can be historically positioned by composition (1860s), by first edition (1890s publication and response), by canonization (1950s and early 1960s Johnson editions and New Critical analyses), and by reevaluation (1980s feminist interpretations).

Encounters with ceremonial texts can also raise other more provocative and profound questions about authorship, about transformations from specific to general audience, about the ethics of revealing and withholding information, and about experiencing literature as a generative force. We should be asking such questions in all our literature courses, but sometimes it takes an unfamiliar text—one that doesn't come complete with an abundance of accepted literary criticism and one that doesn't fit

familiar notions of literature, author, or genre—to jar us into asking the fundamental questions we should ask of all texts.[3] For most English students and professors, the Nightway is unfamiliar, and my students and I were certainly jarred.

I am not, of course, claiming that the only reason to study American Indian texts is to generate questions applicable to other forms of literature. And there are certainly numerous other Indian and non-Indian texts that can be used to raise fundamental questions. Nonetheless, my approach should insure that Native American texts will not be held captive in isolated ethnic pockets. The Nightway is, furthermore, a particularly available and appropriate text for American literature courses. The fourth edition of the *Norton Anthology* reprints two long prayers from Bierhorst's anthology, *Four Masterworks of American Indian Literature* (1974), and Bierhorst's anthology is readily available in a University of Arizona Press paperback (1984). (For more dedicated scholars, AMS Press reprinted Matthews's *Night Chant* in 1978.) Larry Evers has produced an excellent videotape, *By This Song I Walk*, in which Andrew Natonabah, a Nightway chanter, uses a Nightway song to introduce Navajo concepts of place, song, and life. James C. Faris's *The Nightway* (1990) provides interested teachers and students with significant backgrounds and contexts, including descriptions of various nineteenth- and twentieth-century translations.[4] Finally, the Nightway is especially meaningful to me because I have worked on the Navajo reservation and have recently attended parts of two Nightways under the guidance of Will Tsosie. Tsosie has danced and sung in many Nightways, and his uncle is a Nightway chanter.[5]

■ ■ ■

A few words about the Nightway should help to orient nonspecialists to my discussions of authorship, literary transformations, the ethics of knowledge exchange, and generative literature.[6] Most published analyses categorize the Nightway (*tl'ééjí hatáál* or, more colloquially, *Yei-bechai* Dances) as one of the Navajo Holyways, though Tsosie emphasizes strong connections with Blessingways.[7] Holyway chantways invite and attract the powers of particular Holy People (*diné diyinii*) so that disharmony can be dispelled and *hózhó* (balance, beauty, happiness, health, and order) can be reestablished. If all is done correctly, the Holy People are compelled to come and *hózhó* will be restored.

The Nightway is a nine-day healing ceremony primarily performed from October through December. It is comprised of hundreds of songs

and thousands of chanted lines and rituals, including dances and the creation of several large sand paintings. Nightway ceremonials are directed by skilled chanters (or medicine men, the English term many Navajo prefer) assisted by those trained to perform rituals, dances, and songs and to create sand paintings, prayer sticks, and many other ritual objects. The focus of the ceremony is the "patient(s)" or "one(s) sung over" who has visited a traditional diagnostician—for example, a hand trembler—who recommended a Nightway often because the patient's state of imbalance is manifest in paralysis or illnesses concentrated in the head (for example, eye and ear disorders, headaches, or mental problems). Sometimes there are also "sub-patients" who experience parts of the chantway to see if the Nightway might be an appropriate cure for them. The patients have brought disorders upon themselves by consciously or inadvertently disrupting natural or social orders. Certain parts of the Nightway are performed inside the ceremonial hogan; others, especially during the final all-night dances and songs, are held outside and witnessed by hundreds of Navajo.

■ ■ ■

One of the many ways, besides time-period associations, that texts are pigeonholed is through the process of author association. Identifying a text as being written by Henry James or Zora Neale Hurston can set up a network of assumptions about style, content, ideology, historical era, gender, and race that establish placement of the text. An introduction to the Nightway can undermine facile associations. "Who is the author of the Nightway?" like "When was the Nightway published?" is a misdirected question. But responses to this misdirection lead to a series of provocative concepts of authorship that can direct students to reevaluate the functions of authorship.

In the videotape *By This Song I Walk* Andrew Natonabah, a Nightway chanter and former head of Navajo Studies at Navajo Community College, has outlined a traditional Navajo conception of Nightway authorship. The Navajo divinities, the Holy People, are the authors; they taught the chantway to the Navajo. For example, centuries ago they taught various forms of the Nightway either to a Navajo individual named the "Dreamer" or "Visionary" or to the "Stricken Twins," depending on which version of this chantway origin narrative one encounters. In one version, after learning the Nightway, the Dreamer taught a younger brother and

thus begins the succession of chanter-apprentice relationships that lead to today's Nightway medicine men. As Faris argues, unified and complete Dreamer narratives are artificial constructs performed by expert chanters for Anglo specialists such as Matthews, Berard Haile, Mary Wheelwright, and Edward Sapir, who assumed that the Nightway must have a whole and coherent "myth" behind it. Actually, the narrative was and is not intended to be told as a whole narrative, though, according to Tsosie, some chanters today do pause during the ceremonies to tell episodes from Nightway narratives.

These origin episodes, whether presented in private apprentice-chanter sessions or during the chantway, provide important contexts and an essential authority for Nightway participants. An awareness of this authority can provoke students to consider the ways knowledge of an author or of "authorial functions," to borrow Foucault's term, can legitimize a text. The discovery that Harriet Jacobs was indeed the author of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)—a revelation that transformed a work of fiction by a white woman into an "authentic" slave narrative—is probably the most striking example of the restoration of authorial authority in recent memory. The authority provided by the Nightway Dreamer narratives may also sensitize students to less spectacular but certainly significant examples; for instance, how a knowledge of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's rest cure experience or Melville's whaling voyages helped to shape the responses of both nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers to "The Yellow Wallpaper" and *Moby-Dick*.

Another notion of authorship associated with the Nightway can teach students the degree to which authors are social constructions. The Nightway medicine men are, in a performance sense, the authors of specific ceremonials. As Faris's and Linda Hadley's elaborate genealogical charts (*Nightway*, 19, 100) and historical analyses of these chanters make clear, "there are general regional concentrations and forms and lineages of medicine men" (*Nightway*, 105). And I should emphasize that they are speaking of medicine *men*. Although women do have important roles, especially as singers and sand painters, Tsosie could identify only one possible Nightway medicine woman, and Faris, Hadley, and Harry Walters have found little evidence of women who have principal responsibility for entire Nightways or who have the necessary medicine bundles and mask sets.[8] This important fact of Navajo ceremonial life can be used to alert students to the power of expectations about who is supposed

to create literature during a specific historical period in a particular culture; it can help them to understand why John Winthrop blamed a Puritan woman's insanity on her proclivity for writing, why Phillis Wheatley's poems seem so "white" to modern readers, or why Hawthorne complained about the "scribbling women."

At first glance it appears that the one other obvious concept of Nightway authorship—the translator-editor as author—would not hold many lessons for Americanists unless they were examining other translated Indian texts; Spanish, French, or Dutch travel accounts; edited slave narratives; or immigrant literature that appeared first in languages other than English. But examinations of how the best-known translator, Washington Matthews, attempted to transform the unfamiliar and incomprehensible into the familiar and comprehensible can help students to understand how many American authors are translators, or rather transformers, who must discover ways to reformulate a private knowledge of specific places, cultures, and selves so that a public reading audience can comprehend the author's private worldview.

One small example from Matthews's *Night Chant* should illustrate how his text can illuminate the processes of transformation. The following four lines come from a song of Monster Slayer, one of the Navajo hero twins. Matthews presents the lines to us in three forms:

Navajo

Sĭtsĕ'dze
Tsĭn nitadeskaígo
Ayolélego yenyenyen
Sĭlagaástini ananhe'hé'

Literal Translation

Before me
Wood scattered around white
He makes it (meaningless [word])
I cause it (meaningless [word])

Free Translation

Before me
Forests white are strewn around
The lightning scatters;
But 'tis I who cause it.[9]

Among the many changes in these lines—the change from Navajo to English, the altered syntax, the deletion of the vocables, which Matthews perceived as "meaningless," and the addition of the Victorian poetic " 'tis I"—the most striking change may be the addition of the word "lightning." In a note, Matthews explains that the "wood scattered" line "refers to trees recently stricken by lightning and showing white wood where they are rent. The word for lightning does not appear; but the shamans explain that lightning is meant, so the word lightning is inserted in . . . the free translation" (*Night Chant*, 281).

Much of Matthews's *Night Chant* is added lightning: attempts to provide explanations that to the traditional Navajo audience are common knowledge but to most non-Navajo are unknown. Though usually not as extreme, a similar process of transformation has shaped much of American literature, since the physical immensity and variety of the landscapes and the diversity of the populations have often forced authors to add, delete, and rearrange so that audiences unfamiliar with the author's topic could comprehend what he or she hoped to express. Certainly, explorers and early settlers had to be skillful translators: Columbus translated a tip of South America near Trinidad through biblical images of the Garden of Eden; John Winthrop imagined a tiny Atlantic coast outpost as St. Matthew's "Citty upon a hill." Clearly ethnic authors are cultural translators. Leslie Marmon Silko once told me that if she had written *Ceremony* (1977) just for Laguna Pueblo, the novel would have been only thirty pages long; some of Rudolfo Anaya's friends greeted the publication of *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) by asking him, "How come you wrote it? We knew all about that."[10] Like Washington Matthews, Silko and Anaya had to "add lightning" so that they could be understood beyond their Laguna and Chicano audiences. Beyond these obvious examples, we could also point to the classics of American literature that required authors to translate for reading audiences the intricacies of professions dominated by men: whaling, Mississippi riverboat piloting, hunting, and fishing. Possibly our greatest translators have been women who labored to transform very private domestic lives into public revelations or to present public topics from women's viewpoints. The challenges that Matthews faced may help to provoke students' awareness of the extremities of the tasks these women faced as they tried to translate what many nineteenth- and twentieth-century women "knew all about" but which was still unfamiliar, even as meaningless as a Navajo vocable, to large portions of American reading and publishing communities.

■ ■ ■

Questions raised by the Nightway about periodization and authorship may force scholars to reevaluate how they structure courses and write literary histories and how they conceive of the origins, the authority, and the cultural transformations of texts. They do not, however, seem to call as obviously for a radical transformation of teacher-student relationships. Such transformations can be necessary, though, when a teacher considers the ethics of imposing non-Navajo functionalist or psychological interpretations on the Nightway or of revealing information about sacred ceremonials. I will focus on the latter.

Up until the early summer of 1992, I thought I had been following all of the guidelines presented by the Abenaki poet and editor Joseph Bruchac, including his demanding advice that in "some cases [teaching Indian literature] may even mean NOT discussing something. That is a hard direction for people with the western mindset to follow, that western mindset which says 'tell it all, show it all, explain it all.'"[11] Even in 332 9″×12″ oversized pages, Matthews could not come close to "telling it all" about the Nightway. And I certainly made no pretense of completeness as we studied Bierhorst's seventy-page collection of Matthews's translations and his own very brief discussions of parts of the ceremonial.

Nevertheless, as I read Faris's *Nightway* during the summer of 1992, I realized that my primary visual aid might violate the "telling it all" warning. In several brief discussions (11; 22, note 13; 111; 132–33, notes 3 and 5), Faris comments on filming and photographing and notes the strong reservations associated with filming a Nightway *in process*, even if some of the participants, including the chanter and the one sung over, have given permission for filming. For several years, I had been using *Navajo: Fight for Survival* (1972), a Time/Life film developed for BBC TV. This movie offers a highly respectful view of Navajo ceremonialism and includes footage of several portions of a Nightway filmed in Lukachuki, Arizona, in 1963. According to Frank Norvick of the Hearst Museum at the University of California, Berkeley (where the entire 13,000 feet of Nightway footage is housed), Samuel Barrett, director of the American Indian Film Project, had obtained signed releases and the approval of the Navajo Tribal Council.[12] At one point in *Navajo*, an elderly Navajo even blesses the film crew. It seemed as if I had the best of both worlds. More than any other film or reading I had used, this movie helped students visualize the complicated ceremonial contexts of the songs and prayers,

and Barrett had made the effort to obtain permissions. But the more I considered the reservations about the 1963 filming expressed by the chanters and families Faris interviewed and considered the history of the way permissions have been obtained from Indians, even by ethical, knowledgeable, and well-meaning scholars, the more I realized that I had to stop using the film. Otherwise I would be violating (at least indirectly) the commonly held prohibition against filming actual ceremonials and (at least indirectly) repeating the old procedure of finding Indians who agree with an Anglo viewpoint and assuming that their approval constitutes tribal approval. As a means of introducing students to the ethics of discussing sacred ceremonials, I tell them why I have stopped showing the film. The responses range from enthusiastic acceptance of my decision to open expressions of anger (especially from graduate students) because a teacher has violated the covenant to "tell it all."

I cannot predict how my students will respond to this instance of altered teacher-student relations. I do hope, however, that they will be provoked enough to consider carefully and habitually how the transfer of a particular text, a particular body of information, or a particular viewpoint might misrepresent or violate the beliefs of the people presented in the text—whether those people be traditional Navajo, white fundamentalist Baptists, Catholic Hispanics, Buddhist Asians, or any other of the diverse peoples of the United States.

■ ■ ■

It is appropriate that I conclude this essay with a return to the graduate student who wanted to be excused from reading Matthews's Nightway translations. Her request, my initial response, the other students' concerns, and my admission of anxiety suggest fundamental questions about definitions of "literature," about student-teacher relationships, and about the nature of reading. English professors are expected to be in control of a process that defines literature and reading experiences in terms of disciplined encounters with texts perceived primarily as art objects, cultural artifacts, social constructions, and, more rarely today, philosophical and/or moral teachings or sources of entertainment. The Nightway can be perceived as all of the above, and, certainly, Matthews's translations can be approached from a variety of interpretive angles, including New Critical close readings. (The intricate forms of repetition, balance, enumeration, dramatic pacing, and personification in several of Matthews's translations invite such close readings. In Bierhorst, see especially the

chant to *Tsisnadzhíni* [identified by Bierhorst as Pelado Peak], 299–302; the song cycle beginning with "The sacred blue corn seed," 313–16; and the long chant before the *Atsálei* dance on the last night, 326–30. The new *Norton Anthology* reprints the *Tsisnadzhíni* and *Atsálei* chants.)

From a traditional Navajo viewpoint, however, this chantway is primarily a gift from the Holy People which, if executed properly by Navajo chanters, their assistants, and the patient(s), will reorder reality. It is the responsibility of the Navajo to perform the ceremonies properly. If the words and rituals are done correctly, the Holy People "cannot resist," must attend, and *hózhó* will be reestablished.[13] The positive generative power of the Nightway is manifest in many of the songs and prayers, especially in Matthews's well-known translation of one of the four long prayers that precede the first dance of the *Atsálei Yei-be-chai* on the final night of the chantway. (N. Scott Momaday uses a similar chant, which is performed earlier in the Nightway, in *House Made of Dawn*, 1968.) The medicine man (echoed by the patient[s]) addresses each of the four dancers.[14] The words are less of an invitation to attend and more of a generative pronouncement of what is happening as the words are spoken. A brief excerpt from the beginning of the prayer illustrates this generative rhetoric. In effect, the pronouncement of words naming the sacred location of the home of the Holy Being and describing his dwelling (with a proper balance of male and female, and beginning and ending forces) compels the deity to move to the doorway of his house and onto the rainbow path that will bring him to a particular performance of a Nightway:

In *Tse'gihi*,
In the house made of the dawn,
In the house made of the evening twilight,
In the house made of the dark cloud,
In the house made of the he-rain,
In the house made of the dark mist,
In the house made of the she-rain,
In the house made of pollen, [male regenerative force]
In the house made of grasshoppers, [female regenerative force]
Where the dark mist curtains the doorway,
The path to which is on the rainbow,
Where the zigzag lightning stands on top,
Where the he-rain stands high on top,
Oh, male divinity! (*Night Chant*, 143)

If the prayers, songs, and rituals are performed improperly, the Nightway can cause harm, even widespread illness, for instance, a 1918 flu epidemic.[15] The strong positive and negative powers of the Nightway reflect fundamental concepts of traditional Navajo ceremonial language. Drawing from the ideas of Sam Gill, Momaday, and Bierhorst, Linda Hogan describes this power as "dynamic energy, able to generate and regenerate."[16] Using more of a linguistic approach, Gary Witherspoon observes in *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* that "reality was created or transformed as a manifestation of symbolic form. *In the Navajo view of the world, language is not a mirror of reality; reality is a mirror of language.*"[17] This concept of language, especially as considered in ceremonial texts, invites readers to expand their notions of literature to include oral performances that literally transform physical, emotional, and spiritual realities. This enlarged conception of literature can cause students and professors to question how they relate to texts and to each other.

Of course, conceiving of literature as a generative force is not exactly new. For most of human history—in other words, up until the rise of English departments—important literature, both oral and written, was often evaluated in terms of its generative forces. As many of the American reviews quoted in Nina Baym's *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* attest, well into the nineteenth century reviewers would judge a book in terms of what one of them called "a medicinal effect." Using words that are strikingly similar to some of the best-known lines in Matthews's translation ("My limbs restore for me / My body restore for me / My mind restore for me / My voice restore for me / . . . Feeling light within, I walk" [*Night Chant*, 144]), one of these reviewers described the effects of a good novel: "your heart aches, your soul smiles, you feel the delight and satisfaction streaming along your nerves."[18] And, certainly, we can point to pioneers of reader-response criticism and current cultural studies theorists who ask what a text does to readers. One of the former, I. A. Richards, probably knew little about Navajo concepts of restoring *hózhó*, but he once defined a poem as "not a *meaning* but a *means* of achieving an ordered balance and composure of impulses."[19]

Despite continuing traditions of evaluating literature in terms of what it does to readers, many teachers and students need to be jolted into an awareness of literature as a generative force. An introduction to the Nightway can provide a jolt that can help them not only to understand the power of sacred oral traditions, but also to appreciate the forces un-

leashed by popular nineteenth-century women's fictions and by society-altering books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), and to begin to grasp what Toni Morrison meant when, in her Nobel acceptance speech, she said, "[o]ppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence."[20] Or they may start to comprehend why highly revered art objects and cultural artifacts such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) can still cause controversies in public schools. Just as important, an exciting and disturbing encounter with the Nightway can invite professors and students to be more aware of how their reading can transform them, and this realization can encourage them to begin sharing those transformations. Such exchanges may be disturbing, but they can also be profoundly rewarding and can teach professors and students what Navajos have known for centuries: the best literature, produced and received with care and respect, can transform our lives in beautiful ways.

University of Texas at Arlington

Notes

I would like to thank Luci Tapahonso for introducing me to Will Tsosie, and Mr. Tsosie and James C. Faris for reading a draft of this essay and offering valuable suggestions for revision. I am grateful to the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and History of Cartography at the University of Texas at Arlington for a travel grant to study the Nightway in October 1993. An earlier version of this essay was presented on 28 December 1993 at the MLA Convention in Toronto.

1 John Bierhorst, ed., *Four Masterworks of American Indian Literature* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), 279–90. All further pagination will be from this first edition and will appear in parentheses in the text. For background information on Matthews, see Susan McGreevy and Katherine Halpern, *Washington Matthews and the Beginning of Navajo Studies* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, forthcoming, 1995).

2 Paul Lauter, "Melville Climbs the Canon," *American Literature* 66 (March 1994): 1–24.

3 See Kenneth M. Roemer, "The Heuristic Powers of Indian Literatures: What Native Authorship Does to Mainstream Texts," *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 2d ser., 3 (Summer 1991): 8–21; Robin Riley Fast, "Outside Looking In: Nonnatives and American Indian Literature," *American Quarterly* 46 (March 1994): 62–76; Jean Molesky-Poz, "Reconstructing Personal and Cultural Identities," *American Quarterly* 45 (December 1993): 611–20. For a similar argument using non-Indian literature, see Stephen H. Sumida, "Asian/Pacific American Literature in the Classroom," *American Literature* 65 (June 1993): 348–53.

4 *By This Song I Walk* is part of the *Words & Place* series originally published in

1981 by Clearwater and now distributed by Norman Ross Publishers in New York. James C. Faris, *The Nightway: A History and a History of Documentation of a Navajo Ceremonial* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1990). All further pagination will appear in parentheses in the text.

5 The performances were held near Tsaile, Arizona, and Standing Rock, New Mexico (16–17 October 1993). My informal interviews with Mr. Tsosie occurred during these days.

6 For detailed overviews, see Faris's ceremonial outlines in *Nightway*, 43–46 and 51–54, and his conclusion, 235–41.

7 Tsosie interviews. For the argument in favor of the Holyway designation, see James C. Faris and Harry Walters, "Navajo History: Some Implications of Contrasts of Navajo Ceremonial Discourse," *History and Anthropology* 5 (December 1990): 1–18.

8 Faris [assisted by Hadley], *Nightway*, 99; Faris and Walters, 4, 14, note 6. Tsosie interviews.

9 Washington Matthews, *The Night Chant: A Navaho Ceremony* (1902; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1978), 281. All further pagination will appear in parentheses in the text. Some Nightway chant translations also appear in Washington Matthews, *Navaho Legends: Collected and Translated* (1897; reprint, Millwood: Kraus, 1976).

10 Informal interview with Leslie Marmon Silko, Flagstaff, Arizona (28 June 1977); Rudolfo Anaya, *Semana de Cultura* Lecture, Univ. of Texas at Arlington (30 March 1993).

11 Joseph Bruchac, "Four Directions: Some Thoughts on Teaching Native American Literature," *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 2d ser., 3 (Summer 1991): 7.

12 Telephone interview with Frank Norvick (9 November 1993).

13 Faris and Walters, 14–15, n. 11.

14 At the Standing Rock Nightway I attended, the chanter and patients addressed all the chants to the first of the four dancers.

15 Scott C. Russell, "The Navajo and the 1918 Influenza Pandemic," in *Health and Disease in the Prehistoric Southwest*, ed. Charles F. Merbs and Robert J. Miller (Tempe: Arizona State Univ. Anthropology Research Papers, 1985), 385.

16 Linda Hogan, "Who Puts Together," in *Critical Perspectives on Native American Fiction*, ed. Richard F. Fleck (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1993), 141.

17 Gary Witherspoon, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1977), 34.

18 Nina Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), 58.

19 Quoted in Elizabeth Freund, *Return of the Reader: Reader Response Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 28.

20 Quoted in John Darnton, "Accepting Nobel, Morrison Proves Power of Words," *New York Times*, 8 December 1993.