

THE COWBOY AND THE LADY:
Models as a determinant of the rate of
acculturation among the Piñon Navajo

James F. Downs
University of Rochester

This paper in substantially the same form was delivered at the fifth annual meetings of the Kroeber Anthropological Society in Berkeley in May, 1961. Since that time I have had two opportunities to return to Piñon¹ and have been able to add certain data which were not available when the paper was presented. This material is in large part that dealing with the rodeo and the rodeo association. Also, since this was presented, Louise Spindler has published her work on the acculturation of Menomini women which approaches this same question from a different direction.

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Anthropologists, popular writers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Navajo tribe itself have pointed out that Navajo women tend to be more conservative than the men. This statement fits neatly into the general assumptions of most acculturation studies, that women are less prone than men to accept new ideas.

In the Piñon area which is considered backward or "traditional"² by both the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the tribal government, Navajo women cling to traditional dress, speak English less frequently, are more aware of and less self-conscious about reciting tribal lore and mythology, retain and regularly use more aboriginal skills and techniques, etc. In addition, women appear to orient their lives toward what might be called a "traditional" future in the sense of remaining in a matrilocal residence group, herding sheep, weaving rugs, working periodically for wages, and farming a small corn field. Men, on the other hand, often think and speak in terms of changing the patterns of their lives, learning new skills, shifting from sheep to cattle husbandry, setting up separate households, finding off-reservation employment, etc. It should be pointed out that although most women tend to expect their menfolk to earn money through off or on reservation employment, they do not expect this to interrupt the traditional cycle of existence. While some women may accompany their men on working trips, many others seem more satisfied to remain in the matrilocal group and wait for the men to return. Nor is this conservatism limited to older and uneducated women. This sexual differentiation can be seen on any given age level. While the world view and aspirations of a teenage Navajo boy may differ enormously from his father's, the teenage girl with the same school experience tends to be more willing to follow in her mother's footsteps with only minor material alterations in the pattern.

So closely does this follow the assumed pattern that one is tempted to allow the assumption to stand without examination and offer the standard explanations. Perhaps the most common of these is that in a culture contact situation it is most frequently the men of the two cultures which are in contact and therefore male patterns of behavior are those most frequently transmitted. Anyone who has once been a member of an army of occupation

will, upon reflection, have cause to question at least part of this statement. As often as not the most intimate and prolonged contact is between the males of the foreign culture and the females of the indigenous culture. Among the western fur hunting mountain men one of the major points of articulation between themselves and the Plains and Mountain Indians was the person of an Indian girl with whom they lived (DeVoto 1947). In these situations it is not infrequent that the foreign males will try to teach indigenous females at least the surface aspects of womankind as his society sees it. Although Linton's famous colonial Frenchman was limited in the number of women's skills he could teach to his African mistress there appears to be no reason to assume that she couldn't have learned many skills which were strictly male in a French context (Linton 1936). In short, this structural explanation, as it stands, does not explain either the general phenomenon or the particular case under discussion. Moreover, history makes it quite clear that Navajo women have been, in the past, receptive to new ideas and patterns of behavior. The so-called "traditional" Navajo dress is clearly an adaptation of white American patterns of the 1860's. Similarly many of the traditional Navajo foods or ways of preparing food were learned while the tribe was in captivity at Fort Sumner (Downs n.d.; Kluckhohn and Leighton 1947). Navajo women also responded to the urgings of traders and the lures of economic gain and changed their weaving styles and techniques to meet market demands. Weaving itself with its necessary attendant shepherding is only something over two hundred years old among the Navajo.

Moreover, during the course of this study it became increasingly clear that Navajo women in the Piñon area, despite their observed conservatism, were not resistive to new ideas. The post office does a large business in handling mail orders for clothing purchased by women. Women, as well as men, eagerly look forward to the introduction of the electric light, envy the white world running water, thoroughly enjoy a trip to the nearest town with its wider selection of goods in the stores and cheaper prices, and whenever possible take their washing to the community washing machine which has recently been installed in the Piñon tribal chapter house. In this latter case, women will often go to considerable time, expense and trouble to be able to use a washing machine sometimes five or ten miles away from home. Moreover, they are willing and eager to take their children to hospitals and clinics (although at the same time the most frequent initiators of ceremonial curing activities) and to have their children delivered in hospitals. Nevertheless they have developed these behaviors within a traditional context.

Spindler has suggested in the Menomini case that the contact situation was one in which women could continue their traditional patterns without experiencing pressure to change from the white world. My argument will not contest but rather elaborate and expand on hers in this area. The problem is to explain why, in view of the facts outlined, the marked difference between men and women exists.

In the matter of adopting new clothing styles, work skills, etc., the problem is relatively simple in a general sense. Efficient tools, metal versus stone for instance, seem always to be adopted. Clothing which is easy to obtain and which eases tensions due to differing views of modesty has been adopted by many non-western peoples. Agriculture or husbandry as more dependable alternatives to hunting and gathering have been adopted

by most of the peoples of the world. In each case, however, the adopting society has required some sort of model on which new behavior could be based. In most cases the model has not been followed perfectly either because it was not presented in its entirety or has been imperfectly perceived or, and in the case under consideration this seems most germane, the conditions of life of the "receiving" culture precluded the total adoption of the observed model no matter how completely it was revealed or accurately it was perceived. An alternative is that the "donor" society does not present models meaningful in the specific situation.

In the Navajo case, partial models, that is, discrete bits of behavior such as using cloth purchased from traders to make dresses rather than weave wool cloth at home, the use of a sewing machine, the techniques of dipping sheep or driving a truck or using a wood stove could be learned piecemeal and incorporated into Navajo life without trouble. On the other hand, an entirely new model based on Anglo-American behavior could not be followed for a number of reasons. The first and perhaps most important of these in terms of Piñon Navajo as a whole is physical isolation. Many Navajo even today have had little opportunity to observe the possible models in American life. Many have spent most of their lives on the reservation, coming in contact with whites only as they appeared as Bureau of Indian Affairs employees, traders, missionaries, or occasional travelers. In many more cases, even Indians with off-reservation experience have had little opportunity to observe or participate in general American life, being, as they were, students in BIA schools, members of all-Indian work gangs or members of the armed forces. From each of these sources particular behavior patterns and material culture items have been introduced into Navajo life. In addition, the institution of the Navajo trader has continuously fed new items of material culture into Navajo life and established new social relationships. Similarly, the now completely "Navajo political organization" (Shepardson n.d.) was introduced from the outside but developed largely in response to Navajo attempts to deal with new problems. In general, each of these sources has provided models of behavior for a few individuals, but American society or culture has, until recently, not provided any overall model from which the Navajo could learn new behaviors and in which new aspirations suitable to changing conditions can be derived. Thus, until recently the Navajo has displayed extreme conservatism as he attempted to adjust the old model to meet new conditions, a device which worked well for a number of years but which in the past two decades, particularly since the enforced reduction of livestock, has not served him well.

The old model, that is the model which has served as a guide for Navajo behavior since and to a large part before 1868, is one based on sheep husbandry which we can call the shepherd model.

The ideal shepherd lived out his life dependent on the increase of his flocks which provided him with meat and wool which could be converted into material goods through trade in the raw or as rugs. Both men and women were involved in shepherding with both actual well being and social status being largely determined by the number and condition of one's sheep herds. In addition, horses, essential to maintaining life on the reservation, took on a value in the system of social symbolism. Cattle, although the Navajo appear to have kept them as long as they have kept sheep (Hill 1940:414) played much less of a role in Navajo life either actually or

symbolically, and were generally owned by only the rich. As long as environmental and economic conditions were in the least favorable, the Navajo could depend on sheep and through them retain his social separateness, obtaining those material items he had learned to use and desire through the institution of the trading post. The nature of the trading post restricted the amount of direct contact with the white world for the individual Navajo. Often the only white man with whom a Navajo had had any contact was the Navajo-speaking trader who might himself have been born on the reservation and be as foreign to general Anglo-American culture and society as was his Indian customer. Thus isolated, the Navajo could aspire and achieve within a Navajo context with minimal reference to the outside world. In a general sense it is to this situation which the older Navajo refer when they speak with vigorous nostalgia of the "old times." If we could personify the shepherd Navajo he would be a man who wears moccasins or perhaps work shoes, wears an ordinary denim shirt and Levi's under which he wears a breech clout. When he is cold he may wear a cast-off white man's dress coat but probably prefers a blanket. His ears are pierced and he wears turquoise earrings in them, at least on special occasions. His hair is long and clubbed in the back with a binding of wool. He carries a buckskin sack of corn meal and other charms against witchcraft. He binds his hair with a turban-like cloth. If he wears a hat it is purchased at the store and worn full-crowned just as it came from the box. At a squaw dance or other ceremonial or social occasion he wears a plush shirt with the tail out, an ornate silver and turquoise belt, a necklace of silver and turquoise and another of coral and perhaps another of raw turquoise. His life is centered in his sheep herd and the daily and yearly cycle of sheep husbandry. He trades almost exclusively at a single trading store and is usually deeply in debt, which debt he may pay off when he sells his wool in the spring.

Within Navajo context he is independent and self-supporting and takes pride in being so. At the same time he has a dependent attitude toward the Bureau of Indian Affairs inasmuch as he expects the Bureau or some other facility to act to meet emergencies or redress grievances, make improvements in water supply, etc. Within Navajo context he may be extremely active politically, but if so, he is generally opposed to what he sees as white domination and is distrustful of the Bureau, the Tribe as a political body, and the white world in general.

Although this is composite, the details are drawn from observation and not a few such men are to be found in the Piñon area. If they have been able to maintain wealth, at least in the reduced degree possible under today's conditions, they are generally admired by all elements of the community. If they have not, they are pitied and have little political or social influence although they may be admired for what they once were. There are in the Piñon area at least a few younger men who still strive to emulate this model and even smaller numbers of boys who are being trained to aspire toward these traditional goals.

The shepherd's wife, the traditional female, is a suitable mate for the man described above. She is not only content with, but often strongly attached to, a hogan. She wears the traditional Navajo plush blouse and sateen or plush skirt. Although she may use a sewing machine and buy material at the traders, she knows only a single dress pattern and experiments not at all. She prides herself on her ability to weave, cook

fried bread and mutton. She is a good sheep herder, a skillful horsewoman, and desires a number of children. Like her husband, her hair is long and bound with wool. She wears all the silver, turquoise and coral she can afford, and pawns it when cash is needed. She is independent of her mate and firmly attached to her matrilineage and the matrilineal household. Although she has accepted many new ideas, as mentioned above, she does not appear to aspire toward goals any different, except in a rather limited material sense, from those of her mother. This is equally true if she is an old woman or a high school girl.

Although the Navajo girl may come home from school with fingernail polish, a permanent wave, and fashionable and attractively-fitted capri pants, she will soon revert to the more traditional type of clothing. Weaving lessons, which were ignored during her school years, will often be taken up again. Her English becomes less and less intelligible in an incredibly short time. Her wardrobe of "White" clothes made during her stay in school will be stored away or given to younger sisters. As long as she is unmarried she will in all likelihood wear a blouse and dungaree trousers, but once married she will quickly shift into a modified form of traditional dress. Her interests in the sheep herd will increase, and at sheep dipping time, to herd and dip sheep, she, like all the other women, will dress in her finest clothes and wear all her jewelry. She may seek employment as a dormitory mistress at the local boarding school, but such jobs are hard to hold because of the demands of her family. Should she not fall into the traditional pattern, she has almost no alternative but to leave the community to find work in some white town or at some distant agency facility. Particularly in the former instance she runs the risk of becoming involved with white men, Mexicans, or non-Navajo Indians, and in many cases succumbs to the demands of the family to give up such relationships and return to the homestead and "help out" while seeking a more acceptable Navajo husband.

With almost no exceptions this describes the conditions and behavior of the Navajo woman of the Piñon area. Despite any specific desires she may have acquired or any general knowledge of the non-Navajo world, if she remains in the community she falls into some modification of the traditional Navajo pattern. However, in seeking a mate she does not turn to her relatively few age mates who have maintained the traditional goals of Navajo life. With eminent practicality she looks for a young man who has a job on- or off-reservation, even though this may mean that they will be separated over long periods while he goes off-reservation to work and she remains behind at the family homestead.

Having married such a young man, however, she often finds herself, against the plans of her new husband, siding with her mother and sisters, or even with female in-laws, should the couple be living with his, rather than her mother. These conflicts, which in many cases create serious rifts in the extended family, are caused by the desire of the younger men to eliminate the sheep herd and buy cattle or at least to divert funds and effort from sheep to cattle husbandry. In many cases this shift into cattle husbandry is carried out against the active opposition of the women of a family. Sometimes men will buy calves and have them cared for by a friend until such time as the womenfolk are away. He will then bring his cattle to the family's traditional range and present the women with a fait accompli. In other cases he will buy the cattle for his wife who cannot in good conscience turn down a gift so valuable as a cow or calf.

The behavior of a woman toward cattle is markedly different from a man's and enormously different from her attitude toward sheep. Cattle are clearly the affair of men in which women seldom participate. While vaccination or sheep dipping are occasions for the display of clothing and wealth and clearly viewed as important social events by women, the time set aside for the community cattle branding is ignored by them and is strictly a male function. Men, cattle owners or not, spend the day watching and helping at the corrals while their wives remain home or spend the day shopping at the traders' store. The only females interested are those of high school age who almost invariably wear the bell bottom style trousers known as "rodeo pants" on this or any other "dress up" occasion.

The Navajo, as it has frequently been pointed out, view the world as dangerous and feel little compunction about displaying fear. Cattle, particularly bulls, are viewed as extremely dangerous. Whenever cattle appear near the homestead, the women evidence great fear and call upon the men to drive them away. The appearance of a bull immediately sends all the women and children into hiding, there to remain until the men of the family go out and drive off the animal. The fear exhibited is far out of proportion to the danger involved and seems in part simulated to express yet another objection to the shift in emphasis from sheep to cattle.

These conflicts point to the dilemma of the Navajo woman, particularly the younger woman who has received an off-reservation education, and brings us to the question of models. What is the new model for Navajo men? And, if a new model has been found by the men, do not the women also have a new model from white society on which to base their future behavior?

The typical younger Navajo is much more difficult to describe than is the traditional male because he has had more experience outside the reservation and therefore more opportunity to adopt varying patterns of behavior. It must be understood that if he, as an individual, has rejected the old model entirely and aspires to some completely white model, he has no recourse save to leave the community--or take on the deviant role of the grandiose and usually drunken dreamer of great dreams. However, the majority of young men fall into neither of these categories and can be described in a general way. He may have any number of specific ambitions from teaching mathematics to becoming an auto mechanic. However, he is most often inadequately educated and seldom can realize ambitions requiring college or other advanced training. In addition, to be an auto mechanic generally requires that he leave the reservation and compete with whites. In this competition, handicapped by a vague but real fear of white people, loneliness, distaste for city noise, racial discrimination in unions, social life, and housing, speaking his own brand of English and not blessed with the American competitive spirit, he often gives up and returns home.

Once home this typical younger Navajo participates in the family herding activities but seeks unskilled or semi-skilled work on the railroads, in migrant agricultural work, or on tribal or Bureau projects. In most cases he expresses a desire to remain on or near the reservation and his family, to participate in Navajo society and political life, and to work out a destiny in the familiar surroundings of the reservation. However he rejects the traditional means, sheepherding, and often uses this word as a term of contempt. He takes wage work hoping to save enough money

to buy some cattle and start a herd. He plans with other male relatives to dig a well or otherwise improve the family's traditional grazing grounds as a cattle ranch. He complains about the demands which a sheep herd makes on a man and quite realistically points out that with the present grazing restrictions it is impossible to make an adequate living raising sheep. Instead of moccasins he wears colorful low-heeled western boots, tight Levi trousers, a wide tooled-leather belt with a fancy western buckle. His dress-up shirt is a colorful tailored western style with numerous pearl buttons. His hair is usually short, although a few young men still retain the long clubbed hair. His hat is straw, molded felt, or even plastic, with the wide brim shaped in what is known as the batwing style. He is, in short, the living embodiment of that well-known figure--the drugstore cowboy.

Since his earliest days he has practiced with a lasso and has graduated from chickens, dogs, and younger brothers to sheep and goats, and finally to horses and cattle. He may become one of the limited number of hoop dancers who travel from rodeo to rodeo in the summer accompanied by an admiring coterie (very much like a boxer in the white world), but he more than likely seeks recognition in rodeo competition. In fact, to him "cowboy" means a person who competes in rodeos and not a man who works with cattle. Success in rodeo competition gives a young man considerable status which he carries long after he has retired from competition, and considerable advantage in securing an attractive and educated young wife.

Rodeo might quite accurately be described as a near mania among the young. Communities throughout the reservation have formed rodeo associations as collective enterprises, built arenas and stock pens, and stage regular summer rodeo. The Navajo Cowboy Association conducts an annual competition for cumulative points and awards a saddle to the Navajo champion cowboy of the year. So popular is rodeo that the traditional summer recreation of rabbit hunting on horseback, an exciting and dangerous game, is gradually disappearing in the Piñon area because most of the younger men are attending a rodeo somewhere every weekend. Even if he does not compete a young man will attend to watch the events, drink, assist with the stock, and generally associate with the rodeo and rodeo performers.

The rodeo in its broadest sense is not exclusively a young man's game. In the Piñon area the rodeo association is the nexus of political activity, and no one who has aspirations to political power can afford not to belong to the association and participate in some way in its activities. It is interesting and very possibly significant that, in the Piñon area, at least, the association was formed at the suggestion of one of the areas' most respected leaders, who is cast in the traditional mold and generally hostile toward the tribal government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Despite these conservative aspects of his person he is also the prime innovator, having been among the first bootleggers, the first to introduce the practice of selling candy and soft drinks at squaw dances, in addition to his role in starting the rodeo association. He and most of the population view this as a strictly Navajo activity which has nothing to do with, and was not carried out in response to, either the government, the tribe or missionaries. Uniquely, this is one of few Navajo institutions, outside of the trader's store, which requires regular contact and association with white men. As the performers have become more expert and spectators more sophisticated, it has been necessary to stop using stock collected in the community and contract with regular rodeo stock suppliers for bucking

horses and bulls for the bull-riding contests. In addition the Indian rodeo performers seek recognition from white performers, and to gain it subscribe to regular Rodeo Cowboy Association rules and employ authorized white judges. Moreover, at Pollacca, the Navajo and Hopi display a rare example of cooperation in planning and staging an annual rodeo.

In Piñon the association is a meeting place on a basis of equality of both the informal political leaders of the area and representatives of tribal government. These latter are in the person of the district chapter delegate, the local representatives and chairman of the quasi-political grazing committee, and the tribal brand inspector, all of whom take an active role in the planning and conduct of the rodeo and have considerable power in their various spheres. Tribal funds to build arena and corrals needed for the affair are obtained through the agency of the delegate.

The rodeo itself is symbolic of the changing patterns of Navajo life. After the competition a night performance is held in front of the trader's store, illuminated by floodlights which he supplies. The store is kept open until the performance is over and the trader has contributed a saddle and various other prizes for the contestants. The performance includes a number of long speeches by the delegate and other tribal officers, the chairman of the grazing committee, local members of the school committee, etc. Entertainment is provided by a number of male and a few female hoop dancers (a teenage girl hoop dancer wears an adaption of the male costume which displays the entire length of her leg--an extremely daring performer indeed) dancing what the Navajo called "dances we borrowed from the Pueblos." A few traditional chants are usually sung by men and women who travel from rodeo to rodeo throughout the summer. Usually a number of Navajo composers are on hand to sing modern songs done in Indian style to the accompaniment of a hand drum. Such songs are often warnings against indulgence in alcohol (Wine Will Make a Fool of You) or rather-uninspired love songs (Are You Mine, Really Mine, Are You Mine?). As a capstone one is treated to the performance of a young Navajo boy with an electric guitar singing his own songs or popular songs with particularly Navajo interjections (usually joking about drinking and being arrested) in a combined "Western and Country" and "Rock and Roll" style known in the music trade as "rockabilly." At the conclusion of the night performance the younger element of the community go to a dance at the chapter house. The music is most often supplied by a group of Hopi boys who have formed a locally popular band known as the Hopi Clans, and the dances are the same as those performed in dance halls throughout the United States.

Throughout the entire rodeo performance, the figure of the cowboy is dominant. With the exception of the most traditional old men, males strive to dress, as nearly as their finances will permit, to the cowboy ideal. Riding to the rodeo on a horse is important for younger men who will pass up a ride in a truck or car to come mounted. Not only men carry out the cowboy theme. Adolescent girls, home from boarding school for the summer, adopt if they can afford it a style of trousers with bell bottoms generally described as rodeo pants. Pre-pubertal girls, girls who have not gone to school, and married women, retain the traditional dress and are clearly spectators, rather than participants, during the entire rodeo.

The rodeo serves as a focus of action for a new Navajo ideal--the cowboy--and the cowboy serves as a platform from which new and non-

traditional aspirations can be formed. Although a young man may wish to become a mathematics teacher, a tribal policeman and tractor driver, or leave the reservation entirely to take up a new life in the city, he views himself as basically a cowboy who can rope, ride, and participate in rodeo, a man who knows something of cattle and cattle lore, who dreams of owning cattle and becoming a rancher or cattleman. Significantly, at a number of functions held at the Oakland California Inter-Tribal Friendship House, a center for re-located Indians, dressing up called for most of the Navajo men and boys who were newly off the reservation to wear cowboy clothes including western boots. Only the young boys who had spent several years in the city wore the same "uniforms" as do white youths.

The cattleman posture is adopted by adult males in Piñon almost in a direct ratio to the degree of "acculturation." Thus the tribal brand inspector, involved in the daily business of recording sales of livestock, supervising branding and castration of horses and steers, cooperating with the grazing committee, directing range development work, etc., wears Levi trousers, western boots, colorful shirt, and ten gallon hat as a matter of course. So does the tribal council delegate, although his livestock holdings are largely in sheep and his income is in large part derived from his political position and from renting a small building to a white trader. The members of the grazing committee, with one exception, affect cowboy as opposed to shepherd clothing, and all are active in rodeo affairs. The exception is the representative of the most remote and traditional area within the Piñon grazing zone.

This rather detailed recounting of the rodeo and the expressions of the cowboy theme in Piñon has been presented in order to support the argument that Navajo men in this area have in large part accepted a new ideal pattern against which they can measure their own behavior. This figure does not develop out of the Navajo past, but is a result of continued exposure to ideas and behavior of an alien culture and society, that of the Anglo-American. Piñon is interesting in this point because, situated as it is well away from the boundaries of the reservation, the population as a whole does not experience day-to-day first-hand contact with any white community. Regular contact with the trader and sporadic contact with various employees of the Public Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs constitute almost the only exposure to white men in situ as it were. However, it should be kept in mind that although these whites are storekeepers, doctors, sanitarians, teachers, or extension agents by profession, they, as often as not, affect one or more features of the cowboy figure, the large hat, a colorful shirt, Levis, or boots.

Prior to World War II, Piñon's associations with the white world were far more limited than they are today. Automobiles were unknown in the area. Williams, the nearest town, was a two-day ride on horseback, four days in a wagon. Piñon remained a classical Navajo reservation community, revolving around the trading store, with occasional and often hostile relationships with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Since the war roads have increased, radios are widespread, weekly movies are shown in the chapter house, regular trips are made to Gallup, Flagstaff, Williams, and Holbrook; the Gallup Indian Days Celebration and the Flagstaff Powwow are important holidays in the Piñon area, as is the tribal fair at Window Rock. Most of the younger children spend much of the year in off-reservation boarding schools scattered from California to northern Utah. Entire

families travel in Colorado, California, Utah, and Idaho to work as migrant labor. In short, Piñon has during the past two decades been subject to a bombardment of new ideas and patterns of behavior as well as actual changes in the environment in the form of roads, wells, catchment dams, telephones, and so forth.

Most important of all, the impact of the stock reduction programs of the late thirties and early forties created a situation in which a young man could no longer aspire toward the old goals of Navajo life. It became illegal and impossible to amass large herds of a thousand or more sheep and several dozen horses. Men who had been rich in Navajo terms and who could have been expected to leave their children substantial numbers of sheep were made destitute, from the Navajo point of view. The legal herd limit of seventy-four makes it impossible to earn even a minimal income from husbandry, and although many families violate this limit, none are able to maintain themselves entirely from the sheep herd, although it continues to play an important, and at the moment, irreplaceable role, in the economy of the area.³ While old men lament the old days and demand that somehow the tribe or the government bring them back, the men who have grown to maturity in these two past decades realize, albeit reluctantly, that such a thing is impossible. At the same time they have been unwilling and unable for educational, social, financial, and cultural reasons to abandon their homes and, as the Bureau of Indian Affairs so clearly would like them to do, go into the cities to find work in the white world. Instead they have chosen from the white world a new image which fits easily into the environmental and cultural background of Navajo life. The model they have chosen presents an interesting example of the picture white culture and society presents to outsiders, of which we are often quite unaware.

The Navajo live in the southern part of what we might call facetiously the "cowboy culture area" of the United States. This area begins in Texas and Oklahoma and includes all of the west, save perhaps the coastal areas of Washington, Oregon, and northern California. This area is, of course, the great grazing and range cattle zone of American animal husbandry. However, the number of people involved in these activities is relatively few. Taken as a whole, ranching does not dominate the western and southwestern portion of the nation as it once did. Moreover, as elsewhere, most of the population is urban or suburban in residence and non-agricultural in employment. However, the figure of the cowboy, not as he exists on ranches today with a jeep, helicopter, horse trailer, and butane-heated branding iron, but as he has been immortalized in American mythology, is of overriding cultural importance. The cowboy costume is found in sportswear, police uniforms, and waitress dresses. The theme appears in murals, post offices, city halls, and motels. Ranch language and ranch equipment find themselves worked into business names and the décor of doctors' offices, department stores, and curio shops. Dude ranches abound as vacation retreats. Entire towns consciously carry out the cowboy theme. Rodeo and quarterhorse racing closely associated with ranching are top drawing spectator sports. Many towns boast a local roping club in which businessmen and high school boys pay dues for the privilege of roping calves kept for the purpose in an arena built by the club. The sheriff's mounted posse composed almost entirely of townsmen is an important, if not indispensable, part of the political organization of every county. These posses, often composed of the area's most influential men, ride in parades dressed in theatrically-styled cowboy uniforms and from time to time act as police auxiliaries in searching for lost vacationers or downed aircraft.

Few towns of any size do not have a Frontier Days celebration complete with rodeo or race meet.⁴ It is within this area that stylists have developed western-style suits and dresses for every occasion, formal or informal. Businessmen often appear in offices or stores in "frontier pants" and western-style shirts. The "bolo" tie has in some communities completely replaced the four-in-hand or bow tie for all occasions save full dress. Riding clubs are to be found in most communities, and annual trail rides of several days duration are often considered as the male social event of the year during which the political and economic leaders of the area congregate for a round of riding and relaxation. Owning horses for pleasure riding is widespread. Horse shows invariably include classes for trail horses, stock horses, and not infrequently for cutting horses. Cutting horse competitions have become popular spectator sports with top horses bringing prices in five figures. It is to be emphasized that most of the people participating in this cowboy culture pattern are not cowboys, nor are they in any way involved in the cattle business. In areas where it is possible, involvement in the cattle business, even to the minor extent of owning only a head or two of cattle pastured on the ranch of a friend, is a prestige activity. For many it may be a financial loss, but it provides an excuse to spend at least a few days a year assisting the ranch owner in range work. A common response to business success throughout the west, whether success be in law, medicine, or the sale of used automobiles, is to buy and attempt to operate a cattle ranch, which often includes donning flamboyant western clothes which help to secure identification as a cattleman.

It is this which the Piñon Navajo sees when he is off-reservation, and in many ways he receives this impression in heavier doses than do the white residents of the community. As often as not he comes to town when some western-oriented celebration is in progress. He is impressed by the fact that the tractor drivers, Bureau of Indian Affairs employees, and store clerks all wear western hats, and affect cowboy clothes. He cannot help but conclude that this role is one which is honored and respected in the white world. He is already well aware that in those areas adjoining the reservation the traditional role of the Indian is anything but respected. Moreover he knows that at least some Indians have become successful rodeo cowboys subject to the rewards both economic and psychological of participating in this sport. He also finds it easier to take on wage work if he has a cattle herd which requires far less attention from day to day than does a flock of sheep. In addition the idealized life of the cowboy is not too much of an alteration from traditional Navajo life. The life of the range and trail drive and cow camp is much closer to the life of the Navajo homestead than is any other role in modern American life. It requires that a man be a horseman and a roper, have a knowledge of animal ways, and a number of outdoor skills which the Navajo already possesses.

Perhaps the most important factors are the new conditions under which the young Navajo grows up. In the very recent past the children of Piñon were introduced to the techniques, attitudes, and values of a traditional socialization process within the context of the extended family homestead (cf. Downs n.d.; Kluckhohn and Leighton 1947). By the time they reached puberty they were confirmed in the traditional shepherd ideal and in addition possessed all the skills necessary to make their way in the traditional scheme of things. Today the vast majority of the children receive only the earliest phases of this indoctrination before their

fifth, sixth, or seventh year, when they are removed from the family homestead to attend full-time boarding schools. In the Piñon area only a few children attend school on a day basis and many cannot be accommodated at Piñon but must attend schools in other parts of the reservation or even off-reservation. Young men and women reaching high school age will have spent from five to twelve years away from home influences except during the summers, however, they will not have participated fully in off-reservation life.

Most Indian Service schools are mono-racial and tend by accident or design to isolate the students from too much direct contact with the white world. Excursions to nearby towns are limited and usually permitted only in groups. Associations with non-Indians are short and highly formalized--exchange plans or inter-school visits. The efforts of the teachers to "unteach" Indian patterns of language, dress, and behavior make the constantly reiterated point that the rest of the world looks down on the traditional Indian while the student's natural resentment of punishment for speaking Navajo or criticism of their dress, hair arrangement or eating habits develops a core of resistance to any real internalization of the new behavior patterns. Moreover much of what is taught in school is so obviously impossible in the context of their reservation homes that students soon compartmentalize their behavior into "White" and "Navajo" segments.

At the same time the children and young people have access to television and regular motion pictures and have before them a monotonously repeated pattern in the form of the mass-myth cowboy.⁵ They are quick to realize that the cowboy is a person of value in white society and are eager to imitate him. Their experiences with the white world tend only to confirm the idea that the cowboy is a figure of prestige and one to which they can aspire. This gives us some idea of how and why the modern Navajo youth has taken a model from the white world, but it does not, at first glance, explain why the Navajo girl remains far more conservative than her brother.

The American myth figure, the cowboy, whether he appears in literature, motion pictures, or television, is a single man, most frequently without antecedents or relatives. Alone or with a "side-kick" he drifts through a series of adventures among, but not as a part of, the society. Not infrequently a western story ends with the cowboy hero riding away, alone, from the group with which he has temporarily interacted. Although certain alterations have been permitted in recent years, the cowboy's relationships with women are seldom permanent. If the cowboy hero does "get the girl," he ceases to be a cowboy. He settles down, a phrase which in the western genre describes his giving up of the roaming, lonely life of the cowboy hero errant.

In effect the western myth provides a model for male behavior, but does not provide a model for female behavior. The cowboy has no wife. Thus the young Navajo girl, exposed to much the same influences as her male contemporary, is not exposed to a total figure which she can emulate and use as a model for her future behavior on the reservation. That she is influenced by the cowboy myth is revealed in her selection of "non-Navajo" clothing and her attitude toward the rodeo and cattle as contrasted to her mother. She does have thrust before her a number of female models unrelated to the cowboy. The teacher, the nurse, the well-groomed and comfortable

housewife of the woman's magazines all play a part in suggesting modes of life alternative to that of the traditional existence. However, reservation life, while it permits parallels and analogies to the cowboy model, cannot support the picture of the average American homemaker. The starched and relatively expensive advertised clothes are out of place and unobtainable. The polished floors and picture windows which generated her envious school-dreams are so removed from the hogan or log cabin as to become unreal. The many convenient appliances are too expensive and would not run without electricity. The clean and smiling children require more water than the Navajo family can afford the time to haul. Parent Teacher Association meetings, of which she may have read, are the product of tax-supported schools with the parent in the ultimate role of employer. On the reservation the government-appointed teacher is viewed more as an authority figure than a public servant. To take an active part in politics would require that a young woman violate the codes of expected behavior and embarrass not only herself but her entire family.

In short, the economic, social, and cultural factors of reservation life make it impossible for a young women to realize more than a minor part of her aspirations. The role of an average American housewife and mother, no matter how appealing it may have been, simply cannot be played out in the reservation atmosphere. While the Navajo boy can imitate the cowboy and stand with a foot in both the Navajo and the white world, observe the more important of the old traditions and still aspire in terms of a new future, the girl simply cannot. The alternatives are to leave the community, and the comforting presence of the family and the home country, or to avoid frustration by conforming to traditional Navajo standards for women. The latter course is easier and most frequently followed with only minor variations of a material nature. In this role, a girl finds herself with a set of expected behaviors which she understands and which her mother and grandmother approve. Having set her foot on this road she is less demanding than the girl who refuses to give up her borrowed dream, and because of this is more desirable as a wife.

Thus a future husband can continue in his borrowed role, comfortable in the knowledge that his wife is more or less satisfied, willing to live with her (or his) parents, content with the pattern of constant debt at the trader's, amenable to his periodic drinking sprees, less concerned with his casual infidelities. However, in return for this comfort he must pay with a stiffening resistance to any plans of his which would materially disturb the relationships which determine the traditional role of women. The young man who marries a girl who is not reconciled to reservation life is faced with even greater turmoil inasmuch as his wife is not infrequently in conflict with her own parents and her behavior is less than acceptable to his family. The tensions created as she tries to maintain her children according to white standards, or to keep herself and her house cleaner than expected by Navajo standards, almost inevitably force him to set up a new home away from the family and its all-important cooperation, leave the reservation and the plans he can make in view of his relationship to reservation land, or terminate his marriage.

This situation has been presented in some detail to point up three major considerations:

- (1) The difficulty of determining what aspects of one culture the bearers of another will accept. This is influenced not only by the conditions

within the receiving society, which has been emphasized so much, but by the way the receiving society perceives the donor society. In this instance few Americans and fewer anthropologists would view the cowboy figure as either central or important in our society, yet this has obviously been the aspect of the white world to which the Navajo has been both willing and able to respond.

- (2) Differences between sexes in the area of change may not always be related to any fundamental factors but to the nature of the contact and the nature of the model from the donor society which each sex selects. In this case neither the communication media nor educational programs have presented to Navajo women an alternative behavior pattern which can be imitated within the reservation context.
- (3) The nature of inter-cultural contacts has seldom included such factors as the effect and/or extent of use of mass media such as motion pictures, television, and radio. In many instances, the Piñon example being a case in point, the white world makes far more impression through these means than through any type of face-to-face contact.

ENDNOTES

1. The research on which this paper is based was supported by a National Institute of Mental Health training fellowship and a post-doctoral research grant from the same organization. The research was carried out during 1960 and 1961. Statements are based on observations made during approximately nine months residence in Piñon in intimate contact with a Navajo extended family which permitted us to occupy a hogan and admitted us to participation in the economic, recreational, and ceremonial activities of the group. In addition, contact was maintained with re-located Navajo in the San Francisco Bay area, some of whom were members of the host family in Piñon. Finally, the literacy of some of our informants contributed something over one hundred letters which have served as extremely useful sources of information.
2. "Traditional" is the current circumlocution of more objectionable terms such as backward, primitive, or old-fashioned. It is used by both the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Navajo Tribe, which among other things selects a traditional and a modern princess to reign over the annual tribal fair. It is, however, not used by the average Navajo.
3. Although no individual or family can exist entirely on income from the sheep herd, most Navajo in the Piñon area must depend on the herd for food and employment during periods when they cannot find work elsewhere.
4. A curious and illustrative example is the Tournament of Roses, celebrated in Pasadena, California, each New Years Day. This event originated from a New Years Day observance of a local hunt club modeled after the British fox-hunting clubs. However, by the 1930's all vestiges of this origin were erased, marshalls were costumed in Spanish caballero costumes, and the frontier theme emphasized by the inclusion in the parade of many western mounted units.
5. As is usual throughout the rural west, "cowboy" pictures and "cowboy" literature are the most popular mass entertainment. The television

stations program western series in large number. The opportunity to view these epics on school-owned television sets is not lost by the young Navajo who knows the names and characteristics of all the current western heroes. They play cowboys and Indians endlessly, the only difference between their activities and those of contemporary white boys being the willingness and enthusiasm with which the role of "Indian," with its inevitable death scene, is accepted.

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