DISAPPOINTING INDIGENEITY: POWWOW AND PARTICIPATION AMONG THE PLAINS APACHE[1]

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Based on ethnographic research in southwest Oklahoma between 2006 and 2009, this paper examines Plains Apache identity through the narrative of disappointment that is often associated with native nonparticipation in cultural activities, particularly powwow. While recent research on the Southern Plains focuses largely on powwow and powwow participants, this research explores the perspectives of Apache people who are rarely active in powwow. Rather than a rejection of native or Apache identity, the results suggest that nonparticipation is a reflection of a complex interplay between the participation requirements of material capital, cultural capital, and contemporary kinship obligations. (Indigeneity, powwow, kinship, Plains Apache)

During the course of fieldwork with the Plains Apache in southwestern Oklahoma, I received many comments from both native and non-native people that expressed disappointment in my choice of anthropological subject. On one occasion a Kiowa woman asked, "Oh, but why? You should really work with us, with the Kiowa. I mean, Apaches are okay, but we have more culture, more ceremonies. We speak our language." Nearly all commenters similarly pointed out that the contemporary Plains Apache, at least compared to other native communities in the vicinity, have few surviving cultural traditions. In this explicit sense, expressions of disappointment reflect the reality of Plains Apache cultural production: today there are few remaining speakers, only one military society and its corresponding ceremonial dance have been revived, and there are few individual Apache participants in this and other forms of cultural production.

Tropes of disappointment, however, also reflect implicit concerns about the Plains Apache. Disappointment often exposes expectations about indigenous peoples—in this case, "Indianness"—that circulate within native and non-native communities alike (Deloria 2004:4). The Plains Apache, a native community seemingly without the requisite cultural trappings of indigeneity, evokes disappointment because expectations of cultural difference, or alterity, are not met. This disappointment is quite different from the disappointment white Australians may feel toward Aboriginal people, sentiments that Cowlishaw (2003) argues stem from misunderstanding radical alterity. Instead, when directed at the Plains Apache, disappointment is largely associated with a perception of apparent sameness, and closely linked to narratives of culture loss and assimilation. These interrelated narratives—

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disappointment, culture loss, and assimilation—relegate the Plains Apache, communities like them, and individual non-participants, to the margins of dominant authentic indigeneity narratives.

These dominant narratives are also reflected and supported in the scholarship of the Southern Plains. Recent literature focuses largely on expressive culture, particularly powwow and related military society dances (Boyd 1981; Ellis 1990, 1999, 2003, 2005; Ellis and Lassiter 2005; Foster 1991; Fowler 2005; Kavanagh 1992; Kracht 1994; Lassiter 1997, 1998, 1999; Lassiter and Ellis 1998; Meadows 2003, 2010; Meredith 1995). These studies often rely heavily on consultants that anthropologists label as cultural stakeholders or culture bearers. These are tribal members actively involved with cultural production, particularly participants, rather than those who participate only partially, sporadically, or not at all. Scholars uncritically present the perspectives of these active powwow participants, particularly claims about the importance of powwow in their communities and assertions of culture loss in nonparticipants (Lassiter 1998:74; Theisz 2005). While this scholarship illuminates why native people dance, it fails to sufficiently address why native people do not dance.

This article aims to better understand powwow nonparticipation among the Plains Apache by examining the perspectives and experiences of Apache tribal citizens, who are not, or not often, active powwow participants. Giving voice to these "disappointing" and "anomalous" Plains Apache people allows for a deeper consideration of the factors that influence powwow participation and the place of powwow in contemporary Apache cultural practices. Instead of assuming that nonparticipation is a reflection of disinterest or culture loss, I argue that material constraints and kinship obligations influence and complicate individual powwow participation. Simultaneously, nonparticipant voices disrupt narratives of indigeneity that tend to privilege powwow participants. These voices help correct existing ethnographic silences by challenging and contextualizing assumptions about nonparticipation and the importance of powwow in native Southern Plains communities. As a result, this paper encourages more inclusive understandings of native cultural difference, particularly important in a political climate that often positions authenticity as a "gatekeeper" to determine access to indigenous rights (Raibmon 2005:206; see also Cattelino 2008, Dombrowski 2001).

THE PLAINS APACHE

To ethnographers working in the twentieth century, the Plains Apache—known historically and ethnographically as the Kiowa Apache—represented an intriguing culture area puzzle. European accounts described the Apache as nomadic bison hunters with some typically Plains cultural patterns and,

despite linguistic differences, allied with the Kiowa (Foster and McCullough 2001:296–7). Noting Apache participation in the Kiowa Sun Dance, James Mooney interpreted the Apache as a Kiowa band, "practically a part of the Kiowa in everything but language," and thus not sufficiently culturally different from the Kiowa to warrant an extended separate study (Mooney 1907:701).[2] For other anthropologists, like Charles Brant and William Bittle, the Plains Apache community, as "the easternmost extension of Southern Athabaskan speaking peoples" and the only example of an Apachean-speaking group living in a true Plains environment, was an apparent anomaly (Bittle 1962:152).[3]

Importantly, powwow was often used to evaluate Plains Apache cultural origins. Brant (1949), for example, argued that the Plains Apache were recent arrivals to the Plains by comparing their cultural patterns—particularly ceremonial dances—to that of other Southern Plains communities, especially the Kiowa. Brant suggested that Plains Apache ceremonialism "was a weakly developed imitation of [Plains] dancing societies" since the Apache had historically, according to his data, only four dancing societies, none of which were age-graded (Brant 1949:60). Additionally, the Apache did not conduct their own Sun Dance, participating instead in the dance held annually by the Kiowa. Thus Plains Apache cultural patterns, apparently neither fully Plains nor fully Southwest, seem to disappoint culture area expectations not once, but twice (Brant 1949).

Today the Plains Apache are federally recognized as the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, and number approximately 2,000 members, most living in and around the towns of Anadarko, Ft. Cobb, and Apache in southwestern Oklahoma.[4] Today, the Plains Apache are a distinct tribal and legal entity from the Kiowa. Unlike the Kiowa, however, the Plains Apache have revived and maintained only one ceremonial dance, the *Manitidie,* or Blackfeet, organized and conducted today by two separate military society organizations. There are few remaining conversational speakers of Plains Apache, and importantly, no attempts at community language revitalization through classes to either adults or children. A culture camp for children, which once took place yearly, is now held sporadically. There is no tribal museum, and the small tribal history and culture display at the tribal complex has been dismantled and put in storage to make way for more office space. Disappointment, then, reflects very real differences between the Kiowa and Apache communities.

In a way, the removal of culture from the tribal complex is symbolic of the place of traditional culture—practices and beliefs linked, but not identical, to precontact patterns of life—in the priorities of the tribal government and some Apache tribal citizens. Like all native communities, however, the Apache community is diverse. Some Plains Apache people do participate in cultural

events and activities in Oklahoma and beyond. Some Apache people are active powwow participants, just as there are those who actively participate in the Native American Church and Indian Christian churches. Importantly, however, there are many Apache people who are only tangentially involved in traditional forms of cultural production, especially expressive culture, as well as those who are more or less completely disengaged from them.[5] Although nonparticipants exist in every indigenous community, nonparticipation and comparative lack of public expressive cultural events among the Plains Apache create the impression of a community failing to maintain a distinctive corporate identity.

Because southwestern Oklahoma is a multi-tribal environment, the historical and contemporary comparison of the Plains Apache to their Southern Plains neighbors remains relevant. Even though most of my research consultants were Apache and I focused on Apache history and cultural events, the Plains Apache are now, and have likely always been, part of a large network of indigenous communities connected to one another through social, political, and cultural ties. In addition to the Plains Apache, the Wichita, Kiowa, Comanche, Caddo, Western Delaware, and Ft. Still/Chiricahua, Apache communities have tribal complexes and significant populations in southwestern Oklahoma today. Because of intermarriage between these communities, many individuals, including some Apaches, claim several tribal affiliations, even though tribal citizenship regulations usually restrict enrollment to one community. As a result, my research and my consultants are representative of the complicated and vibrant cultural landscape of southwestern Oklahoma.

ON POWWOW

The term *powwow* is an Algonquian term for shaman that came to be used by whites for any Indian gathering (Young and Gooding 2001:1012). Today, the term denotes a wide variety of events, some primarily social and others with distinctive ceremonial qualities, some in large urban settings, others in small, out-of-the-way places (Young and Gooding 2001:1012). The size and ethnic composition of the audience varies widely, as does the function of the event. Most usually, the term describes intertribal events that share a similar format, with standard dance forms and song styles that may include contests with varying amounts of prize money for the best dancers in each category. These contemporary powwows, however, "developed out of those historical ceremonial dances that were most widely shared among Indian groups" (Young and Gooding 2001:1011). On the Southern Plains, these historical ceremonial dances included men's military society dances and the Ghost Dance, all of which were exchanged from tribe to tribe throughout the Plains during the historic period (Young and Gooding 2001:1011; Ellis 1999:136).

Many of these dance forms, however, were outlawed and actively suppressed during the reservation and allotment periods (Ellis 1999:137–41).

Despite opposition from federal agents and Christian missionaries, native people continued to dance, often risking jail time or the revocation of their rations if they were caught (Ellis 1999:143–4; Lassiter 1998:93–4). Simultaneously, during the first half of the twentieth century, Indian fairs, expositions and Wild West shows featured native dancing and singing. These events, often with grand entries, contest dancing categories, and prize money, also influenced the form of the contemporary powwow (Ellis 1999:142–3). It was not until after World War II, however, that the contemporary powwow began to flourish, as dances were often held to honor returning servicemen (Ellis 1999:147–51; Young and Gooding 2001:1015). Especially in urban areas, where many native families moved as a result of federal Relocation policy, powwows became intertribal events even as they drew upon a distinct Southern Plains style of dance (Young and Gooding 2001:1015). Concurrently, however, in rural southwestern Oklahoma, tribal military societies were being revived and emerged as annual ceremonial events. For example, the Kiowa Gourd Clan in 1957, the Kiowa Black Leggings in 1958, the Apache Blackfeet in 1959, and the Comanche Little Ponies in 1972 (Bittle 1962; Meadows 2003:137, 139, 229, 346; Young and Gooding 2001:1018). Although many of these men's societies shared similar practices and origins—and some, like the Gourd Dance, would spread to other communities—the dances were specific to particular tribes.

Although demonstrable differences exist between powwow forms and functions, midcentury anthropologists saw powwows as purely Pan-Indian events and indicative of an assumed inevitable acculturation process (Howard 1955, 1983). In this scenario, Pan-Indian (or "generic" Indian) traits would replace tribally specific cultural patterns before the eventual complete acculturation to dominant white American society (Jackson 2005:191). In contemporary scholarship, the oversimplified process of cultural loss embedded within acculturation theory has been replaced with a more complex and nuanced understanding of culture itself, one that recognizes the inevitability of culture change while still allowing for continuity with earlier practices (Ellis and Lassiter 2005:xvii; see also Fowler 1987).

In the scholarship of the native Southern Plains, cultural continuities have been studied primarily through the lens of powwow and military society dances (Boyd 1981; Ellis 1990, 1999, 2003, 2005; Ellis and Lassiter 2005; Foster 1991; Fowler 2005; Kavanagh 1992; Kracht 1994; Lassiter 1997, 1998, 1999; Lassiter and Ellis 1998; Meadows 2003, 2010; Meredith 1995). This preoccupation stands out as somewhat unique against a growing body of literature about global indigeneity, particularly on emergent indigeneities,

indigenous sovereignties, and indigeneity in the context of neoliberal economic policies (Asch, et al. 2004; Barnard 2006; Gausset, et al. 2011; Kenrick and Lewis 2004; Kuper 2003; McCormack 2011; Pelican 2009; Sylvain 2002). Arguably, such a focus is justified by the historical and contemporary importance of dancing culture on the Southern Plains (Ellis 2003; Fowler 2005:68). Certainly, this work has meticulously documented the meaning of powwow song and dance for participants, as well as the role of powwows in maintaining and negotiating individual and corporate identity (Foster 1991; Fowler 1987, 2005; Kracht 1994; Lassiter 1997, 1998, 1999). Simultaneously, powwow-focused works in and beyond the Southern Plains are increasingly problematizing powwows, suggesting them as spaces not just of native unity and identity, but also of division and conflict (Lassiter and Ellis 1998; Mattern 1999).

ON PARTICIPATION

Despite these contributions, powwow scholarship has not addressed the variation in powwow participation or examined marginal and nonparticipation. Fowler (2005), for example, suggests that powwows "attract the entire tribal membership (enrolled and not enrolled, local resident and nonresident) regardless of economic circumstances, religious affiliation, or political alliances" (Fowler 2005:68). While powwows, especially annual military society dances, do indeed draw participants and spectators from across these boundaries, my research suggests that they do not attract the entire tribal population. Among the Plains Apache, all tribal members know of the annual Blackfeet ceremonies, and most will have at least one but often many more kinship connections to a participant. Only a fraction of the community, however, actually attends the annual dances and even fewer are active participants.

Even more, the terms "participation" and "attendance" are slippery and ambiguous, glossing over multiple forms of social action, some of which reflect differential access to power and authority in the community. At Blackfeet, the audience of spectators varies widely, from families who camp for the entire weekend, to individuals who come for an afternoon of dancing, to young adults who come only for a few hours and supper after the dance has finished. Similarly, participation includes male dancers (minimally, four dancers, plus a whip man, but often more than ten), male drummers, and singers. Female dancers, while central to Blackfeet since its revival, were not a part of the pre-revival ceremonial and thus do not dance directly behind the staffs: a point made to me many times by both Apache men and women. More marginal are female singers, who sit behind male singers at the drum. Their voices add to songs, but they do not drum or start songs.

Powwow space, including the dance arena and spectator areas, has often been described as a series of concentric circles (Gelo 1999:45–6; Theisz 2005:87). While male singers and dancers are at the innermost circle and occupy the attention of spectators, many participants work outside of the arena and are nevertheless necessary for the success of the powwow. These include the master of ceremonies (emcee or MC), the arena director, and women who work to sell raffle tickets that go to support the cost of the event. In addition, the division between spectator and participant is often blurry. Men and women may enter the arena to dance in honor of one or two individuals, but remain seated on the outside of the arena for the rest of the event. Some women may simply dance in front of their chairs, never actually entering the arena itself—a pattern that occurs quite frequently during the four closing songs at Apache Blackfeet. Other women, busy with cooking supper at their family's camps, may never approach the arena and have little to do with the dance itself, yet their labor is necessary for the dance to be a success, since a meal always follows.

Scholarship that acknowledges the existence of marginal and nonparticipants often fails to make the same systematic investigation of nonparticipation as it does of participation (Foster 1991:163–4; Fowler 1987:141–5; Lassiter 1998:69–9). Nonparticipants are often described as participating in other native cultural activities, such as the Native American Church or Indian Christian churches, or in the case of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine, as a result of different values based on generation, tribe, and experience (Fowler 1987:173–8). Given these alternatives, my consultants also include those who do not participate, or do so very marginally, in any cultural event, including powwow. The native people who have little to do with native cultural production in any form, as well as nonparticipants, are not fully realized or analyzed.

The lack of academic interest in nonparticipants seems to be based upon the tendency to equate cultural production, particularly powwow, with individual native or tribal identity, especially in current understandings of powwow as integral community rituals on the Plains. For many scholars working only with active participants, an individual's apparent disinterest and subsequent lack of cultural engagement or production seems to indicate a removal from a native or tribal identity. Presenting the perspective of active powwow participants, Lassiter (1998:74) writes:

> Participation in community activities, or "Indian doings"—like going to powwows, peyote meetings or church services; speaking Indian; or dealing with everyday life through an Indian philosophy—signifies, to a greater or lesser degree, actual existence in the Indian world. Withdrawal from participation in Indian doings, from this viewpoint, may imply the rejection of being Indian.

Although Lassiter recognizes that there are circumstances that may limit participation, and that there are other ways of being Indian, a focus on Kiowa song limits his research to highly active participants. One casualty of this focus, however, is the exclusion of nonparticipant perspectives that, in the case of the Plains Apache, would have provided a powerful counterpoint to the assumption that nonparticipation implies "the rejection of being Indian" (Lassiter 1998:74).

Like Lassiter's Kiowa consultants, some Apaches also view powwow participation as a personal choice, unaffected by other constraints. More commonly however, Apache people frame powwow participation as a costly activity, requiring substantial cultural and material capital. Powwow is also articulated as deeply intertwined with Apache obligations to support and honor kin, a collection of normative practices Apache people sometimes describe as respect. Simultaneously, these material requirements and kinship obligations also influence powwow nonparticipation. The following sections represent an attempt to give voice to anomalous Apache people, both powwow participants and nonparticipants. The data below were collected primarily through open-ended interviews during my fieldwork in Anadarko, Oklahoma, from May 2006 through December 2007, with additional interviews in 2008 and 2009.

POWWOW CAPITAL

Material concerns are often a crucial component in decisions about whether or not to participate in a powwow, and in what capacity. Money is necessary for many aspects of powwow dancing, most obviously for travel and regalia. As an Apache woman explained, "Once you get into dancing, you do have to have a lot of money. Not only just to make all your regalia, but having to buy it, having to get … everything made." While male and female Blackfeet singers generally dress in everyday clothing, dancing regalia is more costly. Male dancers wear regalia similar to Straight War Dance clothing, while female dancers wear blue and red cloth dresses, sometimes called "Victory Dresses," common on the Southern Plains (Meadows 2003:237). Male and female dancing regalia also include specific and often expensive accessories, such as moccasins, leggings, and feathered fans (Meadows 2003: 237). The cost of regalia varies dramatically from participant to participant, often depending on how items are acquired.

For many Apache people, dressing properly when dancing is paramount, especially since participants and spectators often evaluate the quality of a dancer's regalia. Sloppy, ill-fitting, or incomplete regalia is perceived as reflecting disrespect for the powwow arena, other dancers, and the larger kinship network that dancers represent. As one elderly woman of Apache and

Kiowa descent told me, "You don't just go out there *háigáhè* style!" A Kiowa word, *háigáhè* can be loosely translated as "any old way," and implies a lack of concern or appreciation for the powwow arena.

In addition, for most participants and spectators, powwow frequently requires the public support of their kin in the arena. This expectation of support motivates individuals to attend, and sometimes participate in the same powwows as their kin. Additionally, kin support often occurs within the powwow arena in a variety of forms commonly called "honoring." Less formally, a participant is honored when other participants or spectators spontaneously drop dollar bills at their feet during a song. More formalized honoring takes place through "specials," when families arrange to honor an individual, and a song, usually of the family's or honoree's choosing, is sung. In both of these instances, dancers and more marginal powwow participants and spectators will come into the arena to place the dollar bills at the feet of the honored individual, some staying to dance behind the honoree.[6] Dancers and other participants are also often required to provide a giveaway, which is discussed in detail below.

For dancers and spectators at a powwow, honoring is not necessarily mandatory, but neither is it completely voluntary. As a public act, honoring represents the tensions between obligations to support kin, expectations of generosity, and the public display of status. As one Apache powwow participant explained:

> If I would [honor] just to make myself look good, because I'm going out there putting money, I don't like that. I'm thinking, that's not what it's here for. But then in my job, because I do a job that does a lot of service, I interact with a lot of families and a lot of tribes, and I feel like, in my position, I should, the obligation is there, that I should go out and honor someone. I can't ignore that family.

As noted above, powwow participants recognize that honoring can be used to highlight or claim a particular socioeconomic status. Simultaneously, however, kinship obligations of support, even for fictive kin, should be met through honoring. Failure to do so would not necessarily signal the abrupt end to kinship ties, but it could imply a lack of respect for individuals and, by extension, their family.

Expectations to honor and support kin often include additional powwow obligations. Periodically, families will provide supper for the entire powwow, dancers and spectators, in honor of a relative. Sometimes families will sponsor an entire powwow in honor of a family member. During fieldwork, one of my consultants sponsored an honor dance for her niece, a newly elected tribal princess. Besides having to arrange a location for the powwow, find a drum, an emcee, and a head staff, she was expected to provide a large giveaway and

supper in honor of the new princess. As the date for the event approached, she expressed deep concern over these costs. In fact, she had to wait until she received a royalty check from her share in an oil lease to afford the food for supper and the items for the giveaway.

Even as kinship obligations can create material costs to powwow participants and spectators, the same expectations of support may also mediate financial requirements for powwow participation. Regalia, for example, are often passed down to younger dancers, and relatives may sew or make regalia for their kin free of charge. Kin may provide transportation for participants, or financial support to enable powwow participation. Simultaneously, kin also provide the cultural capital, such as the knowledge of song and dance forms, which are also necessary for powwow participation. In fact, kin support is so crucial to powwow participation that nearly all of my Apache consultants emphasized the necessity of both monetary and kin resources. As one Apache man, a powwow spectator but nonparticipant, remarked, "If you don't have family or money, it's hard to get out there and dance."

POWWOW INTERLUDE: GIVEAWAYS

Among the Plains Apache, kinship obligations of support often motivate powwow participation. Apache people attend and sometimes participate in powwows to support kin who are participating, yet these obligations can come with material obstacles. Giveaways—when families give away gifts such as grocery baskets, comforters, dish towels, tobacco, shawls, and Pendleton blankets to the head staff, dancers, singers, and crowd in honor of a relative—most clearly exemplify the tensions between the material cost of powwow and kinship obligations to support and honor relatives.

Contemporary giveaways are descended from a long tradition of ritual gift exchange within and between native communities, such as the calumet, smoke, and adoption ceremonies described by early European travelers (Young and Gooding 2001:1024). Working from perspectives provided by native consultants, scholars have recognized the many meanings embedded in and conveyed by giveaways. In particular, giveaways have been described, sometimes simultaneously, as ritualized gift exchanges to honor individuals (Goertzen 2001:73; Pflüg 1996:506), as an outlet to display the generosity so highly valued in Plains societies, to gain respect and loyalty (Foster 1991:125; Fowler 1987; Price 1994:458), as a social mechanism that redistributes wealth to those in need (Foster 1991:125; Moore 1993), and a way to formalize and publicize relationships between individuals and families (Bittle 1962:162; Foster 1991:152).

On the Southern Plains today, giveaways are conducted for various reasons, such as the return home of military veterans, to honor a beloved

family member, and to celebrate significant achievements such as graduations. Giveaways are also expected, if not required, for central powwow participants like the head staff (Young and Gooding 2001:1023–4). At Blackfeet, when an individual is formally honored, his or her family often prepares a giveaway. In addition, the first time an individual, adult or child, dances in regalia, his or her family is expected to provide a giveaway, an event Apache people often call "paying your way in.[7]" Some Apache people also pay their way in after an extended break from dancing, usually because of the death of an influential relative and the resulting mourning period, another manifestation of the expectation to honor kin.

Although the sizes of giveaways vary dramatically depending on the family and the type of honoring event, the cost of buying such items can be prohibitive. For example, a woman explained:

> Whenever you are a head lady dancer it can be real expensive, depending on what you want to get, how you want to buy it. People just give grocery baskets away to each one. Like [my sister], she's different. She buys everybody something different, material-wise. She has spent a lot of money being head lady dancer. She takes her time and when she gets a little bit of money she gets someone something.

As a result, many participants and their families plan long-term for their giveaways. Participants may save items they have been given in giveaways, such as blankets and shawls, for their giveaways. They also actively search pawnshops and yard sales for good deals on these more expensive items. One Apache woman laughed as she told me that she has an extra bedroom in her home and a new storage shed that are filled with potential giveaway items. Similarly, family members will frequently bring an item to contribute to a giveaway, such as a shawl, blanket, or grocery basket.

Even though giveaways create and maintain social relationships, they also replicate "the social divisions between groups" (Scales 2007:27). Participants with large kin networks, with many family members consistently contributing items to be given away, are able to give away more items and therefore, in turn, participate in more powwows. Similarly, the formalized and reciprocal nature of the giveaway requires gifts to be given most often to the same category of highly active participants, enabling more frequent and active powwow participation within this group (see Foster 1991:151–2 on "secondary" honoring). This process, which limits the exchange of giveaway items to active participants, maintains the boundary between participants and non-participants.

Interestingly, in some cases, those who contribute to giveaways neither stand up with their kin at the giveaway nor receive items from the givers. Their material contributions and kinship tie to the givers are not made publicly

visible. While giveaways do formalize and publicize some social and kin relationships (Bittle 1962:162; Foster 1991:152; Moore 1993), I suggest that the giveaway is also an outward, visible manifestation of already existing bonds of reciprocity and obligation, facilitated by often unseen kin relations who do not stand in the arena for the formal giveaway ceremony. That is, in addition to initiating or maintaining relationships of obligation and reciprocity, giveaways are often dependent upon existing relationships between givers and the family members that provide items to be given away.

BEYOND THE POWWOW ARENA

Obligations of support also influence the ways in which Apache people participate, particularly when combined with expectations of age and gender. At Blackfeet, for example, female dancers tend to be young, unmarried, and have no children, although there are always several older female dancers, including a head lady dancer. The majority of middle-aged women, however, are expected to support kin dancers and singers by providing the less visible and more marginal forms of powwow participation, such as cooking supper at camps and selling raffle tickets. These supporting powwow roles, however, meet the contemporary gendered kinship expectations of interaction between Apache women and men. As many explained, Apache women are expected to support, but never usurp, their fathers, brothers, uncles, and other males in public. As a result, few middle-aged Apache women take on the roles of highly active powwow participant within the arena. While this pattern may superficially index cultural disengagement, it more accurately reflects adherence to a set of normative kinship behaviors that constructs women's social value through the support of male kin.

Similarly, obligations to honor kin can also deter participation, particularly if those kin do not or cannot support participation. An elderly regular powwow spectator said that she was asked to be Apache tribal princess in her youth, a great personal and family honor. As a representative of the entire tribal community, tribal princesses have been common since the middle of the twentieth century; most tribal princesses, including the Plains Apache, are selected or elected from young, unmarried women with no children. The Apache tribal princess represents her community at intertribal events, typically intertribal powwows, but also at intra-community events like the annual Blackfeet ceremonies, benefit dances, and honor dances. In this case, however, my consultant's father opposed her appointment as Apache princess for financial reasons, arguing that the powwow obligations, particularly regalia, traveling to powwows, and honoring, would be too expensive (see also Roberts 2005:163).

More subtly, Apache people honor kin by modeling their actions, behaviors, and beliefs on those of their relatives, particularly influential kin (Wightman 2009). Many Apache people draw upon these kinship expectations in the construction of a culturally specific form of historicity, or historical consciousness, to explain their choices regarding powwow participation or nonparticipation (Hodges 2010:115). As a consultant stated:

> We didn't really go to any dances or anything like that. Later on [my grandpa] became a minister, a Baptist minister, so we went to dances but we didn't go that much. … But, you know I guess I don't go to dances, or I don't take part in them, because my grandpa never did take part. We went to some, we camped at some of them, but we didn't really dance or take part.

In this instance, past experience and the example set by an influential relative give meaning to nonparticipation. Many Apache people describe this type of memorializing as a way to show appropriate respect to intimate and particularly influential kin. Similarly, Apache people will often take an extended break from powwow participation after the death of a close or influential relative as a form of respectful mourning. In these cases, obligations of respect influence powwow nonparticipation.

Tribal politics, so often intertwined with kinship ties and obligations among the Plains Apache, may influence nonparticipation in similar ways. The two Blackfeet military societies, for example, are split among kinship groups. While some participants attend both ceremonial dances (one held annually in June and the other in August), a select few individuals, usually the most active participants such as dancers, singers, and emcees, will usually attend only the dance associated with their particular kinship group. Tribal politics are notoriously, and similarly, factionalized among the Plains Apache. During particularly contentious moments, Apache people sometimes choose not to participate in powwows, particularly in Blackfeet, to protest the actions of the tribal business committee or the Blackfeet society headsmen.

Importantly, for some of the most economically marginalized Apache people, powwow participation is often seen as unnecessary and tangential to everyday needs, even with support from kin relations. These individuals rarely, if ever, participate in any form of expressive culture, even in the most peripheral roles. One consultant explained, "We're not back in the olden days, you know? That's just how I look at it, in other words. Because life is hard. … Then it would be different to teach your kids about being your tribe." From this perspective, daily survival does not require Apache cultural knowledge. Even more, however, this knowledge, or the time, effort, and money it takes to both acquire and practice it, potentially conflicts with ability to provide for one's family. Everyday struggles clearly take precedence over what is seen as

the luxury of cultural engagement. From this perspective, cultural knowledge potentially threatens activities, such as work, that are more relevant to a family's economic survival.

DISCUSSION

Despite assertions about their universal importance in native Southern Plains communities, Apache people often express ambivalence about the importance of powwow in their community. As an Apache man stated, "There's more to culture than just dancing. There are other things that make up culture. That's one part of it. Just because you don't take part in it [does not] mean you don't believe in it." Even though powwow is downplayed, nonparticipation does not mean an individual dismisses dancing or singing as important to contemporary Apache life. Another Apache man, an occasional powwow participant, said, "Some people say 'Yeah I know my tradition, I know my culture.' But powwow's a social thing. There's a small ceremony there, but it's a social thing. It's part of your culture, but it's not the foundation." While these sentiments are unlikely to be discussed at Blackfeet, they are commonly expressed among contemporary Apache people, even among avid powwow participants.

Rather than powwow, many Apache people claim that the "foundation" of contemporary Apache culture and identity are the same kinship behaviors and obligations that influence powwow participation and nonparticipation. When asked what aspects of Apache culture he is trying to teach his children, one man responded:

> I want them to learn, I try to teach them unwritten laws of respect. Respect for themselves, respect for their siblings, for their grandpas and grandmas. They all have a role to play and … I want them to understand that. ... Being Apache means knowing your culture and your roots … your family history. You know it and live it. Not just knowing it, but living it. That makes you Apache.

As these narratives suggest, at its most basic level, contemporary Apache cultural identity and sociality are defined by descent from an Apache family, an extended kin network, and by maintaining appropriate respect between relatives.

Although superficially simple, "knowing" one's relatives is simultaneously a social and a cultural act. By acknowledging one's relatives, Apache people effectively claim their place in social relationships based on kinship. Claiming relatives, in other words, is also the act of claiming an Apache identity, as doing so automatically positions an individual as part of an Apache family. Yet, acknowledging kin also requires cultural capital of specific kinship knowledge—not only family histories and genealogies, but

also the embedded knowledge of Apache descent, kinship terminology, and kinship obligations. For Apache people, the foundational unwritten rules of respect are the obligations between specific kin, including reciprocal expectations of financial and symbolic support, honoring through respect, and gendered behavioral expectations that define normative modes of interaction between men and women.

Because kinship relations are both emergent and fragile, acknowledging kin further requires the maintenance of kin relationships through culturally appropriate behaviors (Van Fleet 2008:69). Without mutual maintenance, kin relationships may be undermined or even severed. Importantly, these respect behaviors can be maintained in both ceremonial and mundane circumstances. Powwows are ways to claim family and perform kinship obligations and behaviors, but they should also be displayed in everyday interactions outside of the public and highly visible powwow arena. For Apache people, it is primarily the breakdown of kin relations, largely through not reciprocating obligations of support and respect, which signifies the rejection of an Apache identity.

Contemporary Apache kinship patterns are also understood as setting the standard for behavior in the powwow arena. For Blackfeet, at least, Apache people explain that the gendered nature of the dance corresponds to the patterns of respect required between Apache women and their male kinsmen. Similarly, kinship relations, not Blackfeet or any of its ceremonial requirements, motivate participation, structure the dance, and facilitate and give meaning to honoring and giveaways. For the Plains Apache, powwow can only be understood in the broader cultural and social context of kinship. Obligations of respect and support organize and give meaning to powwow.

CONCLUSIONS

For native participants, as Lassiter (1998) has shown, powwow singing and dancing are emotionally powerful and meaningful, reflective of historic narratives, family connections, a sense of community, and a communal experience. Apache participants often speak about powwow in similar ways, and this article is in no way an attempt to diminish those perspectives or experiences. Yet there is undeniably a void in the literature that glosses over nonparticipants and their experiences. As I have argued here, these perspectives challenge the universal importance of powwow on the Southern Plains, and the belief that nonparticipants have lost their culture or rejected their native identities.

Among the Plains Apache, participation or nonparticipation is influenced by a variety of factors, including material constraints and kinship support. Indeed, in some cases, nonparticipation reflects adherence to Apache culture

and the maintenance of an Apache identity through the observance of certain kinship expectations. While reciprocal kinship obligations mediate structures of inequality and access to money that erect barriers to powwow participation, kinship obligations in the form of respect can also function as roadblocks themselves. In this sense, nonparticipation takes on new significance. What appears to be culture loss or even the rejection of a native identity is actually a culturally appropriate pattern and the claiming of an Apache identity—following gendered kinship obligations or a precedent set by an influential relative—based on the relations of support and respect that define some kinship relationships.

Yet powwows and their participants have clearly come to be valued, by many native and non-native people, as more authentically cultural than other forms of cultural engagement on the Plains. Like any complex cultural trope, indigenous authenticity is historically variable and subjective, emerging from and circulating between both native and non-native communities, with both "collaborating" in its production (Raibmon 2005:3). For native people, indigenous authenticity is often tied to cultural continuity, with disappointment resulting from real or perceived cultural loss. As Cattelino (2008) has argued, concerns of cultural loss within native communities reflect "historically informed indigenous discourse about social reproduction" (Cattelino 2008: 13). In this sense, native disappointment in other indigenous communities or individuals emerges as a result of different cultural priorities, born of different historical and demographic contexts.

Significantly, Plains Apache people convey very little disappointment or concern about individuals who do not participate in powwow. Rather, they more commonly express disappointment about the failure of individuals to maintain expected kinship obligations and behaviors. Similarly, Apache concerns about culture loss are often expressed through the trope of kinship. At the youth culture camps—very explicit moments of formalized cultural and social reproduction—Apache concerns are clearly centered upon teaching kinship knowledge. During the multi-day culture camp in 2006, there were no formal sessions teaching Apache youth song or dance, but there were several sessions about Apache history, conveyed primarily through kinship, and about gendered kinship behaviors. Because this knowledge includes expectations of kinship behavior and social interaction, these kinship concerns are also fundamentally about reproducing a particular type of Apache sociality.

For non-native people, authenticity is often tied to cultural continuity and cultural difference (Conklin 1997:715). Powwow, then, is a powerful and visible manifestation of existing Western narratives about alterity, particularly indigenous alterity. "For outsiders, native costumes tend to carry a heavy semiotic load" (Conklin 1997:714). Native costumes index cultural continuity,

the antithesis of culture loss. Despite clear changes in powwow dance, song, and particularly costume styles, cultural continuity here is understood not in an academic sense, but rather in a fantasy of an unchanged, ahistorical existence. Powwow references the "before" of Simpson (2011:208), an existence prior to forced cultural change and the official assimilation policies of the U.S. government. Although other aspects of contemporary native communities show cultural continuity (e.g., kinship practices), they are less visible as examples of cultural difference.

Crucially, however, narratives of authenticity, cultural loss, and cultural continuity have imminent practical ramifications. "White society continues to station authenticity as the gatekeeper of Aboriginal people's rights to things like commercial fisheries, land, and casinos" (Raibmon 2005:206). As a reflection of failed expectations of authenticity in this "gatekeeper" function, disappointment can also be profoundly dangerous for indigenous nations. As indigenous nations increasingly exercise their rights of sovereignty, they will also increasingly be subject to narrow, non-native expectations of authenticity. In this context, more inclusive representations of indigenous cultural continuities and local, native, subjective formulations of identity and authenticity have the possibility to expand and ultimately challenge these expectations.

For some scholars, the prominent place of powwow and other forms of cultural continuity in academic literature comes at the expense of "some indisputably important aspects of Native American reality," such as the structures of economic inequality that affect native communities (Schroder 2003:436). As argued here, however, "traditional culture" and those who espouse it are not necessarily opposed to and divorced from the social realities of those who are culturally disengaged. Rather, giving voice to anomalous native people, the nonparticipants who often evoke disappointment in native and non-native people alike, allows for critically analyzing the historical, social, and economic contexts that influence forms of cultural continuity and cultural participation. The notion of cultural production (and what counts as more authentically cultural) is challenged and expanded, and as a result the false division between participant and nonparticipant can be bridged. Indeed, the intent of this article is not to deny the social and cultural importance of contemporary powwows, or to deny the meaning that such experiences evoke for participants and spectators alike. Rather, I hope this paper will broaden understandings of contemporary indigeneity and indigenous identities in a more inclusive way.

NOTES

1. I thank the many Plains Apache people who graciously took time to talk with me during the research.

2. For Bittle, Mooney's description of the Plains Apache created an expectation among ethnographers that the Plains Apache had little to offer in the way of cultural difference, resulting in a lack of ethnographic interest and research within the community.
3. At the department of anthropology at the University of Oklahoma, Bittle encouraged graduate students to conduct research with the Plains Apache, and they "gathered the most extensive material on Apache life and culture" (Stokely 2003:16).
4. Based on data published by Schweinfurth (2003) and confirmed by my own conversations with Apache Business Committee members.
5. I have no satisfactory statistic to quantify participation. In 2006–2007, average attendance at the afternoon sessions of the Kiowa-Apache Blackfeet Society dance was 150 people, indicating that only 7.5 percent of the tribal community attended the events. This number, however, is unreliable. Not all attendees are enrolled Apache or even of Apache descent, although Blackfeet does not usually attract a lot of attention from other tribes or non-related spectators. In addition, what counts as "attendance"? Many people stop by for an hour or two, while others might camp for the entire weekend. And, methodologically speaking, trying to count people that are moving between camps, coming from and going home, and visiting around the arena is very challenging and likely leads to errors.
6. Honorees rarely keep the money given to them. It is most often given to the drum, or occasionally to another individual or to an organization.
7. Ellis (1999:133) records the phrase "paying for your seat" for the same process.

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