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This article considers the final disposal of field-recorded tapes that are believed by the informant's family to embody certain dangers to researchers, to the natural world, and to themselves. Motives for keeping or destroying the tapes are discussed in the light of modern concerns such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Navajo worldview, scholarly interests, fieldwork ethics, and personal responsibilities of the fieldworker. I espouse the view that folklorists stand to learn more and do better work when scholarly decisions are guided by the culture we study, even when taking this course causes disruption in our academic assumptions.

OVER THE 43 YEARS I have spent collecting Navajo stories—principally from Hugh Yellowman—one topic has continually emerged: an abiding concern about the power of spoken language. For instance, certain stories and songs are to be orally performed only at certain times of the year: during winter (that is, between the first killing frost and the first lightning stroke), during solstices, and during eclipses—moments that are defined by the larger movements of nature, not by the immediate agendas of humans. Electronic recordings have complicated the normal observance of these “rules,” for tapes can be played anytime, especially if they are out of the control or purview of the person who recorded them. My ability to record—or, more properly, Navajo permission for me to record—was made possible by my promise that I would play the tapes only during the season in which they could properly be performed. Because my Navajo friends trusted my word in this matter, they were quite willing to record anything I asked for; in fact, Yellowman would often suggest that I start the recorder when a particularly interesting story or anecdote came to his mind. This practice became so common that he needed only to clear his throat and point with his lips in the direction of the recorder, and I would flip the switches on. The net result was that on my tapes I eventually accumulated a rich variety of whatever he and the members of his family wanted to tell me.

While living with the combined Little Wagon and Yellowman families for almost two years in Montezuma Canyon (in southeastern Utah) in the 1950s, I had listened to their stories and had taken notes on them purely out of curiosity and

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personal interest.¹ Later, in 1966, as a folklorist teaching at the University of Oregon, I began visiting the family regularly—mostly during winter months—and recorded Yellowman telling Coyote stories to his family. Beyond wanting to “collect” as many story texts as I could on tape, so I could bring them home to Oregon and study them, I was interested in capturing how they were told in the family kitchen (the family had long since moved to a simple frame house in Blanding, Utah) and out in the yard and on camping and hunting trips. I had noticed that when Yellowman was surrounded by a fascinated, engaged Navajo audience, his narration was more fully articulated and textured than it was when he spoke into the microphone with only myself present. Moreover, the listeners often laughed uproariously at elements in the story which did not strike me as particularly funny. Clearly some kind of meaning emerged between the narrator and the audience and the story, and whatever this was, it was not manifestly stated in the “text.” Questions arising from these puzzlements set the direction in which much of my scholarship led me over the next 30 years, and the tapes provided me with the working resources for constant relistening, retranslation, and reflection back in Oregon, far from where Yellowman and his family were living out their lives (Toelken 1969:211–235; Toelken and Scott 1981:65–116).

In addition to a great number of Coyote stories, the tapes included Yellowman singing Yeibichei songs (some of them in a very soft voice in summertime, when these songs are not supposed to be sung), instructing his family about hunting rituals in a tent before dawn during the deer hunt, talking about sacred deer hides, discussing the various arts and crafts he knew (such as the making of traditional moccasins, bows and arrows, cradleboards, looms, silverwork), and reciting various episodes from the Emergence Myth that relate directly to customs of hunting and agriculture (we had discussed doing a book on the Navajo way of life, and Yellowman insisted that each chapter should begin with an appropriate segment of the Emergence or Blessingway myths). In addition, he recalled oral history about early Navajo settlement in the Southwest and about first encounters with the Pueblo tribes (these anecdotes, given in the first person plural “we,” must have reflected Navajo experiences of more than 500 years ago), and he related long, rambling anecdotes about personal experiences and travels in Dinétah, the Navajo country. On one occasion, after we had returned from a day-long drive south through Monument Valley to Kayenta, then back northeast to the Four Corners, then south to Chinle Wash, then northwest to Bluff, east to Montezuma Creek, then back northwest to Blanding, Yellowman pursed his lips toward the tape recorder and proceeded to recall the entire trip in detail, naming the various rock features, washes, canyons, and mountains we had seen along the way and commenting on the various uses of the plants we had passed—along with footnotes on what time of year each one had to be dug or harvested in order to retain its powers as a medicine or dye. He was still talking when I ran out of tape, and by that time the rest of us, including his entire family, were almost unconscious from exhaustion.

In later years, as various of his children came to stay with my family in order to go to school, I discovered a new dimension of the tape-recorded Coyote stories:

while they are not to be told in the summer, they most certainly should be told in the winter. Yellowman's children were allowed to stay with us as long as I promised to play their father's recordings for them during the winter evenings, so that they would not lose their cultural sanity. The stories are far more than entertainment, though they are indeed entertaining; their larger role is to dramatize many of the Navajo cultural abstract values that maintain an individual's equilibrium, balance, harmony, and "beauty." Yellowman felt his children could not survive in good health without hearing the words and envisioning the supportive and instructive episodes of the Coyote stories.

Still another aspect of tape recording became unexpectedly clear a few years ago when a Navajo colleague and I were in the process of translating some Coyote stories and were caught short by the early arrival of summer (signaled by a thunderstorm). We stopped our work, thinking we would have to wait until winter to take it up again, but we were corrected by a Navajo relative who said, "Haven't you learned anything from those white people? Why don't you use earphones?" It turns out that the sounds on the tape were considered dangerous only if they were released into the air, in the normal process of exchange between a person's spirit, *nítch'i* (literally "wind, air, breeze," envisioned by the Navajo as something like our concept of both the soul and the unconscious) and the larger wind (*nítch'i*) that articulates the living aspects of nature (one indication of this relationship is represented by the whorls on our fingers and toes). A radio is called *nítch'i bee halne'é* ("one which speaks by means of wind/spirit"); a television is *nítch'i naalkidí* ("that which is caused to move by wind/spirit").

Interestingly enough, the term for *tape recorder* does not use *nítch'i*, but means something like "by means of metal, something (while turning around) is placed on its surface." Nonetheless, the voices projected out into the air by the speakers are thought to have a direct effect on the *nítch'i*, which animates everything in nature. Despite all this fascinating interplay (which may make us wonder just whose "hegemony" the tape recorder represents in the Navajo fieldwork situation after all), there remained for me some bothersome aspects of my owning the tapes on which Yellowman's utterances were stored. For one thing, since Yellowman passed away, my tapes now contained the voice of a dead man, and many Navajos—though certainly not all—avoid any interaction with the dead. How did the Yellowman family feel about the voice of their dead father still being heard in the living world? Further, what would happen to the tapes and their contents after I pass away and (perhaps after being protected for a few years by my immediate heirs) the tapes come into the ownership of, say, a library or museum or linguistic archive? What if someone—for whatever reason—played the tapes at the wrong time of year, or if someone simply listened long enough to pick up the Navajo sounds and actually spoke them into the air without regard for the Navajo concept that spoken words create the reality in which we all live?

I am fully aware that many of my colleagues will consider these worries to be soft-headed romantic nonsense, for on one occasion, when I gave notice in a paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society that I was not going to inquire further into Coyote stories at the deeper level of

Navajo witchcraft practice, at least six fellow folklorists told me I was being silly and that I owed it to my profession to study the phenomenon as deeply as I could and then report on it (Toelken 1987:388–401). The objective scholarly stance is, presumably, that we are not obliged to share in the worldviews of those we study; indeed, we should resist their influences in order to maintain our objectivity. I am not a Navajo, so I should not concern myself with what the Navajos believe about spoken language—particularly when I am a scholar and my job after all is to study this material and understand it more fully. Spoken language is what I study, and summers are often the time when I and many of my colleagues can do the work.

But utter objectivity is seldom possible, even in the best of circumstances. For me, it is practically useless, and for at least two reasons. For one, this family adopted me in the 1950s, and everyone in the family still considers the relationship to be mutual and ongoing. On at least two occasions, members of this family literally saved my life. Helen Yellowman nursed me back to health when I came down with pneumonia far from doctors and hospitals. Several of her children have lived with us and have later consulted me for information about how to solve problems in a properly Navajo way. This kind of relationship quite understandably impedes—even precludes—objectivity.

Another reason has to do with the impact of my research on the family's well-being: I discovered late in my fieldwork that many of the questions I was asking actually suggested to some Navajos that I was actively interested in practicing witchcraft (Toelken 1996). I was not, of course, but this possibility put the family in some danger without my knowledge, for putative witches are often the objects of retributive or prophylactic ceremonies, and anonymous assassination is never out of the question. Moreover, members of the Yellowman family have had runs of bad luck, hardships, and accidents. Because I am the only one who has all their father's stories, and this might cause imbalances in all our relationships, I have been asked to be the family patient in a series of Protection and Beautyway ceremonies. This ritualization of our relationship entails financial obligations on everyone in the family (bringing together the requisite number of wedding baskets, blankets, pieces of yard goods, sacred deer hides, and mountain tobacco, as well as transporting and paying the singer and providing food for all who attend). I think it is clear that there is no possibility of even pretending I can be objective about the concerns and fears of these people, especially since their attitudes arise from their shared worldview; and I have maintained that the best reason for studying culturally situated expressions is precisely that we can perceive and understand the culture's worldview better. I see no point in understanding a culture and talking about it if the end result is that I must publicly ignore what has been learned in order to attain credibility among my academic colleagues. Beyond that, it seems quite obvious to me that many, if not most, of the Yellowman family's concerns stem directly from my ongoing fieldwork in their midst, and yet—incredibly, when you think about it—instead of separating me out as a dangerous Other, they have included me in their continual attempts to maintain family health and stability. In their view, that is, we are in this together, and they are right.

Therefore, when I visited my adopted Navajo sister (Yellowman's widow) in November 1996, I brought up these concerns about proper disposition of Yellowman's tapes, because I believed they were genuine Navajo and family issues as much as they were the concerns of folklorists and linguists. I asked her what she wanted me to do with the tapes. Her first response—as I had expected—was that she would trust my children to look after them properly. I told her that just postponed the issue for a few years: What would happen later on, when the tapes find their way to an archive, and some scholar with a summer grant eagerly goes to work on them?

After a long silence, she said, "Someone could get hurt with those tapes: what if someone hears the stories at the wrong time of year, or what if someone says some of those words out loud in the wrong situation? They could be injured. You'd better send them to me. I will destroy them." On 30 January 1997, I boxed up the 60-plus hours of original field recording tapes (and various copies used in classes and lectures) and sent them to her by registered mail.

Needless to say, I did not take this action lightly. It was not easy to carry out, and it left me with a sense of personal loss as well as a number of bothersome questions. But in retrospect, many of the issues brought up by this traumatic moment seemed to me worth exploring here, as I did in a more preliminary way with the students in my native traditional literature class that winter term after playing a tape of Yellowman telling a Coyote story and informing my students that they were no doubt the last people in the world to hear it.

For one thing, it is clear that this small act of returning cultural goods to their source (or at least as close to the source as I can come) does not fall under the larger repatriation issues we encounter with Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) processes.² Of course, since the Navajo are matriarchal and my dealings are with Helen Yellowman, this would be better described as *rematriation* anyhow. But this is not a tribe demanding the return of cultural treasures on behalf of all members of the culture, though it certainly could have become that if I had been working with a Hopi narrator, for the Hopi tribe has recently been attempting to exert formal jurisdiction over all scholarly work being done on Hopi materials—including the requirement of posting bonds and submitting one's plans and final results to a cultural commission before gaining permission to publish. I suggested to Helen Yellowman that perhaps the Navajo Tribal Museum or Navajo Community College might be the place to deposit her husband's stories for the benefit of the tribe generally, but she felt that these organizations already knew the stories and place-names and that we were really talking about a family matter more personal, more cultural, and thus more complicated than legal issues of tribal jurisdiction. And I had to admit that just having materials in a tribally governed archive does not insure that anyone will ever have better or less problematic access to them anyway, though there is the possibility that cultural controls could be better exercised. In any case, given the "objective" attitudes of many scholars, I do not believe the items in any archives—tribal or not—are safe from the well-intentioned dangers envisioned here.

If, as a few of my colleagues have suggested, sending Yellowman's tapes back to his wife for destruction constitutes a kind of academic sacrilege, then it brings up

the question of whether it would have been better to keep the tapes (against the wishes of my trusting Navajo family) and thereby commit personal and cultural sacrilege? This sounds more emotional than scholarly, but the dilemma brings up the issue of power and colonialism in fieldwork in a very direct and bothersome way. As a scholar with the best of intentions, as the person who had spent years amassing these interviews, I could have argued for keeping the tapes, explaining to the Yellowman family that they simply had no idea how useful the contents would be to generations of scholars to come. But no matter how sensible this approach might sound to us, it places academic interests over the very real concerns of the people I claim to understand (another kind of sacrilege, I think, considering the current positions on ethics subscribed to by folklorists and anthropologists).

Perhaps I should have argued to my adopted sister that the continued existence of the tapes would play a big role in the "preservation of Navajo culture." But I have become convinced that tape-recorded narratives do not actually preserve a culture as much as they function as sound fossils: important artifacts, to be sure, but not to be confused with the culture itself. The destruction of these tapes, then, actually foregrounds an important question: Where *is* Navajo culture really—in its documented expressions or in its live interactions? I have told the Yellowman family for years that their stories would live as long as they continued to tell them, and I still believe this to be the case. I once heard a young Navajo woman declare, "We Navajos will survive as long as the stories are wet with our breath." If the Yellowmans are not telling them, some other Navajos are. Or they are not. But in terms of living culture it is totally irrelevant whether we have them captured on tape or not. I would like to believe, of course, that the attention I gave to Yellowman and his stories by recording them had a nurturing or an encouraging effect, validating the importance of the material to everyone from his children to the readers of my essays. But the fact of the matter is that while I developed a fairly good academic reputation for writing about Navajo narratives, Yellowman's children did not take up the telling of the stories, and thus—on this count as on several others—the benefits accrued to us, not to them.

Where are traditional stories located? I think they exist in the minds of narrators and audiences and are brought to dramatic reality when they are told in a living cultural context. Believing that a tape recording maintains a story's existence when its narrator is gone is like thinking a home movie of your deceased father keeps him alive. In both cases, the culture carries on regardless of recordings and films.

Who owns these stories? Tlingits believe stories can be *at.óow*, that is, ownable personal and family property (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987:24–29), and many other tribes (such as the Apache) hold some songs and stories to be tribally owned while others may be considered personal property and still others are in the public domain (Farrer 1994:321–322). Whether such "texts" are owned or not, they reach their richest articulation in live performance by traditional narrators in culturally familiar, often ritual contexts, and sometimes we are lucky enough to be present either as insiders to the group or as visitors when a story is being brought to life. The real story is the one performed in its normal setting, under the

cultural jurisdiction, if you will, of those for whom it is being performed. Of course, it is possible to represent the sounds of that performance phonetically by means of letters, and we can thereby produce a fossilized record of it that exists as a printed text and thus as an item that can be bought, sold, owned, stored, and studied—even, alas, lost. And indeed, the question of who owns these visible texts and transcriptions—as well as the recordings on which they are based—remains an ongoing ethical, political, and economic issue in Native American studies (Farrer 1994). In the case of the Yellowman tapes, of course, there is the added question, Who owns the voices?

Without denigrating the seriousness with which these ownership issues may be argued, I feel that there is a still greater kind of proprietorship that is often overlooked, one that grows out of the need of the human community for good stories. In 1891, Charles Cultee—one of the last three speakers of the Kathlamet Chinook language—narrated “The Sun’s Myth” to Franz Boas, who took the words down phonetically and later published them in a Bureau of American Ethnology bulletin (Boas 1901). Within a few years, there were no speakers of Kathlamet Chinook left alive. In 1975, this story was called to our attention by Dell Hymes, who developed a painstakingly close linguistic acquaintance with the phonetically recorded language and from those fossils—so to speak—created a modern translation that allows us to recognize this story as a world-class dramatic narrative, a classic, a blockbuster of a story. And we humans who know that stories are one of the few ways we have of making our abstract values, fears, anxieties, and loves into concrete, palpable dramas, came very close to never knowing about this story at all. We are all fortunate that Boas caught the story as it was in its last mouth, and we are all the beneficiaries of Dell Hymes’s exhaustive linguistic and poetic endeavors. On one level, the modern-day Kathlamets may indeed be the “owners” of this story, even though they cannot speak in its language, but it is in the same way that the Greeks may be said to “own” the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: the story has gone beyond tribal ownership and into world literature (Hymes 1975).³

The possibilities of this kind of close call ran through my mind when I boxed up the Yellowman tapes and sent them off; what if there were similar classics hiding in the untranscribed parts of the 60-plus hours of Yellowman’s narrations and comments? The stories I did get a chance to work with certainly demonstrated his mastery of narration and illustrated the richness and complexity of Navajo oral tradition. One story in particular, in which Coyote and Skunk kill and eat some prairie dogs, has been widely discussed and repeatedly anthologized, no doubt because its apparently simple but heavily nuanced plot dramatizes a wide range of Navajo assumptions about temper, gluttony, trickery, competition, and selfish waste. Other stories focus on proprieties of health and healing; still others dramatize—often with striking hyperbole—the culturally constructed nuances of sexuality; some deal with such behavioral abstractions as intrusiveness, impatience, and egotism, all in distinctly Navajo ways (Toelken 1990). Yellowman’s narratives, commentaries, and personal anecdotes were full of place-name references of the sort recently shown by Keith Basso to provide rich systems of reference to native categories of space, location, morality, and behavior (Basso 1996). But now,

Yellowman's performances are gone. If any of these stories ever come back to us, it will be in the natural course of good, trusting conversation with Navajos who are still passing along their traditions. Meanwhile, a decent translation of Yellowman's story about Coyote and the prairie dogs is available and may well become a part of our ever expanding canon of American literature.⁴ Even so, Helen Yellowman feels further translation or publication of Yellowman's other stories—even in English, whose words are not considered creative and powerful—should not be attempted.

What could I have done differently to have brought about another resolution? Indeed, would another resolution have been preferable? For one thing, I could have had the foresight to work out a plan with Yellowman himself: although he knew I would publish some of his stories, we did not talk about how he wanted me to deal with the tapes after the two of us were gone. Such a conversation would have made him uncomfortable because of the subject of death, but in any case, I confess I did not even think to bring it up. Judging from his wife's position on this matter, it might not have made a difference: her concern is not about ownership, sovereignty, or hegemonic control over texts, but prudent husbandry of potentially dangerous spoken words in the otherwise uncontrollable voice of her dead husband. These concerns would still be paramount even if I had negotiated some agreement with Yellowman in the past.

The more general ethical issue for folklore and anthropological fieldworkers lies beyond all these tantalizing personal and philosophical considerations. It has always been my operating procedure in fieldwork (and I have urged my students to follow this path) to engage the "informants"—who are, after all, our colleagues and teachers—in the shaping and limiting of the fieldwork project. That is, insofar as is humanly possible, we play by their rules, not ours. Of course, this is not entirely workable, because photos, transcriptions, and tape recordings introduce *our* elements into the picture and insert new media into *their* game, which makes playing by the informants' rules more problematic than it might initially seem. Nonetheless, I have found that by agreeing, for example, to play tapes of Navajo Coyote stories only in wintertime, I was allowed to record and thus study a greater number and wider variety of materials than would have been made available to me otherwise. That is to say, playing by their rules I learned more than I would have on my own. As well, I was moved to acknowledge their cultural control over my academic behavior in ways I might otherwise have sidestepped; for example, I always taught Native American Traditional Literature during winter term so that I could properly play the tapes and discuss their meanings, a consideration that applies to the stories of many Western tribes in addition to the Navajo. So I would claim that letting the "target group" set the rules and the limits is not only ethically sound in a potentially hegemonic situation, but it is also eminently practical because it brings better results.

But better results for whom? we must ask. I have been speaking as if "good results," which I assume would include rich, culturally expressive texts and solid linguistic samples along with the cultural insights and perspectives they might provide, are among the benefits that the Navajos would welcome as much as we

do. But in fact, I have seen little interest on the part of my Navajo friends in becoming better known or more fully understood in the Anglo world through the publication and discussion of their stories. Yellowman was perturbed when I told him that many Anglos treated Coyote stories as cute children's fluff. And he was appalled by the sacrilegious depiction of Coyote in the popular (even among his own children) Road Runner cartoons. He saw no indication that non-Navajos had learned anything significant about Navajo culture.

Yellowman provided me with wonderful narrations, explanations, and anecdotes not to promote deeper understanding of the Navajos or of their oral literature, but because I asked for them. The benefits realized from these 40-plus years of study have accrued primarily to me, to my students, to the world of scholarship, and to the arena of literary study, not to the Yellowman family or the Navajo tribe. Although the recordings were all voluntary, all made in Yellowman's own home context and often at his own behest, all done and used according to his rules, it is nonetheless the case that I supplied the tape recorder and tape, dictated the immediate contexts by my sporadic arrivals to do fieldwork, worked out the transcriptions (often with the collaboration of other Navajos whose help I requested), wrote the essays and published them, and happily received whatever academic advantages came from those efforts, including, of course, tenure, advancement in rank, and pay raises.

Thus, while overt exploitation did not take place, one party in this contract enjoyed inherent advantages by virtue of controlling the infrastructure and the output. It is instructive to recall that in contract disputes, a mediator usually resolves issues in favor of the party that was not in control of the advantages; thus, in this spirit, even though there is no dispute between Helen Yellowman and me, it does seem the appropriate and fair model to follow toward resolution here: the call should be hers and not mine, and she has exercised it. In the final analysis, we must recognize that it is not just a polite gesture to assure our informant-colleagues that they have a voice in what we are doing: we are obligated to listen to that voice when they use it.⁵

Epilogue

Late in the winter of 1998, Harrison Yellowman visited me and gave back one cassette—the one containing “Coyote and the Prairie Dogs”—saying that the family thought I should retain it for use in my classes. They felt that because I used the story more than they, I should have jurisdiction over it. It is not lost on me that this is the story in which Coyote, in trying selfishly to get all the prairie dog meat for himself, ends up with only a small fragment. I am also aware that this gesture is a Navajo act of reciprocation and that what I now hold is a physical reference to a living treasure far more important than the story itself. I intend to take it with me when I go.

Notes

This article is expanded and revised from a paper presented at the California Folklore Society annual meeting in Santa Barbara, April 1997, and a lecture given at the Native American Literature Conference, University of Oregon, 14–17 May 1997. In developing the perspectives presented here, I have benefited immensely from conversations with my students, as well as with N. Scott Momaday, Dell Hymes, Alan Jabbour, Arnold Krupat, Gordon Pullar, Harrison Yellowman, George Wasson, James Florendo, and William A. Wilson.

¹One of these stories, a concocted account of the origin of snow told by Little Wagon, is recounted in my “Poetic Retranslation and the ‘Pretty Languages’ of Yellowman” (Toelken and Scott 1981) in Kroeber 1981:94–95.

²The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (Public Law 101-601) was enacted by Congress in 1990 to ensure that tribal funerary remains and objects would be identified and protected and—where they had been exhumed by researchers—would be inventoried and when possible returned to the tribes who wanted them for proper reinterment. An earlier act (101-185) had already established the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in 1989, and this legislation provided for identification and repatriation of graves and funerary objects as well as for the presentation of properly allowed native items in the new (as yet unrealized) museum, which apparently will be the last national museum to be built on the Mall in Washington, D.C. NAGPRA expands the terms of the NMAI Act by including the concept of “cultural patrimony,” which refers to objects that have an “ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to the Native American group or culture itself, rather than property owned by an individual Native American . . .” (Section 2d). While “objects” in English are viewed as tangible, physical items—which, under the terms of the act may be identified and requested for return to the tribes who claim them—elements like songs, stories, rituals, and so on are not so easily dealt with. Suffice it to say, many tribes will indeed make the claim that there are songs and stories, recorded perhaps with the acquiescence of a native tradition-bearer, which were actually not his or hers to give away and should thus be returned in their entirety to the jurisdiction of the tribe. Farrer (1994) discusses a key Apache example of this dilemma. This means, for example, that even though the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress made copies of all native songs and distributed cassettes of them to the respective tribes (in the late 1970s, as a response—the first, in fact—to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act), the fact that they kept the original recordings at the library might eventually be seen by some tribes as another repatriation issue.

In all these deliberations, the focus is on materials—of whatever nature—that the tribe in its entirety claims as jointly “owned” patrimony. In the case of the Yellowman materials, the Navajo tribe could conceivably have claimed the story content as cultural patrimony, I could have claimed the tapes and reels as tangible property I bought, and Helen Yellowman could have claimed the voice of her husband as family patrimony. Assuming she has indeed destroyed the tapes, these claims are now moot; but they do illustrate the delicate nets of intersecting interests being faced by those who are working with the NAGPRA processes. I am much indebted to Gabrielle Hamilton of the New York facility of the NMAI for help in understanding the NAGPRA and NMAI acts and their consequences.

³“The Sun’s Myth” appears with a few revisions in the best anthology of contemporary translations of Native American traditional literatures (Swann 1996); there it is presented along with more than 40 other classics of North America, several of them brought to renewed life through the work of Dell Hymes.

⁴Yellowman’s story “Coyote and the Prairie Dogs,” sometimes referred to elsewhere as “Coyote Makes Rain,” is anthologized in Swann 1996 and appears in the 1998 edition of the *Norton Anthology of American Literature* through the interest of Arnold Krupat.

⁵This is not news, as we see by looking into any of the standard works on folklore fieldwork. See especially Jackson 1987:259–279. It is the application of formal ethics statements to our own rational and professional behavior that pinches us into the realization that playing fair and being reasonable are also abstractions that are culturally—and academically—constructed.

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