

UC Riverside

UC Riverside Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

The White Woman's Indian: Laura Gilpin in the American Southwest

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/66d7487b>

Author

Maness, Rebecca Irene

Publication Date

2018

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

The White Woman's Indian:
Laura Gilpin in the American Southwest

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Rebecca Irene Maness

December 2018

Thesis Committee:
Dr. Jason Weems, Chairperson
Dr. Susan Laxton
Dr. Jeanette Kohl

The Thesis of Rebecca Irene Maness is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Jason Weems for his invaluable direction and encouragement throughout the course of my research and writing, and for first introducing me to the work of Laura Gilpin. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Susan Laxton and Dr. Jeanette Kohl, for their thoughtful comments as well as time.

I would not have applied to graduate school if it were not for my parents, Carl and Elizabeth Maness, and my grandmother, Ann Maness who have offered me nothing but endless support in my educational journey. I appreciate all of the love (and food) I received from my sisters, Morgan and Rowan Maness, brother-in-law, Brian Horiuchi, and my nieces, Otilie and Cosima.

I'd like to thank all of the brilliant friends and colleagues who have inspired me: Liz Shallal, Cassandra Bills, Michelle Nakashima, Carl Harris, Glenn Carson, Rosa Johnson, Lily Allen, and the whole Tar Pits gang.

Although they can't read, I'd like to thank my cats Cosmo and Luna for all of the days they'd lay on my legs while I did school work.

I could not have finished my degree without the constant love and endless patience of my partner, Jon Vorpe. Thank you for always being there, for keeping me sane, and for ordering me so much vegan take-out.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
A History of Violent Representation.....	4
Chapter 1	
Introduction.....	8
Women of the West.....	15
Performing Culture.....	22
Chapter 2	
Introduction.....	33
Red Rock, Arizona.....	38
Coda	53
Works Cited.....	54
Illustrations.....	57

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

- Figure 1. *The Prelude*, Laura Gilpin, 1917. 8
- Figure 2. *The House of the Cliff Dweller*, Laura Gilpin, 1924..... 9
- Figure 3. *The Gate, Laguna, New Mexico*, Laura Gilpin, 1924..... 24
- Figure 4. *San Ildefonso Potters*, Laura Gilpin, 1925..... 26

Chapter 2

- Figure 5. *Migrant Mother*, Dorothea Lange, 1936..... 36
- Figure 6. *Hardbelly's Hogan*, Laura Gilpin, 1932..... 42
- Figure 7. *A Navaho Family*, Laura Gilpin, 1950..... 48

Introduction

Since its inception in the nineteenth century, photography has been a contentious medium in the history of Native American representation. The technology has often been used shape the image of indigeneity in order to justify the forced removal, relocation, and assimilation of Native Americans. At the same time, photography itself was being debated as a tool for artistic purposes or one that provides viewers with an objective view onto reality. From an early time, photographers entered Native American spaces, searching for “authentic” views, often in an effort to promote tourism or perform salvage ethnography of a culture thought to be vanishing. This understanding persisted, and still persists, surrounding the visual representation of Native cultures. At the same time, many Native Americans saw photography as an invasive medium, one that could represent a great danger to the individuals photographed.¹ While Curtis’ photographs have since been criticized for their overly romantic quality and staged scenes, “straight” photography began to develop in the early twentieth century. Crisp, focused images and subjects who appear to be untouched before the camera’s lens characterize this style. Straight photography implied the image’s transference straight from the subject in front of the camera to the negative, and subsequent printed positive, supposedly capturing what is in front of the camera without much influence from the photographer-artist and their subjectivity. Still, these photographs must be understood as providing only a very

¹ Lucy R. Lippard, ed, *Partial Recall: Essays on Photographs of Native North Americans* (New York: New Press, 1992), 29.

specific understanding of what is represented, and one that is necessarily filtered through the perspective of the photographer.

This shift in photographic style can be traced through the career of Laura Gilpin, a photographer of the American Southwest who photographed people from several Native American tribal communities such as the Navajo, San Ildefonso Pueblo, Zuni, Hopi, and more. Gilpin began her career attending the Clarence H. White School for photography, and her earliest photographs are highly influenced by White's pictorial style and her relationship with pictorialist photographer Gertrude Käsebier. When she began photographing the Pueblo in the 1910's to 1920's, Gilpin pictured her Native American subjects in a highly picturesque light, and favored soft focus lenses and even staged scenes to appear like reflections of an idealized past. As her career progressed, Gilpin's work began taking on a more documentary style as she started to choose hard edge, sharper focus images and as the subjects of her portraiture began to confront the camera's lens, creating a characteristic assertiveness and directness.

Gilpin's photographs and her role as a woman photographer in the early twentieth century has been explored by scholars for the most part through her later photographs, especially those featured in her book *The Enduring Navaho*. Towards her later career, Gilpin attempted to distance herself from her earlier pictorial photographs in books such as *The Pueblos: A Camera Chronicle*, as she began to see them as too romantic, including only a few from before 1930 in *The Enduring Navaho*. Although the formal appearance of her photographs begin to

shift towards a more hard-edge style, they still present a romanticized understanding of “Indian” through the lens of a Euro-American woman. Additionally, Gilpin’s career as a photographer of Native Americans was frequently mediated through her close friend Elizabeth Forster, a field nurse who began working on the Navajo reservation at Red Rock, Arizona in 1931. Forster’s position and her unique access to the community made many of the photographs included in *The Enduring Navaho* possible.

The literature on Gilpin’s work centers around Martha A. Sandweiss’ writings, especially her biography *Laura Gilpin: An Enduring Grace*. Throughout this account of Gilpin’s life, Sandweiss notes Gilpin’s deep empathy for her Native American subjects, evidenced by her detailed accounts of their ways of life. While Gilpin was without a doubt invested in the experiences of her subjects, her privilege and Forster’s position complicate this relationship and I will examine them in consideration of her work. Gilpin’s project, especially in her later career, is predicated on the idea that Navajo culture is one of loss, and that photography is the means to capture what is left of it before it can no longer be remembered. Much of the literature on Gilpin has previously ignored this problematic position, which I will investigate further in the context of the history of Native American representation and the relationship between the medium of photography and colonial violence.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENT REPRESENTATION

When considering the impact of Gilpin's work, it is crucial to question the history of representation of Southwest Indians by white photographers, as many scholars have ventured to do. Central to this project is the work of Robert F. Berkhofer in *The White Man's Indian*, which argues that the white image of Native Americans tells us more about white society than about Native cultures. Gilpin's photographs as well as her many published writings about her work and her experiences with Native Americans, particularly Navajo, stand as evidence for the development of "the White Woman's Indian."² This argument emphasizes that white women, although they experienced marginalization because of their sex, still photographed Native Americans from a position of privilege, and thus still perpetuated the stereotypes that have permeated representations of Native Americans since Christopher Columbus. Gilpin's photographs are not exempt from the same critical lens as artists such as Edward Curtis simply because of her gender identity.

Although Sandweiss represents the core of work on Gilpin, other scholars have also focused on Gilpin's career in terms of her gender, and some have also been critical of how she presents her subjects. Vera Norwood explored how Gilpin was uncritical of the role of American colonialism in what she considered the threat of Native traditions by modern influences.³ Jonathan Goldberg also

² Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian, from Columbus to Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), xvi.

³ Vera Norwood, "The Photographer and the Naturalist: Laura Gilpin and Mary Austin in the Southwest," *Journal of American Culture* 5, no. 2 (1982): 21.

explored Gilpin's work through her gender, and also emphasized the importance of reading her work with the Navajo through her relationship with Elizabeth Forster.⁴ James C. Faris argued that even while she claimed truthfulness in her later work, in actuality Gilpin distanced herself from the gritty realism of Navajo assimilation, and was ignorant to Navajo customs, valuing aesthetics over cultural respect.⁵ Faris demonstrated the problem of assuming that white women photographers' work outside these assumptions because of a shared feeling of marginality. This ignores the vast differences between these histories of marginality, falsely concluding that all forms of systemic oppression are experienced in the same way and to the same degree. While Gilpin did not have access to the same privileges as her male contemporaries, she still experienced many freedoms that were not afforded to Native Americans at the same time. This thesis brings this into the larger conversation about her work and the impact it had on the Pueblo and Navajo communities she photographed.

Gilpin's stylistic shift was not a simple shift from less objective to more objective (and due to this perceived distance, more "authentic"), but a continuation of the idealization that is seen in her early works. Beginning with an exploration of the influence of Gilpin's pictorialist education and Käsebier's mentorship, the first chapter considers some of her earliest works with San Ildefonso Pueblo, featured in the early book *The Pueblos: A Camera Chronicle*.

⁴ Jonathan Goldberg, "Photographic Relations: Laura Gilpin, Willa Cather," *American Literature* 70, no. 1 (1998): 80.

⁵ James C. Faris, "Laura Gilpin and the 'Endearing' Navaho," *History of Photography* 21, no. 1 (1997): 62.

At this point in Gilpin's career, she was not yet intimately acquainted with the people she was photographing and as a result, these photographs tend to present the sitters as romanticized types rather than distinct individuals. Questions of authenticity, self-awareness, and sitter participation are brought into the conversation, considering how Käsebier's subjects may shed light on how Gilpin's sitters were involved in shaping their own visual narrative. This chapter also expands upon the early twentieth century trend of Euro American women traveling to the Southwest to discover creative freedom and a deeper connection to an imagined ancient world. As Gilpin participates in this, women such as Mabel Dodge Luhan, Georgia O'Keeffe and Willa Cather also look to the Southwest and Native ideology as a source for creative inspiration. Euro American men, however, often found different connections.

The second chapter considers how Gilpin's later endeavors in the Southwest are documented as her own relationship with Native people began to shift. While her style appears to shift during this time, these later photographs actually hold similar connotations, giving the viewer another kind of idealized view, this time masquerading as objective reality. At this time, Elizabeth Forster became a field nurse with the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs and Gilpin gained a deeper access to life on the Navajo reservation through this relationship. As Forster gained the trust of the residents on the reservation, she and Gilpin built what they consider friendships, and Gilpin attributed the heightened quality of her photographs to these friendships. I explore this further

with a conversation about the history of the field nurse program on Native American reservations, including its assimilationist roots and the dependencies it fostered. At the same time, straight photography became more widely popular, as many photographers looked to distance the medium from the earlier view that it should be compared to painting. Instead, the appearance of truthfulness and the camera's ability to establish objectivity through medium began to be embraced, and helped to root documentary photography in this formal technique. This chapter argues that Gilpin, aware of the visual power of this technique, began to shift away from the pictorialist style after her knowledge of Navajo life deepened. This is complicated by the question of the level of agency that Gilpin's sitters had, and the extent to which she exploited her privilege as a friend of the reservation's only nurse. Gilpin's later work is still tinged with that romantic sentiment, straying away from criticality and skirting the difficult conversations about the lasting effects of settler colonialism, favoring an outlook of positivity, reflected in the text that accompanies her photographs. Both periods of Gilpin's career can be differentiated by formal qualities, but are unified in their underlying message.

Chapter 1: Laura Gilpin's Early Pictorialism

Laura Gilpin's early work, even before her first experiences making photographs of Native Americans, demonstrates the impact of her interactions with Gertrude Käsebier, who became Gilpin's mentor when she was a teenager and encouraged her to pursue studies at the Clarence White School. Her 1917 photograph *The Prelude* (fig. 1) was lauded for its soft, pictorial qualities achieved only through the use of a soft-focus lens and careful lighting, without any hand darkroom manipulation.⁶ Here, the three musicians, their instruments and the floor lamp are carefully arranged in a horizontal line that grounds the composition. The subjects themselves convey a romantic type of women peacefully playing their instruments in a softly lit setting. Nothing about this image attempts to vex or shock the viewer; the gaze of the subjects do not look to the camera, and all has a pleasantly hazy effect, which allows the viewer to observe the image from a removed position, rather than being confronted with the subject's presence. This kind of painterly quality can be seen throughout much of the work Gilpin does into the early 1920's. It is this interest in crafting and manipulating the scene prior to exposure that Gilpin carried into her work with Native American subjects, even as she began to stray from the soft-focus aesthetic of Photo-Secession era pictorialism.

Gilpin took some of her first photographs of Native Americans while on a camping trip through the Southwest in 1924. Along with friends Elizabeth Forster

⁶ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 31-32.

and Brenda Putnam, Gilpin explored Mesa Verde, taking her first photographs of the ancient cliff dwellings there, and continued on to Pueblo and Zuni land in New Mexico.⁷ This initial trip to the Southwest and the photographs produced here can be considered touristic, but with an amateur anthropological lens that attempts to show the viewer a window into the lived experience of an ancient past. Photographs such as *The House of the Cliff Dweller, Mesa Verde* (fig. 2) were staged scenes meant to recreate with the end result compiled into a sort of student's report on her experience and encounter. Here, a woman is shown as she looks out the window of one of these historic dwellings. She gazes upwards, her sight not meeting the camera's lens, but focused elsewhere. Despite the difference in the subject matter, this photograph is tonally similar to *The Prelude*.

During this trip, Gilpin, Forster, and Putnam were just that - tourists. While Gilpin used the trip as an opportunity to begin the work that would lead to her first published book, which was not the original intent of the excursion. Rather, they visited Mesa Verde simply to observe the ruins, not to perform research. They were not yet engaged in the nursing work that Forster would take up later, and they were visiting sites that had become popular places for white tourists since the turn of the century. These highly visited sites likely functioned in a similar way to the staged villages from which Käsebier's sitters came, meaning that the few people who appear in Gilpin's photographs from this trip were probably accustomed to white visitors taking snapshots and searching for a

⁷ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 44-45.

specific kind of visiting experience and interaction. In Gilpin's case, she sought a deeper understanding of the Southwest's spiritual past, something that she had become more curious about through her encounters with the staged villages at the World's Fair. In Martha Sandweiss' description of Gilpin's first encounter with these parts of the American Southwest, and with Mesa Verde in particular, she emphasized Gilpin's fascination with "an ancient and genuinely romantic *American* past" that had also drawn other artists and writers to the Southwest at the beginning of the twentieth century. Sandweiss noted that "the discovery of this American past bestowed a new legitimacy on American life. No longer did America seem a raw, new nation. With the discovery of her Indian past she had a history seemingly as old and rich as Europe's."⁸

From the beginning of her career, Laura Gilpin's photographic practice was shaped within the pictorial tradition exemplified by her main influences, Gertrude Käsebier and Clarence H. White. Käsebier especially was an essential figure and mentor for Gilpin, who was fourteen when her family traveled to New York to sit for portraits with the photographer. Crucially, Käsebier also had a history of photographing Indians in her own studio rather than in the "field," a practice that scholar Elizabeth Hutchinson explored as something that sets Käsebier's work apart. Hutchinson argued that, like many white women photographers whose subject is the indigenous person, Käsebier idealized her subjects as simple and naïve while emphasizing their creativity as a means to

⁸ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 47. Emphasis in original text.

further her own position as an artist and legitimize photography as a medium.⁹ Hutchinson stated that Käsebier's alignment with Indian "primitivism" and the Photo-Secession movement served to emphasize the creative qualities that the movement championed: "in Käsebier's photographs, the Indians are presented not only as markers for decorative primitivism, but also as artistic role models whose lack of 'civilization' endows their work with an individuality, energy, and honesty to which non-Indian artists should aspire."¹⁰ To Käsebier, the apparent separation between Native American culture and the over-saturated white American culture lent an air of authenticity to their artistic production, something that she and other pictorialist photographers wanted to access in their own work. As a movement that was attempting to distinguish photography as a legitimate artistic medium, the Photo-Secessionists sought to establish clear markers that artistic photography could stand on its own and held artistic qualities that were unique and singular. Käsebier's aims in terms of her photographic project seem similar to those of the early twentieth-century women who lived and worked in the Southwest, such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Mabel Dodge Luhan. Her focus on the supposed simplicity of Indian culture and art production is meant as an open criticism of modern Anglo American culture.

Hutchinson also argued that white women artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries felt they could identify with the social

⁹ Elizabeth Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009), 135.

¹⁰ Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 137.

marginalization of Native Americans, a position crucial to any discussion of white women artists working in the Southwest or with Native subjects. Although this feeling of identification and understanding existed, there is still a distinct difference in the marginalization of white women artists and Native Americans. The inherent power imbalance in Käsebier's photographs is also present in Gilpin's, even when Gilpin's work is situated within what appears to be a more "authentic" setting. Critics of Käsebier have claimed that she positioned her subjects as the "noble savage" by largely removing them from their lives as performers, thus eliminating context. However, Hutchinson saw the models as actively participating in the image production and fully aware that this, too, is a performance, much like the performance of their everyday lives in the *Wild West* show.¹¹ If Käsebier's models can be seen as performers of the cultural expectations placed upon them by white Americans, then it is worth asking how Gilpin's subjects compare. Many of Gilpin's later subjects were people living on reservations, going about their daily activities, though many must have been aware of what it meant for a white photographer to be capturing their activities.

Later, when Gilpin was in her early twenties and decided to devote her life to becoming a professional photographer, Käsebier was the one who recommended the Clarence H. White School in New York.¹² After breaking from the Photo-Secession movement due to personal and professional disagreements

¹¹ Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 167-8.

¹² Martha Sandweiss, *Laura Gilpin: An Enduring Grace* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1986), 17.

with Alfred Stieglitz, White established his school as an alternative to what he saw as Stieglitz's elitism. White, and other members of the Photo-Secession movement, became disillusioned with Stieglitz's narrow view of what photography could be - a medium that should only be used for purely artistic purposes and which could not be taught to those without some prior artistic knowledge. Instead, he formed a school that would teach students about how photography can be used both artistically and commercially, with the core belief that anyone could make a good photograph when taught the prior technique. He encouraged his students to consider ways that their photographs could be used in various commercial projects, such as brochures and small books.¹³ Although White and other instructors still embraced and taught the Photo-Secession philosophy that photography should be raised to the level of fine art through the manipulation of its formal qualities, he also believed that commercial photography should also have an understanding of composition, light, and other formal aesthetic qualities typically limited to artistic practice.¹⁴

The notion that there should not be a strict distinction between photography for artistic and commercial purposes continued to influence the direction of Gilpin's work throughout her career. Throughout her life, she often struggled to make enough money through her artistic work to support herself and her family, and so she often took time off from her true passion of photographing

¹³ Marianne Fulton, ed *Pictorialism into modernism: the Clarence H. White School of Photography* (New York: Rizzoli, 1996.) 34.

¹⁴ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 35.

the Southwest and its people to focus on more commercial endeavors. Even in her artistic work, however, Gilpin worked with ways to make her photographs available beyond the exhibition and sale of a single print. From an early point in her career, Gilpin created travelogue-type brochures containing the photographs she made alongside her writings about the places and people they displayed. While these books were successful, she still struggled financially. During the Depression and into the beginning of World War II, Gilpin was actively considering ways to make her photographic practice more marketable. She created a series of lantern slides and lectures that could be purchased for educational purposes and later sold her work as postcards and transparencies to fund her trips to the Navajo community in Red Rock.¹⁵ Many of her photographs were intended to be gathered into series that could be sold as books - and she was able to publish several of them, including *The Enduring Navaho* and *The Pueblos, A Camera Chronicle*. Gilpin's consistent attempts to market her photographs and to combine them with written material make it obvious that she saw her artistic project as a didactic one, and that she saw herself as having some sort of authority on the ways of life of Navajo and the other Native American tribes she encountered. It is through this lens that I choose to approach her work. While her photographs are extremely concerned with the aesthetic, she also positioned them as authentic representations of a culture and their practices. Her images, as they are collected into books, assert their authority as educational

¹⁵ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 88.

resources, not simply collections of travel snapshots or even documentary records.

WOMEN OF THE WEST

The desire to find connection with what seemed to Gilpin to be America's ancient, pre-contact past was not an uncommon one for many artists and writers. Many white women artists and writers were drawn to the Southwest for its supposedly mystical qualities and to its people, with whom they imagined some shared experience. Such women as Mabel Dodge Luhan, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Willa Cather found themselves entranced with the Indian experience, which to them contained some sense of cultural purity that no longer existed in the cities of the Northeast. In her 1984 text, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, Lois Rudnick described the popular experience of many artists and writers who found sanctuary in the American Southwest, as a reprieve from what they saw as the trite, superficial culture of Anglo civilization. Within this discussion of Luhan's journey to Taos, New Mexico and the establishment of her arts colony, Rudnick explained the draw to the Southwest as specifically resonating with Luhan, and described her move as a "spiritual longing for a home," which she had been unable to find in New York's urban environment.¹⁶ Rudnick also pointed to the burgeoning idea that the American Southwest could somehow give shape to the past, a deep cultural history distinct from the history

¹⁶ Lois Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 145.

of Europe, which American artists and writers could draw upon for inspiration, for something to distinguish themselves from their European counterparts. Even Luhan's disdain for the city of Santa Fe is characterized by Rudnick as a response to it already being "discovered."¹⁷ The vast expanse of apparently empty land in the Southwest often tugged at the imaginations of these women, holding with it the potential for new beginnings and endless creative possibilities.

Luhan's desire to lay claim to a part of the Southwest as her own demonstrates how she imagined this part of America to be largely uninhabited, unclaimed. It also demonstrates the extension of the myth of Manifest Destiny to the mind of the individual American - at least, to the wealthy, white American. As it becomes for Gilpin, the appeal of the Southwest is that at first glance it appears to be largely untouched, and set so apart from traditional expectations that it allowed for women to reinvent themselves, now distanced from those traditions. Of course, it was not just the landscape itself that inspired such desires, it was also the people who had inhabited the lands long before the white colonizers and their ways of life that seemed so different and so appealing. Like Gilpin, Luhan was also drawn to the Pueblo Indians, who Rudnick described as "the complete antithesis to [Luhan] and to both the materialistic world she grew up in and the chaotic world of new freedoms in which she had matured."¹⁸ This antithesis is rooted in the specificities of Pueblo cosmology, and the understanding of human interaction with the physical and spiritual worlds as one in balance, as a

¹⁷ Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, 146.

¹⁸ Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, 149.

harmonious relationship. Rudnick characterized Luhan's embrace of Pueblo belief systems as a response to how vastly different it was to the society she had been raised in. She understood it as a source of creative activity, a society in which she could form for herself "an integration of personality that was achieved through an organic connection between the individual and the community, work and living space, play and art."¹⁹ Luhan became infatuated with the Pueblo and their ways of life, and what she perceived as the freedoms allowed by their belief system. This appeal was similar for other women artists in the Southwest as well, though their understanding of the Pueblo seemed always wrapped up in constructed ideas and misinterpretations. Luhan's perspective in particular was shaped by her fascination with the occult, and her belief that certain places and peoples have easier access to spiritual and mystical realms than others. She believed that her presence in Taos and her relationship with the Pueblo Indian Tony Lujan was somehow all a part of a larger cosmic purpose that would unite white and native societies and form a rebirth of America.²⁰ While Luhan's reasoning for moving to Taos slanted towards the extreme, artists such as O'Keeffe found artistic inspiration and a shifted sense of understanding, but were not necessarily seeking to fulfill some kind of cosmic destiny.

Nevertheless, Luhan was confident that Taos was a magnetic place where major cultural shifts could occur, and her influence drew others to this place in search of new perspectives. Around the same time Gilpin was beginning her work

¹⁹ Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, 150.

²⁰Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, 165.

on the Navajo reservations, O’Keeffe began visiting the Taos Arts Colony, creating works inspired by the landscape and visual culture of New Mexico. Like Luhan, O’Keeffe sought more from the Southwest than just a drastic change in the content of her visual landscape. She craved a dramatic shift in her way of life, a more tranquil and solitary existence that was impossible for her while living most of the year among New York’s bustle. In Sacha Scott’s exploration of O’Keeffe’s work in this period, her relationship with the Pueblo is characterized in a slightly different way. Her fascination and admiration seems more in line with Gilpin’s, stemming from the aesthetic experience of the Southwest, and recognizing otherness while seeing a shared humanity within it. O’Keeffe’s reaction to Pueblo ceremonial dances seemed to show the appeal to her aesthetic senses in particular.²¹ Where Gilpin was denied the access to photograph ceremonial dances, O’Keeffe was able to represent what they inspired in her through her medium - painting. O’Keeffe tried to capture the sense of movement and energy and rhythm with nature that she felt from observing Pueblo dances, but her abstract medium allowed her to do so without offending or angering the Pueblo themselves.²²

Unlike O’keeffe’s painting, capturing these ceremonies with a camera could be considered an act of violence, which may be why Gilpin was, on occasion, denied permission to photograph these events.²³ Photography’s

²¹ Sacha T. Scott, *A Strange Mixture: The Art and Politics of Painting Pueblo Indians*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 182.

²² Scott, *A Strange Mixture*, 185.

²³ Faris, “Laura Gilpin and the ‘Endearing’ Navaho,” 61.

process, materiality, and almost mimetic realism make it a far more invasive medium than painting. There is also a complex history inherent in the relationship between Native Americans and photography. Writer Willa Cather was yet another white woman captivated by the idea of the Southwest and the possibilities it held for an “American” history, and the protagonist of her novel *The Professor’s House* demonstrates her own reaction to her first visit to Taos in 1912. Cather’s story paints yet another picture of the American Southwest as a place of fading greatness, which is being subsumed by the shallow populations of the city which look to Europe for artistic guidance. In the 1920s, Luhan invited Cather and her travel companion Edith Lewis to stay with her in Taos, and is said to have been influenced by her time there and inspired by the creative energy of Luhan and “renewed” by the lifestyle of the Southwest, though she felt it necessary to return to “the sophistication offered by more ‘advanced’ civilizations.”²⁴ Still, the visit left enough of an impression on the writer that it influenced the portrayal of the Pueblos in her 1927 novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, a book which Gilpin’s close friend Elizabeth Forster brought along with her when she began her work as a field nurse on the Navajo reservation.²⁵ There are even similarities between Cather’s characterization of the Southwest in her novels and Gilpin’s photographs, both stressing the “peacefulness of the former inhabitants and the high level of their artistic accomplishments.”²⁶ Both

²⁴ Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, 188-189.

²⁵ Sandweiss, *Denizens*, 9.

²⁶ Jonathan Golberg, “Photographic Relations,” *American Literature* 70, no. 1 (March 1998): 64.

women characterize the Southwest through the absence of a lost culture more than its present inhabitants, and this at least seems true for Gilpin's very early photographs which are published in *The Pueblos, A Camera Chronicle*.

While many women artists who visited the Southwest seem to have felt some sense of kinship with the ways of life they encountered there, the men who visited did not always seem to have the same kind of deep relationship and feeling of belonging in the Southwest. Scott compared O'Keeffe's positive relationship with New Mexico and the Pueblo with the largely negative reaction that writer D.H. Lawrence had when he visited. She mentioned Luhan's disappointment with Lawrence's reaction to the surroundings she'd come to love and the Indians she'd come to idealize; after attending an American Indian dance like the ones that had resonated with O'Keeffe, Lawrence felt like an outsider to a strange experience, and felt the tensions more acutely it seems than either Luhan or O'Keeffe.²⁷ Perhaps some part of the self-identification these women felt that Lawrence did not was rooted in their experience as the "Other," to some extent, in their everyday lives, experiences which were far more amplified in their Eastern cities than they were in Southwest. Still, what Luhan and O'Keeffe most admired in the Pueblo communities they encountered was what they understood as their spiritual connection to the land, something they saw as thoroughly lacking in Anglo civilization, and this "ancient" spiritual quality is also one that Lawrence praised in his writings.²⁸ This once again shows the way in which so

²⁷ Scott, *A Strange Mixture*, 188.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

many of the white women artists were drawn in by the *idea* of the Pueblo Indian, less than the reality of the individuals they encountered. Gilpin can be characterized in a similar light; in her earlier books, much of the textual information discusses ancient history and traditions, with very little insight into what contemporary life is like.

Similarly captivated by the Southwest and all of its cultural and creative potential, Gilpin photographed Mesa Verde and the Laguna Pueblo as if they were frozen in time, untouched by the messiness of modernity. She woke up early, before the other tourists descend on Mesa Verde, to avoid capturing any people (besides the occasional posed Indian) in her images of the ruins.²⁹ These photographs are interspersed with landscapes, absent of humans, like the romantic photographs of Ansel Adams, which display the American landscape as expansive and unblemished by human activity. To Adams, like other American artists who were drawn to the Southwestern landscape, emphasizing these qualities within art became an important way to set apart American photography from their European counterparts.³⁰ The idea of the American frontier was essentially defined by its lack of industrialization and its separation from the bustle of the American cities to the East. Adams believed that every part of the photographic process should be carefully thought out and crafted by the photographer before the shutter is released, even in uncertain situations such as

²⁹ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 44.

³⁰ Jonathan Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 25-27.

landscape photography.³¹ By stressing the photographer's agency as an artist, it is apparent that Adam's photographs are not simply snapshots, but very intentional constructions of the timeless American frontier. Yet again, the appearance of the timelessness of the American landscape and its assumed emptiness become important markers for Euro American artists who are attempting to situate themselves within it. Gilpin cropped out automobiles and modern-looking structures because they did not reflect the already-established idea of the landscape - both natural and social - of the American Southwest.

PERFORMING CULTURE

As scholar Lucy Lippard has argued, the unchanging Indian is a myth constructed to soothe white guilt about colonialism, allowing us to believe that native communities retain their traditional ways and are living in a timeless existence, not truly disrupted by the destructiveness of colonialism. Lippard writes, "They don't need us but we somehow, paradoxically, need them. We need to take images away from these encounters, to take Them with Us."³² It is in this sense that Gilpin's Pueblo series photographs exemplify Robert Berkhofer's white image of the Indian.³³ Berkhofer argued that images of Native people created by white people tell us more about white society than they do about Native ones, and

³¹ Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*, 122.

³² Lucy R. Lippard, ed, *Partial Recall: Essays on Photographs of Native North Americans* (New York: New Press, 1992), 29.

³³ Robert Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian, from Columbus to Present*, xvi.

emphasized that the generalization of the *Indian* as a type is a persistent influence on the representation of Native Americans. It is because of this persistent history of representation that even a well-intentioned photographer such as Gilpin falls into problems. Knowledge about Native lands, ruins and people created in this context only reflects these things from the perspective of the white tourist, an example of what Walter Mignolo characterized as the “epistemic privilege” of the colonizer over the colonized.³⁴

In the same way that Hutchinson read Käsebier’s Indian portraits as a performance on the part of both the models and Käsebier herself, Gilpin’s Pueblo photographs can be read as a performance the expectations of a female photographer. Many are quite picturesque, eliciting a sense of calm order in a primitive and isolated world. She often sought to remove any appearance of the modern world in these earlier photographs, trying to present what she believed are the ancient ways of life in order to record them for posterity. However, Gilpin’s exposure to Native American lives could only ever be from the perspective of an outsider. The moment that first sparked her interest in photographing Indian culture was when she traveled to California in 1915 for the Panama-California and Panama-Pacific International Expositions. As with many of the international expositions in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego held a staged village in which Native American life was performed for an audience. The Pueblo Village was

³⁴ Walter Mignolo, “DELINKING: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-coloniality,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 453.

created by archaeologist Jesse Nusbaum, who worked along with Julián and María Martínez, two potters from San Ildefonso with whom Gilpin would later become closely acquainted.³⁵ Although Nusbaum's Indian Village could be considered a less intentional performance than the *Wild West* shows that Käsebier's sitters were involved with, the Martínezes and other Indians were still very likely aware that they were expected to "perform" their culture in an authentic manner. Gilpin, along with the other white visitors to the Expositions who were the audience for these staged villages, were exposed to Pueblo culture in a specific way, which could only ever be constructed through the intentions of Nusbaum and other coordinators of the Exposition, rather than what the lived reality was for Pueblo people on reservations, and in the past. This established a certain method of representing cultural practices from which Gilpin's interest in art and photography first grew. The influence of staged villages and Käsebier's work with the *Wild West* performers can also be seen in Gilpin's early works.

The 1924 photograph *The Gate, Laguna, New Mexico* (fig. 3) shows a woman from behind as she walks up an uneven staircase towards an adobe structure. The figure is completely obscured from any identification; her head is draped with a dark patterned scarf to protect from the Southwestern sun. The covering transforms the woman into a ghost-like afterimage of an ancient past. It puts the viewer in the position of the voyeur, following this woman seemingly without her knowledge. From our perspective as viewers, we trail a distance

³⁵ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 20-21.

behind the woman and wait at the bottom of the stairs as she ascends beyond us. The adobe architecture frames her figure, almost as if what is inside this frame is the original photograph, and Gilpin has retreated to allow us a broader view of the surroundings. On the one hand, this act of framing within framing (and then once more, as the adobe structure in the background provides another cut-out around her body) leads the viewer's eye gradually closer to the central figure.

This intentional lack of cropping, of giving the viewer more of the surrounding space than of the human figure we are perhaps most interested in, has multiple effects. Initially, it emphasizes the relationship between Laguna and their environment, which Gilpin likely saw as intimately intertwined. Compared to her surroundings, the woman takes up very little space in this photograph. The archway of the gate above her is almost twice her height, and the adobe building she walks towards extends beyond the top left side of the frame. Still, she seems to fit naturally and harmoniously within this space. In addition to the cropping, Gilpin's caption also tells us that the woman is not the main subject of this image. She titles the photograph *The Gate* - according to this, the simple wooden structure that the woman walks through is the focus of this image, not the woman herself. The gate acts as the frame within the frame, creating a clear visual separation between the woman, who is representative of preserved past, and the (white) photographer/viewer, who is representative of modernity.

If Gilpin's main interest in this early stage of her career was to capture some sense of a rapidly fading past, the gate acts as an important symbol for this

transition. The scene the woman is stepping into has no sign of modern life - all that we can see is the shape of the adobe structure against the blown-out sky, all framed by a makeshift and imprecise archway above uneven steps. Had Gilpin chosen to include some of the many cars that were all around the area and were so difficult to avoid, the image would send a much different message to the viewer.³⁶ It would situate the Laguna woman in the present, rather than the imagined past, and allow the viewer to pose potential questions about the history of colonial interaction and the imposition of white tourism on the daily lives of the Laguna Pueblo. However, this was not the story Gilpin was interested in telling her viewers. She was instead focused on capturing a sort of romantic sense of the past through the people she photographed, solidifying what she perceived as the essence of Laguna life in a time of uncertainty and change.

A photograph from a year later, *San Ildefonso Potters* (fig. 4), shows the artist María Martínez, who along with her husband Julian Martínez, began a revival of traditional San Ildefonso methods of pottery making.³⁷ Gilpin's interest in Martínez and her work demonstrated her desire to use photography to re-discover "lost" indigenous traditions and to explore the way that traditions have continued to be practiced, since Martínez began her work as a way of revitalizing a form of pottery that was being rapidly forgotten. In *The Pueblos*, this and other images of Martínez at work are accompanied by text describing the

³⁶ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 45.

³⁷ Cody Hartley, "Maria Martinez, Industrial Designer," *The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology* 34, no. 1/2 (2008): 76.

detailed work the woman performs and emphasizing the difficulties of crafting objects like this without the use of modern technology such as a pottery wheel. While the caption describes the process of making that the figures are engaged in, it limits what the viewer can read from the photograph itself. As Roland Barthes described, “the text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to 'quicken' it.”³⁸ In this case, the caption limits the image by focusing the viewer’s understanding solely on the act of pottery production, and not beyond. However, looking at the photograph separately from its place in Gilpin’s book and alongside her text, allows us to read more about the story Gilpin is telling.

In this photograph, we see Maria Martínez standing on the viewer’s right, her body draped in a dark apron which covers a light patterned blouse, which seems to be the same fabric we see on the blouse of the woman to our left. This woman is younger, and she crouches down with a large, shallow bowl cradled on her lap as she cleans and polishes the recently thrown pottery, preparing it for the next step in this process. Both Martínez and the young woman are in profile, with dark hair pulled back but almost obscuring their faces, which are in shadow. Martínez has her back turned to the light source, perhaps a window to the viewer’s right, and her body casts the shadow on the figure of the young woman. Martínez looks down on her apprentice, apparently observing her progress while not engaged in any pottery making of her own. In this process of observation rather than action, she represents the passing down of traditional ways of making

³⁸ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 25.

to the next generation of Laguna women. As their shadowed faces tell us, the individual biographical information about these women is not what is important for Gilpin or her message. Rather, it is that they stand as an example of the continuation of tradition in the face of great change. The traditional act of making pottery is also situated in a fairly modern setting, at the hearth of a fireplace in an adobe house. The women are indoors, in a clean-looking house where other traditional objects are displayed, perhaps implying their continued use - the feathered headdress is hung up on the doorway to the left, kept in its place until the need arises. Everything in frame is neat and orderly, yet it still gives the viewer a sense that remnants of the past are continuing on.

What Gilpin neglected to tell the reader, however, is that commercially produced cookware had been commonly used by Pueblo since they became available to them around the 1820's, and the demand for traditional vessels had decreased since this time. Change, fueled by colonialism and modernity, had already impacted traditional ways of life for the Pueblo, and Martínez's work was an effort to revive these traditional forms of knowledge. Additionally, Martínez and her husband were initially asked by archaeologist Edgar Hewett to begin this work after discoveries of San Ildefonso pottery raised concerns about the loss of this artisan practice. So while these artists began their work as an effort to revive these traditional practices, they ended up inventing an entirely new style of San Ildefonso black-on-black pottery.³⁹ When Gilpin published this photograph in

³⁹ Hartley, "Maria Martinez, Industrial Designer," 74.

her book, however, Martínez was not referred to by name. She was simply referred to as “the potter,” and therefore became a type that refers back to a prehistoric indigenesness in which the practice of this pottery was ubiquitous, not specialized.⁴⁰ However, the type of work that Maria Martínez does in this photograph was not done in the same way in the past - she and her husband invented this process based on the pottery sherds from the archaeological digs, but their process is not completely taken from ancient knowledge. The ongoing innovation of indigenous practices is lost. This is one of several moments in *The Pueblos* when Gilpin failed to identify the sitters in her photographs, describing their actions as examples of ancient life rather than discussing them as individuals in the present. Of course, it was her goal for *The Pueblos* to be a recording of what she understood to be ancient practices before they were “lost” in the modern world, rather than an exploration of contemporary Pueblo ways of life. There is a long history of the use of photography to document cultures that were thought to be vanishing, rooted in early anthropological studies of indigenous people. As Christopher Pinney explored in *Photography and Anthropology*, photography’s apparent scientific objectivity made it useful for early anthropologists who wanted to document and categorize individuals and cultures.⁴¹ Though the extreme of this would be anthropometric photography,

⁴⁰ Laura Gilpin, *The Pueblos, A Camera Chronicle*, (New York: Hastings House, 1941), 80-85.

⁴¹ Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 25.

anthropologists also began to use the medium to document ways of life.⁴² This is more reflective of the work that Gilpin's early photographs perform, and can even categorize her later work with the Navajo. As colonization transformed into assimilation and Americanization, the idea that Native cultures were vanishing and thus needed salvaging took on more weight.⁴³

On one hand, *The Pueblos* works as a book of evidence for what Gilpin believed her project was about: capturing the lives of pre-contact Pueblo Indians. Acts of cropping out the modern world and turning specific people into generic types allowed Gilpin to assert a feeling of timelessness onto her images. Part of this is due to the medium of photography itself, and the belief in its indexicality and objectivity, which captures and records everything that is in front of the lens at a certain moment in time. The history of the use of photography in ethnographic research has often relied on the supposed objectivity of the camera and its use as a scientific tool of sorts. Of course, this disregards the position of the photographer, who makes intentional decisions about what is captured within the frame, what type of lens is used and how the images are developed. Perhaps Gilpin's early photographs on their own do not make claims towards objective scientific observation, but the text she included alongside them in *Pueblos* implies that she wanted the viewer to take these photographs as a truthful recording of daily life. However, the daily life Gilpin referenced was one that had

⁴² Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, 36.

⁴³ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 203

already, in some sense, been “lost” - this was what she imagined as Ancestral Pueblo daily life, not the actual experiences of her contemporary models.

There is also a notion that this ancient past had only recently been discovered, echoed by Gilpin herself in the first paragraph of the introduction to *The Pueblos*: “It is only in recent years that we have begun to realize the thrilling and amazing history that the archaeologists are unfolding for us - a history ‘as old as Egypt.’”⁴⁴ The fact that native North Americans have always known this history was never discussed. It became an appropriative narrative, allowing the Euro-American Gilpin and her reader to see themselves as connected to the land of the American Southwest their imagined Indian. This desire to identify with America’s ancient past became ingrained in narratives of nationalism after the American Revolution, when again America sought to distinguish itself as a leader in art and culture. This self-identification continued as Euro-Americans continuously appropriated Native art and aesthetics to assert themselves into this history.⁴⁵ As Elizabeth Hutchinson discussed, the increased popularity and commercialization of Native American art and cultural materials made an aesthetic of the American Southwest available to a wider audience around the turn of the century. Hutchinson argued that this commercialization and the desire to collect Native American art “allowed people of the United States to combine these nationalist

⁴⁴ Gilpin, *The Pueblos*, 7.

⁴⁵ Philip P. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 75.

and colonialist interests, by appropriating the material culture of subjugated indigenous people as an expression of national aesthetics.”⁴⁶

Leah Dilworth also touched upon the impact of tourism and consumerism on the image of the Indian in the minds of white Americans. In the late nineteenth-century, photography became an important part of experiencing travel to the Southwest and having an authentic interaction with Indian culture. These images were beginning to be used to promote sightseeing and tourism in the Southwest region.⁴⁷ By the beginning of the 1930s, Gilpin had found a way to support her photographic career while indulging her fascination with the American Southwest and the Native Americans who lived there, all supported by this shift in emphasis towards tourism. As her experience and relationships with the Navajo grew, she began to consider how to support her career as a photographer while developing ways to communicate Navajo culture to the rest of the world. These earlier works by Gilpin represent a clear vision of what she wanted to show, which was in a way a record of the history of Native American culture. However, that record only represented the limited perspective of Gilpin, who was removed from a true understanding because she was both a tourist and an amateur anthropologist. She observed from the position of an outsider, who claimed that objectivity, yet still modeled the scene for the consumption of another outsider viewer. When Gilpin’s formal choices became more aligned with

⁴⁶ Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 26.

⁴⁷ Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 17.

documentary photography, the intention of her project and her relationship with her subjects became more complicated.

Chapter 2: Hard-edge Indigenoussness: Laura Gilpin's Enduring Navajo

In *An Enduring Grace*, Martha Sandweiss recounted the story of Gilpin's journey to Europe with the sculptor Brenda Putnam in 1922 when, before the ship even left the dock, a twist of fate occurred. Gilpin's beloved Pinkham and Smith lens fell into the water. It was this soft-focus lens that gave her early photographs the aesthetic so recognizable within the tradition of pictorial photography. Although she had enough time before she departed to order a new Pinkham and Smith lens to be sent to her in London, she had to make do for some time with her "hated anastigmatic lens" which resulted in a much sharper image than she initially preferred.⁴⁸ Whether or not this story truly happened, or if the experience truly changed her opinion of this photographic technique, Gilpin's aesthetic preferences began to shift away from that of White and Kasebier, towards a kind of "straight" photography that was becoming popularized. She began to feel that the hard-edged quality of her anastigmatic lens actually allowed her to better capture the emotional connection she felt was most important in her sitter, especially in portraiture.⁴⁹ Her style did not immediately shift upon her return to Colorado, as there were still several instances in the early work previously discussed that retain the softness she had learned at the Clarence White School. However, her portrait work shifted towards a more crisp aesthetic.

⁴⁸ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 37.

⁴⁹ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 39.

It is only later, after becoming more acquainted with the Navajo in particular, when this aesthetic started to be prevalent in the majority of her photographs. Simultaneously, the style of straight, documentary photography, which supported the appearance of objectivity even with an underlying desire to sway viewer perception, was becoming more popular throughout the country. This is especially apparent in the documentary photographs produced by the Farm Security Administration (FSA). Intended to shock the public into supporting government programs that would help rebuild the economies of rural areas, the FSA project took on documentary-style photographs to create what appeared to be a realistic portrait of the suffering of white Americans during the Great Depression. First established as a project of the Resettlement Administration (RA) in 1935, FSA photography was overseen by Roy Stryker who “began to think of himself as a national historian accumulating images for future generations,” and who believed that the FSA photographs were largely objective public records.⁵⁰ While it was this belief that encouraged Stryker’s work, the photographers did not always share the same kind of focus on objectivity. Artistic judgments were often more important to the production of these images than Stryker desired, and he often had professional disagreements with photographers Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange.⁵¹ Evans thought that Stryker’s strict understanding of what was objective in photography was limiting to his artistic

⁵⁰ James Curtis, *Mind’s Eye, Mind’s Truth: FSA Photography Reconsidered*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 10.

⁵¹ Curtis, *Mind’s Eye, Mind’s Truth*, 13

vision, and was more willing to rearrange people and objects within his frame to fit this vision. Lange, however, felt that she had a responsibility as a documentary photographer to be as detached from the scene as possible by simply observing and capturing what happens in front of the camera.⁵²

Of course, even the FSA photographer most dedicated to objectivity for the sake of journalistic integrity could not truly produce photographs with no trace of the photographer's intention. Philosopher Kendall Walton discussed how photography's realism has a different effect on the viewer than other forms of image production, such as painting or printmaking. He understood that photography is unique in comparison to these other forms because photographs show something that actually existed in front of the camera at the time of the image's production.⁵³ It is this "special nature" that gives the medium an additional layer of realism, allowing us to actually view the world as it was at some point in time through the picture. The process of image production, at least in regards to how the camera itself functions, is one that can only be manipulated by the photographer in certain ways. Beyond aperture, focus, and framing, the chemical reaction of light hitting the sensitive material on the photographic plate limits the possibilities for what appears on the finished image. Much of Gilpin's work in *The Enduring Navaho* was done with a large format camera, and though her images were carefully composed rather than snapshots of moments in time,

⁵² Curtis, *Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth*, 47.

⁵³ Kendall Walton, "Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism," *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 250-251.

they still give the effect of being able to “see through” the image to the object or person who was in front of the camera at the time of exposure. As Gilpin moved away from a pictorialist style towards straight photography, this effect of realism became even more enhanced.

However, Walton also acknowledged the ways that photographs can distort the truth and mislead viewers, even unintentionally, and that they provide viewers with an understanding of the photographer’s subjectivity.⁵⁴ Viewers are introduced to the subject of the photograph only through the experience of the photographer and what the photographer wants to show. From this perspective, practically all photographs work to in some way manipulate the viewer to agree with the photographer’s subjectivity, whether or not this is intentional. The FSA project’s purpose was, of course, to convince the public of the need to support New Deal agricultural reform, and this underlying subjective motivation still comes across.⁵⁵ Lange’s belief in her own detachment does not automatically render her photographs detached. They are still informed by her understanding of effective formal technique, as well as her belief in the importance of her subject matter and the knowledge of the social impact that her images potentially hold when they are exposed to the public.

The process involved in the making of Lange’s most famous FSA photograph, *Migrant Mother* (fig. 5), and the other photographs taken in this

⁵⁴ Walton, “Transparent Pictures,” 261.

⁵⁵ Michael L. Carlebach, “Documentary and Propaganda: The Photographs of the Farm Security Administration,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 8 (Spring 1988): 9.

series shows how important aesthetic considerations were to Lange, not only because they make a more appealing photograph, but also because a well composed shot is more effective as a propagandistic tool.⁵⁶ It was also Lange's choice not to include all of the children in the family, instead focusing on the three youngest we see in the image. She also carefully arranged the children around the mother, instructing them to turn their heads away so that the focus of the expression was on the mother's face alone, which reveals the internal stress that Lange wished to emphasize with the help of the posed hand resting on her face.⁵⁷ The thought and effort that went into composing *Migrant Mother* shows how carefully Lange was considering how the image would be received by her intended audience. While the final image is an accurate replication of what was in front of the camera at that time, the details were so carefully chosen and arranged so that the photographer's intention becomes the viewer's reception.

Accounts of Gilpin's process highlight a similar care for composition - her photographs, while sometimes included in travelogue-type materials, were not simply travel snapshots. Although she became more convinced that photography as a medium should embrace its unique ability to capture reality, her shift away from soft-focus pictorialism towards straight photography did not change her careful process. Sandweiss argued that Gilpin's photographic project with the Navajo was influenced by the efforts of the FSA, and that Gilpin's goals for her photography were to explore the lives of the Navajo in the same way that the FSA

⁵⁶ Curtis, *Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth*, 49-50.

⁵⁷ Curtis, *Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth*, 65.

explored the lives of white Americans who benefitted from the FSA's economic programs. She even applied to be a part of the FSA program, but was rejected for being "too pictorial for the program designed to record American life on film."⁵⁸ Still, she must have seen the influence FSA photographs had on the public and their effectiveness as tools for shaping public opinion. This affected the shape of her work with the Navajo throughout the rest of her career, but they must also be considered through the scope of Gilpin's access to the reservation and the nature of the relationships she developed with her subjects beginning in the 1930s. In the same way that FSA photography sought to sway viewers by presenting a certain sympathetic image of the white rural American, Gilpin's *Enduring Navaho* images sought to reveal the continued resilience of Native Americans even through difficult changes.

RED ROCK, ARIZONA

In 1931, Gilpin's close friend and frequent travel companion Elizabeth Forster took a job as a field nurse through the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs (NMAIA) on the Navajo Reservation in Red Rock, Arizona. From November 1931 until April 1933, Forster lived and worked on the reservation in an old mission hospital, spending much of her time treating patients, making visits to hogans, and transporting the most ill to the hospital in Shiprock.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 28.

⁵⁹ Martha Sandweiss, Elizabeth W. Forster and Laura Gilpin, *Denizens of the Desert: A Tale in Word and Picture of Life Among the Navaho Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988): 11.

Forster quickly developed a strong relationship with some of the families on the reservation, most notably with her translator Timothy Kellywood and the family of Francis Nakai, and her embrace of Navajo traditions, especially medicine men, helped her gain the trust of many who were initially wary of her presence.⁶⁰

Over this time, Gilpin made at least five trips to visit her friend, coming from Colorado Springs with her camera and tripod in tow.⁶¹ She admits that her friendship with Forster played a massive role in how she gained access and acquired permission to photograph, writing “If it hadn’t been for Betsy taking that field nursing job, I would never have gotten my early pictures.”⁶² Even the later photographs from their return trips to Red Rock in the 1950s and 60 are successful in large part because of Forster’s influence as well as Gilpin’s own efforts to befriend people on the reservation and establish her own relationships.⁶³ Sandweiss described Forster’s first interactions with Navajo as one of immediate understanding and connection, before she took the position as a nurse. She echoed the story Gilpin describes in *The Enduring Navaho*, in which she and Forster became stranded after their car died on the Navajo reservation. While Gilpin went to the nearest town to find help, Forster stayed behind with the car and befriended a group of Navajo men in Gilpin’s absence.⁶⁴ In fact, many of Gilpin’s interactions with Navajo people were directly connected to Forster - it

⁶⁰ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 11.

⁶¹ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 3.

⁶² Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 21.

⁶³ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 24.

⁶⁴ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 51.

was she who established those initial connections and gained trust over time. As her close friend, Gilpin gained some of this trust by proxy, but it was still firmly tied to Forster.

Despite what Forster and Gilpin both described as relationships built through trust and friendship, there remained a complicated history between white health practitioners and Native American patients that should be discussed and considered in the context of these photographs. Along with the NMAIA, other field nursing programs, often facilitated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), began to send nurses to reservations not just to provide health care and health education, but also to encourage Americanization, promoting ideals of “right living” that were intended to dismantle traditional practices.⁶⁵ One of the missions of field nurses such as Forster was not only to treat patients, but also to “inculcate Euro-American attitudes and values” within the assimilationist approach that public health nursing worked within.⁶⁶ Although Forster, like many field nurses, expressed compassion for the people she worked with, the position itself holds an inherent unequal power dynamic. As a position created and overseen by government agencies like the BIA and NMAIA, the nurses in the field acted as extensions of those bureaucratic agencies and, as a result, often shared some of the same assimilationist beliefs, such as the naturalized assumption of the superiority of Western medicine. Forster stood apart from

⁶⁵ Emily K. Abel and Nancy Reifel, “Interactions between Public Health Nurses and Clients on American Indian Reservations during the 1930s,” *The Society for the Social History of Medicine* 9, no. 1 (April 1996): 95.

⁶⁶ Abel and Reifel, “Interactions,” 93.

some others because of her acceptance of traditional medicinal practices, however, which became part of the reason why people on the reservation began to accept her.⁶⁷

Forster's acceptance into the community echoes the stories told by Sioux interviewees, who accepted those field nurses who worked hard for the benefit of their patients, respected Sioux standards of conduct, and understood that as much as healers could help, they must also be careful not to do any harm.⁶⁸ Thus, Forster proved herself to the Navajo community and they chose to trust and accept her as a source of healing that would supplement, rather than supplant, tradition. This was a common way of understanding the role of white medicine, as Abel and Reifel described: "Although many Sioux people assumed that white practitioners were best equipped to provide some services, they did not embrace white medicine as a substitute for the declining Sioux healthcare system." The introduction of unfamiliar and often lethal diseases made it necessary to accept field nurses into reservation environments, especially as the knowledge of many practices began to be threatened due to epidemics, war, and the separation and restriction of tribal groups to reservations.⁶⁹ It is difficult to say how much, if any, agency her subjects had if their only access to medical assistance was through Forster. Their ability to deny being photographed may have been compromised by the need for health care. Abel and Reifel discussed how denying the assistance

⁶⁷ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 11.

⁶⁸ Abel and Reifel, "Interactions," 96.

⁶⁹ Abel and Reifel, "Interactions," 95.

of field nurses and thus Western medicine is a form of resistance against the assumed supremacy of Western treatments to Native traditions, but sometimes denial could result in death if there was no alternative treatment.⁷⁰ Whether or not denying to be photographed was an option, it still brings into question the nature of some of the friendships that both Forster and Gilpin felt they had established with Navajo residents. That she was still allowed access after their return to Red Rock in 1950 perhaps implies that the two women really had established trust with at least some of the residents.

The increase in tourism in the American Southwest in the early twentieth century meant that many Navajo became wary of white people with cameras, after seeing how their images could be used for these commercial purposes and to promote a narrow understanding of Indianness to white audiences.⁷¹ Many were also accustomed to visitors who would disregard their desire to not be photographed and often dealt with white visitors who wanted to photograph sacred ceremonies.⁷² Even Gilpin, with all the access and privilege that came with her relationship with Forster, made attempts to photograph Nightway sand paintings after being denied by Navajo.⁷³ It is not too far-fetched to imagine that some of the photographs that ended up in *The Enduring Navaho* could have been ones which Gilpin did not receive explicit permission to take, yet was not prevented from capturing, precisely because of her close friendship with Forster. Faris used

⁷⁰ Abel and Reifel, "Interactions," 90.

⁷¹ Lippard, *Partial Recall*, 14.

⁷² Scott, *A Strange Mixture*, 185.

⁷³ Faris, "Laura Gilpin and the 'Endearing' Navaho," 61.

the 1932 photograph *Hardbelly's Hogan* (fig. 6) to support his claim that the Navajo may not have welcomed Gilpin's camera as much as she tried to emphasize in *The Enduring Navaho*.

In the text, she mentions her surprise that Hardbelly and his wives did not discourage her from taking this photograph.⁷⁴ The image shows the shirtless Hardbelly, who is lying on the floor of the small hogan, propped up with rolled blankets, surrounded by his three wives who sit cross legged, one of whom holds a child in her lap. The women seem to be gazing in different directions, their expressions serious and slightly wary; the child, however, peers out at the camera from the darkness created by the woman's black clothing. A Navajo man stands behind Hardbelly's head to the left of the frame as he watches Forster, who is kneeling at her patient's side, preparing to administer his medication. Sandweiss uses this photograph as evidence that Gilpin's presence was not only accepted, but often went largely unnoticed. She writes, "Her sitters appear comfortable and relaxed...No one seems in the least bit aware of the obtrusive presence of Laura Gilpin...She was as sensitive as Forster was to the quiet traditions and particular manners of Navaho life."⁷⁵ As comfortable as her sitters may appear, it is difficult to imagine that Gilpin's presence would not feel at least slightly intrusive, as a large-format camera on a tripod is not a discrete object.

Gilpin and her camera were accepted in many situations on the reservation during Forster's stay and when the women visited again after the war,

⁷⁴ Gilpin, *The Enduring Navaho*, 31.

⁷⁵ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 4.

as evidenced by the amount of photographs she amassed and the various individuals who agreed to pose for her portraits. It can be assumed that Gilpin received some initial permission from the Navajo to take her photographs, yet the boundaries of that access remain unclear. Forster's presence and her medical expertise had already been largely embraced by the time that *Hardbelly's Hogan* was taken in 1932, and her importance to the Navajo was echoed in Francis Nakai's letter to Eastern Association on Indian Affairs president Oliver LaFarge in the years after Forster left Red Rocks. In the letter he wrote:

“There is one great part which we had lost is a Field Nurse here at Red Rocks Arizona. We had a nurse here whom was a great friend to the Navajos. Her name was Miss Elizabeth Forster from Colorado Springs. We miss her a whole lot. Some of the Navajos didnt hardly yet believe when she left Red Rocks to stay home.”⁷⁶

Nakai's letter, in addition to the fact that Red Rocks received no consistent and dedicated healthcare services after Forster's stay makes her importance to the reservation apparent. Forster held a certain amount of power in her position as a field nurse, even if she characterized her interactions with her patients as friendships. The reaction to her return to the reservation in 1950 was focused on her position as a healer first and foremost.⁷⁷ So perhaps there was little objection to Forster's photographer friend, even when she took photographs in quite intimate and delicate situations, because of a fear that restricting her access could

⁷⁶ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 17-18

⁷⁷ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 22.

damage the relationship with Forster, who was providing Hardbelly with medication during a time when his health was most vulnerable. Gilpin even acknowledged that taking this particular photograph could be dangerous. She stated, “Fortunately the man recovered, otherwise I would be taboo in that region forever.”⁷⁸

Faris also found evidence for some lack of cooperation in Gilpin’s unpublished photographs, where there are many shots of the same scene, and most interestingly in the controversial image *Navaho Madonna*. Lilly Benally, the woman shown holding her infant son in the photograph, sued the Amon Carter Museum in 1984 for publishing the photograph without obtaining her permission.⁷⁹ While Benally agreed to Gilpin taking the photograph, she was not aware of the photographer’s intent to publish and distribute the work. This was, and still is, a common concern regarding native beliefs and photography - the sense that part of a person is captured through the act of photography, and that the image holds power that can be used negatively when it falls into the wrong hands. The idea of photographers as “shadow catchers” exemplifies the complicated relationship many tribes have with photography.⁸⁰ However, this belief was often over-emphasized through narratives that tell of the overly literal and naïve reactions of early twentieth-century Indians upon interactions with modern technologies.⁸¹ It was also a way to reassert the assumption that these

⁷⁸ Sandweiss, *Denizens of the Desert*, 4.

⁷⁹ Faris, “Laura Gilpin and the ‘Endearing’ Navaho,” 65.

⁸⁰ Lippard, *Partial Recall*, 30-31.

⁸¹ Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, 120.

individuals and their cultures are “primitive,” unable to understanding how modern technology functions, and thus promoting cultural superiority of “modern” white societies. Pinney argued that this belief was common in the earlier days of anthropometric photography, and that photographers would champion this rejection because it was a demonstration of “subjects’ reluctance serving as a foil to rationalist enlightenment.”⁸² The story of Lilly Benally stands out especially because it makes it clear that whether or not Gilpin always sought explicit permission to take her photographs, the agency of the sitter was nonexistent once that photograph was taken. There is no record of Gilpin requesting certain permissions to use an individual’s photograph for any purpose, including commercial ones.

Gilpin spent the almost two decades between her visits to Red Rock doing commercial work for brochures and booklets, creating lantern slide sets for lecture use, and traveling to Yucatán for another travel series. During this time she also opted for a smaller, more travel-friendly camera, the 5 x 7 Universal view camera, instead of her 8 x 10, and the formal aspects of her photographs began to shift towards the hard-edge style popularized by FSA photography.⁸³ There is a dramatic difference in the formal appearance of her photographs from *The Pueblos*, for example, when they are compared to her work in *The Enduring Navaho*, published much later in 1968 but compiled with photographs from varying periods of her career. There is also a difference in the way that Gilpin

⁸² Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, 70.

⁸³ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 61.

discussed and named her subjects in the later book, which Sandweiss attributed to her closer relationship with her subjects, who she began to see as friends rather than archaeological remnants of a past culture.⁸⁴ Still, *The Enduring Navaho* was intended to teach non-Natives about Navajo history and cultural practices.

The Enduring Navaho is divided into four sections, based on the importance of the four sacred directions and their corresponding mountains in Navajo religion.⁸⁵ These sections are The Navaho World, The Way of the People, The Coming Way, and The Enduring Way, and together they form what Gilpin saw as a holistic record of Navajo history, religious beliefs, and customs. Throughout the book, Gilpin attempted to demonstrate the ways that the Navajo have managed to maintain these customs through times of hardship (yet she often avoided going into much detail about the role of the United States government in creating these hardships). The photographs that illustrate this book can be divided into two main periods when Gilpin visited the Red Rock community - the initial trip with Forster in 1931, and later trips after 1950 for the purpose of obtaining more photographs to complete *The Enduring Navaho* manuscript. Photographs from both periods are interspersed, and often positioned together to demonstrate how rapidly situations can change for the Navajo. However, in spite of the formal aesthetic treatment of this later era of

⁸⁴ Sandweiss, *An Enduring Grace*, 69.

⁸⁵ Laura Gilpin, *The Enduring Navaho*, (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1968), 10.

photographs that perhaps at first glance appear to show the Navajo in a more realistic light than in the older, soft focus images, Gilpin's enduring Navajo remains an idealization. As hard-edge aesthetic began to be associated with documentary photography around the 1930s with FSA photographers and some of Gilpin's later portraiture shares similar formal aspects to these photographers. As her knowledge about Navajo culture increased and as she began to develop personal relationships with the people she photographed, Gilpin took to a more straightforward portrait style, emphasizing sharpness and encouraging the sitter's direct eye contact.⁸⁶

Additionally, as Sandweiss and others have identified, there was a recognizable shift in the interaction between Gilpin's subjects and the camera. The 1950 photograph *A Navaho Family* (fig. 7), taken after she had left the reservation for a time to work on her commercial projects, shows Francis Nakai, a man who Gilpin and Forster had forged a relationship with since their first visits to Red Rock, along with his wife and their youngest daughters. Their oldest son had died in the second World War and was buried in France with an American flag draped across his coffin. That same American flag was hung in the Nakai household, and can be seen in the photograph. The mother, known only to Gilpin and Forster as "Mrs. Nakai," sits in a rocking chair in front of the flag, staring gravely at the camera. Her eyes are fixed, open wide, almost as if she is surprised

⁸⁶ Olivia Lahs-Gonzales and Lucy Lippard, *Defining Eye: Women Photographers of the 20th Century: Selections from the Helen Kornblum Collection* (St. Louis: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1997), 36.

to see us, the viewer, enter her personal space. The corners of her mouth are turned down, recording a flash of concern over her face that is enhanced by the wary expressions of the children who surround her. In *Enduring Navaho*, Gilpin recalled the disconcerting change she and Forster felt in the Nakai household since their last visit seventeen years prior, a depression that had come over both of the Nakai parents.⁸⁷ In the photograph, Francis stands beside his wife in her rocking chair, clad in Western-wear with a cowboy hat and a clean white cotton shirt tucked into belted blue jeans, like many of the Navajo men in Gilpin's photographs. He is also looking out at the viewer, but his expression is slightly less wary than those of his family. Four children can be seen in the frame, three of whom also stare gravely into the camera, surrounding Mrs. Nakai on all sides. The fourth child is cut off from the picture on the left side sitting on the ground next to the young boy, and all we can see are the hands of this young girl, folded in her lap. The Nakais had two older sons, but the surviving son is not in the photograph and not mentioned in Gilpin's text. She mentioned that during their next visit a year later, she and Forster discovered that Francis had developed a problem with alcohol.⁸⁸ The change in the Nakai family can be sensed in their severe expressions and tense positions. Gilpin's cropping choice is extremely unusual, since a crucial part of her work had always been to carefully plan her composition before shooting, especially when taking a portrait. This then raises the question of whether or not this photograph was carefully planned before it

⁸⁷ Gilpin, *The Enduring Navaho*, 247.

⁸⁸ Gilpin, *The Enduring Navaho*, 248.

was shot, but perhaps more importantly, whether or not Gilpin truly had permission to photograph this scene before doing so.

James C. Faris argued that while Gilpin often describes the access given to her through the relationships she and Forster forged, the Navajo may not have been able to effectively deny access “in the face of the dramatic power differentials between themselves and non-Navajo visitors with cameras.”⁸⁹ Although not a spur-of-the-moment snapshot of the scene in the Nakai household, the serious expressions on the faces of these sitters may demonstrate some unwillingness to be the subject of the photograph, yet some sense that the choice to deny the act is somehow beyond their control. Still, the serious tone of the photograph lends a sense of authenticity to the story that Gilpin crafted in *Enduring Navaho*, of a family forever changed by their son’s sacrifice for the country. That the children, especially, appear so grave, tells the viewer that this family must truly be suffering, like so many other American families who have lost sons, fathers, and brothers fighting in the war. Gilpin emphasized the appearance of a family in mourning, arranged in front of the symbol of patriotism, and cropped the image so that it appears to be a snapshot rather than a carefully crafted portrait.

When considering the *Navaho Family* and the story of the Nakai family, Gilpin decided not to include more information about the role the Navajo played in World War II within the text of *The Enduring Navaho*. Upon their return to

⁸⁹ Faris, “Laura Gilpin and the ‘Endearing’ Navaho,” 64.

Red Rock, Forster and Gilpin discovered that the reservation had been almost completely stripped of its government-provided health care services. The field nurse program was defunded when the United States entered the war, and Red Rock was left with a single government field doctor who visited once a week.⁹⁰ The Nakai family, like many others, sent their young son to fight in the war while his family and community suffered from the lack of government assistance. There is a stark contrast between the treatment of Navajo Indians at home on reservations and the important role that the Navajo played. The Navajo Codetalkers were crucial to the American war efforts, but their role in the military was not uncomplicated. Noah Jed Riseman argued that since Codetalking was conceived by non-Navajo and not pushed as an indigenous initiative, the project itself was an extension of settler colonialism, and because the Navajo language was known by very few non-Navajo people, it required the recruitment of indigenous soldiers.⁹¹ Riseman also noted the lack of recognition Navajo soldiers received after the war, as well as post-war efforts by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to more rapidly assimilate and relocate veterans and their families.⁹²

Among Gilpin's efforts to demonstrate how the Navajo have started to take an important role in the United States democracy, one would assume she would embrace a discussion about the role of Navajo men in this "patriotic" effort. The

⁹⁰ Robert A. Trennert, "Superwomen in Indian Country: U.S.I.S. Field Nurses in Arizona and New Mexico, 1928-1940," *The Journal of Arizona History* 41, no. 1 (2000): 53; Sandweiss, *Denizens*, 17-18.

⁹¹ Noah Jed Riseman, "Regardless of History?": Re-Assessing the Navajo Codetalkers of World War II," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 26, no. 2 (2007): 52.

⁹² Riseman, "Regardless of History?," 60.

reason for this may be that the purpose of *The Enduring Navaho* was to be a record of Navajo history and cultural practices up into the contemporary moment, as Gilpin believed that these ancient practices were being abandoned for the increased Americanization of tribal communities. She did not necessarily have a political motivation in the same way as documentary photographers, and she was not asking her readers to enact policy changes. Instead, Gilpin simply wanted to educate and salvage what she could of a culture she believed was vanishing.

Coda

Photography's power to shape the appearance of truth and reality make it an effective tool for social and political commentary. Thus, Gilpin's images cannot be severed from their place within the history of representing Native American people. Her work, even considered apart from caption and text, holds inherent messages about the people who were in front of her lens. Gilpin's choices as a photographer-artist shaped those messages, and the framework from which she approached her work largely dictated its intended reception. From her earliest work, reflective of her pictorialist training, Gilpin showed her subjects from a distanced perspective. Her work began as an exploration of the imagined history of Native American life before it was forever shifted by contact with European settlers, and it must be viewed in light of her experience as a white American woman. Although the soft-focus style indicative of pictorialism fades in Gilpin's work as she matures as an artist and as the world of photography shifts, that essential aspect of her work remains. While *The Enduring Navaho* was a project that attempts to understand a specific human experience, and the images contained within were intended to act as a documentation, Gilpin did not urge the reader/viewer to question the socio-political dynamics that have shaped Native American history. Instead, *The Enduring Navaho* took up the formal aspects of straight-edge photography while maintaining a romantic understanding of the people being photographed.

Works Cited

- Abel, Emily K. and Nancy Reifel. "Interactions between Public Health Nurses and Clients on American Indian Reservations during the 1930s." *The Society for the Social History of Medicine* 9, no. 1 (April 1996): 89-108.
- Adams, Katherine H. and Michael L. Keene. *Women, Art, and the New Deal*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2016.
- Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*. London: Fontana Press, 1977.
- Berkhofer, Robert F. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian, from Columbus to Present*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Carlebach, Michael L. "Documentary and Propaganda: The Photographs of the Farm Security Administration." *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 8 (Spring 1988): 6-25.
- Chadwick, Whitney. *Women, Art, and Society*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1990.
- Curtis, James. *Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth: FSA Photography Reconsidered*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Deloria, Philip P. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004.
- Dilworth, Leah. *Imagining Indians in the Southwest*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996.
- Faris, James C. "Laura Gilpin and the 'Endearing' Navaho." *History of Photography* 21, no. 1 (1997): 60-66.
- Fulton, Marianne, ed. *Pictorialism into modernism: the Clarence H. White School of Photography*. New York: Rizzoli, 1996.

- Gilpin, Laura. *The Pueblos, A Camera Chronicle*. New York: Hastings House, 1941.
- . *The Enduring Navaho*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1968.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. "Photographic Relations: Laura Gilpin, Willa Cather." *American Literature* 70, no. 1 (1998): 63-95.
- Hartley, Cody. "Maria Martinez, Industrial Designer." *IA. The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology* 34, no. 1/2 (2008): 73-86.
- Hutchinson, Elizabeth. *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Lahs-Gonzales, Olivia and Lucy Lippard. *Defining Eye: Women Photographers of the 20th Century: Selections from the Helen Kornblum Collection*. St. Louis: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1997.
- Lippard, Lucy R., ed. *Partial Recall: Essays on Photographs of Native North Americans*. New York: New Press, 1992.
- Mignolo, Walter D. "DELINKING: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-coloniality." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 449-514.
- Norwood, Vera. "The Photographer and the Naturalist: Laura Gilpin and Mary Austin in the Southwest," *Journal of American Culture* 5, no. 2 (1982) 1-28.
- Pinney, Christopher. *Photography and Anthropology*. London: Reaktion Books, 2011.
- Riseman, Noah Jed. "'Regardless of History?': Re-Assessing the Navajo Codetalkers of World War II." *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 26, no. 2 (2007): 48-73.
- Rudnick, Lois. *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984.

- Sandweiss, Martha. *Laura Gilpin: An Enduring Grace*. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1986.
- Sandweiss, Martha, Elizabeth W. Forster and Laura Gilpin. *Denizens of the Desert: A Tale in Word and Picture of Life Among the Navaho Indians*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1988.
- Scott, Sasha. *A Strange Mixture: The Art and Politics of Painting Pueblo Indians*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015.
- Spaulding, Jonathan. *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880- 1930*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004.
- Trennert, Robert A. "Superwomen in Indian Country: U.S.I.S. Field Nurses in Arizona and New Mexico, 1928-1940." *The Journal of Arizona History* 41, no. 1 (2000): 31-56.
- Walton, Kendall. "Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism." *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 246-277.

Illustrations



Fig 1. *The Prelude*, Laura Gilpin, 1917. © 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art



Fig 2. *The House of the Cliff Dweller, Mesa Verde*, Laura Gilpin, 1925.

© 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art



Fig. 3 *The Gate, Laguna, New Mexico*, Laura Gilpin, 1924. © 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art



Fig. 4 *San Ildefonso Potters*, Laura Gilpin, 1925. © 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art

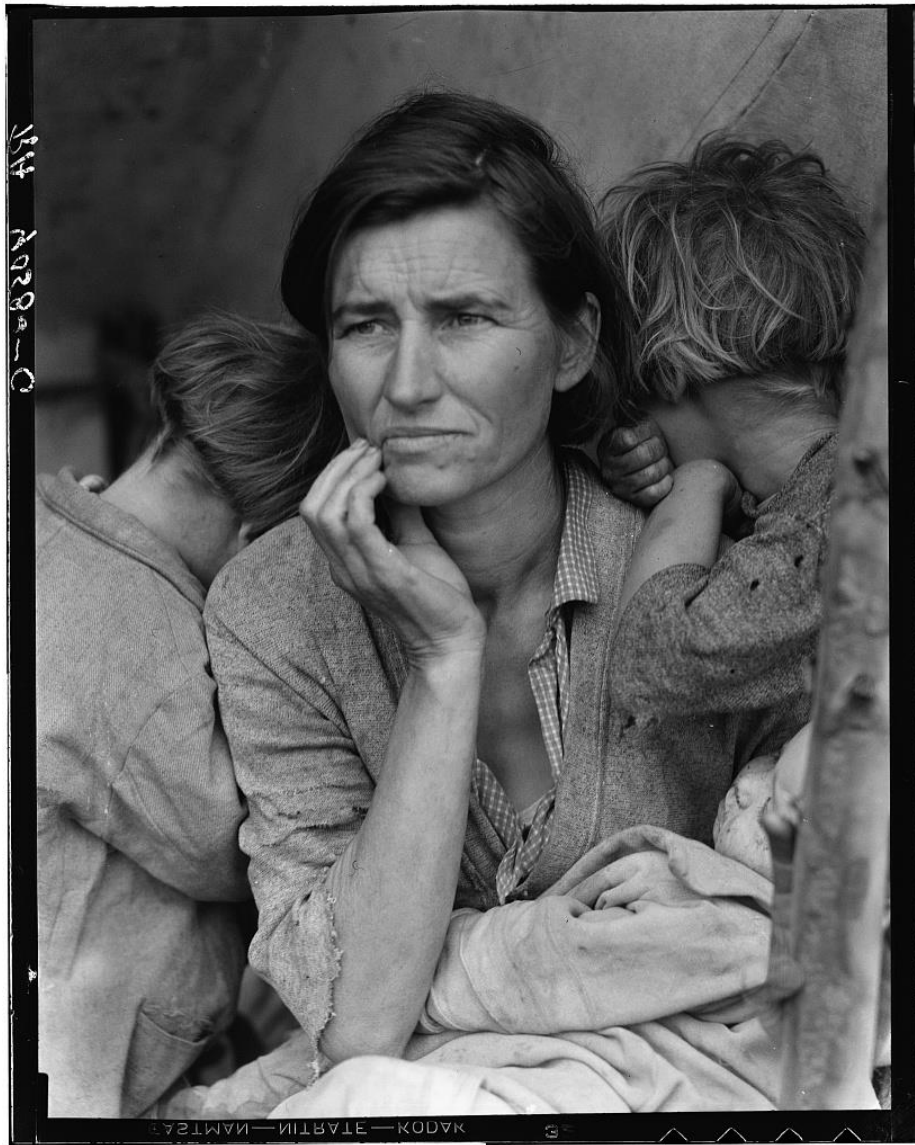


Fig. 5 *Migrant Mother*, Dorothea Lange, 1936.



Fig. 6 *Hardbelly's Hogan*, Laura Gilpin, 1932. © 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art



Fig. 7 *A Navaho Family*, Laura Gilpin, 1950. © 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art