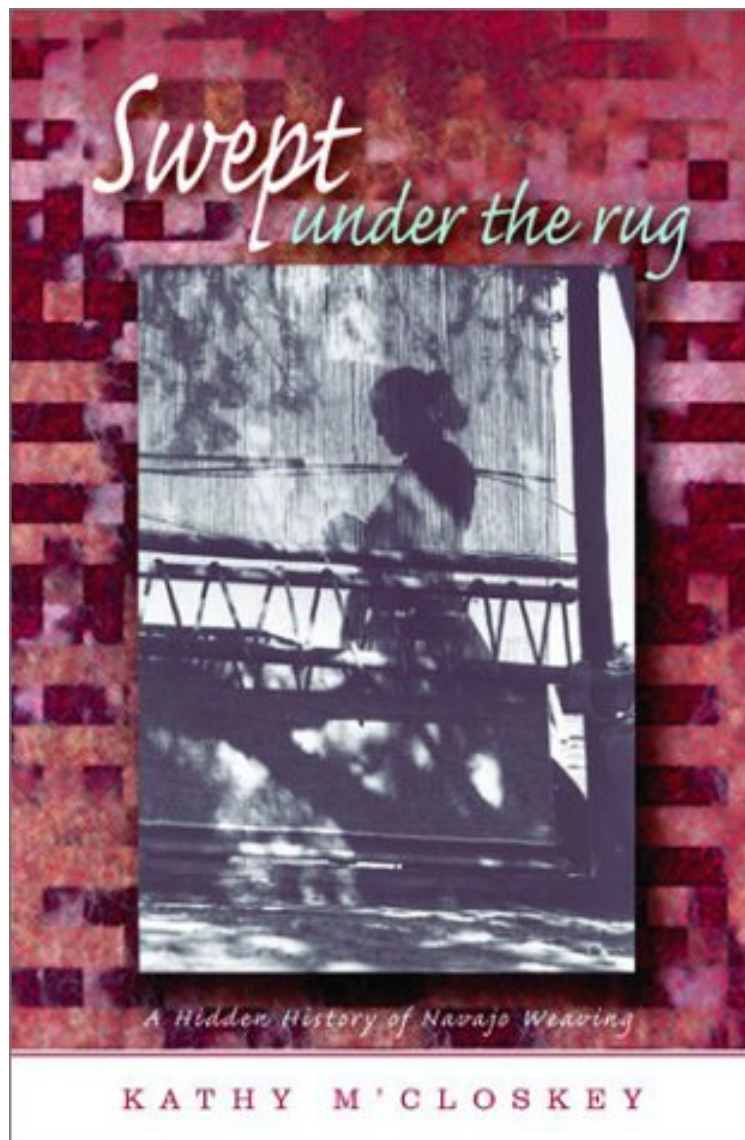


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## **Swept Under the Rug: A Hidden History of Navajo Weaving (University of Arizona Southwest Centre)**

*Kathy M'Closkey*

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**Kathy M'Closkey : Swept Under the Rug: A Hidden History of Navajo Weaving (University of Arizona Southwest Centre)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Swept Under the Rug: A Hidden History of Navajo Weaving (University of Arizona Southwest Centre):

34 of 35 people found the following review helpful. **SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT--HISTORY MADE CLEAR**By DragonflyThis is a book I would have been proud to have written, but Kathy M'Closkey has done it exceedingly well. She has told a long overdue and in-depth history of Navajo weaving that binds together themes usually glossed over or ignored in most academic texts--both art historical and ethnographic--and sets the record straight. One of her central and most telling points is that, given the past (and still current) Anglo-dominated marketing and auction systems, the more Navajo women wove, the poorer they became. The author also addresses the problem of knockoffs of Dine' creativity and design seen today in the increasing number of overseas copies (from Mexico, India, Europe, and elsewhere) of Navajo weaving designs being marketed in the U.S. and sold worldwide. Richly documented from the records of traders, trading posts, government, and other original sources--especially the testimony of the Dine' (Navajo) weavers themselves--the author gives voice to a history too-long hidden from the general public and now made clear and plain. "Swept Under the Rug" reveals how the weavings were severed from their makers' stories and how, because of this, the prevailing and standard "history" of Navajo weaving does not reflect Dine' values, but rather those of an externally controlled access to the public and marketplace. Fair-trade grassroots indigenous initiatives and cooperatives such as Black Mesa Weavers for Life and Land, Sheep Is Life, the Dine' College Navajo Textile Project, and others, are starting to bring about change and empower the Dine', through the work of their own hands, to reach the market directly, reclaiming the present and a future for the wool and weavings at the core of their culture and economy. This book is a must-read complement to the few books in print about Navajo weaving that give voice to the Dine' themselves, such as in "Weaving A World: Textiles and the Navajo Way of Seeing," by Roseann S. Willink and Paul G. Zolbrod, and in parts of "Woven by the Grandmothers: Nineteenth-Century Textiles from the National Museum of the American Indian," ed. by Eulalie H. Bonar. 1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. **challenge to read**By Jan Norvoldthe book was rather difficult to read and to maintain interest while reading. the author uses lots of obscure language, complicated sentence structure, grafts, and numbers to impress the readers. I was annoyed to have to keep looking up definitions in dictionary. it is more of a sociology text for sociologists than usable information for novice fans of Navajo textiles. the authors premise is that weavers have always been inadequately compensated for their work first by the post traders and now by investors who overvalue classic weavings at the expense of contemporary work.

Collected and highly valued all over the world, Navajo weaving has been the subject of many aesthetic and historic studies. Grounded in archival research and cultural and economic approaches, this new book situates Navajo weavers within the economic history of the Southwest and debunks the romantic stereotypes of weavers and traders that have dominated the literature. Beginning with an analysis of trader archives revealing that nearly all Navajo textiles were wholesaled by weight until the 1960s, M'Closkey scrutinizes the complex interactions among artists, dealers, collectors, and museum curators that have facilitated the explosion in value of those old weavings. She also examines the production of Mexican copies of Navajo-style rugs, which in recent years has combined with the market for pre-1950 textiles to diminish the demand for contemporary Navajo weavings. Navajo patterns, she points out, remain unprotected by copyright because traditional designs have been in the public domain for decades. Much of the exploitation M'Closkey delineates has been justified by the ethnographic classification of functional textiles as nonsacred crafts. But the author's conversations with Navajo weavers suggest that their motivations for weaving go far beyond economics. Weavers' feelings for hozho, the Navajo concept of harmonious beauty, encompass far more than any western concept of aesthetics. M'Closkey shows that the weavers' views of their work are marginalized when the work is treated as a collectible craft and culture is split from commodity. No one who studies, collects, sells, or enjoys Navajo textiles (either genuine or knock-offs) can ignore this book. Sure to be controversial, it will be important reading for anyone concerned with the merchandising of Indian art.

"It breaks new ground. . . "Swept Under the Rug" is a thought-provoking examination of a complex and challenging subject made even more interesting because of this book."From the PublisherDebunks the romanticist stereotyping of Navajo weavers and Reservation traders and situates weavers within the economic history of the southwest. From the Inside FlapDebunks the romanticist stereotyping of Navajo weavers and Reservation traders and situates weavers within the economic history of the southwest.