

THE POLITICS OF
SCHOLARSHIP AND
COLLECTING

Edited by Janet Catherine Berlo

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Janet Catherine Berlo

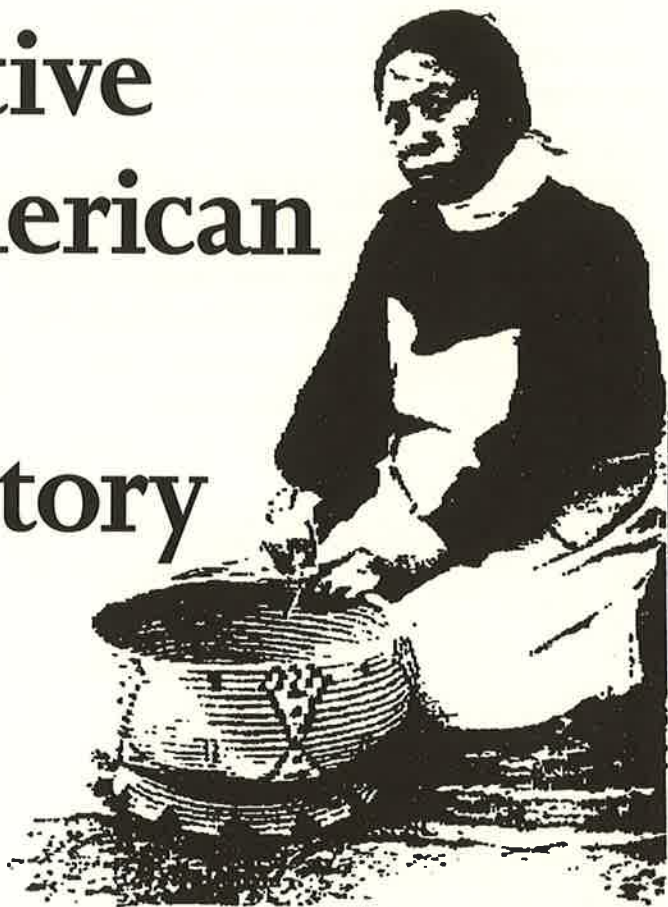
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The
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JANET CATHERINE BERLO

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INTRODUCTION

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF NATIVE

AMERICAN ART HISTORY

French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre once observed that "the social scientist and his 'object' form a couple, each one of which is to be interpreted by the other; the *relationship* between them must be itself interpreted as a moment of history" (Sartre 1963:72). In this volume, the 'objects' are literally that: the art objects of Native American cultures. The social scientists are those early anthropologists, museum curators, dealers, and collectors who sought to interpret and possess those objects. The multiple levels of understanding and misunderstanding, appropriation and reappropriation, that characterized these transactions are the focus of our study.

The period covered by the contributors to this volume extends from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to 1941: from the initial large-

scale collecting of American Indian art objects in the 1880s to the arrangement in a pivotal exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in 1941 of the objects that Frank Cushing, Franz Boas, Stewart Culin, and their successors collected. These years witnessed the first apotheosis of Native American art objects, from ethnographic curiosities to objects reified by their installation in America's premier institution of artistic modernism. Today, as part of a reassessment of method, paradigm, and scholarship in anthropology and the history of art,¹ such objects are undergoing a second apotheosis. As Sartre said that we must, we are examining them anew in order to understand the relationship between scholar and subject.

My object in this introduction is twofold: to pull together the various strands of the six essays that follow, and to provide a broader historical picture into which we might place the activities of Culin, Boas, O'Neale, d'Harnoncourt, and the other individuals whose work is examined by my colleagues. While the history of Native American art history remains to be written, this volume embarks upon the task. This essay is a prolegomenon to such an enterprise. Perforce incomplete, it sets the stage for future, more in-depth work. I do not provide an exhaustive coverage of the events of the early years of the study of Native American art, but rather a discussion of some major intellectual trends and contributions.

The Late Nineteenth Century: Laying the Groundwork

The second half of the nineteenth century was the period in which museums and institutions established their great ethnological collections. Only now, more than one hundred years later, are we beginning to come to terms with what this era reveals about the history of our cultural tastes as well as the history of anthropology. As several essays in this collection demonstrate, our constructs about what comprises Indian art were largely molded by these institutions and their collecting policies. Because several recent studies document these institutional histories, here I shall refer to them briefly, for this essay concerns not the history of collecting but the history of Native American art history.² The essays by Diana Fane, Ira Jacknis, and Aldona Jonaitis will consider aspects of institutional histories in more detail.

The Smithsonian Institution was established in 1846, the Peabody Museum at Harvard ten years later.³ In 1869, New York's American Museum of Natural History was established,⁴ and other regional institutions arose in the following decades. In 1879 the Bureau of American Ethnology at



Museum Shop

the Smithsonian sponsored the first large-scale collecting expedition to the Indian pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona. The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth formed the great era of collecting. Scholars, scientists, and entrepreneurs were all collecting bits and pieces of Native American heritage. Some acquisitions were factual—data on linguistics, religion, and social structure. Some were material—baskets, hide paintings, religious icons. For the past one hundred years these bits and pieces, facts and objects, have been arranged and rearranged in a changing mosaic in which we have constructed an image we claim represents Native American art and culture. We now realize that this image tells us at least as much about the collectors as it does about the materials collected.

It is important to understand that Cushing, Culin, Boas, and their contemporaries in the field were in search of the past as they collected both objects and information from Indian peoples. They sought out the “oldest” and the “most authentic.” They saw that Indian culture was in peril, and believed that they should save its vestiges for science. Diana Fane’s essay on Stewart Culin and The Brooklyn Museum considers the scholarly and ethical implications of this “salvage paradigm.” As we only now realize, the collectors’ actions had complex ramifications for the societies they studied.

Ironically, such actions both “preserved” and “destroyed” the “past” (all these terms, of course, must be recognized as relational, judgmental, and approximate). Of the “scramble for Northwest Coast artifacts” between 1875 and 1929, Douglas Cole reports, “By the time it ended there was more Kwakiutl material in Milwaukee than in Mamalillikulla, more Salish pieces in Cambridge than Comox. The city of Washington contained more Northwest Coast material than the state of Washington and New York City probably housed more British Columbia material than British Columbia herself” (1985:286). The Smithsonian’s taking of 6,500 pots out of Zuni and Acoma within six years (1880–85) destabilized pottery making traditions, as design sources were removed from the pueblos (Batkin 1987:30). By the time of Ruth Bunzel’s fieldwork at Zuni in 1924, the “stagnation and inferiority” of the pottery was evident (Bunzel 1929:5). On the other hand, Franz Boas’s meticulous recording of ceremonies, myths, language, and art forms in the Pacific Northwest has left a rich legacy that Northwest Coast peoples actively mine today as they reinterpret or revive aspects of their cultures.

One problem confronting modern scholars as we deal with the vast

amounts of material and information collected in the great age of museum-sponsored field research by the Smithsonian, the American Museum of Natural History, the Field Museum in Chicago, the Peabody Museum at Harvard, and other institutions is that the pieces housed in their storerooms have become canonical objects. We have too often treated them as the "authentic" American Indian art, rather than recognizing that each derives from a particular historical moment in a long and changing history of Native American art. As Jonathan King has observed in his critique of the canon of "tradition" (1986:70):

Most of the principal North American collections of Indian artifacts were created between 1860 and 1930, in large museums in eastern and central North America. It is inevitable, therefore, that most of the standards by which traditionalism in Indian art is judged depend upon these collections for purposes of definition and comparison. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, saw enormous upheaval in Indian North America. . . . And ironically, this was the peak period of collecting. As a result, the most traumatic period in Native American history has provided the material basis for the definition of what is traditional and what is not. Basketry, bead costume, and carving from this time exist in such large quantities that they are used as a general, though often unstated, yardstick by which the unconscious standards of traditionalism are set.

King goes on to discuss the fallacy of creating the "ideal type" by which the art of particular cultures is recognized. The essays in this volume demonstrate the various ways in which our predecessors created ideal "types" or canons for particular art forms; in some cases, the "creation" of the canonical was quite literal.

Washoe basketry dealers Abe and Amy Cohn marketed Louisa Keyser (under the name Dat So La Lee) and her baskets as quintessentially Washoe, as Marvin Cohodas shows. Ironically, Louisa Keyser was a strikingly innovative artist. Although the Cohns marketed her *degikup* as a traditional Washoe basket shape, it was Louisa Keyser's own invention, and one that sparked the creativity of other Washoe basket makers (Cohodas 1986:207). For us, as well, it has come to typify Washoe basketry even though it is an invented tradition.

Stewart Culin, whom the Zuni nicknamed Inotai ("Old Things"), was relentless in his pursuit of the old and the sacred at Zuni. His longing for the old was so overwhelming that if the authentically old was unavailable,

replicas of old masks and figures would do. Diana Fane charts how such replicas became canonical objects in their own right.

Analogous processes were at work on the Northwest Coast as well. Haida artist Charles Edenshaw was highly individualistic in his artwork, yet Jonaitis relates in this volume that as a consequence of white patronage, "Edenshaw became a major force in the process of defining what Haida art was." This is precisely the role that Louisa Keyser played in regard to Washoe basketry. Like the replicas that Culin bought or commissioned from the Zuni, Charles Edenshaw's replicas of Haida sculpture "became the model for this art rather than simply models of it."

We can trace this process in other regions. When Smithsonian anthropologist James Mooney began work with the Kiowa in Oklahoma in 1891, he commissioned small-scale replicas of painted tipis. These were based on the memories of aged informants, for by that date only one painted tipi remained among the Kiowa (Ewers 1978:8). These miniature tipi models were exhibited at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, and later at the Smithsonian. Some of them, in turn, have been models for more recent recreations of Plains tipi painting (New 1973).

The miniaturization process, as Jonaitis observes, reduces a complex culture to a doll-like, controllable scale. We might consider Claude Lévi-Strauss's observations on miniaturization in art (1966:23): "By being quantitatively diminished, it seems to us qualitatively simplified. More exactly, this quantitative transposition extends and diversifies our power over a homologue of the thing, and by means of it the latter can be grasped, assessed, and apprehended at a glance." Moreover, he observes that miniatures are not "just projections or passive homologues of the object: they constitute a real experiment with it" (p. 24). Perhaps in these cases the anthropologist's true role as a sort of metatourist emerges; like the tourist, the anthropologist brings home a replica, a miniature, a simulacrum (see also MacCannell 1976).

The scholars who commissioned models and replicas of no longer extant "prime objects" sometimes ignored the contemporary arts being made by the people whose pasts they were busy salvaging. For example, Haida argillite carving, one of the most widespread Haida arts of the late nineteenth century, was for the most part spurned by anthropologists and other serious collectors of that era. Today, in contrast, we see it as an art that reveals much about the historical moment in which it was created, as well as the complex web of acculturations taking place in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵

Just as anthropologists commissioned replicas, Native artists also had reasons to replicate past artworks. The large-scale collecting craze for California basketry at the end of the nineteenth century prompted Indian artists to produce replicas of earlier baskets. The artists subtly changed the forms and designs of the prime objects, yet satisfied the collector's yen for the "traditional" (see Washburn 1984). As Washburn has analyzed, these innovative replicas often were part of the great collections given or sold to museums. Thus they, in turn, became the yardstick by which other objects were measured. As James Clifford reminds us, "art collecting and culture collecting now take place within a changing field of counterdiscourses, syncretisms, and reappropriations, originating both outside and inside 'the West'" (1988:236).

The turn of the century marked not only the age of great collections of objects but a time of outstanding collections of data as well. Many of the great ethnological studies from this era contain much useful information about art and its social uses. Judged by modern standards, few of them provide any sort of sophisticated analysis of the meanings of art. Yet works such as Matilda Coxe Stevenson's *The Zuni Indians* (1904), Franz Boas's *The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (1897a), and John Swanton's *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (1905) remain gold mines of information. During that era, scholarly research devoted solely to art was almost exclusively classificatory or descriptive in nature. Techniques and formal attributes were catalogued. Examples of this include Washington Matthews's pioneering study of Navajo weaving (1884) and Otis Mason's *Aboriginal American Basketry* (1904). Briefer contributions published in anthropological journals usually are factual or technical. Essays concerned with ideas, methods, or theory are few in number. William Henry Holmes's several essays on "Aboriginal art" deal with aspects of evolution in technique and the development of technological skills (1890, 1892a, 1892b).

Such studies were part of a larger scholarly discourse on art and anthropology. This discourse had two components: (1) an interest in the evolutionary history of ornamental forms, prominent in German art historical writing in the late nineteenth century,⁶ and (2) an offshoot of this, concentrating on the evolutionary histories of tribal arts. Works representative of the second component were the influential *Evolution in Art* (1895) by the British scholar A. C. Haddon, who had trained as a biologist, and German scholar Ernst Grosse's *The Beginnings of Art* (1897). For Haddon, a Darwinian evolutionary model of artistic development allowed him to seriate orna-

mental forms. For Grosse the idea of “technic forms,” or ornament derived through technique, was the key to understanding ethnographic art. With this topic of scholarly discussion in the air, it is evident why so many American scholars concerned themselves with technical issues, evolution in form, the “motor habits” of the artist, and similar matters.

It is against this background that Boas’s 1897 article “The Decorative Art of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast” emerges. This is a pivotal work in the history of Native American art. It stands virtually alone as an essay that takes up issues of iconography, representation, meaning, and abstraction in art. Evincing a highly sophisticated understanding of the range of options open to an artist in Northwest Coast society, Boas demonstrated that artists could juxtapose realism with abstraction. As Jonaitis has pointed out, Boas’s study served to dispute simplistic evolutionary approaches to artistic development (1988:208–10). But as we shall see, it remained for his students to take the leap into studies of artists as individuals within Native American societies.

Merchants and Collectors

Concurrent with the establishment of great institutional collections of American Indian art and scholarly research on such topics, there was a rise in interest in American Indian art on the part of traders and private individuals. There was, of course, no clear-cut dividing line between the two worlds, for a number of important early studies were written by individuals who were not scholars, and many privately amassed collections were sold to institutions. A thread of popular or amateur interest has always run through studies of American Indian art, and middlemen have sometimes had key roles to play.

George Wharton James, for example, was not a scholar, but a collector and popular writer on American Indian topics. His *Indian Basketry* (1901) sold more than 10,000 copies during its first year of publication (Arreola 1986:14). The book helped fuel the collecting craze, as did his later work on Navajo weaving, *Indian Blankets and Their Makers* (1914).

The role of merchants or middlemen varied considerably from region to region and from decade to decade. Their effects on Native art production, technique, style, and iconography are still being charted. As Wade and McChesney have shown (1980:9,75–88), the trader Thomas Keam encouraged Hopi potters in the 1880s and 1890s to mass-produce their wares for tourist consumption. Keam was responsible for the introduc-

tion of new styles, the painting of Kachina figures on ceramics, and the reproduction of ancient pottery wares. The influence of the trader on the development of Navajo textile arts has been well documented by Rodee (1981). Traders C. N. Cotton, J. B. Moore, and Lorenzo Hubbell were directly responsible for changes in Navajo weaving because of their interest in Turkish carpet pattern types, their influence on the weavers' dye and yarn choices, and their concern with having prototype designs available for the Navajo weaver to examine.

Marketing decisions were almost always behind such actions. Marvin Cohodas's essay in this volume on the marketing of Washoe basketry demonstrates the extremes to which such marketing strategies could be taken. He shows how the history and "documentation" of Louisa Keyser's (Dat So La Lee's) baskets were frequently invented by Abe and Amy Cohn. Under their direction, the scholarly museum-style practice of numbering and tagging each basket with ethnographic documentation was subverted into a fiction whose only purpose was to increase sales and raise prices. Yet such fictions, once promulgated, rapidly became part of the corpus of knowledge about American Indian artists, as Cohodas demonstrates.

The financial stakes for the skilled trader or collector could be impressively high. One should not forget that at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, as now, American Indian art was big business. For example, the trader Thomas Keam amassed a collection of 2,400 examples of Hopi ceramics, from archaeological wares to modern commercial pots, which was purchased in 1892 by the Hemenway Expedition for \$10,000. It was later given to the Peabody Museum at Harvard (Wade and McChesney 1980:12). Navy officer George Emmons collected over 4,000 pieces of Tlingit art which were purchased by the American Museum of Natural History in several lots between 1888 and 1893 for a total of \$37,000 (Jonaitis 1988:87, 108, 112). Rodee reports that "in 1908, an otherwise slow, slightly depressed year for the national economy, [Navajo rug trader Lorenzo] Hubbell grossed \$45,000 in the rug business" (1981:67). As Cohodas relates, Abe Cohn sold one of Louisa Keyser's baskets for \$1,400 in 1914, and kept interest and prices high by constructing stories of having refused offers as high as \$2,500 for a single one of her works.

During these early years, it was the collectors who were interested in named artists, signed pieces, and the cult of the individual, because this fueled interest in the purchase of high-priced works. But it remained to

the scholars to plumb the real meaning of artistic individuality in Native American cultures.

Artistry and Individuality

Faint glimmers of scholarly interest in Native American artists as individuals can be found in Boas's 1897 essay "The Decorative Art of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast." This interest grew during the first two decades of the twentieth century, as individuality and art style emerged as concerns in Boasian circles. Ira Jacknis quotes from a letter to James Teit from Boas in 1909 about their ongoing basketry research: "I wish you could get from as many women as possible, quite accurately, just what designs they make, and also the critique of other women of their work." As Jacknis shows, Herman Haerberlin was the first one to take up this challenge. He, more than anyone else in the early years of this century, championed the study of the individual artist in tribal society. In his essay published posthumously in *American Anthropologist*, Haerberlin set forth the challenge (1918:263):

The only plea I wish to make is that we study the formal principles in primitive art by methods comparable to those applied in the esthetics of our own. We are likely to look on primitive art simply as an ethnographic element and to limit our study to its relations with the other elements of a cultural unit. This I have called the extensive line of research. By an intensive study of primitive art we become conscious of the essential identity of problems in primitive art and in our own. Surely both lines of study may become mutually helpful. The study of primitive art has the great advantage of an ethnological perspective in which the cultural relations, I mean borrowings, assimilations, specialization of cultural elements, are far more plastically outlined than they are in the history of our own art. On the other hand the esthetic study of our art is privileged by being able to become individualistic and biographical, so to say, thanks to the detailed documentary evidence bearing on its historical development. It is true that this may become an evil when the student is not able to look beyond the historical details and see the broad underlying principles of cultural relations. But in the study of primitive art it is just this biographical feature of the history of modern art that we need for stimulation.

Haeberlin's interest in these ideas is clearly evident in the jointly authored monograph he worked on, *Coiled Basketry in British Columbia and Surrounding Region* (1928), so thoroughly discussed by Jacknis in this volume. This was a model for the better known studies of artistry and individuality by Bunzel (1929), O'Neale (1932), and Reichard (1934, 1936, 1939a, 1939b) that followed. The publication dates of these studies make it appear that they cluster, suggesting a particularly cogent interest in the individual artist in the late 1920s. Yet Jacknis's discussion of the complicated and belated publication history of the Salish basketry monograph (as well as Haeberlin's 1918 essay, quoted above) demonstrates conclusively that Haeberlin's ideas had primacy. Haeberlin, at Boas's urging, was the first to grapple with the issue of the individual artist in society. Moreover, Boas suggested Haeberlin's work to Ruth Bunzel as a model for her ensuing work with Pueblo potters. Notably, Lila O'Neale reviewed *Coiled Basketry in British Columbia for American Anthropologist* (1930). As Margot Schevill points out in her essay, reading this monograph sparked O'Neale's interest in the viewpoint of the Native artist.

During the summers of 1924 and 1925, Columbia University graduate student Ruth Bunzel lived and worked with Native American potters at Zuni and other pueblos in New Mexico and Arizona. Her resulting monograph, *The Pueblo Potter* (1929), has long been held up as a standard in the study of artistry, individuality, and ethnoaesthetics. While issues of technique continued to be important in her work (as they had been for the previous generation), it is the interplay of individual creativity with style and technique that was the focus of her attention. Bunzel laid out the various design principles in pottery at Zuni, Acoma, Hopi, and San Ildefonso (pp. 13-48). She then turned to what she called "the personal element in design" (i.e., individual creativity), discussing sources for design, Native criticism of pottery styles, methods of instruction, and the range of variability in an individual's artistic repertory (pp. 49-68). Bunzel was the first to set forth principles of aesthetics in Pueblo arts, paving the way for recent attempts.⁷

In the summer of 1929, Lila O'Neale, a University of California graduate student, embarked on her trip to the Klamath River to study the basketry arts of Yurok-Karok women. Though a student of Alfred Kroeber's, she had intellectual interests more in line with her contemporaries at Columbia in New York than with her mentor at Berkeley (who had been Boas's first doctoral student).

Kroeber had a great interest in California Indians in general and in bas-

ketry in particular, as his own publications demonstrate.⁸ Yet his interest in art as art was slight. The very last line of his Pomo essay stresses the “tremendous predominance of unmotivated custom and habit over conscious, utilitarian, artistic, or religious purpose” (1909:249). Kroeber’s concern with motor habit and custom as the motivating currents in decorative arts was rooted in nineteenth-century European intellectual history, as I have already mentioned in discussing Haddon, Semper, and others. Kroeber was not interested in individual members of tribal society, artists or otherwise. In his 1915 article “Eighteen Professions” (in which he puts forth his key ideas about society), his sixth profession states: “the personal or individual has no value, save as illustration.”⁹ Yet the work of his student Lila O’Neale showed great sympathy for the role of the individual, and for individual as well as group aesthetic standards (1932). In her interviews with forty-seven basket makers, O’Neale covered much the same ground that Bunzel had with Pueblo potters. Both Bunzel and O’Neale pioneered the practice of eliciting native aesthetic standards through discussion of art objects (or photographs of such). Dorothy Washburn (n.d.:4) has pointed out that O’Neale’s discussions with her informants about design analysis of works of various tribes

pinpointed one of the central problems in ethnographic research: what is it in culture—specifically in aspects of material culture—which a people uses to differentiate themselves as an ethnic group from other ethnic groups? Much has been written about symbols and styles as ethnic markers, but little about whether it is the shape, color, motif configuration, etc., of the symbols that allows an informant to judge whether a given object is from their culture or not.

The weavers’ comments suggest that it is the proper configuration of motifs that signals a local rather than a foreign design, a correct one rather than an incorrectly composed one (p. 5).

The methods of Bunzel and O’Neale were to become paradigmatic for more recent generations of scholars of ethnographic art.¹⁰ Curiously, Bunzel’s and O’Neale’s monographs, which today we consider pivotal works in the history of Native American art studies, were not reviewed in *American Anthropologist* when they were published.¹¹

The work of Gladys Reichard, another Boas student, further elucidated the role of the artist in traditional society. The development of her interest in these topics can be traced in two articles she wrote early in her career. In one, she addresses the issue of artistic play and variation in the techni-

cally repetitive art forms of beadwork and embroidery (1922). In another, she cites the influence of Haerberlin and Bunzel on her own thinking and stresses the importance of the individual in determining stylistic and technological change (1928:460–61). Reichard's own fieldwork on art focused on the weaver and sand painter in Navajo society. Reichard's three volumes on Navajo weaving (1934, 1936, 1939a) were written for a popular audience. While they shed light on many aspects of Navajo culture, they are especially instructive for their focus on several individual weavers and their lives. Reichard is not the omniscient narrator in these studies, but the neophyte participant-observer, learning from Navajo experts how to weave. Charles Amsden, in his review of *Navajo Shepherd and Weaver*, wrote (1938:725):

Dr. Reichard is the sixth person to make a major contribution (quantitatively speaking) to this general topic. Matthews, Hollister, Pepper, James, Amsden, preceded her; each doing what he considered a pretty comprehensive study. They, being men, almost necessarily wrote as observers of this feminine craft, and their writings have the weakness, the omissions, of the by-stander's version of what happened. Dr. Reichard, a woman, first of all learned how to weave, then wrote about it as a weaver. We have long known how Navaho weaving looks; now, thanks to her, we know how it feels. She writes of the labor, the errors and frustrations and minor triumphs that lie behind the finished product on which her male predecessors fixed their admiring eyes.

Reichard's volumes on sand painting (1939b; Newcomb and Reichard 1937) place this medicinal and artistic tradition within the larger framework of Navajo religion. Yet in these studies the individual artist still has his place. The 1937 volume includes chapters on "Painters and Painting," "Artistic Devices," and "Composition." In the 1939 study, one chapter is devoted to the sand painter and chanter Miguelito and another to the idea of artistry in general.¹² Soon after the important works by Bunzel, O'Neale, and Reichard were published, the study of art and individuality fell out of favor in anthropology, and attention turned to other issues.

The Aesthetic Appropriation of Indian Art

The serious interest in ethnoaesthetics, individual creativity, and artistic motivation on the part of scholars such as Bunzel,

O'Neale, and Reichard arose concurrently with the larger public interest in Indian art in general and individual Indian artists in particular. The interrelations between the scholarly anthropological sphere and the general, artistic one remain unclear. A thorough study of the early twentieth century and its ethos is sorely needed; such an analysis would shed light on the complex uses to which American Indian arts have been put by white society in this century. Here I shall mention only a few strands of this complex cultural fabric. Others are taken up by Fane and Rushing in their essays.

The twenty-five-year period before 1941 was an era in which the history of the marketing of Indian art and artists was intertwined with the history of the concentration of these arts in art museums and galleries—an appropriation that Jackson Rushing has called the aestheticization of Native American art. The greater visibility given to Native arts and artists led to a heightened interest in Native American art on the part of modern artists as well as the general public. These events were somewhat separate from the scholarly work on American Indian artists just discussed.

I have already mentioned the very early mythologizing of the Washoe basket maker Louisa Keyser, analyzed by Marvin Cohodas in his essay. While many aspects of this process were total fiction, it fed an interest in the personality of the “real” Indian artist. By the 1920s, San Ildefonso potter Maria Martinez was signing her pots and those of some of her colleagues in response to the demands of the Anglo marketplace (Marriott 1948:227–35); others soon followed suit. J.J. Brody has documented the rise of a tradition of signed paintings in the Pueblo area and in Oklahoma during this era (Brody 1971: chapters 3–5). As Jackson Rushing points out, one of the purposes of the Museum of Modern Art exhibit in 1941 was to show that American Indian art was a living tradition; signed works by contemporary painters such as Fred Kabotie and Oscar Howe were featured in the show.

Yet these artists had received recognition in the art world prior to the MOMA show. In 1931 the “Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts” in New York featured such paintings as well. Its catalogue (Sloan and La Farge 1931) included an essay by Alice Corbin Henderson on “Modern Indian Painting” in which works by Fred Kabotie and Awa Tsireh were illustrated. Ten years earlier, the periodical *Art and Archaeology* had published an article on “Native American Artists” (Hewett 1922) which featured paintings by these same two young painters. These paintings were concurrently exhibited by the Society of Independent Artists in New York (Hewett 1922:109).

Art and Archaeology was a monthly magazine endeavoring to provide a popular yet intelligent view of art from all places and eras. During its two decades of publication (1915–34), articles on modern art were published next to articles on America's archaeological treasures. From Pompeii to Pueblo pottery, from Corinth to Chichen Itza, world art was presented in serious and egalitarian fashion. In addition to the article on Kaboutie and Tsireh, *Art and Archaeology* included ones on the Southwest Indian Fair and Pueblo pottery (Chapman 1925, 1927) and Navajo sand painting and weaving (Overholt 1933; Arnold 1929).

During these same years, the encyclopedic survey books of art history began to cover non-European arts, including North American Indian art. This trend started in Europe. Eli Faure's *Histoire de l'art* (1909–21) includes Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. The highly respected Propylaen Kunstgeschichte published von Sydow's expert *Die Kunst der Natur-Völker und der Vorzeit* (1923) in its series. By 1926, the American author Helen Gardner had joined the movement to include "primitive" art in art history survey texts. Her influential *Art Through the Ages* (1926) not only has a chapter on "aboriginal American art" but declares in the first sentence of the preface (p. iii) her commitment to a global approach to art history: "The purpose of this book is to introduce the reader to certain phases of art—architecture, painting, sculpture, and the minor arts—from the remote days of the glacial age in Europe, through the successive civilizations of the Near East, Europe, America, and the Orient to the twentieth century." Thus the aestheticization of Native American art that was taking place in the museum world (so thoroughly documented by Rushing's essay in this volume) was part of a larger movement encompassing every level of the art world—museum exhibits, popular interest in Native American art, interest in Native art on the part of avant-garde artists.

Even before the pivotal MOMA exhibit in 1941, many modern artists, in both the United States and Europe, not only were aware of Indian art but were avid students and collectors of it. Georgia O'Keeffe began her sojourns to New Mexico in 1929, and by 1930 her work exhibited at *An American Place* in New York showed dramatic evidence of her new southwestern interests (Lisle 1980:187). By the time of O'Keeffe's arrival, Taos had long been a mecca for artists interested in the Indian heritage (see Eldredge et al. 1986).

In the 1920s, Surrealist artists in Europe were especially drawn to Alaskan Eskimo and Northwest Coast masks, and incorporated some of these

forms in their own paintings (Cowling 1978:486). By the time such material was exhibited in the Galerie Surrealiste in 1927, several of the artists were already familiar with ethnographic collections in Berlin and London. Moreover, many of them owned copies of the profusely illustrated Bureau of American Ethnology annual reports and used them as source material for their own art (Cowling 1978:487). A number of Surrealist exiles arrived in New York in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The 1941 MOMA show, as well as the great collections of the American Museum of Natural History, the Museum of the American Indian, and The Brooklyn Museum fed their interest. Indeed, in 1944, several Surrealist artists planned to collaborate on a book about Eskimo art, but no publisher could be found for such a project (Cowling 1978:494).

As Jonaitis has pointed out (1981), American Indian art served a Surrealist agenda in several ways. The Surrealists hungered for a sort of collective mythmaking, for a communion with the "totemic mind" (Paalen 1943:18). They celebrated such qualities in Northwest Coast and Eskimo art in particular. But once again, their writings and their interest in Native art represent a sort of parallel track to the more scholarly interest in American Indian art. And, as is evident in so many other instances discussed in this volume, they used Native arts to serve their own purposes.

Conclusion

James Clifford has proposed that modern ethnographic study is an "ethnography of conjunctures," in which culture is "not a tradition to be saved, but an assembled code of artifacts always susceptible to critical and creative recombination" (1988:9-12). All of the contributors to this volume examine various "assembled codes of artifacts." Analyzing the diverse ambitions and approaches of Culin, Boas, Swanton, Haeberlin, O'Neale, Abe and Amy Cohn, and René d'Harnoncourt, we see the history of American Indian art history in terms of shifting truths, falsehoods, appropriations, scholarly formulations, and public responses—different conjunctures for different historical moments.

In our own historical moment, we too continue to try to comprehend, apprehend, and display the arts of Native American peoples, both past and present. The last quarter of the twentieth century is clearly an era in which self-evaluation and a self-critical stance are central to the enterprise of encountering other cultures and their arts. Examination of motives,

premises, ideologies, and social agendas has never been stronger. Yet despite our best efforts, no doubt our truths will be critiqued as yet another layer of social fictions by successive generations of scholars.

NOTES

1. Among the most insightful of these critiques are Clifford (1988), Clifford and Marcus (1986), Alpers (1977), Fabian (1983), Werckmeister (1982), and Rees and Borzello (1988).
2. *Objects and Others*, a collection of essays edited by George Stocking (1985), discusses issues in the history of institutional collecting. Cole's *Captured Heritage* (1985) focuses on the collecting of Northwest Coast art in particular.
3. Curtis Hinsley has written on the history of both the Smithsonian Institution (1981) and the Peabody Museum (1985).
4. For a brief overview of the history of that institution and a thorough examination of the history of the Northwest Coast collections there, see Jonaitis (1988).
5. Barbeau was the first to look at argillite carving in depth (1953, 1957). For recent studies of Haida argillite carving, see Wright (1985) and Sheehan (1981).
6. See Gottfried Semper (1878-79) and Alois Riegl (1901-23), two of the most influential of these writers.
7. For a recent study of Pueblo pottery focusing on individual potters, see Trimble (1987); on Zuni pottery, see Hardin (1983). For a sophisticated analysis of Zuni aesthetics in art and performance, see Tedlock (1984). For a critique of Bunzel's premises, see Hardin (n.d.).
8. See, for example, the impressive but incomplete list of his publications in the bibliography of the California volume of the *Handbook of North American Indians* (Heizer 1978:746-47), as well as Kroeber (1905, 1909, 1924).
9. Eric Wolf has criticized Kroeber's linguistic studies for their indifference both to meaning and to the individual: in Kroeber's work "there are, in fact, no people" (Wolf 1981:57). In an unpublished essay on Kroeber and Pomo basketry, Bruce Bernstein criticizes Kroeber for limiting his interests to issues of design and technology and for having forced a diverse body of material into a neat yet artificial tribal construct (Bernstein, n.d.).
10. In Africa, in particular, interest in the individual artist and native exegesis became current in the 1960s and 1970s. Robert Farris Thompson, for example, has been lauded for his work on Yoruba sculptors and potters and their native categories for artistic criticism (1969, 1973). In this, he is clearly the heir of Haeberlin, Bunzel, and O'Neale. Their approach has become increasingly common, as volumes like Biebuyck's *Tradition and Creativity in Tribal Art* (1969), d'Azevedo's *The Traditional Artist in African Societies* (1973), and Barbara Johnson's *Four Dan Sculptors* (1986) attest.
11. *The Pueblo Potter* was reprinted as a Dover paperback in 1972 and remains in print.
12. Both sand painting volumes and *Navajo Shepherd and Weaver* (1936) were re-

printed as affordable Dover paperbacks in the 1970s, making them accessible to a new generation of students and artists. All are still in print.

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