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Reflexivity and Subjectivity in Early Native American Painting: A Critique of Perspectives on the Traditional Style

ELIZABETH A. NEWSOME

Since the publication of J. J. Brody's 1971 *Indian Painters and White Patrons*, a pioneering study on the rise of twentieth-century Native American painting, critical perspectives on the origins of this movement have focused almost exclusively on evaluating the primitivist beliefs of its patrons and their impact on works created in the Studio or Traditional style. With some important exceptions discussed below, elements of the subjectivity that the young Native American artists who originated this movement brought to their compositions remain beyond the breadth of these discussions, acknowledged principally through scattered observations. While the literature that has followed Brody's work has provided this area of study with an increasingly satisfying level of theoretical and contextual richness, an immersion in its discourses leaves the reader conscious of a great unspoken divide that separates those elements of causation and intentionality that they do and do not address. Aspects of the content, style, and even the medium of the watercolor paintings produced by Native painters in New Mexico and Oklahoma during the early twentieth century are rarely addressed with regard to the indigenous perspectives of the artists themselves. Instead, within a variety of analytical frameworks they are viewed as responses to their engagement with an assortment of well-intended but controlling patrons and promoters, including Indian Service teachers, anthropologists, and the prominent artistic and literary figures of the Taos and Santa Fe art colonies. While approaches that emphasize the importance of this relation offer valid paradigms for interpretation, the resulting picture is one-sided, implicitly suggesting that the characteristics of this art were solely determined by the nature of those interactions. Conspicuously missing is an exploration of reflexivity as it

Elizabeth A. Newsome is assistant professor of art history, theory, and criticism at the University of California, San Diego.

pertains both to the creative experience of the artist and the cultural viewpoint shared by the members of his or her tribal group. Scholarship has operated so far on the premise that this art served to communicate with one audience. The intention of this study is to suggest its relation to two others as well: the artist him- or herself, and his or her Native community.

Traditional style is a term that has been applied to a genre of painting that emerged between the end of the nineteenth century and the years preceding World War II, referring in different usages to the original movements that generated it and later developments of the style.[1] In this article, *Traditional painting* refers to the art of the first generations that recognized themselves as the originators of a new means of creative expression, regarded as such by the patrons and institutions that offered them support.[2] Therefore, my discussion begins with the earliest watercolors that are attributed to artists from the Pueblos of New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande, belonging to a period that extends from about 1900 to 1930. Its upper limit is marked by the time when the famous "Studio" at the Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS) was supervised by Dorothy Dunn, who founded the program in 1932 and remained its guiding force for the next five years. Dunn's influence is regarded as having fully realized the characteristics of the style, as well as assuring its widespread dissemination and commercial success. Young people from many tribes converged on Santa Fe seeking to study with Dunn, who offered the only official training program in the visual arts designed for Native Americans at that time. Many continued to practice the methods she advocated throughout their lives and encouraged the growth of a later phase of Traditional painting that still has considerable popularity today. However, since the problems that are at the heart of this study concern the emergence of this genre and the factors that influenced its growth, my chronology will be limited to its earlier era.

The roots of Traditional painting can be traced to several points of origin, for it is less the result of a single artistic development than the parallel growth and eventual synthesis of related styles. Its first coherent paintings were created almost simultaneously by artists who worked in separate locations and belonged to different tribes. Most were from the Tewa-speaking Pueblos in the vicinity of Santa Fe, including Alfredo Montoya, Crescencio Martinez, Awah Tsireh (Alfonso Roybal), and Julian Martinez, husband of the famous potter María of San Ildefonso. Fred Kabotie and Otis Polelonema were Hopi students whose interest in painting grew under the encouragement of Elizabeth DeHuff, whose husband, John DeHuff, was superintendent of the Santa Fe Indian School from 1918 to 1926. In Anadarko, Oklahoma, a group of five Kiowa high school students was encouraged to study art by Susan Ryan Peters, a field worker for the Kiowa Agency, and is credited with establishing the Plains version of the Traditional style. By 1918, painters from each of these schools had attracted the interest and patronage of influential Euro-American sponsors who publicized and encouraged their efforts. With its ethnographic institutions and leading artists, Santa Fe became a catalyst in bringing together the styles these artists originated and supplying their movement with visibility, momentum, and critical support.

The most frequent subjects of Traditional painting are ceremonial, with many examples illustrating the cycle of semi-sacred dances observed by the Hopi and New Mexico Pueblos that are open to public viewership. More esoteric ceremonials that may not be attended by those outside the community are rarely depicted in Traditional art.[3] The Pueblo works typically represent aspects of the complex line dances performed in each village's central plaza, rituals designed to reinforce a harmonious relationship with nature and the internal social balance of the tribe. Most of the works that date from 1917 to 1925 concern such religious themes, although the subsequent decade saw the growth of a style that was more secular and pictorial in concept. Genre subjects began to appear in Pueblo watercolors by 1925, establishing a precedent for the many scenes of nature and home and village life that would later be produced by Studio-trained artists. Earlier compositions generally situated either a single figure or rows of dancers against a blank, undifferentiated ground. Later works might include more complex figural groupings and stylized geometric motifs to suggest details of landscape and setting. The artists used outlines to define the contours of human, animal, and decorative forms, filling them with washes of uniform color. Shading to suggest the effects of light and shadow is absent from most compositions or used sparingly to create subtle three-dimensional effects. Depth and perspective were limited to occasional uses of overlapping and foreshortening, while the arrangement of elements in the picture plane served as the principal means for distinguishing between objects in the foreground and middle ground. The formal conventions of Traditional art deny or minimize illusionistic space, instead arranging forms distinguished by shape and color within a shallow pictorial zone.



Figure 1. *"Eleven Figures of the Animal Dancers" by Crescencio Martinez, circa 1917–1918. Watercolor on paper. SAR/MNM 24145/13.*

The works of one of its earliest practitioners illustrate the fundamental characteristics of Traditional painting, which in its finest examples achieve a graceful balance of abstract and naturalistic forms. "Eleven Figures of the Animal Dancers" by Crescencio Martinez (fig. 1), painted about 1917, represents one of the winter dances at San Ildefonso. The rite is performed to summon the larger game animals down from the mountains, ensuring a successful hunt and giving thanks for their sacrifice. Two processions of dancers traverse the upper and lower sectors of the page, aligned with a clear sense of balance and rhythmical form. Each is isolated by an even spacing, yet their placement generates a powerful visual cadence that simultaneously suggests and negates the motion of their dance. The figures are drawn using outlines that create the delicate contours of their torsos, limbs, and regalia, while color is applied in alternating patterns of bright and muted tones. Without reproducing the effects of light and shadow to model form, the figures' three-dimensional surfaces flatten out to complement the two-dimensional space they occupy. Yet their flatness is subtly contradicted by such details as the positioning of their arms and feet, which suggest pictorial depth, while their proportions and anatomical contours provide each figure with a strong sense of weight and mass. The stasis of their arrangement restrains the energy of their gestures, and the simplicity of the unpainted ground is offset by the fine detailing of their postures and regalia, which provide points of visual interest. Martinez's painting is a masterwork of harmonious composition, lively in its tension between opposite traits, orderly in its method for blending them to achieve an essential vision of ritual order. Such patterns of tension and harmony can be found in the best works of early Traditional painting, projections of a subjectivity that can be more deeply explored with respect to the artists' choices and their approach to representing the subjects they chose to illustrate.

The history of scholarship devoted to the formative years of this movement underscores a general problem in the study of Native American materials, rising from the objectification of its subject peoples by those who seek to interpret their expressive forms. Native American people and increasingly Native American scholars have called for the rejection of the deeply conditioned academic paradigms on which that method is based, to be replaced by approaches that permit self-disclosing, "Indian-centered" narratives to generate a new epistemology of historical knowledge.[4] It is a concern that Native American scholarship shares with the wider discourse on transculturated indigenous arts, an area of research stimulated by the global emergence of rapidly changing, acculturative areas of art production that have variously been called "ethnic," "tourist," or "Fourth World" arts. Researchers in this area also recognize the incongruities that have been perpetuated by consistently viewing the people they study as cultural "Others," screened through a filter of perceptions that remove them from the meaningful contexts of their own experience. Yet because the entire premise of their studies concerns the way these arts package Native identities for an external market, they have allowed for little examination of how those same objects may engage the self-knowledge of their creators. The study of early Traditional painting has been delimited by the barriers to addressing Native subjectivities in both of these

academic realms, suffering doubly from the methodological gaps to be found in each.

As a specific area of historical research, it has been profoundly shaped by the tendency of scholars to draw only on those textual sources authored by observers who stood outside Native American cultures. As critics have charged, these accounts frequently reveal more about the way those witnesses used the Native people they encountered as canvases for the projection of their own imaginations and ethnocentric ideologies than accurate depictions of Indian life. Thus, scholarship has lifted from its primary sources the inherent distances and biases they contain, failing, at the same time, to treat the media that engage the living experience and self-perception of Native American people as original materials of research. In short, as a number of Indian scholars aver, many researchers have elevated more secondary source materials—the sometimes questionable accounts of observers—to the status of their most primary sources, neglecting those which would offer them the most original evidence: narrative forms used to articulate Indian identity and experience.[5] To a large degree, this results from a privileging of textual sources (generally written by outsiders) over the types of oral expression that convey the nature of Indian realities; these oral narratives are important and they figure in the analysis I offer in this work. However, it also reflects a privileging of the written word over other key expressive forms that lend themselves to the account of collective and individual experience, including ceremonial performance, music, and the visual arts. In this study, I treat the paintings of the early Traditionalists as narrative sources that provide original insights into the perspectives of the artists and their engagement with concepts that belong within a culturally and artistically reflexive realm. I treat them as documents of intentionality and authoriality that are independent of and in some major ways contradictory to the written impressions gleaned from their patrons' accounts.

This approach departs not only from the prevailing historical method, but also from the mainstream of studies that rarely apply such questions to modern indigenous arts. Research in this area is still in its infancy in many respects, grappling with the most fundamental of methodological problems. These include matters of classification, for much work needs to be done to distinguish among acculturative art forms that do not easily accommodate the standard models of "tourist" and "ethnic" art. Some, like Traditional painting, require broader and less conventional modes of explanation. However, the most essential problem that confronts this area of study is the need to disengage itself from the long-standing influence that paradigms of "authenticity" have exerted on its development, shaping its discourses and methodological scope. Ironically, the limitations of its current perspectives are a result of the field having risen in reaction to the dominance of "aesthetic purity" as a criterion for subjecting Native materials to ethnographic analysis. The mission of anthropology and related disciplines to "rescue endangered authenticities" came under heavy fire in the mid-1980s and the intellectual history and practices associated with it have been the subject of a number of important deconstructive essays in recent years.[6] Yet in rejecting the legacy of neglect and

contempt toward acculturative art forms that were the product of salvage ethnology, the study of tourist art has inadvertently perpetuated some of its most firmly entrenched assumptions. Rather than challenging the belief that such hybrid forms of expression operate wholly beyond the producers' aesthetic and social domains, scholarship has extended its entire trajectory of research to proceed from that point of interpretation. Thus, its existence and theoretical potential have been predicated on explaining the extra-cultural dialogics of this art, inheriting from earlier scholarship a methodological blind spot concerning its significance closer to home.

This oversight is undoubtedly a product of the challenges to their subject area that scholars confronted in the 1970s and '80s, when the first wave of tourist-art studies mapped out the terrain for this research. To overcome resistance from established schools of thought, their work required a methodology that would offer an irrefutable basis for examining synthesis and commodification as issues for legitimate research. This was accomplished by highlighting the role that souvenirs and other transculturated art forms play as a medium for communication between societies, particularly in the encounter between indigenous and colonial populations. A series of important publications laid the groundwork for this point of view, including Brody's *Indian Painters and White Patrons,* Nelson Graburn's *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World* (1976), and Bennetta Jules-Rosette's *The Messages of Tourist Art: An African Semiotic System in Comparative Perspective* (1984). By exposing the cognitive transactions that accompany trade in indigenous art forms, these studies provided scholars with a means for using the visual arts to probe the conceptual conflicts and negotiations that take place between opposing societies. Tourist art, they argued, is shaped in form and content by the beliefs, expectations, and motivations of its producers and consumers, ultimately externalizing the tensions that fluctuate at their point of contact. The objects are responses to the way indigenous people are viewed, or perceive themselves to be viewed, by a powerful clientele of cultural Others, and may also reflect changes in the way they see themselves in relation to this group. Thus, a central concern of scholarship has been the impact that market forces and external perceptions produce on these works of art, because they gauge and influence the way indigenous people and the agents of Western change will interact. However, while this recognition has made tourist-art studies a leading theater for postcolonial research, their byproduct has been a general inattention to questions of artistic autonomy that influence the adaptation of new expressive forms, as well as self-referential functions that may be embedded within their range of significance and use.

Indian Painters and White Patrons, Brody's groundbreaking analysis of Traditional painting, exemplifies the difficulties inherent in both schools of research. One of the earliest and most influential ventures in tourist art studies, Brody's publication was the first to bring the history of Native American painting under serious art historical consideration. Subsequent treatments of this topic are greatly indebted to his effort to establish the history of the movement and criteria for delineating its stylistic development. However, the book is also a revealing case study in the dual pitfalls of applying an objectifying

methodology and the stubborn biases of authenticity to an important development in an indigenous art. One of the most unfortunate omissions of Brody's 1971 publication was its lack of original source material in the form of interviews with or first-person narratives by the artists and those in their communities who knew them best. Most of the artists who trained at the Studio were still alive and active at the time of Brody's writing, as were many of the first generation of "self-taught" Pueblo painters. At least one of the latter, Tonita Peña of San Ildefonso, left letters in the collections of the School of American Research that provide intriguing insights into the circumstances and motivations that informed her work. Fred Kabotie published an autobiography in 1977 (coauthored with William Belknap) that deals candidly with his long career as an artist and activist for Hopi political causes.[7] Others who did not leave autobiographical accounts, including studio alumni Allan Houser and Pablita Verlarde, emerge from the interviews conducted later in their lives as articulate spokesmen for the sources and meaning of their work. The arguments offered in *Indian Painters and White Patrons* suffer deeply from the lack of perspectives that discussions with these artists might have provided. However, Brody's archival research followed methods deemed fully acceptable at the time and, as discussed above, such practices are still normative today. It is to his credit that his recent publications on the topic do attempt to address something of the views and contributions of the artists, although his focus is still primarily on those of their Santa Fe sponsors.[8]

By developing an approach based solely on the patrons' points of view, Brody generated an analysis constrained by its reliance on coming to terms with their conduct toward Indian cultures. The individuals who involved themselves in controlling the exposure and development of Traditional painting left an extensive body of writings on the topic, including publications in *El Palacio,* the Museum of New Mexico journal, texts of their lectures and exhibition catalogues on the subject, historical and literary works, diaries, letters, and other writings of a personal nature. Their interests in the new art ranged from the scientific curiosity of Edgar L. Hewett, founding director of the Museum of New Mexico and the School of American Archaeology (now the School of American Research), one of the style's earliest proponents, to the brashly romantic views championed by many of the area's artistic and literary elite. Most of the latter were expatriates from New York and other urban areas of the East who had come west to experience New Mexico's invigorating climate and colorful Indian cultures. A good many were activists who campaigned to improve the social and economic conditions on the impoverished reservations they visited, and were involved in establishing organizations such as the Indian Arts Fund to promote the rehabilitation of Native cultures.

In addition to these gestures of philanthropy, many were influenced by trends in psychology, art, and social theory that associated Native American and other tribal societies with more primal states of mental and cultural existence. These ranged from Social Darwinism and the budding notions of Jungian analysis to the vogue for primitivism as an adjunct to the emergence of modern art. Among those who were outspoken advocates for such ideas were Mabel Dodge Luhan and Amelia Elizabeth White, leading patrons of the

arts, the painters Robert Henri and John Sloan, and literary modernists such as Alice Corbin Henderson and Mary Austin. In their view, the Southwest's Native peoples fit within a conception of the primitive that was mystical and utopian, an idealized part of humankind's vanishing past. They moved quickly to "rescue" what they deemed uniquely primitive in early Traditional painting, namely its abstract and non-illusionistic qualities, which they felt expressed a raw creative energy shared by the art of tribal cultures, children, and the insane. Directed by those ethnocentric goals, its patrons assumed a status with respect to the Traditional painters that was paternalistic and biased in its simultaneous glorification and denigration of Indian people and their art. Brody's essay effectively exposed the underpinnings of this intellectual racism; however, in doing so, his analysis took on the conceptual boundaries those biases dictated, treating the artists as representatives of a humbled, defeated populace, wholly dependent on capitulating to the stereotypes of their benefactors.

As a result, the book's methods became in themselves an extension of colonialism's discursive modes, generating a study that is strangely prejudicial and conflicted within itself. *Indian Painters and White Patrons* presents a deeply disturbing picture of the first fifty years of Native American painting; the artists are objectified in the extreme, with their actions removed from all contexts of enterprise or subjective intent. They continually appear as the passive recipients of influences that first destroyed the authenticity of their true identities and then replaced them with fictions that would prove equally destructive. Thus, they became the subjects of a doomed enterprise, constantly defeated by their inability to rise above the limits forced on them by their supporters and the market they evolved. The content of their art, Brody contended, embodied not indigenous realities but the aspects of Indian cultures that their patrons found most exotic: ritual dances, scenes of pottery making, and idyllic views of tribal life. Their style also reinforced a kind of passive Uncle Tomism that accommodated their patrons' desires for an art that arose from the depths of racial memory. The book's conclusions implicated the artists in a strange brand of complicity with the fictions embraced by their clientele, a willingness to collaborate in the misrepresentation of their own societies fueled by poverty, discrimination, and the erosion of traditional values. As the following quote indicates, Brody viewed Traditional painting, along with earlier experimental works on paper, as aberrations that reflect little more than Native American dependence on the manipulations and rewards of an external market.

> The role of the Indian artist has been primarily that of a performer, working from a script written by Whites. Early manifestations of easel painting such as the secular Navajo pictures of the turn of the century, Plains Indian ledger-book drawings, or the Hopi paintings commissioned by Fewkes were more or less isolated events. In no case did they fill a clearly defined social, psychic, or economic role within the Indian communities, and they were often met by negative reactions from other Indians. Painting on a sustained basis began only after a

> market for it had developed among elements of the White community living in and around Santa Fe, New Mexico. To the Indians its economic function was paramount, with psychic considerations counting for little and social functions not at all.[9]

Although Brody's intention was to liberate Indian painting from the influence of such stereotypes, the result was precisely what the proponents of "Indian-centered history" have repeatedly decried: narratives in which Indians are neither subjects nor agents of the events that concern them, but function merely as the receptors of colonial interventions. Angela Cavender Wilson has aptly labeled this kind of scholarship "non-Indian perceptions of Indian history," a style that contrasts with "Indian history" as an account that deals equitably with Native experience and perspectives as the other half of its theoretical equation.[10]

The study's second methodological minefield lay in the deeply divisive struggle then taking place between different camps of artists, institutions, and patrons to secure the definition of authenticity for their favored artistic styles. Brody's research took place in an atmosphere of intense rivalry between the supporters of Traditional painting and those striving to establish a market and institutional presence for artists working in a new set of formal and conceptual modes. Painters whose styles incorporated references to Cubism, Pop Art, or Abstract Expressionism faced considerable obstacles to showing and selling their work. Paramount among these were accusations of selling out their ethnic identities by creating works indistinguishable from those of non-Indian artists. Their defense lay in asserting allegiance to the objectives of art as they are defined in contemporary practice: a commitment to explore the interpretive possibilities of the medium through experimentation with its formal qualities and intensely subjective, personal approaches to meaning. In their view, it was the practitioners of the older, Traditional style who had betrayed the artistic goals of self-expression, failing to develop new ways of applying themselves to the problems of painting and creating images that had little relevance to the modern concerns of Indian people. As these oppositions played themselves out, Native American artists on both sides found themselves positioned between untenable extremes, required to choose between tradition and self-expression, between tribal and individual identities, between being an artist and being an Indian. The critical response that rose from the world of museums, collectors, dealers, and academics offered little help, for whether they were charged with betraying their ethnicities or painting clichés, the artists invariably failed to meet someone's criteria for authenticity, to be quite as Indian as others expected them to be. Mired amid these inconsistencies, the arguments that appear in *Indian Painters and White Patrons* generated a paradoxical tension that the study failed to resolve, stemming from Brody's attempt to authenticate the newer acculturative art forms by deauthenticating their precursors.

The impetus for this strategy lay in the concern that had come to be widely shared by the 1950s among museums, collectors, and many Indian artists that Traditional painting had grown repetitive and sterile, suppressing further

creative explorations. In their view, its production had become dominated by market interests and a system of institutional practices that contributed to a declining set of standards. As perhaps demonstrated in a more refined treatment in Brody's 1997 study of Pueblo painting, traders, curio dealers, and a clientele of conservative collectors gained increasing influence over the distribution of Indian painting after World War II.[11] Serving on the purchasing boards of museums and as jurors for competitive shows, they were instrumental in determining what works were sold or exhibited, and what stylistic features would be associated with the "Indianess" of Indian art. A key contention of many of Traditional painting's purists was that the style represented an extension, in only slightly modified form, of purely aboriginal concepts. More experimental works that responded to the criteria for originality and formal innovation rewarded in the mainstream art world were generally rejected for not looking Indian enough to suit jurors' expectations or market tastes.

Many Native Americans began to feel segregated from the wider community of artists, generating a crisis that led to several efforts at reform. These culminated with the Directions in Indian Art conference at the University of Arizona in 1959, convened to develop an educational program that would foster the development of more individualistic styles, which would presumably be more personally satisfying to the artists and attuned to the modern cultural and political concerns of Indian people. This initiative led to the founding in 1962 of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), established in Santa Fe on the grounds of the former Indian School. IAIA replaced the Studio, which had continued since 1937 under the direction of Géronima Cruz Montoya, a former Dorothy Dunn student. IAIA was substantially different from the Studio in its goals and artistic philosophy.[12] *Indian Painters and White Patrons* was written in some measure in support of this development, and reflects a political climate in which Traditional painting was associated with the assimilationist strategies of earlier Indian education and the "docile acceptance of government authority" by Native American people. Its arguments therefore are in part a response to the time when it was written, sympathetic to the tide of civil rights sentiment that led "angry young Indians" to reject a visual idiom they saw as the legacy of a subservient past.

One of the conceptual difficulties of this publication was Brody's projection of that point of view back into the distant past, such that whatever problems of marketing or stylistic stagnation may have offered cause for concern in the 1950s and '60s masked the true importance of the medium's adaptation by Native Americans in an earlier time. Denial of the style's linkage to reflexive meaning and purposes was critical to furthering this connection between present criticisms and its formative years, demonstrating that Traditional painting had originated as a commodity divorced from the cultural and aesthetic subjectivities of its makers. The book emphasized its alienation from the social contexts of traditional Native American art, which limited the use of painting to ritual or decorative purposes, with meanings and graphic conventions that adhered strictly to tribal norms. In these ancient pictorial traditions, content mattered more than form, reflecting the need for art to communicate socially prescribed messages to its own internal audience.

According to the tourist-art paradigm Brody deployed to explain Traditional painting, the reverse became true: form mattered more than content, providing a recognizable index of aboriginal authenticity for an audience incapable of comprehending its deeper cultural meanings. Brody's arguments identified clear distinctions between what he believed were the reemerging concerns with content and subjective expression found in the experiments of IAIA artists and features of Traditional painting that he found impersonal and formally prescriptive.

> Easel painting was a White medium; it was given to the Indians, and the result for fifty years was meek acceptance. Now the Indians have taken it. . . . Style selection is made in terms of subjective intent and once again the imperatives of content dictate formal appearance, only now content is determined by individuals rather than any homogeneous tribal group. The death of Indian painting is accompanied by the birth of Indian painters.[13]

The point of this discussion of *Indian Painters and White Patrons* is not so much to aim criticism at Brody's early scholarship as to probe a set of intellectual foundations that have had far-reaching effects on subsequent research. In fairness, his later publications have not maintained many of those earlier positions and instead establish important new precedents for research. The book realized an irony that is not unique in early studies of transculturated arts, having departed sufficiently from the notions of salvage scholarship to treat such objects as a subject for serious study, yet retaining assumptions about their function and authenticity that preclude them from receiving a full analysis. Similar conceptual underpinnings can be found in the study of other acculturative arts, and they form the basis for judgements that have continued to haunt the authors of later studies, either as an explicit subject for deconstruction or as a subtext that requires certain statements or positions. To extract those notions from their embeddedness in the structure of discourse is a pressing concern, both to permit their critical reassessment and to move beyond the boundaries they prescribe to consider other theoretical issues. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the study of modern Native American painting, which was colored from the outset by an influential set of assumptions: that its practice was associated solely with economic motives and ethnic self-negation; that it operated in a domain alienated from Native American culture; and that its pictorial qualities embody little more than the censorship of an external market. Certainly the patrons of Traditional painting took strong measures to enforce their tastes and expectations. Yet their involvement, however influential, is insufficient to explain the character of Traditional art. Reexamining the works themselves offers a point of departure for questioning conventional market-driven explanations, instead raising new questions that concern the cultural and cognitive contexts of their design.

One of the key arguments of *Indian Painters and White Patrons* was the assertion that the Plains and Southwest artists, having no prior pictorial tradition for representing their own cultures, simply lifted their templates from

the art of Euro-American painters who used Indian subjects to illustrate the scenic qualities of the West. A tradition of painting rooted in nineteenth-century Romanticism flourished among American painters on the frontier, and Brody argued that their treatment of Indian genre and ceremonial scenes provided the principal models for early Native American watercolor art.[14] Given the importance of this assertion, it is remarkable that later authors have not reexamined the relationship Brody suggested to determine what similarities or differences characterize the way art colony painters and the artists of the Traditional school depicted Native American subjects. It is this comparison that first attracted me to the problem of Native subjectivities because the affinities Brody argued cannot be verified by examining the works side by side. Instead, profound differences characterize the compositions painted by these two schools of artists, who, as Brody correctly indicates, were in close communication and well aware of one another's pictorial methods. It is the magnitude of these differences in artistic perspective that warrants a further exploration of the artists' engagements with their communities and their own creative processes as a source for the autonomy of their representations.



FIGURE 2. *"The Snake Dance" by Charles H. Carpenter, 1901. Photograph. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.*

The trio of images shown in figures 2 through 4 offer a particularly compelling example of the radically different choices and interpretations that Native American artists and the painters of the American West applied to representing the same subject. The first of these images, shown in figure 2, is a photograph by Charles H. Carpenter of a Snake Dance ceremonial performed at Hopi in 1901. It exemplifies a tradition of ethnographic photography that developed in the Southwest alongside and in support of anthropological study of the region's ruins and modern Indian cultures. Such images were popular and influential, for reproductions were sold in local tourist shops, published in national magazines, and used by the railroads to promote tourism to the Southwest. They also provided an important inventory of source materials for the academically trained painters who began to immigrate to New Mexico in the late 1890s, settling in the Taos area and founding the Taos Society of Artists. The painting that appears in figure 3, by E. Irving Couse, was clearly modeled on Carpenter's photograph and is based on the artist's observation of a Snake Dance conducted in 1903. Such paintings by Couse and others of the Taos colony were also widely known, for they were reproduced as calendar art and illustrations for railway brochures. The pictorial devices that Carpenter and Couse utilize in their respective images are consistent with the general modes for representing rustic and exotic subjects that were shared among painters and photographers in that period. Elements such as the framing of the images, the treatment of atmosphere and value contrast, the grouping of figures, the low vantage point, and the scale of the lead dancers attest to specific attitudes and styles of viewership that have no parallels in the painting shown in figure 4. This watercolor, painted by Fred Kabotie about 1926, presents a dramatically different vision of the same event, illustrated from the viewpoint of an artist culturally associated with the ritual performance it represents. Kabotie's painting contrasts sharply in mood, organization, and observational perspective from the two works shown in figures 2 and 3. The wide circulation of such images makes it likely that Kabotie would have known of these or similar works. His own treatment of this subject, however, could not be more dissimilar and underscores a deep level of cultural and artistic autonomy within his aesthetic process.

In both the Carpenter and Couse images, the scene is illustrated from a particularly low vantage point so that the action zooms in on a pair of dancers who dominate the foreground of the picture plane. These two figures are centralized in the composition by both their position near its lower midpoint and their scale with respect to the procession of dancers that recedes behind them. The photograph's character is documentary and objectifying, offering a descriptive treatment of the rite's setting, participants, and ethnographic details. However, certain compositional choices, such as its immediacy to the lead dancers, low vanishing point, and juxtaposition of the viewers seated on the Pueblo walls generate a powerful sense of spectacle that saturates the viewer's perception of the event. These features also serve to call attention to the aspect of this ritual that soon made it a subject of intense and morbid fascination for tourists: the handling of snakes by the dancers, who perform at certain points with live reptiles in their mouths.



FIGURE 3. *"Moki Snake Dance" by E. Irving Couse, 1904. Oil on canvas. Anschutz Collection.*

The painting E. Irving Couse extrapolated from this image obscures its historicizing and ethnographic features, and at the same time adds embellishments that belonged to the artistic traditions of his training. His image draws the compositional focus even closer to the lead dancers, who, from this distance, move into an uncomfortable proximity for the Western observer. This nearness to the object of Couse's spectacle provides the viewer's experience with a certain shock value, as it brings the dancers' painted faces, grimacing expressions, and shuffling bodies within a somewhat threatening perceptual space. The flailing snake in the right-hand dancer's mouth and the additional swarm of serpents that writhe in the dust behind him, under the feet of men whose dark bodies become virtually indistinct, are enough to send a chill down the spine of any squeamish observer. To some degree, Couse has removed the ethnographic detail that characterizes the Carpenter photo, blurring the edges of the Pueblo buildings and crowds of observers into hazy impressions that seem removed from the specificity of historical time. The dancers merge as well into a dark atmosphere that seems to render them the living shadows of a primordial past, trapped within the claustrophobic space of a plaza filled with sweating bodies and swirling dust.

It is possible to situate Couse's interpretation of this scene within the context of his artistic training and the intellectual currents that shaped views of indigenous people in his time. His painting shares with the Carpenter photo a long tradition of Western art that steeped both its own antiquity and the practices of non-Western cultures in a fascination with spectacle, especially those ritual performances that were deemed to belong to pagan or primitive

religions. However, his enhancements to the ethnographic image pertain to certain conventions of the academic tradition in which he was educated, cued to genres of allegorical painting that were taught in Europe, and exhibited in its academic salons from the Romantic era to the turn of the twentieth century. In addition to his studies at the Art Institute of Chicago and New York's National Academy of Design, Couse traveled to Paris in the late 1880s, as did many American painters of his generation. There he spent five years at the Academie Julian (1886–1891) and he may have briefly attended the Ecole des Beaux-Art as well (1888). His primary mentor at the former was William-Adolphe Bouguereau, whose own works of allegorical painting, couched in historical and mythological subjects, were considered a reigning standard of didactic and technical mastery.

Meritorious art of the European salons aspired to be more than illustrative. Its content was to be moralizing, using mythological or historical subjects to express certain values or universal truths. Imagery drawn from classical mythology provided the primary vehicle for such purposes, although painters often infused their historical subjects with mythic overtones to further such messages. Increasingly, artists of the period turned to non-Western subjects to frame allegories that contrasted civilization with barbarism, virtue with vice, and urbanization with the simplicity of rural life. Many traveled to North Africa and Turkey, where Oriental cultures provided much of the grist for their fascination with primitive people and faraway lands. For some, European folk cultures became the subject of representations that sought to discover primal values in rustic ways of life. The painters of Taos and Santa Fe eagerly embraced the opportunity to represent the Native and Hispanic cultures of the region as an alternative to the European tropes of Orientalism, genre, and mytho-historical painting. However, the habits of their education served to invest these subjects with many of the same underlying concepts as those that flourished in the works of their European counterparts. Among their similarities are the means by which both schools removed their subjects from the particularities of a historical setting. By blurring the historical details of the Snake Dance performance, for example, Couse removes it from time, transforming the immediacy of its human action into something akin to the hazy mythological landscapes of Bouguereau's allegorical school.

The dark atmosphere with its emphasis on earthy flesh tones, dusky backgrounds, and areas of dim illumination are not uncommon in the rustic idylls painted by Couse's master and his contemporaries, scenes that featured figures from Classical mythology, or views of European peasant life. However, the darkness and obscurity of Couse's treatment, his somewhat crude portrayal of the dancers' faces, costumes, and gestures, and his emphasis on snakes and human figures merging in the dust combine to suggest something else as well. They imply an intention to frame this painting as a universalizing statement, a strategy that pertains to the allegorical method but is also informed by emerging modernist views of indigenous societies as the living relics of a primordial past. Couse's image treats the Hopi Snake Dance as a manifestation of the dark mysteries of the mind, an outlet for the raw energy of the human imagination and creative spirit that European modernists were

then exploring through the abstract qualities of African, Oceanic, and Native American art. Couse himself was not as attuned to the emergence of European modernism as the generation of painters who would succeed the Taos Society of Artists, those individuals like Robert Henri and John Sloan who became pioneers of the avante-garde community in Santa Fe. However, like most of the Taos painters, he had begun to embrace some of the fundamental tenets of its intellectual, if not artistic, directions. Prominent among the currents that were influential in the growth of modernist philosophies were the theories of Rudolf Steiner, Henri Bergson, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung, who saw in the lifeways and religious practices of tribal societies the universal workings of the unconscious mind. In Couse's "Moki Snake Dance," the performance of this profoundly sacred rite designed to promote rainmaking and community well-being appears like a revelation of that psychological realm, at once creative, fertile, and terrifying, a reminder of humankind's more instinctual past.

For artists who inherited the lingering influence of Romanticism, images that evoked this peculiar mixture of wonder, terror, and awe recalled the terms of Edmund Burke's aesthetic philosophy, which delineated art and its experiences into the two contrasted categories of the picturesque and the sublime. These categories, assimilated into the academicism of Couse's generation and the modernist cult of primitivism, were certainly paramount in the representations of Indian subjects by both the Taos and Santa Fe painters. Couse's painting of the Hopi Snake Dance echoes with the concepts and representational conventions that nineteenth-century European and American painters had used to evoke the qualities of existential power, terror, and fearsome beauty associated with the sublime, while the genre paintings executed by Couse and his contemporaries—scenes of Indian domestic life, craft activities, agriculture, and so forth—conformed to the charming and scenic qualities of the picturesque. Brody suggested that the quest to fulfill their patrons' demands for an Indian art that accommodated their interest in the picturesque fostered the growth of Traditional painting as a "timid art," unchallenging to the stereotypes and biases of its promoters and marketers and satisfying their requirements for a Romantic and unsophisticated representation of Indian societies. However, when we turn to figure 4, Fred Kabotie's representation of the Hopi Snake Dance, we can discover no visual elements that correspond to these or the other concepts so clearly exemplified by Couse's work. Neither sublime nor picturesque, neither romanticized nor treated as spectacle, Kabotie's painting proceeds from an entirely independent set of formal and observational criteria, reflecting a perspective that deeply engages the artist's self-knowledge and that of his society.

One of the most striking differences between Kabotie's work and that of Carpenter and Couse is its organization, which brings a structure of geometric clarity to the representation of the Snake Dance that is totally foreign to the other compositions. This rational approach pertains in some measure to the segment of the ritual Kabotie elected to represent. Carpenter appears to have taken his photograph at a stage in the performance when the snakes are first exposed to public view, portraying an event that Euro-American spectators

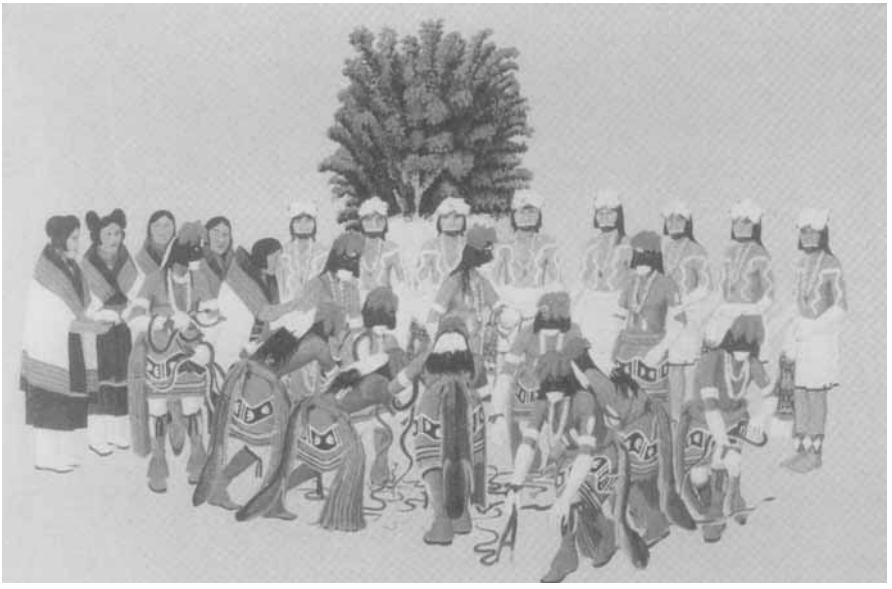


FIGURE 4. *"Tsu'ti (Second Mesa) or Tsu'tikive (Third Mesa) Snake Dance" by Fred Kabotie, circa 1926. Watercolor on paper. William and Leslie Van Ness Denman Collection (W-68.56.27).*

might have found the most shocking moment of the entire rite. The serpents, collected days earlier and cared for in the Snake Society Kiva, are housed on the day of the event in a ceremonial bower called the *kisi.* After a series of preparatory dances, chants, and ritual circuits through the plaza have been completed, the lead Snake Dancer enters the bower and emerges with the first reptile dangling between his teeth. As he begins his dance, which will circumscribe the courtyard once again, he is joined by a second dancer, who places his hand on the lead dancer's shoulder and uses a special feather-tipped wand to soothe the agitated snake. A third man follows to control the serpent when it is finally released, preventing it from escaping into the crowd. Other Snake Society participants follow, first completing a circuit of the plaza, and then dancing in independent groups. Couse appears to have added additional elements that evoke the subsequent phase, when, after all the dancers have joined the performance, as many as fifty to sixty snakes may fill the dance area. The scene he illustrates suggests chaos, as well as the viewer's uncomfortable sense of how close the creatures are to the spectators who line the plaza's edge. In their circuits of the courtyard, the dancers press close to the crowds who assemble along its walls. As early as the 1890s, the Snake Dance had already begun to attract throngs of visitors, whose eyewitness accounts emphasize the fascination and alarm with which they greeted this particular phase of the rite.

Kabotie's representation, however, focuses on a different stage of the ritual which represents the climax of the nine days of open and closed observances that are required to complete its full ceremonial cycle. It is a moment that underscores the dance's most significant religious purposes, and Kabotie

illustrates it with a composition that alludes to the profound reciprocity the Hopi perceive between their religious actions and the natural order. At the rite's conclusion, when all the serpents have been released, the chief Snake Society dancer sprinkles sacred cornmeal on the ground to form a large circular design. He then tosses cornmeal offerings from each of the six cardinal directions toward the circle's center, generating a ritual pattern that replicates the spatial geometry of the Hopi universe. These conceptions of unity and directional order provide the model for many aspects of Hopi sacred and secular life, influencing social organization, the divisions of the ritual calendar, and the individual's orientation with respect to family, community, and a richly conceived spiritual world. Other dancers then gather the snakes and place them in the circle, where women and girls will enter to bless and honor the animals by sprinkling them with meal. With this last step complete, the Snake Society members remove the reptiles and carry them away from the village along four paths, finally releasing them at certain shrines. There they will become messengers who convey the community's goodwill and prayers to the powerful spirits who dwell at each cardinal point. The rewards that follow a dance correctly performed are fertility, rain, and the well-being of the Hopi people, with benefits for all humankind.

The scene Kabotie portrays includes elements that suggest he intended to depict this pivotal moment of the performance. The Snake Society dancers, distinguished by their brown kilts and mask-like facial paint, gather in a tight circle that confines the mass of slithering snakes. Their kilts are decorated with undulating black and white bands, which serve as symbols for both serpents and lightning. Each wears a crown of red-dyed feathers and broad areas of black paint applied to his upper face contrast with the white zone that covers his mouth and chin. Several men bear serpents in their arms to deposit in the sacred ring, while two dancers in the foreground move to capture others that have begun to escape. Behind the Snake Society dancers stand a row of figures whose white feathers, kilts, and body paint identify them as members of the Antelope Kiva, who traditionally assist the Snake Society in this dance. Holding the rattles they use to provide accompaniment for the dancers, they appear before the *kisi*, the bower of cottonwood branches that serves as a shrine for the ceremony. In addition to providing a repository for the serpents, the bower's vegetative symbolism alludes to the revitalizing purpose of this performance. Unseen at its base is a pit dug in the floor of the plaza that symbolizes the *sipapu*, the place of emergence in Hopi accounts of cosmogenesis. A medium for communication between the living Hopi people and the ancestral spirits who will receive their prayers for healing, renewal, and rain, the *sipapu* reflects the ritual's vital role in linking the present and future to the generative wellsprings of their ancient past. A group of women clad in red and white mantas waits patiently toward the left side of the composition for their role in what will be the final gesture of the dance. Each holds a plaque of cornmeal, and the first to step forward has already entered the circle, scattering the offering toward the serpents at her feet.

By electing to represent this key moment of the Snake Dance performance, Kabotie not only has emphasized its most meaningful act, but has also

allowed the viewer to witness something of its inherent orderliness and solemn beauty. The circle formation brings the dancers and their attendants together in a gesture of cooperation that reflects the harmonious integration of individuals within the social collective, one of the most fundamental ethical precepts of Hopi life. Although Kabotie does not represent the spectators who would be present to behold the rite, his vantage point, which draws the observer within the picture plane, into the midst of the dancers' circle, introduces the understanding that this community embraces the observer as well. In contrast to the low horizon line that characterizes the Couse and Carpenter representations, Kabotie's vantage point is situated high, slightly above the dancers, permitting a panoramic view. This strategy not only permits the observer to fully comprehend the group's formation, but to assume something of the perspective enjoyed by the Hopi themselves, who generally view plaza dances from the rooftops of their homes. While Kabotie's image uses the dancers' centripetal action to draw attention to their unity, he also devotes special attention to their individual features of height, posture, gesture, and stance. Each assumes a balanced role in the composition that strikes harmony between individuation and belonging in the larger social unit, reflecting a concern for the parity between individual and society that is shared among all Pueblo groups. The murky atmosphere and obscure treatment of forms in the Couse representation give way in Kabotie's painting to a light, luminous palette of colors that suffuse the scene with radiance and call attention to its vivid contrasts between shades of red, white, black, and brown. This carefully harmonized color scheme is complemented by the clarity of the figures' forms, painted with exacting attention to their anatomical proportions and regalia.

The works of Carpenter, Couse, and Kabotie offer an exceptionally clear example of the way each artist's subjectivities guided his choice of visual form, resulting in images that evoke profoundly different emotional and intellectual responses. However, the disparities they illustrate are not unique; others can be discerned by comparing Traditional paintings to those by contemporary Taos and Santa Fe painters who represented the same events. Figure 5, for instance, can be contrasted with the Crescencio Martinez watercolor that appears in figure 1. "The Camofleurs," by Joseph A. Imhof, illustrates a Deer Dance at the Tewa pueblo of San Juan. Imhof worked primarily as a graphic artist and is best known as a lithographer whose prints were distributed commercially by Currier and Ives. While serving a series of apprenticeships in Europe, Imhof met Buffalo Bill Cody and sketched the Indian performers who were touring overseas with his Wild West Show. His interest in Native American subjects grew after he returned to the United States, and in 1907 he moved to Albuquerque to record the dance ceremonials of the Pueblo Indians. The painting shown in figure 5 may date to the period of Imhof's first residency in New Mexico, which lasted until 1912, although he returned to the region ten years later and settled permanently in Taos.

The animal dances of the Rio Grande Pueblos are ritualized dramatizations of the hunt, with animated pantomimes that imitate the animals' movements and gestures. Imhof's painting focuses on the theatrical aspect of these



FIGURE 4. *"The Camoufleurs" (San Juan Deer Dance) by Joseph A. Imhof, undated. Oil on canvas. Anschutz Collection.*

rites, isolating and enlarging a group of four dancers whose activities take place within a stage-like setting. His figures are expressive and dynamic; their heads twist and turn, and their eyes flash as they simulate the behavior of the wary deer. Each is poised on lightly moving feet, his weight resting on canes that substitute for the animal's forelegs. Imhof's study exhibits his interest in the tension of their performance, and in the skill that guides the dancers' complex interplay of weight and balance. The shadows that stretch beneath their feet, products of a strongly directional, off-stage lighting, enhance their sense of movement and the work's overall dramatic effect. Imhof's painting, like that of Couse, is framed in a visual language of spectacle, although its effect more closely approximates theater than the belief in a primal unconscious. It is possible that this quality in Imhof's work relates to his earlier exposure to the Wild West Show, in which Indian ceremonial performances were translated into staged forms of entertainment. In the work of Martinez, however, dramatic action is superceded by a strong compositional discipline that integrates the dancers' movements into a greater concern for overall pattern. This same rational, disciplined approach, this same ordering of events into a geometry that lends cohesion to group performance, characterizes Kabotie's treatment of ritual subjects as well. Compositional balance, harmony, symmetry, and emphasis on an enduring pattern for ceremonial action, one which is not confined by the particularities of a single setting or moment in time, are qualities that structure many works of the early Traditional school. The distinctions I have observed between the art of the Taos and Santa Fe painters and those of the area's Native American watercolorists go beyond, I believe, mere differences in the use of line, shading, depth, and other formal means.

I believe they reflect attitudes and perceptions structured by each artist's creative explorations of self-knowledge, and reflect subjectivities that are rooted in their cultural experience.

What explanations might logically account for the qualities of early Traditional painting that the comparisons above illustrate? One that finds substantial support in the artists' own statements is that they fulfilled a didactic purpose with respect to their Euro-American audiences. Brody and Penney and Roberts have remarked on this connection between the careful attention to ethnographic detail that characterizes the works of many self-taught painters and their desire to convey an accurate understanding of their cultural practices and values to non-Indian observers.[15] As some scholars have suggested, this approach may have involved a certain quiet activism on the artists' part, particularly viewed against the backdrop of federal actions that denounced and suppressed Native religious expression.[16] A kind of anthropological impetus may have also figured in their efforts to cultivate the external knowledge of their cultures, related in specific instances to works made in direct response to ethnographic commissions. As Penney and Roberts point out, a number of the most important early Pueblo watercolors were solicited by Edgar L. Hewett for the Museum of New Mexico collection. By applying the concept of autoethnography, a term Mary Louise Pratt has used to characterize certain indigenous texts, the authors offer particularly valuable insights into the kind of empathy that joined anthropologists and informants in their mutual venture to document and conserve Native cultures.[17] Certainly works devised for such a purpose addressed individuals who were informed, committed, and deeply interested in the details of Native American life, and it is logical that they would be revealing.

The observations these scholars have pursued with regard to the didactic functions of Pueblo watercolors signal a significant reversal in the direction of scholarship, including a departure from earlier pejorative judgements and a heightened sensitivity to Native American points of view. The advantage of their approach lies in offering some basis for viewing artists such as Kabotie, Awah Tsireh, Tonita Peña, and their contemporaries as engaged in a deliberate process of self-representation. However, they must also be recognized as a partial approach to explaining pictorial design that does not extend its depth of interpretation beyond the theoretical reflex of treating transcultural works purely as the products of external pressures. As Pratt defines autoethnography, it characterizes "those instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms [in this case, those of anthropology]."[18] Penney and Roberts further characterize the pictorial realization of this anthropological attitude as a "reflexive consciousness of the self in terms of the other."[19] Despite the growing tendency in transcultural studies to consciously reject the methodological template established by questions of authenticity, its influence is still deeply felt. Even those studies that pursue interpretations of cultural survival or incipient modernity often seem to respond to its lingering subtext, seeking redemptive valuations in the face of uncertainties over the impact that museums, collectors, and ethnographic practices have exerted on the autonomy of indigenous expression.

What is missing from these explanations, as from previous scholarship, is a methodology addressed toward examining how reflexive consciousness may operate with respect to its own array of cultural terms, how the self is defined with respect to its own values and ideals.

One potential means of correcting this problem is to examine the response which early Traditional painting evoked among its Native American viewers, who, as far as scholarship has been concerned, remain the least visible sector of its audience. There are substantial difficulties involved in any effort to uncover this element of viewership, including the nature of the contemporary records, which extensively document the agendas of the patrons but offer little information on Native American points of view. The passage of time likewise poses difficulties, for few of the artists who achieved notoriety in this period are still living today, and the recollections of those who knew them well sometimes rely on second-hand accounts and are tempered by time. A particularly relevant issue is the way that self-knowledge is construed in many Native American cultures, such that certain kinds of explication are not customary and levels of esoteric knowledge are maintained within appropriate, often exclusionary domains. Given this condition, there are many elements of Native response to paintings depicting ceremonial subjects which went unrecorded and undiscussed with outsiders at the time, and lie beyond the realm of ethical inquiry today.

Yet there are revealing facts to be found in certain accounts that date from the 1920s and '30s, as well as statements by the artists and their close associates recorded at a later time. What these suggest is that their attempts to develop the new medium in ways that simultaneously interfaced the external art world and the conditions of self-knowledge may have been more complex than previously presumed, with more varied and interesting results. It is clear that in most instances, the artists either produced their works with the intention of selling them to an external buyer or were willing to do so if presented the opportunity. However, a discrimination should be made between the market and a wider audience that also included family members, neighbors, tribal elders, Indian school classmates and other peers, as well as viewers who might see Traditional paintings at the various markets and fairs that had high levels of Native American attendance.[20] Traditional scholarly wisdom has held that community reaction to the new medium was overwhelmingly negative, for its negotiation of prescriptions regarding the representation of esoteric subjects often placed it in a precarious relationship to community ethics and epistemological values. Yet there is also evidence that it was accorded support and approbation in certain circumstances, that communities were knowledgeable and concerned about the way the art form would develop, and of instances when early Traditional works became folded into a strong fabric of family and community relations.

The numerous instances in which painters confronted criticism and sanctions for their work are well known to readers familiar with the movement's history.[21] Artists from the Rio Grande Pueblos were most subject to prohibitions that prevented divulging information of a confidential nature to those outside the community, as well as those within it who were not initiated into positions

that permit access to specific religious lore. However, as Paula Gunn Allen suggests, such demarcations of Native theology operate to varying degrees within other cultures as well. The Kiowa painters, for example, maintained the secrecy of certain symbols that referred to rites of the Native American Church.[22] Among those who faced such objections at various points in their careers were Tonita Peña, Pablita Verlarde, and Velino Shije Herrera, whose work incited Zia's tribal leaders to impose stern sanctions on his property and civic rights. The extent of community control over representations was sufficient to prevent youths from some Pueblos, such as Zuni and Santo Domingo, from becoming extensively involved in the watercolor movement. Painters from these villages often elected to illustrate only geometric designs inspired by pottery motifs or other non-ceremonial subjects, while those from less restrictive communities are suspected of introducing elements intended to conceal or deflect speculation away from religious themes.[23] Guardianship of this knowledge and control over its representation are profoundly important to Native communities of the Rio Grande, which hold both to be powerful elements that, when used properly, benefit the tribe, humankind, and the natural world. Conversely, their misuse may be so profoundly disturbing to the nature of existence that it poses unfortunate, even catastrophic, consequences for both its rightful possessors and those who may intentionally or inadvertently intrude on its proper domain. As Allen explains, such sanctions are for the protection of outsiders as well as Pueblo members. Given this context of belief, it is reasonable to suppose that families, religious officials, and tribal council leaders would closely observe the form and content of the art as it progressed, intervening when necessary to ensure that Native realities were appropriately maintained.

Their care and the proactive role they were willing to assume is best exemplified by the visits that Santo Domingo parents paid to Dorothy Dunn's Studio, as recalled by Pop Chalee of Taos.[24] These parents, willing to travel some thirty-five miles to Santa Fe, positioned themselves as observers in Dunn's classroom to watch their children at work. Chalee remembered that parents would seize and tear up any paintings they felt violated their Pueblo's standards for the depiction of religious subjects. The incident is revealing, for the parents' actions provide a compelling counterpoint to the degree of dominance often ascribed to Dunn, who was strong-willed in her vision of the Studio's objectives and had specific ideas about what Native American painting should comprise. Dunn has been characterized as responsible for implementing Traditional painting's most conformist style, tailoring her students' work to strongly adhere to Euro-American preconceptions. A number of students later recalled having chaffed under her methods, which required that subjects be depicted against blank, unpainted grounds (like those of nineteenth-century hide paintings or kiva murals), that students draw only from imagination and memory rather than life, and that all contaminating influences of European shading and perspective be avoided. Content was also an issue, with Dunn requiring that students paint only those subjects and motifs authentic to their own tribal traditions. Certainly Dunn's teaching was influential and the characteristic traits of Studio production are clearly represented in the works of her students, and in those of artists they later

trained. However, the forceful intervention of the Santo Domingans into the very heart of Dunn's sphere of influence raises questions about the complete primacy usually assigned to her requirements and those of other patrons. More than one community had vested interests in shaping the style and content of Traditional art. Given the potency the Rio Grande Pueblos attribute to all forms of figural representation, one suspects that their stake in the outcome was much higher.

While control over the representation of their culture to outsiders was clearly an area of concern for Native communities, the way the new art form was received by their own members must also be factored into its interpretation. There are accounts suggesting that in particular circumstances, paintings created for the external market engaged considerable local interest, apparently satisfying the expectations of family, friends, and neighbors for an art relevant to their own experience. Tonita Peña of Cochiti seems to have acquired a regular following of visitors who dropped by to watch her work, some even expressing an interest in buying her art. In a letter to Edgar L. Hewett written in 1921, Peña mentioned these admirers and requested that Hewett provide her with a studio space at the Museum of New Mexico, since she felt self-conscious about painting in front of an audience.[25] Peña also seems to have enjoyed ongoing support from her second husband, Felipe Herrera, who died in 1920, and Epitacio Arquero, whom she married in 1922.[26] Following Herrera's death, the governor of Cochiti granted her permission to hire others to fulfill her agricultural obligations to the Pueblo so that she might be free to paint, providing an income for herself and three children. Arquero structured family responsibilities such that Peña could continue to devote herself to her art, with older children helping to care for their younger siblings. When questions over the appropriateness of her paintings did arise, Arquero, by then governor of Cochiti, provided influential support, and persuaded the objectors that her sales violated no community standards.[27]

Beyond the realm of approbation, in one notable instance, the introduction of a watercolor into the artist's community (fig. 6) served as the impetus for revitalizing an important aspect of its ritual life. While employed to paint a series of watercolors for the Museum of New Mexico in the 1920s, Kabotie chanced upon a pair of Hopi Shalako masks that had been collected in the late nineteenth century. The Shalako had not been performed on Second Mesa for some seventy years, having fallen into disuse during a period of famine and epidemics. Kabotie's knowledge of the ceremony drew from the memories of his grandparents, whose stories described the dramatic performance as they had witnessed it in their youth. Excited by the discovery, Kabotie studied the masks carefully and crafted a painting reconstructing the appearance of the original Shalako dance pair in full regalia, accompanied by the Hayhay'iwuuti and Ewtoto katsinas.[28] Kabotie recalled this event in his autobiography and interviews conducted later in his life, characterizing it as a purposeful act intended to restore for himself and his relations an accurate vision of how the Shalako was once performed.[29] When Kabotie finally had the opportunity to return to Shungopavi for a visit, he brought along this picture, which he circulated to his relatives and others in the community. The



FIGURE 6. *"Sa'lakot: Sa'lakwmana and Sa'lakwtaqa, with Hayhay'iwuuti and Ewtoto" by Fred Kabotie, circa 1928–1938. Watercolor on paper. William and Leslie Van Ness Denman Collection (W-68.56.38).*

image produced something of a sensation, rekindling his grandfather's memories and generating a wave of interest in reinstating the performance. Kabotie did indeed sell the painting, which, as he discovered years later, had been purchased by Mrs. Leslie Denman for her extensive collection of Traditional watercolors.[30] Plans to revive the Shalako had been guided by Kabotie's study, which provided essential elements for recreating ceremonial attire. After the work sold, members of the community had to search out other sources for certain designs, such as the details of the tablitas, but an ancient pictograph was soon discovered which provided an acceptable model.

As this incident illustrates, Kabotie acted on what Joseph Traugott has characterized as a kind of "reverse salvage paradigm." A key strategy employed by many Native American artists today is to "salvage parts of the dominant culture—as well as of their own culture—to further their own identity, in opposition to the influence of the dominant culture."[31] Kabotie's action implemented precisely such a method, for he utilized his association with Hewett and access to the Museum of New Mexico collections to "salvage" information that would further Hopi identity and cultural restoration. As he explained in his interview with Seymour, Kabotie was aware of the circumstances that led to the museum's possession of the masks, including the identity of the donors and the Hopi policeman who had sold them the Shalako regalia. Like other Southwest painters whose works were commissioned by anthropologists and art colony residents, Kabotie was familiar with their efforts to construct an ethnographic definition of authenticity by removing such objects from their cultural contexts and transforming them into specimens for scientific analysis. Passing into museums and private collections, they ceased to fulfill the

living purposes for which they were made, redefined as artifacts the prevailing culture might use to strengthen its association of aboriginal cultures with extinct practices and a vanishing past. By illustrating the Shalako dancers and reintroducing their images into his own community, Kabotie came as close as his circumstances would permit to restoring the masks themselves to their original setting. In doing so, he transcended both the purposes that led to the masks' acquisition by the museum—the belief that such objects had to be rescued from historical obsolescence—and their effects, which deprived the Hopi community of a tangible means for reinstating the rite. Whereas the kind of reappropriation Traugott discusses in relation to the Postmodern school often involves a contemporary transformation of such "salvaged" information, Kabotie's strategy may have operated from a far more fundamental basis, negating the obsolescence and artifactual character assigned to the Shalako masks and reestablishing their link to a thriving religious life.

Little has been written on the role that watercolor painters of the 1920s and '30s may have played in accomplishing such forms of reappropriation, using the new medium as a means to extend and reaffirm their identities and those of their communities. If examined in this light, their contributions would have been twofold, involving the acquisition of a new medium, watercolor, from the European tradition, as well as the wealth of ethnographic information which Hewett, Dunn, and other benefactors placed at their disposal. It should be pointed out that, as Traugott's definition suggests, such moves occurred in opposition to the influence of the dominant society, which suppressed Native American heritage through the regulation of religious observances, reeducation, and the removal of such sacred materials as katsina masks into ethnographic collections. Moreover, Kabotie developed and acted on this intention despite his ultimate acceptance that the painting would be sold to an external patron. On one hand, he behaved as an artist, according to the economic mandates of the dominant society, which defines art as a business. Accordingly, painters at all levels must accept the necessity to relinquish their most treasured creations to the ownership of museums and collectors. On the other, he acted as a member of the Hopi community, seeing in the new medium and the ethnographic knowledge available to him an opportunity to recover a vital part of its cultural patrimony.

Kabotie's action illustrates two additional aspects of the relationship between early Traditional painting and the realm of cultural subjectivities that belonged to its makers and their Native American audience. The first concerns the relationship between the creation of this art and bonds shared among Native American people at home and in the context of Indian school education. The second concerns sensibilities that are highly accentuated in Native American cultures with regard to oral expression, experience, and memory, which have qualitative functions heightened by their non-reliance on the written word. Kabotie's choice to paint his recreation of the Shalako dancers must be understood within a context that embraces the way experiences are shared between generations through storytelling and other modes of oral communication, as well as the way that memory fulfills a transcendent role in capturing and conveying particularly meaningful knowledge. The intimacy of family

relations informed Kabotie's motivation to paint this work and, reciprocally, helped fulfill his goals for its realization. A chain of memory, articulated through his grandparents' stories, links Kabotie's painting back to the time when the Shalako was last performed, a union of their experience of the rite and the vibrantly conceived image Kabotie reconstructed from the account.

This bond to memory conveyed in intimate settings, a past graphically conceived through song, word, and mental imagery, can also be identified in the art of other early Traditional painters. For example, much of the inspiration Allan Houser cited for his work was based on the narratives of his father, Sam Haozous, together with a rich legacy of Apache music and ceremonial dance. Haozous, a kinsman of Geronimo and Mangas Coloradas, belonged to the band of Warm Springs-Mimbreños Chiricahua who waged an eleven-year war of resistance against US and Mexican troops in the last decades of the nineteenth century. After the group's surrender and the imprisonment of its leaders, the family accepted its resettlement in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where they joined a small community of Chiricahua refugees. Nonetheless, Sam Haozous kept alive for his family and neighbors a rich oral history of Apache experience during their tribe's final years of independence. Houser's early work from the Santa Fe Studio is strongly narrative, evoking the spirit of such accounts.

Like most of the early watercolor painters, Houser had begun to draw and paint in his early youth, years before attending the Studio and being "discovered" by the Santa Fe elite. Although his initial works simply expressed his boyhood fascination with cars, motorcycles, and similar subjects, he soon developed a more serious interest in using the medium to capture the substance of Apache remembrance and verbal expression. "As I heard my folks singing together," Houser related in an interview with Barbara Perlman, "and my father telling about the old days, I wanted to preserve what they had in some way. That's how it started."[32] Sam Haozous, other family members, and neighbors in the Fort Sill community provided a receptive audience and a source of criticism for Houser's art. Sam Haozous would often watch his son draw and critique his finished products, shaping them to reflect Apache realities of the time when he was young. As Houser stated, "I would draw something for my dad and he'd say, 'No, it was this way, this is the way we did it.' . . . I was pretty accurate with things like that simply because he wanted it that way."[33] Many of the works of Houser's Studio years capture an episodic sense of the events that were common to Apache life in the turbulent period his father described, including raiding parties, acts of bravery in defense of family and home, and the sorrow of family loss (fig. 7).

While enrolled at the Studio, Houser turned again to these stories in response to Dunn's requirements that he use sources from his tribal past. Houser was among those Studio graduates who felt most constrained by Dunn's methods, for he had already developed a strong feeling for three-dimensional form that clashed with her insistence on painting in a two-dimensional style. His leanings were also decidedly modern, and in his later career he would produce an acclaimed body of sculptural works influenced by such international masters of three-dimensional abstraction as Noguchi and Henry Moore. Houser remarked to Perlman that in the "starving artist"

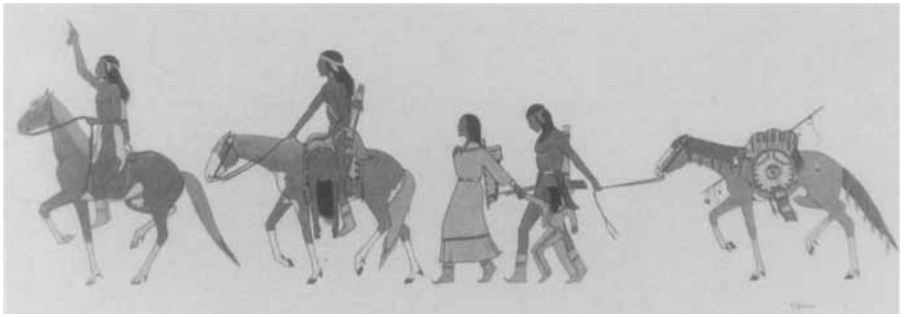


FIGURE 7. *"Warrior's Funeral Procession" by Allan Houser, 1936–1937. Casein on watercolor paper. Leslie Van Ness Denman Collection (US Department of the Interior, Indian Arts and Crafts Board) (W-68.56.268).*

years following his graduation, he and other alumni of Dunn's program felt compelled to paint whatever they thought tourists and traders would buy.[34] However, his words also reveal the immediacy of the link he established between his creative efforts as a painter and the vibrant imagery of what he had seen and experienced growing up among the Apache residents of Fort Sill. Houser recalled, "I thought of what my dad used to tell me . . . so I would think of those stories I'd heard and ceremonies I'd seen at Mescalero in my teens. Then I recreated the scenes in my art, imagining them as if they were happening right then while I was drawing or painting."[35] Despite Houser's frustrations with the Studio regimen, and his eventual pursuit of more modernist forms, the works of his later career still exhibit this link to living memory, embedded in a narrative framework steeped in his father's storytelling role.

A final element of discussion concerns the nature of the artists' own creative experiences with a medium which permitted them to externalize and reflect on the dimensions of their culture not traditionally set down in permanent forms. This discussion proceeds with the recognition that subjective engagement with the creative process is an element of artistic experience even in those media most subject to traditional forms, and that the artist is always in some sense an audience for his or her own work. While revealing interviews with artists from the first generation of Traditional painters are rare, a number are available in Tryntje Van Ness Seymour's 1988 *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, and first-person statements may be found in the biographies of Kabotie, Allan Houser, and Pablita Verlarde.[36] These provide some insight into the highly personal dimensions of their engagement with the process of making and viewing their own works of art, which they often associated with the vivid auditory, visual, and affective sensations of ceremonial performance. Their statements indicate that, in many instances, the process of painting a subject fulfilled a self-actualizing role that allowed them to reawaken distinct impressions of sound, music, rhythm, choreography, sight, aesthetic sensibility, and intense religious feeling inscribed within their memories by witnessing or participating in ceremonial events.

A common experience mentioned by many of the painters whose comments are represented in the Seymour volume is the clear memory of music, heard again in the mind while painting, with the artist often humming or singing along with the rhythms recalled. Kabotie identified katsina music as a frequent source of inspiration for his art. "Sometimes the music inspired me to do certain paintings," he explained in an interview with Seymour, "That makes you feel that you just want to go ahead and paint something about them. . . . You hear that particular music, then you see the very katsinas who are using that music. And that always expresses happiness."[37] Ceremonial music remains one of the most dynamic and eloquent means of evoking the underlying concepts of Pueblo religious thought, belonging to a context of composition and performance that continually blends spontaneity with tradition. Linguist Emory Sekaquaptewa calls katsina songs, which are usually composed anew for each performance, "the most creative medium in the Hopi language . . . filled with the energy of Hopi thought."[38] For Sekaquaptewa, music is one of the most compelling facets of an oral tradition that is invested with great force and power, kept vital through endless opportunities for poetic improvisation. As the compiler of a Hopi language dictionary and director of the Hopi Oral History Project, Sekaquaptewa wonders about the impact that committing this oral heritage to writing will have on its expressive qualities, which are less prosaic than akin to poetry and dramatization. "What happens to a person and his world view and his view of himself when you switch him from oral to written words?" he asks. "Words, spoken words, carry the meaning and power of the Hopi way not out of context, but in context. In the context of ritual forms, ceremonial formation, architecture, place names."[39] Within this verbal framework, memory assumes a heightened role with respect to preserving ephemeral forms and assuring that their creative energy persists as a living element of the present rather than the relic of a clearly demarcated past. Thus, Hopi kiva society members do not record designs for the masks, altars, and religious paintings they use; instead, the power of these objects and images is constantly reconstituted within their appropriate ceremonial contexts, through a synthesis of memory and living practice.

In describing their creative process, the artists often express a compelling desire to interject aspects of their experience as witnesses or participants in a ceremonial into their designs. For Gerónima Cruz Montoya of San Juan, for example, the poetic dimensions of ritual song often translated themselves directly into elements of her composition. "If the song was talking about clouds, maybe the cloud will get into the painting," she explained. "Or if the song was talking about birds or plants, maybe that would get into the painting."[40] Language as well as rhythm and sound convey meanings that Montoya attempts to realize through visual form. "If I could just capture some of the words that they use in the songs," she said. "If I could just capture what they are singing and put it on paper."[41] Ceremonial scenes also frequently contain allusions to the artists' own performative roles. Quite personal memory of dancing is a common element, with the artist moved to create on the painted surface the remembered steps and movements, the sense of becoming integrated into the harmony and dynamics of a greater, rhythmical order. Pablita

Verlarde recalled painting a watercolor of the Santa Clara Butterfly Dance in association with her memories of performing the ceremony when she was very young. "The Butterfly Dance had been forgotten at Santa Clara," she told Seymour, "—I don't know how long it had been since the last performance of it. . . . It was more or less retaught to my tribe, my pueblo, by the San Juan Indians, and my cousin and I were the first performers in that dance. I think that was why I painted that picture: I was trying to keep a memory of it."[42] Likewise, Jantzer-White has observed that Tonita Peña assigned primacy to women's dance roles that were closely connected with her own experience.[43] Peña is known to have used herself as a model for her female dance figures, reflecting a deeply personal integration of her own identity into contexts that concern gender reciprocity and feminine values in the Eastern Pueblo world.[44]

The notion that artists from Hopi and the Rio Grande Pueblos practiced such psychological extensions of the self in their depictions of ceremonial events is strongly evocative of Emory Sekaquaptewa's identification of self-projection as a religious and aesthetic feature of Hopi ritual dance. In discussing the nature of participation in katsina ceremonies, Sekaquaptewa writes,

> The spiritual fulfillment of a man depends on how he is able to project himself into the spiritual world as he performs. He really doesn't perform for the third parties who form the audience. Rather the audience becomes his personal self. He tries to express to himself his own conceptions about the spiritual ideals that he sees in the kachina. . . . I think this is a very important element in the kachina ceremonies. The idea of performing to yourself is a rather difficult one for me to describe in terms of a theory. . . . But the essence of the kachina ceremony for me as a participant has to do with the ability to project oneself into the make-believe world, the world of ideas and images which sustain that particular representation.[45]

Sekaquaptewa's description might just as readily apply to painting, a visible and enduring medium that may accommodate similar reflexive modes of imagination. In a vital way that scholarship has largely overlooked, the paintings crafted by Pueblo and other early Native American painters functioned within their own subjective domains as performances to themselves, as works rich in introspective purpose and meaning, stemming from contexts of self-affirming experience grounded in their own cultural life. The artists' own statements repeatedly address their desire to recapture aspects of ceremonial performances and reflect on the beauty of their meaning and expression. These are dimensions of their art that would not have been accessible to their external audience, in the same way that the subjective meanings that attend an open Pueblo dance are imperceptible to outsiders but richly experienced by those co-cultural with the rite. Contrary to models that portray the early Traditional painters engaged in an artistically disinterested effort to earn money or approval from their patrons, a number have described painting as the fulfillment of an intense desire, an activity essential to their happiness and well-being. One of those who has most clearly stated that sentiment is Pablita

Verlarde, who explained that, "In the beginning it was half a way to make a little money just so I could survive tomorrow, but I wasn't in it for the money. I was doing it because I wanted to do it. If I sold a painting, fine. I liked making pictures, whether anybody liked them or not."[46]

Verlarde's commitment to painting mattered deeply enough to emerge as a factor in her divorce from Herbert Hardin after seventeen years of marriage. Unlike Tonita Peña's husbands, Hardin objected to his wife's career. Citing his opposition as the principal reason for their separation, Verlarde alluded in an interview with Samuel Gray to the frustration and depression she experienced when she was unable to paint.[47] The reasons for her unhappiness may be clarified with respect to the processes that stimulated her creativity, which she discussed with Seymour in the mid-1980s. Her own words describe a dream-like state of consciousness that inspired her to paint, arising at times from actual dreams and a subconscious level of thought, but also produced as an immediate or after-effect of attending ceremonial events. Verlarde characterized the sense of beauty and satisfaction she took away from those experiences as the most rewarding component of her art, and recalled that imagery often took shape in her imagination during those times. Lingering impressions of dreams and dances would recur as persistent memories that she felt irresistibly moved to give visible form. The terms she uses to describe her motivations recall Sekaquaptewa's, which associate spiritual fulfillment with the ability to portray a set of ideals to oneself during special kinds of affective and imaginative states.

> It is something you either dream in your sleep, or you have it in your subconscious mind, and it just comes out. And you want to do it. So you do it. . . . When I go to the ceremonies, I listen to the chants and listen to what they are saying, and that is the most beautiful part, to listen. Then you drift off into a dream world, and it makes pictures in your head. You remember those nice thoughts when you get back home. Your heart is still pounding with the rhythm after you leave the place. And you lock it up someplace in your head. As time goes on, when you get a quiet moment, you begin to think of those things. And they begin to haunt you, so you have to do something about it. That is the way I do things; I just keep remembering.[48]

Spectatorship has been cited by a number of painters as a key source of inspiration, and as Verlarde's remarks suggest, witnessing as well as dancing may act as a vehicle for inducing intensely imaginative mental states. This association may be traced to the dynamic, effective agency attributed to thought and psychological activity in Pueblo and many other Native American worldviews. Attendance and spectatorship are regarded as active participation, so that viewers as well as dancers are seen as contributing with their moods, thoughts, and imaginative engagement to the purpose and success of the rite. As Jill Sweet observes in her study of Tewa dance, attendance does not involve passive watching in the Western theatrical sense, but a quite different state of awareness which she calls "active listening."[49] While Sekaquaptewa's observations

specifically refer to the psychological and spiritual conditions achieved while participating in masked katsina dances, I suspect that "active listening" also partakes of ideals and representations internalized through similar methods of self-projection. For the artists, the process of observation is quite reflexive, involving an intense rapport between perception and imagination, and is often described through analogy with the achievement of a higher spiritual and mental state. As José Rey Toledo explained:

> Where the katsinas are dancing, particularly at Hopi, the rhythm and all the sounds accompanying the occasion, it just puts me on another plane. It is very uplifting. I would be busy documenting in my mind exactly what is going on, what they are wearing and all their movements and all their feather attachments, and the songs they are singing. . . . That is what I put together in my paintings, the feeling of the occasion, the characteristics of a given moment, and the beings from another dimension. I try to depict actions. I hope that would be present in the paintings, because I put myself in it by singing certain songs that went with the ceremonial while I am painting.[50]

This projection of viewership as participation may explain in part the features of compositional inclusiveness and intimacy that characterize many early Traditional works, such as Kabotie's Snake Dance watercolor discussed above. However, one of the most interesting insights to stem from this recognition is that secular painting allowed Kabotie and his contemporaries to sustain their psychology of self-involvement even while experiencing the assimilative pressures of Indian reeducation. Kabotie had been removed from Hopi to the Santa Fe boarding school at an age that prevented him from being initiated into the kiva society dances his early works portray. Thus the paintings he created during those years reflect the memory of a child who learned to embrace Hopi values and identify with his community by witnessing katsina rites. Many of the artists began their painting careers in a similar way, as children who were provided with pencils, crayons, and paper at reservation day or boarding schools, and encouraged by their teachers to draw or paint. It seems ironic that a movement that emphasized ceremonial subjects and indigenous modes of self-expression could have taken root in settings designed to distance children from such tribal affiliations. However, separated from families and communities, Native American students may have found painting an alternate, non-traditional means to fulfill vitally important psychological and spiritual needs. Among these may have been a sense of belonging and identification with their own communities, as well as the comfort of a spiritual reality confirmed on paper, with the artist included as both viewer and participant. Ceremonial dances, songs, prayers, and storytelling fulfill these roles in the context of family and community life. The introduction of the watercolor medium may have provided the early Traditional painters, particularly those confined to boarding schools, with a powerful means of accomplishing the imaginative functions of projection and identification associated with the oral expressions of their societies.

Kabotie's words describing his motives for painting at the Santa Fe Indian School suggest the validity of this interpretation, emphasizing that his watercolors restored for him elements of a social context he had lost.

> That was how my painting began, in the school year of 1916–17. Mrs. De Huff got me some drawing paper and watercolors and I started painting things I remembered from home, mostly kachinas. When you're so remote from your own people you get lonesome. You don't paint what's around you, you paint what you have in mind. Loneliness moves you to express something of your home, your background.[51]

As the arguments presented in this article indicate, examining early Native American painting from the perspective of artistic and cultural subjectivities requires that the long-standing interpretive enterprise that has surrounded this medium be carefully reassessed. As long ago as 1973, historian Robert Berkhofer challenged the ethnocentrism of studies that reduce the problems of acculturation to the terms of "Indian-White relations," ascribing unilateral importance to the accounts and influences of Euro-American actors.[52] Art history has often fallen victim to this same methodological fallacy, failing to recognize the value of addressing artistic change within the theater of indigenous ideas, needs, and motivations, where Native American people act according to their own initiatives and cultural terms. Allied disciplines such as history have struggled with the challenge of transcending this deep-rooted bias, and, as the authors of an important collection of methodological essays have observed, even the leading edge of the "New Indian History" faces difficulty overcoming its perpetuation.[53] New methodologies are required for the future study of transcultural arts, which admit not only of responses shaped by external markets and perceptions, but of important dimensions of meaning, use, and artistic motivation that are embedded in the values and experience of indigenous societies.

Although there are few models for this kind of investigation, Jill Sweet's study of Tewa dance suggests certain directions they may follow. Sweet's study defined a surprisingly dualistic social space occupied by versions of ceremonial dance that are adapted for tourist-oriented display.[54] There are clear analogies between her findings and the early Traditional paintings discussed in this work. These include the recognition that both expressive forms engage aspects of meaning that are operant within the value systems of their makers' own societies, serving purposes that parallel, and are independent of, their commercial intent. There is much that has been formulaic in the treatment of modern aboriginal art forms as mirrors for our own preconceptions, with scant inquiry into the substance of what transculturation truly means. I suspect that, beyond the conditioning imposed by habit and historical bias, this failure reflects the daunting challenge researchers face when confronted with the cognitive and aesthetic systems of societies so different from their own. However, one of the most valuable prospects of accepting that task lies in the opportunity to identify what are the truly new, emergent qualities of art forms that recombine the tenets of both Western and non-Western aesthetic categories to fashion new tools for self-expression.

The example best illustrated by this study is the transmediation of the imaginative and affective psychological functions associated with such ephemeral media as music, speech, and dance into a medium in which those had not previously been realized: the visual arts. The concept of the representational painting as a window into an illusionistically construed world is a legacy of European design; however, by assimilating that convention, the Traditional painters invested the picture plane with subjectivities of memory, viewership, and self-awareness associated with their own, and not Western, aesthetic experience. The forms of thought and self-projection the artists identified with their use of the watercolor medium were neither anticipated by the prior graphic traditions of their own societies nor by the modes of creation and viewership associated with European art. For them, its materials and illusionistic possibilities became an instrumentality for translating these states of mind from their intangible, time-based contexts of performance and oral expression into the lasting imagery of a pictorial art.

The lingering models of Traditional painting as the embodiment of tourist-oriented stereotypes have begun to be displaced in recent years by various acknowledgements that it traversed new artistic frontiers. Brody has emphasized its value in mediating a new set of intersocietal relations, while Rushing has discussed its positioning on the cusp of a uniquely aboriginal assimilation of modern consciousness.[55] While these are important milestones in research, what I wish to define as new in this art form pertains less to negotiating relations between societies or the assumption of modernist thinking than the reciprocity that necessarily transpires between artists and their media, which shapes not only visual products, but also the creative focus of their makers. Although artists invest their works with certain intentionalities, the formal possibilities of their medium also direct the scope of their creativity in certain ways, admitting, for example, the introspective qualities Kabotie, Verlarde, and Houser associated with their art. By recognizing this engagement as a new foundation for research, art history may move beyond making endless inquires into the impact of European stereotypes to consider deeper questions about the impact of the medium itself, addressing its integration into the fabric of indigenous thought.

NOTES

1. It is not my purpose to accept or reject the Traditional label that has been applied to the works of this school. The term reflects the original belief shared by its patrons and accepted by some Native Americans that the style maintained important continuities with nineteenth-century and pre-contact Native American art. This view has been challenged from many perspectives, reflecting a difficult effort to sort out what is "traditional" or "modern" in Indian societies, and how to characterize those phenomena that occur at their points of intersection. My use of the "Traditional" nomenclature here is to characterize the movement as a historical entity. Since the term *Traditional painting* has different meanings for the Native American artists, patrons, and critics who embrace or reject it, I feel that the effort of scholars to argue for its retention or obsolesce is counterproductive. To do so leads into discussions of

authenticity, ethnic identity, and the polarized categories of acculturation and tradition that have been imposed to a large degree on Native American people from outside their own cultures. Current scholarship does not support the concepts on which these categories are based, and to perpetuate them through such discussions would only subject an important artistic movement to irrelevant criteria of judgement.

2. Since World War II, many skilled painters have continued to work within the parameters of Traditional style. While the works of later artists such as Blackbear Bosin, Richard West, Rance Hood, and others maintain many of the themes and formal traits of the earlier Traditional painters, I have made a distinction between their styles and those of the pre–World War II painters for several reasons. One is that they fall within classes of individual, regional, and chronological variation that I feel merits a different scope of analysis, taking into account the quite different influences and historical circumstances that impact their design. The earliest phases of Traditional painting were quite circumscribed in their local settings, organized around a tight set of historical circumstances and a limited number of participants. The more expansive development of their stylistic precedents by artists of Woodlands, Plains, Northwest, and other descent should be considered on its own terms.

In addition, the later phases of Traditional painting took form in an era when, as the global infrastructures of colonialism began to decline, indigenous people exercised a greater voice in articulating their own viewpoints and reclaiming control over their internal affairs. In Native American art, such developments are reflected in the establishment of new institutions and in the increasing use by Native American painters of irony and social commentary to promote their own perspectives and those of their people. Traditional painters such as Blackbear Bosin and Richard West have painted with a self-conscious, strongly articulated intention of communicating Native perspectives and ethnographic heritage to both Native American and external audiences. I see this confident effort as different in key respects from the experimental works of the early Traditional painters, who confronted all the uncertainties of their time and a new artistic medium to establish a dialogue with these audiences.

3. Examples of Traditional watercolors that openly represent these restricted subjects are rare. Painters from the Rio Grande Pueblos in particular scrupulously avoided portraying masked dances, kiva murals, and other imagery limited to the viewership of ritual association or community members. Restrictions vary among the different communities. At Hopi, for example, masked katsina dances are open to public viewership, although prohibitions apply to other images and performances. A few painters, such as Velino Shije Herrera of Zia, are known to have incurred sanctions for illustrating forbidden subjects. A set of watercolors depicting kiva murals of the 1920s is housed under restricted access in the School of American Research to protect the secrecy of their subject and the anonymity of the artist who created them. For further discussion on this subject, see J. J. Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting: Tradition and Modernism in New Mexico, 1900–1930* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1997), 24, 86, 107, 123, 132.

4. For perspectives on Indian-centered history, see Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., "Native Americans and United States History," in *The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture*, eds. William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson Jr. (Washington DC: National Council for Social Studies, 1973), 37–52; and id., "Cultural Pluralism Versus Ethnocentrism in the New Indian History," in *The American Indian and the Problem of*

History, ed. Calvin Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 35–45; Susan Hegemon, "History, Ethnography, and Myth: Some Notes on the 'Indian-Centered' Narrative," *Social Text* 23 (1989): 144–160; Devon A. Mihesuah, Introduction to *Natives and Academics: Research and Writing about American Indians,* ed. Devon A. Mihesuah (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 1–22; Donald L. Fixico, "Ethics and Responsibilities in Writing American Indian History," in *Natives and Academics,* ed. Mihesuah, 84–99; Angela Cavender Wilson, "American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History?" in *Natives and Academics,* ed. Mihesuah, 23–27.

5. See Mihesuah, Introduction to *Natives and Academics,* 1–22; Donald L. Fixico, "Ethics and Responsibilities in Writing American Indian History," in *Natives and Academics,* ed. Mihesuah, 84–99; Angela Cavender Wilson, "American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History?" in *Natives and Academics,* ed. Mihesuah, 23–27.

6. For pioneering critiques of the salvage paradigm see *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography,* eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); James Clifford, "Of Other Peoples: Beyond the 'Salvage Paradigm,'" in *Discussions in Contemporary Culture* 1, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 121–130; and id., *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). For recent deconstructions, see Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, "Art, Authenticity, and the Baggage of Cultural Encounter," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds,* eds. R. B. Phillips and C. B. Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3–19; and Shelly Errington, *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

7. Fred Kabotie and William Belknap, *Fred Kabotie: Hopi Indian Artist* (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1977).

8. For Brody's more recent treatments of the Pueblo school, see *A Bridge Across Cultures: Pueblo Painters in Santa Fe, 1910–1932* (Santa Fe: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 1992); and id., *Pueblo Indian Painting.*

9. J. J. Brody, *Indian Painters and White Patrons* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), 189.

10. Wilson, "American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History?" in *Natives And Academics,* ed. Mihesuah, 23–27.

11. See Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting.*

12. See Joy L. Gritton, "The Institute of American Indian Arts: A Convergence of Ideologies," in *Shared Visions: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the Twentieth Century* (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1991); id., "Cross-Cultural Education vs. Modernist Imperialism: The Institute of American Indian Arts," *Art Journal* 51 (1992): 28–35; and id., *The Institute of American Indian Arts: Modernism and U.S. Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

13. Brody, *Indian Painters and White Patrons,* 205–206.

14. Ibid, 91–95.

15. See Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting;* and David W. Penney and Lisa A. Roberts, "America's Pueblo Artists: Encounters on the Borderlands," in *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century,* ed. W. Jackson Rushing (New York: Routledge, 1999), 21–38.

16. See discussions in Marilee Jantzer-White, "Tonita Peña (Quah Ah), Pueblo Painter: Asserting Identity through Continuity and Change," *American Indian Quarterly* 18 (1994): 369–382; and David W. Penney and Lisa A. Roberts, "America's Pueblo Artists: Encounters on the Borderlands," in *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Rushing, 21–38.

17. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

18. Ibid, 7.

19. David W. Penney and Lisa A. Roberts, "America's Pueblo Artists: Encounters on the Borderlands," in *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Rushing, 21–38.

20. For a discussion of sources that allude to Native American audiences for Traditional painting, see Marilee Janzter-White, "Tonita Peña (Quah Ah), Pueblo Painter," 369–382. One of the most interesting of these is an article that appeared in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* in 1921, a review of the city's annual Fiesta that mentions the response of Native American audiences to the Traditional watercolors exhibited at the event. The author reported that,

> There were many Indians from the pueblos of Tesuque, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, San Juan, Cochiti, Santo Domingo, and San Felipe with many from farther afield. It was most interesting to watch them flock to the museum to see the paintings, but it must be confessed that they manifested greater interest in the three made by their own artists exhibited in one of the alcoves than they did in those of their white friends (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 19, 1920).

21. Although many painters faced controversies for their representation of ceremonial subjects, the conflicts generated by those of Tonita Peña, Velino Shije Herrera, and Pablita Verlarde are best known to researchers. Peña was most successful in surmounting criticisms that her works revealed too much, due in some measure to the defense mounted on her behalf by her husband Epitacio Arquero, four-time governor of Cochiti (see discussions in Marilee Janzter-White, "Tonita Peña (Quah Ah), Pueblo Painter, 369–382; and Samuel Gray, *Tonita Peña* [Albuquerque: Avanyu Publishing, 1990]). In the 1960s, Verlarde encountered numerous difficulties when she moved back to Santa Clara following her divorce and two decades of living outside the Pueblo. In addition to the prescriptions she encountered on specific representations, she faced charges of acting selfishly, without benefit to the community. She continued to paint despite these objections (see Sally Hyer, *"Woman's Work": The Art of Pablita Verlarde* [Santa Fe: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 1993]).

The works of Velino Shije Herrera seem to have raised the most serious objections and resulted in the strongest disciplinary actions. Herrera first encountered difficulties while painting under Elizabeth DeHuff's mentorship at the SFIS, with Zia's tribal leaders requiring him to withdraw one of his paintings from an exhibition (recorded by Kenneth Chapman, Indian Arts Research Center Collection Records, c. 1933, School of American Research). Later, he would produce illustrations for Hewett that depicted certain of the masked dances that Zia treated as closed observances. Brody speculates that the reasons for Herrera's violations lay in his youth and exposure to the paintings of Fred Kabotie and Otis Polelomena. Like many boarding school students, Herrera was removed from his community at quite a young age, and may not have been fully aware of the protocols he transgressed. Masked dances also abounded in

the works of the two young painters from Hopi, where katsina dances are open, public rites (see discussion in Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting*, 132). Punitive measures against Herrera took the form of penalties exacted on his property and temporary expulsion from the Pueblo (see interview with Herrera in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, December 19, 1944, as well as discussions in Brody, *Indian Painters and White Patrons*, 101, and Tryntje Van Ness Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down* (Phoenix: Heard Museum, 1988), 144, 168.

22. See Paula Gunn Allen, "Special Problems in Teaching Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*," in *Natives and Academics*, ed. Mihesuah, 54–64.

23. Brody has raised the possibility that certain trends in Traditional painting of the late 1920s and 1930s were devised to conceal or even disguise ceremonial knowledge. Among these were the creation of works that became increasingly decorative and abstract, as well as a shift away from descriptive ethnographic portrayals toward the fantastic compositions painted by artists such as Awa Tsireh and Velino Shije Herrera during this time. Rushing has also remarked on this connection, which he believes may account for the imaginative depictions of nature that dominate the art of Pop Chalee and others (see Bruce Bernstein and W. Jackson Rushing, *Modern by Tradition: American Indian Painting in the Studio Style* [Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1995], 55–58).

In addition, Brody suspects that a number of painters may have engaged in the fabrication of what he calls "pseudosecrets," misleading depictions intended to conceal the true nature of Pueblo mythology and ritual. For a discussion of his observations on this subject, see Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting*, 164–165.

24. Pop Chalee's comments on these interventions are recorded in Tryntje Van Ness Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down* (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1988), 144.

25. Letters from Tonita Peña to Edgar L. Hewett, HLA Box 29, dated July 11, 1921, March 19, 1921, and September 19, 1921 (History Library and Archive, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe).

26. See discussion in Samuel Gray, *Tonita Peña* (Albuquerque: Avanyu Publishing, 1990), 16–10.

27. For discussions of Peña's support from her husband and others in her community, see Samuel Gray, *Tonita Peña*, 18-19; and Marilee Jantzer-White, "Tonita Peña (Quah Ah)," 369–382. Arquero's arguments in defense of Peña's art are summarized in Gray's biography. Countering charges that her work revealed ceremonial secrets, Arquero pointed out that Peña depicted only dances that were openly performed, such that the scenes she painted were already accessible to any tourists present at those events. Moreover, he stressed the clear comparison between Peña's painting and a well-established craft industry at Cochiti which focused on creating replicas of ceremonial drums and other ritual items for the tourist market. This analogy with the pueblo's trade in these items satisfied the objectors that Peña's works were consistent with accepted community standards.

28. I have used the term *katsinas* rather than *kachinas* throughout this work because of its greater resemblance to the Hopi language term for these spirit beings and the masked dancers who impersonate them. I have maintained the use of *kachinas* where it appears in quoted sources.

29. See Kabotie and Belknap, *Fred Kabotie, Hopi Indian Artist* (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1977), 65–66; and Tryntje Van Ness Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 262.

30. Kabotie discussed this painting in detail during the interview published in Seymour's volume *When the Rainbow Touches Down* (pp. 261–264). He recognized the image that appears as figure 6 in this article as the Shalako illustration he painted while working at the Museum of New Mexico, and then sold to Mrs. Denman. It is now housed as part of the US Department of the Interior's Indian Arts and Crafts Board Collection (W-68.56.38).

31. See Joseph Traugott, "Native American Artists and the Postmodern Cultural Divide," *Art Journal* 51 (1992): 36–43.

32. See Houser's comments in Barbara H. Perlman, *Allan Houser* (Santa Fe: Glenn Green Galleries, 1987), 54.

33. Ibid, 100.

34. Ibid, 120.

35. Ibid, 112.

36. See Kabotie and Belknap, *Fred Kabotie, Hopi Indian Artist*; Barbara H. Perlman, *Allan Houser* (Sante Fe: Glenn Green Galleries, 1987); and Sally Hyer, *"Woman's Work": The Art of Pablita Verlarde.*

37. Fred Kabotie, quoted in Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 241.

38. Emory Sekaquaptewa, quoted in Stephen Trimble, *The People: Indians of the American Southwest* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1993), 109.

39. Ibid.

40. Gerónima Cruz Montoya, quoted in Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 162.

41. Ibid.

42. Pablita Verlarde, quoted in Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 187.

43. See Marilee Jantzer-White, "Tonita Peña (Quah Ah)," 369–382.

44. Joe H. Herrera, cited in Gray, *Tonita Peña* (Albuquerque: Avanyu Publishing, 1990), 61.

45. See Emory Sekaquaptewa, "Hopi Indian Ceremonies," in *Seeing with a Native Eye: Essays on American Indian Religion*, ed. Walter Holden Capps (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 35–43.

46. Pablita Verlarde, quoted in Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 164.

47. Cited in Samuel Gray, *Tonita Peña*, 55.

48. Pablita Verlarde, quoted in Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 165.

49. See Jill L. Sweet, *Dances of the Tewa Pueblo Indians* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1988), 16, 59–60.

50. José Rey Toledo, quoted in Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 155.

51. See Fred Kabotie and William Belknap, *Fred Kabotie, Hopi Indian Artist*, 28. Additional comments by Kabotie on this topic are available in Seymour, *When the Rainbow Touches Down*, 242–246.

52. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., "Native Americans and United States History," 37–52; and id., "Cultural Pluralism Versus Ethnocentrism in the New Indian History," 35–45.

53. See Mihesuah, ed., *Natives and Academics.*

54. See discussion in Jill D. Sweet, *Dances of the Tewa Pueblo Indians* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1985), 53–63, 79–81. Her study offers an illuminating treatment of the adaptations that characterize dances performed for tourist audiences, as well as the distinctions her informants perceived between those events and rites held for community benefit. However, she observes that both kinds of dances

share certain higher-order meanings, which require that those performed for tourist audiences be executed with serious attention to their aesthetic and religious contexts. Although the meanings and intended effects of pueblo dances may not be understood by external audiences, they are understood by the performers themselves, who therefore must experience them in the proper way. Moreover, like their ritual counterparts, the commercial dances are regarded as beneficial, since their higher-order meanings promote the well-being of all observers and participants, even tourists who cannot comprehend their religious significance. Sweet writes,

> When Tewas compare theatrical shows to village rituals, they often insist that both kinds of performances contain the same fundamental meanings. Performing in a theatrical event can promote growth, fertility, rainfall and life and can bring blessing to the people and the village, if only the Tewas dance and sing "from the heart." So long as the performers are sincerely committed to the gestures and words of the songs, the meanings remain intact. . . . The Tewas do not segregate that which a Western thinker might consider to be sacred from that which would be considered secular. They have long celebrated both in ritual performance, juxtaposing the solemn and the humorous, the serious and the absurd, the mystical and the mundane, the ancient and the contemporary. For them, there is no contradiction in adapting segments of their ritual dances for secular, commercial theatrical events (p. 79).

55. See Brody, *A Bridge Across Cultures*; and id., *Pueblo Indian Painting: Tradition and Modernism in New Mexico, 1900–1930* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1997); Bruce Bernstein and W. Jackson Rushing, *Modern by Tradition: American Indian Painting in the Studio Style* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1995); W. Jackson Rushing, "Authenticity and Subjectivity in Post-War Painting: Concerning Herrera, Scholder, and Cannon," in *Shared Visions: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the Twentieth Century*, eds. M. Archuleta and R. Strickland (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1991), 12–21; id., *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); and id., "Essence and Existence in Allan Houser's Modernism," in *The Studio of Allan Houser* (Santa Fe: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 1996), reprinted in *Third Text* 39 (1997): 87–94.