Wichita State University
Department of Anthropology
Lowell D. Holmes Museum of Anthropology

MADE FOR TRADE
AND OTHER ETHNIC ARTS

Evelyn Payne Hatcher

Volume 1

Photographs by Petronella Ytsma
and the author
Evelyn Payne Hatcher (1914-2009) was an accomplished artist, anthropologist, author, and educator. “Made for Trade” is her last book that she has almost completed before her death. The book was prepared for publication by her colleagues in Wichita State University Lowell D. Holmes Museum of Anthropology

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Evelyn Payne Hatcher
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Scholarly editor: Dorothy K. Billings
Photographs by Petronella Ytsma and Evelyn Payne Hatcher
 Literary editing and layout: Julie Schrader, Douglas Browning
 Indexes by Douglas Browning
Managing editor: Susan J. Matveyeva

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Foreword

Evelyn Hatcher is unrivaled among anthropologists in her broad knowledge of interpretive insights into tribal/folk/primitive art. Her textbook, *Art as Culture* (1985, 1999), provides a detailed *Ethnographic Index* to the well-known anthropologically studied arts of Africa, Asia, North and South America, and the Pacific. Black and white drawings, provided by her husband Jack Hatcher, identify objects in the index by tribe or ethnic group and location. Hatcher did not use colored photographs because she wanted to keep her text affordable for students. I have taught the anthropology of art in various places since 1959, and her book, which students like very much, has greatly enhanced this course. It is not just a book for new students, however. Hatcher provides original interpretations of the arts from many points of view in terms of geography, technology, psychology, history, social functions, and new global contexts. While she was reluctant to call her presentation *theory*, I have no such hesitation; this book gives us a solid document in support of the holistic understanding of the arts on which Hatcher insists. She has regularly taken the position that conceptual categories should not be taken too seriously, but are useful in considering any subject.

In this book, Evelyn Hatcher reviews and rejects common myths about the pristine nature of *traditional* arts and looks unfettered by common snobberies at *tourist* art: art *Made for Trade*. She found ways to use theories without making the ideological commitments that fuel much academic debate. She loved to debate the issues, always with endless good will. Her work shows the attention to detail and to objects, which she learned from her parents, who were both painters; but she also has the broad perspective and ability to generalize that she shared with her husband Jack, who was an engineer. As she often said, she was “born to art and married science,” and she had a great deal more sophistication in both arenas than do most of the rest of us in anthropology.

Born January 12, 1914, in Chicago, Evelyn Hatcher was educated at Fieldston Ethnical Culture High School in New York; UCLA (B.A. Psychology, 1942); The University of Chicago (MA Anthropology, 1954) and was a "non-traditional student" when she received her PhD in 1967 in Anthropology at the University of Minnesota under the guidance of E. Adamson Hoebel. We became colleagues and friends when I taught at the University of Minnesota in the Anthropology Department during the spring term of 1968.

As a child, Evelyn travelled across the United States and throughout Europe on painting trips with her parents, Edgar Alwin Payne and Elsie Palmer Payne. When they lived in the Southwest, she participated in traditional Navajo Ceremonials, which laid the foundation for her Ph.D dissertation and later book, *Visual Metaphors* (1974; 1989). In this book Evelyn introduced the concept of metaphor in a central position a decade or two before it became important in anthropological discourse. She loved her career as a teacher and retired as a Professor Emeritus from St. Cloud University (1968-79) in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Thereafter she continued to work on professional presentations for Central States Anthropological Society, American Anthropological Association, and the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. She also worked, as she said, as "the daughter of the artist," preparing paintings and catalogs for the exhibition of her parents' paintings (Stern and Hatcher 1990; Hatcher et al 2002; Payne 1941; Coen 1988; Goldfield Galleries 1987). Evelyn had virtually completed *Made for Trade* when she passed it on to her friend and colleague photographer Petronella Ytsma and to me for final preparation. Work on it was nearly done and had all been discussed with Evelyn.
Hatcher when she died peacefully after a short decline in Minneapolis, Minnesota on February 16, 2009 at the age of 96.

Evelyn Payne Hatcher donated her collection of ethnic arts, most of which are pictured in this book, and her books and manuscripts to the Lowell D. Holmes Museum of Anthropology at Wichita State University, where I have taught since 1968. I am pleased and proud to have been able to help make her work available to the next generation.

Coen, Rena Neumann

Payne, Edgar (1882-1947)

Hatcher, Evelyn Payne, Edgar Payne and Jean Stern
2002 The Drawings of Edgar Payne (1882-1947). DeRu's Fine Arts: Laguna Beach, CA

Stern, Jean and Evelyn Payne Hatcher

Acknowledgements

In 2006, all the Hatcher treasures arrived in Wichita from Minneapolis in a large number of boxes well and carefully packed by her friend Petronella Ytsma. In Wichita, Julie Schrader (M.A. Anthropology, Wichita State University, 2005) undertook the meticulous task of carefully unpacking and sorting objects, photographs, books, and manuscripts. Director of the Holmes Museum Jerry Martin took the books he wanted for the Museum collection, and Julie Schrader cataloged the rest of them for the Anthropology Department Library. Those not in the Ablah Library of Wichita State University were donated to that library, where some of Evelyn Hatcher's manuscripts are now in Special Collections.

The manuscript and photographs for *Made for Trade* are part of the collection of the Holmes Museum of Anthropology. Jerry Martin proposed to make it an electronic copy, published by the Museum, and put it on the Museum website. Evelyn liked this idea very much. The electronic copy was prepared almost entirely by Julie Schrader. She re-typed the book from the paper manuscript, the original of which was on Macintosh disks that we could read but not print out. Nearly all the layout had been accomplished, and copies, but not originals, of the pictures had been inserted in the paper manuscript. Julie went through boxes and notebooks full of photographs and slides and found most of the originals, which she scanned into the electronic copy. In the end, she scanned in from the manuscript about two-dozen copies of photographs that never showed up in her searches. Evelyn had penciled in notes here and had left one chapter, “Postmodernism”, blank except for one paragraph. Julie did all the initial editing, making suggestions about the marginal notes; and checked and added references in the bibliography. I wrote a brief chapter on “Postmodernism” by adapting her words from her book (Hatcher 1999:238-253) and occasionally extending her thoughts expressed in *Made for Trade*.

Dorothy K. Billings
Wichita State University
March 2009
Made for Trade
Introduction

It has always seemed odd to me that Euro-American art is esteemed in terms of its value in money, yet *ethnic* or I might say other ethnic arts are downgraded if they are made for sale – mere tourist arts. But artists need to eat and so do their families. I ought to know, as both my parents were artists, and while I was always fed, I was aware of the many ups and downs of the family income, and my current lifestyle would be restricted now if it were not for the sale of the paintings they did so many years ago.

I have been interested in the things I have accumulated chiefly because of ideas about them and the way they were perceived and conceived. In Santa Fe I asked many store keepers and gallery people why customers bought what they did, and I watched people who came and listened to what they said. Some things I bought were a form of thanks for the courtesy and information from these informants.

My interest centered on how the works were thought of by the buyers more than on the artists who made them. I found that this corresponded to the interest of the buyers. I have found a number of works called *folk art*, made by graduates of art schools, because they look folksy.

Because of my interest in the way these objects are perceived and labeled, there is a great deal that could be explored concerning their makers and their histories, which I hope students and scholars will look into. By questioning stereotypic labels, such as the ones about African art, I hope that this work will spark new questions and new understandings.
PART I: Artifacts and Adaptations

CHAPTER 1: Myths and Things

There are three myths or popular misconceptions that are still current about the arts of different peoples. They reveal many attitudes about them and us, which tells a lot more about us than about them. These myths can be summarized as follows:

I. Once upon a time, people lived a natural life, really understanding and being part of nature, close to Mother Earth and Father Sky. They were unfettered by civilized inhibitions and free to act out their sexual desires with natural passion. They roamed the forests and grasslands with their magnificent bodies and keen senses, hunting animals with simple weapons and consummate skill. They were restrained only by fear of the unknown, and of the mysterious beings that took animal forms and threatened the lives and souls of the hunters, their womenfolk, and their children. They dealt with these fears with the power of the rites of shamans and magical objects that were their art forms, as well as by feats of bravery and daring. Their arts express profound human emotions and put us in touch with our own deeper feelings and hidden selves.

II. Once upon a time, there were many tribes and villages scattered about the world. Each was pretty much isolated. The people grew their own food and made all their own tools, clothes, and everything they needed for their communal existence. They lived in harmony with each other and the natural world around them. Their crafts were beautiful because they were made for use from natural materials by traditional methods. The people never competed with each other but worked for the common good in a spirit of cooperation. Their traditional beliefs were expressed in traditional art forms without conscious thought on the part of the artists and reflected the soul of the community. When such a community came into contact with the outside world, the lives of the people were contaminated by crass materialism and the arts deteriorated.

III. Once upon a time, there was a young man who grew up in a middle class family. His father was a prosperous businessman and wanted his son to carry on the business after he had finished his education. But the young man was always drawing in his notebooks instead of studying and finally left school and went to Paris to enroll in an art school. He made many friends among his fellow art students, and led a merry bohemian life. After a time he left the art school as he felt constrained by the traditional teaching. He felt compelled to express himself in a totally new way. His father cut off his allowance, and it was freezing in the garret where he lived and worked. He painted furiously, expressing his unique soul in his own unique way. He died of consumption, but after his death the world discovered his genius.

All three of these myths have ambiguous connotations. Most conspicuously, some people regard the savage primarily as wicked, dirty, and dangerous. Others maintain an image of the Noble Savage surviving with courage and being part of the beautiful natural world. Yet there may even be a combination of these opposed images in the attitudes of the same individual. A similar ambiguity is to be found regarding the other myths. While we admire the selfless, harmonious community there is at the same time condescension for lack of progress and individual initiative. Even artists in our own tradition, admired for their genius and for rejecting tradition are often regarded as impractical, immoral, and not very nice, unless they have become rich. All these mixed up notions not only affect the way we see the arts, but also show a great deal about our own desires and fears.

There are other myths that affect our views and understanding of the arts made by them, as contrasted to Arts made by us, but these are the most prevalent and the most potent. These
myths have so affected the way various arts are seen that forms that do not fit one or the other of these myths tend to be overlooked, or if not overlooked, regarded as somehow inferior.

The myths I have summarized here are the myths of persons whose culture comes to them from a European background, the Western world. But myths and stereotypes about them are found among all peoples. There are myths and stereotypes about Euro-Americans, both as us and as them. Representations of the other in the form of visual art are many, and a very interesting field of study is provided by such representations, as can be seen in the few examples below. Whether in words or pictures, it is difficult to characterize any group of people or even a single individual. The problem arises when we believe these shorthand versions, and let them affect the way we see things.

The romantic myth about the artist in our society seriously and adversely affects the way we view arts that are made for sale in other parts of the world. The myth says that the real artist in our society produces art out of his own genius, caring nothing for the preferences of patrons, and produces art that is totally creative and new. In works from other societies, we feel that real art is only the traditional art, made for functional purposes, that is for use within the small society where the artist lived, preferably in a ritual or magical context. Anything made for trade must be junk. This attitude is most noticeable with regard to Africa and Melanesia.

A more careful study of artists in the European tradition will show that artists have always been concerned about how they were going to eat, and the importance of an artist is judged by the prices paid for his work. Study of the ethnographic literature shows that the artists in the smallest societies, however functional the art, and however religious the meaning, were often commissioned by patrons, elders, and were at least fed while they did their work. This does not mean that artists everywhere have not had their own ideas. They have often felt strongly about these ideas, and there may even have been differences of opinion with the patrons, making a dilemma for each of them. Furthermore, artists have always been aware of the arts of neighboring peoples and sometimes of art that has traveled considerable distances. We do not say that Picasso lacked originality because he was influenced by African art. Nor do we consider that his style was contaminated by such influences.

While in recent times there has been considerable interest in tribal and folk arts, they are not considered of artistic interest unless they were functional. This is a rather curious attitude in view of the fact that some of the most esteemed folk arts, such as many forms of Japanese pottery, were made for sale and were sold in the marketplace. Tribal artists often traveled outside of their own societies to work on commission in other small societies, if they had achieved a reputation for their creations. So there are many kinds of artifacts, crafts and arts that were and are trade goods, market ware, made for sale and widely distributed across ethnic lines in pre-industrial societies. Pilgrims are tourists, and often took home religious and souvenir items. All this is to say that while there has been an enormous increase in travel and a greatly increased number of crafts and artworks made for sale, this is not a totally new thing. A sharp dichotomy between functional and tourist art is an oversimplification. It is also an over-simplification to say that all artwork made for sale to strangers is junk.

So the purpose of this work is not so much to give detailed information about these arts made for sale to strangers, but to raise questions that may lead the reader to become intrigued by the variety of stories behind the wealth of arts that are offered for sale to the great majority of us who are not wealthy. The artifacts are the result of very human efforts of very human people who are trying to adapt and survive in this rapidly changing world. This includes not only the artists and craftspersons, but also the middlemen and even tourists. Listening to the people in the shops...
in Santa Fe, and talking to people in all sorts of places, I find that many are not content with vague feelings of the primal passions of myth I, or the dream of sweet harmony of myth II. They ask questions and sometimes indicate that they wish they knew more of what questions to ask.

It has often been difficult to find much published information about the kind of work considered here, especially in certain areas, although there are monographs on the histories of particular genres in the American Southwest. I have frequently found a lot of work dismissed with some such phrase as “they make items for the tourist trade.” Seeing that the tourist trade is one of the world’s largest industries, this would seem to be a rather effete attitude. The pioneering work edited by Graburn (1976) is an important source concerned with the fascinating case studies of transitions from local arts to art for sale, and has sparked interest in the field. There have recently been a number of very pertinent and interesting papers presented at anthropological and museum studies meetings, which brings out some of the complexities with which I have been concerned. So there have been moments of discouragement when I feel that my slowness in getting this work together will make it entirely obsolete. But it seems useful to bring together this material in a form that is more accessible. There is something to be said, too, for a kind of bird’s eye overview, not merely of the subject matter, but in terms of viewpoint.

Curiosity about an object involves one in the search for the context of that object, including where it was made, who made it and why, what the previous traditions were, and the factors involved in change. What dilemmas, what choices, what problems faced the maker, and when the article entered into trade, what dilemmas faced the middlemen and the buyer? The first section below is mostly the basic facts about the artifacts themselves, and the different ways these types of objects have been changing. In the second and third sections, contexts in several cases are gone into a little more extensively, and some complexities pointed out. Trying to understand all these contexts and changes leads to the theories and queries of the fourth section.

Artifacts are things. Things we can see and touch and maybe own or look at in museums. Things arouse our curiosity and lead to discoveries about other peoples and other ideas. The kind of things of interest here are things made by peoples whose ways of life were very different from the lives of those of us who come out of the Euro-American tradition and the industrialized world.

Many people have come to value the traditional arts of peoples who lived relatively isolated lives in small societies, those arts called primitive or tribal or folk, but increasingly all such peoples have been in contact with and in various ways changed by the expanding industrialized world. Their arts too have changed, especially those made for sale. It has been customary in the art world, to ignore or deplore such art forms, and indeed, many of them are, from an esthetic point of view, deplorable. But a great many are not, and it seems deplorable to me to ignore the enormous variety of ways the artists and craftspersons of the world have adapted to the changes by using their skills to provide a cash crop. Thus they keep themselves and their families among the living and exhibit an enormous amount of creativity and adaptability in the process. The results of these creative efforts can be seen in the great variety of ways their products, the artifacts, have changed over time. These changes have been especially remarkable during the last half-century with the advent of rapid transportation and mass tourism.

Of course the arts have always changed through time, more slowly at some times than at others, depending on many circumstances. Our mainstream Euro-American arts have been changing rapidly, although in many ways far less rapidly than it seems to us, while the arts of the others in the past have changed more than we realize. In this shrinking world the enormous flow of images and ideas means that experimentation is going on everywhere, and in no tradition is all
of it successful. We should not be surprised at the diversity of world-views and definitions of reality that are to be found in various parts of the world. We find so much diversity in the way people conceive life within the developed Western World and even within our own nations that we should have come to expect diversity everywhere. The attitudes suggested by the introductory myths, suggest that the people are somehow basically different than us, and the diversity of life styles and art styles are something other than the adaptations of human beings to their circumstances. For example, it has been common to say that the artists in small societies with traditional cultures work *unconsciously* in producing their traditional arts and crafts. Sally Price (1989) has discussed this unfortunate usage and its pejorative implications. I suggest that this is an error of wording - a more accurate term would be *unselfconsciously*. In the myth about our own tradition the idea that an artist must produce an innovation or even a novelty that is unique makes for very self-conscious products in the mainstream world of art.

The objects I am using as examples in this work are objects made by people whose lives have been greatly affected by the industrialized world, objects made for sale. Yet such objects can lead to questions about other life-ways.

The many ways people are adapting by using their skills to earn money are shown in the different kinds of changes that are to be seen in the artifacts themselves. Sometimes they are able to continue the accustomed forms and tourists will buy them; sometimes they find it necessary to expend less time on them in order to sell them at a price that buyers will pay; sometimes they get ideas from the new forms they come in contact with in books, photographs, and industrially made products, or they make use of new materials and techniques. Then, too, they may produce the forms required by new patrons: missionaries may want Christian icons, commercial establishments want new signs, and traders whatever they think will sell. This first part will explore the various ways styles have been changing in this worldwide babel of visual communication. Aspects of meaning, for example, appear chiefly in regard to how they change.

In this changing world, people are adapting in many ways to many kinds of new circumstances. Among these circumstances is the amazing growth of populations everywhere, the transportation revolution, and the emergence of mass tourism. There have always been tourists in the sense of sightseeing travelers and buyers of souvenirs but never in such variety and quantity. The adaptations of craftspersons to this phenomenon are many and various, and there are a great variety of tourists in terms of tastes, interests, and means. There is also a great variety in the enormous numbers of artifacts produced for sale lumped together as tourist art, airport art, and the like (MacCannell 1976).

The changes are the changes of recent times, and it is assumed that these are changes from what was traditional. *Traditional* usually refers to what was first seen, collected, or recorded in recent times by people from the industrialized world. Traditional is a sloppy word, but convenient. It does not imply, as used here, that arts did not change or did not change much before contact with the developed world. It is still sloppy as no precise time period is indicated. Graburn tried to overcome the sloppiness of the word “traditional” and suggested the word “functional”, which in
anthropological usage meant having to do with use and meaning only within a particular society, but there are also difficulties with this word. In functional theory how customs held a society together was the focus of study. Anyhow, I find it useful to divide the kinds of changes that have been and are taking place into several categories: continuations and modifications, resurrections, imitations, revitalizations, and innovations. This terminology should not be taken too seriously. There are other ways this categorizing could be done, but it makes the point that not all the changes are simply deteriorations, and so has the virtue of not prejudging the quality of the work. This viewpoint differs from that of the art historians who would prefer to take into account the effects of change on the esthetic quality of forms when such objects are adapted to the tastes of buyers from other cultures. Most questions about deep beliefs, authenticity, and esthetic excellence are put aside. But by putting them aside, such efforts as this one may eventually cast light on these matters. Otherwise, one is all too likely to start with one’s own preferences.

As a starting point, let us take a look at a number of artifacts that have come onto the market recently, that have not been expensive, and have come into my possession one way or another.

The Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea offers an image of the primitive much as Africa has done in the past, but the image of primitive Africa is slowly being lost as TV images of trucks, cities and wars slowly penetrate our consciousness. Lucien Taylor’s *In and Out of Africa* is an award winning video about authenticity, taste, and racial politics in the transnational African art market. For a wonderful sad/funny look at the tourist scene in New Guinea, the video *Cannibal Tours* should not be missed. While art has changed under the impact of the industrialized world since it literally descended upon New Guinea in WWII, there is still a lot being produced both for local use and for sale, or for local use and then sold after the festival. While the meaning of the art forms is lost on most buyers, the mere fact that it is considered worth buying (if at depressingly low prices) helps to keep it valued. Efforts to promote national pride involve ideas of pride in the heritage of the area, and there have been efforts to preserve traditional forms in local museums.

All that is needed is time to transform work like this into valuable antiques because they evoke the *primitive* that so intrigues persons who are attracted to myth I.

Myth II attracts us to works of a very different character, such as this appliqué wall hanging.
Wall hangings that come from South America are made of commercial cloth with the pictures formed with appliquéd fabrics that are either flat or stuffed, and touches of embroidery. They are called arpilleras, which means burlap, as they were originally made of old sacking with scrap material. There are several accounts of how this form got started but it seems to have been in Chile in the 1970s with the intention of providing a source of income for impoverished women. The arpilleras soon evolved into records of the poverty, violence, and oppression suffered by such women and their families.

Such works were sometimes exhibited and bought abroad, if they were not seized at the export point. They often had small pockets on the back with some words of commemoration, grief, or outrage.

The ones on the market at this time are mostly made in the shantytowns of Peru. They show happy village scenes like this one, which is the form widely available in this country.
CHAPTER 2: Continuations and Modifications

Traditional, as I have said, is a very sloppy term. In some cases, however, we can document an extensive history of forms of art that continue until the present day. The category of continuations includes such traditions, and the modifications that come with time without radical departures from the basic styles. We could limit the categories to styles that have persisted for more than a century, using the U.S. Customs definitions of an antique to establish some kind of criterion for traditional, but this is not a good criterion to apply to the numbers of societies for which we have no records, with little known about the arts before more recent times. The assumption is that arts that were used locally have very long histories, but this is not necessarily the case.

In Kaeppler’s (1979) classification of Polynesian art there are some good, thoughtful definitions using an ethnohistorical approach. She is careful to say that her schema applies only to Polynesia, but the discussion deserves consideration for the ethnohistorical study of art from any area. As my work has a somewhat different focus, I will quote only the main outline:

In my view, however it is a mistake to consider Polynesian art acculturated simply because of changes brought about by the use of metal tools or the introduction of European things. These changes may be irrelevant. Rather, one might consider Polynesian art to be traditional as long as the basic structure and sentiments have not changed or else have evolved along traditional lines. The dynamic relationship between social and artistic change is a promising field for investigation, particularly if the views of the Polynesians are taken into account. I find it useful to analyze Polynesian art within a framework of four categories – traditional art, evolved traditional art, folk art, and airport art. “Traditional art” in this scheme refers to art as it was produced at the time of European contact. Statements about traditional art must be based on pieces, which can be traced to voyages of the earliest Europeans.

We are also learning about arts of the past from the work of archaeologists. There are some traditions that are ancient and continue into the present, made for sale alongside other, newer forms. Sometimes they may represent traditions that are no longer in tune with the prevailing ideology but are made and sold because to the foreigner, they represent significant images. Tourist art is a way of maintaining rather than destroying traditional forms. Ancient traditional forms may become modified traditional art, folk art, or tourist (airport) art, and all of these things have happened in China. Some recorded traditions have gone on as traditional and folk art, but in the catastrophic changes of recent times, it is perhaps their importance as tourist art that keeps them from dying out (Chang 1983).

Ethiopia is a country with a long and difficult history, yet through it all, many traditions and characteristic styles have persisted. The ancient Egyptians knew it as the land of Punt, from which came spices and other desirable articles in trade. It lay beyond that other ancient black kingdom, Kush, where great iron works stood near the city of Meroe. We are indebted to Ethiopia for coffee, which is native to the mountains there.
In the tenth century, B.C., the queen of Ethiopia, known as the Queen of Sheba, visited King Solomon with a large retinue (1 Kings 10:1-13). The Ethiopian version is recorded in the Ethiopian Royal Chronicle and gives an account of how the Queen was seduced by King Solomon, and when she got home, she bore him a son, who became Melenic I and so founded the dynasty. This account is the subject of many paintings, which were popular tourist art in the 1960s, when the Emperor Haile Sellasie, the last ruler of this dynasty, was trying to modernize the country (Perczel 1983).

This style of the painting goes back to the early Middle Ages, when it was introduced by Syrian missionaries along with the Christian religion (Lloyd 1961). This distinctive style is to be found on a variety of religious paintings, icons and magic scrolls painted on parchment, and more recently used in secular painting, especially historic scenes. It is related to the Coptic style, which was used by the Egyptian Christians before the Muslim conquest. New materials, canvas and commercial paint are used on this story of the visit of the Queen to Solomon’s court.

The smaller painting (p. 9) is painted on traditional parchment. The touch of shading is the only modification of the basic style. A more drastic adaptation is the printing of Saint George on T-shirts reproduced from a painting on a drumhead. The embroidery is also traditional in style and resembles the elaboration of the Cross motif found on metal Crosses and magic scroll paintings.
5: Recent Ethiopian painting on parchment.

6: St. George on T-shirt, Ethiopia.

7: Embroidered cross motif on table runner, Ethiopia.
Ethiopia has for many centuries been a multi-ethnic state, and one of the minorities was the Black Jews, who call themselves Beta-Israel and who were called Falasha by others. In the mythological history, these are the descendants of members of Solomon’s court who came with the queen of Sheba and her entourage when she returned to Ethiopia. Before the recent upheavals and the migration of many Black Jews to Israel, the people made for sale small black-ware figurines such as these. Most of the ones I’ve seen were of bearded men. The woman, I bought recently, is less common, and I was told these figurines are still made by Beta-Israel people in Ethiopia. These figurines reminded me of the worshiper figurines made in ancient Sumner over five thousand years ago. I do not know if this resemblance has any significance.

The blackware dish, on the other hand, is a traditional item that is still functional and is used for the spicy sauces so characteristic of Ethiopian cuisine. I am curious about the techniques by which it is made because blackware made in the American Southwest is so soft it could not be used or hot sauce, much less survive washing afterwards.
One of the longest traditions is that of Chinese painting, especially on silk. In China, and indeed in Europe until recently, it was part of the artist’s training to copy the works of artists of the past. Some of the older works are only known from copies, and these are now highly valued. This tradition is still carried on in various ways and provides many items to be sold as souvenirs for the visiting tourist, or for export.

Chinese painting has a long history and has commanded great prestige. In the early part of the twelfth century, the last of the Northern Sung (Song) emperors started an academy that specialized in exquisite small paintings of birds and flowers or small creatures and flowers, a tradition that has continued to the present day. Painting on silk, embroidery and tapestry, and colored paper cut-outs are all descendents of the style favored by the emperor Hui Tsung. The use of this style in the form of embroidery and other textile techniques is not a recent adaptation, but was made soon after it became the court style in Sung times, although it has not had the prestige that painting has commanded. Classical fine art painting traditions are also modified to make embroidered pictures, and these come in a considerable range of quality and price.
The subjects that are so traditional in the fine arts of China are also found in the folk arts that have become tourist arts. Paper cutting is one of these arts. Of course the medium affects the style, and paper cutters adapt the subjects to their medium. One very popular subject is that of birds and flowers although the creatures in this example are butterflies.

Landscapes featuring towering mountains and misty spaces are not suitable, but scenes on a smaller scale with ancient style structures are more successful. Sometimes such peasant versions of fine art have been called *lagging emulation* but there is a bit of condescension in this label, and as all artists appropriate whatever they know about, I see no need for a separate category for this influence.

The art of paper cutting has a long tradition. There are pieces surviving from the fifth century. After all, paper was made in China one thousand years before the Europeans learned how. These examples are made with knives rather than scissors because large quantities can be made at one time, even with the intricate cuts. Every cutter makes his or her own tools. There are knives of various shapes and sizes, also punches and chisels. They use tissue paper and stack it in a wooden box frame. Then the artist drives the tools straight down so that the bottom sheet does not vary from the pattern. Some cutters actually work free hand, which is amazing when one remembers that all parts of the finished piece must be connected. Some cutters design and make their own patterns. The works usually come in sets of four, six, or eight with the same basic subject (Temko 1985:72-76). That more than one of each design is produced makes this form analogous to prints. What is lacking is name and numbered limited editions.
Paper is and has been used widely. Whether it is locally made or purchased, it takes little money for the craftsperson or the buyer, and is very portable. Tissue paper in a variety of hues is folded and cut into elaborate designs throughout Mexico.

The cut out amate bark collages made by the Otomi of San Pablito, Mexico are quite different from the amate bark paintings made in another part of Mexico (Torres 1980). The traditional forms are only slightly altered to make them into saleable items. The appeal lies in the superstitious meanings that not only have the appeal of the primitive but also remind people of fundamental connections with the earth. With eyes trained by the collage work of the modern period, I am surprised that these are not more esteemed as art.

Paper made from the inner bark of any of several kinds of amatl trees was important in the Pre-Columbian civilizations of Mesoamerica. There were large libraries of books in all the larger towns. These books were made in accordion form, that is to say, in codex form. Paper also had uses in rituals. Conquerors destroyed the libraries and the rituals of the natives and sought to substitute their own religious works, beliefs, and rituals for the native ones.

One of the areas that produced large quantities of this paper, as evidenced by the amounts demanded by the Aztecs as tribute, was in the tropical, mountainous area east of the coastal lowlands along the Gulf of Mexico. Because the terrain was rugged and contained no gold, people in the region were able to maintain many aspects of their Pre-Columbian culture. Paper continued to be used in rituals, although these rituals were performed in areas in the backcountry where members of the dominant society did not see them. The Catholic Church was the official religion, and its calendar was, and is, generally used in the area. In recent times, commercially produced paper is often used for the sake of the colors...
available, but the people still made small quantities of their traditional bark paper, so the technique was not forgotten.

It is all too easy to jump to the conclusion that these are symbols of a naïf animism or polytheism with a great variety of gods. But while the world view of these people suggests that a host of invisible spirits is responsible for important events, and there are many spirit names associated with particular types of events, the philosophical beliefs behind this way of conceiving the forces of nature are sophisticated, subtle, and complex. These paper images are symbols, and in the rituals are used to communicate the state of affairs, the diagnosis of what is wrong, and to establish a procedure to correct the situation.

The belief system is pantheistic, and all the various spirits are aspects of the one great reality. All these aspects are interrelated and may operate in various combinations in various circumstances. These highly abstract concepts are difficult for persons brought up to revere an anthropomorphic deity to understand. And, of course, there are persons in any society who are more literal minded than others. But the shamans show awareness of the Unity, and “create their rituals and paper images out of this unity, but they do so using a common reservoir of symbols and icons. They temporarily break the unity into manageable segments in order to restore harmony and balance between humans and the powers in the universe” (Sandstrom and Sandstrom 1986: 277). The use of amate bark for cut-out figures is a continuation, although there are some slight modifications since these have also become items for sale. The cut outs made for ritual use are now often made of colored tissue paper. The change in the ones made for sale is in providing a backing to make the work usable for cards and collage pictures. But innovations in another part of Mexico using amate bark for a variety of small paintings has meant a revival of the craft of papermaking and increased local interest in the local forms (Stromberg 1976).
The Eight Immortals are legendary, being of the Taoist tradition in China. They are said to dwell in remote places and have all sorts of magical powers. They were not conceived as a set until the Yuan dynasty, but they have become symbolic of eight conditions of human life: age/youth, male/female, poor/rich, and plebian/aristocratic. Each has several symbolic attributes. The boy, for example, has a flute and is a sort of patron saint of musicians. These particular ones were piled in a basket full of such figures at Pier I. They were clearly made to a pattern, but colors varied somewhat, and one would assume they are still made from scraps. I said to the salesperson “Hey, these are the Eight Immortals!” She did not know what I was talking about, but she let me dump them all on the counter and pick one of each.

Silk covered paper figures are an old technique in China. They probably originated as a way to use scraps of material. I have seen such figures used to make a composition with a background, hung on the wall as a collage painting. The technique of making this type of figure with cloth and cardboard is also known in Japan, where they are called Oshi-e (push picture). Several examples are shown in the Brooklyn Museum’s catalogue of Japanese folk art (1985). The subjects are different, but the technique using scrap materials “as a pastime for long winter evenings” is very similar.
Sometimes Chinese symbolism is confusing because the symbols shown for these figures are similar to those shown for other mythological figures. The chief of immortals has a bare, fat belly like Hotei, the God of Prosperity, who overlaps with the figure sometimes called the laughing Buddha. Furthermore, he often carries the life-giving peach like the God of Longevity but does not have the high domed forehead of the latter, and the latter does not display his belly. It is not so much that the symbols are unclear, but they are combined in different ways (Williams 1976 passim).

The Immortals have long been a popular subject in many Chinese art forms and are frequently found on tourist items and works made of export. I once inherited a white on white embroidered tablecloth and had it for years before I learned what the figures represented. Here they are again in a collection of cloisonné pendants (previous page).

Some things are still being made as they have been for centuries. Such is the case of the statues and statuettes made of brass by the lost wax process in Nepal. This technique has been practiced here since about the seventh century by a caste of the Newars of the Katmandu Valley. The subjects are almost always Buddhist in subject matter, and are made in various sizes and qualities. Patrons commission the artists, and much of the work is still used locally, but businessmen who sell to tourists order more of it. Some of the work is extraordinarily fine in design and craftsmanship. Duncan says:

Although this rise in the demand for sculpture has had a somewhat deleterious effect of the finishing of some of the cheaper images, it has had a tonic effect on the sculptors themselves, who are now constantly employed and are thus able to sharpen their skills. (Duncan 1976)

The two musicians, on the other hand, look more Hindu than Buddhist and are not nearly as well finished as the Buddha figure. Further, one of the figures is carelessly made in that it is tilted back off the base, making it off balance. However, it can easily be put upright in a dish garden and is a joyous little figure.
The Denver, Colorado airport was for a long time a good place for travelers to pick up souvenirs of almost any place to take home as gifts they had not found or forgotten to get. What was available could quite literally be called airport art. On my last trip I saw that there were fewer import stores, but there were some small carts sitting around. I bought the little Shiva Nararaja (in the dance of creation and destruction) at one of these (p. 17). The young woman salesperson did not know much about it, but a tag gave a reasonably good short version of the symbolism. It is not of high quality, but the form has a long tradition, and such minor versions have probably been available to the less affluent for much of that time.

Defining traditional as the style as it was when first observed by Europeans, gives us the mask on the left as a traditional form. It comes from the Sepik River area of New Guinea and was once one of a row of maskettes from the façade of a ceremonial house in the Abelam region (Forge 1973). These ceremonial houses are imposing structures, the center of a rich ceremonial life in each of the good-sized villages. This mask is functional although it was never worn and was not meant to be worn. Not all mask type forms made to be hung on a wall are done for sale to strangers.
In all the Sepik area dances and performances and their paraphernalia were bought, copied, and adapted by neighbors so that they moved around, sometimes in an almost fad-like fashion. Artifacts made for these performances were often traded to others so that it is not always as different as it seems to sell such objects to strangers, although a distinction can be made between the more sacred objects and the more purely festive ones. The basketry mask on the bottom right on page seventeen was probably functional but eventually sold and possibly replaced by a fresher form.

Making dolls, or corn dollies, from available fibers probably goes back long before the dawn of written history and probably before grains were domesticated. Corn in British English has always meant any kind of grain. American corn, or maize, is called corn in America. The first two in the series below are from Kenya in East Africa and are made of banana leaves. The darkness of the leaves and the costumes make them look more primitive than some of the others. The little ones in the middle are from Mexico and are made in many places. The tall one is from Bali, and the two on the end came from the historical society in Minnesota and are made of maize leaves. This folk art form is not as popular a collector’s item as one would think, but now that dolls are not always considered childish, this will probably change.

This ceramic piece in the form of a set of musicians each has a whistle opening in the back. It was labeled Peru. I found it at a Save-the-Children shop. As usual, I said, “Peru is a big place. Do you know where in Peru it is from?” No one did. So I bought it, and when I got home, I went looking through my books and found the following in Litto (1976: 46, 48). In speaking of Tineo, a prominent folk craftsman from Ayacucho, Peru:
He also makes humorous campesinos riding burros, seated, playing a guitar, etc. Many of these are whistles, the orifice for the whistle placed not too discreetly at the rear of the figure or animal. A group of clay figures standing in a row, all attached to each other, is played like a harmonious pipe. One orifice suffices to sound all the individual whistle people.

This gave me a great feeling of achievement. I had found not only the location, but also a probable individual maker and some history for this kind of object. This detective work is fun if one gets answers.

Archaeologists interested in ethnographic analysis write much of the published material about the recent pottery of this area, rather than the impact of the modern world on people’s lives, but it is very helpful.

I have questions concerning what has happened to the pottery of this area since the export trade has become so large. The middlemen who buy it from the makers know what will sell, and one can see a number of changes in the pieces themselves in recent years. They have tended to become fancier and more figurative.

Then I was given the little female musicians of the same type. They have become simpler and look to be mold made. They are labeled Peru, but Peru is a big...
country, and I wonder if these are city made in imitation of the ones from Ayacuchol or are truly
modifications at the local level. In any case, this one is not very good as a whistle.

While legally imported objects should bear a label indicating the country of origin, such
labels tend to be ignored or overlooked, at least in large shipments of imports. Even when the
country of origin is clear, as in the case of the clay musicians from Peru, the region and ethnic origin may be hard to determine.

Nativity scenes, or Naciementos, in clay have been made throughout the Andean region since the Conquest. This one (p. 19)
comes from Peru.

The candelabrum (p. 19) is a fairly recent ceramic from Ayacucho.

Elements have been combined to make it fancier, a more complex piece than has been traditional. All of the elements seem to
have been traditional separately, but combining the animal head pot shape with the little church and a candleabra, and figures is a
modification that art historians might consider a late phase of a style. This elaboration contrasts with the
simplification seen in the slip cast piece, showing that
changes can go in opposite directions.

The style of the little campesino, also said to be from Ayacucho, is quite different again. It looks as if it
may have been in part slip cast, with additions. The expressive face is in contrast to the deadpan, painted
faces of the more traditional figures.

The example of the Shipibo-Conibo is interesting in part because the continuations have gone on so long
in spite of drastic changes in the lives of the people. Lathrap, who has spent much time in the area
studying the culture both archaeologically and ethnographically, says:

Given the disruptive factors that have operated on the Shipibo-Conibo culture during the last
four centuries the elaboration of the traditional aspects of material culture, and art is
remarkable. (Lathrap in Graburn 1976)

The Shipibo-Conibo inhabits the tropical zone of eastern Peru. In Pre-Columbian times they had
good-sized towns and well developed forest farming, but suffered a succession of periods of disruption of
one kind or another, and the population declined. In this century they have gathered together
again this time around mission stations, and schools, and the population has increased. Tourism
and traders have become important sources of income. Pottery has changed by the appearance of non-traditional shapes, changes in the traditionally standard sizes, reduction in the complexity of painted designs, and new types of folk art. What has clearly continued is the style of pottery painting, which is very distinctive, and the quality of the craftsmanship. Pots that are painted in a simplified fashion are still thin and hard. The small bowl shown here is an example (p. 20). Lathrap says further that in 1970 potters were still producing pottery of the highest quality, which was not made for sale (Lathrap 1976). This painting style is continued in the new form of painting on commercial fabric. This use of the style makes the product instantly recognizable if one is familiar with the pottery, yet it could be called an innovation or a modification.

Molas have been changing continuously, and there are a number of kinds and grades from little souvenir patches to elaborate pieces now pushing into the fine arts market. Subjects range widely, many inspired by illustrations in publications from the industrialized world.

The parrot mola was never functional but was made for sale. I bought it at an ethnic art gallery – not a shop. So it has been transformed from functional ethnic art or wearable art to art for art’s sake to be framed and hung on a wall.
Still a functional form in parts of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, although to some extent being pushed aside by mass media, shadow puppets enact traditional dramas. These are usually Hindu epics such as the Ramayana, although Islam has become dominant in Java, and Buddhism in Thailand, where these examples are from. Puppets and shadow puppets are classified as folk art, although there have been elaborate forms made for performances in temples and palaces. The Ramayana is a very popular saga of Prince Rama’s search for his abducted princess and is not one story but many. In one of them he comes to a kingdom of monkeys. He helps the monkey king and is, in return, helped by the monkey general Hanuman, who gets word to the Prince’s beloved in her captivity. The shadow puppet in the frame is reasonably traditional. Only one arm is movable, but he is quite elaborate in detail. It represents the monkey king, which is why the feet look like the hands.

The small, black one is strictly tourist art and never was a working puppet, although it is made of real parchment. The friend who brought it to me said a pimp, who sat at the end of the bar, keeping one eye out for prospects, punched these out.

Also from Thailand is a figurine representing Hanuman (not pictured). Although they are not shown with wings, these monkey folk can fly, reminding one of the monkey army in the Wizard of Oz, except that they are good guys.

God sticks made by the Maori of New Zealand functioned in the same way as the prayer sticks used by the Pueblo peoples of the Southwest. It is designed to get the attention of the deity so that one’s appeal would be heard. Each god stick incorporated symbols associated with a particular deity, and so they varied. This one (p. 23) resembles an example in the Auckland Museum (S. Mead 1984), but as it is a recent one made for sale, it may be somewhat generalized in form. This example is very well finished and seems to be polished better than the examples I
have seen in museums or photographs. It is too bad that this esthetic quality would not have contributed to the spiritual quality; when one was used it would have been placed in the ground and smeared with red ochre and decorated with feathers.

Barrow (1962) says:

The stick god form is very old for it occurs in the archaic style of New Zealand art, and has a close relationship with the stick gods of Hawaii. (page 199)

Later regarding this style, he says:

The out-thrust tongue, tattoo marks, and contorted posture of the war dance, stress the war-like character of the ancestor, thus providing and ever-present example to the young warrior. Eye inlay of shell (haliotis iris) accentuates the fierce aspect of these images. (page 102)

One of the modifications in art made for sale in tropical lands is the use of hardwood, highly polished, instead of the softer woods of the past. The crocodile below is from the Trobriand Islands.
CHAPTER 3: Resurrections

Under this heading, we can consider, first of all, things that have been dug up, that is to say, old things that are found in archaeological context. To be made for sale, they may have been reworked in some fashion. The second category under this heading refers to the recreation of a stylistic tradition that had become extinct but is resurrected by making new things in the style of the old including, copies, replicas, and new works that pick up the style and carry it forward. Sometimes the older style was not found in archaeological context, not dug up, but has become extinct in historic times and is resurrected from information found in libraries and museums.

The three little fabric dolls shown here are made of Pre-Columbian textiles dug from the arid coast of Peru, where such items are so astonishingly well preserved. Such pieces of textiles are taken into town, where the women make them into little dolls as a cottage industry. Sometimes the cloth is cut into many pieces to do this, which makes archaeologists, museum people and other academics very unhappy. Such pot-hunting is illegal, but nobody worries about it as they would artifacts of gold. A dilemma is how very poor people can make a living if they do not dig up graves and make little tourist items.

I bought this set in a store in Olvera Street, Los Angeles, where I was told it was from Guatemala. It is not illegal to ship textiles from Guatemala, but they don’t look like these textiles. I saw similar items in a shop in Santa Fe, NM and was told they were made from scraps of Pre-Columbian material found loose after they had been torn out of the old graves by storms along the shore, a most unlikely happening.

There is a considerable interest in prehistoric works of art, and this interest means that such arts appear in various ways as objects that can be purchased. There is a large trade in copies, replicas and works that follow closely the techniques and styles of a tradition that had been extinct. These are often modeled on artifacts that were found in archaeological contexts, but we may put under this same heading antiques that have been visible, but largely ignored. A replica is a copy made as exactly as possible, usually with some kind of technical aid such as a mold, whereas a copy is made by eye in much the same way as the original. Replicas are often made in museums, or under museum supervision, and sold by them. Copies can be very exact or totally awful – Mexico City is full of very bad copies of Pre-Columbian pieces. Good or bad, if they are sold as originals they are fakes (Boone 1982).
The examples below are copies of Pre-Columbian pieces, one from Monte Alban, and the other Maya probably from the cemeteries on Jaina. If one were to judge these purely on appearance and feel they would be considered equal to genuine Pre-Columbian pieces. The cape, beads, loincloth and headdress are all added appliqué, not reproduced with the aid of a mold. These are excellent and well made copies, and while sold commercially, offer a marked contrast to those available in quantity in places like Pier I. However, I do not know anything about their histories, as I found them in a department store, on sale in the decorative arts section. No one knew anything about them, so the attribution and the judgment are mine.

Pre-Columbian copies at Pier I are clearly slip cast in quantity, and stood in rows on the shelf. I had been looking for an example of such a copy that did not cost too much. This one surprised me when I got home because it did not look as bad as when it was with so many others, especially from the side view. So I began to question my first response. Could it be an accurate copy? Could it be that the ancient original was not up to
my standards? When collecting, quality is not an infallible guide to antiquity, nor is antiquity a
guarantee of quality. This example has a vaguely Aztec look.

The art world is full of various kinds of fakes and
forgeries. The stories about them often involve detective
work worthy of a crime thriller, including sophisticated
scientific techniques and iconographic expertise. Museum
people suffer embarrassment when an artifact they had
paid a lot for and proudly displayed turns out to be an
imitation. We have all read about such cases in the
newspapers and may even have felt a tinge of glee at the
discomfiture of the mighty.

However, there are a number of stories about cases
that have never reached public attention. One told by
Sawyer (1982): Fakes discovered by expert detective work
by the iconographic expert Donnan were traced back and
found to have been made some years before by an art
student, who signed the works in all honesty. Many art
students and scholars have probably at some time been
attracted to an art form and attempted to duplicate it to
learn to understand it and to see if they could do it. Some
also do it as part of their training. I can relate to this,
having done it myself. (But my ceramics are glazed; they
would never be taken for Pre-Columbian.) Also having had
experience with a variety of art dealers, I am not surprised
that somewhere along the way in the history of these pieces, the surfaces had been damaged and
the signatures were no longer visible. There are a number of fine craftspersons in the world
making fine pieces in the styles of former times. Some of these people are deliberately making
fakes but many are just doing a job, and the middlemen who buy them decide on how to present
them. It is sad to me that people who can do such superior work have to have the work presented
as something old to command a good price on the market. It is particularly pleasing, then when
such a craftsperson becomes known in his/her own right and is paid a fair price. Many people
would rather have a genuine piece recently made in an ancient style than a fake or replica, but
the name of the artist must become recognizable, and signatures become as important as
authentication.

Copies that have high value are those made so long ago as to be antiquities in their own
right. The ones that we know most about are Roman copies of Greek sculptures and Chinese
copies of older paintings.

A form of replica found in Latin America involves the making of ceramic pieces from
Pre-Columbian molds. As these molds were probably used to make souvenir art for the
tourist/pilgrim of antiquity, the question is whether these pieces should be considered only as
fakes. They were actually modeled by Pre-Columbian artists, but the touch of long gone hands is
what is valued, so they are worthless. They are often sold as ancient and, by the definition of
how they are represented, they are fakes.

In Thailand also, there are stone carvers and woodcarvers described as not merely good
craftsmen but as brilliant sculptors, who can make more money by aging their works to sell as
antiquities. When the royal families were the principle patrons, they commissioned new works.
Now that the patrons are tourists, or *shoppers*, they want to believe the works are old. Note, however, that sold as new, or sold as old, this tourist art is of very high quality, and the tendency to dismiss all tourist art as junk is simplistic and reveals a romantic nostalgia for the past.

The article by Alexander (1984) tells about the revival of woodcarving at Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. One could hardly call this a resurrection, because the style and skill had never really been extinct. It was merely out of style in the face of modernity until a Mrs. Banyen discovered the tourist market for antiques. When the antiques became scarce, she had carvings made and antiqued to satisfy the demand. If tourists preferred to buy things that they could see being made, fine craftspersons might be recognized.

The situation in Thailand is very much like the situation with regards to African carving, where very fine carvers are required to age their works to make them look old or functional (see Africa chapter in the next section).

On a larger scale, Thailand has several potteries that experiment to find the ancient techniques and make very fine pieces without resorting to shortcuts. These pieces bear the kiln logo with proper pride, but when they eventually reach the market, many of them have become antiques.

Above right is a souvenir of Egypt, brought home by a friend. The reverse says “real papyrus pented,” the colors are painted, but the black outlines appear to be printed, a technique common in earlier days in the U.S. for greeting cards and the like. The painters need only slight skill, so the pay to artists can be extremely low. It is an ideal souvenir – small, light, and cheap. The extent to which any tourist item from Egypt has to do with ancient Egypt is interesting. The long history since then seems to be largely ignored, although there is much for persons interested in the arts, such as the works of the Coptic Christians as well as the wonderful works of the Muslim era.

On the left are some copies of Pre-Columbian works on the wall of Los Banditos a Mexican restaurant in my neighborhood. The man with the snake is a copy of the painting on a well-known and frequently pictured Mayan vase (A.D. 754) from Altar de Sacrificios, Guatemala, although for some reason the modern artist decided he should reduce.
A great variety of simplified copies of ancient works come on the market as little souvenir items. The one shown (left) is a Chinese bronze-age ceremonial vessel. The legs are discolored from use in a dish garden. The little candleholder, which can hold birthday cake size candles, is a copy of a medieval Europe original.
A friend brought me some rubbings from Korea. Supposedly they are rubbings made from antique relief carvings, but on going through them I recognized the horseman from an illustration I had seen. The original is a ceramic statuette, not a relief. In looking them over, I can only conclude that all the rubbings have been made from crude relief tablets of wood or clay. The results are genuine rubbings, but the images are in all probability, rather poor copies of photographs of a variety of art forms.

Interestingly enough, while I saw them as poor and distant echoes of fine antique art works, a friend who is knowledgeable about the current art scene liked them. She found them evocative of the primitive past. This is ironic because the arts they have drawn on were highly sophisticated. Her reaction made me wonder about the tourist image of Korea.

The use of book illustrations to copy or appropriate images reminds me of another experience. Once, on being asked to give my opinion on some carvings from the Pacific region I saw two or three statues carved from what amounted to thick boards. They were quite well done, but being made from frontal photographs, the carver did not know that the originals were solidly three-dimensional.
CHAPTER 4: Revitalizations and Revivals

Revitalization is the word I am using for art styles that have not disappeared but have lost vitality and some distinctive stylistic qualities, but in recent times, have been revived, regained vitality, and are continuing to evolve. With the impact of Europeans and Euro-Americans on the peoples of the rest of the world, many art styles were half forgotten as older pieces were destroyed or collected by outsiders. However, changes in material culture and even religious conversions do not always transform people’s world-views, and these views can again be expressed in art if the relationships with outsiders change to provide a more encouraging context.

The Northwest Coast of North America has produced one of the great art styles with regional variations. More southerly peoples were adopting the most distinctive, stylized characteristics of the art developed in the Northern part of the region when the Europeans appeared on the scene. An early effect of this contact was an increase in the production of woodcarvings with the introduction of steel tools. Another was the development of argillite carving on Queen Charlotte Island, where the material is found. Early trade meant an increase in trade and wealth as well as a reduction in population because of introduced diseases.

Then government agencies and Christian missionaries succeeded in suppressing the ceremonies and potlatches in which the arts played such a large part. Art was taken to museums; the great houses with their art gave way to other structures, and totem poles gradually disappeared. The culture seemed to have become a memory culture. But in the period after WWII some people from the dominant society became more open to diversity, and schoolteachers looked for sources of ethnic pride for the children. Hidden ideas and talents surfaced. Tourism increased and the sale of local art began to go beyond souvenir curious, but the style seemed to have lost something of its vitality.

Then an artist and academic, Bill Holm, published a formal analysis of the Northern style (Holm 1965). The effect was immediate, because the analysis revealed the formal qualities that had been so weakened over the years. Although the subject matter had been repeated in the making of curios, many of the elements that made these works so distinctive had been lost. These
formal qualities are important in making the art of this region one of the Great Styles of the world. This artistic revitalization has been significant, as it has brought both money and respect to the native peoples of the region.

With this revitalization, the art has been increasingly valued so that the works of artists with big names are moving into the Fine Art category in terms of price and esteem. The artists complain that purchasers want traditional themes and forms, and they would like to develop new ones. Some have abandoned tradition and have become mainstream. Art from the area continues to change, and some of the fusions of traditional with mainstream art are fine. In my opinion, the best work comes from those who have thoroughly mastered the style and are incorporating both old and new (MacNair et al. 1980).

The two thunderbird carvings (p. 30), one of which has been made into a lamp, are clear examples of work made for sale before Bill Holm published his analysis of the classic Northern style.

One of the illustrations from Holm’s (1965) book shows the kind of analysis that has been so influential.
While argillite carving seems to have been a result of the contact situation, it has had a fairly long and interesting history, and as it is old enough to be antique, we can call the style, which was derived from woodcarving, the traditional one. Many pieces have moved into the fine art category, price wise, but there are smaller pieces like the beaver pendant. It shows very well the way realistic elements are recombined in the traditional style. The teeth can be clearly seen and the eyes above the mouth and the ears above the eyes, but the hatched area between the ears represent the beaver’s tail.

The silk-screen process is an innovation that has been successful in this area and is very well suited to carrying on the painting traditions that had been done on wood. As the Northwest Coast style has risen in esteem and price, it provides a form of fine art that is affordable. There are many stylistic variations that have developed, but this is quite traditional (Stewart 1979).

The Indians of the Plains have produced a variety of art works during the reservation years, some made for sale and some for local use. (A recent survey is Conn 1986.) I cannot easily label current Plains art, but there is a feeling of revitalization in the range of forms I have seen. Native Americans of the Plains area have drawn of their history for subject matter and
work in many media, but have continued to emphasize painting and two-dimensional works. Many use the knowledge they have gained in mainstream schools without losing touch with their traditions.

For example, Arthur Amiote uses mainstream techniques, such as silkscreen and collage, not only to commemorate his forebears, but also to comment on contact history with ironic wit. This piece, a silkscreen using an old photograph of his grandfather, is one of the commemorative works. The little watercolor by Red Bear draws on the tradition of hide painting with a delightful tough of humor.

The Festival of India was a lively event held at the Landmark Center in St. Paul. The program was put on by people from India who live in the area, so the children would learn something about their origins. There was a program of dances from various provinces. A variety of foods were sold at booths, some of it eaten at tables. Also, many handcrafts were available, including this painting. I have been told that these painting are made at an art school in Northern India that trains students in the apprenticeship tradition, and works by the senior students are sold to support the program.

The style revived here goes back to the time when the Persian influence was marked.
ch. 4 Revitalizations and Revivals

64: Persian influence style of painting, Northern India.
CHAPTER 5: Imitations and Reverberations

This section could equally well be called *appropriations*. All artists use ideas and images from anything they have seen, but putting one’s own name on a close copy is different. I am using a similar idea here, except that it is a matter of copying an item made in the tradition of another culture, especially for use as a commercial item. Many of the copies and fakes under *resurrections* fall into this category. In the examples here, however, the styles are adapted to modern use of tastes, are never claimed to be ancient, and are often signed by the appropriator.

The matter of borrowing (when it refers to matters of style and content in the arts themselves), copying, and adapting the work of others is complex. The old academic saying is “If you use the work of many others, it’s scholarship, if only one, it’s plagiarism” has its counterpart in the visual arts. Artists have always developed their styles by following the styles around them. The individual input is small, although it may seem radical at the time. If this were not so, we could not so easily recognize the styles of place and period from the past.

In terms of the images themselves, ethnic arts are widely used both in recombination (*scholarship*) and outright copying. There is a vast gray area such as silkscreen images of Hopi pots with no other content at all, sometimes made by Anglos.

A well-known example is the dinnerware used for years until 1970 on the Santa Fe railroad. It was a white, hotel grade, under-glaze, high-fired China with designs taken from ancient Mimbres earthenware, which was remade and offered for sale again to nostalgia buffs in 1986.
One of the Mimbres designs used on this dinnerware was the little rabbit figure (p. 35) that still more recently has been painted on pieces of stone and sold as rock art, now that stone is so in. Another use of prehistoric rock art is the use of such figures on slate tiles for use as trivets. They are made in several sizes and I use mine a lot.

I do not know whether this imitation of Northwest Coast argillite style was designed by a Native American, but it is a fine adaptation of the style.

Not all the artifacts in this category are as faithful to the Northwest Coast styles as the previous items.
In modern times, images of art forms from almost anyplace are known almost everywhere, and the people in Kenya are experts.

And how about replicas and copies? If you examine museum catalogues you will find not only objects inspired by ancient and exotic arts, but also works adapted from many pieces, artifacts that are copies, and there are also exact replicas. The attitudes toward replicas are interesting. I have known people who sneer at museum replicas in the visual arts, but who would not dream of being without recorded music in the house.

70: A little mold-made plastic pot found for sale in the Toronto airport.

71: Paint by number plastic totem pole, North America.

72: Printed burlap tablemat, U.S.

73: The Aku Ba figure is a well known item made by the Asante (Ashanti) of Ghana. They vary in size, ranging from six to ten inches tall and are carved of wood. This one is made of bone in Kenya, some 4,000 miles away.
Here we have two comparable objects with different histories. One is a museum replica (left) of unimpeachable accuracy that differs from the original only in that it is made of polymer instead of ivory, and it takes close inspection to detect that. The original was a netsuke from Japan. (Netsuke’s were toggles to hold pouches on the clothes before pockets became usual.) It represents Shoki the demon catcher. Netsuke’s are delightful miniature works of art and are much esteemed by collectors. Many command high prices, but considered purely visually, the replica is esthetically of equal quality.

The second had lost its country of origin sticker by the time I found it in an import store, and the clerks knew nothing about it. I could see that it stylistically resembles a netsuke – the feet and linen cloth are well carved underneath, for example, as netsukes were meant to be seen from any angle. It is much too large for a real netsuke. Friends who know Indonesia tell me that this figure is carved in many sizes, and with great variety in quality. In that region it is called *The Grieving Buddha*. I assume that these are copies made from some original netsuke.

**Reverberations**

Influences go back and forth. Artists and craftspersons see works from other cultures and sometimes directly use these ideas in their work. Their ideas may influence artists and craftspersons in the society of the earlier forms; these kinds of reverberations have probably always been going on but are more obvious when the styles were originally dissimilar. The best known example is the reverberation between Japan and the Western world, especially as centered in Paris just before the turn of the century. Japanese prints and Western paintings were the main focus of this process, but the history of Chinoiserie and the effects of the European taste on Asian crafts is a long one. The East-West reverberations are well known to art historians, but the reverberations between Africa and Europe are usually treated in a more one-sided way. Eugene Ogan has called my attention to the long history of reverberations in music between the Hawaiian Islands and the mainland.
The interrelations of Mexican and Southwest weaving go back a long way. Many Zapotec weavings look something like Navajo ones and often are found for sale in the shops of the Southwest at prices well below that of the Navajo ones. They are woven on a frame loom. Such weavings, especially small rugs, are popular with younger people who want a trendy southwest look for their homes.

But Zapotec weaving has gone on longer than Navajo weaving, and the Zapotec have a considerable variety of styles at their command. Some of the resemblances to SW patterns result simply from the nature of weaving techniques. There are also some interesting revivals and innovations in this area.

I sometimes wonder about the content of Euro-American visual art in terms of appropriation. Are photography and painting forms of appropriation and what about the primitive idea that photographs steal people’s souls? I never thought of painting this way, possibly because my mother painted people wherever she was with the same kind of detached affection for all. But what about those who only represent quaint others? For example, the Taos school of artists, many sent out by the Santa Fe railroad early in this century, use Native American models with various props, sometimes ethnically inaccurate, and usually in the studio. They presented their subjects as the exotic other, much as their contemporaries in Germany did with people and props from other parts of the world. It is easy to disparage such an approach, but our eternal problems of trying to understand people who are different inevitably starts with some superficial recognition. The romantic view is a step up from ignoring or disparaging and several steps up from the view that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. Many Native Americans are even uncomfortable with paintings of their ancestors in terms of the myth of the Noble Savage (Coen 1969), although they may be willing to encourage newer versions, especially their own. It is by no means unusual for peoples to romanticize their past histories.
CHAPTER 6: Innovations

Whatever the myths about creative genius, every invention is a combination of elements known before. This is as true of art as it is of technology. Perhaps one could call all the histories of changes in style and technique combinations as so many processes are involved in most cases, but as I have said, the terminology is only intended to call attention to the fact that there are many different kinds of change. So the category of innovation offers a continuum from continuations through modifications to innovations often including appropriations, resurrections, revitalizations, and so on.

East Africa, especially Kenya, has been an area where a considerable variety of objects have been produced to provide souvenirs. When I go to import stores, I often find some new forms, and I am delighted by the ingenuity involved. Tourists have long considered this safari country, and they have been primarily interested in big game animals, so these provided popular subjects, but the blackness of Africa provides another exotic quality.

The wood of the Mingo tree is known as African Blackwood to musicians and ebony to collectors of African sculpture. It grows in Southern Tanzania. Ebony is a very hard wood with a black core that is difficult to carve, so it was not used before Europeans found it a perfect medium and commissioned African carvers to make exotic figures to express Africa for them. By now, these carvings have been made by the Makonde long enough to be considered traditional and some are Fine Art. Recent smaller ones are still within my tourist art price range. The most popular Makonde sculptures have been elongated, sinuous anthropomorphic figures often intertwined. Some are said to be witches, weird spirits, and the like, but some are said to represent the interdependence of people. The more valued ones are large and black, reflecting in part the value of the wood. This one (above left) comes from a smaller piece, probably a limb, and shows the light outer wood.

Industrial use of this wood for clarinets and other musical instruments is beginning to endanger the supply, but local people use fewer trees and use every scrap for small souvenir pieces and chessmen. Both wood and carvings are exported to nearby Kenya, where the wood is also carved for export and the tourist trade, nearly always as human figures. Lighter wood is used for animals.
The ebony figurines made in Kenya, usually by the Kikuyu people, began to be made later than the Makonde. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the ones shown here were sold as novelties in drug stores in this country. The man with the staff (p. 40) stood out among a bunch of these as an affecting presence for me. I liked the echoing curves. The other (with a spear) I picked up in a flea market at a later date to show the variations in quality that come out of the bush factories, where a number of such items are made, usually to a pattern. Such places provide training in carving skill and a few persons emerge as artists. The Masai warrior on the right is the most common form.

These two statuettes (below right) are apparently from Africa. Some friends found them at a local flea market. I don’t know why they are tooled all over. Does this indicate an attempt at Euro-American style or an attempt to look primitive or folksy? Traditional African esthetic tastes would call for a smooth, finished look better achieved in the faces of these figures.
Animal figures have been exported since the 1950s in sizes up to six or eight inches. The animal necklace is more recent. Such items seem so trivial as to not merit attention as art, but while they are trivial, they are not bad. One wonders how they would be viewed if they were larger or made of precious material or presented in a different context. The little ebony heads show the range of quality in the smaller ebony item made by learners.

One clever use of easy to get materials that does not require expensive tools can be seen in these banana leaf figurines and the banana leaf collage. The animal figures are standardized in form and ideal souvenir pieces, as they are small, characteristic of the country, light weight, and inexpensive. Some human figures seem to me to have quite a presence. They are the type of thing that can very properly be called folk art and are comparable to the corn dollies of Western tradition. Perhaps I should have put these under continuations and modifications, as corn dollies have probably been made for thousands of years wherever there were suitable leaves, but I do not know about their history in this area, and they seem to be a new clever form of souvenir. The animal pieces were purchased from an ad in *Africa News*. This operation had the explicit purpose of getting a larger share of the retail price to the persons who made the objects. However, it is very hard to get rid of import and sales costs unless parts of the chain are contributed by volunteer efforts.
Tie-dye and resist dye (batiks) may be used to produce art in the form of wall hangings or pictures for sale. These are more likely to be pictorial rather than the abstract and decorative patterns that were traditionally used for clothing. These examples are from Kenya, where batik is a relatively recent technique. The same adaptation has been made in Java.

On the next page is an example of the use of recent technology, a slip-cast pottery figurine from Chile. These figures are cleverly designed for the technique, as they are very smooth with no undercutting. In slip casting a plaster-of-Paris mold is used, and the clay is in liquid form with sodium silicate added. It is poured into the mold, which is often in two or even more parts. The clay dries and shrinks. Slip casting is the technique used in hobby ceramics shops but is looked down upon by the art world because of the type of kitsch that is produced in them. The technique can be used for forms of high quality too, but rarely is. The style is interesting, having a lot of sentimental appeal and a slick, professional look but not a deplorable message.
Zambia, as I note from advertisements, is actively promoting tourist trade. The innovation on the right, a mold-made ceramic figurine with a shiny black glaze should do very well as a souvenir item. It emphasizes blackness, as ebony does. The technique is a European one, and at least some of the materials, such as the glaze and kiln, probably are too. There is not a great deal of traditional African style here, except the rather large head and the African piano he is playing. All of those on sale at the import store were the same except for different instruments.

European influence takes many forms and comes from many sources. The painting from Kenya picks up the European idea of a framed painting to be hung on a vertical wall. It is in a decorative style designed to please the middlebrow more than persons from the art establishment. It is signed. I wonder how it would be rated if the decorative style were currently in fashion.

Sometimes innovation comes in the form of unusual technical combinations. The piece below seems like a modern piece of work stylistically, but the way it is made is unusual. The back is pigskin rawhide covered with foil, sprayed with some kind of paint, and covered with a thin layer of glass. I was told that many objects of this type were made for sale in Mexico City in the 1960s. At first blush, this does not seem very ethnic nor very touristy, but Nell Ytsma pointed out the kind of tourists that swarmed over Mexico at that time were Hippies, and it is a remarkable example of an innovative adaptation to the customer’s taste. I do not know who originated it, but pigskin rawhide is not exactly a hi-tech material.
Missionary influence of one kind or another has affected African art since the fifteenth century. In some cases Christian icons were made in the local styles, but more usually the missionaries wanted something more Christian. Some artists went to mission schools and absorbed the styles presented to them. In this example, the style is very European, except for a touch of African, as in the treatment of the ears. When this piece arrived from Tanzania as a gift from Mary E. Read (now Nicholson) it had no word with it. I saw it as being in the tradition of the craftsperson that dedicates his work to the Virgin, so I was pleased when the letter came telling me that it is a self-portrait of John the Carver who worked for the White Fathers in Tanzania in the 1960s.

Another material that has been widely used to make items for sale is soapstone. There are many kinds of stone that are relatively soft and easy to carve when freshly dug but harden when exposed to air, such as chrysolite, argillite, serpentine, catlinite (pipestone). Such materials were used for utilitarian objects such as small bowls and the like, sometimes, like Native American pipestone, artistically carved. But where soapstone is available it lends itself nicely to making art forms in a variety of styles. Perhaps the best known is the Inuit (Eskimo) figures. With their territories so encroached upon after WWII, Inuit peoples were in need of new ways to make a living. An artist named James Houston saw something of the potential of carving and got sales started through the Canadian Handcraft Guild.
By the 1950s many thousands of pieces were on the market (Swinton 1972). With so many carvers getting into the act, quality varied widely for a while but has now become much more professional. Eber (1990) provides a remarkable account of how sculptures recording actual events have served as evidence in court cases and so have become functional in the modern context. The piece shown here was probably made in the 1960s.

Argillite carving (p. 45) on the Northwest Coast of North America goes back to early contact with whalers and other ships and a variety of items carved to sailors’ tastes. In time, the items most frequently made were small totem poles in the traditional style. These now command Art prices. All are made by the Haida of Queen Charlotte Island where the stone is found.

Pipestone (catlinite) occurs in what is now southwest Minnesota. The pipes made from it in pre-contact time were often sacred objects and works of art that were widely traded. This is the smallest of souvenirs (Shane 1959).

The mythology of the Iroquois, with the deep understanding of the balance of nature that is implied has long attracted me. A famous False Face mask represents the Twin who symbolizes darkness and the dark side. He got his crooked nose when he lost a contest with the Twin of light and bumped into a mountain. This soft-stone version came from a local airport store that carries a mix of Native American objects.

Soft stone comes from the Kisii district of western Kenya and figurative pieces for sale to missionaries and tourists were first made about the time of WWII. A variety of forms and styles have been produced. Carving is usually done with tools made locally from scrap metal, and are polished with a kind of leaf from the sandpaper tree. Soapstone can be turned black by firing it like ceramic blackware, although it is easier to use black shoe polish. In spite of the efforts to form cooperatives in the past, wholesale prices for Kisii carvings are very low, and traders make profits by selling at as much as three or four times what they paid. Considering how little one can buy such items for in the U.S., the carvers make a very poor living, even if it is a supplementary form of income and the whole family participates. Objects range from small souvenir animals to the chess sets that are perhaps the most elaborate and interesting forms.

The two plates (p. 47) from Kenya show something of the variety that has been developed there.
While the working of walrus ivory, whalebone, and antler was long known to the Inuit, the need for outside revenue has spurred a number of artistic innovations. Sometimes these were suggested by outsiders, but they were developed in various ingenious ways by the craftspersons. The very simple little figurine made of antler is an amusing and affecting presence, and I marvel at the vitality achieved with such economy of means.

A technological innovation that has been widely used in North America by Native American artists is the silkscreen process (p. 48). This is particularly important where the traditional techniques have produced forms that have become esteemed and expensive. The process, considered as fine art, is often called serigraph. It is done by making a stencil for each color and then pushing ink through a silk stretched below onto the paper surface. The artist does this often, but as is the case with much fine art printing, it is frequently done by cooperation with craftspersons that make the prints. Such prints are limited in number and signed by the artist, who continues to own the copyright. At a craft-art fair one can see an endless variety of innovations achieved by modifications, resurrections, and appropriations and inventions in various combinations.
At an American Craft Council Show in 1993, I picked up a piece that seems to incorporate all of these processes (below). The craftperson, an Anglo, has combined gourds, motif from the Southwestern USA with the idea and technology of a thumb piano from Africa. Some of the larger ones were incised with a variety of petroglyph motifs, including the ubiquitous Kokopelli. In this case she has used some metal pieces and old trade beads from Africa. A piano you can wear around our neck is undoubtedly an innovation.

This piece seems to embody a great deal of what is going on in the arts in all parts of the world. If one considers that the current Postmodernist period is a period of experimental eclecticism, it becomes clear that this is what is happening, not only with the professionally trained mainstream artists and craftpersons of the European tradition but with artists and craftpersons everywhere. Why should anybody consider our appropriations creative and charming, while expecting the others to stick to their traditions? Few are isolated from the bombardment of images that scatter over the earth on paper and over the airways, and even those who are in remote areas see the experiments of their near neighbors.

The wonder is that so many creative persons find that their traditional beliefs are so valuable that they seek to incorporate them in their art forms, however much they may experiment with ways to adapt them to the current situation. Artists and craftpersons everywhere experiment and use whatever new tools and materials are available and whatever images have stuck in their minds.
Some artifacts produced for sale, however, are so eclectic, so mainstream, that even though folk artists produce them, they are very Postmodern. Is this a Miro hanging on the wall? No, it is a weaving by an unnamed Zapotec folk craftsperson and is from Mexico (left). Where would you guess the object to the right is from?

107: Zapotec folk weaving, Mexico.

108: Unidentified stone carving.
CHAPTER 7: Postmodern Globalization

In the tourist place called Ports of Call on the shore near Long Beach in California, there are a number of import stores with souvenirs from various parts of the world as well as clothing, toys, and some very good food. This tourist destination illustrates the globalized world as it is envisioned by Postmodernism.

With the increased pace of globalization, the awareness of the diversity of human ideas and beliefs causes questions and confusions [everywhere]. The rapid changes give rise to ...a variety of ways of trying to retain what is valued from the past and what one finds attractive in the new. Appropriation has become a buzzword. What are artists trying to do? What are they saying?

The current Postmodern period in the arts is marked by an enormous amount of experimental eclecticism. This means the inclusion of a great deal from other ethnic traditions as well as from the distant past of one's own. Not that this is new. After all, there were influences from Japanese prints on Art Nouveau and Impressionism and of African masks on the Modernists. And further back there were many influences on Renaissance art. But the extent, explicitness, diversity, and rapidity of these influences are more marked today. The result is enormously varied, making it almost impossible to pick out any kind of representative sample.

Appropriation from the arts of any time and place depends on access to the arts and experiences of other times and places available to the artist, and with the information explosion, all artists now have easy access to art from all over. This access is not limited to the developed world. Small villages in Africa and Papua New Guinea have solar-powered TV and telephones. Tourists are in town where shops sell videos from the world.

All over the world, artists trained in universities and art schools copy, imitate, or combine any and all of the twentieth century and previous Western styles, on one way or another. A few years ago a show billed as fisherman's art from China proved to consist of the products of an art school in a fishing village, demonstrating a considerable range of modern style.

Globalization is so extensive that many of the same trends can be seen everywhere. Everywhere there are traditionalists producing art in the styles of the past. Sometimes they would like to modify or change them, but many of their patrons will only buy traditional forms, whether realistic paintings of Chinese ducks and geese, African masks, or New Guinea painted bark cloth.

One can easily interpret the Postmodern appropriation of art forms from other cultures as a way of accepting diversity. The idea that art functions to provide trial balloons for new ways of conceiving relationships is relevant here. But there are some curious ways in which the them/us habit of thinking makes us react differently to the styles of other peoples. For one, the eclecticism of our artists is considered clever and inventive, but it is regarded as a shame for others to abandon their traditions.

But artists and craftsmen everywhere have access to almost as much of the world's art as contemporary artists of the developed world. They are all Postmodern in that sense now. They cannot forever be primitive and folk and let us be the creative, innovative ones.

The eclecticism of the Postmodern period makes for an extraordinary diversity in the art scene. African artists seem particularly inventive in the use of found (scrap) materials and

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1 Nearly all of this chapter, for which Evelyn Hatcher had written only the first paragraph, is adapted directly from her chapter on Postmodernism in her early book (Hatcher 1998: 238-253).
combinations. African artists also explore the uses of industrial materials. Cities fare full of hand painted commercial art in both naive and more sophisticated styles. In Nigeria, the graves of important personages may now be marked with highly realistic concrete portraits, painted with acrylic.

In Africa, there are also continuations of traditional styles in many rural areas. There are also fine traditional craft arts that are in some cases sold for export. For example, in Northeast Nigeria gourds are decorated in a variety of techniques and styles. Some arts, traditional in many parts of Nigeria, are new elsewhere. It would be a mistake to assume that all learning is from the developed world. For example, The Tiv, who never used masks before, now use them in their contemporary puppet and masquerade theaters. In Papua New Guinea, village people that used to value plastic baskets from China now seek to copy and adapt basketry bags from the Highlands of New Guinea made in local materials.

At the present time, it is often hard to make a clear distinction between folk art, tourist art, and export art. Many charming and some fine works in various mediums are being produced for sale if one looks at the art itself with an open mind. Of course there is a lot of junk being produced everywhere. Experiments do not always work. There was also a lot of junk being produced in the past, which usually disappeared. But with all the global diversity, it is not easy to determine what will pass the test of time. Patron’s tastes have been shaped by the values of their cultures, and esthetic values are somehow related to other values, and to the metaphors, verbal and otherwise, that express them. To learn about these is an aid to understanding and appreciation.

There has long been a push toward identification with a national state and a pull of one's hometown or region. With the additional affect of globalization and the increase in network communities, one can see how people and art become increasingly difficult to categorize. This shows up in the arts as regional styles interacting with Postmodern eclecticism. New mediums and mixed mediums tend to appropriate from past times and other places.

Museums have come to play an important role in presenting cultural diversity as exemplified in art forms. Outsider art is no longer simply lumped in a section called primitive art. Museums provide an important social function, because art opens up at least a beginning of understanding. With the new emphasis on diversity, and in discovering arts from all over, can we rid ourselves of snobbery about the world of others? What kind of standards can be worked out that can be applied to all this Postmodern diversity?

But there are some interesting cross cultural similarities relating to the functions of the arts that are illuminating. Art still metaphorically and symbolically communicates values and provides trial balloons for ways to change social structures and values. There are some similarities of form and function in a great many societies, but the kinds of society have changed. To try to learn all one can about an art form, its context, ethnoesthetics, craftsmanship, and all the levels of meaning, tends to give a new perspective in which the qualities of the work can be better evaluated and appreciated.

Globalization is a fundamental process of history from the beginning of time. We are just more aware of it today because communication technologies and travel opportunities are speedy and ubiquitous. Tourism itself has become a central topic in contemporary Postmodern anthropology, as it is one manifestation of the migrations and mixings and meanderings that has made traditional ethnography, which concentrates on whole settled communities, difficult and unlikely. As individuals have increasingly split off from their birthplaces to seek their fortunes, or to survive, anthropology has seen fit to focus on the individual rather than on the
communities, which generated the cultures and the arts we have studied. Some ideas that are part of Postmodernism have been part of anthropology at least since the early 1900s. However, as we look at individuals who are on the move rather than at communities that have remained together in one place, we can follow Postmodernists who look at the goals and intentions of individual human actors rather than primarily at the consequences and processes of social forces. When considering art that is made for trade rather than for traditional ceremonies or purposes you have to look at individual intentions and creativity. Anthropologists and art museums have tended to discard tourist art that does not fit into someone's idea of, or documentation of, or insistence that something was used in a ritual. Postmodern theories support my long held view that a piece of art made to sell often has its own affecting presence far from what may have been its ceremonial starting place. There has never been any need to see it as without value because it is without ritual context. That is what I have tried to show as I look at particular objects of art acquired in particular places, sometimes for no particular reason beyond my liking it, throughout this book.
PART II: Contexts

CHAPTER 8: Indonesia, Especially Bali and Java

The cultures of Indonesia can be conceived as successive layers, as over centuries various peoples came over the seas to trade their goods and give, or impose, their ideas, their religions, their rulers, and their art forms. The earliest peoples were probably hunters and gathers with some cultivation of root crops. In recent times, remnants of this way of life have been described among peoples in remote areas, such as the interior of Malaysia (the Semai) or the Andaman Islands. Malayo-Polynesian kinds of cultures based on rice cultivation followed, and this way of life is still a visible component of life in the area. In Bali, these elements became well integrated with the later waves from India, mainly transmitted through Java, the Buddhist and Hindu formulations that became Balinese Hinduism. When the Islamic wave took over Java, some Javanese rulers, with their courts and attendant artisans, moved to Bali and became Balinese.

Off and on, over the centuries since, Chinese traders have brought their goods and ideas, and these too have left their traces in the arts of the region. But this was not a one-way trade; Chinese records between the seventh and fifteenth centuries tell of treasured gifts of cotton and silk cloth brought by emissaries from Sumatra, Java, and Bali. Portuguese and Dutch traders got patola cloth in India and brought it to Indonesia to trade for spices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ancient ways of life have persisted, especially in the interiors of many Islands, while the most recent influences are more
evident near the coasts. The nation state of Indonesia includes the western half of New Guinea, called Irian Jaya, and this area shows very few influences from Asia. What all this means is that Indonesia is a land of many cultural traditions, many languages and ways of life that are mingling, and there are many ongoing dilemmas concerning the efforts to build national unity and the desire to retain ethnic identities, a situation that is complicated by ethnic rivalries, prejudices, and vast differences in wealth and influence.

One noticeable dilemma lies in the desire of the government and many educated persons to modernize and become one of the great industrialized states, but much of the money available to industrialize comes from tourist interest in the exotic and therefore traditional sights and goods.

The history of textiles in recent times illustrates some of the processes of change in the area, even in a very brief overview. Before the introduction of the treadle loom by Europeans, the fine fabrics of the area were woven on the backstrap loom. Yarns were handspun and dyes were all vegetal. The European loom permitted the weaving of wider fabrics, making commercial quantities of ikat fabrics possible, and men tended to become the weavers instead of women. However, competition with automatic looms and other machine products all but shut down production in the 1960s. Then some academics began doing research of ikat and other weaving and ways to bring about a revival and develop markets, which has been done
with great success (see Batubara in Ave and Achjada 1988). Mechanically spun thread and chemical dyes have made the weaver’s work easier, and production has enormously increased. The thread and dyes have affected the designs, and furthermore, weavers have become aware of designs from all over Indonesia. The world market for these textiles has made revitalization possible.

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Such hand woven fabrics have become a source of wearable art that designers can use for sale to upscale customers, but some of the materials are also sold as art in the sense that they are used as tapestries to hang on a wall. The free-form ikat shown here (next page: illustration 114) was bought as a fabric and made into a tunic for me. My friend who made the tunic dubbed it the “Rorschach ikat”.

Ikat is the technique of making patterns with thread that has been tie-dyed before weaving. This technique was widely used in many parts of the Indonesian islands. The tunic shown here was made of Balinese ikat, done in a random pattern that comes out as abstract. It is of course far more difficult to plan figurative patterns using both warp and weft (or double ikat), which means tie-dying the thread very precisely, so that when woven together an image is formed. Ikat is seen fairly often in hand woven fabrics, but double ikat with figurative designs are something else. I am told that in Bali it all still comes from the traditional source: the village of Tenganan Pageringsingan (Gittenger 1979).
These samples show the series of operations to wax and dye a fine batik.

I was surprised to learn that batik is not a traditional technique in Bali. Ceremonial, festive, and status garments might be a complex ikat or gold leaf appliqué.

Batik is dyed after the cloth is woven, using wax or other material to resist the dye in the desired areas. The best batik from Java involves a very elaborate process involving many steps. A design is drawn on the fabric with wax, the material is dyed, the wax removed and the process is repeated. I bought a sample set that show each step in the process and sometimes wear my true batik jacket. Another technique that is somewhat less time consuming is the use of a metal stamp to put on the wax. This technique is often used in combination with the former. Widely sold also are jackets made from cloth printed with batik designs.

Javanese batik is widely used for sarongs, and there have been a great variety of designs. New technologies have stimulated creativity. I was happy to find this patchwork shirt (right) with the wonderful collection of patterns. An economical sampler, it was made from the good parts of old sarongs, like crazy quilts in America, but it was made for sale in Bali. Such garments suddenly became available in the U.S. in 1992-93.
116: An applicator from Indonesia (canting) used to paint the wax designs on cloth before dying. They come in various sizes.

117: Details of design on a reversible batik jacket, Indonesia. Made in traditional form, metal stamps were used to apply the wax. Note that the colors are the same as on the samples above showing the technique.

118: Metal stamp for applying hot wax to fabrics, Indonesia. This too is an individually hand-made item and can stand alone as a work of art.

119: Patchwork shirt made from good parts of old batik sarongs, Bali.
More recent innovations include commercially made printed cloth using designs from traditional batiks. Jackets were made in considerable quantities for export. This one is lined in plain black cotton, while the real batik one has batik on both sides. One recent innovation is the production of pictorial works meant to be hung on a wall. This is a form of art that takes up little space in a suitcase and makes a good souvenir. A detail of the pattern is shown below. More recent innovations include commercially made printed cloth using designs from traditional batiks. Jackets were made in considerable quantities for export. This one is lined in plain black cotton, while the real batik one has batik on both sides. One recent innovation is the production of pictorial works meant to be hung on a wall. This is a form of art that takes up little space in a suitcase and makes a good souvenir. A detail of the pattern is shown on the right.

The enormous range of techniques and styles to be found in Indonesia should fascinate persons interested in baskets, including collectors. Basketry goes so far back in time that it was probably a known technique that appeared long before textiles of spun fibers.
The making of horn spoons is another old technique that is found in many parts of the world. There are some fine old examples from the Northwest Coast of North America. While these are perhaps no longer made for domestic use, being replaced by metal and plastic, the craft is used to make souvenir items like the one below.

The horn available in this part of the world is water buffalo, an exotic beast to persons from the Northern Hemisphere.

The Dutch conquered Java over a period of two centuries (between 1619 and 1808), but they did not secure control over Bali until 1906/08, and even then changes were not imposed to the extent found in some other areas. This is an area where we can talk about an art tradition in the villages that was functional until the 1930s, and to some extent, still persists. The people of Bali have been called the most artistic in the world, and what has happened in this century gives us an illuminating taste of art history in action.

The island of Bali in Indonesia has had a long and complex history of peoples and ideas from other cultures and yet developed its own characteristic stylistic qualities that have made its art unique. Bali’s artistic traditions have charmed and fascinated people from the industrialized world for most of this century, so the history of the arts is well documented. However, the enormous diversity that has developed in the recent period of mass tourism is hard to encompass, and no simple generalizations can cover it.

The diversity that has occurred in an area as small as Bali is extensive and extraordinary. The style that has been traditional in Bali since about 1350 A.D. came from Java, where it had been developing for hundreds of years. This style is known as the Wayang style, which is found in many forms. For example, the lontar (palm leaf) books are still made in the traditional way. They tell the stories of Ramayana and other Hindu epics in their Balinese-Hindu form.
Paintings were used as banners and hangings, and were made on bark cloth or handmade cotton fabric sized with starch and polished with a shell. The colors used were black and white, red Chinese vermillion, indigo, as well as yellow and ochre. The subject matter illustrated the same ancient epics as the lontar books and puppet plays. The lontar books contain written accounts on one side of each leaf. The paintings were done in a series of illustrative scenes, like some medieval Christian murals.

One of my favorite subjects for all of these art forms was the story told in the Ramayana. Early in the story, the princess is abducted and the Garuda follows so that he can tell the prince where they have gone, leading to the many adventures that unfold. It is this part of the story that is shown here in the detail of the painting, and other episodes fill the entire work. This example was probably painted just before the style changed in the late 1920s. The lontar book leaf below shows the same episode.

In the 1930s, several artists from the Western world, including Walter Spies and Miguel Covarrubius, often visited Bali for long periods. Their works, words, and influence started new traditions including the painting of easel pictures. Tourists with the wealth and leisure for the long journey came and discovered the artistic wealth. Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson documented some of the culture on film and were followed by other anthropologists so that exotic Bali became a place generations of college students had read about and seen films of.
A number of changes were made as a result of contact with artists trained in the European tradition, who introduced not only new stylistic techniques, but also new materials. Subjects painted in the new style were the Balinese people themselves, and while the paintings show ceremonies and masked dramas, it is the people and not the super-naturals who are the subjects. Compositions are of a moment in time, not episodic, and are very, very full with overlapping figures.
One of the best known of the plays performed in Bali, which was described, filmed, and interpreted by Margaret Mead, is the drama of the witch Rangda and the Barong, a kind of dragon. Rangda brings disease, fear and death. The Dragon, with a group of young men, comes out to fight the witch. She throws the young men into a trance, and they turn their krises against themselves, but do not shed their blood. Mead says:

Adults and children and babies in arms watched the play over and over again, seeing how the witch never conquered and was never finally killed. And watching, they learned that the greatest protection against their fears was to be found in the theatre. (Mead 1959:118)

Westerners tend to interpret this as the battle of Good and Evil, but it is subtler than that and involves some concepts as to how to deal with fear and evil and how to balance the forces that surround us.

In a style that since the 1930s has become the traditional one for paintings, the artist A. Rai P. F. Tulu has represented the confrontation between the witch Rangda and the Barong, in the now traditional style. It is quite representational, as the masks and costumes are very ornate but achieve an additional effect from crowding so much into such a small space.
The Barong (p. 61) often looks like a lion but may be more like a tiger or a pig. Two men wear the dragon mask costume. As Mead pointed out, the witch Rangda seems to express fear as well as fearsomeness.

With the ideas about painting that came from the European world, came the custom of framing them. This provided no problem to the Balinese, as there have always been skilled carvers. These chip-carved frames came with the paintings, and it is noticeable that the joinery is not the best.

It should be noted that each painting has been signed by the artist.
Wood and stone carving has long been highly developed in all of Indonesia, as can be seen in the many temples of Bali. Carvings are still made from the wonderful assortment of woods available (Eisman and Eisman 1988) and the history of this art form in this century is a most interesting one. The traditional styles of woodcarving that were to be found before 1930 were the elaborate forms made for temples and palaces, painted and gilded with gold leaf, as well as a great variety of masks made for the colorful dance dramas. Carving in Bali is not done by artists but by craftsmen. However, Master carvers have long been recognized for their artistry and their work recognized in current terms as art. The craft tradition means that training is by apprenticeship; son often follows father, and whole families may participate in parts of the work. Depending on the quality and quantity of the work done, the apprenticeship system can grade into a factory-like system with tourist items turned out in quantity.

134: The frame that came on the Tree of Life painting has a wash of thin ivory enamel, and I have made no effort to change it.

135: The Garuda (Bali) shown here is a tourist version of the important figure in the Ramayana myth. It is simplified from the much more ornate traditional forms.

136: A mask representing a noble citizen of the Monkey Kingdom, Indonesia.
In the 1930s, when carvers came in contact with Western artists Spies, Bonnet, and Covarrubias, they developed a very different form. As Holt says:

In the village of Mas, still an important art center, the most fantastic, sleek, fluid, elongated and sometimes even spidery figurines appeared….Unlike the traditional colored and gilded wood sculpture of flaming fantastic creatures or elaborately adorned human figures, the smooth carvings with flowing lines were of highly polished natural wood. (Holt 1967:177-78)

This style is said to have reached its peak in the 1950s. Since then the carvers have responded to the great variety of influences and the preferences of traders and patrons by producing not only these styles but a considerable variety of new and modified ones. Many traditional forms are still made, some with fine craftsmanship, some made more quickly for the tourist and export trade. The flying mermaid, a very popular item, is derived from the tradition of heavenly nymphs. Such nymph figures, hung over a baby’s cradle, protected the child. Tourists buy them for the same purpose. I do not know when or how they got tails.

I have not as yet found much information on such forms in the past, because the histories describe the finest art and it is possible that not all art was to the highest standard. Also, so much of the art of Bali has long been ephemeral-art as event rather than as possession used for the round of ceremonies.

Some forms are still made for local consumption, and a great many are adapted in a number of ways to the tastes of the many types of tourists who come in increasing numbers to the island not only from Europe and America but from nearby Australia and from Asia. A lot are sold to exporters, and in addition, entrepreneurs from the developed world employ the local craftspeople to turn out very un-Balinese objects on the world market for novelties. I cannot look upon these objects with detachment and I find most of them very unpleasant, particularly when placed alongside the novelties the Balinese initiate.
The painting on the left is an example of one of the many styles that have developed as a result of European influences and patron preferences. The bananas are made of wood, and such realistic carved and painted wooden fruits have become a popular souvenir and export form along with wooden palm trees and the like.
The fan is modified from traditional form, but the cactus, bananas, and cats are made in response to the commissions of outsiders (p. 66). Cactus is not native to Indonesia – it is a dry-land North American form, but it is exotic looking. Some people like cats and will buy anything in the form of a cat.

Woodcarving in the outer Islands of Indonesia is very different from that of Bali and Java and often belongs to an older tradition. The great ethnic diversity of the area means a great variety of traditional styles in all crafts. And as each of these areas has had different contacts and different kinds and degrees of contact with other peoples, the diversity is rich and extraordinary. At one end of a scale of degree of contact, the Asmat of Iran Jaya carve their canoe prows and bis poles and were until recently very little touched by outside influences.

An area that has more recently become a tourist mecca is in the Tana Toraja area of Sulawesi. Sulawesi is the island formerly known as Celebese. This is an area where many of the traditional customs are still observed and it is especially the elaborate funerary practices that attract visitors. In Indonesia, funerals were traditionally the most elaborate ceremonies of all and were religious and extended family statements having to do with the importance of ancestors and the rank of the deceased and his relatives.

Crystal (1985:129) says:
So strong are these customs, that even the contemporary Christian majority preserves the structure and form of traditional funerary rites despite newly introduced monotheistic ritual, which has naturally altered them. Because death occurs with predictable regularity, because social rank and status are clearly manifested in the offering and exchange of livestock, and because death rituals constitute the principal occasion for consumption of animal protein in Tana Toraja, funerals are the most commonly attended (as observed) social and ritual events in this area…One pivotally important element in this funerary tradition, and one which survives among the Toraja to a degree unparalleled elsewhere in contemporary Southeast Asia is the fabrication of life-sized images (tau tau) of the deceased. Galleries of weathered tau tau funerary images are found throughout present day Tana Toraja.

143: Small version of a Toraja ancestor figure, Sulawesi.

144: Figure made for sale with a decoration resembling water buffalo horns, Sulawesi.
This is the area where the houses and granaries were built with picturesque curved roofs, and much fine craftsmanship in carved, woven, and painted decoration. The Indonesian government was trying to get the area modernized with look-alike houses in neat rows until they discovered the value of these exotic dwellings in attracting tourists. One of the charming items that tourists buy has been a miniature version of these houses in silver filigree.

Unfortunately another result of the attraction of this area has been the theft of the ancestor images from their balconies in the cliffs. The response to this has been to keep the figures in the houses and to make small versions for the tourist trade. I find that this one has some of the qualities of traditional full sized ones I have seen, in addition to reminding me of the tragedies caused by the greed of my kind. They also make a variety of other items for sale.

In Indonesia it seems that every technique for producing ceramics is known and used. Clay is hand modeled, shaped by paddles, formed in press molds, poured into plaster molds (slip-cast), and thrown on wheels. It comes in the form of earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, with or without glazes, and a great deal is of high esthetic quality.

The minor item shown here is simply a reminder that pottery crafts exist. From Bali, it is apparently made in a press mold like the traditional roof ornaments of the regions but without the clay appliqué that makes some of this work so elaborate. Newman (1974) has some good descriptions and illustrations of this and other techniques. On page 211 she shows:

Making tungkub, rooftop ornaments, in the pottery village of Pajaten in Bali is a timeless tradition. Here terra-cotta clay is rolled and flattened in shape and pressed into a fired clay stoneware mold. Then a top companion mold is pressed into the clay, sandwiching it into a shape.
Wayang Kulit

The shadow puppet play, with a subject matter devoted to the ancient Hindu epics, has survived as an important folk art in Java as well as Bali, in spite of the dominance of Islam and the more recent conversions to Christianity.

All that has been said about Southeast Asian theatre in general holds for Javanese drama, only more so. For at least a thousand years, Java has maintained a vigorous and venerable dramatic tradition in the form of wajang kulit, the puppet play that is regarded by Javanese as the most important vehicle of “Javanese religion”; that complex of mystical beliefs which most Javanese treasure more than Islam. (Peacock 1968: 4, 5)

Shadow puppets enact traditional dramas such as the Ramayana. Puppets and shadow puppets are classified as folk art, although there have been elaborate forms made for performances in temples and palaces. So puppets have been, and are, made in various sizes with various degrees of care and skill. New ones and old ones are available on the market, and the latter may have been more or less well repaired and repainted. These certainly should be called a continuation.

Javanese shadow puppets differ in style from those of Bali and can be most easily recognized by the elongated shoulder, almost like another segment of arm. This one represents a prince in one of the traditional dramas. It has been suggested that the long arms have a metaphorical meaning, as in the long arm of the law in English. Comic characters do not have this feature.

Smaller shadow puppets, made for sale as toys or souvenirs are not much for quality but demonstrate the different shapes of the Balinese figures. I have been told that the better Balinese puppets seldom come onto the market. One wonders why the traditional ones are so elaborately painted when only the silhouettes are seen in the performance. They are, however, sometimes seen otherwise, and it is perhaps proper that the “real” mythological characters are only known by shadows. Still, small boys in Java have the privilege of sitting behind the puppeteer and seeing the puppets themselves.
Revitalization

Nancy Coune has told me about an interesting development in the art of the shadow puppet theater. While the shadow plays remain popular and the puppets are often sold as tourist items, both the puppets and the plays have tended to become routinized. In Jogjakarta in Java, an intense and dedicated artist named Kasman is trying to communicate the mystical quality and spirituality of the past by using new techniques to present an expanded form of wayang kulit. Using three screens and puppeteers, larger orchestras, and live actors, all with brilliant colors and lights in a more modern tempo, he produces performances with a dramatic impact that is felt even by persons who do not know the stories. He makes all the puppets himself with more transparency and clearer colors than usual, giving great care to the form and quality of the shadows they cast. He does not make them for sale, but Nancy allowed me to photograph two that belong to her. This kind of innovation is just what I mean by revitalization, but as with many creative changes, both the form and the message have met with opposition in some quarters.
Stick puppets are also charming, although they lack some of the magic and mystery of shadow puppets. This one is also from Java, and wears a batik lap-lap in a very traditional Javanese pattern.

The head is supported by a wooden spindle which runs through the body and is rotatable. The arms, too, can be rotated at the shoulder and elbow joint, and can be moved by thin rods attached to the hands. The dalang is exceedingly skilled...so that the puppet really gives the impression of a living human being. “This play is performed both by day and by night…and is closely connected with the penetration of Islam into Java. Thus a play is performed about one Prince Menak, who by his military campaigns and victories prepares the world, so to speak, for the coming of the prophet Mohammed, and is thus a sort of forerunner, as John the Baptist was for Christ, but in the world of chivalrous romance. (Wagner 1959:138)

Geertz, in Negara (1980), has described nineteenth century Bali as a “theater state” with elaborate ceremonies and a great amount of time and resources put into esthetic endeavors. He suggests that all these efforts were not entirely pomp and circumstance serving to reinforce rank and power, but that rank and power served esthetic ends. We find that other descriptions are congruent with this interpretation. For example Margaret Mead in discussing child rearing, says:
Man may shape his culture, as the Balinese have done, so that there is a symbolic answer for every need, which is patterned in the growing child. The young child may be taught to know terror and frustration, bitterness of rejection and cruel loneliness of spirit very young, and yet grow up to be a gay and light-footed adult because, for every tension of the threads which have been twisted or double-woven in the delicate mesh of the child’s spirit, the culture has a symbolic relaxation ready. (1940:346)

It must be remembered that Balinese theatre is not just entertainment but a religious experience in which the esthetic has spiritual value comparable to a high mass in a beautiful cathedral.
Peacock suggests that this value system is not unique to Bali but that the attitude of putting on an esthetically elegant performance is an important value in Javanese tradition as well. It could even be called one of the strategies for survival.
...“alus” and “rukin” describe actions oriented toward keeping social relations harmonious, Alus behavior has aesthetic value. The surface appearance of alus etiquette is beautiful, therefore good in itself. The form and style of Alus behavior often means more than any practical end it serves. Javanese care about manners for manners’ sake. They strive to speak beautifully, to move with controlled balance and grace. Alus art is an extension of alus manners. (Peacock 1968:190)

In the shadow plays, there is an item called the *kekanyon* or *gunungan* that serves the same function as the curtain in Western theaters, to mark the end of a segment of the performance. The kekanyon represents a symbolic tree and is placed in the middle of the screen.

The Javanese and Balinese forms are of different shapes; the Javanese one is pointed, while the Balinese are rounded on top. Both have a variety of birds and flowers and other ornaments but with some differences in the symbols around the base of the tree.

The painting (p. 74) seemed to be an example of the experimentation and innovation of recent times in the arts made for sale. It is so small and detailed that I took it out of the frame for a closer look and used a wet finger on a corner to be sure it was not a print. After looking at it for a while, I saw marked stylistic resemblance to the Wayang Kulit forms and was surprised I had not recognized it sooner. The subject is the same *The Tree of Life*. 

CHAPTER 9: West Africa

This piece has provided me with a lot of fun, but the implications of what I have learned are disturbing. I bought it in an antique shop I had visited with a friend. There was no information with it, just a label: “MASK”! As it is African in feel, I asked several Africanists and curators about it. The answer in every case was, “It’s a fake.” I said, “It can’t be a fake because all the little tag said was ‘mask’ and that it is.” Finally, on a clue from Louise Lincoln, I learned that it is a tourist item made in several parts of West Africa, and I found two examples in a shop. They were similar in style but lacked much of the esthetic quality I find so affecting in this one. But all of them are authentic in the sense that they were hand-made in Africa. Mine shows considerable craftsmanship in detail. So it is an example of the potential of tourist art. As the shape resembles the Luba Kifwebe masks, I am reminded that many West Africans probably have seen the same books I have.

My experience with this piece emphasizes the part that labels play in what we see. The people I showed the picture to did not respond to the thing itself but automatically sought to place it in one of the categories of traditional tribal art that they know and consider authentic. This is a kind of blindness to what people are doing in the present and indicates the potency of myth and labels with regard to visual art.

Nearly five years after I acquired the mask above, I was in a large department store, and happened upon a Global Market with a number of items mostly from Kenya. Among them were half a dozen masks, almost exactly alike. The style must have sold well to have been ordered in such quantity. To me these have none of the affecting qualities of the older one from Ghana, although they are made in very much the same way. My first reaction was to be saddened by such mass production but thinking about the account of the workshop in Kumasi, (see next page) I realized that apprentices have always made copies, so this increase in quantity is not necessarily an entirely new and destructive thing. They learn their trade and a few of them may become innovative masters. And as a small exotic decorative item, these masks may lead a few purchasers to greater knowledge and appreciation of African art.
West Africa is a very large area with a great variety of peoples, languages, and life- ways. There are also a number of nation-states that were, for about a century, colonies of several European countries. Traditional art forms from this area are supposedly functional, that is, were made for use within the society and were uncontaminated by European influences. Implicit is the idea that these were small self-contained, tribal societies. However, the situation has not been so simple for millennia, as people have moved about, traded with each other, sometimes over long distances. Kingdoms and empires have risen and fallen but are remembered with nations named after them. Trade with the Mediterranean and SW Asian worlds has been going on for millennia, and craftspersons have made things for patrons and sold things in markets to other peoples for as long. Vansina (1984) has addressed the problem of the history of the arts in Africa and has indicated ways that we can work out the time dimension.

I would not have to use such a vast and complex region if it were possible to learn more about the arts that have recently been made for sale in any one part of the area. Bascon’s (1976) article in Graburn, recognizes the problems and possibilities of the many changes going on, including tourist art, but does not go into detail. Mount’s (1973) book has one chapter on tourist art and is very interesting on the subject of mission influence. One aspect that makes the problem difficult for a buyer is the fact that when importers and retailers obey the law and label the place of origin, it is the nation that is stated on the label. But each state contains a number of peoples, and national borders sometimes cut across ethnic lines. In short, there is a great deal going on that does not fit into categories that have become so standardized.

It is by bits and pieces, most usually from articles published in African Arts magazine that one can piece together something of the way changes are going on, and one finds that the ways many items are made for sale are not destruction of the traditional ways, but show interesting continuities. There are also many innovations and experiments. The ongoing art histories of Africa offer a marvelous field of study for those with open minds.
In wood, there is, and has been for some time, a considerable production of copies of the best-known pieces and styles from the past. The honest ones can be bought at tourist level prices, although the sellers are well aware that they differ a lot in quality. As long as they are sold in this way, I think it is ridiculous to call them fakes. The Bambara antelope is probably one of the most widely known of all African carvings. It was the first I learned to identify. This is the form most often pictured in books about African art, but it was actually made in a variety of types and styles. As a dance headdress, this represents the male of a pair. The female is shown with an infant on her back. They were held on the dancer’s head with the aid of a small basketry cap attached to the base, and now that they are carved for sale, the basketry cap is sometimes added to suggest that it had been used in a ceremony. While this form is made in some quantity, it is done by a skilled carver, who actually is probably more skilled than many of his predecessors, because he carves only figurative forms, instead of doing this rarely as a part time occupation, and no longer makes simple utensils. He is aided by apprentices in training. This is a style that can be copied and yet retain its vitality.

Woodcarving is what most collectors think of as African art and what most galleries exhibit. There has in fact been work in a number of media for thousands of years. Metalwork, for example, has long been particularly skilled. I have been having a hard time documenting ethnic arts for sale from Africa, presumably because art made for sale is not considered authentic. It has been very interesting to deduce why this is so, but hard to document. Africanists I have talked to seem uninterested in the kind of art that is the subject of this work, and I have not been able to do the extensive work in Africa that has been needed. But there are now several people who have really dug into this matter, and they substantiate a great deal of what I had suspected. With regard to the attitudes toward African art among collectors, Steiner (1991) says:

In the United States and Europe, the aesthetic value of African artwork is given more overt attention than the economic value. Moreover, since the collection of African art is often associated with an idealized Western vision of static “primitive” culture, most collectors, I believe, would prefer to read about its uses in a punitively unchanging pre-colonial milieu than about its commoditization in the post-colonial transnational economy.
Demonstrating the power of myth, in the case of Africa, seems to be a kind of combination myth that combines, rather illogically, myths one and two. What people do not seem to realize, in their glorification of the primitive is that they are perpetuating the myth of an unchanging Africa, which fosters the myth that Africans are not creative but are backward and inferior. I have heard a direct statement that “Blacks must be inferior! Otherwise, how is it that they have no history?” It’s all very well to admire traditional African cultures. Indeed, I find much that we could learn from. But it seems neither logical nor decent to put down the people who produced those cultures in adapting to the problems of their time and who have continued since then to deal with the enormous problems of our time by the implication that they are incapable of change. Once in a while, an older piece comes my way that I can afford, and if it is an affecting presence that has some personal meaning for me, I break my own rules and buy it. This figurine from Mali probably would have been out of my price range entirely if it had not been considered a slave figure and if it were stylistically what is usually thought of as Bambara (or Bamana) and therefore had not been sold and was reduced in price. This matter of labels is discussed at some length below in the chapter on The Verbal Context, the main point being that how we see something depends to a remarkable extent on the words we know them by. At any rate, this piece was such an affecting presence that it is one of the few older pieces I have bought.

The two meanings of the word history have contributed to some of the misconceptions about peoples without history. In a rather specialized use of the term, the line between pre-history and history has been defined by the invention of writing. The more basic meaning of history has to do with the flow of events: what people did, what happened to people, or even, in the term natural history, what happened to living things. The difference that writing makes to our knowledge of what happened can be overrated and comes rather late in the history of writing. Much of the written materials, especially in earlier times, are fragments of tax records, divination items, sacred myths, labels on containers, and other fragments that add to the information inferred from artifacts.

The recent history of African art has had to do with two categories that are being widely produced but fall outside the realm of tourist art: the very lively production of commercial arts such as shop signs, which is quite functional in cities and also the rise of fine art genres – art for the sake of art – a great deal of it painting. European teaching has been important in this; however, much the teachers have tried to encourage the students to do their own thing. The resulting works have been considered as part of the international style, modern or post-modern.

Peoples who do not have a history of depending on the written word develop memory skills that astonish us, and the deficiencies of literate persons in this regard are a source of scorn to the memory-proficient. In Africa, records were kept in people’s heads, and some persons were
especially trained to record important matters. Some kinds of evidence, such as the occurrence of an eclipse, have shown the accuracy of records kept for many generations. The use of visual records in the form of images contributed, of course. Furthermore, the use of a connection between the visual and the verbal was highly developed and quite conscious. By giving well-known labels to certain images and designs, meaning could be communicated and remembered. I remember reading about a pot (dish) lid by which a difficult subject could be initiated: the wife communicating to the husband that a serious matter had to be discussed.

Among the Asante and other Akan peoples, the use of proverbs has always been of great importance, incorporating the law and wisdom of the past, but used and modified in law and interpersonal negotiations, and so not fossilized like written rules. Images, both figurative and geometrical, were, and are, named by proverbial sayings, and hence are very much part of the communication system as Domowitz (1992) presents in an article titled “Wearing Proverbs: Anyi Names for Printed Fabric Cloth”.

One printed with birds in cages and flying out is named “You go Out, I go Out,” a warning that should be clear to one’s significant other. The gold weights that played such an important part in this area, once called the Gold Coast, all had proverb names. The little brass figurines made for sale come without this rich heritage, although some are of equal esthetic quality.

Steiner also has some very interesting things to say about why information on the trade in African art is so hard to come by. In many ways it differs markedly from the trade in Native American art. Although in some ways (such as the reluctance to talk about their financial affairs, and their sources of supply), they are like traders everywhere. There is an additional reluctance to tell about their techniques of aging, which is far more common than, for example, in the American Southwest. The practice of aging and adding signs of use is the natural result of the extreme valuation of functional art in the African case. It seems very sad to me that living artists who can do work of as high quality as was done in the past are essentially kept hidden and do not receive a very large share of the selling price. Even the collector who claims interest in African art purely for its esthetic qualities has criteria that for others we would call magic or even superstition. Bascom, (1976) says:

162: I suspect this is a pot-broiler experiment, made by an art school trained artist or a wife of one. I am inclined to see the Lion as a form of reverberation between Picasso and African artists.
Anthropologists and art historians have contributed by disparaging individual pieces as not ‘authentic’ if they have not been used. A piece may have been carved many years ago, but if it was never used, perhaps because the customer who commissioned it died unexpectedly, it is not ‘authentic’ just as an object lacks power in the eyes of the African believer if it has not been sanctified by herbs or sacrifices.

Fagg (1966:21) has an interesting comment on this situation:

In the last few years, a vast number of much larger versions of this mask [Kurumba-shown] have come on to the international market, all or most of them clearly made for the purpose; however, it is rumored that many of these became genuine a few years ago by being used in a specially revived ceremony, a kind of Blessing of the Exports.

I have been told (by E. DeCarbo) that traders have been known to put on dances for this purpose but most do not bother to provide this element of truth.

Earthenware pots are still made in the villages and used for cooking and storage. Some glazed stoneware is made in the cities for use by upper class Nigerians and European residents. Pottery has never been popular as a tourist or export item. I bought this small pottery plaque (top right) in a museum shop, where they knew nothing about it except that it came from Nigeria. None of my African or Africanist friends has seen anything like it.

The well-known Akua Ba figures from the Ashanti (Asante) area of Ghana have for a long time been made in considerable quantity, as they were traditionally made as charms for pregnant women to express the hope for a healthy, beautiful child. It is hard to tell for sure whether or not any particular one was functional because so many were made. This was probably made to be sold, but it is possible that it was sold when it became chipped (p. 81). After all, it would be a poor sort of charm if was not perfect. This form is one the apprentices in the workshop in Kumasi make in various sizes and qualities.
There are very good carvers in West Africa carving works in traditional styles who unfortunately have to age them in order to be able to sell them at anything resembling a good price, although this is an exceeding small fraction of what they are sold for abroad. Ross and Reichert (1983) give an account of a workshop in Kumasi where three master carvers and their apprentices produce works comparable in style, workmanship, and quality to any of the past: “The inspiration for their sculptures is drawn from the individual imagination of the three master carvers from traditional carvings brought to them for repair or restoration, and from photographs out of books or given to them by dealers” (p83). Also: “They generally borrow only select elements from a given photograph and often combine them with shapes, styles, and motifs borrowed from other photographs to create a unique work of art” (p84).

The fact that art was for so long collected and sent to the industrial world without information on context explains, in part, why so much emphasis has been placed on function.

These fragments, curios, or art for art’s sake, give rise to questions as to what the meanings were for the people who made and used them.

Senufo carvings were well known as art and exhibited as such fairly early on in the discovery of African art. Thirty years ago when I first began to specialize in the anthropology of art, it was very difficult to try to find ethnographic information to go with the known styles so that one could talk about functions in any meaningful way. It was in 1981 that Glaze’s Art and Death in a Senufo Village was published and function became a very meaningful term for that great art tradition. Recently, when I was looking for honest copies of well-known styles, the Senufo example filled the bill, as many copies have been made and sold over the years, some honest, some not.
168: Ewe carving from Togo. These figures were used in divination procedures, and some eventually came onto the market. I know of no way of telling whether any particular piece was ever used for ritual purposes or whether it was made for sale. Because of the grain of wood, the feet are almost always broken off, so one could guess that they were sold when this happened.

169: Gourds are still widely used in Africa in spite of the prestige of enamelware and the like. African ones are often called calabashes, but the botanists tell us that true calabashes are different and grow on trees. Gourd containers come in a variety of sizes and shapes and are decorated with a number of techniques, often with fine craftsmanship and artistic quality (Newman 1974). These are simple ladles, probably made as souvenirs.

170: Wood necklace, Africa.
A lot of innovation goes into small tourist items that could be called pot-boilers. For that matter, a lot of small things were probably made in the past for local use but have not been preserved and have not collected in museums. Trinkets of little value that were trivial but may nevertheless have been innovative and charming. This necklace is such a trinket. The necklace (p. 83) is a recent item, but the hand theme is an old one.

Really good articles on the creative changes in African art and information about the artists appear in the African Arts frequently. The irony is that when one looks at the advertisements in that magazine it is hard to find any that are not selling traditional, authentic, genuine, real, old carvings. Kasfir’s article (1992) “African Art and Authenticity: A Text Without a Shadow” is particularly thought provoking. It has aroused a considerable reaction among experts in the field and some of the dilemmas involved are discussed below in the chapter on esthetics. Robert says in the same issue: “dismissing recent African art as de cadent favors those in the art and antiquities market who stand to profit from the rarity of ‘real’ art objects.”

As an example of innovation Bascom mentions: “The Yoruba thorn carvings, first created by J.D. Akeredolu, depart from tradition in that they are carved with a pocket knife, in a new medium, on a miniature scale, and with remarkable realism” (1976:317). These make wonderful souvenirs, being small and light, and have been one of the most popular tourist items. The examples shown here are far from the best I have seen, but while they are not important art, they are not bad art either. I wonder how the same forms would be considered if they were larger and claimed to be functional antiques. Note the combination of dark and light woods. Mount says:
The thorn carving style was created in the early 1930s by Justus Akeredolu, a chief born in the town of Owo. From 1933 to 1938 he taught his new technique to students at the Owo Government School. He has had many imitators, and thorn carvings have become one of the most popular souvenir styles in Nigeria.

Picturesque genre aspects of village life are chosen as subject matter..... The small carvings, however have little relationship in their proportions and modeling to traditional West African art. (Mount 1973:48-49, passim)

In 1993, I bought the two larger figurines (p. 85). These are not traditional genre figures doing traditional village tasks but are modern, literate Africans, a little old fashioned in using typewriters instead of word-processors but important in that they convey a new image. This type of tourist art shows much creativity, and if one looks carefully, one can see how observant the carver was.
A great variety of textiles are made in West Africa, and they have a long history attested to by archaeological data, going back before the eleventh century. Schaedler (1987), in a large well-illustrated volume, documents the astounding variety of looms that have been used to make these fabrics, as well as the fabrics themselves. These are true looms, and many of them are treadle looms, often with frames even if they do not resemble the massive frame looms of European tradition.

African textiles have only recently come to be esteemed by people in other countries. Probably the first to be discovered was the spectacular Kente cloth in the brilliant form worn by Ashanti (Asante) chiefs and kings. Kente cloth is woven in narrow strips by men, and the strips are sown together to make the entire piece. The patterns of such cloth were named and owned by certain families, a kind of copyright. Togas of this cloth are still worn on ceremonial occasions and express ethnic or national pride. Fine photos of such garb in use can be seen in Cole and Ross (1977).

Although similar functions long existed in European society, it is hard for us to realize how much panoply of this kind was part of the communication system that embodied the Ashanti constitution.

Not all pieces are in the brilliant colors that are so well known. There are also more subtle pieces, rich rather than brilliant. Furthermore, many peoples in the area do strip weaving in many patterns.

The example here was made in the Ewe area of Togo. Ewe also live in Ghana next door to the Asante. The Ewe manner of strip weaving was learned by people of Southeastern Nigeria in the 1930s and was named Popo after the port in Togo from which it came. Linholm’s 1982 article on its history gives a picture of the kind of exchange that has been going on for so many centuries. The assumption that the important African art is woodcarving has meant that the Togo area has been considered very lacking in artistic expression, ignoring other media. One of the factors here may be the relative lack of wood, for, as Willet points out: “The tropical rain forest…. is quite limited in extent. It is found along the West African or Guinea Coast (with an important gap in Togo and Dahomey)” (1971:11).

Picton (1991) and others have pointed out that the esthetic sensibilities and values of Africans may be better expressed in textiles than in sculpture. Textiles are connected to dance,
music, and ceremony to a far greater extent than masks and other carvings. African artistry expresses itself most fully in multimedia performing art than in static possessions, and visual communication is highly developed. This is a most interesting observation, particularly in the light of Maquet’s concept of the aesthetic locus to be found in a society, even those that do not have a concept of art.

It is as if the members of such a society had agreed to localize their concern for visual composition and expressive power in the forms of certain classes of objects. We mentioned earlier the masks in several traditional societies of Africa… (1986:182)

We must ask ourselves how much we project our own ideas of art as artifact, as possession, onto the esthetic of other peoples.
A form of textile art that has been produced in many forms is tie-dyed fabric, traditionally in indigo, but the technique has been enormously expanded in recent years, and a variety of forms are made for sale both inside and outside the country. For a summary of the variety of techniques in addition to weaving, see Eicher (1976). Batik is also made by using a material that resists the dye, as described above. In West Africa, the resist is sometimes starch instead of wax, often cassava starch. When starch is used, it does not penetrate through the fabric, so that the back of the fabric is all dyed.

The Kente cloth pants were made of cloth printed in West Africa using a Kente cloth pattern, but I doubt that the imitation Kente cloth made into a napkin (p. 89) was from Africa. The pattern is just too far off. The label says it was sewn in the U.S. and recommends dry cleaning. A napkin?

Mud cloth is made with an interesting technique. Hand woven cotton cloth is painted with a yellowish-green dye made from leaves of the falma bush. Then, the whole design is painted over with a kind of mud that seems to act as a mordant to set the dye (Newman 1974). Some of the paintings are fairly elaborate with figurative works in the dark brown color that results but many are geometrical.
A technique associated with the introduction of commercially made cloth into Dahomey (now the country called Benin) is appliqué used for pictorial hangings. I am told that they are now made on sewing machines and have guns, tanks, and other warlike subjects, which suggests that they may be made for local use. On the next page is a rather simple appliqué example.
181: Indigo design on a pillow.

182: Appliqué cloth example, Dahomey (Benin).
Small works of art that I particularly enjoy are the little brass figurines that are available in some quantity and are made in many parts of West Africa. They are associated with the Gold Coast, particularly the Ashanti (Asante) area. In the terms used here, the smaller brass figurines called gold weights can be considered as a revival, as the making of such items to be thus used ceased early in this century. There are several stories about who revived the craft as a tourist item, but they are now made in considerable quantity and are on the average more figurative and of larger size than the traditional items used for weighing gold. Most of the traditional subjects referred to proverbs well known to the Ashanti, but recent ones show human figures in a variety of traditional activities. Erotic couples are popular in this county. The difference in price and in the amount of literature about contemporary objects and the functional ones is enormous, far greater than would be the case if esthetic criteria were as heavily weighted as collectors claim. Of course, the quality varies considerably. I usually buy only a sample or two of any given style to illustrate some ideas. But I have a number of these small brass figurines because, being small and inexpensive, they are nice to buy as a thank you in a shop where my questions have been generously answered. And anyhow, I like them and they work well in dish gardens.

The little bird is a copy of a famous piece, which is pictured on the cover of Vansina’s book on African art history. The fish is a museum replica that has been made into a pin and is gold plated.
These little brass figures (p. 91) were bought in a local import store. They were not marked with the country of origin. I asked where they were from and the clerk said “Africa.” I said, “Africa is enormous: 5,000 miles long and some 5,000 miles wide – where in Africa?” The response was “Kenya.” I suspected that his was just the standard response when the clerk did not have the faintest idea. Quite a lot of souvenir arts are made in Kenya, but this was stylistically very Ashanti (Ghana). So the question became had they started copying the West African brass figurines in East Africa. There was no trace of such a thing in any publication I had at hand, and one or two persons who had been to Kenya had not seen them there. Then I told a friend about them and she asked her roommate who had worked at this shop and confirmed my hunch that Kenya was the glib answer clerks used.

The questions here have to do with how you establish provenance. It’s difficult enough with important items in art museums, but gets increasingly difficult the more trivial the object. While legally imported objects should bear a label indicating the country of origin, such labels tend to be ignored, overlooked at least in large shipments of imports. And can be ignored if you can call the items antique. Even when the country of origin is clear, as in the case of the clay musicians from Peru, the region and ethnic origin may be hard to determine.

187: This kind of figurine, in various forms was well known in this century as the product of the Fon of Dahomey. Dahomey is now known as the country of Benin, not to be confused with Benin City, which is in Nigeria. (The name is the result of the African custom of naming independent states after ancient kingdoms.) This piece is nicely balanced, so that the little figure on top spins around.

188: This piece has a crack in one figure; the lack of finish is seen in the rough surfaces. I suspect it was put aside when the crack showed up, possibly when removed from the mold. I have tried to clean it up, but it is a slow job. Some persons would probably say I should leave it as it came from the hand of the craftsperson, but I assume that if he had finished it, the surface would have been polished. Except for the crack and the lack of finish, it is a good piece in the tradition of the region. Compare with example shown in Willet (1971:163).
The literature on small lost-wax objects seems to concentrate heavily on the Ashanti gold weights made in Ghana.

Gold is not as abundant as in the past, but there is still fine work done in gold. Many of the same techniques are used for gold-work as for brass, especially lost wax casting.

Ghana is not the only place where brass castings are made. The statuette, the pendant, and the bottle opener were all made in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta). I’ve seen statuettes on this model as much as three feet high, which makes me wonder about the fuel used.
The making of brass figurines has never been discontinued, and the somewhat larger ones had long been used locally as prestige items, and were on the market all along. The best known was the Fon brasses from Dahomey (now the country of Benin), but they were made in a number of places. In former times, the gleam of the brass in the light of the fire was enjoyed, and so brass was well polished.

A quality of African art, especially sculpture that makes it more saleable is blackness. Ebony was not much used for carving until it was in demand by Europeans. Even my lost-wax brass casting of the musicians was covered with a thick coating of black enamel when I found it neglected in the corner of a museum shop. Much of the detail and quality of the work was obscured, and it was something of a job to get the stuff off. Considering the prestige that a good brass casting is said to have in Africa, I can only conclude that some misguided trader thought this would make it more saleable.

192: Brass musician’s figurine, Africa.
CHAPTER 10: Mexico and the Mayan Area

The history of this area, called Mesoamerica by archaeologists, is long and complicated and more is being learned about it all the time. Many people do not realize the sophistication of these civilizations because not only were their records destroyed, but we could not read the ones that survived. As we come to better understand their histories, we can begin to see them more as people like ourselves and to understand their triumphs and their failures. The skillful craftsmanship of ancient times has been adapted to the many changing circumstances of the last four centuries and still helps people to survive by using these skills to make a variety of folk arts for sale to tourists and traders. Trade is no new thing here, and due to the great variety of ecological zones, goods were interchanged between highlands and lowlands, wetlands and drylands, and people made things of local material and traded their work or sent it in tribute.

Paintings made on amate paper are a recent innovation, starting around 1960, but they could be considered a resurrection, as amate paper was used for all books in Pre-Columbian times. The center of this activity has been the town of Xalitla in the state of Guerrero, which lies between Acapulco and Mexico City. Some of the crafts of this area have been fairly well known but much of the area was remarkably little known to outsiders. The long known crafts include
silver from Taxco, lacquer ware from Olinala, and gold work from Iguala. In the communities near Xalitla, pottery and basketry were produced. The ceramics of the area were painted with a reddish-brown slip on a whitish base with decorative treatment of animals, birds, and plant forms. Stromberg (1976) says that nobody knows for sure who had the bright idea of getting amate bark and making paintings for sale. When a few people started making the paintings, they based them on the flora and fauna style of the pottery they had been using but not making themselves.

As the painting developed and sold well, the paintings became more stylized and elaborate. Interestingly enough, these changes were reflected back to the neighboring painting of pottery. At first, the paintings sold for good prices. More persons began making paintings, and some of the original artists began to develop a style of pictorial art with landscapes and human figures showing scenes of the life around them. These too sold well and for good prices. But simplified flora and fauna paintings are much more quickly made, and wholesalers kept pushing for more and more paintings at even lower prices. More people began painting; whole families could work on the simpler productions. People became more dependent on the money economy and farming suffered.

Beginning in 1972, the government agency BANFOCO, that seeks to promote rural industries, began having exhibits and giving prizes, which has given impetus to a small group of the more innovative artists. Prominent among them was Gregorio Martinez who has done a lot of experimenting in various mediums, including ceramic and batik. Apparently at one time Aztec motifs were introduced, and these have been combined with a variety of monsters and the like to
introduce the style known as fantistico. Quite an amazing number of innovations were made within a short time and market tested for sale ability.

There is a great range not only of style but also of quality as the return for time and effort is taken into account by artists (Stromberg 1976). The folk-life kind of painting has been imitated by school-trained artists, and reproduced in various forms; I have some folklorico coasters. The folk artists have explored other media and often paint scenes on masonite.

I also have a copy of a figure from a pre-Columbian codex made on amate bark paper (first photo beginning of chapter). There is nothing in the article by Stromberg on this kind of painting made in Xalitla. I bought it in Mexico City and have no idea where it was made. It shows the range of ideas that have been introduced in this genre. But while the little florescent flower souvenir paintings were made in great quantity and sold very well, the pre-Columbian ones, for all their accuracy and excellence, are quite rare. Considering the appeal of the paper itself because of its use in antiquity, one would think these would be particularly appealing. However, the time required, and therefore the price that must be asked may have priced them out of the market, or perhaps I have not looked in the right places.

The yarn paintings of the Huicholes are also well known and easily available. They too have a long and complex history. They probably derive from the old stone mosaics, which were transformed into beadwork mosaics when glass beads became available. Another strand in this history was the use of yarn for God's Eye prayer sticks and little votive tablets with yarn on thin sheets of wood. The meanings lie deep in their traditional belief system.

The Huichol people live in the western Sierra Madre range, mostly in the state of Jalisco. They were one of the last tribes to come under Spanish rule, and the belief system is more indigenous that Christian. Furst (1973) said:

Huichol religion, and especially the peyote quest and its symbolism, appears to be the only survival on a major scale of relativity pure Indian belief and ceremony in Mexico today.
The most sacred of the rituals is the difficult pilgrimage in search of peyote to make contact with the unseen world and help the effort to maintain equilibrium of the social, physical, and supernatural worlds (Meyerhoff 1974). The dreams that result from the ritual use of peyote are said to be the subject matter of yarn paintings. (Peyote has very different effects in connection with the extensive ritual, than when taken individually as recreation.)

The form has changed in many ways over the years. For example, homespun wool was long ago replaced by commercial yarn and later by a crylic. Since the 1960s, a great number of paintings have been made, many of them by a culturated Huichols in towns and probably some by non-Huichols. They are still put on with wax, usually beeswax, but are now made on masonite. A few persons have developed the technique and the style to make complex and impressive works that I saw presented as fine Art in Santa Fe in 1992. Perhaps if one were knowledgeable about Huichol beliefs, it would be possible to tell which subjects came from sacred dreams, and which from waking imagination.

The Days of the Dead (Los Dias de los Muertos) that are so important throughout Mexico combine the pre-Columbian Indian cult of the dead with the medieval Spanish-European tradition. Both traditions are different in observance and attitude from those of Anglo-Americans. While the Mexican observances occur on the Catholic Feast of All Souls and All Saints on November first and second, they also differ in customs and attitude from those of the Church elsewhere. In Mexico the souls of the dead are invited back to their homes enjoy the feast, where food, candles, toys, flowers and incense are there to welcome them. Families gather in the cemeteries to clean the gravesites, arrange flowers, remember the dead, and to reinforce family solidarity. There is also a difference in function, as traditional Mexicans pray to the spirits of the dead family members to help and not hinder them, and forgive the living for any errors, while the European goal is to pray for the souls of the dead that they may not be kept in purgatory.

Although the fiesta revolves around death, it is neither grim nor macabre. Rather it is a warm and friendly family reunion of the living and deceased. Images of skulls of sugar serve to remind one that all mortals must die and that one should keep death in perspective. (Childs and Altman 1982)
A great many small toy-like figures are made in the form of skeletons from a variety of materials – clay, sugar, paper mache, and especially in the cities, wire with paper mache. The figures of skeletons are also widely used by well-known artist and satirists. And of course, they are often bought as souvenirs by tourists.

In Mexico, a profusion of miniature items are made in every medium and make popular souvenirs. Tin is cut and colored in a variety of forms that American tourists bring home to adorn the Christmas tree. This is very similar to one pictured in Sayer (1990:9) made by Pacheco of Oaxaca City. The little basketwork figures are made in many places. I was given these by a friend who adorned the whole house with such figures at Christmas time – souvenirs of cherished fishing trips. Children in the streets sell strings of beads. The gourd is a small version of the fine lacquer ware. The pig is a miniature of the famous piggy banks, although it is not hollow and too small to hold any coins. Alabaster, popular for larger items like the bookends, is here an ornament for a key chain.

The little wooden doll seems to be an innovation in the Tarahumara area of the mountains of Northern Mexico. This area has been remote and not visited by tourists until the recent popularity of train trips through the Copper Canyon. Previous items for sale from this area had been large utilitarian cooking pots, handsome but much too large for souvenirs. Now with tourist trains coming through, the making of souvenirs will probably flourish. The cross-stitch embroidered patch is Huichol.
Some years ago, I went to a Mexican Folk Art exhibit at a big art museum and was crushed to find nothing but a few toy-like objects made of boxwood and painted with poster paint. They were not unattractive in a modern setting, but I thought that by ignoring so many of the fine crafts of the area, the implication was a putdown.

Among the numerous small souvenirs made in Mexico, I have some that could be called airport art in the strict sense. I bought them at the airport in Mexico City.

The mines of Mexico have produced silver and gold since long before the Conquest, and jewelry in a great variety of forms has long been one of the important forms of loot brought home from the area. It comes in all categories: resurrections, imitations, and revitalizations. There are many levels of quality, and many materials used. Filigree was very popular in the 1940s. The necklace of clay beads with fish is from the 1990s.

The solid gold pendant, a replica of the end of a pre-Colombian lip plug from Oaxaca, was one of a pair of earrings, bought in Mexico City. The silver cuff links were bought at the same time. When I lost one of the earrings, I had it made into a pendant and bought the gold chain. A lot of skill goes into the craft of making replicas, and in the case of items such as these, it is very much like the craft used for originals.
Jade, for jewelry, and alabaster, for various small objects, are the stones most often used for typical Mexican folkloric objects (p. 101).

Much is made in Mexico, at least in the official presentation of “Los Tres Cultures”, the three cultures that are seen as blending to make a great country. These three cultures are the Pre-Columbian/Indian, the Hispanic/Ladino, and the Modern/Industrial.

The three world views are so different, that even aside from the differences in economic and political position, the blend is more a patchwork that a tapestry. Cone has written of the highland area of southern Mexico:

The highland Maya area is characterized by the segmentation of two groups: the Indian peasant farmers and the Ladinos, Spanish-speaking Mexican nationals. Though socially separate, the two groups are economically interdependent. The Indians, who live in scattered hamlets in the countryside, provide foodstuffs, raw materials, and a source of cheap agricultural labor. The Ladinos – shopkeepers, middlemen, government bureaucracy landowners and professionals – are concentrated largely in the [regional] market town and government center. (Cone 1990:262-263)

The Indians are divided into groups named for the municipio or county within which they live. Each subgroup has its distinctive costume and religious rituals. Cultural differences operate as barriers to economic and political integration of the groups, as does the language. (ibid: 263)

The Maya retain more of their heritage that most Mexican groups. Mayan weavers and potters continue to make fabrics and ceramics similar to those in the exhibits of the celebrated Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. (ibid: 265)

Fluency in Spanish among the Indian people varies; men are more likely to speak it than women. Literacy in Spanish is recent and far from universal. The values of the two segments of the population are very different. Among the Ladinos, physical effort is disvalued, and this affects the production of crafts. Indian people value hard work and the effort that goes into fine craftsmanship. In the area that Cone describes, pottery and weaving are both important crafts made by women, but the attitudes toward the two were quite different, and this makes a difference in all sorts of ways in the market.

Weaving is a sacred activity, and clothes possess extraordinary social and religious significance. The Maya concepts of time, space, and the mythological forces of nature are woven into even everyday
garments. Women contribute their skills to the glory of their family and their gods. Until recently, with the advent of weaving cooperatives, few finely woven garments found their way into the market place. Even there, textiles were purchased only by foreigners, never by Indians themselves. (ibid: 274)

Pottery is very different. It is a profane craft; there are no ceremonies or symbolisms involved. Pots have been produced for the market for a long time. Pots are bought by other Indians and Ladinos as useful objects, so potters have taken their wares to market towns for centuries. This means that potters have more experience with the outside world than weavers. It also means that products are more easily changed to meet the preferences of buyers. In the area that Cone describes, pottery is purchased by tourists to a greater extent than weaving, possibly because it is more available.

The whole area of Mesoamerica has produced pottery for thousands of years. It is one of the most important, if not the most important source of information for archaeologists. It seems strange that earthenware pottery, which is easily broken in use, lasts longer than other artifacts except stone and gold in the ground. Pots are very useful objects if they are well fired, and they have been widely traded for almost as long as they have been made. In areas where there are good deposits of clay, the local people have developed a specialty in pottery making and transported their pots, in pre-colonial times on their backs to the nearest market center. Since Colonial times, potting has often been a part time occupation, or the specialty of poorer persons who do not have access to land to farm. Useful market pottery is made in many local styles and in recent times has been a popular form of tourist and export art.

For centuries, there have been strong regional traditions in all parts of the area, and these are still evident in the styles. A form of market pottery thought of as toys is the considerable number of miniature pots and dishes that were made in the local style. It is assumed that these were toys that became souvenirs for tourist, but a passage in Beals about the village of Cheran in Michoacan (1946) tells of local women of the village who collected miniature pots from neighboring areas, which gives one a fellow feeling.
Regional styles are still recognizable, although imports to this country are seldom identified except by the required Hecho en Mexico. But there have always been influences from other peoples, other areas.

Mexico is astonishing in the extent to which the tensions between the various segments of society and their various cultural orientations seem to have produced the extraordinary amount and diversity of creative arts.

The marketing of Mexican ceramics has undergone dramatic changes during the past three decades, partly as a result of increased tourist demands, partly because there is better transportation between villages, and partly because of government and private interest in and sponsorship of village arts and crafts. (Mulryan 1982)

One of the trends in tourist art has been in the direction of portability, and pottery is not very well suited to plane travel, but a lot of pottery is still available in Mexico because it is still used. Importers do bring in a fair amount in the form of pots, tiles and such ornamentals, and figurative pieces. Dishes are now less used by people who have them in this country because in this hypochondriac atmosphere, people worry about lead in the glazes. I don’t bake in mine, but I use them for serving, and I’m still surviving after many, many decades of such use.

Figurative ceramics were very well developed in pre-conquest times. Clay sculpture must have been a full-time profession or a recognized specialty and probably was reasonably well supported. The situation in this regard changed drastically in colonial times; potting became a low pay occupation and as Mulryan says:

216: Ceramic dish, Mexico.
The small ceramic toys and figures from which more elaborate forms evolved were then made by children of utilitarian-ware potters and were sold at the same local markets where their parents sold their goods. This was the traditional production and marketing context of these small figural objects and it remains so. (1982:5)

Some figures had and still have symbolic value related to the various religious holidays and celebrations. I have no doubt that children got some help from older family members for these. Mulryan’s account of the work of Teodora Blanco describes how the symbolic aspects of her work were significant to her, and they reflect a worldview derived from her Zapotec ancestors, especially the aspects concerned with protection and nurturing.

Many of these traditional clay sculptures are put together using a combination of hand modeled and mold made elements. The molds used are press molds of the same kind as were used in pre-Columbian times. Press molds are made of clay and fired. The clay pressed into these molds is of the same consistency as that used for modeling. (The more recent technique for mold made ceramics is slip-casting.)

One should not infer that while figurative forms may have been made mostly by children in the poor villages, there were none made elsewhere by adults. There were figurines in a variety of media, such as the skeletons and skulls for the cult of the dead, piñatas, church figures and Santos, and figures for the elaborate candelabras made since the turn of the century as gifts for
special occasions. In the recent literature, there is often an individual name, or innovator, associated with each area, and sometimes it is even difficult to be sure that there is a local style or an ethnic identification. For example, Ocumichho has long been known for the weird figures produced there.

A great many of the figurative works in clay from Mexico are brilliantly colored and used commercial paints rather than glazes. This cuts out the step of firing the glazes. Such is the case with the many weird figures made in Ocumichho. In terms of subject matter, I think we have a case of reverberation, as the earlier weird little figures were so eagerly bought by outsiders that the people made larger and weirder ones.

Mulryan’s account of Mexican figural ceramists is one of the monographs in the fine series put out by the Museum of Cultural History at UCLA. She tells about the lives and work of Teodora Blanco in Oaxaca, Candelario Medrano in Jalisco, Josefina Aguilar in Oaxaca, Roseno Rodriguez in Jalisco, and Heron Martinez in Puebla. The potters were innovative in developing figurative styles, going far beyond the traditions of their areas. There have also been innovators in the towns.

Folk humor seems to be related to the fact that life is tough and tragic. The grotesque and the exaggerated have been seen as ways of protesting the inequalities of the society in a harmless fashion. Some forms have been seen as satirical and some forms probably are. But often the folk are more philosophical than the intellectuals who analyze and sympathize. For example, the folk
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humor of the Days of the Dead in Mexico recognizes the reality of death as a fact of life and the foibles of human nature. In Mexico, it is the intellectuals who use the images as satire.

The history of the Maya speaking peoples has fascinated a great many persons throughout the last century, and as more and more is learned about the ancient cultures, the fascination has not diminished. Many questions have arisen as to how such a high civilization arose in a tropical forest area, why it declined before the conquest, and how the conquest changed or did not change the cultures of the region.

The Mayan area included, and in the form of language, includes, what is now Guatemala, Belize, much of Honduras, and Southern Mexico, including all of the Yucatan Peninsula. The attraction of this area for travelers and tourists has long been the impressive ruins, and the art styles found in various forms and in such profusion among them. Antiquities of stone and clay have long been prized by collectors and are also a source of income to the locals. This distresses archaeologists and officials, partly for the sake of national pride and partly for the loss of potential income from visitors of many kinds.

Textiles and Clothing

There are a number of interesting crafts made in modern times in the ancient Maya styles, as well as the replicas mentioned above as resurrections. One of the fascinating recent discoveries is how many of the old styles still persist in the form of textiles, as comparisons have been made with those that can be seen on

220: This mask of painted clay was never functional and strikes me as almost a parody of peasant folk art. I don’t know who made it, but looking at it this way makes me realize what a good job it does in communicating a real folklorico feeling. These were probably made in quantity, as I bought it at Pier 1. It interests me that it has none of that quality of ridicule that I find in the works of folk art made by trained artists in this country. My uneducated guess is that these were turned out by city folk perhaps in some small entrepreneur’s workshop.

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211: This stone frog, bought for me by my husband many years ago is from Guatemala. I have always wondered if it were really an ancient piece claimed to be recent so as to be legal.

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222: Fiber dolls, Mexico.
ancient paintings and carvings. Donald and Dorothy Cordry (1968:10) have a theory to explain why Indians dress in such elaborately decorated garments:

After the conquest, when native laws lost their power, the laws concerning dress were ignored, and the common people, most particularly the women, took over (with modifications) the sumptuous dress of the Indian aristocracy.

Even though garments in pre-contact times had essentially the same construction, sumptuary laws (in Aztec society) dictated the fiber content and surface decoration of garments. In Aztec society cotton fabric decorated with feather work and embellishments was reserved for nobility while simple border designs, maguey, and yucca fibers were more commonplace. In order to maintain some sort of integrity, Indian communities developed defensive mechanisms to prevent further degradation. The traditional costume acted as a defense mechanism by reinforcing self-identity and cultural pride. The Cofradia system was another mechanism developed to insure personal security and provide mutual aid through religious and civil services. The Cofraida, which is still common today, is a religious brotherhood that unites an Indian community through respect and prestige based on age (Helms 1975; Nash 1965).

All Mesoamerican garments were rectilinear in construction. Garments were made from rectangular pieces of cloth, several of which could be sewn together to create varying degrees of widths and lengths. All weaving was done on a backstrap loom, which limits the width to that of the weaver’s arms.
Sheep were imported to the New World, and by the end of the seventeenth century, domestication was well established in the Western Highlands. Wool fiber has elasticity and the ability to repel water. Wool garments afforded warmth previously unknown to the Highlanders of Guatemala. The arrival of the spinning wheel, which was in general use throughout Europe, improved the production of fiber preparation. The European treadle loom was the most unprecedented innovation brought to the New World by the Spanish. The treadle loom is a structural tensioning device that frees a weaver’s hands and feet to respectively throw shuttles and push pedals, all of which increase production. The treadle loom also affords greater weaving breadth than the backstrap loom. One disadvantage of the treadle loom is its cumbersome size. Men weave on the foot loom while women continue to weave on the backstrap loom which is small, portable, and conductive to home use.

Women’s dress styles in Guatemala have changed little since pre-contact times while men’s dress has undergone dramatic changes. This may be in part due to Indian social structure and the fact that men travel outside the home for business or to sell agricultural products while women stay at home as caretakers.

I noticed that after my return from Guatemala in 1980, many traditional and highly prized garments and woven pieces were entering the market. I felt very emotional about textile brokers making a profit on these items because I knew from experience that the political turmoil and repression of Indian communities forced women to open their hope chest and sell these items to augment their family income. (Abby Sue Fisher 1992)

Tourist art objects that became popular in the 1960s were belts woven on backstrap looms in a variety of forms. On page 107 is a weft-faced piece, finely woven in a traditional style. The other is much coarser and heavier. The little purse is of a kind that is still very common in import stores.

Early in the 1960s an anthropologist suggested to some Mayan weavers that they might be able to sell little looms with unfinished work on them. He was undoubtedly familiar with the difficulty of trying to tell people what such a loom was like. They sold well as items to hang on a wall and women from several areas quickly latched on to the idea, and they are now readily available. (Note that what is hung on a wall is, almost by definition, art.)
Mexico was kept isolated until independence from Spain in 1821. During the colonial period, Saltillo Sarapes were considered to be the finest and were worn by gentlemen who could afford them. They were not all made in Saltillo, but Saltillo in Northern Mexico had a famous trade fair every year with which they became associated. They were woven on a European treadle loom. Many changes followed each other after independence; there was a French period with more colorful designs. In the late nineteenth century the sarape became a national symbol, although by that time they were smaller and cheaper.
A traditional form that has been a popular item made for sale is the bolsa, or bag. The one from Guatemala is densely woven. The other is Huichol, which is more loosely woven with the design embroidered in cross-stitch. I made a tote bag and a small purse from a Mayan man’s head cloth. I was surprised when a woman at a meeting said I should not have cut it up. What should I have done? Hung it on the wall?

231: An assortment of wearable art objects from Guatemala.

232: A basket of change purses at the Maya Market shows a little of the variety.
Once, when my husband and I were in Mexico City, a shop with a variety of crafts seemed to suddenly appear in a spot we have passed many times, so we said it must be witchcraft, and we dubbed the owner the Witch. Once, seeking to avoid buying a shirt, I said I always wanted pockets. So the Witch promptly and imperiously ordered Maria in the back to put in pockets, and I meekly bought it. It’s pretty far from the well-made authentic ones, but it is handy to wear in the summer, and is valued souvenir.

In San Pablito, Puebla, the area where the amate bark paper is made, commercial materials are now used to make embroidered squares in a variety of sizes. I am told that similar work is done elsewhere in Mexico and they are cottage industries, or whole families, including small boys, helping to do the embroidery. The ones I have seen come from San Pablito are illustrated in Sayer (1990), which are larger and more complex than my samples. They are all satin-stitched. A tunic from Oaxaca has a

233: Blouse, Mexico City.

234: I do not know where it all started, but miniature belts like this are woven in many parts of the world and all with the same idea: tie it on somebody’s wrist with a good wish and it will bring good fortune.

235: Embroidery square, Mexico.

236: Tunic, Oaxaca.
very subtle design in the weave, but I have enlivened it by sewing on some of these patches.

There is a great deal of experimentation and invention going on among the Zapotec weavers of Oaxaca. They look to the past for designs and for producing a revival of some of the old techniques of spinning, dyeing, and weaving.

In a paper that has now been incorporated as the first chapter of a book, Liza Bakewell (1993) says illuminating things about Mexican art, and the distinction that is made in the Mexican art world between Mexican folk art – artesanias or artes populares and bellas artes or fine art. She says, for example:

To describe the Mexican art world is to describe two historically and culturally constructed opposite worldviews. One is based on cultural nationalism, a program of the Revolution rooted in the popular sector and in popular notions of culture. The other grows out of European bourgeois construction of culture, which the Mexican Revolution sought to overthrow – at least ideologically. Yet the effort to weave the popular sector into the political and artistic arena of the Revolution ultimately contributed to more elaborately defied distinctions between the two sectors and their productions and created a tension between the two that characterizes the century art world, a tension that century artists have had to and continue to negotiate in producing their work.

And she says further:

The two overarching questions that characterize post-revolutionary art appreciation in Mexico City might be articulated as follows: How much of the indigenous culture should artists and dealers incorporate into their work without appearing folklo’rico”? And, how much of the international, Euro-American avant-garde modernism and postmodernism can they include in their work without appearing to violate their national identities and cultural sovereignty?
It should be obvious that these are questions that only concern the artists who aspire to *bellas artes* status and rewards and that the tensions involved may be precisely those that result in the high creativity of Mexican artists. It is the folk arts that are the ones made for tourists. The problem of these artists is how to earn a living, striking the balance between good craftsmanship and quickly made stuff that will sell. This dilemma increases the distinction between the two categories of art. There is not a sharp distinction between the functional and tourist art that there is in Africa. Nor is there much of a distinction between folk art and popular art. It is all called by words translatable as *folk art*. This makes it harder to elevate any folk art to fine art status.

Call them folk crafts or tourist art, there is still a great variety of handcrafts produced in Mexico and the Mayan area, using a variety of materials. Here is a minor example of the famous lacquer work and some wooden objects.

There are many puzzles about the presentation of the human form. At one time a very popular souvenir of Mexico was a ceramic figurine of campesino with a serape and a big sombrero tipped over his face as he slept with his back against a cactus. This stereotypic figure illustrates very clearly the misunderstandings of tourist visitors. Visitors from the north did not
know about the custom of the siesta, much less that country folk they saw sleeping had probably walked many miles since dawn to bring produce to market. These ceramic pieces were made Tonala and they sold well. One potter refused to make such a stupid piece – no one would ever sit leaning against a cactus. I have looked for one of these pieces and have asked a friend who goes to garage sales and antique shops in California to watch for one – so far no luck. The fact that the majority of potters were willing to make them if they sold indicates that one should be wary of perceiving folk figures as self-images.

243: The carved wood statuette bought in Mexico City in the 1970s provides another identity question. To a Mexican person, he could represent a patriotic figure, like a militia man in the Revolutionary War for people in the U.S. But it could also be seen as just a bandit. Perhaps there is ambiguity here that includes both. Tourists may see him in much the same way, but the dark light-weight unpolished wood has a primitive quality, differing from the usual brightly painted folk figures sold in Mexico.
CHAPTER 11: The Southwestern United States

The area we know as the Southwest is, from the point of view of a culture area, part of a larger area Mexican anthropologists call Arid America. To some persons elsewhere in this country, New Mexico is so exotic that they place it in Mexico. The people who live there are for the most part American citizens, and the area is home, but they take pride in its special quality. It has long been a mecca for tourists: Indian Country, The Land of Enchantment. The history of cultures and culture contacts is long and involved, and its history as a tourist mecca goes back before the age of the automobile, when the railroads pushed westward.

In an area where the vegetation is scarce, except at the highest altitudes, the earth is a visible presence. It provides adobe for houses, clay for pots, and sand and rocks in many hues. Since sheep herding started, Navajo children watching the sheep have modeled little animals and people. This pastime has recently been taken up by adults as a form of folk art for sale. The figurine above was made by Elsie Benally and painted with poster paints. I keep him on a mantel in front of one of my father's paintings of the Canyon de Chelley, where he looks very much at home.

After a long history in the region, the Pueblo peoples moved down from their cliff dwellings and larger towns into the Rio Grande Valley, the Hopi mesas, Acoma, and Zuni. They knew the desert peoples such as the Pima and Papago. They had contacts with peoples of Mexico for centuries. Later, various bands of Athabascan speaking peoples, now known as Navajo and Apache, drifted into the area, hunting and gathering, trading and raiding, learning much from those impressive city people of the Pueblos.
Before 1880, when the Santa Fe railroad first provided cheap transportation to the American Southwest, the impact of Europe on Pueblo arts was minimal despite more than 300 years of political domination. Political considerations and distance from manufacturing centers in Europe, Mexico, and the Eastern United States had inhibited imports, and Spanish and later colonists depended on their own handicrafts or on trade with Pueblo and other Indian people for most manufactured products. Because the Pueblos were usually sellers rather than buyers of artifacts, and because they had a near monopoly, their aesthetic traditions were more effective than affected by those of their European neighbors and conquerors. (Brody 1979)

When the Anglos arrived with their conquering ways, increasing numbers, and tempting technologies, the problems of adaptation multiplied, and the wonder is not how things have changed so much but how much has endured. However much they misunderstand, restless people of the modern world in this age of anxiety often dimly feel that these desert peoples have something we lack. This is part of the appeal of the region and its arts.

The appeal of the old, unchanging, traditional, and cultural valuation of the new and novel result in all sorts of combinations, contradictions, and dilemmas in the domain of art made for sale in this area. Many maintain that the energy generated by all these tensions has a lot to do with the artistic productivity of the region. The city of Santa Fe can be seen as the eye of this storm. The variety of cultural backgrounds in artists and craftspeople, in merchants and residents, in travelers and tourists, as well as the great range in all these sectors of occupation, education and wealth make a scene of incredible complexity and diversity against the background of the carefully maintained Santa Fe style of the city. The diversity that is seen in the arts, and centering around these arts, Santa Fe can be seen as a microcosm of a culturally diverse world.

It is this microcosm in which I have sought, by a process of sampling, to get a feel for what goes on in the inter-cultural transactions that center around the arts. Of particular interest have been the arts derived from various cultural traditions and sold to persons of other ethnic traditions, and of those, the ones sold to the not-so-wealthy. Why do they buy what they do? What kinds of understandings and misunderstandings are involved?

Pottery has maintained more of its ancient traditional styles than any other form of art and continues to be made in traditional ways and forms, modified and evolving forms, revivals, and new adaptations.
After 1875, the Keams Canyon Trading Post near the Hopi mesas was distributing art pottery made by Nampeyo and modeled after Sityakti Polychrome and other prehistoric wares. Not long after, Maria and Julian Martinez of San Ildefonso began to make the blackware that was also encouraged by the interest of archaeologists. Thus traditions were established.

The larger of the pots shown here (p. 116) is by Nampeyo's daughter Nellie Nampeyo and dates back to quite early in this century. The small one is a recent piece, signed T. Denum; it is quite thick.

The famous Pueblo potter Maria of San Ildefonso resurrected and reinvented the ancient technique of blackware, which is fired in a reducing atmosphere - that is to say the fire is smothered, usually with dung, so that no oxygen gets to the pots. Her husband Julian often painted the designs in slip so that they are dull on a highly polished surface, a technique known as black-on-black.
Jemez, for most of this century, has been a producer of little curios in clay painted in bright, sometimes garish poster colors, so the development of revivals of traditional Pueblo pottery types with a number of modifications and innovations is an interesting development.

Pottery is a very important part of the traditional art of the Southwest, and because it survives so well in archeological context, we have knowledge of its very long history. Of the ancient styles, Mimbres is most often imitated because the figurative elements are so appealing. The advantage of using a resurrected style, especially for persons who are not descendants of the makers, is that no living artist can complain that you are copying his or her work. Brody (1982) has written a definitive work.
The potters of Cochiti Pueblo have made clay figurines for many years - more than a century at least. I had always especially enjoyed the figure of a Hispanic patron in the Field Museum and a tourist with a camera I saw somewhere. By the time I had the opportunity and money to buy one, Helen Cordero's storytellers were all the rage and I did not see any other forms on a brief trip to Santa Fe. All were too expensive for me, especially as I had my heart set on a tourist subject. Then in 1990 there were thousands of them around, and I found this one in a store that specialized in little Christmas ornaments. The ones I saw varied in size, style, and price. They were made by potters in pueblos and by others as well. The ethnic names had largely disappeared, except for a few very small souvenir examples, and were mostly signed with individual names. The history of this form is a fascinating one and has been explored by Babcock (1983), but there are still some questions about this history that seem interesting that I would like to explore. For example, why did this particular image achieve such enormous popularity? There is also the question as to what is happening with regard to ethnicity, which also leads questions as to the nature of ethnicity and of authenticity and borrowing.

A few trivial examples of the numerous proliferations of the Cochiti storyteller give some idea of the varieties of spin-off. Storyteller figures are made in all portable sizes in every pueblo village and probably in all cities of the Southwest. Some are made in molds, although I was once told that, "She just likes to make them all alike."
Pueblo peoples have a long history as dwellers in this arid land. They were relatively isolated but knew much of the world beyond, and some of them had been on long journeys to the civilizations and tropical lands to the south. It is the close harmony with the natural world that arouses admiration for their ancient way of life. Astronomical observation provided knowledge of the seasonal round, closely tied to the growing of crops, and the ceremonial cycle reflected and guided these activities. The religion provided a whole series of levels of belief from the children's literal acceptance of the dancers as supernatural to the philosophical perception of spiritual oneness beyond all outward forms.

Symbols of the various aspects and powers took the anthropomorphic forms called kachinas. During the half-year of the ceremonial season, dancers impersonate the kachinas. There is great variation in the importance of various forms. In the Hopi Kachina dolls, we have some interesting adaptations. The traditional dolls made for the education of children were simply carved and painted with enough detail to identify the symbols of the Kachina they represented. The Kachina dolls made for sale are increasingly realistic and detailed in active dance poses. The artists are identified by name, and the prices have steadily risen. Dockstader says:

It must be emphasized that the new types of action figures can no longer be regarded simply as Kachina dolls; they have become costumed sculpture or genre figures. The degree or detail, precise proportions, and life-like activities portrayed in the round now ensure an entree into the world of sculpture for objects once seen as merely folk carving. (1985:155)

These figures are now defined as Art. Authentic iconography, which was all-important in the original use of tihii to instruct the young, no longer has much purpose. Once there was a possibility that white purchasers would learn as children do, but it seems beyond them. For those whose interest goes beyond art for art sake there are some good books, such as the one by Dockstader.

I was orally assured that a doll I bought in the museum shop of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, NM was Hopi, made by a young unknown artist, but it is not signed. The style is realistic but not the full action figure of recent times. It is made of cottonwood. It is probably a variant of Tsitoto, the "Flower Kachina" (Colton 1959:31). There have been many
variations in Hopi Kachina figurines over time. This one does not represent a highly sacred figure.

The tradition is certainly a continuing one, with many modifications involving a continuing series of innovations, and the influence of the Anglo market are clearly evident. Prices for work by carvers with Names are in the thousands. Recently, contemporary looking elongated forms appeared on the market, mostly natural wood. At about the same time Hispanic Santos in a similar elongated style using the natural wood shape is being made. This is a clear case of contemporary mainstream art tendencies and Anglo tastes resulting in a convergence of style in Hispanic and Pueblo forms.

The miniatures on the bottom left are both done by Hopi people. The watercolor is by Peter Sumatzkuku and represents a bear dancer. The miniature next to the painting is a red Hawk dancer. They are both very skilled works but far less expensive than the larger items, although they probably take as much time and effort. It is one way to make pot-boilers without lowering one's standards. Sumatzkuku is still a young man, and when his name becomes better known, his work may move into a different category.

The Navajo people have done a lot of adapting since they came into the Southwest. They have not had an easy time. They adopted and adapted much from the Pueblo peoples in terms of religion, but not kachinas. Now they make kachina dolls for sale, but they rarely make them in Navajo forms. They are more likely to make them in the form of the lesser Hopi figures, like the Butterfly Kachina at the right, above. This one is typical of the many to be found at the tourist shops in Santa Fe. They cost very little. The other, called Yellow Warrior I bought to show that there are Navajo pieces of better quality.

One interesting version is small, quickly carved souvenir versions that sometimes, ironically, are superficially more like the traditional dolls than the modern art versions.
The Zuni people, while they have a unique history and language, share many symbolic forms with the Hopi. I have read many times that Zuni kachina dolls differ from those of the Hopi in having the arms made separately and then attached to the body, and little more is said about them. But I could find no examples in Santa Fe for all the hundreds of dolls I looked at. This aroused my curiosity, and I began searching for information in the library of the Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe. Even with the interested help of Laura Holt, the head librarian, very little could be found, except some fine articles and books on the Zuni kachina dancers and their costumes. Then she found one article in a trader newsletter that said that two young men were starting to make them. This was dated some five or six years previously. The mystery deepened, because you would think that I would have found at least a few. Finally, I was able to ask curator Ed Ladd, who was also a Zuni. He said tersely that Zuni people make the dolls only for the education of children, as is traditional, and do not make them for sale.

More than a year later I saw a few in a shop (the Storm Cloud Trading Company in St. Paul) specializing in Native American arts and was given an account of the situation which illustrates what I mean by the dilemmas of change. I was told that there are very few carvers in Zuni, but one of the best, makes articles for ritual use at the request of the Elders. When he made some for sale, they objected, feeling as Mr. Ladd does. But the carver felt that he needed to sell some of his work in order to make a living, so the trader bought some. We discussed the matter of respecting the Zuni way and came to the conclusion that this was a Zuni problem; our part was to pay a decent price. So I bought one. I deduce that selling to a merchant in a distant town could be a kind of solution to the dilemma.

The many little animal figures made by Zuni craftspeople only become sacred objects, or fetishes, when treated with the proper rituals, but they are sold and bought as fetishes. Some tourists who buy them invest them with magical significance in very new and different contexts,
whether or not the buyers have made any effort to find out about their meanings to the makers. It has been said that Indians (any Indians) are the New Age shamans, but not much of the traditional Native American religious beliefs seem to be understood. Spirituality and magic are easily confused.

Zuni carvers have been bombarded by images in books and magazines, movies and TV, as well as travels to many places. They also are familiar with the works of the many artists to be seen in nearby towns. Yet they respond most strongly to the images that resonate with their traditions and interests. These are the pictures of animals available in the works of naturalists. Few carvers have seen any of the larger animals in the wild, yet these are important to them, and they portray them with feeling and artistry (Rodee and Ostler 1990).

Two different types of preferences in the arts have affected the work of Zuni carvers. One is the emphasis on increased realism, and the other is a trend toward abstraction. The latter trend is more often seen in the borrowing of the best known forms by other peoples, as in the case of the bear figures that are often made in larger sizes. If these figures, in addition to other characteristic additions, have feathers attached one can be pretty sure that the makers were not Zuni, as feathers are part of the ritual of sacrilization. The simplified stylized bear has been so widely appropriated that few people in most places would know of its origin.

The esthetic focus of much of Zuni craftwork is stone. It has been said that the Zuni people, when they learned to use silver, treated it simply as material to hold the stone and so continued a tradition of mosaic work that goes back to prehistoric times. Now they use not only the turquoise and other stones from the region but items imported from any place in the world. For all the cross-cultural misunderstandings that exist, this is one facet where interests converge; both many Zuni people and many Anglos give pretty rocks high esthetic priority.
These are Navajo hard goods from before 1930. The pendant on the end was probably once a buckle and is a stone cast piece, often called sand cast, made on the pattern of the ornaments for bow guards once so much a part of a Navajo man's outfit. The naja was my father's watch fob ornament. He was a great admirer and judge of fine male (deep toned) turquoise.

The Hopi have consciously developed a style of their own in silver, using an overlay technique. Recently they have also begun using a variety of colorful stones, in new post-modern styles, with just a hint of the more traditional qualities.

A few years ago, during the mid-eighties, *depression necklaces* were not considered much. When I asked around in shops and galleries in Santa Fe, I learned very little, and some of it was wrong. By 1992, they had become valued and collectable, and I learned that mine was made in Santo Domingo from the quartzite available there. I still don't know what the black is. Old Edison phonograph records?
Innovations can become traditional in time, which is why traditional is such a sloppy word. Beadwork is considered by many to be the most Indian of Native American crafts. But colored glass beads were trade goods brought by the European invaders. Africans, as well as Native Americans developed high skill in the craft. There were precedents. Both had beads before but not in such colors, sizes, and profusion. In America, peoples of the woodlands and prairies did fine work in porcupine quill embroidery unique to this region and so had many well developed techniques. Some Indian people are shocked to be told that they owe the introduction of glass beads and fry bread to their conquerors, but the skill and artistry they have shown, and the styles that have been developed give every right to the term traditional.

All the Navajo weaving I have is from early in this century. Navajo rugs present a very good history of the changes that take place over time as a result of contacts with other peoples. Recently, as fine rugs have come to be esteemed, their prices have risen, and weaving is done by professional craftswomen. If persons of moderate means buy them, they hang them on a wall as art. Only the wealthy can afford to put them on the floor!

As the Navajo adapted to this area, they adopted many myths and symbolic forms from the Pueblos, who are closely related to the natural world of this region. They also adopted some of the ritual forms. The altar sandpaintings of the Pueblo peoples were elaborated and extended in the Navajo forms, and these prayers made visible were and are an important form of ephemeral art. For a long time the Chanters, the ritual specialists, were
opposed to any form of preservation, but eventually Hosteen Klah and a few others decided that paintings of the images might be made and kept in order to preserve sacred knowledge that was in danger of being lost. Then with the introduction of white glue, the art of souvenir sandpainting came into being. Parezo has told this story in her book Navajo Sandpainting: From Religious Act to Commercial Art. At one point she says that the art could become fine art, but I have not seen any that I thought could qualify. There is, however, a good deal of experimentation, so the medium is interesting to follow.
Many are done in traditional sandpainting style, but unfortunately the background color is usually a darkish brown and not the lovely pinkish tan that is preferred for the background and makes the other colors look right. None are iconographically correct, but that is all to the good. Some sacred things should be kept sacred.

However, I have been told that there are some excellent ones made in proper traditional form because, in these days, the makers are very concerned with the loss of knowledge and so are willing to preserve it. I have not yet seen these.

Souvenir sandpaintings allow the maker to experiment with a variety of subjects, and the quality varies a lot, and there is considerable potential in the medium. Father Sky and Mother Earth can have some meaning even to Anglo buyers and possibly lead to a further interest and understanding.

These alabaster figurines (p. 128) provide an example of the current interest in stone as a material. Examining this display in Cristof's in Santa Fe, I noticed that each piece was carefully marked with the kind of alabaster and the place it was from. A few of the pieces were signed, and the label for the whole display indicated that Navajos did the carving. It seems clear that interest in the art, craft, or ethnicity of the carvers was minor compared to interest in the stone.

One of the surprising aspects of the extensive borrowing, or appropriation, of styles in the Southwest is the very exact copying of a style usually a Native American one, in another medium. Anglos often make such copies. There is a gallery full of gourds painted in a detailed and exact imitation of Pueblo pots and costing as much. There are detailed watercolor paintings and silk screens of storyteller figurines and pots. There are meticulous copies of baskets done in clay so that they look just like baskets but are pots. Undoubtedly, the craftsmanship that goes into these productions is very good, but I wonder about their appeal. Much of it must come simply for the pleasure of fooling people. But the artistic creativity is provided by the original craftspersons whose work is thus used.
Weaving goes back a long way in this area in the form of basketry, probably for some 9,000 years. Indian weavers will tell you that Spider Woman taught weaving to the people a long time ago. Since then, a variety of techniques and materials have been introduced at one time or another. The Pueblo peoples grew cotton and spun cotton thread on spindles long before the Spaniards introduced sheep. Belt looms and upright looms are true looms and have been in used in this region for many centuries.

The Navajo people learned weaving from their Pueblo neighbors, and after, they got sheep wove blankets that were widely traded, especially among Indian peoples as far away as the Plains. The history of this craft is well known, but the Hispanic weaving in the area has also gone on for centuries and only recently received much attention.

Hispanics have tended to be invisible people, as the emphasis for tourists has been on the area as Indian Country. Anglos have tended to think of the Hispanics as the conquerors, which they were, and ignored the fact that Anglos have been conquerors too. I have recently come to realize the extent of this in my own background.
The work by B aizerman on t he history of Hispanic weaving in the area, the many reverberations with weaving in Mexico and Indian peoples of the area, as well as the roles of traders are eye-opening. I have one bit of weaving in this category, bought at the Albuquerque airport to show students the differences with Navajo rugs - (the fringe).

The interest in folk art has changed the situation, and there is quite a market for weaving and for the traditional religious Santos, both carved and painted. Somehow the animales became very saleable, although these had traditionally been a minor activity by the folk. The coyote and snakes became especially popular, and they were made by all sorts of people in a variety of forms.

The curious combinations of our yearnings that we project on to those mysterious others seem to be blatantly obvious in the art forms that attain fad like popularity and are for sale all over the place in Santa Fe and elsewhere in the Southwest. In the late 1980s, it was storytellers and coyotes. Storytellers communicate rather clearly the togetherness quality of the Pueblo image. It is interesting that the figures changed early from Cordero's personal image of a grandfather with children to a more maternal figure.
The coyote, on the other hand rather explicitly in some versions, ties in with freedom, especially sexual freedom: "this is my night to howl." It seems rather surprising to find this tied in with the new interest in folk art, especially in this area where the Hispanic folk art that has been traditional takes the form of religious works.

In 1991 I idly predicted that the Kokopelli image would become the in-thing, to replace the coyote in representing the wild side. In 1992, I found that I had been overwhelmingly right. Kokopelli, the traveling salesman of the Pueblos, was everywhere, in all sorts of forms.

With the increased interest in rock art, and perhaps a reference in one of the mystery stories by Tony Hillerman, the figure called Kokopelli has become ubiquitous in the SW area in a great many forms of tourist art. In Pueblo myth, this personage goes back a long way. Very early in the origin story, it is told how the People, when they had evolved enough to emerge onto the surface world, hunted for a place to live. Great bravery and the healing power of music by some flute playing insect-people helped them to achieve the respect of Eagle and so find a homeland.

The locust mahu is known as the Humpbacked flute player, a kachina named Kokopilau....In the hump on his back he carried seeds of plants and flowers (Footnote - the Kokopilau or Kokopeli kachina is often made with a long penis to symbolize the seeds of human reproduction also) and with the music of his flute he created warmth. When the people moved off on their migrations over the continent they carved pictographs of him on rocks from the tip of South America up to Canada, and it was for these two mahus that the Blue Flute and Gray Flute clans and societies were named. (Waters 1963)
Stories arose about Kokopeli's human reproductive powers, but in the marketplace, all of the connections with plants and the fertility of the earth have been ignored along with the importance of bravery and the healing power of music. Merchants know what sells in contemporary America.

I have been wondering ever since what nice sweet thing would come along as the fad for storytellers faded, and now it seems that dreamcatchers in a variety of sizes and materials are made by all Indian peoples. I failed to predict this one.