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Culture Contact and Material Change

Lawrence E. Dawson
Vera-Mae Frederickson
Nelson H. H. Graburn

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TRADITIONS IN TRANSITION
CULTURE CONTACT AND MATERIAL CHANGE

by

Lawrence E. Dawson
Vera-Mae Fredrickson
Nelson H. H. Graburn

Lowie Museum of Anthropology
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1. (Frontispiece) Twined basket in tea kettle form; Tlingit, Alaska, pre-1898. 20 cm. wide, 15 cm. high, UCLMA 2-6514.

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I. INTRODUCTION

With rare exceptions any human society about which anthropologists have information has had some regular contact with one or many other societies which are ordinarily considered alien. These contacts can take a simple form, such as exchange of a few items of trade goods, or they can be expressed by the direct control of one society over another, with the dominant one often deliberately attempting to modify the group under its control. In addition to these contacts any society may reach into its own cultural past or that of others for symbols and ideas which seem significant to its current condition.

"Traditions in Transition" illustrates some of the effects of and on items of material culture brought about by contacts between peoples and by the passage of time. These effects are particularly drastic in contacts between heavily industrialized Western societies and technologically simpler peoples. All contact situations involve people—agents of change—who may be the artisans or the recipients but are likely to be the middlemen who specialize in such cross-cultural transfers. The ramifications of material cultural contact are not always deleterious but can result in the restructuring and accommodation by the recipient society, and may lead to loss of values or status distinctions.

Many material objects and associated ideas have become almost universal, furnishing the opportunity to compare the many different situations of cultural contact and introduction. Such processes are by no means unidirectional from the more complex to the simpler societies: tobacco and pipe-smoking, horses and riding equipment, systems of writing, and tailor-made clothing are all examples which have at times been passed both ways between societies of different complexity as well as between relative equals. These large-scale continentwide or worldwide movements of achieved cultural transmission we call *diffusion*. If it is only the ideas rather than the objects themselves that have moved across cultural boundaries, such as the idea of writing to Sequoia the inventor of the Cherokee syllabary, we call this *stimulus diffusion*. The actual processes of long term cultural contact with subsequent modifications of one or both cultures, we call *acculturation*—though the rare phenomenon of one culture being totally modified and absorbed into another is distinguished as *assimilation*.

Change is universal, but the increased communications of the past hundred and especially the past thirty years have speeded up the rate of change and the spread of ideas everywhere. Previously separate peoples content to live with their own ideas and relying on their own or nearby resources and craft techniques now have available to them, nay, even forced upon them, a range of paraphernalia of undreamed complexity and efficiency spewed out by the industrial giants. Small-scale societies have always been eager to adopt innovations that they perceive as making their life easier or enhancing their status, but they rarely foresee the long-term ramifications of attachment to a trading or credit system, or of the irreversible dependency that the new technology and equipment brings. After insulated wooden houses were made available to the Canadian Eskimos, rarely could an Eskimo be found who wanted to live in an igloo again—even though the new housing form totally precludes mobility and easy modification.

The new material apparatus that has covered the world is not necessarily taken in, used, and worn the same way as the

manufacturers intended or even as would be done by any other recipient group. Even the most utilitarian objects have to fit into a social milieu with its own prestige system, gift and trade routes, daily and yearly routines, and preexisting cosmology. An ax might not be used on wood but become a symbol of the highest political office; utilitarian clothes may become the regalia for the most special occasions; large boats or wagons may require the formation of new cooperative social groups, enhancing kinship or local solidarity; other items, such as rifles and iron traps for hunters, often break down the cooperative system because they enable the individual to operate alone, and hence encourage individual competition, monetization, and political breakdown. The accommodations and ramifications are as various as the affected societies.

At the same time that the industrial world's paraphernalia have been encompassing the globe, the same trade routes and agents have been acquainting the people of the industrial world with the crafts and manufactures of the nonindustrial peoples, often at a time when these crafts are ceasing production and have lost their local functions. The nostalgia for the lost handiwork arts and the incessant cultural consumption and imperialism of the industrialized peoples have engendered a lust for collection of the antique and the exotic which has kept open these trade routes even when authentic objects no longer exist. Explorers and museum collectors may in the past have engaged in barter, but by now most cross-cultural exchanges are commercial trades following the rules of supply and demand, and the customs of exploitation and advertising that characterize the industrial products flowing the other way. It is difficult to maintain or revive traditional crafts under modern conditions, but the complimentary process, the commercial innovation of new arts and crafts building upon both the old style and the new demands, has met with considerable success (Chapter II).

One danger, from the anthropologist's point of view, is the virtual elimination of significant differences between the range of material equipment and the panoply of ideas of the cultures

of the world. Anthropology celebrates the diversity of man whereas the world is rushing fast in the opposite direction. Not only are the products of all industrial civilizations made to resemble and compete with each other—and be sold to the nonindustrial peoples in the same way—but the crafts of the latter peoples are gaining an even greater similarity as they are designed to meet the exigencies of portability, salability, and the décor of middle-class homes (Chapter IV). Though this may be a romantic rather than an efficiency-oriented point of view, we must not forget that material items, utilitarian and decorative, carry an enormous burden in the form of the symbolic and identity system of the users and makers. Not only are we “what we eat” (*chow mein* made in Chicago, *bleu* cheese made in Wisconsin, and *champagne* made in Merced) but socially and ethnically we are very much what we wear and what we surround ourselves with—as well as, of course, what we say (Chapter III).

Our personal and local material world is a symbolic expression of our identification *with* a certain group—our in-group or reference group—and a mark of our distinction from other groups—out-groups of different status, sex, ethnicity, or ideology. Most of our material surroundings are symbolic and arbitrary rather than forced by utilitarian function; for instance the shape of cars has little to do with their efficiency, and the shape of our clothes and the cut of our hair has little to do with keeping us warm. In simpler, traditional times peoples wore clothes and lived in houses appropriate to their social status and geographical locality; their material surroundings were much like those of their parents, their children, and their neighbors, with whom they unquestioningly identified. Tribes and nations knew each other by appearances, and within each society the arts and crafts were not supposed to be significantly different, progressive, or original. Since the expansion of the Western world and the effusion of industrial products, people have had greater choices of material traditions and hence identity: They often try to present an image of their life style by surrounding themselves with objects suggestive of their taste, their sophisti-

cation, their travel experiences, or even their own creative abilities. Whereas the masses of large scale societies make vain efforts to make themselves appear "different," the masses of the emerging nations take on the products of the former and try to look "the same."

Technology has enabled us to be all the same; the question for the long run is: How different do we want to be?

Introductions of New Material Objects

In recent centuries the introduction of steel-cutting tools has led to major technological changes in many economically simple native cultures. The steel tools were usually followed by additional items of Euro-American manufacture, but this did not always occur through direct continuous contact with members of the larger urban societies, because the items were often initially obtained through a long chain of intermediaries in the native trading network. It was thus possible for native peoples to use some items of foreign manufacture for years, with their culture showing little other direct influence from the dominant or colonizing societies.

Introduction of new technological items to a culture, however, often had extensive repercussions, which the receiving society could comprehend only in retrospect. The use of the new item, and the behavior associated with its acquisition and accumulation, might have unpredictable effects on the economy and local power structure, as well as on relationships with neighboring groups. Moreover it could alter the relationships between the sexes, between age groups, and between kin groups. In all examples discussed here a new technological item was introduced with subsequent profound effects, both negative and positive, on the life of the receiving society.

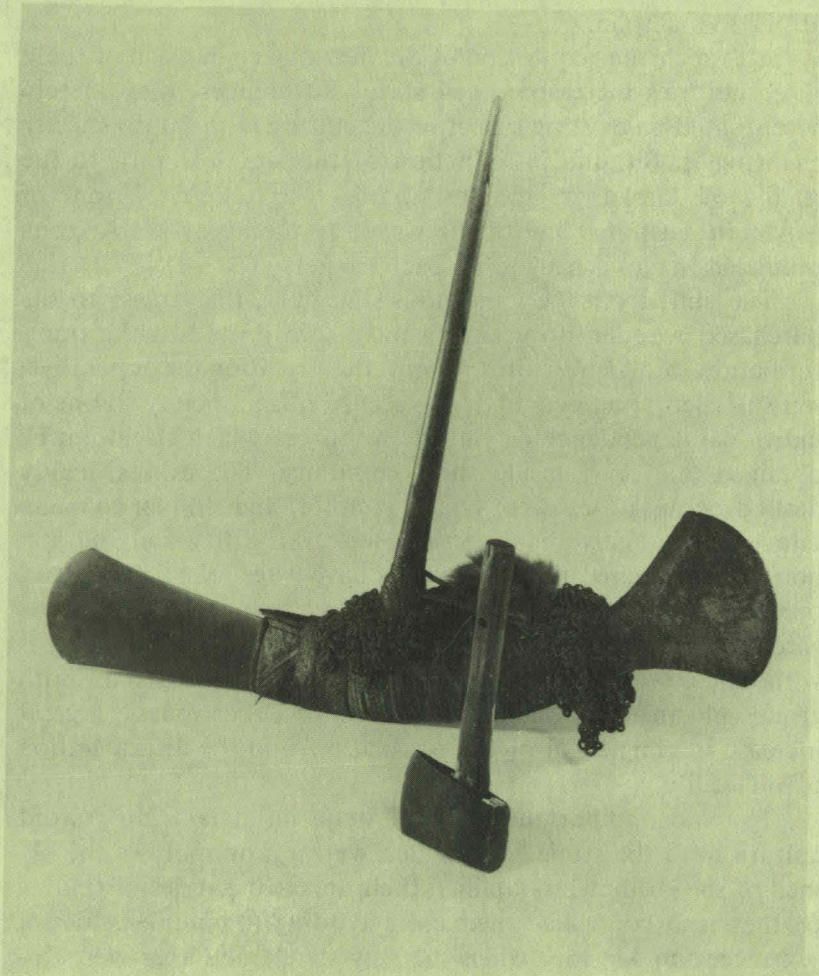
Machetes and firearms introduced to the eastern Jivaro of Ecuador, steel axes to the Siane of Highland New Guinea, and horses and associated equipment to the Blackfeet of the American Great Plains represented technological intrusions which were part of a basically similar process of change within these highly diverse societies. In all three instances the new items

were acquired through the native trading networks, not through direct contact with Western industrialized societies. In each instance the new items, although more efficient than their aboriginal counterparts, did not necessarily result in increased food production but rather in the intensification of nonsubsistence activities associated with newly acquired free time. In each instance the new items quickly became the most desired valuables in the native culture and their possession became correlated with the acquisition of social power. Following upon this was an acceleration of social differentiation as the gap widened between those with the valuables (and the related power) and those without.

The machete, used in weeding, land clearing, food preparation, and wood working, rapidly became the most important tool in Jívaro culture. Machetes are still so valued that they are used until worn down to a fraction of their original size. The muzzle-loading shotgun, available to the Jívaro in great numbers since the 1930s, has become the most desired symbol of masculinity and has replaced earlier valuables as the prime object in the Jívaro distribution of property to obtain prestige and friendship. Since the shamans are the only members of Jívaro society whom people are afraid to ask for gifts, shamans have the best opportunity for accumulating large numbers of machetes and firearms and the associated prestige and power.

Before the introduction of the steel ax to the Siane in 1933, the symbol of a "big man," that is, one with power and influence in the village, was the rare polished greenstone ceremonial ax, one of the most valuable items in native culture. The steel axes, which replaced both the stone work axes and the ornamental stone axes, were promptly acquired by the "big men" who were already engaged in ceremonial trade through the existing native trading networks, and by lending them they enormously increased their social status and power (Plate 2).

After the initial acquisition of the horse through other tribes, the Blackfeet shifted the focus of their intertribal warfare almost exclusively to horse raiding. By 1833 the Piegan, one of the Blackfeet tribes, was estimated to have owned at least one



2. Ceremonial stone ax, New Guinea highlands, 1930s, 61 cm. wide, UCLMA 11-39269; iron trade ax, 26 cm. long, UCLMA 2-48544.

horse for every man, woman, and child. A wealthy horse-owning class began to develop and with the increase in horses the numbers of tipis and wives increased that wealthy men could afford to maintain.

Although the acquisition of the new objects in each of these three cultures increased social status differences, they merely accentuated an existing aspect of the culture without drastically changing it. But the introduction of the wooden dory to the Aleuts of Alaska, of the steel hatchet to the Yir Yiront of Northern Australia, and of the wagon to the Papago of Arizona produced major changes in each society.

The shift from the indigenous skin boat, the *kayak*, to the purchased wooden dory significantly contributed to the transformation of Aleut culture from the traditional cooperative, self-sufficient, and economically secure village society to one of individual dependence on outside resources which could not be obtained and used inside the community. The dories, highly desired because they were larger, sturdier, and simpler to maintain than the native boat constructed from driftwood and sea-lion skins, required that the owners have wage jobs to purchase, operate, and maintain them. The dory owners therefore regarded their catch as exclusively their own and did not share it with other families. The result was a drastic decrease in both group self-sufficiency and in community cohesiveness, a great increase in emigration of the population, and the disintegration of village life.

The most important material items in native Yir Yiront culture were the stone axes, which were a monopoly of the old men of the group who obtained them through a series of trading partners and controlled their use according to complex rules of sex, age, and kinship. When the new steel trade axes were distributed profusely and indiscriminately by Western missionaries to Yir Yiront young people and women, the traditional mechanisms for the exchange of valuables were disrupted, the social power of the old men was destroyed, and there was a revolutionary confusion of age, sex, and kinship roles—a total disruption of the basic social organization. The Yir Yiront were also

unable to fit the steel axes and subsequent products of Western society into their totemic and myth-making system, the keystone of their cultural life. The present and the future, which were conceived of as simply stable continuations of the mythical past of the totemic ancestors, became conceptually unstructured and uncertain, and individual demoralization and cultural disintegration followed.

The first wagon acquired by the Papago in the 1890s was obtained by the headman of the village council, who treated it not as an individual possession but as a community resource comparable with available arable lands and wells. The use of the wagon was distributed equally among the families of the community, the community members joined together cooperatively to construct the newly required roads, and the village council was greatly strengthened to meet the added responsibilities relating to the use of the wagon. The result was increased community cohesiveness. Replacing the pack horse, the wagon made it possible to collect and transport large quantities of firewood and made available a surplus of wood to sell to white neighbors. As a result, a surplus of wheat and corn was produced for the first time, and sold to whites with the wagon used for transport. One side effect of the use of rough-riding wagons to haul water was the replacement of the relatively fragile Papago pottery containers with metal drums. The preference remained, however, for the use of pottery containers for storing household drinking water, and thus ceramic traditions were kept alive, although fewer women made pottery, and pottery making rapidly became a specialized craft.

Items of Worldwide Diffusion

The widespread diffusion of such elements as tobacco, writing, money, cloth, glass beads, horses, sheep, maize, potatoes, and cassava have in many cases had dramatic consequences for the cultures in which they were introduced. The result of assimilation of these introductions was somewhat different for each receiving society because differences in culture conditioned the processes of incorporation. Sheep raising

introduced by the Spanish among the Pueblo tribes, for instance, was always on a limited scale because most Pueblo activities were farm and village-centered, and flocks of sheep need a larger ambit of forage. By contrast, the Navaho who didn't live in settled villages, took up sheep raising on a large scale and turned much of the wool into a remunerative production of blankets and rugs. Still other tribes, such as the Comanche, found no interest in sheep and took up horses instead, thereby becoming great buffalo hunters.

Items of wide diffusion have the effect of giving the multitude of receivers common denominators that enhance further communication. Horses, for example, at first introduced into North America by the Spanish, became the basis for a wide communication and trading network among many tribes of the Great Plains and Plateau area who formerly lived in relative isolation. Likewise the spread of writing, money, cloth garments, and messianic religions creates common ground for diverse peoples and intensifies contacts.

Tobacco, used for smoking, chewing, and snuffing, spread around the world in less than three hundred years. Its history exemplifies how innocent-seeming introductions can have astonishing consequences, given the opportunity of transportation. The statistics of the tobacco industry and the number of smokers are staggering. European explorers were the principal agents of the spread of tobacco. They and their sailors adopted its various habits from American Indians, brought them home to the ports of Europe, and carried them far and wide to lands that had never before seen outsiders. Portuguese sailors brought tobacco to the coasts of Africa, from where it penetrated to the interior; Dutch traders brought it to Japan, and English traders introduced it to India. The Spanish conquered the Philippines in the mid-sixteenth century, and from there tobacco was carried to China. Russian imperial expansion across Siberia to the Pacific was complete by the mid-eighteenth century, and further expansion into Alaska brought tobacco to the Eskimos, thus completing its circling of the globe.

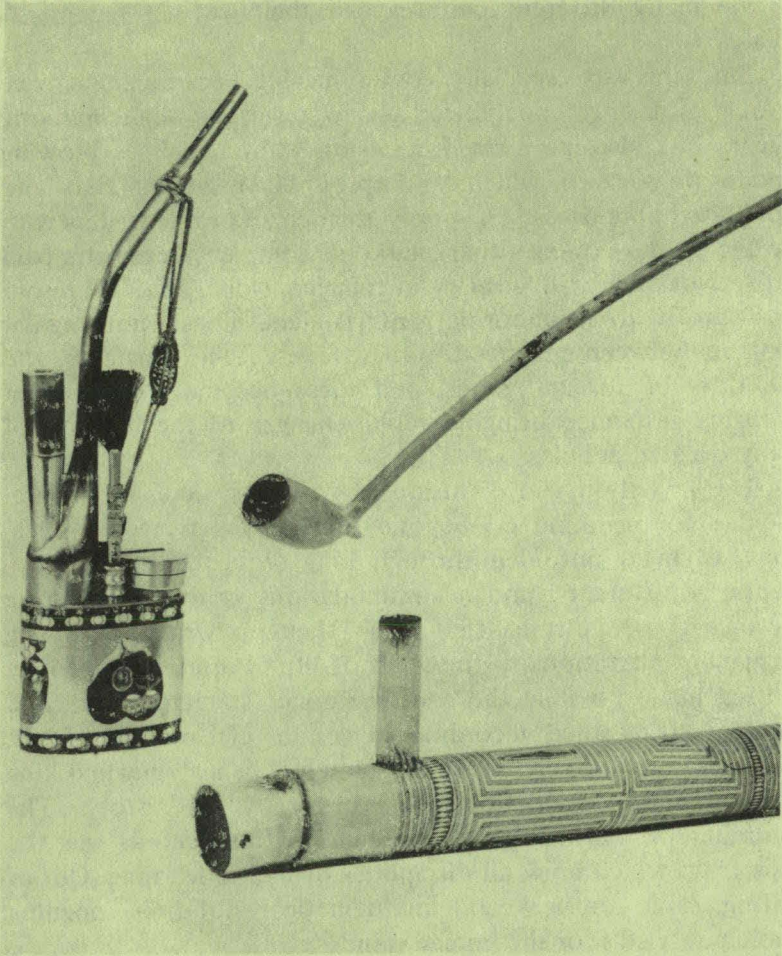
The diverse forms of pipes and snuff apparatus developed in

tobacco-using lands illustrate the varied assimilation processes of the many different cultures and their distinct viewpoints (Plate 3).

Smoking was especially communicable because the novice smoker not only experienced a new taste and slight narcotic effect, but also performed a visible stunt, such as blowing smoke rings, with which to impress his naive familiars and would-be apprentices. To supply the demand came traders with an eye to developing other markets. Some entrepreneurs paid native workmen with a salary of tobacco, which could be resold at a profit to neighboring hinterlanders. Thus came regular contacts between cultures through traders, their assistants, and the flow of foreign goods, and these became a channel of enduring influence bringing rapid changes to the lifeways of many isolated peoples.

The invention and diffusion of writing systems had consequences for mankind far beyond the easily perceived applications. Changes unfolded through long sequences of developments, adjustments, and accommodations gradually suffusing through those cultures that had taken up writing, bringing permanent alterations to the ways of life of millions of people. Writing made possible the codification of statecraft, law, and religions. It enabled recording of commercial receipts, debts, agreements, and taxes. The setting down of genealogies and king lists provided foundations for the study of history. The accumulation of knowledge through written records was the basis from which grew all disciplines of higher learning. Out of writing came musical and mathematical notation, opening whole new vistas for the human mind.

The widespread introduction of glass trade beads and manufactured cloth also brought subtle changes to the receiving cultures. The following effects can be noted, for instance, on the traditional skin clothing of the Alaskan Athabascan Indians: a) they substituted or replaced traditional materials used for the same purposes (porcupine quills); b) they became a vehicle for the assimilation of foreign design styles (e.g., floral patterns); c) they altered the traditional style through use of a different



3. Chinese water pipe, date unknown, 26 cm. high, UCLMA 9-8341; Dutch clay pipe, 38 cm. long, property of Eugene R. Prince; bamboo pipe of the Forei tribe, eastern New Guinea highlands, collected 1958, 28 cm. long, UCLMA 11-14778.

range of colors. The eventual outcome, of course, was a clothing style of radically different appearance.

Agents of Change: Innovation, Revival, and Demise

Persons in direct and regular communication with the population of another culture commonly exert a large influence on that people's course of culture change. Among these intercultural go-betweens we may, for present purposes, distinguish between those whose job it is to introduce new ideas and material items—missionaries, schoolteachers, agricultural extension workers, and above all traders; and those who unwittingly induce changes—miners, explorers, prospectors, soldiers and sailors and, especially nowadays, tourists. Through the former are funneled many foreign influences and materials to which accommodations are made. However, even short-term visitors exert an influence through, for instance, their selection of articles to purchase as souvenirs.

Materials and symbolic systems are influenced as much by the indirect effects of psychological impact and life-style emulation as by the intended export of goods and techniques. Thus members of small-scale societies undergoing acculturation often emulate the personnel of the dominant society, be they missionaries or miners, traders or technicians. Thus new ideas and new demands are created as new values and scales of prestige emerge from a contact situation. Not only do the persons in the focus of culture contact bring cultural influences directly, but the articles of trade and exchange themselves may suggest novel uses to purchasers who may perceive them from a point of view radically different from that of the manufacturers and traders. The innovations produced thus may result in new and unique cultural accents.

The agents of change include those who specifically set out to modify, change, or even revive the manufactures of native peoples, usually for commercial purposes but often with "moral" overtones, stressing how good it would be for them. There are many examples of successful introductions and revivals, but to understand the processes of material and

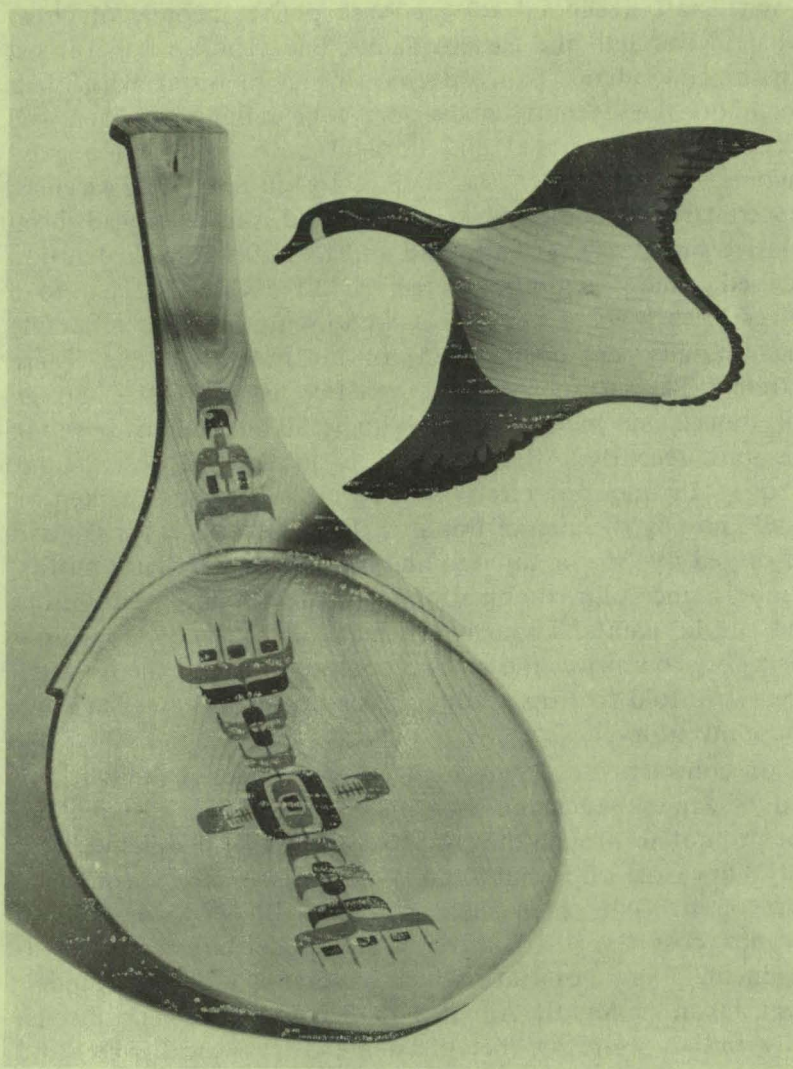
cultural change we should also examine the failures: we shall discuss two of the latter from North America.

Around the turn of the century most Indian tribes had been conquered, put on reservations, missionized, and deprived of their original modes of livelihood. They were more and more dependent on the white man's material equipment and had less opportunity and motivation to continue their own manufactures. At the same time white collectors became interested in Indian goods and bemoaned their increasing rarity. Some collectors devised schemes and arguments why and how these crafts should be revived:

"It would be a calamity to Indians and whites alike if the industrial art of basket making were allowed to die. Intelligent, concentrated effort can save it, and in its salvation a greater good can be done the Indians than a century's distribution of rations and supplies On every reservation, in every school under the control of the government; arrangements should be made instantly to gather together all the old majellas [women] and give them adequate compensation for teaching the young girls all the various branches of the art Then let intelligent white people study the subject and suggest improved methods of growing, harvesting and preparing the necessary material. Let scientific culture direct new methods of securing the permanent and beautiful color of the native dyes; and then leave the Indian alone to follow the bent of her own mind, as far as shape, design and symbolism are concerned. It would not be long, were these suggestions carried out, ere there would be a revival of the art, a true renaissance from which Indian and white would alike profit—profit in more important ways than the merely financial, good though that alone would be."

(*Indian Basketry*, by George Wharton James, 2d ed., rev. and enl.; Portland: Frohman Trading Co. 1902, p. 229)

Most of these attempts came to naught, though traders, collectors, and less professional do-gooders have kept trying and some instances have been successful. More recently the staff of the Federation of Indian and Eskimo Cooperatives of Northern Quebec sought to combine revival with innovation in providing



4. "Cree Craft" wooden ladle, Naskapi-Cree, 1969, 37 cm. long, property of Nelson H. H. Graburn; goose wall plaque, James Bay Cree, 1972, 21 cm. wide, UCLMA 2-56502.

a new craft livelihood for the Naskapi-Cree peoples of Great Whale River and the eastern James Bay. These northernmost Algonkian Indians had suffered by comparison with their neighbors the Eskimos whose soapstone carving had been well received and promoted and brought both fame and a good income. The efforts of the Indians to sell soapstone carvings, wood carvings, dolomite carvings, and souvenirs had been relative failures. The white and Indian staff of the Federation devised a new genre marketed as "Cree Craft" scaled to a lower price bracket than the Eskimo sculptures and reflecting the ethnicity and environment of the Indian creators. These artifacts (Plate 4) included decorated copies of full-size aboriginal utensils and models of larger items, all of which had been in use until recently. All were made of local woods—black pine, spruce, tamarack, or birch—which were logged and worked by hand knife by the men of this area. They were made for sale and decorated by two or three young men, using aboriginal motifs, symbols, and color combinations applied with imported brushes and acrylic paints. Though well made and promoted and sold for a very low price, the market soon fell off and the Naskapi-Cree were told to stop producing for the already swollen warehouse inventory.

In contrast, the closely related Cree peoples at the southern end of James Bay make souvenir carvings for sale. These are not promoted through the cooperative or other middlemen, and only a few Cree who want to pursue this occupation spend much time on it. Older men such as Johnny Blueboy whittle wall plaques, cosy "northern scenes," and model birds and animals producing a genre of crafts which is closer to the plastic models from Japan or Middle America than it is to anything aboriginally Indian (Plate 4). Yet the demand from local whites and visitors continues and generally outstrips supply. The agents of change are the makers and the buyers themselves; there are no promoters and no one has to guess or research the market, for the buyers order and the Cree respond directly but do not make objects willy-nilly for some distributional chain.

The extinction of native customs or crafts has been a

common occurrence in this century of rapid cultural change. Many well-meaning efforts such as those mentioned above have been made in attempts to reverse the decline or modify threatened traditions to ensure their continuation. There have been subsidies to potential craftsmen and promotion of the values of the works. Almost all have failed because the advocates have not taken into account the complexity of the underpinnings which supported these traditions in their former cultural settings. At other times they have also misjudged the potential market. Folkways and crafts are not isolated compartments of culture, but subtly integrated with many aspects of a people's total social experience. Some of the usual supports that maintain traditional crafts include: 1) Needs and uses for the products, 2) the ready availability of materials, 3) examples at hand from which to draw ideas, 4) free time to do the work and lack of competing attractions, 5) competent knowledge of the craft and opportunities for learning, 6) reward of status for good work in the eyes of other in-group members, 7) connections and rationale within the belief and value systems, 8) role of the products in the internal gifts-exchange systems, or the external trading systems of the people.

Though agents of change may have good intentions they can rarely do much to restore the old conditions in which traditional crafts flourished. Most examples of what appear to be successful revivals are in reality restructured and reconstituted crafts on a different basis with new underpinnings. The innovative agents have seen a commercial demand for souvenirs or exotica and know what features of the traditional crafts may be retained and what features must be introduced to ensure success. For instance, in 1900 the traders on the Navaho reservation saw the need for rugs rather than saddle blankets and, later, friends of the Navaho saw how "natural dyes," actually unknown to the native peoples, would attract the white buyers. Similarly the small-scale entrepreneurs of East Africa have insured that the subject matter of Kamba carvings smacks of Africa although the Kamba never traditionally carved them, and the Makonde of Tanzania are encouraged to use ebony

wood—dark wood sculptures from dark-skinned people—in making either naturalistic carvings of African subjects or fantastic carvings of *shetani* spirits. In most instances the successful contemporary traditions have a rather superficial resemblance to the works of the older precontact cultures, but, as has been remarked, they bear a strong resemblance to each other—from New Guinea to Cape Dorset or from Benin to Hokkaido.

Agents of change may not be purely commercial in their aims. There are nowadays emerging leaders of exploited peoples who attempt nativistic revivals of pride in their past heritage, but encounter the same problems faced by earlier “outsider” advocates. The principles of the necessary sociocultural setting still apply regardless of the spontaneous enthusiasm sparked by the movement. The task of recreating the necessary conditions and details of an ill-remembered past is a romantic nostalgia akin to “turning time backwards.”

Secondary Uses

Not all segments of a population are affected evenly by the drastic culture changes accompanying rapid industrialization. Some of the more peripheral members such as those living in rural areas or the urban poor do not have the means to purchase the goods produced by industry. However, they have in many places in the world ingeniously developed ways of remanufacturing cast-offs of the affluent users of industrial goods. Throw-aways such as tin cans and bottles are reprocessed in home workshops into a wide range of useful and salable items that meet the needs of those who cannot afford to buy the proper manufactured article. In other cases objects may be given new functions without modification (see Chapter II).

Many persons who make or use recycled products have no direct association with the original industrial items. Oil cans, old tires, and other automobile parts may be reworked by people who have never owned or even driven a car.

The most common remanufactured products are probably simple domestic items such as small lamps, containers, and food

preparation tools. Since this process takes place among people with limited resources where little money is expended on toys there are also numerous forms of remanufactured playthings, many of which are made by the children themselves.

There are several sources of materials for remanufacture: objects discarded when their original function is fulfilled, such as empty oil cans and old tires; parts of manufactured objects which are routinely discarded, such as bottle caps; new materials which have been spoiled in the manufacturing process such as sheets of printed metal like license plates, which are then sold at a minimal price to the recycling craftsmen (Plate 5).

For convenience, four basic ways may be distinguished in which industrial junk is recycled:

A. Direct reuse for something approximating the original function of the object, for example, an oil can made into a container.

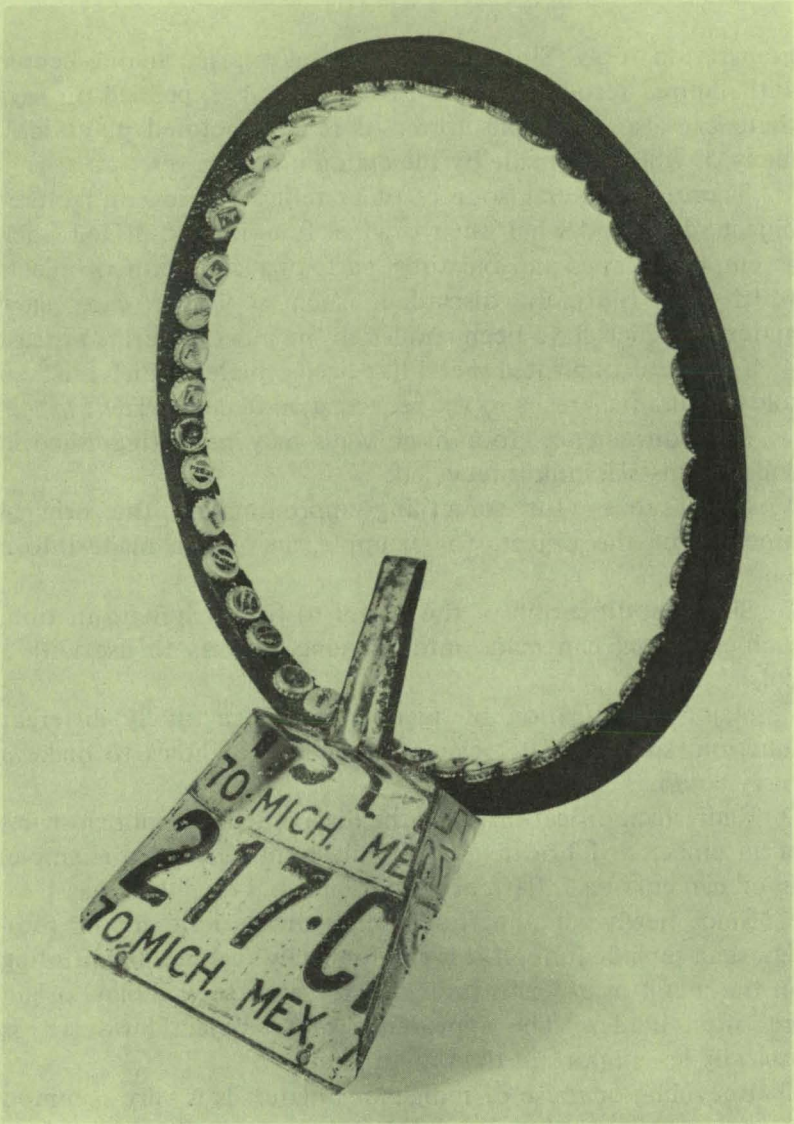
B. Slight modification of the object to fit an altered function, such as an oil can made into carrying buckets to use with a yoke.

C. Major modification of an object to fit a totally different function, such as a flat can punched full of holes to make a curry comb.

D. Radical modification using the dismantled, component parts of an object to fabricate a totally different object, for example, an oil can cut apart, flattened, and remade into a bird cage.

Since newly manufactured items always have greater prestige than remade junk, if it is economically feasible, the printing on the metal or other features that reveal its second-hand origin are often hidden. The appearance of an object, however, is basically less important than its function.

Recycling or reuse of indigenous materials is very common in preindustrial societies around the world. California archaeology provides examples of rechipped broken arrowheads and of spear points reworked into the smaller arrow points, a worn-out, painted rawhide Plains Indian bag (parfleche) reused as the soles for a pair of moccasins, a fossil ivory Eskimo harpoon head reworked as a tourist curio, and a broken fossil



5. Toy hoop of automobile tire section and bottlecaps, 50 cm. diameter; dustpan made from license plates, 26 cm. wide, both collected in Mexico, 1972, property of J. S. Kassovic.

ivory knife handle accidentally dug up and refashioned as a handle for a metal knife blade. One of the best-known sources of ancient Egyptian papyri is the stuffing of mummified crocodiles of a later period.

Imported manufactured materials have, of course, been used by native peoples since the first days of European contact. In Africa, for example, artists have been adapting materials such as glass beads, mirrors, paints, metals, and cotton cloth to their own purposes since the fifteenth century, often substituting an imported material for an indigenous one. However, it is probably not until a country is in the process of industrializing that there is a sufficient quantity of manufacturing cast-offs to supply a steady recycling market.

In some areas, such as Mexico, the remanufacturing or recycling process has developed into a vigorous folk craft comparable to weaving or pottery-making with the designs of objects at least partly regulated by regional and village traditions, and existing both as a home-craft and a small-cottage industry. This cast-off alteration trade differs from the more conventional crafts in that it is only as old as the tin can and, unlike most crafts in industrializing countries, has not yet undergone significant modification to meet the tourist market. There are indications, however, that this may happen in the near future because some cleverly designed items such as toys, as well as such "exotic" items as automobile-tire sandals and feed-sack shirts, are being purchased as souvenirs.

II. COMMERCIALIZATION

When material objects are produced to sell to consumers who are not part of the maker's culture (particularly when the producers are members of small-scale, nonindustrialized societies and the buyers are tourists and collectors from Western, industrialized societies or the more urbanized segments of the maker's own society) similar processes of modification in size, materials, forms, functions, and the role of the maker appear in many different societies. The similarity of these processes of modification with respect to a large range of objects and despite great differences in the cultures in which they appear is attributable to numbers of factors. Important among them are responses to commercialization, because the production of large numbers of salable objects for a European and American market may be based on aesthetic criteria, functional categories, and value-based tastes other than those deriving from the producers' culture.

Probably all societies that are in contact sooner or later enter into exchange or sale relationships with each other, because they will almost invariably have somewhat different natural and cultural resources. However, it is only when societies at greatly different stages of economic and technological development enter into an exchange relationship that great modifications are introduced into the manufactured objects of the less-developed societies.

In the nineteenth century, Europeans and Americans viewed most foreign cultures and their products not as presenting alternative interpretations of the world but merely as unsuccessful attempts to achieve the model of perfection represented most successfully by Western societies and their products. It is, perhaps, still generally true that objects from other cultures will be most admired which either approach the artistic idiom of the more dominant cultures, or which are considered to be crude, exotic, and quaint. The current counter-trend to this preference is the growing desire of individuals in mass-production societies to seek objects that appear to be unique and individually made. In addition, it is becoming increasingly difficult for even the most intransigent cultural chauvinists to maintain absolute faith in the superiority of their own cultures and their material products.

Nevertheless, although there is a large market for objects that bear the stamp of the unique, the individual, and the exotic, most of these objects have now been modified in size, material, form, and function from any of their cultural predecessors.

Changes in size have been made for easier portability and to accommodate the decorative use of such objects in modern Western households. Miniaturization and gigantism are both changes that add a feeling of the novel and exotic. Examples of gigantism appear particularly in some African and New Guinea masks and other carved objects. Miniaturization has been a feature of California Indian basketry, Southwestern Indian pottery, and Northwest Coast Indian totem poles. Such items as Navaho wall hangings and suitcase-sized Australian bark paintings are changes made for decorative use and easier portability.

Changes in materials used to make salable objects occur through the adoption of imported materials such as glass, cloth, metals, and paints; through the combining of imported with native materials, such as in many African masks, both for novelty and innovative effects; commercial emphasis on "valuable" woods such as ebony and mahogany; and through the use of previously unused native materials such as the soapstone and

argillite used by the Canadian Eskimos and Haida Indians. A fairly recent development is the current situation in places as far apart as the Northwest Coast of America and the Okavango District of Southwest Africa where the argillite used to make tourist carvings and the large tree trunks used to make tourist stools are both seriously depleted. The result has been a rise in prices, a reduction in size, and perhaps the foreshadowing of another change in materials.

Changes in form blend into changes in function in a large area of overlap. For example, many of the novelty basketry items made by the Indians of the west coast of America not only exemplify changes, for example, from bowl-like containers and trays to such forms as tea kettles (Plate I—frontispiece), kerosene lamps, and wine bottles but also changes in function, from utilitarian domestic utensils to purely decorative curios. These latter are nonfunctional imitations of functional European or American trade items. The production in both traditional and nontraditional materials of items such as salad servers, ashtrays, vases, and desk sets is to meet functional needs of the new consumers. The change in Navaho weaving from saddle blankets and textiles for local consumption to rugs and wall hangings for commercial consumption is a change in both form and function. Continuities in form with a change in function are a feature of the incised and engraved gourds which have been made in Peru for four thousand years for both sacred and secular use. Today the decorations are applied to gourds which serve as *objects d'art* to grace the living rooms of affluent Peruvians, Europeans and North Americans. One reason for changes in both form and function is that many broad categories of traditional arts in native culture (disregarding their specific function) were and are simply regarded as curios by Europeans and Americans. The result is a shift in production to purely decorative objects or to objects regarded as useful from the point of view of the new consumers.

Yet another major change is associated with the growth of individualism in the commercial arts. In the nineteenth century it was said that a critical difference between "folk" arts and

crafts and the "fine" arts was that the former were anonymous and the latter produced by known individuals. Furthermore items of "primitive" art were even more anonymous, in fact one often was not even sure what tribe made them! The modern emergence of the "name artist" began during the Renaissance for the modern Western world and similar processes occurred in the development of the high civilizations of China and Japan. A characteristic most prominent in Western civilization is the cult of individualism, as opposed to cooperative effort, combined with the cult of the artist as someone "special" with creative powers different from ordinary men. The latter belief fits in well with our notions of the value of originality, uniqueness, and "progress." Thus paintings and sculptures may be deemed more valuable if they are named rather than because their form is appealing. Conversely, artists, and all creative individuals, may even strive for a personal style, try to get their identities known, and attach their names or personal symbols to their works.

Thus when the arts and crafts of non-Western traditions are modified or introduced to the Western market, the agents of change and sale have attempted to get their creators to write or mark their names on the objects, and the retailers and promoters have tried to promote the names of the individual craftsmen to the buying public: the underlying analogy here is that creative works of value are made by named individuals in our culture, so the best of someone else's culture must also be made by unique, named individuals. This process or way of thinking has in turn been introduced into non-Western cultures with the enhancement of individualism, competitiveness, and the emulation of the successful *for his success* rather than for the beauty or utility of his product.

This simplistic picture is complicated by ethnographic realities. Anonymity is not the norm in "folk" or "primitive" cultures. Just because an object is not signed by name does not mean that other members of the group do not know who created it. In small-scale societies where everything is everybody's business there is little anonymity, for one would know the details of style, aesthetic choices, and even tool marks of

one's contemporaries. This would apply as much to the peasant villages of Europe (for which the concept of "folk" was invented) as to the nomads of the great plains of Africa or North America (for whom the concept of "primitive" was developed). Only in large-scale societies is anonymity truly possible and it was in this milieu that writing and the signing of works had to be developed to offset the growing lack of individuality. Furthermore the world has now become so integrated and self-conscious that the most folksy arts and crafts are soon identified, glorified, preserved, and stultified. In Japan since the 1930s individuals known as the most competent artists and craftsmen have been dignified (deified?) as "living national treasures" and their signed works are now worth ten times as much as those of their less well known neighbors!

There are other, perhaps over familiar, processes connected with commercialization. One example is the standardization of both design and workmanship which accompany the production of large quantities of articles for consumers who cannot afford or do not value individual skilled production. The splitting up of the various steps in the carving of an object, for example (where separate persons do the rough carving, smoothing, painting, and finishing), results in the loss of the uniqueness and individualization of the objects that were part of their original commercial appeal. Deterioration of craftsmanship, a frequent result of commercial production, is most marked when items which had a functional place in the traditional culture have lost their cultural meanings and have become simply inexpensive curios. Such deterioration is less likely when objects have acquired the status of *objects d'art* in the new market.

Additional processes of interest are the trend toward naturalism, seen in such disparate objects as West African animal carvings and pictorial animal designs on California Indian baskets: and the trend toward grotesqueness which is particularly conspicuous in some African and New Guinea carvings. A widespread form of simplification is the elimination of traditional symbolic content because it has no significance for the new consumers.

A final interesting but regrettable corollary of the commercialization of objects from exotic cultures is forgery and faking. As the various processes of modification have accelerated, a "cult of antiquity" has emerged among the buying public which overvalues age and "authenticity," and thus encourages faking. We have, of course, long been familiar with this problem in classical and Egyptian antiquities but it has recently become a major problem in such diverse categories of materials as African sculptures and pre-Columbian pots.

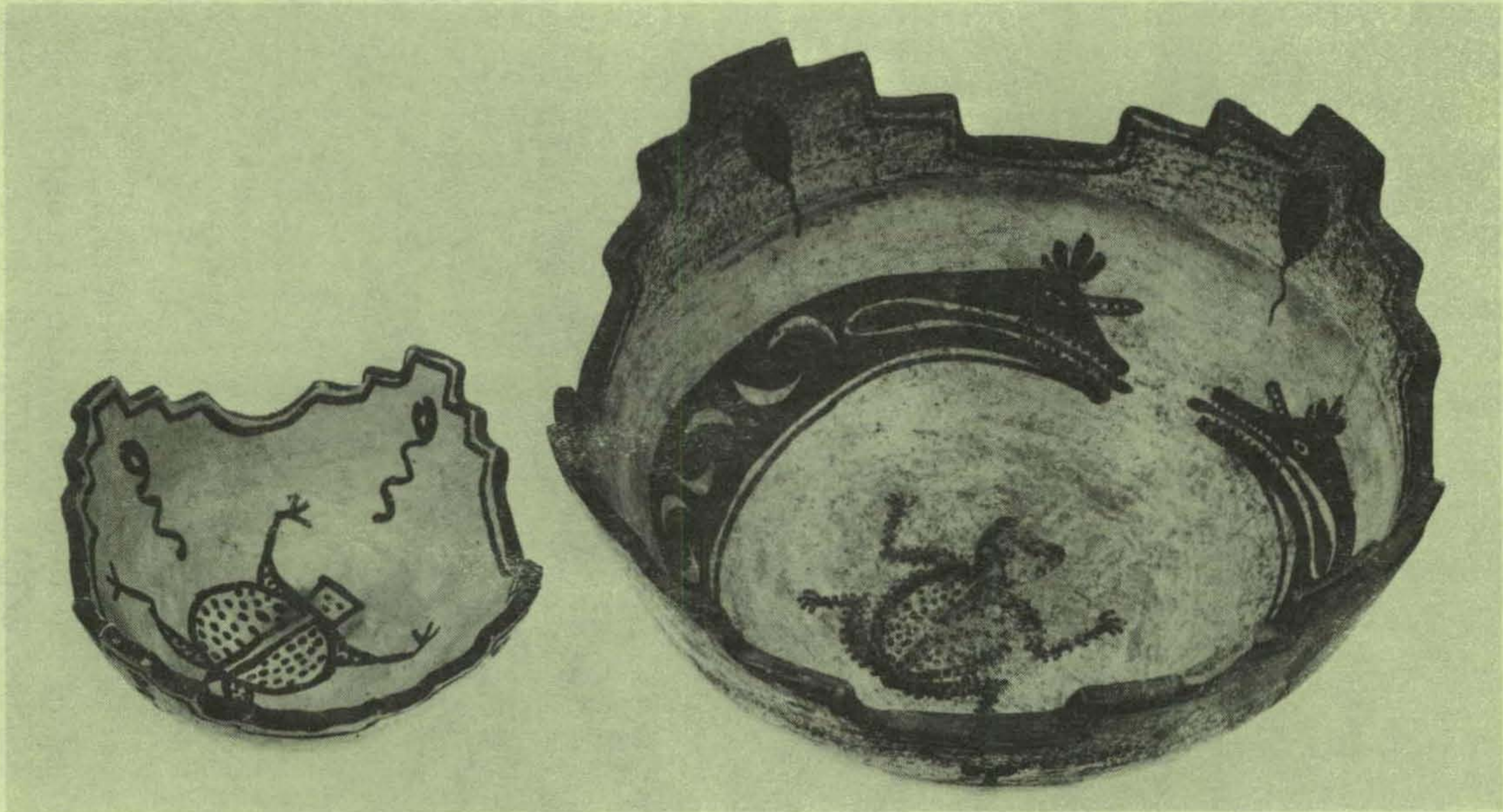
Changes in Size

One of the first and most common alterations to take place in the adaptation of traditional arts for sale to outsiders may be a change in size. Reducing the size of an artifact, or miniaturization, is the more usual change and it brings several advantages: portability, desired by the traveler and casual shopper; lower price; less effort to make; applicability to decorative use on the mantelpiece or wall; a folkloristic quality in small models not usually associated with the real article; economy of raw materials. This tendency is well exemplified by the intricate basketry of many tribes of Western American Indians who worked largely for commercial outlets after 1900. Most of the reduction in size consisted in making small novelty baskets rather than strict miniatures, although a few tribes such as the Pomo specialized to some extent in tiny miniatures of thumbnail or pinhead size (Plate 6). Novelty baskets were produced mainly in the two- to eight-inch size bracket, definitely smaller than the average traditional baskets. Small basketry cradles particularly had a powerful attraction for women tourists and collectors of the early twentieth century.

Most of the pottery of the Southwestern Indians has been much reduced in size. Old-time bread-mixing bowls and water jars were about twice as large as any of the made-for-sale pots of today. Most of the small pots of recent decades are thick-walled and usually do not have the designs reduced in scale, so one might say that they are not true miniatures, but just objects smaller in size (Plate 7).



6. Miniature coiled baskets, Pomo, California, ca. 1907, largest 44 mm. diameter, smallest 5 mm.; UCLMA 1-70844, 28632, 70857, 163941.



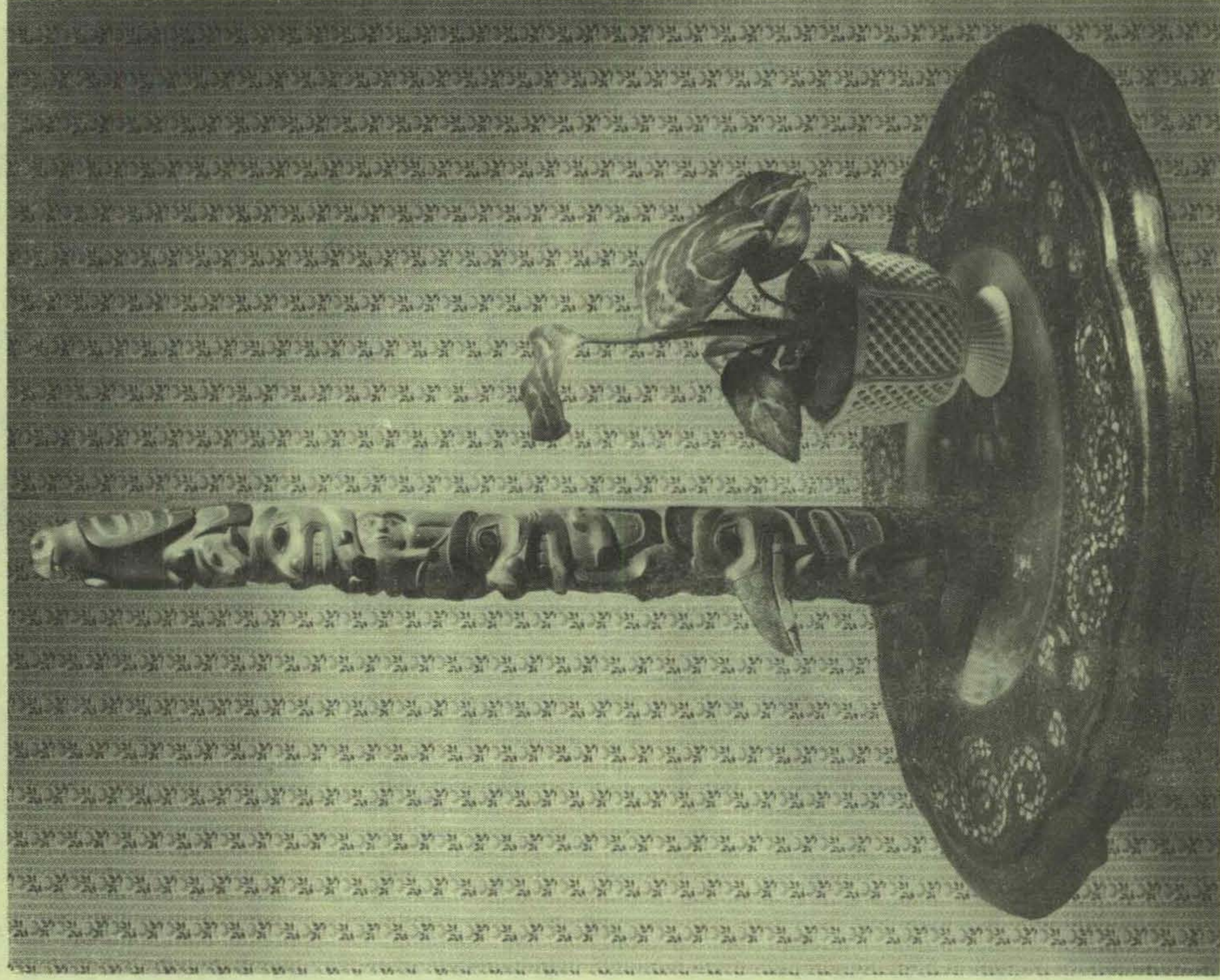
7. Altar bowls for sacred meal, Zuñi, New Mexico. The larger one, collected in 1903, was made for actual use, the smaller, collected ca. 1922, made for sale. Larger 31 cm. wide, UCLMA 2-8461; smaller 14 cm. wide, UCLMA 2-17159.

Models of boats, houses, cradles, and so on are common forms of commercialized souvenirs, and a class in which miniaturization is the rule. Careful attention is often given to fidelity of detail, and the products are readily sold. Bulk production of such articles is not possible without sacrificing workmanship, and finely crafted models are not numerous on the market. The Alaskan Eskimos are masters of miniaturization of such items as kayaks, umiaks, dog sleds, and houses.

Totem poles, the hallmark of Northwest Coast Indian culture, demand miniaturization in order to be sold on the market, and have in fact been made in miniature since the mid-1800s (Plate 8). The trend has been to make them ever smaller and today some six-inch models can be obtained in plastic. Along with reduction in size has often come a cursory treatment of depictive detail in the totemic figures since outsiders do not usually understand the representations or their significance anyway. Though the combinations of motifs are not traditional, the adherence to correct detail and form is retained in the argillite miniatures made by the Haida Indians themselves.

In Australia, aboriginal bark paintings have long been standardized to suitcase size to accommodate the needs of dealers and traveling tourists. To some extent boomerangs, spear throwers, and figure carvings have also been shortened to fit the same container. Carved baobab nuts and emu eggs have become a popular category of souvenir, because of their convenient size.

Gigantism is less common in the souvenir market, but does occur in scattered instances. Apparently exaggeration of size is one way that craftsmen have learned to add an element of grotesqueness, a quality that uninformed outsiders expect in "primitive" arts. Some examples are oversized wooden masks, tins masks, and immense pottery forms made in Mexico. In California there are a few giant Indian baskets such as the one long exhibited at the Yosemite Park Museum. Contemporary New Guinea artisans produce outsized ancestor-figure carvings up to about ten feet tall. In West Africa, at least one reason for



8. Model totem pole, Haida attributed, collected 1880s, 69 cm. high, UCLMA 2-14267.

gigantism is that for a larger woodcarving a higher price can be charged.

Changes in Materials

Indigenous peoples as far apart as Africa and the Arctic have applied already existing skills to new materials and new subjects to produce whole new classes of objects made strictly for commercial sale to collectors and tourists. The argillite ("slate") carvings of the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands on the Northwest Coast of America, the soapstone figures and scenes carved by the Canadian Eskimos, and the soapstone animal figures and busts made respectively by the So of Uganda, East Africa and in Gabon, West Africa are *objects d'art* carved from attractive materials that have particular appeal to Western collectors. One of the effects of tourism and the commercialization of indigenous arts is the emphasis on materials such as soapstone and argillite (Plate 9), and in Africa especially on "valuable" woods such as ebony and mahogany, neither of which was frequently used in traditional African carving. For African and Canadian soapstone carvings both the material and the subject matter were suggested by non-natives to create a new economic resource for the producers. The Haida developed their souvenir art themselves.

Argillite carvings have been produced in large quantities and can be found in small museums and private collections all over the world. Recently because of the scarcity of stone the market price of these carvings has greatly risen. About twenty Haida carvers are presently working in argillite; many are more concerned with achieving a proper "Haida style" through technical means rather than through specific Haida subject matter.

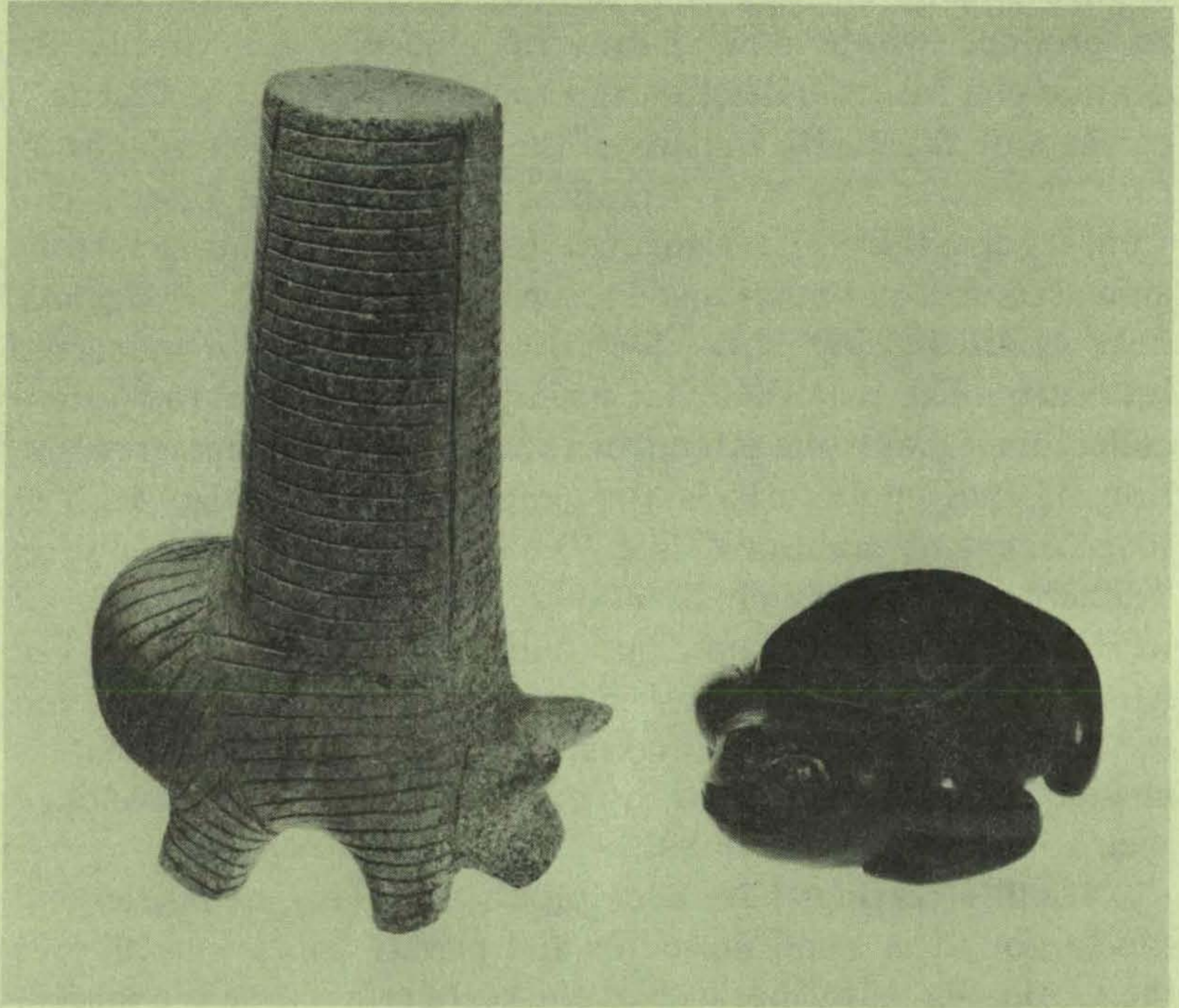
Contemporary Canadian Eskimo soapstone carving differs so markedly in almost every respect from previous developments that it represents a new art. In precontact times the Canadian Eskimos, besides applying decoration to utilitarian objects, mainly carved small models of familiar creatures. A *pinguak* ("imitation thing") was usually carved of ivory; it was

used as a gambling chip, amulet, or toy and was often casually lost since its main value was in the pleasure derived from making it. *Pinguaks* were characteristically very small, lacked detail, and disregarded realism.

When explorers and traders arrived in the eastern Arctic, ivory and wood miniatures of everyday items were occasionally sold as souvenirs. This was the carving situation when James Houston, a Canadian artist, visited Port Harrison in 1948. Apparently at his suggestion the Eskimos started to use soapstone for larger carvings. In essence, Houston, with the backing of the Canadian government and the Hudson's Bay Company took the souvenir carving in hand and refurbished it with aesthetic concepts and standards of artistic workmanship compatible with outside tastes. The resultant output was widely publicized as "primitive art" and was rigorously guarded against any practices which might have reduced it to a "slick" trinket industry. Some two thousand Eskimos in the eastern Arctic now carve, at least occasionally, and carving has replaced hunting as the appropriate occupation for men. The subject matter of the carvings reflects the old world of igloos, kayaks, and dog sleds; however, the money derived from carving is mostly spent on imported objects from the urban, industrial society such as outboard motors, rifles, snowmobiles, and frame houses.

The artistic idiom of the carvings is essentially based on an introduced foreign model, but criteria of what distinguishes a good carving from a bad one differ markedly between the Eskimo creators and the white purchasers (Plate 12). Criteria which the Eskimo apply are a well-finished surface, clever use of natural surfaces on the stone, a delicate balance in the whole piece, and a definite sense of motion in the carving.

Soapstone carvings of stylized humped cattle are the most popular examples of a new craft which originated in 1965 among the So people of Uganda, East Africa. Before working in this material, the So had limited their carvings to objects of wood, developing their sculptural talents in the production of stools, neckrests, and throwing sticks. The new stone industry



9. Soapstone carving of humped bovine, So tribe, Uganda, ca. 1965, 25 cm. high, property of Bella Feldman; carved argillite frog bowl, Haida, date unknown, 15 cm. long, UCLMA 2-47041.

was initiated by a local British settler, a former agricultural agent who was operating the only craft shop in the district. He provided local soapstone to talented artisans, first asking them to copy objects in his house and then encouraging sculpture of original pieces. Because political unrest in Uganda has diminished tourism, the carvers may shift from the manufacture of these imaginative pieces and turn to the production of more readily salable items such as ashtrays. Soapstone carvings of busts of human figures are being produced for the tourist market in Gabon, West Africa, but no details are known concerning the development of this craft except that the carvings, like those in East Africa, are part of a modern craft based on traditional skills.

Artisans in small-scale societies who discover a market for their products among visiting foreigners respond to these consumer demands with varying degrees of organization and interest. The Indians of the Northwest Coast, who lived in societies in which social achievement was largely measured by economic gain and who were already sophisticated creators, sold and bartered their craft products from the very beginnings of their contacts with Westerners.

In the 1820s, at about the time when the supply of sea otters, the mainstay of Haida trade with the whites, was diminishing, some white prospectors discovered a deposit of argillite on Haida land near the village of Skidegate in the Queen Charlotte Islands. This carbonaceous shale is soft enough to be easily carved when it is freshly exposed but hardens rapidly and then may be sanded, stained, and polished. Skidegate, and later the village of Masset, became the center of a Haida argillite sculpture curio trade with the visiting explorers, whalers, and traders. The villagers already had highly developed wood-carving techniques which could be readily transferred to the new medium. In addition, it has been suggested that the carvers were also influenced by the visitors' "scrimshaw" work, the carvings in ivory and bone done by seamen to occupy their time on long voyages.

The Haida carvers, keen observers and stimulated by the

new forms, from 1820 to about 1870 used mostly European subject matter and designs. The new medium and subject matter evidently gave the carvers a sense of freedom and innovation that could not be expressed so strongly in the wood carvings of traditional subjects. Accordingly, when the carvers around 1870 began to turn to subjects familiar in their own culture, they treated them in a freer, more eloquent manner. Many of the carvings after that date show a mixture of European motifs and themes from Haida myths and traditional life. Miniature totem poles, which began to be produced about 1910, were and are probably the single most popular small object.

Changes in Form

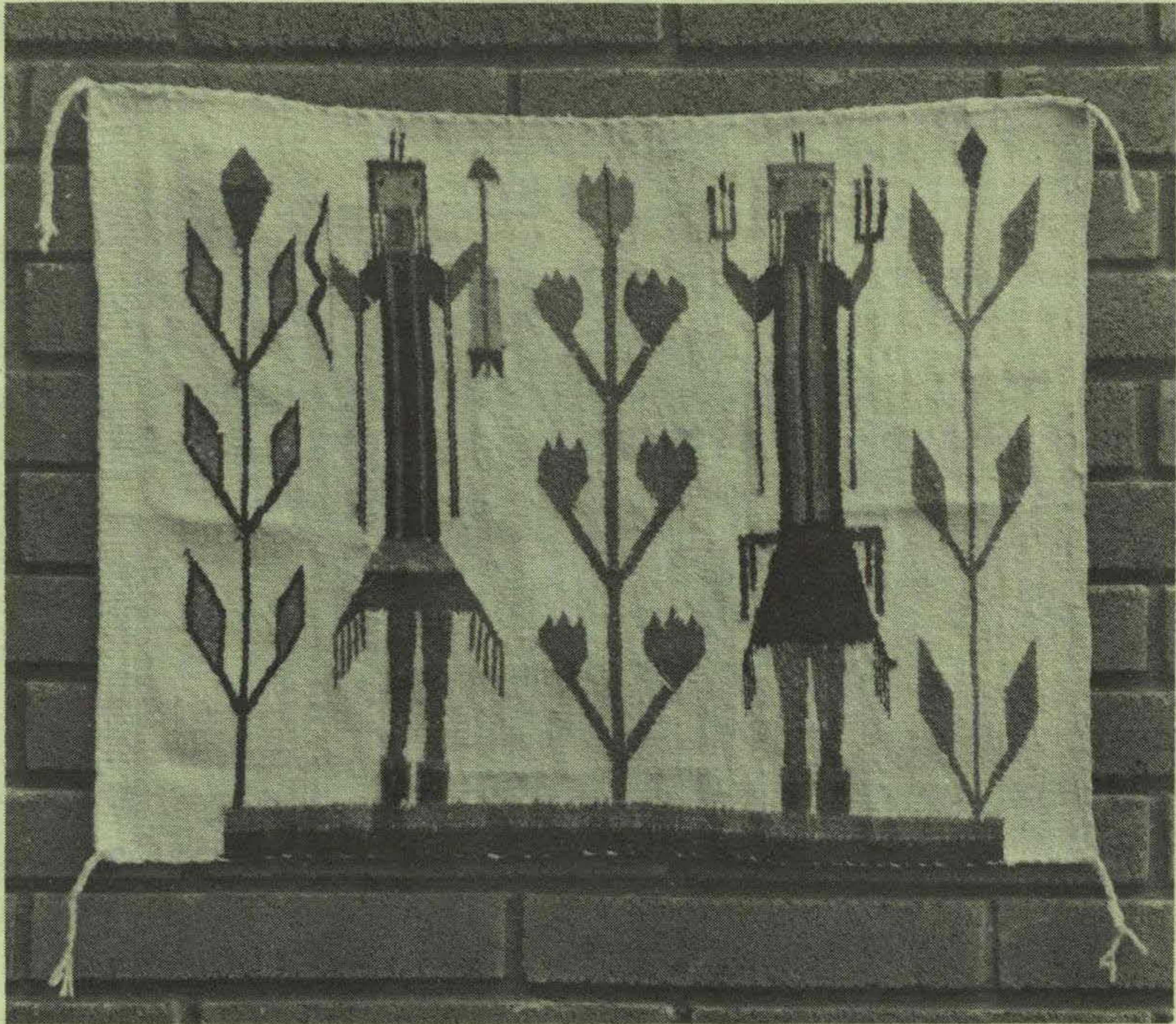
Examples of changes in form, in response to the processes of commercialization, can be found among a large range of materials from many societies. The vases, ashtrays, and other novelty forms introduced into Southwest Indian pottery production; the Eskimo ivories in the form of cribbage boards and crucifixes; and the basketry-covered bottles and other novelties made by the western North American Indians (see frontispiece of a Tlingit basketry tea kettle) are all nontraditional forms produced by traditional techniques to meet consumer demands from outside.

A familiar but instructive example is the "Indian rugs" which, to most Euro-Americans are almost synonymous with Navaho Indian art, but which were not made until late in the nineteenth century. The Navaho apparently learned the art of weaving sometime after 1680 from the Pueblo Indians who had rebelled against the Spaniards and sought refuge in Navaho territory to avoid reprisals. Although little is known of the intervening history of textile development, between 1850 and 1875 Navaho women were weaving dresses, saddle blankets, and other textiles for their own families and "wearing" blankets for sale or trade to Mexicans, other local Indians, and U.S. soldiers. With the introduction of cheap yard goods and commercial clothing the craft appeared doomed but it was saved from extinction by the demand created by the new tourist market of

American settlers and travelers brought in by the railroads. With the encouragement of the traders the Navaho weavers turned to the manufacture of the most salable items, namely floor rugs and novelty weavings. By the 1930s good, heavy floor rugs were being woven to compete both in design and durability with the oriental rugs of the day. The East Coast market's preconceived ideas of "Indian" designs were promoted by the traders who also supplied commercial dyes and yarns, although later some of them also encouraged the return to handspun wool and natural dyes.

Besides the ever-popular rugs one of the most salable categories of contemporary Navaho weaving is what the dealers call "tapestries," that is, weaving produced in a size convenient for wall hangings and expensively priced as "art" objects. It was also at the insistence of the traders that pictorial images appeared in Navaho weavings. A popular class of wall hangings depicts Navaho deities or *yeis*, designs adapted from the sacred dry paintings used in healing rituals (Plate 10). These figures were first woven into rugs in the early twentieth century at the insistence of a trader although there was strong tribal opposition to the innovation. A contemporary development of some interest is the series of rugs in the full range of Navaho patterns, apparently copied from published sources, which are being produced in Mexico. Although the Mexican rugs are not usually made to defraud the public (showing several technical differences from the Navaho prototypes and often labeled "Made in Mexico") one must be wary of the statement that a particular piece is "Indian made" because the "Indian" may be Mexican, not Navaho.

Navaho weavings offer a particularly fine example of a commercial production that ranges from the Gallup "throws" (small, often crude, Navaho weavings designed to meet the tourist demand for inexpensive Indian curios) to the contemporary textiles from such areas as Two Grey Hills and Pine Springs which, in both technical virtuosity and aesthetic quality, rank with the finest Navaho weaving of the past.



10. Small Navaho rug or throw with *yei* designs, pre-1942, 60 cm. wide, UCLMA 2-17191.

Changes in Function

Changes in function of artifacts to suit the needs of outsiders are a frequent result of the commercialization process. California Indians, for instance, found that their basketry mortar hoppers, acorn leachers, and boilers were of little use to white purchasers except as decorations. Consequently much experimentation was done to adapt their fine basket work to "civilized" uses such as: basketry-covered liquor bottles, laundry baskets, wall pouches for postcards, fish creels, lidded serving baskets, and napkin rings. (See Plate 1 for an example of a new but not strictly utilitarian function.)

Decorated gourds, a traditional craft of Peru, are likewise undergoing a change from kinds made for local household use to new articles conforming to the demands of the market. Formerly most gourds were made into eating dishes, mixing bowls, and closed containers for sugar and seed storage. Today a large part of the production is turned out for the growing tourist and export market with a concomitant change in the functions of the articles. Dish shapes are now usually designed to be wall hangings and are decorated appropriately. Many gourds are not cut but left whole and decorated to make bird or animal effigies for coffee-table or shelf decoration. Cheap gourds for home use, usually decorated with floral patterns by an acid-burning technique, are bought up in lots and redecorated for the tourist market, so great is the demand (See Plate 11).

New Guinea wood sculptures have changed from playing a role in religious pageantry and secret initiation rites to serving as decorative products for sale to primitive art dealers and tourists. Uninformed outsiders may appreciate the sculptural qualities of the carvings but they usually understand nothing of the native color symbolism or iconography. Therefore, these latter aspects are now frequently abbreviated or left out entirely. Finishes that emphasize the color and grain of the wood are used instead of the old-time pigments, and varnish is not uncommon.

Alaskan Eskimo ivory carvings in precontact times were nearly all made for uses connected with hunting gear, tools, and a few personal adornments. Since the coming of outsiders ivory



11. Peruvian decorated gourds: Inca period (1485-1540 A.D.) pyroengraved gourd, Chincha, 14 cm. wide, UCLMA 4-3723; contemporary acid-burned gourd for domestic use, Lambayeque, collected 1960, 20 cm. wide, property of John H. Rowe; wall hanging with acid-burned and incised scenic design made for export and sale to tourists and upper-class Peruvians, made in Cochac Chico, 1966, 19 cm. wide, UCLMA 16-11936.

carving has become a souvenir craft, and the functions have changed to suit the market. Now, instead of hunting gear which is no longer produced, cribbage boards, animal figure carvings, and walrus tusks with incised scenes of Eskimo life are favored.

Individualism and the Artisan

The Eskimos of the Eastern Canadian Arctic have become famous for their stone sculptures and their prints. The former were based on the idea of making souvenirs—formerly in ivory and wood—of the readily available lamp and cooking-pot stone, and the latter were a transplantation of European print-making methods, and more recently of copper-plate engraving. In both genres individualism is now primary: for the print-making which was such a totally new craft that every phase had to be taught, the signing of the works (by both the artist and the block cutter) was introduced from the start and the individual artists have been recognized from the beginning. For the first few years of soapstone sculpture the Eskimos, though literate in Eskimo syllabic script, did not attempt to sign their carvings nor to make them all different or different from each other. However, as new ideas and imaginative individuals were rewarded by the market, some strove to make their individual styles known and others strove to emulate them. At the same time, the distribution and retail agencies who wanted the discerning public to get to know the individual artists, attached tags with names and provenance, and encouraged the Eskimos to scratch their names and sometimes identification numbers on the bottoms of their works. This practice soon became routine and was even considered a mark of “authenticity” for Eskimo carvings.

With the institution of general education the Eskimos are more frequently writing their names in Roman script and the pieces now have stock numbers. Problems with copying and copyright have caused the government to urge not only the signing but the use of the symbol © on these supposedly unique and individualistic works of art. The cult of the artist has been exploited fully with many one-man shows and with

Eskimo artists traveling all over Canada and much of the rest of the world. Hundreds of individuals are known by name and many also by the content and style of their art—features which are recognizable in both soapstone and print media, as in the case of the “Flying Bear” motif illustrated by the sculpture of the famous Qirnuajuak of Cape Dorset (See Plate 12).

The encouragement of the individual in response to the commercialization process is also well known from the old but vitally changed pottery of Southwest Indians, the paintings of the Australian aborigines of Arnhem Land and the Central Desert, and many traditions of wood-carving in West Africa. Some well-known traditions in transition have been less subject to this trend. For instance, only a few of the souvenir ivory carvers of Alaska ever became known by name, and only a few of the recent full-size totem-pole carvers of the Northwest Coast have continued to practice as opposed to the many anonymous creators of the ghastly souvenirs (which are not always made in the area at all); two or three Indian basket makers of California-Nevada were promoted with great success by name, but that phenomenon has disappeared with their demise decades ago; and few collectors of Navaho rugs or Peruvian gourds attempt to discern the names of the creator although these are sometimes known. In the case of Navaho textiles, the names of the weaver-artists are now being promoted and recognized at the very point when the items are being “hung” as works of art rather than being used as rugs, i.e., crafts. There are even traditions where individualism is neither encouraged nor apparent, such as for many of the cheaper African wood carvings, Araucanian jewelry, or Malaysian silverwork. Furthermore, the promoters of Cree Craft specifically stated in their brochures that the craft will remain anonymous.

The spread or lack of individualism in the arts and crafts in transition may be accounted for by looking at (1) the presence or absence of Westerners as middlemen and retailers; the presence of readily identifiable characteristics in the works, which should not be too many and too cheap; and (2) the similarity or lack thereof to an established Western genre



12. Canadian Eskimo soapstone carving of a flying bear by Qirnuajuak, Cape Dorset, 1968, 15 cm. high, property of Nelson H. H. Graburn.

already characterized as “art” and populated by named “artists.” Thus Eskimo stone sculpture became “art,” whereas Persian rugs, Trobriand lime spatulas, and Kamba salad spoons did not.

III. MATERIAL CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Peoples of all cultures surround themselves with material objects that express their individual or social identities. For most peoples in the world the social category to which one "belongs" or with which one identifies is more important than the statements of uniqueness and individualism characteristic of many Western societies, especially the United States. The social categories or statuses with which people wish to identify may be as simple as age or sex groups, or they may be as esoteric as totemic phratries, cannibal societies, or World War I military regiments. The means by which material items express identity is through symbols. Symbols—visual, verbal or aural—are arbitrary expressions which stand for something—arbitrary because usually there is no necessary connection between the content of the sign or word and the object or category for which it stands. If there were a necessary connection between a word and an object, the word for that object should be similar in all languages. Thus symbols are conventional devices by which we recognize something and their only limitation is that the bearers and the viewers (or transmitters and receivers) must "speak the same language," that is, agree on the meaning conveyed.

Social identity needs to be conveyed for two different purposes—for the members of the in-group, that is, for the other people of the same group who wish to get together, and for

members of the out-group, that is, for people whose relationships depend upon their being different. Recognition of shared social identity is the basis of what Durkheim called mechanical solidarity, as would be exemplified by nuns worshipping together; different but complimentary identity is the basis of organic solidarity, recognized in our phrases "vive la difference," "it takes two to tango," or "opposites attract." In many parts of the world people of different backgrounds perform different but essential services in the running of the whole society and must therefore wear clothes or symbols indicating their identities and their functions, such as peasants from different areas who bring different kinds of goods to a market place. In brief, all societies contain social categories within which members are similar, but between which they are different but complimentary; these categories are marked, often by material symbols, to enable society to function and for people to know how to behave properly toward each other. If a society is stratified, as most are to some degree, then the possession or wearing of certain symbols are marks of prestige leading to deferent behavior by other members.

The addition of the factors of time and change to even the simplest system of symbols of social identity may have two consequences. The first is that new materials and new items may be added to a functioning social situation, having to be incorporated into that situation. Sometimes the new items merely displace the old, as in the case of the Siane, already described, so that the system of statuses and identities are maintained or even strengthened. The new material items may be supplementary to the old, creating a more diverse culture than before, with new ways of marking social identity. Another possibility is that the new items may change the nature of the recipient society, as in the cases of the Yir Yiront steel axes or the Papago wagon, so that new social identities are created or old ones destroyed. In our society not just functional, but societal and prestige systemic changes were wrought by the replacement of the horse and the train by the automobile and airplane.

Second, and more important than the introduction of material items, are the changes brought about by the imposition of an entirely new society and its material inventory on the social world of a recipient group. The commonest example here is the expansion of the European nations and their complex technologies throughout the world, impinging on and usually dominating the social, material, and even psychological lives of the smaller-scale societies contacted. The mercantile and missionary nature of the larger societies oriented them toward changing those whom they encountered, and the vast differences in material and economic lives usually prompted the smaller societies to wish to acquire from the larger. This process was not entirely one way: the cultures of Europe, for example, acquired such important items as tea, tobacco, other drugs, corn, and potatoes from the peoples it met in distant lands, but the changes wrought by the contacts were of greater impact on the smaller-scale groups and in many instances the newcomers were seen as being of high status to be emulated for prestigious social identity.

Four processes in the material expression of identity may be separated out for analytical purposes and are illustrated in our case materials. Most often two or more of these processes are present in any concrete example, because cultures tend to be efficient in performing more than one function at a time where feasible.

The simplest process is the maintenance of internal status and identity in a culture by material symbols and regalia, often in the form of clothing. These are simple means by which people instantly recognize the offices or guess what the appropriate behavior might be. These symbols mark differences as gross as those between the sexes or between royalty and commoners, or as fine as between the various ranks of noncommissioned officers in the military.

In the world of contact and change no peoples are totally isolated, and conquest and expansion have put many varied ethnic groups into juxtaposition such that they form parts of a larger whole. Some even say that the whole human world is

today one society, and all of us only subgroups within it. Thus what were once independent groups are now parts of a complex society, and material signs and symbols are necessary for external and internal identification. Each group may wish to show members of out-groups who they are and what their qualities are. Most commonly, colonialized people have developed dress and other symbols separating them from their conquerors, but colonialism is by now a lesser form of cultural contact compared with tourism, trade, and military adventures. One result of these contacts has been exchange of material items, often in the form of souvenirs. Members of the expanding societies collect material "evidence" of their travels and adventures, and these items must express values positive in the eyes of the collectors, such as the exotic, the brave, the remote, or the beautiful. The makers of these movable symbols may also try to express in their manufactured items the values important to them—thus telling the buyers not only what they want to hear but something about themselves that they can be proud of and that they hope will disseminate a positive image or identity to the outside world. Eskimo soapstone carvings, Aleut model boats, or the Menangkabau houses are good examples.

But the world moves on: people do not always retain fixed images of themselves or their value to the outside, and new items and materials may have greater prestige than the older—especially if they are brought by powerful and prestigious outsiders. Symbols of identity may be borrowed, stolen, or even exchanged. Groups may wish to enhance their prestige in their own or the eyes of others by taking on the materials, symbols, and regalia of other groups—there is almost a magic of the power rubbing off by imitation and such phenomena are always part of the numerous cargo and millenarian cults around the world. Though some might be tempted to laugh at such attempts, such as middle-class Californians of Indian descent wearing Plains feather war bonnets or Andean peasants wearing variations of sixteenth-century Spanish costumes, such practices are almost universal and it would be difficult to pick any culture or subgroup whose cultural symbols were

totally of their own creation or from their own history. Furthermore such "borrowed" identities are often useful or functional in a world where old groups are degraded or new categories and ethnicities are being created.

One fascinating aspect of material expressions of identity in this ethnically complex world is attempts of one group to portray members of another group using their own symbolic system and attaching importance to those features which are important to the in-group rather than the out-group. This generally results in stereotypic portrayals which are satisfactory to the in-group but hilarious or insulting to the outsiders portrayed. We all know the most obvious examples from our own literature and the depiction of American ethnic subgroups; and the Western world's explorers and their illustrators stereotyped the rest of the world for us, in such a way that we understand the familiar genre and can even tell the time period and cultural area governing the conventions by which the portrait was drawn. But this also has not been a one-way process. The Europeans themselves were often portrayed with scathing penetration in the media of the peoples being explored, and every group has conventional and accepted portrayals of its neighbors and enemies. (See Julius L. Lips, *The Savage Hits Back.*)

In the following examples of the material mechanisms for identity portrayal and maintenance we should be reminded that these are universal mechanisms in all known cultures; that status and identity are not immutably fixed, but are fluid categories that respond to and shape the ever-moving social milieu; and that in every instance the devices function for more than just the one process that they are picked to illustrate.

Internal Identity

Under the threat of political and economic change a previously adequately functioning society may feel the need to retrench and intensify its native customs and values, especially when under pressure from missionaries or attractive but disruptive material offerings. This may arouse revivals of past or

archaic traditions which bolster a sense of unique identity or link the people to a valued past. Other revivals are purely commercial where the link to the prestigious past is a selling point because of the values of the buyers rather than the makers.

Identity maintenance is brought into sharp focus by immigrant groups, such as Samoans resettled in the San Francisco Bay area, who need to continue solidarity and identity in the face of submergence by an alien culture. Since World War II Samoans have been attracted to the Bay Area by more abundant job opportunities and by the presumed superiority of the local public-school system. Contacts with the home islands are kept alive, however, and extended return visits are made to renew family ties. Some aspects of Samoan culture are considered so essential to group identity that they have been transplanted, along with the people, to American soil. The core feature is the economic exchange system based on interrelationships of extended families. This system, which includes feasting, kava-drinking, and ceremonial presentation of finely woven mats, functions in Samoan society in two ways (Plate 13). It defines kinship relationships and their associated patterns of obligations, primarily of the untitled to the titled and the young to the old, and it provides a mechanism to distribute goods in Samoa's subsistence economy. When these customs are transferred to the money-economy context of the Bay Area, they often do not mesh well with the changing values of the younger generation, and problems arise. The perpetuation of the traditional authority of the titled elders and the obligatory participation in the recurring round of weddings, funerals, feasts, and receptions for important guests impose a burden of work and expense that falls on the younger adults.

Like the exchange system, dancing also has a role in Samoan identity maintenance. In Samoa it is a frequent accompaniment of social gatherings, holiday festivities, and events around rugby contests, when it serves as entertainment and a display of individual skill. In the Bay Area there is usually dancing at feasts and other Samoan social occasions, but it is in the shows



13. Upper: presentation of *kava* to a titled elder at a formal gathering, Samoa, 1972; photo Richard A. Goodman, © 1974.
Lower: immigrant Samoan men preparing *kava* for a formal occasion in San Jose, California, 1972; photo Richard A. Goodman, © 1974.

given at schools and colleges that the special function of dancing in the Bay Area is clear: it then emphasizes Samoan ethnic identity.

Archaism is a deliberate attempt to imitate or revive certain remembered or recorded features of an earlier period. This period could be the recent or even the remote past of a people's own culture or of another prestigious society. Such attempts may vary widely in motivation, and revival movements are not an unusual phenomenon: the Renaissance in Europe was a prime example of archaism on an immense scale where the classical Mediterranean world was the model. Mexico and Peru and other Latin American countries have made efforts to promote the identity and pride of the present *mestizo* populations in the Aztec and Inca civilizations. These attempts to provide ethnicity and continuity, and separation from Europe, are parts in the processes of identity maintenance of these countries which see themselves as threatened by European countries and the United States as well. The china pitcher purchased in Lima in 1961 (Plate 14) employs a freely translated version of Inca style-pottery designs, invoking ancient and peculiarly Peruvian glories. Whole sets of dishes with similar motifs are found in restaurants and in the homes of Peruvians.

The introduction of new materials and techniques often allows for new ways to symbolize or maintain the traditional status system, without the society being otherwise much affected. For instance the Cuna Indians of the San Blas Islands of Panama have developed a traditional dress form of new materials in the past hundred years. Before this women were dressed in skirts but no blouses and had body tattooing applied at puberty, emphasizing their adult status. They all had to wear this same "uniform," expressing the equalitarian nature and sexual division of labor of Cuna culture, and their expressed individuality came from the forms of the skin tattooing. Since the introduction of cotton cloth, needles, and scissors, the craft of *mola*-making has developed; *molos* are the front and back panels of the blouse which has become the most important part of the traditional women's dress. *Mola* makers often use



14. Inca style face-neck pitcher, Ica, Peru, 1476-1540 A.D., 22 cm. high, UCLMA 4-5369; modern glazed china bottle using Inca motifs, Lima, Peru, 1961, 22 cm. high, UCLMA 16-14913.

traditional designs and preferred color combinations, but individuals incorporate new themes from inside and outside their culture (Plate 19). Admired designs are copied and even become "fads"; the *mola* has become a source of family pride, an expressive outlet for women, and a means of maintenance of sexual and ethnic identity. Many old Cuna values are preserved and expressed by the new dress materials and forms which all women have to wear.

External Identity

People wish to be recognized as similar to others and express their identification with their neighbors as equals in material acquisitions and surroundings, but the reverse is also true: to identify with any *one* group to mark the distinction from some other group(s). In economically simpler societies one conveyed one's distinction from persons of different sex and status within one's own tribe or neighborhood and from people of other tribes or geographical areas. These traditional distinctions were well known to everyone within the socially significant world. With the recent increase of worldwide travel and communications, people and their homes are not only seen directly by strangers but their manufactures are known by people they are never likely to meet—transistor radios and plastic shoes have penetrated to the ends of the earth and at the same time the products of very small societies, such as Eastern Canadian Eskimos or the Hokkaido Ainu are known in the living rooms of much of the middle-class industrial world.

Thus a culture's "image" in the eyes of the world is often the result of their transportable arts and crafts as much as their actions in their remote homeland. Who would have heard of the Seri of Sonora or the people of Cochac Chico, Peru if it were not for the wood sculptures of the former and the pyro-engraved gourds of the latter? The material products of these small populations are often made for outsiders only and are their messages to the world saying "we exist; we are different; we can do something we are proud of; this is something uniquely ours." The subject matter of models and other items made for

presentation to outsiders represent an effort by the makers to communicate their separate identity and a positive image of themselves and their most valued characteristics. Aspects, achievements, and artifacts which are the pride of the nation, which embody the style and glamor of the culture are singled out. Tourists and other agents are often interested in these same positive features which the natives wish to convey.

Though genuine items of material culture may have been the original souvenirs and transmitters of cultural pride—such as bows, arrows, shields, clothing, carving, and religious paraphernalia—it is models of these valued items that are most often developed to bear the cross-cultural messages after regular contact is developed. In many instances model-making was not known to the people in precontact times (though dolls are well-nigh universal) but the idea, once introduced, has been pursued with zeal and originality. Models have to be accommodated to the tourists' demand but there are many instances where the buyers are interested in the same unique features that the natives wish to transmit.

Boats are heavily emphasized among souvenir models. They seem to epitomize the prowess, skill, enterprise, and characteristic activity of many groups. The loving touches bestowed on the real articles are often applied to the model, even though this may be more difficult to do on a miniature scale. Among those with the most dramatic forms of boat and boat construction are the Eskimos and Aleuts of North America and Greenland; the *kayaks* or *bidarkas* have been called the finest single-man craft ever developed; with their light but strong skin and framework construction they are eminently seaworthy, almost unsinkable, and can carry heavy loads. Models of these crafts were among the first and most widespread arriving from the Arctic areas, and reproduce exactly the elegant construction from local materials using the unique skills of men and women.

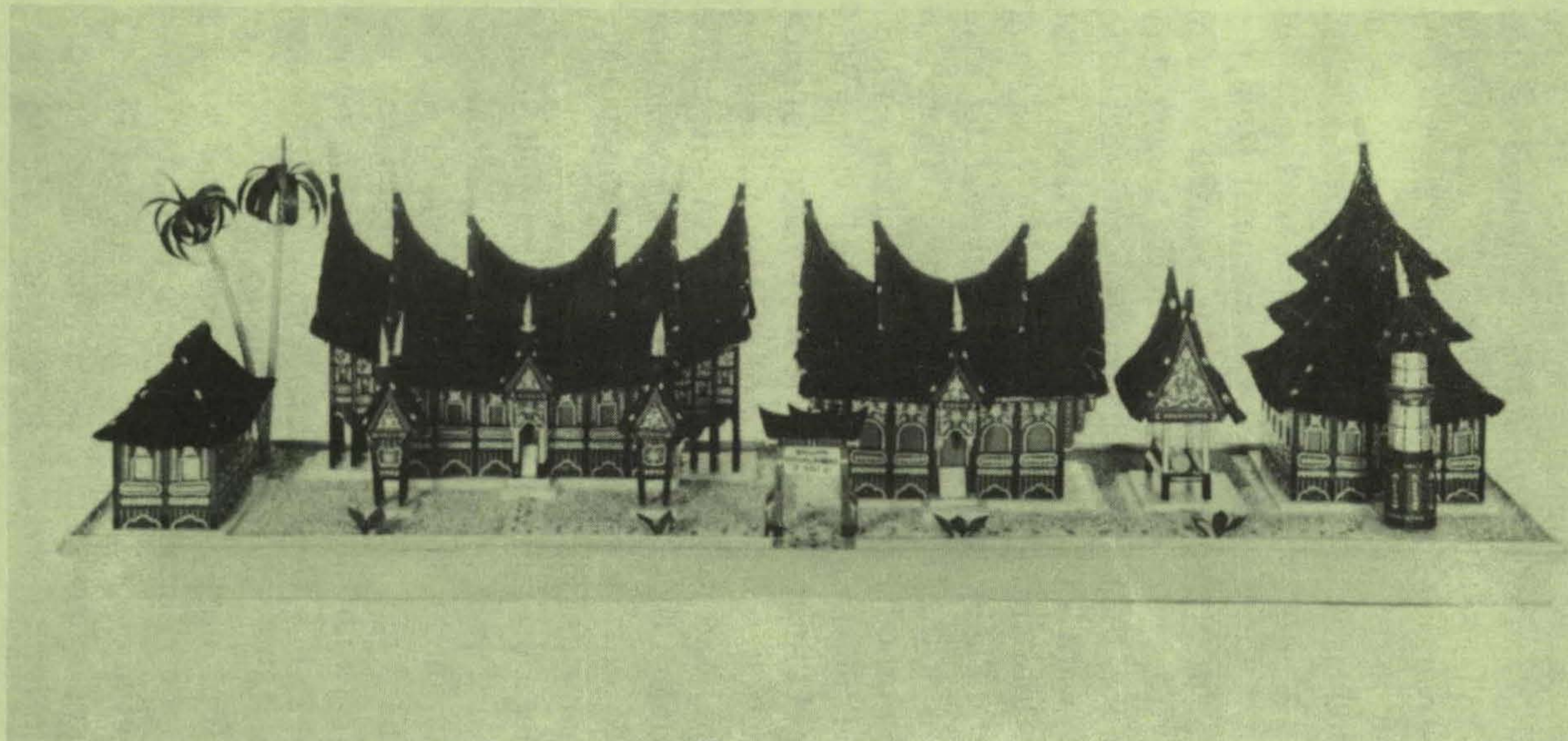
Dramatic ceremonials, buildings, and regalia are also common themes for models where they are present in the traditional culture—they may often be sold as models long after the originals have given way to pervasive modernity in real life,

for a people's positive identity depends as much on their past as their present. Among the exotic architectural styles of Southeast Asia, the buildings of the Menangkabau are unique (Plate 15). The Menangkabau of Sumatra are proud of their elegant houses, the roofs of which are stylized like the horns of a buffalo. In contacts with the Dutch and other travelers, the Menangkabau were quick to make models of their special way of life, including their water-buffalo carts, their dolls and ceremonial costumes, and their houses. Models of the latter were made from the proper local materials for accuracy, but these were often too large for easy portability, so they made smaller models using their traditional filigree silver work—another craft of which they are justly proud.

Though the positive ethnic identity of many small-scale societies are often well expressed in their souvenir models, nothing could be so tawdry as the degenerate items that the market sometimes forces upon them. Some peoples have been so crushed that they no longer are able to practice their crafts or live a life of which they are proud. When desperation is brought on by the forces of the industrial world, such that people are no longer independent or unique, they may churn out slick objects which the buying public wants to see and believe in but which have no particular connections with the native people's belief system and certainly do not reflect their traditional standards of craftsmanship. Thus the messages transmitted are not shouts of joy and pride but cries for help saying: "We are forced into this to make a living; this is not us; these are not our standards; this is you using us for cheap labour."

Borrowed Identity

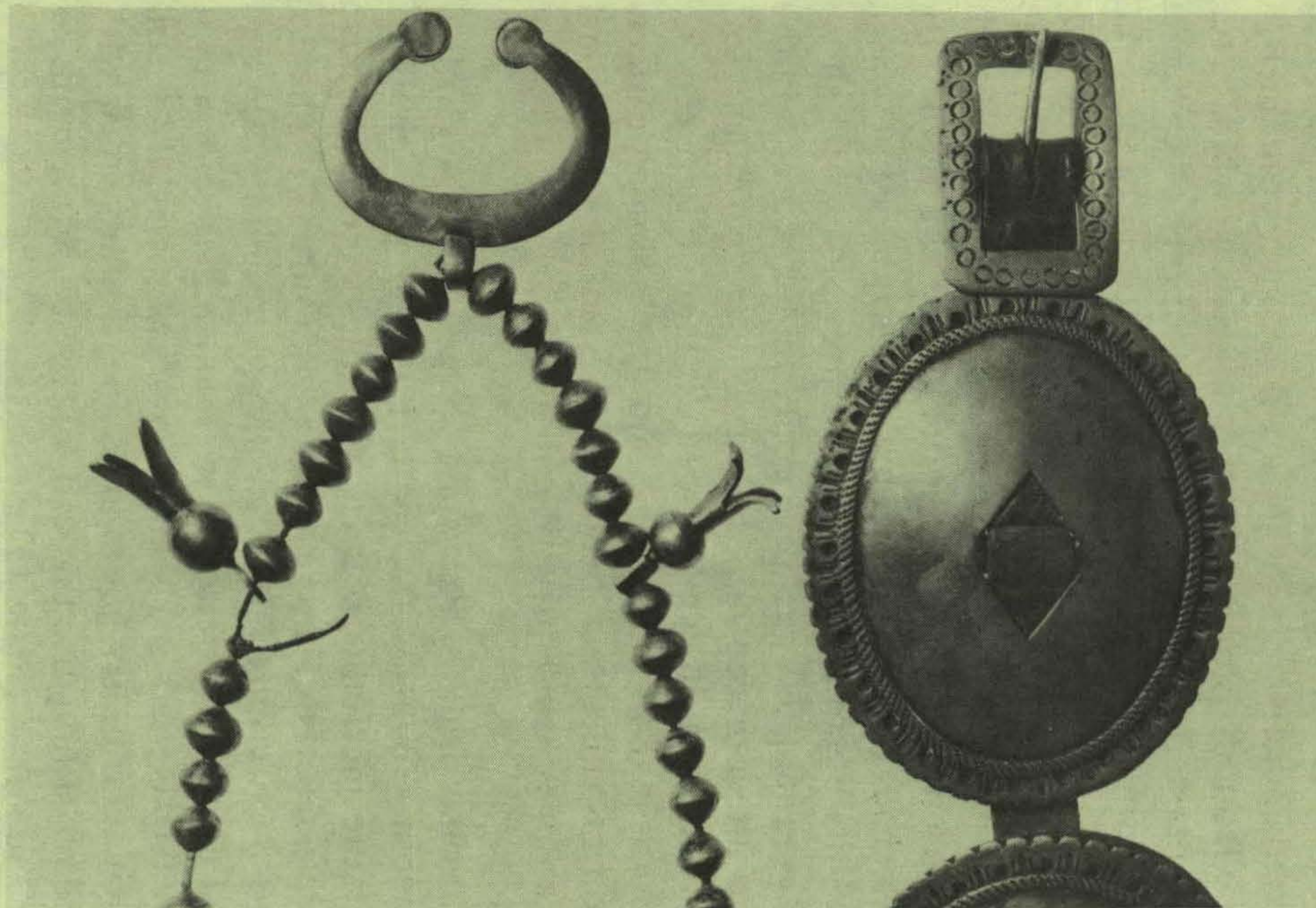
Numerous examples could be cited to illustrate the process of identity borrowing, where objects or symbols of one culture have been taken over by another culture to such a degree that they have become part of the public identity of the borrowing group in the eyes of themselves or of others. Three familiar examples have been selected for discussion here.



15. Souvenir model of a Menangkabau village with distinctive roofs. Left to right: ordinary dwelling, main lineage house and rice storehouses, meeting house, drum house, mosque and minaret. Sumatra, Indonesia, 1965, 99 cm. long, UCLMA 18-708.

Navaho silverwork, like Navaho weaving, is a relatively recent addition to the Indian repertory of finely developed skills. The Navaho learned silversmithing between 1850 and 1870 from Spanish-American silversmiths who lived in the upper Rio Grande valley and at the southeastern edge of the present Navaho reservation. The "squash blossom" ornaments which are the major motif in many Navaho necklaces are, in fact, copies of pomegranate blossoms, a favorite Spanish decorative motif. The horseshoe or crescent-shaped pendant that often terminates these necklaces was acquired from the Spanish-Americans who obtained it from the Spanish who, in turn, borrowed it from the Moors. Known as a *naja*, this ornament functioned in the Old World as an amulet attached to horse trappings to ward off the evil eye. The Navaho first acquired *conchas* as loot from their battles with the Kiowa and Comanche, Southern Plains tribes who are believed to have acquired the form from the Delaware and Shawnees. These two eastern tribes were pushed into the Plains by eastern settlers, after having learned silversmithing from colonial whites who produced items for the Indian trade. The Kiowa also obtained strings of unornamented *conchas* made of "German silver," an alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel, from American traders. The Navaho initially copied these *conchas* in coin silver adding scalloped edges and other typical decorations from Spanish-American bridle ornaments (Plate 16).

Until the last decade of the nineteenth century all Southwest Indian silverwork was produced for the Indian market. Then the railroad brought the white tourists and a second market evolved. The Fred Harvey Company began to buy pawned Navaho silver from the traders but this jewelry proved too heavy for tourist tastes. The organized commercialization of the craft began in 1899 when the company ordered silver jewelry modified for tourist preferences and made to sell particularly at Santa Fe railroad stations. Both markets, Indian and non-Indian, continue today and both are subject to fads and fashions. A large market in Europe has also recently developed; the majority of Navaho jewelry is made for the



16. Navaho silver concha belt and necklace, nineteenth century. Belt 9 cm. wide, UCLMA 2-36903; necklace pendant 5.7 cm. wide, UCLMA 2-9362.

white consumer. Although there are many current non-Indian copies of silver and turquoise jewelry, it is still primarily identified with the Navaho, and many collectors demand proof of its authenticity of origin.

The Guarani Indians of the Rio Plata region, in what has subsequently become the republics of Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina, traditionally drank from a gourd container a beverage made from the shrub *Ilex paraguayensis* which, like tea and coffee, contained mildly stimulating amounts of caffeine. The Spanish immigrants quickly acquired a taste for the beverage to which they applied the Quechua name for a gourd, *mati*. The drinking of *maté* however, was forbidden by the Catholic church in 1610 on the grounds that "it started with the Indians who were under the influence of the devil." By 1645 when it had become clear that the suppression was a failure the Jesuits began to cultivate this previously wild shrub and were also granted the exclusive concession for trade in the tea. By the eighteenth century the custom of *maté* drinking, since it had its roots in the land, helped distinguish between the Europeans born in South America and the colonial officers imported from Spain, thus becoming a symbol of national identity which was subsequently enhanced by the wars for independence.

As the national drink of Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentine, *maté* has become so associated with them in the minds of travelers that the inevitable souvenirs of these countries have become *maté* vessels. They are made in a large variety of shapes, materials, and decorations (although always retaining the two main forms, a canteen shape for unsweetened *maté* and a pear shape for the sweetened tea). Many modern derivatives still resemble the Guarani Indian gourd and cane drinking straw with a basketry filter, although enhanced with such refinements as silver edgings and straws (Plate 17).

The development of conventions in additives, methods of preparation and serving, niceties of utensils, and regional specializations resulted in an emphasis on style in *maté* drinking that makes it comparable to other ritualized social customs in



17. Silver-ornamented gourd and drinking tube for *maté* tea, Argentina, 1940-1960, UCLMA 16-9446, 9469.

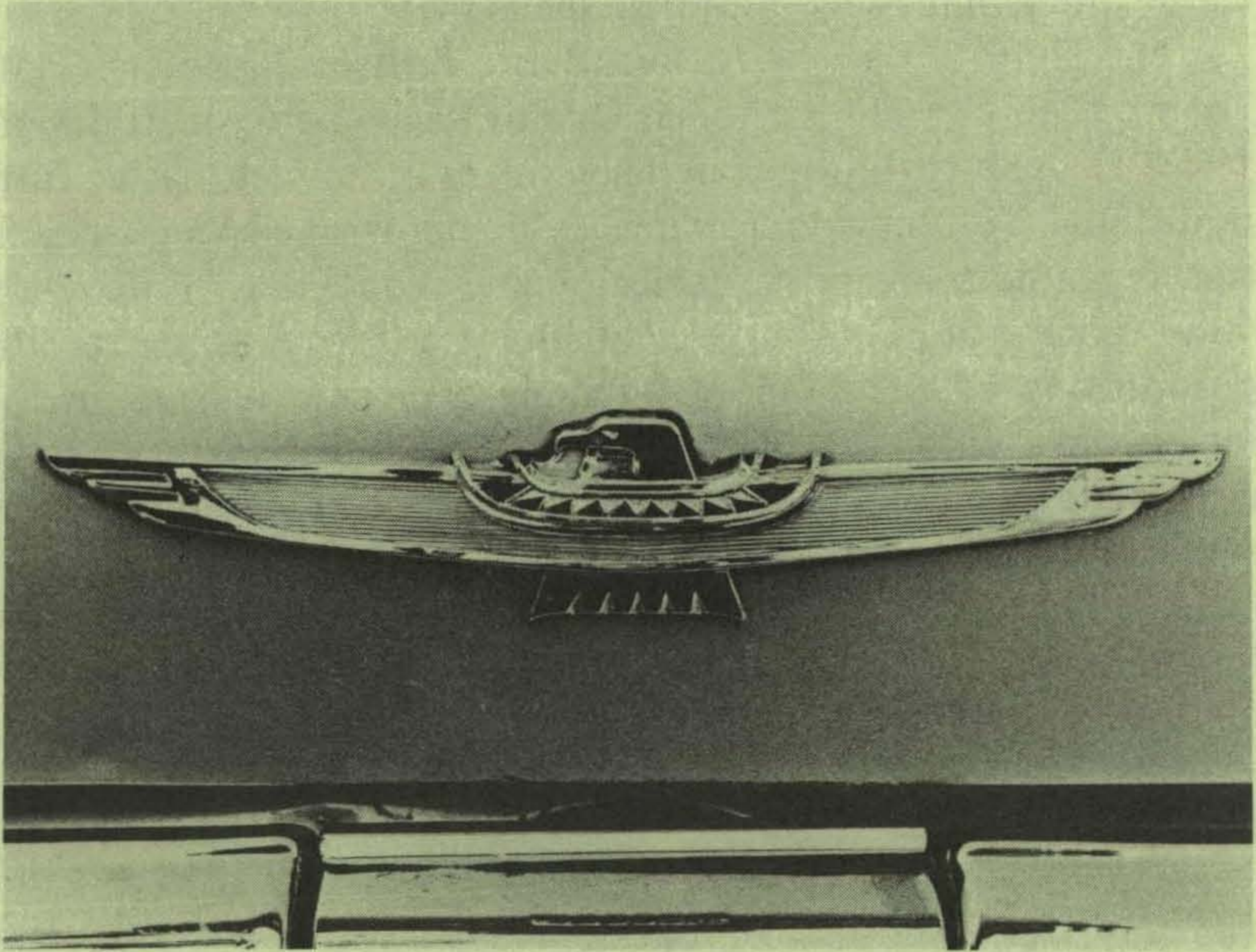
the world such as the tea ceremony of the Japanese or the coffee ritual of the Arabs, and, like these, serving as a symbol of cultural identity.

Even a cursory survey from coast to coast of North America reveals how elements of the Native American cultural heritage—words, food, symbolic images—suffuse contemporary United States culture. The Plains Indians have become the dominant visual image of “Indianness,” which has been transmitted mainly through the medium of the traveling medicine shows of the nineteenth century, the movies and television of the twentieth century, and the current pow-wows and pan-Indian movement. Thus it is their generalized cultural symbols that are often selected for public recognition and commercial purposes, although well-known tribes from the Northeast and Southwest have also been exploited. The frequent appearance of Indian motifs in signs and trademarks suggests that such usage has something to do with image-making and in this case, the use of a commercial identity for white Americans which borrows heavily from the native Americans (Plate 18).

Perceptions of Foreigners

Material expressions of outsiders are a common theme in both small-scale and national cultures. People like to see outsiders portrayed in a way which satisfies their preconceptions, often of their own superiority, or in a way which explains the often mystifying nature of the outsiders' society. These portrayals of the outsiders may be for the benefit of the in-group members or they may be for transmission to the members of the outsiders' group, that is, to the people being portrayed. Both the perception of the essential characteristics of the outsiders and the conventions of depiction of these features are products of the creator culture and its codes and techniques. Thus both the features chosen and the methods of showing them may be unsatisfying or even unrecognizable to the outsider group depicted. Our examples have been chosen to show the complexities of such processes.

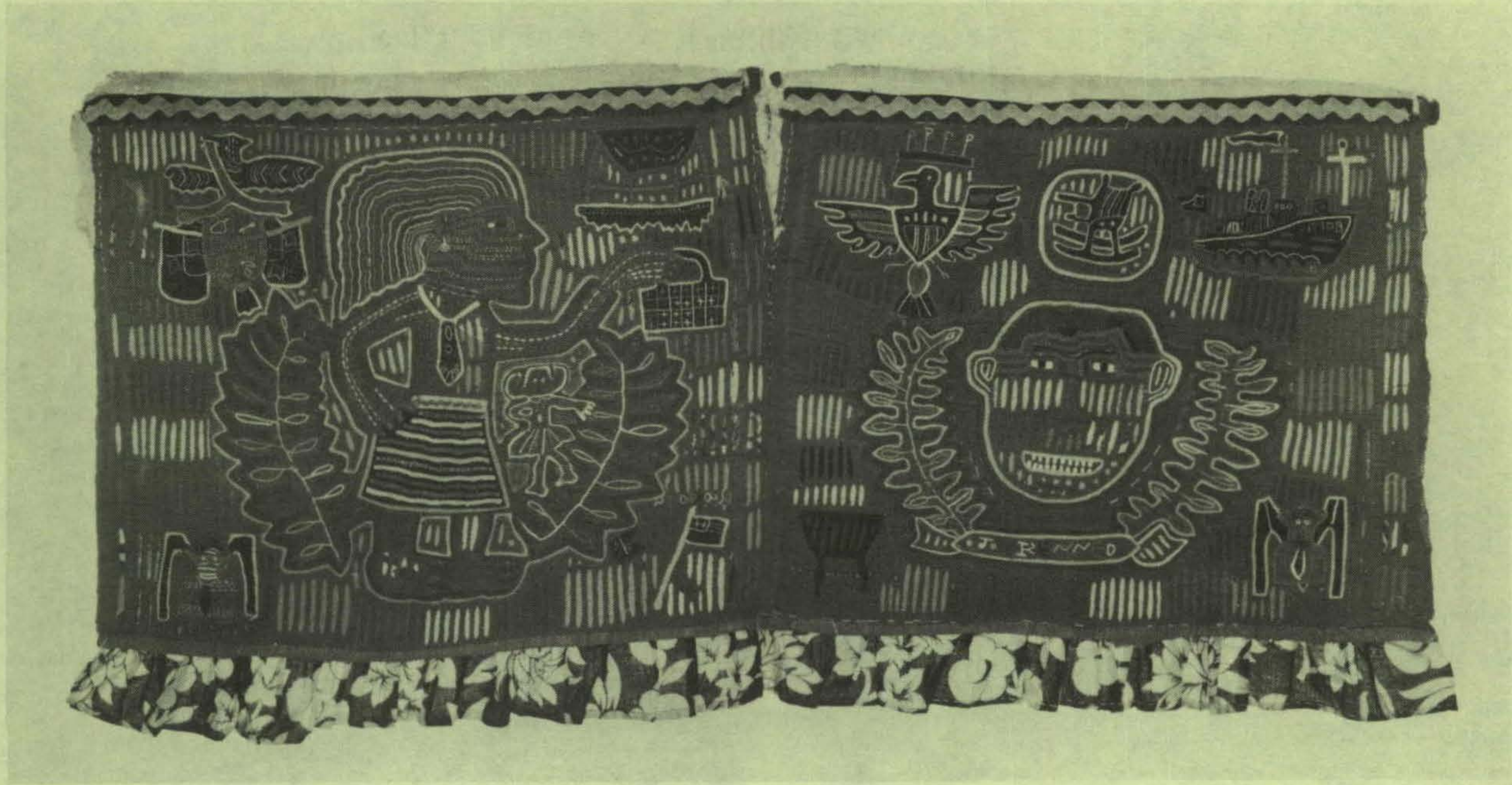
The Cuna are eclectic and willingly include many themes of



18. Thunderbird automobile hood ornament,
1974.

current content in their *mola* designs. Neighbors to the north and south are familiar to these Panamanian Indians, especially as they often serve on ocean-going ships and are familiar with United States publications. The idealized portrayal on one woman's *mola* shows the late President John F. Kennedy and his wife in the idiom of the Cuna (Plate 19). The PT boat and rocking chair are symbols of the late president and the man's tie worn by Mrs. Kennedy indicates (to the Cuna) her important status; the handbag signifies that she is rich.

The slyly humorous figures of the British characters (Plate 20) were all carved by Thomas Ona of Lagos between 1943 and 1945, for sale to Europeans. They differ in subject matter from traditional Yoruba woodcarvings, which portrayed kings, chiefs, and mythological and historical beings, but they follow the same conventions of style. In the traditional carvings the proportions of the human body are conventionalized in the same way with the head being emphasized as the most important part of the body, as in Yoruba religion. Also the symbols of office are emphasized, such as clothing and insignia, rather than individual characteristics. Ona's characters represent his documentation of the colonial scene and the idealized role of the most important members of that scene, including soldiers, missionaries, Queen Victoria, lawyers, and polo players.



19. Cuna Indian *mola* (blouse decoration) with motifs of John F. Kennedy, Jackie, and Caroline; Panama, 1967, 97 cm. long, property of Mari Lyn Salvador.



20. Carved wooden figures of Englishmen as seen by the carver, Thomas Ona of Lagos, Nigeria. From left to right: a soldier, a missionary, Queen Victoria, a wigged lawyer, and a polo player. Carved 1943-45, figure of Victoria 29 cm. high, property of William Bascom.

IV. POSTSCRIPT: CULTURAL DIVERSITY VERSUS WORLDWIDE UNIFORMITY

At several places in the discussion up to this point allusion has been made to the changes induced in cultures all over the world by massively increased communication, travel, transport, and introduction of foreign products. It has been pointed out that the changes in large degree tend to be convergent because there are numerous common denominators in the cultural influences being diffused by the many agencies. In other words, all this interchange and communication is having a leveling effect on the world's cultural diversity. Year by year the distinctness of national and tribal cultures is blurring, languages are disappearing, customs are becoming extinct, and ethnic arts are going commercial. Perhaps we should take occasion to weigh the advantages of cultural diversity versus uniformity for there are arguments on both sides of the question.

Pro Uniformity

Cultural uniformity has its strongest value in the routine aspects of life. Uniform standards of behavior minimize complications arising from misunderstanding, and bring the advantage of efficiency in communication, administration of institutions, social control, distribution of resources, and, in the political sphere, the consolidation of power. Standard (inter-

national) language, manners, courtesies, money, measures, time, calendar, machinery, automobile driving habits, legal codes, education, and medical practice, to name a few, have obvious advantages in efficiency and workability. In fact, every culture is internally structured with many uniformity- and conformity-producing mechanisms that make social life possible and prevent fragmentation.

Uniformity and its accessories tend to be mutually supportive; communication assists uniformity and uniformity assists communication. The same is true of standard education and medical practices.

Advocates of uniformity are usually persons in the administrative and organizational sphere. Executives, law makers, reformers, idealists, and revolutionaries are persons for whom efficiency is a paramount value.

Reactions against uniformity and conformity come from persons in the creative sphere, from youth seeking alternative values, from all questioners of assumptions and conventions such as nudists, religious pioneers, and minority group spokesmen.

Pro Diversity

The advantages of cultural diversity mainly lie in the creative, nonroutine departments of life. Since every culture tends to narrow upon a circumscribed set of values and precepts of behavior, and inhibits alternative ways, it puts arbitrary limits on human awareness and experience. The leavening to this restriction is diversity of options. Diversified, heterogeneous cultures are richer in total content, meet the needs of more people, bring more satisfactions, and provide more alternatives.

Contacts between diverse cultures stimulate innovation through exchange of independently derived ideas. Innovation makes possible culture change and broader adaptability to unanticipated challenges of the future. Examples are the cross-fertilization of ideas around the Mediterranean commencing with the invention of seaworthy cargo vessels about 2500 B.C. and the stimulation brought to the life of Europe by the

Age of Exploration. Literature, the arts, science, and technology were greatly affected by these episodes of broadened contacts.

The accessories of diversity are isolation, a degree of noncommunication, and lack of restrictions on nonconformist behavior.

Advocates of diversity are generally scholars, writers, artists, scientists, and chefs, as well as religious and social minorities who may feel oppressed by the prevailing culture. Boundary role players and go-betweens such as diplomats, traders, and agents dealing with out-groups benefit from and support diversity.

Reactions against diversity usually come from reformers, missionaries, idealists, administrators, and others who are promoting organization and efficiency. These reactions may take the form of suppression of minorities by power consolidators, or repression of every manifestation of nonconformity as is done under doctrinaire uniformitarian regimes.

It seems safe to predict that the future will bring further increase of contacts, communication, trade, and power consolidation that will hasten the trends to worldwide cultural uniformity. Diversity, on the other hand, has lost ground, and seldom has had the advantages of majority support or a power position. Perhaps some thought should be given to programming the conservation of cultural diversity and its associated values in some kind of balance with circumscribed uniformity.

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