



Museum Collections and the Search for “Authentic Historical Consciousness” in the Age of Nationalist Imperialism

Richard O. Clemmer

Abstract. – Examination is made of the contexts in which three collections of Puebloan pottery were assembled by Aby Warburg, Thomas Keam, and John Wesley Powell in the period in which Anthropology was birthed, between 1870 and 1896. Accessioned by European museums in Hamburg, Berlin, and Paris, these collections embedded conflicting meanings. Utilizing the concept of “ambivalence” reveals the agency with which these collections became mantled and extends analysis to engage these conflicting meanings. The concept-metaphors of “nation-state”; “imperial”; and “modernity” evolving as products of the search for an “authentic historical consciousness” are examined in terms of these conflicting meanings. [*Hopi, Puebloan pottery, assimilation, ideological arguments*]

Richard O. Clemmer, Professor of Anthropology and Curator of Ethnology, University of Denver, Denver Colorado. – Research interests focus on interpreting the context of the collecting of Puebloan pottery prior to 1950; examining the interface between indigenous agency and colonialist hegemony; and the politics of indigenous peoples’ human rights referenced through ecological contexts – His publications include: “Julian Steward and the Great Basin. The Making of an Anthropologist” (ed. with L. D. Myers and M. E. Rudden; Salt Lake City 1999), and various articles in scientific journals like *PolAR. Political and Legal Anthropological Review*, *Journal of Anthropological Research*, *Dialectical Anthropology, History and Anthropology*, and *International Journal of the Humanities*. – See also Ref. Cited.

Nation-Building, “Authentic Historical Consciousness,” and Ambivalence

Examination of the contexts in which three collections of Puebloan pottery were assembled and secured by European museums reveals the conflicting meanings embedded in “nation-state”; “imperial”;

and “modernity” in the last decades of the 19th century. “Modernity” evolved during this period of time as a product for an “authentic historical consciousness.” Utilizing the concept of “ambivalence” reveals these conflicting meanings as inherent in these contexts, and suggests that each should be treated as an ideological argument rather than as a received assumption. The following discussion, then, poses and answers two questions: (1) How did each of those collections get there? (2) What meanings of “cultural production and issues of identity” (Moore 2006: 447) surrounded these collections in the world of rampant imperialism and nation-building in the latter third of the nineteenth century?

These collections in questions are Puebloan ceramics in three European museums: one donated to the Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte (Hamburg) by Aby Warburg; another purchased from Thomas Keam by the Museum für Völkerkunde (Berlin-Dahlem); and a small assemblage of pottery from the Hopi village of Oraibi collected by John Wesley Powell and acquired by the Musée de l’Homme (Paris). I would like to suggest that early collecting activity derived as much from several overarching contingencies and biases that permeated the consciousness of those early collectors and more importantly, the kit bag of ideas that animated many of the individuals that came to influence the trajectory of nation-building institutions in the age of imperialist. In other words, early collecting did not concern just collecting or even the institutions – museums and universities – that com-

missioned the collecting or became the repositories of what was collected. Collecting was a variable of meanings – what Talal Asad (1979: 612) noted as “ideological arguments about the basic transformation of social conditions” in which people lived. I suggest that, even where these ideological arguments were not directly articulated, the behavior of the collectors and even the collections themselves acquired agency that reflected and promoted particular meanings.

These meanings were by no means straightforward, but rather fought with each other. The pivot point of these conflicts was the search for what Bhabha (1984: 132) has noted as an “authentic historical consciousness.” This authentic historical consciousness would rationalize and ameliorate the crisis of doubt arising from the increasing realization, in the famous words of Marx (1843: 11) “*that man makes religion; religion does not make man*” and replace it with an affirmation of rationality, science, and “progress” in social formations and technology. These meanings were created as negotiated ideologies devolving from nation-state building, imperialism, and modernization. The concept of ambivalence encompasses these conflicting meanings.

Imperialist Nation-States’ Cultural Agendas

Nationalism was the “seed” of this imperialism. “It was the consolidated state which provided the primary base in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from which a nation could reach out towards the rest of the world. The psychic disposition to a *ne plus ultra* attitude reached only when pride in former political and cultural achievements in the excellence of national character and the inherent genius of the nation itself, had developed to a high degree when national self-confidence dominated all public pronouncements, and national traditions were raised to the level of cultural standards” (Gollwitzer 1969: 41), or more accurately, cultural traditions were raised to the level of national standards. State-building and nation-building, then, went hand-in-hand (Hobsbawm 1972: 388–390, 395).

Therefore, although imperialism in the last half of the 19th century is often conceptualized as a political-military enterprise, it was also an enterprise that entailed a good deal of complex cultural maneuvering. While it might be commonly thought that powers, such as Portugal and France¹ embraced

and encouraged assimilation and acculturation in their colonial realms, while Spain, Great Britain, and the Netherlands discouraged it, the actual situations were by no means so straightforward, as the writings of Fanon (1973), Memmi (1967), and Said (1978) and studies by Wolf (1982), Stoler (1989), Trotter (1990), and others demonstrate. Imperial states such as Austria and Ottoman Turkey (Gellner 1983) that conquered continentally are often left out of such discussions, as is Germany, whose short-lived empire (1871–1919) included continental as well as colonial conquests,² although it seems to occupy a position at the extreme end of the “no-assimilation” continuum (see Drechsler 1986). The United States is also often omitted from discussions of colonialism and imperialism, even though colonialists and administrators caused and confronted the same dilemmas in the “classic” empires, as did the carriers of Euro-American culture in Indian country. These dilemmas swirled around cultural issues and policies concerning “interdictory otherness,” “authentic historical consciousness,” and modernization.

“Interdictory Otherness”, “Authentic Historical Consciousness”, and Ambivalence

Postcolonial theorists Homi Bhabha (1984) and Anne McClintock (1995) provide several observations that are useful for framing the following discussion. Bhabha identifies “interdictory otherness” as a kind of “splitting” of identities in the colonized and marginalized reaches of nationalist empires. He particularly applies the concept of “splitting” to what he calls “mimic men”: lower-level functionaries and bureaucrats; police and interpreters; overseers and tax collectors; servants and cultural brokers who were drawn from the ranks of the colonized and had to more or less adopt some of the language, gestures, habits, and attitudes of the colonizers. They fulfilled the desire [of the colonizer] for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of a difference that is almost the same* [as the colonizer] *but not quite* (Bhabha 1984: 126). They were “other than” the “we” of the colonizers, but they acted as buffers, restraining both the colonized in overstepping social and political boundaries, but also impeding the colonizers in possibly implementing

ana – and New Caledonia less so – as “départements outre-mer” in the 1990s.

2 Germany’s overseas empire included Southwest Africa (Namibia); East Africa (Tanganyika); Cameroun; Togo; New Guinea; Palau; and the Caroline, Marianas, and Marshall Islands. Germany also had “offices” in Morocco and China.

1 Portugal’s failed attempt to convince its colonial subjects to “come to mother” in the 1970s contrasts with France’s more successful incorporation of Martinique, Guadalupe, and Gui-

draconian punishments. To do so they had to present themselves culturally as *almost* the colonizer. But it was a stance that had to be approached discreetly: too much mimicry of the colonizer could backfire and result in an individual being labeled “uppity” at best or a rebellious infiltrator at worst. Following Bhabha, McClintock (1995: 62f.) notes that “mimicry” results in a “flawed identity imposed on colonized people who are obliged to mirror back an image of the colonials but imperfect in form ... The mimic men serve as the intermediaries of empire; they are colonized teachers, soldiers, bureaucrats and cultural interpreters whom [Frantz] Fanon (1973: 47) described as ‘dusted over with colonial culture’ ... The mimic men are obliged to inhabit an uninhabitable zone of ambivalence that grants them neither identity nor difference; they must mimic an image that they cannot fully assume ...”

“Interdictory otherness” cuts the other way, too, however. The colonial and imperial worlds also produced colonizers who went “native.” These individuals learned the native languages, took native spouses, lived in native communities, and deliberately set themselves up as cultural brokers, “understanding” the “native” in a way that colonists and administrators could not do. The ambivalent aspect of their “in-between-ness” lay in the possibility that they would “go over” to “the enemy” in a situation of conflict.³ Whether the “mimic man” is a colonial “passing” as a native or a native “passing” as a colonial, individuals who were betwixt and between in a kind of Turnerian “liminal state” were necessary go-betweens and mediators in the colonized world that bolstered the imperialist municipalities.

This position of ambivalence – on the part of “native” as well as “colonist” mimic men – is particularly evident in the “19th-century European desire for an authentic historical consciousness” (Bhabha 1984: 132). This search for an authentic historical consciousness was not confined to Europe: it also afflicted Americans. This authentic historical consciousness was fraught with two obsessions: a dedication to rational modernity, manifested in an embrace and trumpeting of technological prowess that “imagined” itself as homogeneous,⁴ on the one hand, and the conviction that a national agenda had to entail a national culture requiring the invention of

traditions on the other (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

The variations of these imaginings and inventions cannot be addressed here. Nonetheless, two permeating ideological assumptions united the efforts of aspiring nation-states such as the United States, Canada, and Mexico to create national cultures with the imperialist projects of the British, German, French, and Hapsburgian realms: (1) the world consisted of civilized peoples and primitive peoples, the latter a point of fascination and revulsion; (2) behavioral and social structural loyalties must transcend family, village, town, and region and be dedicated to a national identity that, by definition, rivaled other ethnic or potentially national identities (Gollwitzer 1969: 47). For the United States, this meant that Native Americans must be integrated, assimilated, acculturated into the lower rungs of the social and cultural fabric of the United States. Museums were important symbols of national identities in these imperialist states where class conflicts, political intrigues, ethnically-based independence movements, resistance to conquest on the part of the colonized, and the sheer challenge of administering colonial empires, whether internal or external, placed these imperial states in continual crisis. The administrative apparatuses of these states held together social formations that periodically threatened to blow apart from stresses and strains that were entirely internal.

But imperialism and along with it, nationalism was “a contradictory and ambiguous project, shaped as much by tensions within metropolitan policy and conflicts within colonial administrations – at best, ad hoc and opportunistic affairs – as by the varied cultures and circumstances into which colonials intruded ...” (McClintock 1995: 15). One aspect of this contradictory and ambiguous project was an attempt to incorporate a fascination with the “primitive” along with the conviction that the “primitive” must and will be overtaken by “civilization” (McClintock 1995: 36–64) into the “authentic historical consciousness” that enshrined particular cultural traditions of particular ethnic groups as national standards defended and promoted by the state apparatus. The nationalism of the nation-state itself promoted some degree of ambiguity; how would multi-cultural nations such as Austria, France, and the United States create national cultural standards without squeezing its ethnic minorities – whether within its “home” borders or “overseas” – into a one-language-and-culture-fits-all mold?

The answer to that question lay in promoting “modernity” and “modernization”: a devotion to a set of values, principles, material conditions, and

3 An example is William Bent, a trader who had a Cheyenne wife. In the sneak attack on the Cheyenne by U.S. troops at Sand Creek in 1864, Bent’s sons George and Charles actually fought with the Cheyenne and another brother, James, was forced at gunpoint against his will to guide the troops to the village.

4 Benedict (1983); Breckenridge (1989); Mitchell (1989); Auerbach (1999); Bonython and Burton (2003).

behavior patterns would override ethnic, linguistic, racial, and cultural differences. But modernity is a concept-metaphor (Moore 2006) that has shifting ideological and social referents. Although modernity as a cultural phenomenon has been exhaustively explored, less explored is what Matei Călinescu (1977: 41) calls the tension between the “First Modernity” and the “Second Modernity” (cf. Clemmer 1995: 8–10). The First Modernity is a set of agendas, moral orders, ideologies and assumptions, styles, methods, and techniques geared to encourage specific outcomes of human activity. Among them are an ever-increasing economic output and the application of technical solutions to all problems. This First Modernity embraces secularism, rationality, objectivity, standardization, predictability, punctuality, personal success, and future orientation. A concern with measurable time that can be calculated, bought, and sold is combined with fair competition, hard work, and discipline. The ideal of freedom within an abstract humanism accompanies an orientation toward pragmatism and the measurement of human worth in economic terms.

The Second Modernity is challenge, criticism, dissent, and opposition to the First. It was “brought into being by the avant-gardists, the romantics,” in Europe in the 1870s, in just the time period under scrutiny here (Călinescu 1977: 42). The Second Modernity opposes industrial technologies; the dampening of emotions; pursuit of rational objectivity at any cost; narrow individualism; standardization and conformity; crass materialism. It is for the cultivating of intuition and the subconscious; promoting the uncalculated and the spontaneous; taking seriously rebellion, anarchy, apocalypticism, prophecy, and the paradoxical; promoting communalism and everything that is local but ecumenical, handcrafted, and elemental. It almost goes without saying that museums with ethnographic and archaeological collections sat squarely in the interstices between these two modernities: they sought unique, handmade objects, while insisting on cataloguing, organizing, and relativizing those objects according to disciplinary rules that facilitated administrative pragmatism and standardized interpretations of cultural variation and prehistory. So did the collectors.

The Collections and the Collectors

Aby Warburg

Aby Warburg was fascinated by “the problem of the true significance of antiquity for our civilization” (Gombrich 1970: 87). He spent more than half

of a six-month stay in the United States (October–December 1895; January and part of February and April and early May, 1896) in and around the contemporary and prehistoric Pueblos of the Southwest in hopes of finding enlightenment. The Puebloan and other Native Americans of the Southwest people whose life, culture, habitat, and material culture provided destinations for tourists and connoisseurs in 1900 were viewed as exotic people of the “New West,” the Borderlands recently acquired in the war with Mexico. Puebloans share a heritage of distinctive diagnostic cultural characteristics such as nucleated settlements, built of two- and three-storey apartment complexes arranged in straight rows with streets and plazas; calendrical, collective ceremonies performed at specific times of the year; a polytheistic religion; a largely barter economy; and subsistence rooted in maize horticulture. In the early 1900s, the sixteen politically independent pueblos straddling the Rio Grande River and its tributaries supported themselves through horticulture and irrigated agriculture, animal husbandry, and some selling of pottery, jewelry, and basketry. Three more Pueblos and the eight Hopi villages located to the west also lived by selling handicrafts and doing horticulture, although without irrigation and with more reliance on livestock. Hopis numbered about 2,500; the population of the nineteen pueblos was about 9,000 around 1900 (Clemmer 1995: 3, 157; Simmons 1979: 221).

While in New Mexico and Arizona, Warburg collected material culture and took dozens of photographs, many of religious dances. The Warburg collection in Hamburg consists of nine pieces of prehistoric pottery, thirty-two pieces of contemporary Puebloan pottery,⁵ twelve items of Puebloan dance paraphernalia including three Katsina masks, two “Kachina dolls,” and twenty-one other items of Puebloan, Navajo, and Apache material culture (Kaemlein 1967: 119f.; Hagen 1903: cxiv f.). Design motifs include Hopi migration (meander), prayer feathers (*natci*), eagle tail, Moroccan flower,⁶ Shalako maiden (masked Katsina figure), realistic chicken heads, stylized “stepped” clouds, and a motif described as the “lightning snake” (Blitzschlange;

5 Kaemlein (1967: 119f.) lists only twenty-seven; however, on-site research revealed additional items. The Museum was badly damaged in World War II and some of the pottery was broken. It is possible it had not yet been repaired and restored to open storage when Kaemlein was there. The assistance of Dr. Corinna Raddatz, Department Head for America, is gratefully acknowledged.

6 These designs were brought to Spain by North African Moslems (Moors), who ruled much of Spain for 800 years. Spanish colonists commissioned Puebloan potters to make bowls with such designs for their use in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Hagen 1903: cxi – see below), and insects.⁷ Warburg assembled his collection and took his photographs in order to demonstrate what unilineal evolutionists such as James Frazer and E. B. Tylor would have called “survivals” (Harris 1968: 164–167, 205). Influenced by Darwin and also by Lévy-Bruhl’s idea that “primitives” had different thought processes from “moderns” (Gombrich 1970: 242 f., 196), and by the widespread notion of a “‘racial’ memory” (239), he wanted to convince himself and others that in Puebloan rituals, mythology, and design motifs in material culture were the pure and primal expression of answers to the “most pressing questions of the Why of things” (Warburg 1995 [1923]: 48). These primal expressions had their analogue in Greek imagery and mythology and survived into some Christian iconography. The art of “primitive” peoples expressed an “organic connection” with their religion (Steinberg 1995: 67); therefore, stylized images of clouds-and-lightning on Puebloan pottery were, for Warburg, the expression of a religious belief in a cosmic power that the artist could not explain and, therefore, was a source of wonder.

Scion of a wealthy banking family, he relinquished his share of the family business to his brother in return for a lifelong stipend that would support his investigations into art, mythology, philosophy, and iconography. Oddly enough, the most coherent and comprehensive statement of his ideas about Puebloan culture come from a slide lecture that he delivered in 1923 as a demonstration of his sanity and mental stamina in order to be released from institutionalization that he had undergone in 1918 as the result of a breakdown (Steinberg 1995: 76). Although he did see a Katsina dance at Oraibi (Warburg 1995: 21–34), he never witnessed the Hopi Snake Dance. Instead, he referenced the immensely popular memoir by army captain John Bourke, “The Snake Dance of the Moquis”⁸ in order to demonstrate to his audience that it was “an actual survival of the magical serpent cult, as an example of that primordial condition of which the refinement, transcendence, and replacement are the work of modern culture” (Warburg 1995: 53). He was of the conviction that the snake, as an image and in its role as an animus in nature, represented and controlled lightning (Blitzschlange) (Bredenkamp 1991: 1) and therefore the forces controlling rain. He seems to have based this conviction largely on an interpreta-

tion of the Hopi Snake Dance by botanist-turned-ethnographer Jesse Walter Fewkes (Fewkes, Stephen, and Owens 1894), probably supplied by Stephen who had far more ethnographic experience than Fewkes (see Parsons 1936; Hinsley 1983) and supported it with drawings that the “guardian”⁹ of the Cochiti kiva and his young son drew for him while he interviewed him in his hotel room in Santa Fe (Warburg 1995: 9). Presumably the drawings were produced at Warburg’s request. Warburg averred that, following the Snake Dance, the snakes were released to “rush back into the Underworld, in order to implore the deceased souls to bring rain to the Indians” (Warburg und Saxl 1926).¹⁰ What Fewkes et al. (1894: 126) had actually said was that the snakes were released to bear these petitions (for “copious rains”) to the divinities.

Warburg has been described as a “micro historian” and also as a “historical anthropologist,” documenting specific historical moments in particular geographical locations as evidenced by his North American photographs, and also as a “historian of mentalities” (Burke 1991: 39). Convinced that the Pueblos were in the same evolutionary stage as the ancient Greeks (Gombrich 1970: 91), he compared the Snake Dance to the dance of the “Maenads” in Greek mythology who “danced with snakes in one hand and wore serpents as diadems in their hair” in the “orgiastic cult of Dionysus”; to “the primal serpent Tiamat in Babylon,” the “spirit of evil and temptation”; to its depiction “as a destroying force” in representations of the “sculpted group of Laocoon”; and to the “Asclepian serpent cult.” He was, consciously or unconsciously, following Nietzsche in re-interpreting much of Greek mythology and symbology as “primitive” (Burke 1991: 40 f.). But the “primitive” was not limited to ancient cultures or the “surviving” cultures of indigenous North America. For Warburg, the influence of the past went “beyond the presentation of traditional images from prototypes and imitations, and with conscious recourse to Hegel.” It reaches “into the very groundwater of culturally annunciat-

7 Stephen (1994 [1890/1883]): 27–33, 42–44, 48, 52, 55–64, 72, 79–85, 88, 94 f.; see also 198, 241, 243).

8 “Moqui” (Moki) was a term applied to the Hopi until the mid-1920s. It is a derogatory term, probably Tewa, meaning “already dead,” used by some Navajos in the early-to-mid-19th century in reference to skirmishes with the Hopi.

9 It is difficult to know what he meant by “guardian of the kiva” (which he called by the Spanish term, *estufa*, so named because steps lead up into the entrance to the kiva). This could have been the head of one of the two societies – Flint and Koshare – that have charge of ceremonies depending upon season, winter or summer, or the head of a more specific sodality, such as the Snake Society.

10 “Sie sollen in die Unterwelt hinabellen, um dort bei den abgeschiedenen Seelen für die Indianer den Regen zu erleben.” The article appeared anonymously in a youth newspaper. Current belief among the Hopi is that rain is brought by Katsina spirits that dwell as clouds on the tops of the San Francisco Peaks, 80–100 miles to the south of the Hopi villages.

ed images” and penetrates “every region” (Forster 1991: 33).¹¹

The Snake Dance, he thought, replicated the power and mystery embedded in observations of lightning (Warburg 1995: 38–43), apparently confusing the “water serpent” of the mythological world depicted in Tewa imagery as the “avanyu” with a crooked line tipped with a prominent point (see Bunzel 1929: 122 f.) and honored in the Hopi ritual, Pá-lü-lü-koñ-ti (see Fewkes 1893) with snakes encountered in the natural world.¹² But the Snake Dance was doomed, declared Warburg, to be conquered by “Uncle Sam,” together with inventors of the telegraph and airplane, “destroyers of the sense of distance, who threaten to lead the planet back into chaos” (Warburg 1995: 54).¹³

Discussion: Rationality versus “Paganism”

Modern technological society for Warburg was the end result of the development of rationality that began in the Italian Quattrocento, developed slowly through the Protestant Reformation (Steinberg 1995: 92 f.), and ultimately liberated humanity from the grip of magic and superstition (Steinberg 1995: 65). Yet “paganism” “returns as a dominant cultural mode at various historical moments” in entire cultural groups and individuals. His ambivalence about the presence of the “primitive” and “pagan” in the modern world is evident: one of its manifestations, he thought, was Judaism, with which he was intimately familiar from his early upbringing. Thus his fascination with the “primitive” and his employment of rational analysis to relativize it could not liberate him from himself. Sympathy with the “mythical past” could not close the distance that he, and all “modern” individuals, inevitably experienced.

This ambivalence was not just a personal one on Warburg’s part; it was embedded in the socio-political realities of the German Empire and Warburg knew this. Among his personal papers is a file

box containing twenty picture postcards expressing “a clear propagandist message of German-Jewish solidarity” during World War I, a myth that was unraveling even as Warburg was giving his lecture in 1923. One of them shows a tall German soldier, closely resembling Emperor Wilhelm II, extending an arm over the top of the head of a short-statured man meant to be (and possibly was) a Jew. The short man is wearing a hand-lettered sign around his neck that says “Großpolen unter deutschem Schutz” (Greater Poland under German protection), clearly an effort to make it seem as if German administration of Poland offered a better life for its minorities than administration by an independent Poland would have provided (Steinberg 1995: 82–84). Within barely a decade after the end of World War I, the ideology of ambivalence about just what should constitute the identity of the German state, embedded in the social structure and the behavior of those who had inhabited since its construction in the mid-19th century, would become evident.¹⁴

In pre-1919 Germany, “Germanness” was essentially Prussia writ large. Unlike Austria and France, where the revolutions of 1848, despite being dramatically unsuccessful did have a gradual, if delayed liberalizing impact, Germany never experienced any real sociopolitical reforms. The landed nobility (Junker) retained economic and political power despite the rise of industrialists and shopkeepers. Land reform did not happen and peasants were converted from serfs to low-paid agricultural workers. Therefore, there were essentially two important classes: industrial and agricultural workers and the “Junker.” The shopkeepers and industrialists identified with the nobility and distrusted the working class. The nation-state apparatus was controlled by the nobility (Poulantzas 1973: 180–182). The working class could not organize “to smash the state’s apparatus and structures and gain control of them” (Poulantzas 1973: 184). For intellectuals, then, identifying as a “German” meant inevitably identifying with the nation-state; there was no “national spirit” independent of it. As a model of nationhood, Germany demanded unequivocal loyalty from everybody. It was this demand for loyalty that produced such ambivalence in Warburg and the “primitive” sentiments that it could evoke that drove him to try to come to an understanding, however flawed, of how they manifested themselves.

¹⁴ Born in 1866, Warburg died in 1929. His family began assembling an archive of his work almost immediately, but moved themselves and it to England with the Nazis’ usurpation of the German state in 1933 (Saxl 1970).

¹¹ “Dieses ‘Wissen von einer Vergangenheit’ erstreckte sich bei Warburg freilich gerade auf jene Bezirke, die weit über die landläufige Vorstellung von Bildtraditionen, von Vorbild und Nachahmung hinausgehen und, in bewusstem Rückgriff auf Hegel, kulturell vermittelter Vorstellungen hinabreichen” (Forster 1991: 33).

¹² Lightning is usually depicted in Hopi imagery by parallel squiggly lines (see Stephen 1994: 106; cf. Schaaf 1998: 172 f.). Species associated with rain in imagery on Hopi pottery are dragonflies, butterflies, and inchworms (Bunzel 1929: 93, 104, 112).

¹³ The Snake Dance slowly died out between 1910 and 1966 at all Hopi villages except two, where it was still being performed in 2008–2009.

Warburg offers an unusual glimpse into the ambivalence that permeated nationalism and modernity. He seemed to urge, on the one hand, the celebration of Native Americans’ expressive and material culture as representing the “survival” of the kind of “primitive,” “pagan” sentiments, beliefs, and values that animated Greek civilization, while at the same time, eschewing the embrace of those sentiments and values, which defied the rationality born from the Italian Enlightenment that enabled Warburg and his fellow intellectuals to objectify and, therefore, study and analyze art, culture, politics, and nature. The serpent represented for Warburg the “demonic forces” lurking within human nature that must be overcome. It was this rationality that would ultimately exterminate the “surviving” sentiments and their expression from an archaic era. Warburg must have been well aware of the attempts at forced acculturation and suppression of traditional rituals implemented by Christian missionaries; one of his guides and interpreters among the Hopi was the German Mennonite missionary Heinrich Voth (Steinberg 1995: 64). Warburg (1995: 53 f.) regarded the extermination of these “surviving” sentiments from an “archaic” era as inevitable as it was misplaced, connected as it was with the mission of the United States – “Uncle Sam” – as a national project. For Warburg, the ambivalence inherent in the embrace of symbols referencing nature and the cultural milieu that create them was essential to a healthy and strong collective psychology in an increasingly industrializing, routinizing, and rationalizing modernity. Therefore, the struggle to maintain and accommodate the contradiction between the two was what should characterize an authentic historical consciousness (Gombrich 1970: 249).

Thomas Varker Keam

This ambivalence about “the primitive” is even more salient in the life of Thomas Keam, a trader whom Warburg undoubtedly encountered on his two trips to the Hopi villages in Fall 1895 and in Spring 1896. Keam or his brother probably assembled the first large collection of Puebloan pottery. Ironically, Thomas Keam became the first private citizen to have his personal collection of Native American artifacts cited, discussed, and displayed by collectors for the United States National Museum. Yet that museum did not purchase the collection and ended up purchasing only a small number of ceramic items from him. The best pieces from this collection as well as the largest number ended up not in North America, but in Berlin. In 1899, Keam

offered more than 2,500 items of material culture for sale to what was then the national Museum für Völkerkunde for only \$ 3,000 (Sanner 1999: 122).¹⁵ The collection included hundreds of ceramic vessels from the Hopi area, 66 contemporary Kachina dolls, six ceremonial “altar stones” used in the Marau ceremony, and at least 39 contemporary baskets, and 46 ceramic tiles (Kaemlein 1967: 99–105).¹⁶ Although called the “least known and rarest” of Hopi ceramics (Wright 1977: 64), actually hundreds of these tiles were produced prior to 1910. Keam probably commissioned the tiles specially (Wright 1977). Some of the most intriguing items are three white-slipped pieces with black geometric designs, shaped in the form of miniature Greek amphoras, with flared mouths, and handles attached to globoid midsections. They are unlike any other Puebloan pottery, and undoubtedly were made on commission to Keam’s specifications. Just why, is unknown. At least seven additional pots – initially catalogued as “Sityatki Polychrome” from the 15th/16th centuries were also probably deliberately commissioned by Keam as replica specimens (cf. Traugott 1999).

Born in 1842, Thomas Keam emigrated to the United States from Cornwall, England, probably landing by ship in San Francisco. He joined one of the two companies of “California volunteers” who marched off in search of Confederates and ended up pursuing Indians. Thomas Keam was among the troops that rounded up Navajos and Apaches and marched with them to the ill-fated reservation at Bosque Redondo, New Mexico, and thereby earned United States citizenship that way, which would prove vital in his ability to establish a ranching and trading business. He undoubtedly learned Navajo, which he spoke fluently, while stationed there. Discharged in Santa Fe in 1866, he hired on as interpreter at the Navajo Agency in Fort Defiance in 1869. Shortly after settling in, he married Asdzaan Liba in a traditional Navajo ceremony. At that point, Keam may well have been on his way to integrating himself into Navajo life and becoming a powerful ally in their struggle to maintain autonomy from the U.S. Government (Graves 1998: 106). But within the following decade, he instead chose to mim-

¹⁵ The collection was accessioned in 1901.

¹⁶ The author visited the museum in 1966 and researched the collection in 2000. Kaemlein’s (1967: 99–105) inventory lists only 280 items, all of them Hopi except for a few. The collection is much larger than Kaemlein’s research reflects. Nearly the entire collection of the museum and some of the accession records were in storage and unavailable to her because the museum building was still under repair from World War II bombing. My thanks to Dr. Peter Bolz, Curator for North America, Ethnological Museum, Berlin, for assistance in this research.

ic the conqueror, rather than the conquered. But he also assumed a position of deliberate ambivalence between native life and the world of scientific objectification and modernizing imperialism (cf. Graves 1998: 236).

In 1870, the Navajo Agency hired his brother William to assist with interpreting. Brother William also married a Navajo woman. Just when William Keam came to America, and where and how he learned Navajo is unknown (Graves 1998: 54). But the Keam brothers set themselves in opposition to the agent, William Arny, accusing him of tyranny and embezzling. Arny counteraccused and prosecuted them. Although eventually vindicated, the Keams gave up and moved away (McNitt 1962: 162–165). Thomas Keam established a ranch and trading post in a place that he called “Far View.” By 1875 Asdzaan Liba had divorced Thomas Keam,¹⁷ who was busy lobbying his Office of Indian Affairs in Washington to appoint him as agent. Establishing a post at the Canyon named for him, William had thoroughly settled into life at the foot of the Hopi mesas by 1877. Appointed interpreter for the Hopi Agency, he developed a good working relationship with cultural broker, adventure, and all-around go-between Tom Polacca and his sister, Nampeyo, who would eventually become a famous potter. He also had built up a successful trading enterprise and become a willing contact point for travelers, especially museologists bent on collecting.

Not so Thomas Keam. Between 1877 and 1880, Thomas was busy lobbying Washington for his appointment as Indian agent – either for Navajo or the Hopi, serving as temporary interpreter and agent at the San Carlos Apache Reservation, dabbling in mining interests, and defending himself against accusations that he was part of a “a group of New Mexican businessmen,” called the ““Santa Fe Ring”” “who allegedly tried to cheat the government in fraudulent contracting schemes” (Graves 1998: 100). Keam was hardly around. A man named William Leonard ran his Far View trading post for him. But in midsummer, 1880, everything changed. An executive order of October 29, 1878 made an addition to the Navajo Reservation that moved its boundaries 20 miles to the west (Williams 1970: 13). The addition swallowed up Thomas Keam’s Far View ranch and trading post; instantly it was on reservation land and under the collective ownership of the Navajo Nation, with the U.S. Government as trustee. Thomas Keam would have to clear out. At almost the same time, he learned in August that his

brother, William Keam, was “very sick.” By the end of November, 1880, William Keam was dead.

Thomas Keam abandoned his Far View ranch and post and moved everything to his brother’s post. Because the Hopi Reservation would not be created until 1882, Thomas Keam was able to take out a homestead patent. When John G. Bourke visited him in August, 1881, finding the ranch house crammed with weavings, pottery, carvings, baskets, and other Indian artifacts, Thomas Keam had been ensconced in the post a scant ten months. His brother’s apparently sudden death and Thomas Keam’s removal from his Far View post begs an obvious question: When had he had time to assemble and arrange a collection of Indian artifacts? Although Thomas Keam may have been technically the owner of the Keams Canyon post, it was his brother William who ran it. It was William who was interpreter for the Hopi Agency and whose contacts in the villages included Tom Polacca, his parents, and his sister Nampeyo. There is every reason to assume that William, who had had five years to develop personal and trading relationships with Hopis and Hopi-Tewas, as well as Navajos living nearby, steadily built up a collection of artifacts, both contemporary and prehistoric, the latter consisting largely of pottery looted from graves. Thomas Keam most probably simply moved into his brother’s quarters, inheriting everything, including probably Garryowen and Mrs. Pinkham (see below).

At the Keam Bed-and-Breakfast: The Little King in His Castle

Captain John Bourke, who in 1884 would publish his observation and description of the Hopi Snake Dance that informed Aby Warburg so well a decade later, arrived with artist Peter Moran at the Keam ranch in late August, 1881. Arriving at the ranch with its nineteen outbuildings must have been like arriving at a 21st-century sprawling bed-and-breakfast-cum-dude-ranch. A suburban English garden with aster and candytuft and windowsills decked with flower pots brightened their view, pure, sweet spring water quenched their thirst, and other guests enlightened them about the exotica they were about to experience. Like a century’s worth of tourists after them, they had come to see the Snake Dance. Despite the title of his book, “The Snake Dance of the Moquis of Arizona” (Bourke 1984 [1884]) most of the book did not concern the Snake Dance and it was not the first detailed, ethnographic account of the ritual. In fact, it was Thomas Keam (1882) who published the first detailed account of

¹⁷ Keam nonetheless left \$ 25,000 and 125 shares of stock to her in his will.

the Snake Dance, “a curious ceremonial,” in *Chamber’s Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Arts* (Graves 1998: 149 f.), beating Bourke into print by two years. It was his first and only publication.

Next morning, Bourke and Moran pattered around the ranch buildings before sitting down to breakfast with Thomas Keam, who employed a cook, Garryowen, “a bright Navajo boy,” who brought the coffee, then returned to operating the punkah, grasping the doubled cord, pulling, letting go; pulling again, then letting go; pulling, releasing; pulling, releasing. The punkah, a large piece of canvas stretched on a frame, swinging from the ceiling sent a whoosh of air down onto the diners, to dispel the dragon’s breath of fetid hotness, then another whoosh! Of cooling air again. The flies fled, buzzed, settled, fled again. “Mrs. Pinkham,” also Navajo, brought a pitcher of goat’s milk for it.

Breakfast in the dining nook gave a view of the living room. This quintessential collector’s den and the artful lifestyle of an iconoclastic man of letters that accompanied it led Bourke (1984 [1884]: 82) to remark:

Although his mode of life had necessarily many rude features, the fact that Keam still clung to the methods and mode of thought of civilised life was shadowed forth in the interior of his dwelling, which was tastily decorated with fine Navajo blankets, sheepskin rugs, Moqui (Hopi) pottery, and Smithsonian photographs. A set of shelves in one corner of the living room contained choice specimens of literature – Shakespeare, Thackeray, Dickens, Taine ... and also an unusually good representation of standard English and American magazines and newspapers.

The “Keam Collection”

The collection that Bourke admired in 1881 was up for sale by 1884, maybe even by 1883. In a letter to ethnologist and museum collector Francis Hamilton Cushing (see below) of December 15, 1883, fellow Smithsonian ethnologist and collector Alexander M. Stephen, who was staying with Keam noted: “Mr. Keam writes you a plain (confidential) business proposition; for the sake of your bank account don’t allow anything to stand between yourself and us” (Green 1990: 313). What was the “proposition”? We will never know. But Cushing’s ostensible involvement argues for some plan involving the sale of Native American artifacts, perhaps to the Smithsonian, or perhaps to private collectors (see below).

When William Henry Holmes, geologist and illustrator for the United States Geological Survey in

Washington, D.C., was appointed “honorary curator of pottery” at the U.S. National Museum’s Bureau of American Ethnology at the behest of John Wesley Powell, who was director of both organizations in 1883, he was promptly charged with setting up the pottery exhibit at the upcoming “World’s Industrial and Cotton Exposition” in New Orleans.¹⁸ He had planned to use “a large and important collection of objects of pueblo art” that was “obtained by Mr. James Stevenson.”¹⁹ But it had “failed to reach Washington in time for exhibition purposes.” What to do? Instead, Holmes borrowed the “valuable collection of the ancient fictile products of Tusayan belonging to Mr. Thomas Keam” that “was ... utilized in perfecting the exhibits of Pueblo art.” Keam actually had wanted to sell the collection; he wrote to Holmes that he was “satisfied when you see all the collection together, with the information we have, you will not say I ask a high price for it” (Graves 1998: 154 f.). The Smithsonian did not buy Keam’s collection; Holmes was choking on a deluge of pottery from the Stevensons and Cushing – 23,000 items from expeditions mounted between 1879 and 1884 (Parezo 1987: 20, 16) from the Puebloans alone – that needed to be catalogued and documented. The fact that he needed a temporary loan from Keam resulted from Holmes’ inability, with no staff, to even unpack the Stevenson’s collections, let alone catalogue them. Keam’s collection seems to have already had a catalogue. In the months between acquiring the collection on loan in November, 1884, and setting up the pottery exhibit for the Exposition, Holmes – a gifted artist – seems to have made illustrations for the catalogue. Or perhaps Holmes hoped to persuade his boss, Spencer Baird, to purchase the collection by providing color illustrations of the designs on the pottery.

Keam’s big break came in 1892, largely because of the flamboyant ethnologist, Frank Cushing, a philanthropist and would-be collector named Mary Hemenway, and a number of intermediaries – among them a natural scientist named Jesse Walter Fewkes. Accompanied by two Zuni Bow priests, in the dimming evening light filtering into Mary Hemenway’s summer house in Manchester-by-the-Sea,

18 Graves (1998: 153–155); Fernlund (2000: 116); Powell (1888: xlix).

19 Commanding Army transportation facilities, Colonel James Stevenson and Matilda Coxe Stevenson made several collecting and ethnographic expeditions to the Zuni and Hopi Pueblos on behalf of the Smithsonian between 1879 and 1885. The *Illustrated Police Gazette* of March 6, 1886, made her famous, picturing her in a woodcut shaking her fist in the face of an angry Hopi about to kick her in the shins to deep her from forcing her way into a kiva in 1885 (Green 1990: 228; Roscoe 1991: 77).

halfway between Salem and Gloucester in 1886, Cushing and Hemenway hatched an audacious and compelling plan: to turn archaeological excavation and the resulting of artifact collections to the service of the passionate philanthropy that Mary Hemenway embraced and pursued – a museum housing the material culture of the apex of Native American civilization in Salem, Massachusetts, for the education of the American working class (Hinsley 1996). Cushing purported to have “solved” the “mystery” of what had happened to the “seven cities of Cibola” by confirming Zuni oral tradition that the inhabitants of “Cibola” were related to the Aztecs and Toltecs and were ancestral to the contemporary Zuni. All that remained was to excavate them and provide the documentation linking the contemporary Zuni and other Puebloan peoples ethnologically with the vanished civilization ostensibly locked in the archaeology of the ruins scattered throughout the Zuni area (Hinsley and Wilcox 1996: 113–177; Baxter 1996: 51). By the time that Cushing and the Zunis headed back to New Mexico, Cushing had secured a commitment from Mary Hemenway for virtually open-ended funding for the project (Hinsley 1983: 61). The exhibition of the material culture of this purported grand civilization would constitute the museum.

But \$ 100,000 and three years later, Cushing had come up neither with verification for his ideas nor with what was ultimately needed for Mary Hemenway’s museum: beautiful and spectacular objects. Frederick Webb Hodge, who became Cushing’s brother-in-law and eventually developed enormous power and authority in the world of Anthropology, first as Director of the Museum of the American Indian and later as Director of the Southwest Museum, referred to Cushing’s work, specifically his archaeological reports for the Hemenway Expeditions as “largely ‘bunk’” (Hinsley 1996: 3). Mrs. Hemenway was advised to replace Cushing with a new director for the expedition. She did so. Jesse Walter Fewkes assumed the position of Director in 1890. His approach to the problem of how to get Mrs. Hemenway her collection of artifacts was straightforward: He bought more than 2,000 pieces of pottery – most of them prehistoric – from Thomas Keam. Mrs. Hemenway acquired the collection just in time for some of it to be shipped off for exhibition to the Columbian Exposition in Madrid, and a year later to the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago at the Field Museum, where it joined exhibits in the “Anthropological Building” orchestrated by F. W. Putnam of Harvard’s Peabody Museum and his chief assistant, Franz Boas (Hinsley 1991: 346). Another copy of the “catalogue,” but this one

not illustrated by William Henry Holmes back in the 1880s – accompanied the Hemenway Collection.

Keam’s Ambivalence

Thomas Keam was in the thick of fateful events that pitted the Snake Dancers against “Uncle Sam,” the telegraph, and airplane, the “destroyers of the sense of distance, who threaten to lead the planet back into chaos” (Warburg 1995: 54), the purveyors of modernity. It was Keam who pushed hardest for schools for the Hopi. He wrote a letter ostensibly on behalf of “Cimo, tribal chief of Mokis” (actually chief of only the villages of Walpi and Sichomovi) plus the “chiefs of Mishongnovi, Shipaulovi, and Shungopavi” and 15 “religious leaders” requesting a school accompanied by a petition with each man’s name and clan mark (*ARCIA* 1886: lxxx). But Cimo was also known to oppose schooling (Yava 1978: 11). Ostensibly in response, a “Moqui School Reserve” was established in 1885, but without any school buildings. Keam offered some of his buildings for an “Indian industrial boarding school” and in 1886, the Government agreed to lease 19 buildings for \$ 100 a month, opening the “Moqui Boarding School” in September. In 1889 the Government bought the buildings outright, including the 640 acres on which they sat for \$ 10,000.

Keam persuaded the chiefs of four of the five villages that filling the school with children would get them an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. (*ARCIA* 1890; Yava 1978: 157–164). There they met the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior. It was on this trip that the chiefs were asked to select missionaries, and apparently they did: Baptists and Mennonites. Now Hopis had almost everything needed to become Americans: access to manufactured goods at Keam’s trading post, education in English at Keam’s school, and conversion to Christianity at three different missions. But the “Moqui Boarding School” was still not popular. Parents were not keen on sending their children away – a minimum of seven miles, but for many more like 20, 30, and even 80 miles – to spend nine months as virtual captives in a foreign place and culture. Parents at the village of Oraibi virtually boycotted the school. This defiance, of course, put the village’s chief – whose name was Lololma – in violation of his agreement. It must have also embarrassed Keam, who had persuaded the Government to buy his ranch buildings for the school on the strength of what he presented as the Hopis’ zealous eagerness for education over which they would have no control. The agency superintendent, living in one of Keam’s

ranch buildings, requested troops to arrest the ring-leaders of the boycott.

On a hot and windy summer’s day in June, 1891, seven cavalry, a school teacher, and a government bureaucrat waited uneasily outside Oraibi. But the villagers had seen them coming. Inside the village, 300 men held bows and shields, waiting to train arrows on the little band of intruders. Five deities associated with war, and rarely seen publicly in recent years, appeared in the plaza. The force of 300 armed men was probably the entire warrior society, reconstituted after more than two decades of inactivity. War was averted when the troops judiciously withdrew. The cavalry returned in July with reinforcements and a Hotchkiss cannon. Thomas Keam came along as interpreter and anthropologist Jesse Fewkes came along too, perhaps out of curiosity. Once again the warriors were ready for them. Keam and the troops again halted outside the village. Six leaders came walking down the trail. The leaders then led the troops’ commanding officer, Fewkes, and Keam up the trail. On the way they encountered the warrior chief, who told them his warriors were ready to fight them, but the rest of the people did not want a war. The fight was off. The troops arrested the leaders – including Lololma – anyway, and took them to Fort Wingate, 80 miles away. They remained jailed for the rest of the summer (Clemmer 1978: 56; 1995: 108 f.).

What did Keam think of this draconian response to this bid for continued cultural independence? Presumably he approved of it. There is no letter of indignation, no petition for leniency, no statement about cultural misunderstandings under Keam’s authorship.

Three years later, when troops arrested nineteen Hopi men who opposed the U.S. Government takeover of their land and lives, Keam suggested they be banished for two years (Graves 1998: 207); they ended up being imprisoned in the military prison at Alcatraz for eight months. Thomas Keam seems to have wanted Hopis to reinvent themselves as nice Americans: exotic but tame, English-speaking and entertaining, fine craft persons and tourist-loving, efficient economic producers and reliable consumers. And of course it was Keam who benefited immensely from Indians’ integration into the capitalist economy on a cash-and-barter basis. Keam had a monopoly on arranging for the commodification of Hopi culture. Speaking Hopi and Navajo and having a close relationship with Tom Polacca, a well-traveled Hopi-Tewa who knew English as well as Tewa, Hopi, and Zuni, Keam could put travelers in touch with Polacca and arrange for him to guide them to the Hopi villages, especially to the Snake Dance, as

well as with nearby Navajos. He became “the vehicle through which the outside world made contact” with the local “Natives” (Graves 1998: 140). By the 1890s he had persuaded a family at the village of Sichomovi to make quarters more or less permanently available during tourist season for people that Keam brought in (150). Keam popularized the Hopi Snake Dance in an anonymous article (149–152). With the publication of Bourke’s lengthy description of it in 1884, a steady stream of anthropologists, artists, photographers, and curious tourists, beating a path to Keam’s door, was virtually assured (see Graves 1998: 150–163).

Keam clearly cultivated a cosmopolitan persona, but did so on the basis of his mediation with quaint, colorful “primitives” who danced with snakes in their mouths, donned exotic and colorful masks and costumes, made pottery and baskets decorated in mysterious, ancient designs, and clustered in austere, windswept villages built of stone piled one on another and held together with mud. Visitors over the years included photographers William Henry Jackson, Ben Wittick, and Adam Clark Vroman; artists Peter Moran, Willard Metcalf, and A. J. Scott; ethnographer Alexander M. Stephen; collectors Frank Cushing, Matilda Coxe Stevenson and James Stevenson, Edward Ayer, and Jesse Walter Fewkes; anthropologist Henry ten Kate; journalist Charles Lummis; photographer and tour leader George Wharton James; and gentleman pot-hunter Gustav Nordenskiöld.

Thomas Varker Keam stretched his persona, his instrumentality, and his mediations between engaging the scientific, artistic, and collecting world as the expert, the presenter, the interpreter of Native American life and culture and the forces of modernity, assimilation, and capitalism to which that life and culture were anathema.

At the same time as Keam exploited Hopi culture and religion in his role as huckster of culturally exotic autochthony, he was also a staunch proponent of “education” in government-run schools where attendance was mandatory, speaking Native languages was prohibited and punished, conversion to Christianity was enforced, and emphasis was on the “dignity of labor”: “industrial” or “vocational” training accompanied by “physical activity through military discipline” (Lomawaima 2002: 422, 427). Yet success of the Government’s assimilationist program would result in that the “aboriginal rites” of the “strange people” (Hough 1898: 17) in their stone fastness would have gone away. So would Keam’s role as their self-appointed mediator. Keam’s collection of pottery, which eventually ended up in Berlin’s ethnographic museum, represented

a tangible testimonial to a Native American ethos, tradition, symbology, and way of life that served a large part – perhaps the majority – of Keam’s self-definition, but also to his unwavering commitment to relativizing that way of life as something of the past that should be collected, catalogued, shelved in cabinets, and documented in reports and accession cards. Keam sold his trading post to John Lorenzo Hubbell in 1902. Returning to England in May, 1904, he died a few months later.

Musée de l’Homme

The Musée de l’Homme (Paris) replaced the ethnographic museum in the Palais de Trocadéro in 1937, in the same space. The Trocadéro had had an influential legacy. Picasso attributed his cubist period to the influence of African masks that he had found in the chaotic collections and dingy halls of the old Trocadéro Museum in 1907, “where superb ethnographic collections lay neglected by all but a handful of artists and specialists” (Adès et al. 1986: 456). The museum’s collection of Native American pottery had been transferred from the Trocadéro. Sixty ceramic items date to 1885 and are provenanced to the “U.S. National Museum,” still with Smithsonian numbers on them in 2000 as well as the “new” numbers placed by museum workers in Paris. One had a label on the bottom reading “U.S. Top and Geol Survey of the Valley of the Colorado of the West, by J. W. Powell & A. H. Thompson No. 103 (undecipherable) name – Bowl People – Shimino Locality Oraibi.”²⁰ This information indicates that, in actuality, these items came from the first-ever collecting expedition to a Southwestern Pueblo, organized by John Wesley Powell in 1871–72. Powell’s interactions with Native Americans (Hopis, Western Shoshones, Paiutes) are well documented.²¹ More of interest is the agency resulting in a segment of Powell’s collection ending up in Paris.

The one-armed Civil War veteran and geologist, who had made himself famous by navigating the Colorado River and proclaiming himself as the first to do so in 1869, returned to the area in 1871. Although in his autobiography he claimed to have spent two months among the Hopi, in fact he spent only two weeks there (Worster 2001: 216–218, 229, 293–295). In the villages, Powell collected anything and everything that people would give him in trade.

20 Researched in July, 2000. Thanks to Madame Marie-France Fauvet-Berthelot, *Chargée* of the Laboratory of Ethnology’s American Department, Musée de l’Homme.

21 Powell (1964 [1895]); Fowler and Fowler (1971); Parezo (1987); Worster (2001).

“First, we display to them our stock of goods,” wrote Powell (1964: 342–344), “... knives, needles, awls, scissors, paints, dyestuffs, leather, and ... fabrics in gay colors.” Then he meandered through people’s houses noting items that he liked. Retreating like a pasha to his temporary quarters, he received people the following day, one after another, bringing their trade items: baskets, pottery, stone, bone, horn, and shell implements, homespun cotton garments, ceremonial headdresses, Kachina dolls. For what he did not want, he offered nothing; for what he did want, he set the terms and refused to bargain. Some people were undoubtedly disappointed. Nonetheless, he averred, “the barter is carried on with a hearty good will; the people jest and laugh with us and with one another” (Powell 1964: 344).

The Musée de l’Homme inventory listed 43 Hopi ceramic items. One pot labelled “Vase a décor peint. Ceramique. Moki. Arizona” was decorated with four panels, with two alternating Katsina faces painted in black on a surface of white crackle slip, one of them resembling a “Kachina Mother” and the other a “Qoeqloe” (Kokle), identifiable by its down-turned mouth, prominent eyebrow hairs and “bird’s feet” decoration on its cheeks (Colton 1959: 133, 131). Both are often portrayed in “Kachina dolls” carved by Hopi artists. As a masked dancer, Qoeqloe appears in the Hopi villages every February during the annual “Bean Dance.” At the end of the last dance set, as the sun is setting, the Kikmongwi – village chief and religious leader – leads a procession of masked Katsina dancers who carry baskets of newly sprouted bean plants out of kivas, square buildings that are used for ceremonial purposes. Taking up the rear of the procession are Qoeqloe Katsinas who also carry baskets of bean plants, but unlike the others they do not carry them in front of them but rather carry them on their backs (Clemmer 1978: 42 f.).

A medium-sized bowl has an interior decoration featuring the “four directions” symbol – the swastika – still used as a decorative motif on Hopi gourd rattles used by dancers but no longer seen on newly created pottery. There are a number of small, crudely made “vases” in the form of birds and one with a handle in the form of a Hopi girl. The specific provenience was surprising. Although pottery was made in the village of Oraibi on Third Mesa until 1890 (Wade and McChesney 1980: 13, 17), nearly all Hopi pottery in collections in Europe and the U.S. are provenienced as “First Mesa,” “Walpi,” a village on First Mesa or “Hopi-Tewa,” also on First Mesa. Some of the items Powell collected were designated as “Zuni” “Acoma”, or Isleta, including five small dishes. These items may have been traded to the Oraibi people and subsequently

traded to Powell. The final astonishing feature was where these pots were. The accession records described these items as a “don” – gift – but how and why had the U.S. National Museum at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington decided to give a gift to the *Trocadéro*?

A file of correspondence accompanied the collection and revealed that the collection was not a “gift” but rather was part of an exchange. The letters were between Prof. B. L. Hamy and M. Armand Laudrin, director and curator, respectively of the *Trocadéro* and Charles Rau, Otis T. Mason, and Spencer Baird on behalf of the Smithsonian’s director, between 1881 and 1885. In fact, the items – misdescribed by Baird as “Zuni” and “New Mexican” pottery – had been “selected by the Smithsonian Institution from the duplicates of the National Museum” (despite the fact that they constituted 5% of all the objects collected before 1879 – Parezo 1987: 11), in exchange for a “box of specimens, illustrating the manufacture of the Sevres ware,” secured from the *Ministre de l’Instruction Publique et des Beaux Arts*, sent by the *Trocadéro* to the Smithsonian.²²

Discussion: The Porcelain of Royalty for the Ceramics of an “Authentic” Civilization?

In this case it is not the collector who embeds the ambivalence evident in nation-state modernity. Rather, this ambivalence is reflected in the negotiations between the personnel of the two museums. Sevres porcelain was initially made beginning in 1769 on contract to the royal household of Louis XVI. If any set of collectible objects could be said to embody the *élan* and *esprit* of the French Empire, it was Sevres porcelain. Its political and military prowess severely challenged by the disastrous attack on Prussia in 1870 and Prussia’s subsequent siege of Paris and demand for cession of Alsace-Lorraine as reparation, France’s grandeur as a nation-state was, in the 1880s, severely tarnished, to say the least. The defeat was “one of the signal events of the second half of the nineteenth century” (Gollwitzer 1969: 17). M. Hamy and M. Laudrin arguably chose a collection that was both monetarily valuable and also constituted a trenchant statement on the symbolic importance of a 100-year-old ceramic tradition that originated from a contract to provide tableware to the French royalty. The fact

22 The Musée de l’Homme had also requested other items that were subsequently sent throughout the 1880s and ’90s, but the Smithsonian refused to send items from the requested “Mound relics” because they “had been brought together at great expense to the Government”.

that the collection of Sevres porcelain shipped to the U.S. National Museum referenced the Napoleonic dynasty resurrected in 1852 and abolished in the wake of the humiliation of 1870 – and French royalty in general – embedded the contradiction of a failing imperialism against the memory of royalty’s long lost glory.

The contradiction becomes even more salient when the collection for which it was exchanged is taken in its redefined status. Influenced by sociocultural evolutionists Lewis Henry Morgan and Lester Ward, Powell came to the conviction that the way of life that produced the artifacts he collected would – and should – eventually be overwhelmed by a “naturalist” “rationalizing of society” that would result in American-style democracy triumphing over all other forms of political decision-making (Worster 2001: 66, 444–449). The items produced by a society that would eventually be integrated into a “higher” stage of “evolution” would stand as documentation of a “stage” that would soon no longer be evident. Powell urged the collecting of pottery because it was the “best evidence for solving the problem of the origins of the modern pueblos” (Parezo 1987: 20). Yet M. Hamy apparently considered the Oraibi pottery to be as fitting a representation of the American national psyche as Sevres porcelain was of the French. While France may have gloried in the persistent prestige of Sevres, did the exchange of royal Sevres porcelain for bird effigies and representations of Katsina spirits reflect an ambivalence about the viability of indigenous culture against turn-of-the-century nation-statism embodied in the discipline of scientific collecting?

Conclusions

Anthropology as a discipline was birthed amidst collections of human remains and material culture.²³ The collections under discussion here were assembled and their dispositions orchestrated between 1870 and 1896 by men who might be called “entrepreneurial” rather than “professionally trained” anthropologists. In the early days of what became professional anthropology, nearly all anthropology was carried out by researchers and scholars who had training or experience in some other profession: history, geology, zoology, botany, psychology, and even theology, Bible translation, banking, and Indian-fighting. The entry point for these profession-entrepreneurs was most often the collecting,

23 Stocking (1968: 30); Hinsley (1981, 1983); Parezo (1985, 1986, 1987); Harris (1968: 374).

organizing, and interpreting of material culture. A number of studies in the last twenty-five years have concerned collectors who either actively worked for ethnographic components of natural history or art museums,²⁴ or whose collections eventually formed important components of ethnographic or archaeological collections that have become firmly entrenched in the interpretative narratives of Native American material culture.²⁵ But the collecting of Native American material culture in the early days of museum-building did not merely proceed apace on its own motivations.

Keam's collection, so proudly displayed in three celebrations of progress and modern nationalism in the United States disappears into the basement of Harvard's Peabody Museum upon Mary Hemenway's sudden death in 1897, not to appear again for more than 80 years (Wade and McChesney 1980). The rest of it takes pride of place as a variable of Germany's late bid for imperial and nation-state status in a museum collection, 5,000 miles distant "designed to showcase the international reach of the Kaiser's power in the cultural realm, ... in rivalry with the capitols of other imperialistic powers" in its aspiration to rise to the "status of a European metropolis in the wake of the *Reichseinigung* ... of 1871" (Bolz 1999: 30). Keam – an English colonial and "reverse mimic-man," speaking Hopi and Navajo fluently, creator of his own raj and prototype of the civilized man that the natives were supposed to admire and mimic, huckster of the institutions of modernity and the civilizing mission to the "natives" –, ended up hawking prehistoric pottery and "the primitive" to the civilizing mission of an imperial municipality.

Aby Warburg, caught in the throes of that imperial municipality's "civilizing mission" regarded that mission as ultimately flawed by a putative "primitive psyche" that was deliberately submerged within it. His assemblage of photographs and Puebloan material culture as mnemonic and pedagogic aides to demonstrating his ideas entangled decorative pottery made for tourists embedded in the collection with questions of what a nation-state culture should look like, and the degree to which it could accommodate a multiculturalism that would include the "archaic" and "primitive" alongside the "modern." The more that Warburg encountered and engaged the Pueblos and their symbols, the more he subjected himself to an "epistemological splitting"

(Bhabha 1984: 126; McClintock 1995: 62) that both supported and also challenged the modernist agenda. It may well have been this epistemological splitting, between a fascination with the assumptions of autochthonous theology and a conviction that modernist rationality, with all its diffused referents, had to supersede it, that contributed to Warburg's mental unraveling.

John Wesley Powell's scientifically-directed collecting, intended to document a way of life in its senescence, came to represent the United States as the equivalent of porcelain purveyed to French royalty. The conviction in France that the emperor was impregnable in his capability to wield political power (Gollwitzer 1969: 17) had to be abandoned as referent of French nation-statism after 1871. When the Trocadéro sent in exchange its Sevres porcelain, was it sending also a not-so-subtle appraisal of the relative value of Native American civilization as against the upstart American newcomers to imperial self-aggrandizement? Could we imagine the French archnationalist Ernest Renan (1823–1892) looking at the two collections side by side and asking, Does this pottery represent one of the grand things that you Americans have accomplished, the acquisition of the only true American ceramics made by people with whom you will live together only if they acquiesce to cultural extermination? (cf. Renan 1996 [1882]). These questions and suggestions are not intended to be taken as blanket conclusions about the motivations behind collecting. Rather, they are intended to urge extension of analyses of collecting behavior beyond the activities themselves and to promote new directions in anthropologists' engagement with the broad historical and sociopolitical contexts in which collections of the material culture of indigenous peoples came into existence. Such collections are not merely products of the activity that produced them – "collecting." They are also relics – tangible if shifting references – of concept-metaphors of the late 19th century such as "modernization," "imperialism," "colonialism," and "nation-state" that loom as shades behind them. This essay urges an approach that treats them as having agency – as if they embodied all the assumptions that surrounded the motivations for assembling them, and, in particular, ambivalence in the pursuit of nationalist modernist agendas.

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