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# HEMISPHERE

VISUAL CULTURES *of the* AMERICAS

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# LOCAL KNOWLEDGE & ART HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON AWA TSIREH & THE SAN ILDEFONSO EASEL PAINTING MOVEMENT

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The global influenza epidemic of 1918 had severe and lasting impacts at San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico. The pandemic was, in fact, only the latest in a series of misfortunes dating back to the late 1800s that had produced catastrophic population declines at the village.<sup>1</sup> Like the other Tewa Pueblos, the theo-political<sup>2</sup> life of San Ildefonso society had centered on the Winter and Summer moieties, each of whom oversaw village governance during their respective half of the year.<sup>3</sup> However, because of influenza fatalities, 'the already small Winter moiety was reduced to two families. As a result the people were confronted with the unalterable fact that they could no longer operate on the basis of the traditional Winter and Summer moieties.'<sup>4</sup> The fallout of this radical social upheaval still reverberates at San Ildefonso today.

At the same time these unsettling events were unfolding, San Ildefonso artists became instrumental in the appearance of two emerging artistic traditions. María and Julian Martínez experimented with creating and decorating reduction-fired black ceramics, and a number of easel painters started producing watercolor images of ceremonial and genre scenes. Both of these nascent artistic movements were heavily indebted to the support of both individual and institutional patrons in Santa Fe.<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly, these patrons saw the death and turmoil at San Ildefonso as an opportunity to enact the salvage paradigm, whereby museums and a wealthy Anglo intelligentsia felt that they could actually save the material evidence of a dying culture, and possibly the people themselves, by their benevolent intervention. However, Jerry Brody has argued that these patrons' *benevolence* was hardly benign. In Indian Painters and White Patrons (1971), Brody described this system of patronage (and its concomitant economic imbalances) in more stern terms, calling the Santa Fe patronage of Pueblo artists, 'paternalistic racism.'<sup>6</sup>

Since the publication of Brody's Indian Painters and White Patrons, many art historical treatments of Native arts have utilized studies of patronage. Brody's own work on early Pueblo painters and others' critical treatments of the supposed *revival* of polished black ceramics at San Ildefonso have produced indispensable analytic insights.<sup>7</sup> Yet it is somewhat surprising that there has been almost no attention paid to the ramifications of the 1918 flu epidemic and the subsequent cultural disruptions and reconfigurations as key factors in the emergence of these artistic movements.<sup>8</sup> Even more

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troubling is that after 150 years of ethnographic studies of Pueblo peoples, art historical examinations of twentieth-century Pueblo arts have failed to fully engage Pueblo concepts and perspectives on the production of these arts, especially easel painting. It is astonishing that studies of San Ildefonso arts have altogether ignored one of the most important works of interpretive, symbolic anthropology—Alfonso Ortiz's The Tewa World; indeed, Brody's study of the patronage of Pueblo painting does not even include The Tewa World in its bibliography. Anyone dealing with a topic involving a Tewa Pueblo simply must account for Ortiz's work or he/she commits a grave interpretive oversight.

Therefore, in this essay I argue that studies of Native American art history, and San Ildefonso easel painting specifically, are caught in a methodological bind brought about by an over-emphasis on the patronage model pioneered by Brody. I will interrogate how this predicament came to be and propose approaches for overcoming the limits of extant methods. I suggest that patronage studies are not incorrect, but rather incomplete and, therefore, must be supplemented by indigenous explanatory frameworks, which are derived from local knowledge. Too often, Native perspectives on Native arts are seen as one more thing in need of an explanation. However, I advocate that local knowledge must be engaged as an interpretive or analytical methodology, what we might call an ethnotheoretical or indigenous epistemological approach to the creation of art historical explanations.<sup>9</sup> To achieve this end, I will examine several works by Alfonso Roybal, often known by his Tewa name, Awa Tsireh, in light of local concepts that structured Tewa thought and action. Ultimately, I will demonstrate that changes in Roybal's work, both in terms of stylistic attributes and content, must be understood as products of the intersection of external patronage and internal matters, such as the reconfiguration of the moiety system at San Ildefonso and Roybal's ascendancy to a key theo-political position in the Pueblo.

Though from the perspective of the early twenty-first century, Indian Painters and White Patrons can seem a bit dated, it must be recognized that it was truly revolutionary when it was published. Not only did Brody's dissertation-turned book put the sub-field of Native American art history on the disciplinary map, it also radically challenged prevailing approaches to dealing with Native American art. Native arts were treated, at best, as artifacts, and, at worst, as the products of peculiar collective racial minds.<sup>10</sup> Brody was among the first to seriously address Native works of art as Art, and by focusing on the impact of external patronage, he was able to reveal the intellectual (and arguably moral) bankruptcy of racialized discourses about Native-made objects. Brody's argument was simple: the social, political

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and economic power wielded by Euro-American patrons produced visible consequences in the formal qualities (and to a lesser degree, the content) of early twentieth-century Native easel paintings.<sup>11</sup>

One of the most clear-cut examples of the impact of Euro-American patronage on Native art production can be seen in the work of Alfonso Roybal. Around 1919, he painted an ambitious composition depicting several Pueblo women firing pottery in one of the plazas of San Ildefonso.<sup>12</sup> This painting is noteworthy insofar as the plaza is meticulously represented, as are the adobe structures at its margins, which reveal Roybal's experimentations with three-dimensionality and linear perspective. Likewise, the mountains in the background are painted in a hazy gray, as Roybal was grappling with how to render atmospheric perspective. However, Brody notes that the artist's use of a background, landscape, and three-dimensionality in his images was not seen by Santa Fe patrons as *authentic*, instead they believed that it revealed some sort of *contamination* from European pictorial traditions.<sup>13</sup> By late 1919 or early 1920, Roybal had removed the background from his images, even when dealing with identical subject matter (Figure 1). If Roybal wanted to sell his paintings to individual or institutional patrons in Santa Fe, the images needed to conform to their notions of *authentic* or *traditional* Pueblo painting. Clearly, in this case an analysis of patronage provides a convincing explanation for the formal changes in Roybal's work.

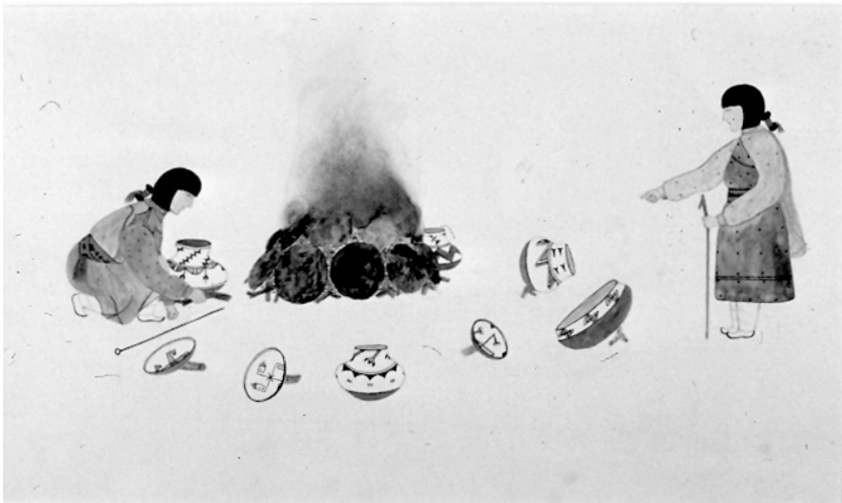


Figure 1. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh–San Ildefonso), *Firing Pottery* (c. 1919).  
Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 15.

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The problem here is that form, framed as a consequence of external interventions, is privileged over content or other contextual concerns. Brody is by no means a Greenbergian formalist and he is meticulous in his attention to the social and economic processes underwriting systems of patronage; however, he gives only cursory treatment to questions of content, noting patrons' preference for ceremonial scenes. Patronage becomes a motivating force for painters, who then struggle with formal pictorial problems resolved in the aesthetic qualities of particular paintings. The content of early San Ildefonso paintings (and by extension, the culturally situated positionality of the painters) has likely been avoided out of a fear of being anthropological. Brody points out that the works of one of the first San Ildefonso painters, Crescencio Martínez, were purchased precisely for their ethnographic content—a practice that was in part motivated by bans on photography at Pueblo ceremonies starting in 1913.<sup>14</sup> In both, Indian Painters and White Patrons and Pueblo Indian Painting, Brody was consciously writing against this ethnographic grain, thus seeking to answer debates over the art/artifact status of so-called non-Western arts.<sup>15</sup>

The art/artifact debates presented historians of non-Western arts with a false dichotomy. Authors could, on one hand, frame non-Western (and specifically, Native American) objects, as art through the deployment of various kinds of formalist, modernist, art-for-art's-sake rhetoric—emphasizing the aesthetic dimensions of any particular object; on the other hand, scholars could situate works of art within particular non-Western cultural contexts or illuminate the culturally salient dimensions of those objects, but such approaches committed the cardinal sin of treating indigenous works as artifacts. In the sub-field of Native American art history, this avoidance of supposedly anthropological information is heightened due to a disciplinary awareness of the authority that anthropology has historically exercised over Native arts. That same anthropological authority produced ongoing antagonisms between Native (particularly Pueblo) people and anthropologists. Those tensions may have a great deal to do with art historical avoidance of anthropological information about Native peoples: *we* want to avoid *their* disciplinary missteps. In what may be the supreme irony of the art/artifact debates, as art historians moved increasingly toward formalist rhetorics to legitimate Native American works as art, their colleagues in other fields increasingly embraced contextualizing tools often derived from anthropological models; after all, Michelangelo's David was not merely a particular reinvention of Classical aesthetics, it was also a politically charged critique of the socio-economic power of the Medici family, and can thus only be fully understood through a nuanced analysis of Florentine socio-cultural

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contexts. One of the legacies of this perspectival shift is the emergence of the discipline of Visual Culture studies, which often simultaneously parallels and challenges more orthodox art historical theory and practice.<sup>16</sup>

The art historical utilization of aestheticizing, art-for-art's-sake discourses in dealing with Native arts is a kind of vindicationism;<sup>17</sup> that is, Native arts are *vindicated* by being positioned as equivalent to Western arts insofar as they can be described using the formal language developed by canonical art historical practice. Of course, the aesthetic concepts derived from European artistic traditions are framed as natural and universally applicable, ultimately masking their own historical contingency. Hence, many discussions of Native arts have actually reinforced a Eurocentric concept of aesthetics via formalist, modernist discourses; this is little more than ethnocentrism masquerading as anti-ethnocentrism. As Nanette Salomon has noted, simply squeezing non-canonical works of art into an exclusionary narrative is insufficient; what is needed is a far-reaching reconfiguration of discursive structures so that exclusionary tactics become obsolete.<sup>18</sup>

In the wake of new and social art histories, patronage studies (following Brody's influential lead) asked important new questions about Native American arts. As noted above, examinations of the impact of patronage have resulted in significant contributions; indeed, patronage studies have enabled critical analyses of the ways in which patrons imposed their supposedly universal, but thoroughly Eurocentric, aesthetic ideas on Native art and artists. This is clearly an important step toward the kind of disciplinary reinvention that Salomon advocates. However, this approach certainly has its limits, not the least of which is an emphasis on what the patrons, rather than the Native artists, said, thought, and wrote. Patronage studies, therefore, are by definition partial, both in the sense of being grounded in a particular angle of vision and in the sense that they are always incomplete. This partiality is an entrenched condition of empiricist art historical strategies: some non-Native art patrons left documentation that is more easily incorporated into existing methodologies of art historical production, but that only reflects the limits of evidentiary standards and says nothing about the range of available sources that might fall outside of those limits.<sup>19</sup> To reconfigure Native American art historical narrative structures and de-center Eurocentric aesthetic ideals, a far more rigorous and sustained engagement with Pueblo (and other Native) epistemologies is clearly needed.

Deploying local knowledge as an effective intercultural explanatory apparatus requires, above all, a base of knowledge from which to work. How then can we (meaning anyone, Native or non-Native, who did not

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experience a traditional upbringing in San Ildefonso culture) approximate a San Ildefonso epistemology from which we can launch an analytic endeavor? For the purposes of this essay, I rely heavily on Alfonso Ortiz's seminal text, The Tewa World, a study, which is truly indispensable for gaining a *very* basic understanding of the symbolic and philosophical foundations of Tewa Pueblo culture. Given Ortiz's firsthand experiential knowledge of his subject matter, simultaneous breadth and detail, analytic ingenuity and unmatched ability to effectively translate complex Tewa concepts and logic into English locutions, the fact that this book has not been more frequently utilized as a theoretical model is quite shocking. In short, The Tewa World opens the possibility of reading Alfonso Roybal's paintings as conscious expressions of the conceptual system articulated by Ortiz.

Of course, there are clear problems with this approach. Ortiz wrote specifically about San Juan Pueblo, his home community. Each of the six Tewa Pueblos (San Juan, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Nambe, Tesuque and Pojoaque) practice slightly different versions of the basic model outlined by Ortiz; the anthropological tendency toward generalization that Ortiz employs does not always capture the complexity of particular socio-historic experiences at any given village. This contrast between ethnographic generality and historical particularity is nowhere more pronounced than at San Ildefonso, precisely for the reasons outlined in the introductory paragraphs above. The flu epidemic and the subsequent social upheavals, signifying localized circumstances, clearly problematize any application of Ortiz's ideas to Roybal's paintings. Nonetheless, one of the key points that Ortiz makes about San Ildefonso specifically is how, in the aftermath of the flu epidemic, the people of the Pueblo consciously attempted to recreate their social order based on one of the fundamental social, cultural, theo-political concepts, which is common to all of the Tewa Pueblos, namely: the duality in the division of society into moieties.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, I suggest that, despite clear differences between the six Tewa villages, Ortiz's information allows us to examine the ways in which paintings by Roybal were impacted by these circumstances, especially since Roybal played an important role in the reorganization of San Ildefonso society.

We might ask whether The Tewa World actually constitutes *local knowledge* at all. After all, even though Ortiz was from San Juan, his text is probably more accurately described as local knowledge filtered through the lens of symbolic anthropology. In fact, Ortiz wrote this book (originally, his dissertation at the University of Chicago), as a challenge to the more static structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss, who had claimed that truly symmetrical moieties did not exist. Symbolic anthropology was a more fluid dynamic advancement over prior structuralisms; the University of Chicago *school* was highly interpretive (due to the influence of Clifford Geertz) and argued

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not for universal structural laws, but rather for the primacy of local cultural systematicity. Ortiz's book typified this strategy. A fellow graduate student of Ortiz's at Chicago was Gary Witherspoon, who utilized a parallel approach in framing the Navajo language as the fundamental tool for understanding the conceptual symbolic system structuring Diné art.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, The Tewa World and Witherspoon's Language and Art in the Navajo Universe represent early attempts to utilize indigenous epistemologies, as explanatory frameworks—literally trying to wed local knowledge with anthropological theory.

Art historians must be aware of a fundamental critique of the Chicago school of symbolic anthropology, specifically its ahistorical quality. Both Witherspoon and Ortiz fail to fully engage socio-historic processes, presenting their work as timeless—a flaw too common in ethnography, generally speaking. Hence, Witherspoon treats Navajo textiles from the mid-1800s in the same broad strokes as trading-post era rugs without examining the intervening social, economic and political factors that clearly impacted Navajo aesthetics over time. Likewise, Ortiz barely mentions the radical changes wrought in Pueblo societies due to both Spanish and U.S. colonialism. Such avoidance of historical questions explains why Peter Whiteley proposed that, 'anthropology needs more history.'<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, some scholars have suggested that interpretive ethnography, which is focused on symbolic systems, imagined symbolism everywhere and treated all of it with the same level of importance.<sup>23</sup> Ortiz's work may be less susceptible to this critique, given its focused attention to detail and overall analytic rigor. Art historians are in a unique position to use our own disciplinary strengths to address and resolve these problems. Therefore, our subsequent examination of Alfonso Roybal's work will proceed from the assumption that Ortiz did a reasonably convincing job describing the broad philosophical, conceptual, social and theo-political currents of Tewa culture in the twentieth century, thereby enabling a deployment of these ideas as our theoretical matrix.

Most early San Ildefonso easel paintings depicted the buffalo dance, which Brody says was the most, 'comprehensible to outsiders of all public ritual dances,' thereby locating the impetus for this subject matter in the voyeuristic interests of external patrons.<sup>24</sup> However, it must be noted that Alfredo Montoya (a day-school classmate of Alfonso Roybal) made his first paintings of that subject around 1911–1913.<sup>25</sup> By 1918, both Alfonso Roybal and Crescencio Martínez (Roybal's uncle) were also making frequent images of the buffalo dance (Figure 2). This is precisely the time when photographic bans went into effect among the Pueblos;<sup>26</sup> probably, as a result of these bans, Edgar Hewett commissioned twenty-four paintings by Martínez in late 1917 and early 1918 as ethnographic documents.<sup>27</sup>



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Figure 2. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh–San Ildefonso), *Buffalo Dance* (c. 1918).

Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 10.

Certainly, external patronage had a marked role to play in the invention of this new painting tradition at San Ildefonso. However, the participation of men from San Ildefonso, while surely based on economic imbalances and voyeuristic tendencies (as Brody suggests) may have also been motivated by purely internal rationales. The fact that one of Montoya's, Martínez's and Roybal's most frequent subjects was the buffalo dance points to such internal motivations.

Rather than being *comprehensible* to outsiders, Alfonso Ortiz has noted that among Tewa people the buffalo dance holds an anomalous place among all of the recurring ceremonial dances, both public and private. Because buffalo lived and were hunted outside the boundaries of the Tewa world, the buffalo dance is not controlled by the Winter Moiety or the Hunt Chief, as are all other hunting rituals.<sup>28</sup> The willingness of easel painters to represent this dance, although certainly encouraged by external patronage, may well have been dependant on the lack of strict rules placing the dance under the direct control of established religious officials. Therefore, to understand why this subject matter was so popular requires an understanding of the control of ritual prerogatives among Tewa people. Any of the San Ildefonso painters—regardless of their membership in either the Summer or Winter moiety—could paint this dance, since it was not *owned* by the moieties. This suggests that the painters, even while negotiating external patronage, were highly conscious of Pueblo concepts regarding the instrumentality of images. In short, graphic representations of ceremonial events have real effects and consequences in the world, especially the possibility that they might reveal socio-ritual knowledge that is not meant for public circulation.<sup>29</sup> The photographic bans emerged in part from this concern; arguably, when a Tewa painter depicted the buffalo dance, he was able to circumvent any question about the appropriateness of that painting, insofar as this dance existed in Tewa public domain.

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By late 1918, the global influenza pandemic had taken its toll on the people of San Ildefonso. Crescencio Martínez had been among the victims of the outbreak,<sup>30</sup> which was so widespread that the traditional social system, based on shared and alternating governance by the Winter and Summer moieties, was in danger of total collapse at San Ildefonso. Alfonso Ortiz elaborates with the following statements:

*[T]he already small Winter moiety was reduced to two families. As a result the people were confronted with the unalterable fact that they could no longer operate on the basis of the traditional Winter and Summer moieties. Consequently, the Summer moiety divided into a north and south division, on the basis of residence, with the north side absorbing the two Winter families. On this basis they attempted to reconstitute the dual organization much as it had existed in the past. Some other factors, including antagonism between members of the two groups, were involved in this split, but the lesson I wish to derive from this brief sketch is that the people of San Ildefonso regarded the dual organization as the only way they could operate meaningfully in social relations, and the only way they could impose order on their world.<sup>31</sup>*

Thus, the dual organization and the realignment of the moieties into North plaza people and South plaza people have to be central features of any analysis of San Ildefonso easel painting.

Roybal was a member of the new North plaza moiety;<sup>32</sup> however, it is not clear what his prior moiety affiliation had been. Suggestively, one striking feature of his paintings is the frequency with which he represented Winter moiety dances between 1918 and 1925. For example, in *Turtle Dance* (1918), he painted one of the key Winter solstice dances conducted under the authority of the Winter moiety (Figure 3). I would suggest that this painting actually functioned as a claim of ownership by the new North plaza moiety over the ritual prerogatives of the former Winter people. Once again, the content here may well be motivated by internal questions rather than by external interventions. The sudden ability of former Summer moiety people to gain access to Winter moiety ceremonialism—now in the control of the North plaza people—was no doubt disturbing, and this painting may have been part of an internal debate about questions of religious patrimony. One of the important qualities of this painting is Roybal's use of realism, a trend that would increase in his work until about 1922, when he started experimenting with abstract geometric compositions. This realism can be read as a visual demonstration that Roybal had a fundamental understanding of at least the visual dimensions of this important solstice ritual; such a demonstrated understanding could ultimately help quiet any concerns held by the surviving Winter moiety people over the exposure of their ritual knowledge to former Summer people.

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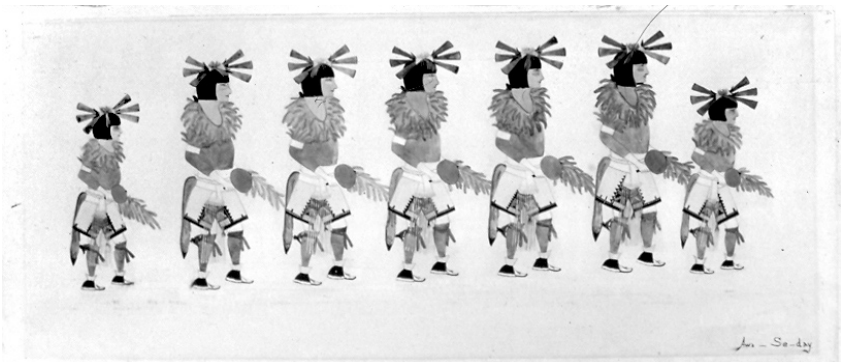


Figure 3. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh – San Ildefonso), *Turtle Dance* (c. 1918-1919). Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 1.

Roybal's realism was heightened by his adaptation of formal tools, such as shading and modeling. Likewise, although he had earlier abandoned backgrounds and pictorial devices, such as linear perspective, he increasingly arranged the figures which he was painting in such a way as to suggest spatial depth. We can clearly see these tactics at work in *Corn Dance* (c. 1920), wherein three-dimensionality is suggested by the staggered arrangement of the dancers: those who are farther from the viewer are slightly higher in the picture plane (Figure 4). Although the corn dance was formerly a Summer moiety dance, this image may nonetheless again be addressing the manner in which the people of San Ildefonso sorted out the ritual implications of the moiety reorganization.

Realism was not merely a tool for depicting what existed in the world; rather, it was, 'an interventionary way of structuring artistically an ideologically framed...interpretation of reality.'<sup>33</sup> David Craven argues that realist artists, 'attempt to unify in art what is fragmented in modern society.'<sup>34</sup> Certainly, San



Figure 4. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh–San Ildefonso), *Corn Dance* (c. 1920). Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 11.

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Ildefonso was a fragmented society after the pandemic; therefore, Roybal's realism—even when he paints images belonging to another moiety—must be seen as an indigenous imagining of a proper social order where questions of ritual and political authority are settled in such a way that they resemble an ideal functioning of the moiety system.

In 1922, Roybal began investigating an abstraction based on geometric pottery designs. Even though he continued to paint more or less realistic figures, he did so with flat applications of color and highly stylized compositions—in contrast to his early use of shading, modeling and illusionistic spatial depth. Likewise, his use of purely geometric abstractions became much more pronounced after 1925. I argue that this stylistic shift is indicative of a resolution to some of the internal debates about the new moieties' proprietorship of ritual activities. Ortiz notes that at San Juan, the Winter moiety holds crucial initiation ceremonies once every four years;<sup>35</sup> if the Winter moiety at San Ildefonso held its last initiation around 1918, then 1922 would mark its next round of initiations. Therefore, by 1922, the North plaza people would have had to substantiate their claim to the prior ritual knowledge and practices of the former Winter moiety. Roybal's shift towards more abstract imagery may well indicate that any debates over stewardship of religious practices may have been reaching a conclusion, as realism's utility for demonstrating moiety specific knowledge was decreasing.

Roybal's shift toward abstraction and geometricized imagery was most notable in his works after 1925. For example, Roybal's painting of an abstracted geometric bird was painted between 1925 and 1928 (Figure 5). If there were any lingering debates over the social and religious relationships between the new moieties, they may have been settled around 1925. Again, Ortiz notes that Summer moiety initiations at San Juan, which are the ritual equivalent of the aforementioned Winter initiations, are held every seven years, in contrast to the four year cycle of the Winter moiety.<sup>36</sup> 1925 was seven years after the flu epidemic and three years after the probable initiations into the new North plaza moiety; therefore, it is likely that the South plaza moiety had recently conducted its first initiation, again demonstrating its authority over the rituals of the prior Summer moiety. San Ildefonso society was slowly becoming less fractured; as a result, idealizing realist paintings was less necessary.

By 1925, the North plaza was economically better off in comparison to the South plaza, since the North moiety had a disproportionate number of artists, including Roybal and María and Julian Martínez, whose work was patronized by the Santa Fe art establishment. That same year, Julian Martínez became governor and Roybal became a war chief.<sup>37</sup> Both Martínez's and

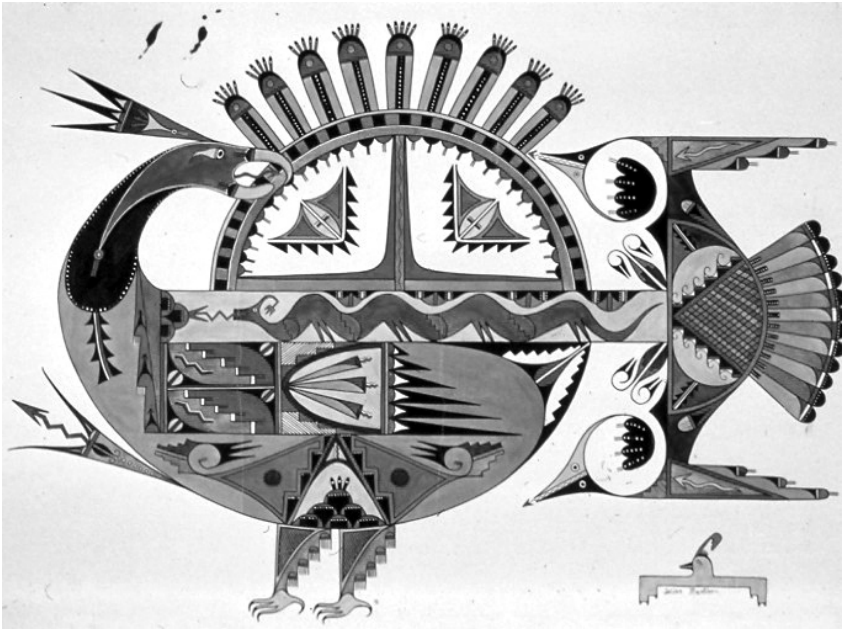


Figure 5. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh–San Ildefonso), *Bird in Geometric Design* (c. 1925-28). Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 221.

Roybal's ascendancy to these positions of leadership within the pueblo may have helped to settle any debate about the theo-political authority of the North plaza moiety. Importantly, Ortiz notes that the Governor's office (as a governmental position introduced by Spanish colonial systems) alternates between the moieties every year.<sup>38</sup> The war chiefs, on the other hand, function as a pair, one selected from each moiety, and are thus equated with the twin war gods of Pueblo theology. Most importantly, Ortiz points out that for the Tewas, the war chiefs are called *Towa'é*, and serve as intermediaries between ordinary people and the high ranking religious officials within each moiety's hierarchical structure. Furthermore, the *Towa'é* are enforcers of the directives issued by theo-political leadership, and given their own association with the twin war gods and other supernatural beings, their authority is beyond question.<sup>39</sup>

Any internal disputes over the socio-religious implications of the realignment of the moieties could easily have been settled through an alliance between Roybal and Martínez, both North plaza men in prominent leadership positions. Such an alliance is suggested by *Bird in Geometric Design*, which (according to Brody) although clearly painted by Roybal, is signed by Julian

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Martínez (Figure 5).<sup>40</sup> This curious signature probably parallels María Martínez's practice of signing other people's pottery—her actions insured that other members of the Pueblo shared in the economic gains brought about by her fame and also deflected any criticism of her own economic gains. The economic power derived from external patronage was transformed into Pueblo political capital.

As a *Towa'e*, Roybal may have also been grappling with Pueblo rules about the production of images, specifically, with ideas about the instrumentality of graphic representations. His shift toward abstraction and away from realistic illustrative paintings can be seen as an enforcement of Pueblo rules against the creation of certain kinds of images. When he did make paintings of ritual scenes, they were often based on other Pueblos' dances, heavily abstracted and framed by geometric designs to de-emphasize the realism of the overall depiction. Clearly, reading Roybal's paintings in light of Tewa epistemologies allows us to see these works in radical new ways that are simply not accounted for by patronage studies.

In the introduction to Pueblo Indian Painting, Brody wrote, "The comparative silence of the artists concerning their lives and work makes it infinitely harder to discover a parallel motivating philosophical principle,' to motivations expressed in the documentary evidence left by patrons."<sup>41</sup> An ethnotheoretical approach, as demonstrated above, can indeed help reveal the motivations of some artists, filling in the gaps left by their textual silence. This methodology could be fruitfully applied to a range of Native arts and artists, from historic and traditional arts (where this task might be a bit easier) to contemporary cutting-edge Native artists who are working in the present. For example, the painters of the Artists Hopid group, as well as a concurrent wave of Hopi photographers, such as Vistor Masayesva and Owen Seumtewa, have self-consciously created works based on Hopi philosophical, ethical and aesthetic principles. Of course, not every contemporary Native artist does that, but the point remains that a careful utilization of indigenous epistemologies can be an important explanatory tool with which to generate truly intercultural dialogue and understanding. The narrative above, about Roybal and his fellow painters' work—which was motivated by both patronage and internal cultural concerns—is radically different than extant scholarship on the early twentieth-century San Ildefonso painting movement. From this point forward, it is clear that a serious engagement with indigenous epistemologies must be a fundamental part of Native American art historical practice.

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### NOTES:

1. See William Whitman, "The San Ildefonso of New Mexico," in Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes, ed. Ralph Linton (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1940); Elsie Clews Parsons, "The Social Organization of the Tewa of New Mexico," American Anthropological Society Memoir, no. 36, (1929).
2. This rather awkward neologism is meant to approximate the imbrication of political and religious authority in traditional Pueblo socio-cultural contexts. The fusion of political and religious authority permeated every realm of Pueblo life, from extravagant ritual dramas to mundane issues such as the tenure and stewardship of agricultural plots. This is a point that has been made eloquently by Peter Whiteley, Rethinking Hopi Ethnography (Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998); and by Alfonso Ortiz, The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being and Becoming in a Pueblo Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969).
3. Alfonso Ortiz, "Dual Organization as an Operational Concept in the Pueblo Southwest," Ethnology, Vol. 4, No. 4, (Oct., 1965), pp. 389-396; Ortiz, Tewa World.
4. Ortiz, Tewa World, p 135, based in part on Whitman; Parsons states that there were three Winter moiety families in the early 1920s, but her definition of 'family'—nuclear versus extended, or described in Euro-American versus Tewa terminologies—may account for the discrepancy here. Nonetheless, Ortiz's larger point – the centrality of the moieties—is not undermined and will be taken up again later in this essay.
5. The literature on Maria and Julian Martinez is extensive, but for a good general introduction, see Edwin L. Wade, "Straddling the Cultural Fence: The Conflict for Ethnic Artists within Pueblo Societies," in The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution, ed. Edwin L. Wade (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986), pp 243-254; and Stephen Trimble, Talking with the Clay: The Art of Pueblo Pottery (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1987), pp 37-54, who notes that black ware was still being made at Santa Clara, so the Martinez's did less to *revive* such forms than to innovate the decorative technique of matte slip painting on a polished surface; on the emerging easel painting tradition at San Ildefonso, Jerry Brody, Pueblo Indian Painting: Tradition and Modernism in New Mexico, 1900-1930 (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1997) is the definitive source to date.
6. Jerry Brody, Indian Painters and White Patrons (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), p 90.
7. Brody, Pueblo; Trimble; Wade; additional works that have made highly perceptive contributions to our understanding of the relationship between native artists and their patrons include Marvin Cohodas, "Washoe Innovators and Their Patrons," in The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution, ed. Edwin L. Wade (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986), pp 203-220; and Greta J. Murphy, "Chief Blankets on the Middle Missouri: Navajo Artists and Their Patrons," in Painters, Patrons, and Identity: Essays in Native American Art to Honor J. J. Brody, ed. Joyce M. Szabo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), pp 241-261, where she has convincingly demonstrates that relationships between artists and patrons were not merely a function of Indian versus white contacts, showing that Plains Indian aesthetic preferences had an incredible impact on the formal qualities of Chief's blankets woven by Navajo women for external trade.
8. Wade, pp 248-254, comes closest to this idea in discussing the developing black ware ceramics

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at San Ildefonso; however, though he briefly addresses the issue of north versus south plaza factionalism, he does not adequately explain its origins in earlier social upheavals and therefore ends up with a rather anemic narrative of these complex socio-political issues. Likewise, Brody, Pueblo, p 47 only discusses the 1918 epidemic insofar as one of the first San Ildefonso painters, Crescencio Martinez, died of the flu that year.

9. I borrow this idea of an *ethnotheoretical* approach primarily from Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 13-15 and passim; there is a less rigorous use of this term (and its variants) in some disciplines, wherein an *ethnotheory* is simply a specific local understanding of some particular phenomenon, as in an *ethnotheory* of disease. What Whiteley argues is that local knowledge is produced by a particular hermeneutic epistemology that is by definition rigorous, encompassing, and systematic. In slightly different terms, Whiteley is talking about indigenous epistemologies, a phrasing that is more popular in studies of Oceanic topics or in explanatory frameworks derived from Oceanic indigenous/aboriginal perspectives.

10. See, for example, the racialized discourse in Oscar Jacobson, "Indian Artists from Oklahoma." Oklahoma Almanac 7, no. 5 (1964); Dorothy Dunn, American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968).

11. Brody, Indian Painters, passim; these themes were also taken up in more detail throughout Brody, Pueblo.

12. See Plate 5 in Brody, Pueblo, pp 36-7.

13. Brody, Pueblo, passim.

14. On Crescencio Martinez's paintings, see Brody, Pueblo, pp 55-6; on Pueblo bans of photography, see Luke Lyon, "History of the Prohibition of Photography of Southwestern Indian Ceremonies," in Reflections: Papers on Southwestern Culture History in Honor of Charles H. Lange, ed., Anne van Arsdall Poore, (Papers of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico). 14 (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1988). In part, these photographic bans were motivated by Pueblo concepts about the instrumentality of graphic representations, an issue which is incorporated below, see Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 163-87.

15. On the art/artifact distinction and debates surrounding exhibitions of non-Western arts, see Sally Price, Primitive Art in Civilized Places (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

16. On the emergence of visual culture and the very utility of art as a classificatory term, see Carolyn Dean, "The Trouble with (the Term) Art," Art Journal 65:2 (2006), pp 24-32.

17. My thinking on the issue of *vindicationism* is influenced by Adolph L. Reed, Jr., W. E. B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp 10-12 and passim.

18. Nanette Salomon, "The Art Historical Canon: Sins of Omission," in The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp 344-355.

19. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 55-57, and chapter three generally, but especially pp 82-83, 88, 95-96

20. Ortiz, Tewa World, pp 135.

21. See Gary Witherspoon, Language and Art in the Navajo Universe (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977).

22. Peter Whiteley, "Why Anthropology Needs More History," Journal of Anthropological Research, 60:4 (Winter, 2004), pp 487-514.

23. See Kathy M'Closkey, Swept Under the Rug: A Hidden History of Navajo Weaving, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), pp 211-2 and passim, for a rather unconvincing critique of Witherspoon on those grounds.

24. Brody, Pueblo, p 61; the following account is based on a synthesis of Brody, Pueblo, Wade, and Ortiz, Tewa World; though he deals with the Hopi, Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 80-104 greatly



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informed my reading of Pueblo political motivations.

25. Brody, Pueblo, pp 20-21.

26. Lyon, "Photography."

27. Brody, Pueblo, pp 55-6.

28. Ortiz, Tewa World, pp 172-173n19.

29. Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 163-87 and passim.

30. Brody, Pueblo, p 47.

31. Ortiz, Tewa World, p 135.

32. Wade, pp 248-254.

33. David Craven, "Realism Revisited and Re-theorised in 'Pan-American' Terms," Third Text 21:3 (May 2007), p 308.

34. Ibid., elaborating on ideas put forth by Terry Eagleton.

35. Ortiz, Tewa World, p 37.

36. Ibid., p 39. Ortiz explains the seemingly asymmetrical relation between the two initiation ceremonies from several different angles which are far too complex to explicate here.

37. Wade, pp 248-54, but see Ortiz, Tewa World generally on the functioning of both *Spanish* officials such as the governor and *Native* officials such as the war chiefs.

38. Ortiz, Tewa World, pp 62-68.

39. Ibid, chapter 4, pp 61-77 and passim.

40. Brody, Pueblo, p 194.

41. Ibid., p. 14.