

non-alphabetic scholars are confronted with difficult situations. They have to learn English which for them is much more difficult to master than it is for the Indo-European peoples.

So, I ask all English speaking scholars to use a kind of English understandable to non-alphabetic people. Not the English of 'Time' or 'Newsweek,' but the English of the 'Reader's Digest.' With the natural sciences the situation is less severe than in the social sciences. In fact, most Japanese scholars find it nearly impossible to participate in the study of folklore on an international level because of the language difficulty. If 'Oral Tradition' seeks to be an international journal by attempting to reach non-alphabetic as well as alphabetic societies, I am sure it will become an epoch-making periodical.

NOTE:

1. For more details concerning the submission of contributions and the journal's subscription policy please refer to the communications section in this issue, page 287.

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BABCOCK, BARBARA A., GUY and DORIS MONTHAN. *The Pueblo Storyteller. Development of a Figurative Ceramic Tradition*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1986. Xix+201 pages. Map, figures, color plates, glossary, bibliography and index. Cloth US\$40.00; ISBN 0-8165-0870-4.

The Pueblo Storyteller displays ceramic figures of storytellers (the grandmother, grandfather, aunts, and uncles of the potters) which are used in retelling the tales of the storytellers they portray. Retold stories and their reconfigured tellers thus become models for refashioned figures, molded—open-mouthed—in clay, and fired in the imagination of each new generation. In their turn, the new images spark new stories, including this book. The process thickens with refractions and reflections into which the reader is privileged to peer.

Helen Cordero of Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico began her art in her late forties, after raising six children. In 1964 Helen shaped the first ceramic Storyteller doll, a portrait of her grandfather, Santiago Quintana, who was not only a teller of tales to his local Pueblo community but an authoritative raconteur of the Pueblo life-story to such notable ethnographers as Ruth Benedict, Edward S. Curtis, Charles F. Saunders, Frederick Starr, and Adolph Bandelier. To produce the portrait, Cordero altered the traditional "Singing Mother" figure of Pueblo pottery by making the primary figure

male and multiplying the number of children who surrounded him (sometimes as many as thirty). By creating this figure, Cordero "made one of the oldest forms of Native American self-portraiture her own, reinvented a longstanding but moribund Cochiti tradition of figurative pottery, and engendered a revolution in Pueblo ceramics . . . In the last two decades, Pueblo figurative pottery has been rediscovered, redefined, and reinvented by both producers and consumers" (3).

The Pueblo Storyteller uncovers the sources of this figurative tradition, the place of the storyteller motif in it, and the meaning of this innovation to artist and audience. The authors divide their labor. Barbara Babcock's historical and interpretive essay comprises Part I (1-86). She also worked up the glossary and bibliographies on Pueblo ceramics, Pueblo culture, and aesthetic anthropology. Guy Monthan's exquisite photographs, especially the color plates, stir us to admire the art he carefully documents in Part II (89-124). Doris Monthan prepared the legends for figures and the biographical surveys of some 379 Pueblo potters in Part III (127-157), of which number 160 artists have made Storyteller figures in the past twenty years.

Guy Monthan and Doris Monthan met Helen Cordero in 1971, when fewer than a half-dozen potters modelled storytellers, and they included Cordero's work in their *Art and Indian Individualists* (Monthan and Monthan 1975). Babcock first met Cordero in 1977 and immediately published an article about her (Babcock 1978). Perhaps fate played a hand in the meeting of Babcock and Cordero. The opening sentences of Babcock's doctoral dissertation in comparative studies in literature read, "*Mirrors, Masks, and Metafiction* is a dissertation about writing and telling stories about writing and telling stories. It is, in other words, a study of the novelistic tradition of fictions that reflexively turn back upon themselves and take as their subject the artist, the creative process, the work of art itself and its audience . . . More broadly, it considers the reflexive dimension in all forms of performance and communication" (Babcock 1975: iv).

This volume delineates and illustrates not only the development of a material form but also the history of a form of thought and even of a mode of experiencing social and historical existence through the medium of clay, story, and artistic creativity. The story of the storyteller figurine tells of the remodelling of the shape of Pueblo cultural experience. Such a regenerative process, Babcock argues, is constitutive of the Pueblo potter tradition. "Like telling stories, making and exchanging potteries has always been a vehicle for retelling family history and for expressing personal and tribal identity" (86).

Concerning the significance of Pueblo ceramic figures from ancient times to the 1980s, Babcock generalizes that "[F]igurative designs may be described as embodiments of and prayers to ancestors, gods, or spirits for rain, for crops, for success in hunting, and for human and animal procreation" (9). Clay is a living substance: "a pot acquired a kind of personal and conscious existence as it was being made" (9). And, as a receptacle for food and water, a pot was treated as a source of life. Furthermore, Pueblo origin myths invariably record the creation of life through the process of pottery making. In fact, images modelled by primordial beings enable those first people to ascend to new levels of being within the earth and, finally, to emerge into the light of this world. Clay figurines are taken to be 'seeds' like the seeds crammed into the baskets brought by the mythical brother-sister pair when they first appeared on earth. From these seeds sprouted the objects of creation on earth.

Helen Cordero's work is a new epicycle in this recreative process. The chains of story-telling and pottery-making have linked generation to generation in a kind of

endless creation wherein each story and wedge of clay is a 'seed of seeds' for many new narratives and ceramic forms to come. Cordero's figurines conjoin these chains so that they reflect one another.

As Babcock has done elsewhere (e.g., Babcock 1982a; 1982b; 1984; 1986), here too she surprises a reader by suddenly turning the spotlight on the reading audience. In some startling and illuminating way, one finds oneself on the stage one thought to be watching with the detachment of an innocent bystander. For instance, Babcock points out, in regard to the "native art" of the southwest produced between 1878 and 1881, that "whether the white man realized it or not, what he purchased and described as 'primitive idols' or 'eccentric grotesques' were, in fact, portraits of himself": humorous caricatures of tourists, Anglo professionals, cowboys, priests, businessmen, circus entertainers, and opera singers (17). With such ironic turns, Babcock gives new hermeneutic depth to what has been tossed off as tourist art and degenerate commercialism. Such art may instantiate a critique of the very cultural contact that generated its own market of consumers.

Something important may be missing in this fine volume. For all their awareness of reflexivity, the authors give no explicit attention to their own role, as creative artists, in the growing popularity that drives forward this evolution in Pueblo pottery, as both art and economic phenomenon. There appear to be grounds for such considerations, for the growth of the art and industry coincides strikingly with their own active presence (and that of the architect Alexander Girard) in the picture. In 1964 Helen Cordero modelled the first Storyteller at the request of Girard. The figure was featured in Girard's 1968 exhibition volume, *The Magic of People*, published not by a local museum but by the Viking Press of New York. (Girard commissioned or purchased some 684 Cochiti Pueblo ceramics, which he donated to the Museum of International Folk Art in 1978). By 1973 "Storytellers were being made by at least six other Cochiti potters" (28). "In the fall of 1977, there were only about fifteen Storyteller potters. . . . By the fall of 1979, [the number] had doubled yet again to no less than sixty potters" (51). Cordero's Storytellers appear on the front cover of *National Geographic* (October 1982) and *American Indian Art* (Spring 1983). By the mid 1980s the number becomes at least 55 potters in Cochiti Pueblo alone and some 175 in all the Pueblos.

Babcock, in particular, could fruitfully juxtapose two facts and allow them to reflect against one another. The first is that, by the early 1980s, "for the first time in several centuries, Pueblo ceramic figurines began to be valued and respected as art" and "Sotheby Parke Bernet auctioned off old Cochiti figures for four-digit figures" (4). The second fact is that, from 1975 onward, the authors have written extensively on this very art, both in scholarly and artistic publications and in popular magazines; Babcock herself served as an exhibition curator of Helen Cordero's art and has given "many lectures on the same subjects [Helen Cordero, the Storyteller, and the history of Cochiti figurative ceramics] at museums and universities from Tucson to Groningen, the Netherlands, and Bergen, Norway" (xiv). To the extent that the Monthans and Babcock have played some storytelling role by interpreting the power and elegance of this tradition to the 'outside' world-wide market, they may be a reflexive element in the reshaping of the tradition. Such an approach would give self-conscious depth to Doris Monthan's observation that, "It is rare that a movement is documented while it is occurring" (xv). Perhaps it is occurring, in some way that bears exploration, because it is being documented? In any event, resituating the authors within their own study in this reflexive way would also highlight the parallels between this Pueblo ceramic revival and the two other major pottery revivals in the Southwest begun by

Nampeyo, the Hopi-Tewa potter of Hano in 1895 (involving the anthropologist J. Walter Fewkes) and by Maria Martinez of the Tewa Pueblo of San Ildefonso which began after 1907 and continued into the 1930s (involving the archaeologists Edgar L. Hewett and Kenneth Chapman).

This is not to accuse the authors of reporting an event of their own making. Such a preposterous proposition would underestimate Helen Cordero's inspiration and skills (already in 1964 her figures received first, second, and third prize at the New Mexico State Fair) as well as the long-standing genius of the Pueblo pottery tradition. But Babcock's development, in the last ten years, of the dynamics of reflexivity is stimulating and would probably be interesting to the reader, if applied to the authors' own involvement in their story about the Pueblo story. As it is, the book is beautiful testimony to the continued creativity of the Pueblo.

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DOW, JAMES R. and ROLF W. BREDNICH, editors. *Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie/International Folklore Bibliography/Bibliographie Internationale d'Ethnographie* für die Jahre 1981 und 1982 mit Nachträgen für die vorausgehenden Jahre. Bonn/Germany: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 1986. Xiii+377 pages. Paper DM195.—, ISBN 3-7749-2214-4.

With this volume of the *Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie* (hereafter, IVB), scholars will be able to take advantage of subject indexes in German, French, and English. The bibliography for 1983 and 1984 should be published by fall, 1987 and future volumes within two years of the date of the materials.