

Representing the Hopi Snake Dance*

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From 1880 to 1920 the Hopi Snake and Antelope ceremony, popularly known as the Snake dance, was far and away the most widely depicted Southwest Native American ritual. Usually performed in August to ensure abundant rainfall for the corn crops, it was only one ritual in the round of ceremonies that Hopis enacted throughout the year, but because it involved the handling of live snakes, it was the ceremony most often described by non-Indian observers.

Ethnographers began publishing accounts of the Snake dance in both the popular press and museum monographs in the 1880s. By the early 1890s it had become a national ritual for newspapers and magazines to report on the "Weird Arizona Snake Dance" or "Hideous Rites" in their August issues.¹ Photographs, drawings, and paintings of the Snake dance appeared in the press, on postcards, and as stereographs. The ceremony also became a major tourist attraction; thousands of people, including many celebrities and luminaries, descended on the Hopi mesas every year, and detailed accounts of the ritual appeared in travel narratives, guidebooks, and railroad promotional pamphlets.

The focus of all this attention was actually the final day of a nine-day ceremony. The public dance, in which the participants handled snakes, took place at the end of the last day, which began with a foot race and proceeded through various rites performed by the men of the Snake and Antelope societies. Crowds (including Hopis and outsiders) gathered early in anticipation of the climax of the ceremony, a processional dance in which Snake priests carried live snakes, many of them rattlesnakes, in their mouths. The ceremony ended with the snakes being let go and the participants' ingestion of an emetic.²

Accounts of the Snake dance began to reach a mass audience just as the Apaches of New Mexico and Arizona had been "subdued" by the U.S. Army and the region was joined by railroad to the rest of the nation. Concomitantly, the "Indian problem" shifted from the matter of conquest to the question of how to incorporate the region's Native Americans socially and culturally into the nation. The Snake dance — the event itself as well as the burgeoning representations of it — became a spectacle that defined and displayed the cultural differences between the "primitive" Hopis and "civilized" Americans.

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The early ethnographic accounts of the Snake dance are especially interesting in this regard, because the people who produced them were concerned with describing and codifying the nature of the "primitive." They addressed in particular the problem of ethnic differences, and because ethnology was a relatively new science, their efforts reveal how they struggled with ways of defining and representing those differences. Popular accounts and representations of the Snake dance portrayed it as an exotic, orientalized tourist attraction. At the same time, literary (and other) observers of the ceremony, which seemed so troublingly primitive, tried to understand its (and the Hopis') cultural significance to the nation.

Caught in the flurry of ethnographic, artistic, literary, and touristic interest in the Snake dance, Hopis quickly discovered that the proliferation of representations was just as threatening to their cultural practices as government schools, land allotment, and missionaries. By the early 1920s they had forbidden sketching and taking photographs of the ceremony, and eventually they closed it to outsiders altogether.

In writing this analysis of representations of the Snake and Antelope ceremony, my aim is not to recapitulate the modes of representation that have proved so oppressive to Hopi people. Rather, I want to investigate and defuse the power these images and texts exert over readers, viewers, and the subjects depicted. The decision to include some visual representations of the ceremony [see www.anthro.uiuc.edu/jashm/dilworth] is based on the desire to have my argument clearly understood and on the belief that removing them from view will only further mystify these imaginings of the primitive. I hope that this analysis is useful to Hopi as well as non-Hopi people. If "fascination" or "offense," "enchantment" or "shock" is what these images elicit, I ask readers to examine those responses. What is it that fascinates or offends? What are the mechanisms of those responses? Furthermore, I invite readers to think about their own role in the continuing "spectacle" of Native American life in the Southwest and how they might disrupt it and its politics. To these ends, I have only reproduced images of the public parts of the ceremony, images that are crucial to my discussion and that give readers a sense of the scope, content, and context of the spectacle of which these representations were a part. I have not included any images or passages of text that depict ritual activities inside kivas.

Textualizing the Snake Dance

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, ethnographers working on both federally and privately funded expeditions were the first observers to systematically describe the Snake dance. Men such as John Gregory Bourke, Jesse Walter Fewkes, George A. Dorsey, and H. R. Voth were determined to salvage information about a culture that many Americans believed would disappear through the "progress" of civilization. Many of these men were influenced by the writings of anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, who

developed a theory of cultural evolution. He argued that all cultures represented different stages of social development along a progressive, evolutionary scale: from savage to barbaric to civilized, with European society being the standard of civilization. In Hopi culture American ethnographers believed they were seeing previous stages in the evolution of their own culture, the difference between the two being a degree of civilization.³

These ethnographers believed anthropology was a science that could be an agent of social reform; by observing civilization at earlier stages of its evolution they could understand the nature of progress and use this knowledge to further the nation's progress. They also felt their studies would provide answers to the "Indian problem," which, after the Civil War, seemed soluble by either "civilization or extermination" (Hinsley 1981:146, 149-51; Porter 1986: 80-81). The Hopis seemed good candidates for civilization. They were "peaceful," lived in houses, practiced agriculture, and crafted objects of beauty and utility. However, the process of civilizing the Hopis apparently would involve the "loss" of their culture. As they became more civilized, more like white Americans, they would give up their Hopi ways. Ethnographers, therefore, went to the Hopi mesas to salvage what they could of Hopi culture before it disappeared, and they believed their data would help show how the Hopis could be incorporated into the nation.

Ethnographers "saved" the Snake dance, in part, by rendering it as a text. To make their texts, ethnographers, the writers of culture, used the tools of literacy and image making: paper, pens, pencils, paints, cameras, and phonographs. They published their findings in books and journals, in which Hopi culture appeared as bits of data, artifacts, ruins — collected for study and display (Fabian 1983:120). But in this textualization, the *presence* of the Hopis was lost. Hopis did not exist as subjects but as objects of exchange or as signifiers available for moral and allegorical interpretation (Clifford 1986:113). By positing a disappearing Indian, the ethnographic representations of the Snake dance seemed to serve the interests of Indian assimilation through "civilization." But by disseminating increasingly detailed information about the ritual, more and more non-Indians began to value and support the preservation of Hopi culture. In the end, ethnography failed to provide an easy solution to the Indian problem.

One of the earliest ethnographic observers of the Snake dance was John G. Bourke, a "soldier-scientist" who participated in the campaigns against the Apaches and the war against the Sioux and Cheyenne in 1876-77. During 1880-81 he received a year's leave from the army to collect ethnographic information about Native Americans of the Plains and the Southwest, and he saw the Snake dance at Walpi in August 1881. His book about what he observed in the Southwest, *The Snake-Dance of the Moquis of Arizona* (1884), brought Bourke national attention and established his reputation as an ethnographer.⁴

The Snake-Dance of the Moquis of Arizona was intended for "popular perusal" and was as much travel narrative as scientific observation ([1884] 1984: xx). Bourke related his journey through the Southwest and his encounters with the Pueblos of the Rio Grande; it is an account full of local color and travel anecdotes, but the centerpiece of the book is the last day of the Snake and Antelope ceremonies. The book's full title promised to describe "the revolting religious rite, The Snake-Dance; to which is added a Brief Dissertation upon Serpent-Worship in General." In the hours before the public dance, Bourke was allowed into a kiva to observe the participants preparing the snakes. His account displays a combination of revulsion and cool detachment: "The air [in the kiva] was heavy with a stench like that of a rotten cesspool: only a stern sense of responsibility kept me at my post" (1984:138). Bourke believed he was the first white man to "carefully note this strange heathen rite during the moment of its celebration," and his "responsibility" was to record it as thoroughly and accurately as he could (1984:1). He took notes continually, asked questions, and lifted lids on covered ceremonial bowls (1984:138).

At the public dance he was a careful and thorough observer, noting the presence of about 750 visitors, only half a dozen of whom were Anglos. In addition to describing the activities of all the participants, he was moved to write that the Snake dance had the "lurid tinge of a nightmare":

The spectacle was an astonishing one, and one felt at once bewildered and horrified at this long column of weird figures, naked in all excepting the snake-painted cotton kilts and red buckskin moccasins; bodies a dark greenish-brown, relieved only by the broad white armlets and the bright yellowish-gray of the fox skins dangling behind them; long elfin locks brushed straight back from the head, tufted with scarlet parrot or woodpecker feathers; faces painted black, as with a mask of charcoal, from brow to upper lip, where the ghastly white of kaolin began, and continued down over chin and neck; the crowning point being the deadly reptiles borne in mouth and hand, which imparted to the drama the lurid tinge of a nightmare (1984:162-63).

Concluding his description of the Snake dance, Bourke made clear the Hopis' presence as pagan primitives within the American nation:

This was the Snake-Dance of the Moquis, a tribe of people living within our own boundaries, less than seventy miles from the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad in the year of our Lord 1881. And in this same year, as a clipping from the *Omaha Nebraska Herald* states, the women of the United States subscribed for the diffusion of the Gospel in *foreign* lands, the munificent sum of six hundred thousand dollars (1984:169-70).

Bourke's call to missionary action was about to be answered by Christian reformers committed to the spiritual salvation and "Americanization" of Indians. Reform groups organized in the early 1880s thought the government's policy of maintaining reservations as separate, alien entities was an impediment to this process. They argued that Indians should be civilized via land allotment, education, and evangelism. Organizations such as the powerful Indian Rights Association, founded in Philadelphia in 1882,

began lobbying the government to establish schools, in which Indian people would learn English and manual skills, and to allot reservation lands in severalty so that they might learn to be self-sufficient farmers and ranchers (Prucha 1984: 611-13). Reformers and policy makers assumed that in the process of assimilation, Native Americans would give up their religion and take up Christianity (Hoxie 1984: 41-81).

The theory of cultural evolution, as it turned out, dovetailed nicely with the notion of assimilation; it made the process of civilization seem inevitable and natural. Forced assimilation merely accelerated a "natural" process. When Bourke observed the Snake dance at Walpi in 1881, assimilation as a policy was not in place, but Bourke's work was overshadowed by the idea that the Hopi way of life was doomed to disappear. Bourke, a member of the conquering army and a believer in cultural evolution, assumed that the Hopis were destined to give up their ways and accept the blessings of civilization. As a work of salvage ethnography, Bourke's account of the Snake dance is accurate in that it presents a detailed description of the procedures of the ceremony, but it also demonstrates that the Hopis were different to a degree that was intolerable to the idea of the modern nation and the ideology of progress.

Ten years after Bourke's account of the Snake dance appeared, the ethnologist Jesse Walter Fewkes published "The Snake Ceremonials at Walpi" (1894) under the auspices of the Hemenway Southwest Expedition. Fewkes had begun his career as a natural scientist working under Alexander Agassiz at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. When he was not reappointed to this post, he accepted the offer of Mary Hemenway's son to take over their Southwest Expedition from Frank Hamilton Cushing, whose performance the Hemenways did not like. One of Cushing's failings in the Hemenways' view was that he did not produce enough publishable material. As Cushing's replacement, Fewkes set about making up for this shortcoming, publishing prolifically on Zuni and Hopi subjects.⁵ Compared to Bourke's, the expedition Fewkes oversaw was highly organized, with many observers working together to collect data, including photographs and phonographic recordings of ceremonial songs. And unlike Bourke's account, Fewkes's was less a travelogue for popular consumption and more a scientific report for other ethnologists.⁶ In "The Snake Ceremonials at Walpi," Fewkes took the objective and taxonomic approach of the natural scientist, cataloguing details in dispassionate, precise language. Even so, his writing occasionally echoes Bourke's evocation of Gothic horror. After witnessing some of the men handling the snakes, Fewkes commented:

The sight haunted me for weeks afterwards, and I can never forget this wildest of all the aboriginal rites of this strange people, which showed no element of our present civilization. It was a performance which might have been expected in the heart of Africa rather than in the American Union, and certainly one could not realize that he was in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century ([1894] 1977: 85).

Like Bourke, Fewkes asserted that the Snake dance was out of place in the modern Union. Comparing the dance to something more African than American was already a standard trope in the popular literature about the ritual (e.g., Lummis [1893] 1952: 3). The Snake dance seemed to be a cultural and geographic anomaly, and by asserting its anomalousness in this way, Fewkes suggested that it should disappear so that the correct geographic and cultural order — that is, the “natural” order — could prevail.

The passage’s allusion to slavery and Reconstruction is also apt; the Indian problem in the 1890s presented a dilemma similar to that concerning incorporation of freedmen after the Civil War. By the time Fewkes began publishing, the Indian Commission’s policy of assimilation, in which Indians would be reconstructed as white people, was under way. The efforts of Christian reformers had paid off: the Allotment Act was passed in 1887. It provided for, among other things, allotment of reservation lands in severalty and stipulated that each person receiving an allotment would become a citizen of the United States. Remaining lands would be purchased by the government and then sold. Also, each year the Indian Commission received more money to establish day and boarding schools for Indian students; to ensure that this education would be Christian, the government contracted with Protestant and Catholic missionaries to run the reservation schools (Prucha 1984: 689).

But the policy of assimilation was not a success; from the beginning (and even before) it was clear that Indian people would not simply give up their cultural practices and adopt “American” ones. The Hopi experience provides a good example of how much conflict surrounded this policy. When allotment surveyors came to the Hopi mesas in 1891, although some Hopis were willing to accept their allotments, a group of Oraibi men pulled up all the surveyors’ stakes around Third Mesa. This act stalled the allotment process but also resulted in the arrival of federal troops and the arrest of several Hopi men. Many whites were also opposed to allotment at Hopi, and a group of them, as well as more than a hundred Hopi men, signed a petition against it in 1894. Allotment was discontinued on the Hopi reservation later that year (Whiteley 1988: 78-81).⁷

The education portion of the assimilation policy was also not well received by Hopis. In 1887 a boarding school opened at Kearn’s Canyon, but many Hopis refused to send their children. A day school opened near Oraibi in 1893 and encountered the same problem. These acts of resistance against government control were complicated by ongoing factionalism within the Hopi communities. At Oraibi, “Hostile” and “Friendly” factions were so named according to their general attitude toward government policies, but the factions also expressed older fissures within Oraibi society. In 1906, as a result of more than twenty years of disputes among Hopi leaders, the Hostiles were forced to leave Oraibi and resettle at Hotevilla. Their departure

happened just a few days after the Snake dance, which had been delayed until September that year because of the internal strife.⁸

Even though ethnographers were working at Hopi amidst these political and social conflicts, this information was, for the most part, absent from Fewkes's and other ethnographic accounts. These accounts were not histories; their purpose was to distill a cultural essence. These scientists were interested in the essential Hopi, because, in addition to understanding the Hopis, they were interested in formulating theories about humanity as a whole. If Hopis were survivors of an earlier stage of cultural evolution, they must share some characteristics with other, similarly "primitive" peoples. For example, early ethnographic accounts tried to relate the Hopi Snake dance to other forms of "serpent worship." In an 1886 article about the Snake dance at Mishongnovi, the Smithsonian ethnographer Cosmos Mindeleff tried to connect the dance to serpent worship in ancient Mexico, snakes mentioned in the Bible, and snake rituals in India and China. And Bourke quoted at length from other authorities' meditations on serpent worship around the world and through history, but he stopped short of making an explicit connection between Hindu snake handling and the Hopi ritual ([1884] 1984: 209-25).

Similarly, the Snake and Antelope ceremony Fewkes described in "The Snake Ceremonials at Walpi" was not a record of one particular performance but a conflation of observations he made at the ceremonies in 1891 and 1893. This combined account, then, was presented as the essential Snake dance. Like Bourke, Fewkes was interested in recording data about the ceremony before it disappeared, but he was more explicit about the Snake dance's being a "curious survival" of cultural evolution ([1894] 1977: 9). His main purpose in observing the dance was to determine which of five Hopi villages had the most primitive variant, which to Fewkes meant the one "more nearly like the ancestral performance" or the "oldest variants of the ceremonies" ([1900] 1986: 986). By 1898 he had seen all five variants and concluded that the most primitive was in Oraibi, the most isolated of the villages and, therefore, the least affected by outside influences. Fewkes's search demanded that he elide from his accounts the local politics of the Hopis themselves and their dealings with the world beyond their mesas. This had the effect of dehistoricizing Hopi culture, of isolating it in an imagined past, not in the present, which was full of conflict and "contaminating" influences.

Fewkes's accounts of the Hopis represented what would come to be known as the "ethnographic present," an imagined time when ethnicity last existed in a "pure" form, which in the case of North American Indians was the moment just before the Columbian "discovery" (Lyman 1982: 50). Fewkes's reference to the "heart of Africa" is an echo of this ethnographic present, imagining the ethnographer as explorer and discoverer, a kind of Livingstone of the Southwest.

Allusions to the Columbian discovery were common in the literature about the Indians of the Southwest.⁹ With their settled, agricultural, and artisanal way of life, the Hopis and other Pueblo groups seemed to recall the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica at the time of European contact. Their supposed similarities to these civilizations and their success in resisting European influence may also explain why they, and not the Navajos or the Apaches, attracted so much ethnographic attention. Because Apache and Navajo cultures had been more violently disrupted by European contact and were thus perceived as less purely "primitive," they did not fit the discovery scenario.

Ethnographic renderings of the Snake dance simultaneously recapitulated the "discovery" and the "loss" of the primitive, not only in the content of the narratives but also in their very textuality. As James Clifford has argued, the process of textualization suggested a fall from a prelapsarian, authentic oral or physical act to the word and picture. Performances of the Snake dance were authentic but transitory; writing endured. And precisely because of writing's endurance, the ethnographer became a "custodian of an essence, unimpeachable witness to an authenticity" (Clifford 1986: 113). Thus the ethnographer's authority was established not only by his ability to "discover" the true or essential primitive but also by his literacy.

"The Snake Ceremonials at Walpi," in which Fewkes included a version of the "Legend of Ti-yo, the Snake Hero" (1977: 106-19), contains a good example of how textualization ensured ethnographic authority. The legend was recorded by Alexander M. Stephen, who heard it from Wiki, a member of the Antelope society.¹⁰ This version of the Snake legend is worth noting, because it was widely referred to and quoted in many subsequent representations of the Snake dance. It appears as a written translation of Wiki's words and so is a representation of the Indian's narrative voice. Following it is Fewkes's "Interpretation of the Myth," in which he notes that there are many variations of the story and that using it to determine the meaning of the Snake dance required interpretation:

We see, as it were, only the crudest outlines, and only partial explanations of the ritual, and it is probably impossible for us to arrive at the true explanation from a study of the story alone. There are many evidences of later invention, of incorporation, and of individual explanations. I am not sanguine that the true explanation of the Snake Dance can be obtained from the Indians themselves, and if my want of faith is well grounded, this fact is without doubt of greatest importance ([1894] 1977: 119).

As in his search for the most primitive variant of the performed Snake dance, Fewkes was interested in finding the essential meaning of the ritual. He logically sought a Hopi explanation but then rejected its "truth." Fewkes's lack of faith in the Hopis' ability to explain the meaning of the Snake dance and his faith in his own ability to do so point to how textualization helped create and enforce the unequal relationship between ethnographer and

subject. Wiki is gone, as is the moment and context of his narrative, but the text remains. As a text, Wiki's version of the Snake legend is available for an interpretation — in fact, requires interpretation — that will reveal its true meaning. The scientist, not the Hopi, has the ability to "read" Hopi culture.

The illustrations that accompanied Bourke's *Snake-Dance of the Mokis of Arizona* illuminate another aspect of the process of textualization: how it "purified" the ethnographic information by erasing its native subjects. These illustrations were made by Alexander F. Harmer, a sergeant in the U.S. Army and "a student of the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts" (Bourke [1884] 1984: xix-xx). Apparently, Harmer's illustrations were made after the fact, based on Bourke's sketches and on the objects Bourke collected.¹¹ The illustration of the Snake dance in Figure 2¹² was meant to be understood with the help of Bourke's text, which explains in detail the number of participants and the order in which they appeared. The image is organized spatially to emphasize the number and categories of dancers and the repetition of their posture and movements. This view of the procession shows a relatively accurate, or informationally dense, view of the ceremony, complete with crowds of observers and the ubiquitous pueblo dogs. The groups are rigidly ordered for ease of classification; each figure is secure in its place and easily identifiable when referred to in the text.

Figures 3 and 4 further disassemble the first view. Figure 3 reproduces the first Snake priest to the left of the rock outcropping in Figure 2, and Figure 4 is almost literally a deconstruction of the Snake priest. These last two drawings decontextualize the dancer and make a taxonomy of the ceremony's paraphernalia. The whole is categorized and broken down to its smallest parts, as if to say the ritual is understandable as the sum of its parts, that what may seem mysterious in its entirety, once subjected to collection and categorization, is entirely understandable.

At the same time, the Snake priest has completely disappeared, and all that remains is his costume, turning him into a kind of paper doll and reducing the ceremony to the sort of ethnographic evidence one might find in a museum. And this, in fact, was what Bourke believed would be the fate of the Snake dance; eventually, only the bits and pieces of the costume would survive. By means of these three illustrations, Bourke "preserved" the material culture and the context of the dance by relegating its relics to the museum and the book. The ethnographies of Bourke and Fewkes are like pastoral elegies in that they evoke the figure of the Indian as a ruin, "an always-disappearing structure that invites imaginative reconstruction."¹³ By "vanishing" the Indian subject, these texts leave a set of "Indian" signifiers available for "imaginative reconstruction" by the reader. The gradual erasure of Hopis in the three Harmer illustrations also suggests that this imaginative reconstruction might involve a kind of substitution, in which the reader substitutes him- or herself for the Indian. Figure 3 is reminiscent of a mid-nineteenth-century fashion plate; the information presented is embodied in

the costume, not the Indian “model,” and suggests that the costume is something the reader might acquire or even wear. Indeed, one might see the items in Figure 4 in a museum case, but the manner in which the items are depicted is also reminiscent of the way goods were displayed in mail-order catalogues and department-store windows. Thus the vanished Indian in these representations could serve a reflexive purpose; the space left by the vanished subject could serve as a mirror, and the residual relics could become available and appropriable.

Like other ethnographers of his time, Bourke was creating a new form of representation; in these early ethnographic representations of the Snake dance, the seams of the narrative showed, as did rhetorical experiments and borrowings from other genres. For example, while the drawings in Bourke’s account are rigorous in their taxonomic organization, they employ or allude to various visual grammars, including, as we have seen, the representational grammar of commercial displays. Bourke’s writing, too, is peppered not only with moments of Gothic frisson but also with picturesque descriptions that recall travel writing. Just before he begins to describe the procession illustrated in Figure 2, he sets the stage in a more dramatic way:

Fill every nook and cranny of this mass of buildings with a congregation of Moqui women, maids and matrons, dressed in their graceful garb of dark-blue cloth with lemon stitching; tie up the little girl’s hair in big Chinese Puffs at the sides; throw in a liberal allowance of children, naked and half-naked; give color and tone by using blankets of scarlet and blue and black, girdles of red and green, and necklaces of silver and coral, abalone, and chalchihuitl.

For variety’s sake add a half-dozen tall, lithe, square-shouldered Navajoes, and as many keen, dyspeptic-looking Americans, one of these a lady; localise the scene by the introduction of ladders, earthenware chimneys, piles of cedar-fuel and sheep manure, scores of mangy pups, and other scores of old squaws carrying on their backs little babies or great ollas of water, and with a hazy atmosphere and partially clouded sky as accessories, you have a faithful picture of the square in the Pueblo of Hualpi, Arizona, as it appeared on this eventful 12th day of August 1881 ([1884] 1984: 156).

Bourke, in employing the language of the picturesque traveler as defined in the eighteenth century by William Gilpin, illustrates the aesthetic appeal of the ritual’s setting. His concern with color, shading, and composition turns the empirical catalogue into a “picture.” It became formulaic to describe observers of the Snake dance in this way. Writers almost always mentioned the variety and colorfulness of the observers — Hopi, Navajo, and Anglo — demonstrating that these groups could, as observers of the spectacle, share common ground.

Cosmos Mindeleff’s 1886 account of the Snake dance contains another example of representational experimentation. His article in the journal *Science* was illustrated with several line drawings, including one whose maker is not credited, that combines ground plans for the dance at Mishongnovi with drawings of parts of a Snake dancer’s costume and a live

snake. The diagrams of the dance appear as a drawing tacked onto a board around which a snake coils. The "paraphernalia" are shown tied together with cord hanging from a nail or tack driven into an invisible wall. It is an artful arrangement, combining the picturesque and scientific, like something one might find in a museum or a man's library. The drawing presents both the artifacts collected at the Snake dance and diagrams showing the context for the objects' deployment. The image reveals something about the problems of representation; the collected data is reassembled, re-presented using the vocabulary of still-life painting. These disparate objects are forced together into an arrangement whose representational conceit calls attention to itself: the diagrams of the dance are presented as three-dimensional, but the "live" snake is a two-dimensional drawing, as is the tack from which the paraphernalia hang.

The representation of the snake is especially interesting. It is part of the dance paraphernalia, but the dancers are absent, or rather are represented by dots in the diagram. In this regard, the image is very much like Harmer's illustration of the Snake dancer's costume in Bourke's text. The snake is "alive," serving almost as a stand-in for the dancer. The absence of human beings suggests a scientific purity about the information presented. Like writing, the objects will endure, but not the Indian. The imaginary ethnographic present is represented better by the objects than by the human being, whose presence suggests history. This image is purified of that presence.

Fewkes's "Snake Ceremonials at Walpi" employs a great variety of graphic media; the written account is accompanied by numerous drawings, charts, diagrams, photographs, and paintings that seem to record every detail of the ceremony. Drawings of disembodied arms and legs illustrate body-paint markings; a diagram renders a bird's-eye view of the inside of a kiva; there is a photograph of the Snake priest, Kopeli; several color plates depict sand paintings; and two drawings by Julian Scott show *A Group of Snake Dancers* and *Chief of the Antelope Priests*. Some of the drawings are based on Fewkes's notebooks in which he recorded data in the field. Fewkes also arranged for artists Julian Scott, F. H. Lungren, and W. K. Fales to be initiated into the Antelope clan and admitted into the kiva to witness part of the Walpi ceremony in 1893 (Fewkes [1894] 1977: 5). But it seems that only Scott's images were included in the published account, and he painted the color plates.¹⁴

The graphic representations in Fewkes's account function like a series of architectural renderings, presenting the context of the ceremony as well as separate details. For example, in one drawing a snake kilt is shown stretched out flat, in another, as it is worn. One of the sand paintings is shown in context in a diagram of the kiva and is enlarged as a color plate on another page. And Kopeli appears alone in a photograph as well as in the bird's-eye view of the kiva interior. These various representations were meant to

render a complete and understandable account of the Snake dance. As in the Mindeleff illustration, the proliferation of media and points of view is assumed to reproduce reality more accurately.

Fewkes's account also rendered the world of the ceremony in miniature. The experience of reading his book is like holding the data, which is miniaturized and framed by the text, in one's hand. This feeling is intensified by a life-sized rendering of a portion of the hand of one of the participants. As Susan Stewart has written, "The miniature, linked to nostalgic versions of childhood and history, presents a diminutive, and thereby manipulatable, version of experience, a version which is domesticated and protected from contamination" (1984:69). As the reader "operates" the book by reading and juxtaposing the diagrams, drawings, and photographs, a total, pristine, other world emerges. The reader *apprehends* the data as virtually "at hand," as a collection of significant objects. The book becomes a kind of "social space," a "talisman to the body and emblem of the self; ... microcosm and macrocosm; ... commodity and knowledge.... fact and fiction" (Stewart 1984: 41).

In addition to drawings and paintings, one of the most powerful tools of representation the ethnographers used in recording the Snake dance was photography, which was considered the most transparent medium for apprehending and representing ethnographic information.¹⁵ From the beginning of ethnographic interest in the Southwest, photography had been an important method of collecting information. John K. Hillers and William H. Jackson photographed the Hopis in the 1870s as part of the government surveys of the region, and by the 1890s photographers were participating in every ethnographic expedition to the Southwest. Photographs began to appear in published accounts of the Snake dance in the 1890s with the invention of halftone reproduction. Many of the early ethnographic photographs were portraits of individuals or groups of Indians; the glass plates and tripods of the 1870s and 1880s prohibited more "candid" images.¹⁶ There were also many commercial photographers working in the region, George Wharton James, Ben Wittick, and Adam Clark Vroman being among the most active (Hooper 1989: 14-15). They all photographed the Snake dance, and many of their photographs found their way into ethnographic accounts.

In 1902 the Field Columbian Museum published "The Mishongnovi Ceremonies of the Snake and Antelope Fraternities" under the auspices of the Stanley McCormick Hopi Expedition and written by ethnologists George A. Dorsey and H. R. Voth. Voth, who began as a Mennonite missionary to the Hopis, later published many ethnographic accounts of their culture (Eggen 1971). This publication contains a very detailed description of all nine days of the Snake and Antelope ceremony, the four days following it, and a retelling of the Snake legend. It is profusely illustrated with photographs by the commercial photographers George Wharton James and Sumner W. Matteson, Field Museum photographer Charles H. Carpenter, and Voth himself. All four had access to kivas and, apparently, the cooperation of some

Hopis. Many of the photographs were made inside the kivas and show members of the Snake and Antelope societies engaged in various activities in the days prior to the public ceremony. The completeness and detail of this account seem to be a result of the unprecedented openness of some of the participants and the changes in photographic technology, such as roll film and flash light, which enabled the photographers to make images in low light with relatively short exposures.

One of the most impressive things about these photographs is their intrusive nature. They fascinate because they seem candid, but they also pry. One in particular stands out. Captioned "Snake priests asleep on the roof of the Snake kiva (a flashlight picture in the open air at three o'clock in the morning)," it was taken between the fifth and sixth day of the ceremony and has a distinctly voyeuristic quality to it. It reminds one of Jacob Riis's flashlight photographs of the urban poor in *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) and demonstrates the similar aims and methods of Fewkes's work and Riis's urban ethnography. Like Riis's, these photographs expose what was hidden, but they also make clear the power of the photographic gaze to objectify its subject.

Another photograph from this expedition was not reproduced in the museum's publication. Taken by Sumner Matteson, it shows Charles Carpenter photographing a member of the Snake society while Dorsey takes notes (Longo 1980: 19). A large-format camera on a tripod is aimed at a Hopi man seated in a chair placed against a wall. The imbalance of power is clear: the complicated, overbearing apparatus of ethnographic collection and representation and the Hopi man alone, representative of something "Hopi." One can imagine the contrast between this photograph and the image Carpenter is making — the one suitable for publication. Carpenter's portrait will appear "natural," but the text will not reveal that its production required substantial staging and manipulation.

It would be tempting to claim that the hegemony of ethnographers over Hopis was complete and unrelenting, but that would be oversimplifying the situation. The relationship between ethnographers and Hopis was complex and locked in a process of continual negotiation. Within the ethnographies of the Snake dance there are moments when this process of negotiation surfaces. For example, Bourke included in his *Snake-Dance of the Moquis* a remarkable account of a conversation he had in November of 1881 at Zuni with Nanahe, a Hopi man who had observed Bourke at the Snake dance at Walpi. Frank Cushing was their interpreter. When he met Bourke, Nanahe said:

We saw you writing down everything as you sat in the Estufa, and we knew that you had all that man could learn from his eyes. We didn't like to have you down there. No other man has ever shown so little regard for what we thought, but we knew that you had come there under orders, and that you were only doing what you thought you

ought to do to learn all about our ceremonies. So we concluded to let you stay ([1884] 1984: 182).

Cushing had apparently prepared the Hopis for Bourke's arrival, and his influence had something to do with their decision to let Bourke into the kiva. But Nanahe makes it clear that they were extremely reluctant to do so. Bourke wasn't the last ethnographer allowed to record ceremonial activities inside kivas, however, and most ethnographers did not include in their accounts of the Snake dance any record of how intrusive their presence was.

According to Bourke, although initially Nanahe refused to tell him anything about the secret societies, he eventually agreed to explain some of the rituals he witnessed. But he prefaced his remarks thus:

A secret order is for the benefit of the whole world, that it may call the whole world its children, and that the whole world may call it father, and not for the exclusive benefits of the few men who belong to it. But its privileges are the property of its members, and should be preserved with jealous vigilance; since, if they became known to the whole world, they would cease to be secrets, and the order would be destroyed, and its benefit to the world would pass away ([1884]:1984: 183-84).

Nanahe clearly explained why the members of the Snake and Antelope societies would not want Bourke or anyone else to witness their activities. The knowledge these societies held was of benefit to the world.¹⁷

Ethnographers made it their business to "discover" and then publicize Hopi ritual knowledge. Consequently, the men who recorded their rituals (particularly the Snake dance) most thoroughly — Voth, Stephen, and Fewkes — were and still are not well regarded among Hopis. In *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian* (1942), Don Talayesva, who was born at Oraibi in 1890, remembered Voth in connection with a year of drought:

The land was very dry, the crops suffered, and even the Snake dance failed to bring much rain. We tried to discover the reason for our plight, and remembered the Rev. Voth who had stolen so many of our ceremonial secrets and had even carried off sacred images and altars to equip a museum and become a rich man. When he had worked here in my boyhood, the Hopi were afraid of him and dared not lay their hands on him or any other missionary, lest they be jailed by the Whites. During the ceremonies this wicked man would force his way into the kiva and write down everything that he saw. He wore shoes with solid heels, and when the Hopi tried to put him out of the kiva he would kick them (Talayesva 1942: 252).¹⁸

In this account one gets some sense of the position Hopis were in as they tried to negotiate with ethnographers determined to "save" Hopi culture.

As ethnographers were creating narratives about Hopis, so Hopis were creating narratives about ethnographers. In 1980 Edmund Nequatewa published a story he said Hopis have for decades told about why Fewkes abruptly interrupted his research at Walpi in the fall of 1898. The official explanation, published in the Bureau of American Ethnology's (BAE) annual report for that year, states that an outbreak of smallpox both interrupted the

Hopis' ceremonial cycle and endangered Fewkes. According to Nequatewa, Hopis have quite a different story: at the end of a day of note-taking in a kiva, Fewkes was asked to leave because the fearsome earth god, Masauwu, was about to appear. Fewkes retired to his house and locked the door. While he was writing his notes, Masauwu appeared in the room with him. At first Fewkes told the being to go away, because he was busy, but when he realized who it was, he became afraid:

Then the being talked and talked to him, and finally the Doctor, "gave up to him" and said he would become a Hopi and be like them and believe in Masauwu, and Masauwu cast his spell on him and they both became like little children and all night long they played around together and Masauwu gave the Doctor no rest.

And it was not long after that Dr. Fewkes went away but it was not on account of the smallpox as you now know (Nequatewa 1980: 37).

Two aspects of this story are striking. First, just as Fewkes reinterpreted the explanations of the Snake dance offered by Hopis, this story reinterprets the official explanation for Fewkes's departure. Second, the story imagines Fewkes's coming under the spell of Masauwu, demonstrating that the greater power lies with the deity, not the ethnographer. The result is not only that Fewkes "becomes a Hopi" but also, and perhaps more important, that he stops his note-taking. Masauwu's appearance brings to an end the Fewkesian inscription of Hopi culture.

The Snake Dance in Ethnographic Exhibits

The "textualization" of Native American cultures falls within the metaphor of collecting scientific data. But at a more literal level, ethnologists were deeply involved in collecting the material culture of the groups they studied. The collections they made were another form of representation, and the process of collecting and displaying ethnographic artifacts was another means by which Native Americans were rendered culturally useful. The irony was that the ethnographers traded manufactured goods for native goods, thereby dismantling the very cultures they sought to preserve (Parezo 1986: 3; Coombes 1991: 199).

Like other ethnographic representations, the process of collecting caused Indians to "vanish" and made relics of their cultures. These relics were in turn preserved in museums, which were like Noah's arks of salvaged cultures (Stewart 1984: 152). In the museum each object stood for the whole, and the collection of fragments stood for the totality of the Indian's world in microcosm. The aim of ethnographic collecting was completeness, like Audubon's *Birds of North America* or Catlin's Indian Gallery, but at the same time each object was overburdened with meaning, because the scientist-collectors assumed that one could know an entire culture from its smallest artifact. Furthermore, the process of collecting reinforced the *availability* of Indian cultures; collecting appeared as a simple process: Indians simply gave up their belongings (Todorov 1984: 39). As in the ideology of Manifest

Destiny, which claimed in part that Indians were not fit to possess the vast land of the continent, the ideology of collecting insisted that Indians were not fit "keepers" of their culture. They did not know the value of their cultural property — which was sure to increase as it became (inevitably) scarcer; and even if they did value it as the ethnographers did, they weren't equipped to preserve it.

Assembled back east in the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, or the Peabody Museum at Harvard, Native American artifacts and other documentation were displayed alongside natural science specimens. The "presence" of Indians in museums of natural history was possible and even inevitable given anthropological understanding of the primitive. Indian objects were moved into the pure, innocent realm of nature, into a lost natural past — this loss of nature being demonstrated by the presence of natural specimens in the museum. Donna Haraway (1986) has called the American Museum of Natural History in New York City "a monumental reproduction of the Garden of Eden." Situated on the edge of Central Park, whose purpose was to "heal the over-wrought or decadent city dweller with a prophylactic dose of nature," the museum offered a similar healing experience by taking the visitor back to a prelapsarian time when the relationship between humans and nature was uncomplicated and "pure" (1986: 20). The American Indian was the icon of this state of being.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as more and more museums of natural history were established, with at least part of their missions being to educate the public, and as ethnographic collections grew, museum ethnologists were faced with the problem of how to display ethnographic artifacts. In the 1870s and 1880s in American museums and expositions such artifacts were arranged on shelves in glass-enclosed cases or were displayed on the occasional wax manikin. But after the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, a new display technique came into use: the "life group." The practice of using individual life-sized models of native peoples to display material culture was in practice by the mid-1870s, but at the Chicago exposition ethnologists designed displays that grouped manikins inside glass cases. Each arrangement depicted a number of individuals engaged in a particular activity, the aim being to show more contextual information and action. Ethnographers from the United States National Museum made several groups especially for the Chicago exposition, including "Zuni Ritual of Creation" and "Zuni Bread-makers," as well as potters, a belt maker, weavers, Sioux women dressing hides, and a Jivaro Indian. The figures were based on photographs by Hillers, Jackson, and others; on actual Native Americans, such as the Zuni men who accompanied Cushing to Washington in 1882; and on the ethnologists themselves. In 1895 Boas posed for the Kwakiutl Hamatsa dance, and Cushing posed for several Zuni and Plains figures (Hinsley 1983: 59; Truettner 1985: 67). After the Chicago exposition these figures appeared in exhibits at the National Museum and had long and

varied "lives." For example, some 1893 Zuni manikins were recycled later as Navajo weavers, and the Zuni bread makers of 1893 appeared as a "Hopi Household" in about 1910. Sometime between 1910 and 1920, a life group of the Snake dance appeared in the National Museum.¹⁹

The life group was one way to solve the problem of how to represent collected ethnographic information about a ceremony (or other primitive activity). But how could ethnographers reconstitute an event such as the Snake dance, which existed in a certain time and place and was performed by living people in another timeless place? In the first few decades of the twentieth century the makers of life groups answered this question by striving for greater realism: the displays became increasingly illusionistic, employing theatrical techniques such as realistically painted backdrops and elaborate lighting, and the manikins went from being "pieces of sculpture to 'pictures from life'" (Hinsley 1981: 108). At the peak of this trend Clark Wissler wrote in praise of the Hopi life group at the American Museum of Natural History:

Thus, in the group as a whole, we get a veritable snapshot of Hopi life, precisely what one might see in a glance through a village. It was not designed to force into the composition many phases of life not usually seen in juxtaposition, but to present one of the commonest scenes of prosaic life. It was not our aim to instruct the visitor in details, such as how cloth is made, how houses are built, the whole life history of a clay pot from the grinding of the clay to the firing, and the like — all subjects far better treated in the exhibition cases of the hall — but to give a concrete idea of Hopi life in its native setting. In a way, the production is a human habitat group, analogous to bird and mammal habitat groups (1915: 344).

Wissler's evocation of the "snapshot" as the ideal aim of the life group and his comparison of life groups to "bird and mammal habitat groups" suggest that in the life group photographic representation and taxidermy came together. In bringing the photograph to life, or into three dimensions, the life group aimed to capture something lost. The ultimate referent of the life group was the life of Indians, but manikins stood in for living Indians, and one cannot help but compare the manikins to the taxidermied animals that inhabit the same museums. The Indian collected, like the collected bird or mammal, is, metaphorically, the Indian hunted and killed, and Indians' presence in the museum is a kind of taxidermic preservation.

The aesthetic of realism that governed design of the life groups and nature dioramas provided the means to make real a profoundly idealistic wish for a primal, pure past in which humans and animals lived together in an orderly, Edenic world. In spite of its grotesque overtones, the Snake dance seemed to typify this wish, because it showed humans and animals in an intimate relationship. However, the aesthetic of the life groups rendered invisible the massive capital and the violence of collecting that created the "world" of the natural history museum. As textual representations caused Native Americans to "vanish," so life groups erased living Indians and replaced them with manikins, which were themselves interchangeable. And as the

renderings of individual Snake dancers in Bourke's account suggested fashion plates or department-store windows, so life groups invited the viewer to "try on" various Indian identities.

Another approach to the problem of representing Indians to the public in ethnographic displays was, of course, to present actual Native Americans, and this strategy was employed on a grand scale at world's fairs. In the United States the first world's fair to present exhibits of living Native Americans was the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Among those on display, the Indians of the Southwest were widely represented, especially the Pueblo groups. A group of Navajos lived on the grounds next to the Anthropological Building and made and sold jewelry and blankets, and some Pueblos lived on the Midway Plaisance in a plaster representation of their home (Trennert 1987: 136).²⁰

At Chicago, the ethnographic exhibits in the Anthropological Building were overseen by Frederic Ward Putnam, director and curator of the Peabody Museum at Harvard and head of the Department of Ethnology and Archaeology for the fair. Putnam had the help of, among others, Franz Boas. In the Government Building, Otis T. Mason of the United States National Museum and William H. Holmes, who was working for the Smithsonian, organized and presented exhibits about primitive peoples of the world. The Chicago exposition established a cultural geography for American Indians. On one hand the anthropological and government exhibits showed the Indians' role in the evolution of humans from savage to civilized. The ethnographic displays in the Anthropological Building and in the Government Building and the living Native Americans on display nearby depicted what was "vanishing." On the other hand, there was the exotic appeal of the Midway. There, American Indians and other primitive peoples were presented as entertaining but not threatening. All of these displays depicted versions of the past; the future of Native Americans was not represented.

The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis was planned to rival the Chicago exposition and included, among other things, more elaborate and bigger Indian exhibits, which were assembled under the direction of William J. McGee of the Smithsonian. The Department of Anthropology's exhibits were designed to show "the evolution of industrial art, and the expansion of those mental and moral forces which obtain in modern civilization" (*History* 1905: 43) and were presented in several sections in the Anthropology Building, which contained the Archeology Section, History Section, and Laboratories of Anthropometry and Psychometry. A large "Congress of the Races" surrounded the Anthropology Building and presented primitive people from around the world, including representatives from North American groups, "Patagonian Giants," and "African Pygmies." These groups lived in reconstructions of their native dwellings and were arranged in evolutionary order. The largest anthropological exhibit was the Philippine exhibit, which covered forty-seven acres and represented the United States'

newest colonial subjects (Hoxie 1977: 290). Among the Native Americans present almost half were from the Southwest and California, including Navajos, Apaches, Pueblos, Hopis, Papagos, Pimas and Maricopas, and Cocopahs (Trennert 1987: 146-47).

The Bureau of Indian Affairs building (the "Indian Building") overlooked the Congress of Races and housed a model Indian school, which showed the process of assimilation in progress as Native American students learned to become useful citizens. In the Indian Building, Geronimo, who was still a prisoner of war, sat in a booth, between a Pueblo potter and women grinding corn, and sold bows and arrows as well as photographs and autographs (Drinnon 1980: 340) (Fig. 7). This tableau was a reminder, no doubt, of the military conquest of the Apaches and other "hostile" Indians, but it also represents the twin strains of primitivism associated with Native Americans. The women grinding corn and making ceramic vessels fit the stereotype of Southwest Indians as artisans, as peaceful, industrious people who work with their hands. In contrast, Geronimo was presented not only as a relic of a savage past (witness the bows and arrows) but also as a celebrity (selling autographs and photos of himself). Both strains of primitive stereotyping, the noble (but doomed) savage and the industrious artisan, represented a past that vanished or was vanquished. Juxtaposed with the model school, which depicted the future, Geronimo and the Pueblo women represented what was passing away. But Geronimo and the Pueblo women weren't simply going to disappear; they would persist as mythologies about the primitive, and these mythologies would continue to define the cultural roles Indian people could play in American culture.

On the mile-long Pike, the Midway Plaisance of the St. Louis exposition, one could see what was by now the standard encyclopedic accumulation of exotic attractions, the world in microcosm. Visitors to the Pike could see a spectacle of the Boer War staged twice a day, an "Irish Village," the Tyrolean Alps, streets of Cairo, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Seville, an "Esquimau Village," and a Cliff Dwellers exhibit (History 1905: 717).²¹ Visitors to the Cliff Dwellers exhibit passed through a gateway made to look like rocky cliffs, into an outdoor area that contained what was purported to be a replica of Taos Pueblo. Inside this structure was a theater called the "Snake Kiva," where visitors could see reenactments of a "Pueblo Snake Dance" (Trennert 1987: 149). *The Complete Portfolio of Photographs of the World's Fair*, a souvenir book of the exposition, reproduced a photograph of a group of Snake dancers (Fig. 8). The caption claimed that "there were many famous dances given by the Pueblo Indians of the Pike which visitors to the exposition saw for the first, and probably for the last time in their lives. Some were graceful, some were fantastic and some were horrible. None combined all these features in a greater degree than the Snake Dance, which the trio above are about to execute" (1904: n.p.). This passage is haunted by the specter of the vanishing Indian as well as the Gothic thrill of the Snake dance. The appeal of the Snake dance came not only from seeing men handle snakes but also from the

notion that the dance was about to disappear. Its presence on the Pike seems to indicate that it was not considered a legitimate part of the Indian's future and that it was best relegated to the realm of entertainment.

One mission of ethnographic displays was to educate the public about cultural difference and national identity. The standard against which "others" were understood was late nineteenth-century American civilization. Industrial expositions and natural history museums, as encyclopedic representations of the world, showed where Native Americans fit in and displayed the superiority of civilization and the inferiority of the primitive. These spectacles of otherness simultaneously created and demonstrated difference and then accrued power by incorporating it. Judith Williamson notes that "to have something 'different' captive in our midst reassures us of the liberality of our own system and provides a way of re-presenting real difference in tamed form" (1986: 116). That Indians were represented in the high as well as low culture areas of the fairs is testimony to this process, and the exhibits of Indian people also call to mind John Berger's meditations on looking at animals in zoos: "Everywhere animals disappear. In zoos they constitute the living monument to their own disappearance." Zoos, like museums and fairs, are "sites of enforced marginalisation" that operate through enforced visibility (Berger 1980: 24). The museum was the proper place for Indians; in the "real" world, according to government policy, they were supposed to be vanishing through assimilation. But Indian people were not in fact simply assimilating or vanishing. They resisted and persisted.

These representations of the primitive assumed a "civilized" viewer, but at least one observer of the Chicago exposition tried to suggest what a "Primitive" viewer might think about the displays. In "Types of People at the Fair," a kind of ethnography of visitors to the fair, J. A. Mitchell imagined an Indian looking back:

If the native Indian were of a reflective turn of mind, all this might awaken unpleasant thoughts. Judging from outside appearance, however, he has no thoughts whatever. He stalks solemnly about the grounds with a face as impassive as his wooden counterparts on Sixth Avenue. And yet *he* is the American. He is the only one among us who had ancestors to be discovered. He is the aboriginal; the first occupant and owner; the only one here with an hereditary right to the country we are celebrating (1893: 186).

Mitchell's attitude toward the Indian's mental capabilities is clearly condescending, but the passage suggests the tenuousness of the ideological conceits at the heart of the vast display. From the Indian's point of view, history since Columbus might be imagined very differently from the fair's presentation of it. And, however awkwardly or spuriously, Mitchell asks readers to imagine an Indian as an observer, not an exhibit, which suggests that Native Americans persisted as *subjects* capable, at least, of watching the spectacle.

Another example from a later Chicago exposition also illustrates how ethnographic representations might be received by Native Americans. In *Sun Chief*, Don Talayesva recalled that in 1939 a University of Chicago anthropologist, Fred Eggan, showed him a copy of a 1901 account of the Soyal ceremony written by George A. Dorsey and H. R. Voth. Talayesva remembered that Dr. Eggan said,

You remember that in 1933 some Hopis from here were at the World's Fair in Chicago, went to the Field Museum, and saw what they thought was a statue of you dressed in a ceremonial costume used in the Soyal. You know that when they returned they claimed that you had sold the secrets and ceremonial equipment and made much trouble for you. Now I will let you see this book.

Talayesva continued:

When he opened it, I was surprised to see pictures of secret altars, how the members of the Soyal dressed and what they did. This evil man Voth had written out all the secrets, not only of the Soyal but of other ceremonies. I saw the names and pictures of the Soyal officers, those old timers, and recognized every one of them. Now at the time I was only a little boy and had not been initiated into the Wowochim. Fred also showed me altars of the Snake and the Antelope ceremonies. These things were of greater value to the Hopi than anything else in the world and the Whites had gotten them away from us. I felt very badly. But I did not blame the Whites for buying them as much as I blamed the old Hopis, the head Soyal Priest, Shokhungyoma, and Chief Lolulomai. There was even a picture of my great-uncle, Talasquaptewa, who acted as Star Priest. If those chiefs had not permitted Voth to take the pictures and watch the ceremonies, they would never have been published. Fred urged me not to feel badly about it. When he closed the book, I asked how much it would cost. The only good thing about it was the fact that it was clear proof that I was not the one who had sold the secrets. I wanted it, for if any Hopi ever charged me again with selling secrets all I would need to defend myself was this book. Fred left about nine-thirty, and I went to bed. But I was so worried that I never slept until one-thirty in the morning. With all our ceremonial secrets out, it is no wonder that our gods are offended and fail to send us enough snow and rain, and that sickness, droughts, and other misfortunes come upon us (1942: 344).

The Hopis who saw the manikin of the Soyal ceremony participant did not "read" it as other tourists might have, or as the makers of the exhibit intended it to be read. The exchange of cultural information broke down; the Hopi visitors did not see the manikin as a generic Hopi but as a portrait of Don Talayesva and then assumed that his "presence" in the museum indicated his complicity in the selling of information and ceremonial equipment. This encounter shows how, for the Hopi visitors, the realism of the display failed to purify it of its human presence; rather, what they saw was precisely a human, an individual, Don Talayesva. Furthermore, their interpretation reinserted the historical narrative into the museum display, which was supposed to move the Indian into a realm that was timeless and to erase the actual history of the ethnographic encounter.

The Hopis' encounter with "Don" in the museum is mirrored by Talayesva's encounter with the published ethnography by Dorsey and Voth.

He saw individuals also; Talayesva did not read it as an ethnography but as a kind of family album, a different sort of historical record. And the book was both the source and vindication of Talayesva's problem. He suggested another exchange: he would buy the book from Eggan to use as proof that it was not he who gave the information to the ethnologists.

It is not clear from *Sun Chief* whether Talayesva was able to buy the book, but the incident illustrates the confusion that could result when representations of "others" were seen by "others." The codes used in the construction of the ethnographic display were reinterpreted and new meaning was made. The products of colonialism inevitably returned to the site of their origin as commodities sold to the "natives." The products of ethnography — museum displays and monographs — were not produced with the intention of becoming useful to Native Americans, but they did return, in unexpected ways with unforeseen consequences.

The Snake Dance as a Tourist Attraction

As the Indians of the Southwest were being presented to the nation at the Chicago and St. Louis expositions, the railroads in the Southwest were encouraging tourists to visit the region. In its tourist literature, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (ATSF), whose routes came closest to the Hopi mesas, promoted the Snake dance as one of the major attractions of the region. Publicists for the railroad, like the organizers of the fairs and expositions, promised that the spectacle would be educational as well as entertaining.

In 1900 the Santa Fe Railway published a pamphlet called *The Moki Snake Dance, a popular account of that unparalleled dramatic pagan ceremony of the Pueblo Indians of Tusayan, Arizona, with incidental mention of their life and customs*, by Walter Hough, a Smithsonian anthropologist. And in 1903 the railway published *Indians of the Southwest*, by George A. Dorsey, at the time curator of anthropology at the Field Columbian Museum. Both accounts note the region's appeal to overcivilized urbanites. Tourists could "mount a sturdy bronco, and forget for a time the cares and conventionalities of civilized life in a simple, wholesome and joyous existence in the sunlit air of the desert" (Hough 1900: 54). And both works stressed the Indian cultures as the region's main attractions. Hough's account of the Snake dance is a step-by-step description of the final day's events written with the tourist in mind. He describes costumes in the dance to help the visitor identify the various participants, and he quotes Fewkes's Snake legend. Throughout the book he characterizes Hopis using highly romanticized terms: peaceful, childlike, welcoming to tourists. Writing that the "Mokis are so like children that a smile lurks just behind a sorrow," Hough reassures tourists that even though Hopis perform the lurid Snake dance, they are not dangerous, and reminds readers that Indians are living examples of the childhood of man. The pamphlet ends with the warning that if readers wanted to see these charming

primitives, they had better hurry: "Fortunate is the person, who before it is too late, sees under so favorable aspect their charming life in the old new world" (1900: 51).

Although both Hough's and Dorsey's accounts were sincere efforts to provide accurate information about the Indian cultures they described, they emphasized certain aspects of the cultures that would appeal to tourists, specifically the rituals Indians performed, the objects they crafted, and their peaceful nature. Dorsey's *Indians of the Southwest* is a considerably longer work and is essentially a guidebook, divided into chapters on each culture group, including a day-by-day account of the Snake dance. Dorsey plays tour guide and uses the conceit of journeying through the region, stopping periodically to discuss what he encounters there. In noting the distinguishing characteristics of different groups of Indians, his account is rather like a field guide to birds. He lends scientific validity to the touristic desire to see Indians: "If we may better understand civilized man of to-day by a knowledge of man in more primitive conditions, then surely the Southwest forms a field, not only to scientific students but to all who have a broad interest in mankind, second to that presented by no other region in the world" (Dorsey 1903: 5).

Dorsey's involvement in tourism may have come out of a commitment to education, but he was also committed to the Santa Fe Railway. In his book's preface he explains that his host on his 1899 junket was C. A. Higgins, the assistant general passenger agent of the Santa Fe, and in 1901 Dorsey made a trip with another Santa Fe official (1903: 5). His account includes plenty of information about how to reach the Indian "sights" from the Santa Fe lines. Thus, Dorsey, like other ethnographers and anthropologists, worked within a complicated institutional matrix that included not only private and public museums and universities but also corporations with vested interests in the region and the people they studied.

Dorsey's and Hough's guidebooks were illustrated with dozens of photographs by commercial photographers, including Ben Wittick, Adam Clark Vroman, and George Wharton James. Although these photographers' works also appeared in ethnographic accounts, the guidebook photos emphasized the formally picturesque aspects of the Indians — the elements of contrast, composition, and rhythm. In addition to the photographs of Hopi men with snakes in their mouths, many photographs depicted Hopi women and men posed with pots, baskets, or blankets. There were also many pictures of children, family groups, and "Hopi maidens" with their distinctive hairdos. Although the texts described the presence of visitors at the Snake dance, no tourists are visible in the photographs. The widespread use of these photographs by ethnologists and tourism entrepreneurs would ensure their circulation until well into the 1930s. Ben Wittick was a particularly astute marketer and promoter of his own work and produced some of the earliest photographs of the Snake dance at Walpi (Fig. 9).²²

Although most of the photographs and paintings the Santa Fe Railway used in their publications depicted Hopis and other Pueblo Indians as peaceful and sedentary, a picturesque attraction to tourists and artists, the perceived grotesque appeal of the Snake dance was irresistible. The cover of Hough's pamphlet (Fig. 10) featured a drawing of a Snake dancer, based on a painting by Henry H. Cross called *Moki Indian Snake Priest Training the Rattlesnake to Dance* (1898). This rendering of a Snake "priest" is interestingly inaccurate; his costume looks vaguely Aztec, and the snake is doing the dance, not he. The action has been transformed into a kind of oriental snake charming. As the Cliff Dwellers and Pueblo Indians existed side by side with the Streets of Cairo and Constantinople on the exposition midways, so Cross, who once painted circus wagons for P. T. Barnum, depicted the Hopi as an oriental curiosity (Harmsen 1978: 56). The Santa Fe, in its promotion of the Snake dance as a tourist attraction, borrowed this sideshow strategy by giving Hough's text a veneer of oriental exoticism.

The popular writings about and images of the Indians of the Southwest, and about the Snake dance in particular, were full of allusions to the Orient. In his book of travel sketches about the Southwest, *Some Strange Comers of Our Country* (1891), Charles Lummis referred to the Great American Desert as the "American Sahara" and alluded to "Arabian Simoons" and caravans in his descriptions of the region and its inhabitants (1891: 28-33). This orientalist rhetoric characterized tourist literature well into the 1920s. The writer Erna Fergusson reminded tourists in 1928, "Motorists crossing the southwestern states are nearer to the primitive than anywhere else on the continent. They are crossing a land in which a foreign people, with foreign speech and foreign ways, offer them spectacles which can be equaled in a very few Oriental lands" (Thomas 1978: 191; see also Pomeroy 1957: 39). Noting the long history of orientalism in the literature about the Southwest, Barbara Babcock has declared that the region is America's Orient and points to the "olla maiden" as its main icon (Babcock 1990: 406). The figure of the olla maiden, or water carrier (Fig. 11), evokes the biblical Orient, and I read it as the feminine pendant to the more masculine (and dangerously libidinal in its Edenic allusions) Snake dance. Together these icons present a dichotomous image of southwestern Indians as exotic others, good and bad, tamed and wild.

Allusions to the Orient in representations of the Snake dance may also have suggested a parallel between European empires and the American empire. As Europe had colonized the Orient, so had the United States colonized the Indian Southwest. Given its role in the conquest of the American West, it seems fitting that the railroad would invoke this allusion. Furthermore, the tourist literature often struck a nationalist chord: Americans did not need to travel to Europe or Asia to find the exotic or the ancient; the aboriginal cultures of the Southwest were "our" antiquity. Charles Lummis, in his lifelong boosterism of the Southwest, claimed to have originated the phrase "See America First" to encourage Americans to explore the wonders of their Southwest. He chiefly exhorted them to forego

Europe in favor of the ruins, antiquities, and curiosities of America's ancient civilizations (1925: 3-12). As in European orientalism, the Indian other was reconstructed in a way that distanced it in time but incorporated it as part of the ancient history and tradition of the American nation (Said 1979: 3).

One of the Santa Fe Railway's favorite artists was E. Irving Couse, who first visited the Southwest in 1902. In all, he made paintings for twenty-two of the famous Santa Fe calendars (Bryant 1978: 449). His 1904 painting, *Moki Snake Dance* (Fig. 12), is based on his seeing the dance at Walpi in 1903. This painting occupies a position somewhere between the exoticism of the cover of Hough's *Moki Snake Dance* and the ethnographic representations. Like Harmer's drawing for Bourke (Fig. 2), Couse's painting depicts the moment in the dance when the priests circle the dance plaza carrying the snakes in their mouths. The costumes are detailed and accurate, but Couse's painting lacks the rigid organization of the anthropological drawing. It is realistic in the sense of being an illusionistic rendering, but the ritual is highly romanticized and somewhat sensationalized in the way the painting pushes the viewer into the action. And yet the dance is not presented as threatening or grotesque. There is a serenity and intimacy to the scene; rather than feeling repelled, the viewer is encouraged to contemplate the various activities depicted. There are relatively few observers, and they appear to be Hopis, not outsiders. With the omission of Anglo observers, the viewer has a sense of primal discovery, similar to the ethnographer's point of view. The Couse painting tries to reconcile the tension between the good and the bad Indian, between the merely less evolved primitive and the irredeemable savage. There is a stately, dreamlike quality to the painting, an excessive calmness that completely tames the snakes and Indians and evokes not only the tradition of orientalism in nineteenth-century European painting but also a kind of painterly pastoralism. These Indians resemble not savages so much as European peasants in paintings by Courbet.

The Santa Fe purchased this painting in 1904, and although it was not featured on a calendar, the Fred Harvey Company reproduced it as a postcard after 1907, and it appeared in a profusely illustrated Harvey souvenir book by John F. Huckel, *First Families of the Southwest* ([1913] 1934: n.p.). This volume inserted the painting opposite a description of the Snake dance, titled "The Indian Who Understands Rattlesnakes." Huckel, a company executive, pointed out that the Indians' holding snakes between their teeth "naturally suggests a state of barbarism close to the lowest degradation. And yet the Hopi ... have been among the most peaceful of the American tribes, thrifty and industrious and of unusually high moral standards." Huckel speculated that the snake handlers were not bitten because they "... understand rattlesnakes. Perhaps the reckless confidence of the Indian makes the snake think more of flight than fight" ([1913] 1934: n.p.). To the Western observer, the ceremony's salient characteristic was the handling of snakes. Indeed, in all the accounts of the Snake dance, ethnographic, artistic, and touristic, the moments of greatest importance involved handling the snakes, and the first question all recorders

of the ceremony tried to answer was, Why were the dancers not bitten? Or if they were bitten, why did they not die? For the most part observers suggested two answers: the snakes had been defanged or their venom milked, or the emetic the participants drank after the dance was an antidote to the snakes' poison. Huckel's explanation that the dancers were protected because they "understood" rattlesnakes is particularly revealing. To the Anglo observer, that the Hopi men apparently had an amiable, or at least not inimical, relationship with reptiles suggested that Hopis were somehow like snakes. Furthermore, Huckel implies that non-Indians could "understand" Hopis as Hopis understand rattlesnakes — thus taming and containing the anomalous primitive within the national culture. However, because in Western, Christian tradition snakes signify dark, forbidden powers, snake-handling clearly indicates a dangerous difference between Indians and Anglos.

Cultural Incorporation of the Snake Dance

Government policy in the 1880s tried to enforce the idea that through Indian education, land allotment, and citizenship, Indians could be transformed into something resembling middle-class whites. As primitives, as representatives of the childhood of the race, they could "grow up" into civilized humans. But by the turn of the century this view was changing; Native Americans began to seem more like other "problem" minorities; they weren't disappearing. Rather than assimilating into the American melting pot, Native Americans seemed to be one more static group in a complex society (Hoxie 1977: 612). The Snake dance was emblematic of the dilemma of how to incorporate cultural difference.

In a nation whose founding ideology was based on the freedom of religious practice, the Snake dance tested the limits of that freedom. Hopis *seemed* eminently assimilable in all their habits of life except their religion. In the Snake dance the otherwise childlike and peaceful Hopis became spiritually problematic and uncanny. In 1900 the Religious Crimes Code made it illegal to participate in ceremonies deemed "offensive" to Christian standards. The code was withdrawn in 1923, but in the intervening years, although the Snake dance was not forbidden, it was not encouraged. It was not outlawed in part because it was such a big tourist attraction; the railroads promoted it and tourists demanded it (Crane 1925: 245). Even within the federal bureaucracy there were those who defended the Snake dance on the grounds that it was a religious practice. In 1893 Thomas Donaldson's *Extra Census Bulletin* on the Hopis recommended that they should basically be let alone because they were among the few self-sufficient Native American groups: "They differ from the whites in the mere matter of creed, but they practice religion. Let them continue to be *self-reliant, peaceful citizens*" (1893: 45).

One person who struggled with the cultural significance of the Snake dance was that most strenuous of tourists, Theodore Roosevelt. In 1913 he

witnessed the ritual at Walpi and wrote an account of it for the magazine *Outlook*. As a "former great chief at Washington," he was admitted into a kiva to witness the rituals that preceded the public procession. His account echoed Fewkes and Bourke:

I have never seen a wilder or, in its way, more impressive spectacle than that of these chanting, swaying, red-skinned medicine-men, their lithe bodies naked, unconcernedly handling the death that glides and strikes while they held their mystic worship in the gray twilight of the kiva. The ritual and the soul-needs it met, and the symbolism and the dark savagery, were all relics of an ages-vanished past, survivals of an elder world (Roosevelt 1913: 372).

Roosevelt was clearly both strongly attracted to and repelled by what he saw. His overheated prose captures the excited emotions evoked by humans handling snakes and shows a frank admiration for the bravery of the Hopi men. There is also an element of "playing Indian" here in referring to himself as a "great chief" and to the snakes as "the death that glides and strikes." But he mitigates the sensational by reminding the reader that the ritual is merely a "survival" of an earlier stage of civilization and thus doomed to disappear.

Like Bourke and Fewkes, Roosevelt believed that Native Americans would inevitably be assimilated into Anglo-American society, but he was uncertain about the degree of that assimilation. Hopis were "different," and one can see Roosevelt wrestling with the terms of difference in his account. The social cohesion that the Snake dance exhibited held Hopis together on a local level; it did not bind Hopis to the nation but declared their difference as a group from the rest of the nation. As he wrote of the younger generation, whom he believed were moving away from traditional ways, Roosevelt tried to imagine the future of the Hopi people:

As their type becomes dominant the snake dance and antelope dance will disappear, the Hopi religious myths will become memories, and the Hopis will live in villages on the mesa tops, or scattered out on the plains, as their several inclinations point, just as if they were so many white men. It is to be hoped that the art, the music, the poetry of their elders will be preserved during the change coming over the younger generation (1913: 370).

Roosevelt solved the problem of the Snake dance by saying it would simply disappear as Hopis gradually gave up their religious beliefs. Here we see shades of the vanishing Indian. But at the same time Roosevelt suggested that some characteristics of Hopi "difference" should survive: "the art, the music, the poetry." He argued that Indian incorporation should be shaped "to preserve and develop the very real element of native culture possessed by these Indians" that "may in the end become an important contribution to American cultural life" (1913: 367). Under the rubric of salvage ethnology, Indian cultures were worth preserving, but the sites of preservation would be the academy and the museum. Roosevelt is suggesting something a bit different, that artifacts should be preserved but also that Indians should

continue some of their cultural practices. This was a new tension in the Indian problem: Native Americans were expected to live like white men, that is, to support themselves in a capitalist economy, but they might also preserve certain aspects of their way of life that Anglos found appealing: these included the things that seemed to Anglos most like the Western categories of art, music, and poetry. The problem with this strategy was that it overlooked the meaning to Hopis of their rituals. Furthermore, it secularized the spiritual aspects of the Snake dance, incorporating it within the sphere of Culture, a secular and peripheral realm. It was analogous to relegating the Snake dance to the midway or the museum, where what was different about Indians became harmless entertainment. To Roosevelt, the Snake dance did not qualify as art, music, or poetry and so was not worth preserving.

In contrast, the accounts of several recorders, ethnographers as well as boosters of regional culture such as George Wharton James and Charles Lummis, redeemed the value of the Snake dance precisely because it was a religious ritual. They countered the idea of the dance as a frightening, weird, pagan ritual with accounts of it as a profoundly religious ceremony. A good example of this redemptive Snake dance literature is the writer Hamlin Garland's 1896 account of the ceremony in *Harper's Weekly*. Garland, like Lummis, was a friend of Roosevelt's; they, along with Charles Bird Grinnell, Frederic Remington, Owen Wister, and Francis Leupp, were members of Roosevelt's "cowboy cabinet." Garland was not from the Southwest, but he was an important theorist of regional literature. Fewkes admired Garland's account of the Snake dance and praised it for its accuracy (Fewkes [1897] 1986: 312). In fact, Fewkes was excavating nearby when Garland visited Walpi to see the dance, and Garland quoted Fewkes's descriptions of the activities in the kivas from his BAE reports. Also, Garland's article was illustrated with paintings made by Fernand Lungren, one of the artists Fewkes had initiated into the Antelope society in 1893. Even though Lungren's illustrations made the Snake dance seem grotesque, Garland's account of the Hopis emphasized the picturesque exoticism of the place and the event and is reminiscent of Bourke's and Fewkes's evocations of life in the Hopi villages. Garland stayed several days at Hano before the ceremony and made these observations:

I looked out of the window upon the little plaza. Behold a strange America! In the center of the plaza was a pool of water. In this pool a dozen comical little brown bodies were paddling like ducks. Under the shade of adobe walls women with bare feet and bare arms, their bodies draped in scant gowns, were baking pottery or making bread. On the flat roofs other women, robed in green and black and purple, were moving about. A man in blue and pink, belted with a string of huge silver disks, was unloading an enormous dead wildcat from behind his saddle, his pony waiting with bowed head. A peculiar smell was in the air (Garland 1896: 802.).

In this passage the language is stripped of metaphor and allusion and relies on simple adjectives for its descriptive power. Nevertheless, exoticism is implied by the sentence "Behold a strange America!" Readers were encouraged to compare what Garland saw with "normal" America. Men,

women, and children looked and behaved "differently": the children acted like ducks, the women were "bare," and the men wore pink and blue clothes. This was America made strange, different, but the difference was not threatening.

Garland continues this strategy of tempering the exotic with the familiar. He repeatedly notes that although he felt like he was in a dream while watching the Snake rituals, he realized that for Hopi people the rituals were part of everyday life: "Incredible, thrilling, savage, and dangerous as it appeared to us, to them it was a world old religious ceremonial." He concluded, "There is no reason why the snake-dance should be interfered with or condemned" (1896: 807). It may be that Garland saw the Snake dance as worth protecting in part because of his ideas about American literature. In *Crumbling Idols* (1894) he argued that the future of American literature depended on the recognition of American life, particularly as lived in the West, as fit for literary and artistic endeavors. The local color of the West was especially inspirational, but only as expressed and understood by natives of the region. In his account of the Snake dance, Garland began to make this move: like an ethnographer, he took on the role of interlocutor, interpreting Hopi life for non-Indian readers. In his account, Hopi people seemed more like regional folk, on the order of Sarah Orne Jewett's New Englanders, than exotic foreigners. This claim that regional difference is the source of an authentic national literature would become the dominant refrain of southwestern artists and literati over the next several decades. By reconstituting the Snake dance as a religious ritual, cleansed of oriental or Gothic strangeness, Western writers such as Lummis and Garland brought Hopis into a balance with the rest of American culture, as one more ethnic group whose main difference was religious belief, a difference Garland was willing to tolerate. Unlike Roosevelt, he could see that if Hopi people were to maintain their cultural integrity, they would need their religion. He did not want them to be just like Anglos, because they would lose their cultural distinctiveness and their usefulness as literary subjects.

Many years later another literary observer of the Snake dance summed up the ways in which Americans had come to understand the Snake dance. In 1924, while he was the guest of Mabel Dodge Luhan, D. H. Lawrence saw the Snake dance at Hotevilla. In a travel sketch that appeared in *Theatre Arts Monthly*, he distinguished three ways in which the ritual was understood by Anglo observers: as a "circus-performance," "as a cultured spectacle" (like the ballet), and as a religious ceremonial (1924: 837-38). These distinctions described the appeal of the Snake dance to tourists, artists, and anthropologists, respectively. To Lawrence the touristic appeal recalled the low-brow exoticism of a sideshow, the high-culture appreciation remade the ritual into a formally attractive arrangement of movement and sound, and the scientific approach called for an intellectual explanation of the ritual's spiritual or cultural meaning as a religion. Lawrence dismissed all three, saying that they either sentimentalized or brutalized the Indian, making "the

Indian with his 'religion' ... a sort of public pet," in other words, the savage domesticated, tamed within the terms of Western entertainment, art, or science (1924: 838). Lawrence tried to apprehend the Snake dance on the Hopis' own terms and proceeded to describe it through his own somewhat idiosyncratic understanding of "animism" and oriental philosophies. But his description of the Indian as a "public pet" suggests that Hopi people were culturally incorporated, not as full equals, but as domesticated others represented for public consumption.

In the years between Garland's and Lawrence's account, the cultural battle over the Snake dance and other Native American rituals continued. Although the Snake dance was never forbidden, the Indian Affairs Commission periodically tried to place restrictions on the performances. In 1921 Commissioner Charles Burke sent a series of recommendations to Indian superintendents that limited the times dances could take place and who could participate in them (Gibson 1983: 215; Lyon 1988: 256; Schultz: 1921; Sweet 1981: 85-90). This prompted a wave of activism among Anglo artists and writers working in the Southwest. Poets and writers such as Alice Corbin Henderson, Mary Austin, and John Collier, artists such as John Sloan and Marsden Hartley, the anthropologist F. W. Hodge, and many others lobbied and wrote articles arguing that Americans could only gain from preserving the rituals of Native Americans. As part of this effort, a demonstration of the Snake dance was performed in Washington on the Capitol Plaza on 15 May 1926, before Vice-President Dawes and five thousand others. The purpose was to show that Hopi ceremonies were not savage or cruel. It was reported in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* that Senator Cameron of Arizona found the dance no worse than the Charleston (Lyon 1988: 245). Efforts to preserve the Snake dance and other rituals coincided with the interests of tourism promoters and chambers of commerce, who began to organize annual festivals in New Mexico and Arizona, such as the Santa Fe Fiesta and Indian Market. Finally, in 1928 Deputy Indian Commissioner E. B. Merritt told the Pueblo Council that the United States "did not wish to interfere with Pueblo customs and ceremonies " (Lyon 1988: 256). It might have seemed as though the Snake dance was finally safe, that Hopi people were free to pursue their cultural practices without interference, but, as we shall see, the battle was far from over.

The Snake Dance as a Spectacle

At a literal level, representations of the Snake dance circulated as commodities: as postcards and photographs and in books and magazines. And the ritual itself became a tourist attraction from which railroads and other entrepreneurs profited. But beyond the literal commodification of the representations, they circulated as part of a "spectacle" that embodied "a social relation among people, mediated by images" (Debord 1983: 4). In the spectacle of the Snake dance, Hopis did not control the making of these representations or their circulation; rather, they existed in the spectacle primarily as objects of

exchange rather than subjects. Hopis quickly saw the consequences of this representational process and responded by prohibiting representation of the ritual. By examining the "spectacularization" of the Snake dance, we can begin to see how the representations crossed and recrossed cultural and institutional borders and how Hopis and others have participated in and shaped these exchanges.

An example of the "macro-economy" of the Snake dance as a spectacle and its representational proliferation is the account of Earle R. Forrest, published in 1961. Forrest was working as a cowhand on an Arizona ranch while on vacation from college when he first witnessed and photographed the ceremony at Oraibi in 1906, where he also encountered Edward S. Curtis (Forrest 1961: 55). But the desire to see the ritual had been planted in him in 1899, when he was a boy in Washington, Pennsylvania. There he read an account of it in a story by Hamlin Garland in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Shortly after, he read *The Moki Snake Dance*, by Walter Hough, and then the account of the Snake and Flute ceremonies at Mishongnovi by Fewkes. He saw the dance again at Mishongnovi in 1907, but this time he was with the artist Louis Akin (a favorite of the Santa Fe Railway), who asked him to photograph the winner of the foot race so that he might paint him. It is not clear if Akin actually painted the scene, but in 1911 he was commissioned to paint murals for the Southwest room of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Akin died suddenly of pneumonia in 1913, before he could complete the murals, but shortly before he died he revisited the Hopi mesas, making detailed sketches for the project, including two oil portraits of Snake priests, possibly for a depiction of the Snake dance (Forrest 1961: 74-83; Babbitt 1973: 65).

In Forrest's account we can see how individuals who wrote about or made images of the Snake dance were connected to large and extremely powerful institutions. Images of and literature about the Snake dance were disseminated by the railroads, the popular press, museums, and academia. These representations in turn encouraged the tourist Forrest to produce his own images and, eventually, a narrative of his experience. The artist Akin, who was also a tourist, produced images intended for the railroads as well as an East Coast metropolitan museum that preserved Hopi material culture. Thus seemingly disparate institutions had overlapping interests in the Snake dance, and the representations they helped produce circulated in a vast cultural arena and became the medium of exchange in social relations among producers and consumers of the images and texts.

As the Snake dance became known the world over, it was visited by thousands of outsiders every year. Leo Crane, Hopi agent from 1911 to 1919, recounted in 1925 the difficulty of controlling the crowd at the Walpi dances. He described the Snake dance as "like staging a nervous ballet on the cornice of the Woolworth Building, knowing that fifty mice will be turned loose on signal" (Crane 1925: 249). The Snake dance had become a social event, a kind

of “rendezvous” for Anglos in the know.²³ In 1922 Ethel Hickey noted in the *Santa Fe Magazine* (the railway’s organ): “It is the meeting place of celebrities from all over the world, where the average man may hob-nob with the great, perhaps entirely unaware. Yet, I strongly suspect that the opportunity to see celebrities rough it de luxe — for everybody camps at the Snake Dance — is as strong a drawing card to many as is the dance itself” (Hickey 1922: 45). The presence of Roosevelt in 1913 certainly added to the social cachet of attending the Snake dance. Figure 13 depicts the scramble of film and still photographers to get pictures of the former president and illustrates the extent to which tourists had become part of the attraction. Indeed, the spectacle of the Snake dance (and of southwestern Indian life in general) began to consume its producers. Artists who lived and worked in Taos and Santa Fe became tourist attractions themselves; in 1926 the Fred Harvey Company began its Indian Detours, and among the attractions, which included the Snake dance in the right season, was artist Sheldon Parsons’s studio in Santa Fe (Bryant 1978: 452).

The pressures that the spectacularization of the Snake dance brought to bear on the dance and the Hopis very quickly became problematic — and eventually intolerable. Conflicts surrounding the performance of the ceremony involved not only the sheer number of visitors but also — and especially — photography. Photographic representations of the Snake dance seemed to proliferate exponentially. By the 1890s photographs of the Snake dance were being reproduced widely, and in many of these photographs, dozens of cameras can be seen in the hands of the hundreds of spectators. Agent Crane wrote: “Each tourist packs one of those devices sold by Mr. Eastman” (1925: 251). The presence of so many photographers was also noted in 1905 by Nell Clark Keller, writing for the *Woman’s Home Companion*: when the dancers emerged, “Snap! went all the cameras.” The event became a quintessential “Kodak moment” in that it offered tourists an opportunity to “capture” on film something extremely exotic, the snapshot serving as evidence of the tourists’ experience. The proliferation of cameras began to cause conflicts between photographers vying for the best spots from which to shoot the public parts of the ceremony. In 1902 George Wharton James noted in *Camera Craft* that photographers were asked to

keep within a certain line, and that no one without a camera should be permitted in their preserves. ... Hitherto every man had chosen his own field, and moved to and fro wherever he liked — in front of his neighbor or some one else; kicking down another fellow’s tripod and sticking his elbow in the next fellow’s lens (1902: 7). ... It cannot be said that the changes are to the advantage of the photographer. They render his work less certain and effective, and it will not be long before one can write a learned and accurate paper from the standpoint of scientific ethnology on “the change in religious ceremonies owing to the camera” (1902: 10).

Indeed, this is what began to happen. One of the changes in the Snake dance James noticed was that Hopi participants avoided the cameras when it came time to drink the emetic at the end of the ceremony.

However, Hopis did not continue to change the ceremony to accommodate photographers. Rather, they banned cameras from the Snake dance altogether. The ban came about gradually. From 1870 to 1910 there were few "formal tribal restrictions on photography of Indian ceremonies." But by the 1920s many Southwest Indian groups prohibited photography at ceremonies. Restrictions on photographing the Snake dance at Walpi began in about 1913, when visitors were charged one dollar to bring a camera onto the mesa, and "prohibition of photography of all Hopi ceremonies became almost completely effective in the late 1920s" (Lyon 1988: 238). Luke Lyon has written that he has found no photos of the Snake dance dated later than 1923 (1988: 245). Ironically, officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs at this time agreed with the Hopis that photography should be restricted, because they thought the reproduction of images of the Snake dance encouraged the Indians to keep practicing their religion (Longo 1980).

The ban on photography came about, in part, because of the behavior of some photographers. George Wharton James admitted to having taken a photograph inside a kiva at Mishongnovi when he had been asked not to (1900: 266). Some Anglos were more sensitive to the intrusiveness of taking photographs. Sumner Matteson, writing in *Field and Stream* in 1904, gave some advice for visitors: "It is bad enough to steal photographs of their altars and secret ceremonies, but to this some of the clans do not seriously object, so long as nothing is disturbed and they are assured that no pictures, drawings or words will ever be shown to the other Hopis, thereby exposing the secrets of their orders" (Matteson 1904: 339). Indeed, as we have seen, the divulging of sacred practices was a serious transgression to Hopis, but they also considered taking photographs an act of disrespect and "resented commercial exploitation of their religion through sale of photographs" (Lyon 1988: 256). To put the dilemma in terms of the economy of the spectacle, by prohibiting photography and sketching, Hopi people could begin to escape the commodity exchange of the spectacle and to some extent break from the hegemonic relationship with their representers.

Hopis eventually closed the Snake and Antelope ceremonies to visitors altogether. But the decision to restrict the access of visitors and the making of images of the public parts of the ceremony was a long time in coming and the result of much debate among Hopis. In 1993 anthropologist Peter Whiteley pointed out:

Hopis see their culture not as some abstract expression, but as instrumental: ritual dramas, for example, are performed for the material benefit of the world. It is only with great reluctance and significant opposition, therefore, that the priests felt they had no alternative but to close down the Snake and Kachina dances. In other words, it runs counter to Hopi first principles to restrict all outside representations of them: they are simply tired of the abuses (1993: 147).

At the same time that Hopis began closing the Snake dance to photographers, in Prescott, Arizona, a facsimile of the ceremony was being performed by the Smokis, a secret society of Anglo businessmen and professionals (Fig. 14).²⁴ In 1921 they performed it as part of the city's Way Out West celebration, an exercise in civic boosterism. In 1924 the June Snake dance of the Smokis became an annual event.²⁵

The Smokis performed the Snake dance as a theatrical spectacle with elaborate costumes, makeup, settings, and lighting. The authenticity of the performances extended mainly to the costumes and paraphernalia (including live bull snakes instead of rattlesnakes), not to the procedures of the ceremony. However, over time the Smokis accrued a gloss of authenticity, including their own mythology based loosely on Hopi cosmology. In 1922 Sharlot Hall wrote *The Story of the Smoki People*, which contains several poems explaining "Where the Smokis Dance," "Why the Smokis Dance," and "When the Smokis Dance," as well as "The Story of the Smoki People," which is a Smoki "origin myth" based on Fewkes's Snake legend. And more recently, in the mid-1980s, in imitation of the Hopi ban on photography, the Smokis prohibited visitors from photographing their ceremonies (although dancers could be photographed afterward) (Lyon 1988: 256).

The Smokis are part of a long tradition of American fraternal and sororal organizations engaged in "playing Indian," appropriating and reenacting various Native American cultural practices (Rayna Green 1988; Deloria 1994). The literature the Smokis published about themselves claimed that "shrouded in the anonymity of authentic Indian dress [they] lose their identity and shed their personality of the White Man in faithful interpretation of age-old dances of their Indian neighbors" (Parker 1941: 1). As much as the Smoki rhetoric emphasized the authenticity and seriousness of their performances, they did not show respect for Hopi beliefs or cosmology, and the performances were, in fact, comic turns; as respectable members of the business elite, the Smokis played at being inferior savages. The Smokis eventually performed other Native American rituals, but that the Snake dance was the first is telling. It was the most celebrated ritual of the Southwest and also apparently the most primitive, the most other. To be able to "be" this most extreme other demonstrated the power of the performer. The Indian became entirely appropriable and controlled by the performer. As if they were bringing an ethnographic exhibit to life, the Smokis literally inhabited the space of the vanished Indian. However, as in minstrelsy, one of the problems with the Smokis' appropriation and performance was that Hopis had not vanished — they were very present.

In recent years Hopis have responded to the Smoki dances by parodying the Smokis. Peter Whiteley reports that in 1985 a group of Hopi ritual clowns performed a "burlesque" of the Smoki Snake dance using wooden snakes and executing Hollywood-style chanting and dancing. As Whiteley points out, they were "ridiculing its racism and incongruities, reasserting sovereignty

over Hopi representations, parodically turning the parody back on itself, emptying it for the time being at least of its oppressive meaning and power" (1993: 150). Finally, in 1990 a group of Hopis launched a protest at the Smoki Snake dance. The Smokis responded by canceling the 1991 performance, and, for the time being at least, the Smokis no longer perform the Snake dance (Whiteley 1993: 127).

As representations of the Snake dance proliferated, so did the dance's social and cultural uses. The meaning of the Snake dance to non-Indian Americans has shifted over time: from profane outrage, to ethnographic curiosity, to sacred ritual, to artistic performance. Although there was a gradual drift toward tolerance of the Snake dance on the part of government authorities, all of these meanings existed at any given time. As a marker of ethnic difference, the Snake dance and its representations came to serve as a cultural battleground, where political and social issues having to do with the incorporation of Native Americans into the nation were fought, with much of the fighting being over the control of representations. The politics of representation, in collecting, in photographing, in textualizing the Snake dance, effectively objectified and silenced the men and women who participated in the ritual. The first step toward a solution was for Hopis to remove themselves from the spectacle by prohibiting the making of representations of their rituals, to cease to make themselves available for objectification. But in addition to trying to control the spread of representations, Hopis and other Native Americans have begun to "write back." By re-presenting their encounters with non-Indians in the "social spaces" provided by ethnography, tourism, and the art market, southwestern Indian people continue to reimagine and negotiate the terms of their participation in American culture.

Notes:

¹ See newspaper references cited in Fewkes ([1897] 1986: 312); see also Baxter (1895), Edwardy (1889), James (1900), Long (1896), Oliver (1911), Rust (1896), and Schultz (1908). The date of the first account of the Snake dance in the American press is uncertain, but accounts began appearing in newspapers by 1879 (Harrison 1964).

² At the end of the nineteenth century, the Snake and Antelope ceremony was performed in even years at the pueblos of Oraibi, Shongopavi, and Sipaulovi. In odd years it took place at Walpi and Mishongnovi. Sichomovi apparently did not have the ceremony. The Flute dance occurred at each pueblo in years when the Snake dance did not. In the mid-1980s, the Snake dance continued to be performed only at Mishongnovi and Shongopavi. It was last performed at Oraibi in 1916, at Walpi in 1969, at Sipaulovi in the 1970s, and at Hotevilla in 1980 (Lyon 1988: 263).

³ For good summaries and discussions of the theory of cultural evolution, see Hinsley (1981: 133-37) and Stocking (1968: 110-32).

⁴ "Moqui" or "Moki" is what Hopi people were called by early Anglo observers.

⁵ Hinsley (1983: 68) argues that the tension in the disparity between Cushing's and Fewkes's approaches to ethnography continued to be embodied in Boasian anthropology. For more on Cushing and ethnographic patronage, see Hinsley (1989).

⁶ This is not to say that Bourke was less of a scientist than Fewkes; Bourke went on to write several well-regarded monographs for the Bureau of American Ethnology, and it was actually Fewkes whose reputation was not very good. Other ethnographers, including Bourke, Washington Matthews, and Frank Cushing, claimed Fewkes plagiarized others' work, especially that of Alexander M. Stephen. For more on Fewkes's reputation, see Hinsley (1983: 64) and Porter (1986: 277-78).

⁷ Whites who signed included trader Thomas Kearns, Alexander Stephen, missionary H. R. Voth, Frank Hamilton Cushing, John Wesley Powell, and ethnologist James Mooney (Whiteley 1988: 81).

⁸ For an excellent account of the "Oraibi split," see Whiteley (1988). See also Rushforth and Upham (1992: Chap. 6).

⁹ For example, a pamphlet advertising the Tertiary-Millennial Celebration of Santa Fe in 1883 (supposedly one-third of a thousand years, to the day and hour, since the arrival of Europeans in the area) described the local Indians as "the direct descendants of the Aztecs, who were found here in 1534 by Cabeza de Vaca—tilling the soil and living under wholesome laws" (*Santa Fe Tertiary-Millennial Celebration* 1883: n.p.). See Mauzy (1936) for more about this exposition.

¹⁰ Alexander M. Stephen (d. 1894), a friend of the trader Thomas Kearns, had lived at Kearns's Canyon, near the Hopi mesas, since 1881 and had recorded his observations of the Hopis and the Navajos since 1882. Fewkes enlisted Stephen's help in observing the Hopis beginning in 1890 and published accounts based on Stephen's recorded observations. These publications (notably "The Snake Ceremonials at Walpi") appeared under Fewkes's name, with Stephen acknowledged in the introduction. Stephen's writings went largely unpublished until his journals, edited by Elsie Clews Parsons, appeared in 1936. See Stephen (1936: 577-767) for accounts of various performances of the Snake dance in the 1880s and 1890s. See also his *Hopi Indians of Arizona* (1940).

¹¹ One of Bourke's companions during his visit to the Hopi villages was the artist Peter Moran, brother of the painter Thomas Moran. Moran was not affiliated with the Bureau of Ethnology, and his task was distinct from Bourke's: the painter was "obtaining material which will one day be serviceable in placing upon canvas the scenes of this wonderful drama" (Bourke [1884] 1984: 141). In other words, Moran was making sketches that he would later develop into oil paintings of artistic value. Unfortunately, his sketchbooks are not known to have survived (Porter 1986: 320). It would be useful to compare his depictions of Hopi life to Harmer's. A description of the Snake dance written by Peter Moran appears in the *Extra Census Bulletin on the Moqui Pueblo Indians of Arizona* (1893) by Thomas Donaldson.

¹² Fig. 1, "Outline Map Showing the Position of Tusayan", reprinted from Fewkes [1894] 1977, "Snake Ceremonials at Walpi". To view the figures that accompany this paper, please go to www.anthro.uiuc.edu/jashm/dilworth.

¹³ Walter Benjamin cited in Clifford (1986: 119). See also Clifford's "On Ethnographic Authority" (1983).

¹⁴ Paintings and drawings of the Snake dance by Scott also figured prominently in the 1893 *Extra Census Bulletin on the Hopis*, by Thomas Donaldson.

¹⁵ For more on the history of ethnographic photography, see Banta and Hinsley (1986); Blackman (1980); Edwards (1992); Lyman (1982); and Scherer (1975).

¹⁶ When it became possible to do so, ethnographers and others began making films of the Snake dance. Edward Curtis filmed the Snake dance in 1904 at Oraibi; apparently this film became part of Curtis's "musicale" delivered in 1911 and 1912 (Gidley 1982: 71-72). William E. Kopplin, an advertising executive with the Santa Fe Railway, made a film of the Walpi dance in 1911 (Lyon 1988: 262; McLuhan 1985: 131-42). The Library of Congress has a paper print of a film of the Snake dance at Walpi copyrighted in 1901 by Thomas Edison.

¹⁷ As anthropologist Peter Whiteley has observed of Hopi cosmology, "Secrecy and the attendant social care and respect accorded to esoteric knowledge guarantees both authority conferred by initiation and instrumental efficacy when the power and knowledge is activated." Therefore, making this knowledge public destroyed its effectiveness and could "damage the spiritual health of the community" (1993: 139).

¹⁸ *Sun Chief* was edited by anthropologist Leo Simmons from interviews with and diaries kept by Talayesva at Simmons's request.

¹⁹ This approximate date for the Snake dance life group comes from "Brief Illustrated History of the Manikins," by Thomas Kavanagh (1990). In a conversation with Dr. Kavanagh at the National Museum of Natural History in the summer of 1990, I learned that this same Snake dance life group was on display in the museum until a couple of years before, when it was put into storage because of continuing sensitivities on the part of Hopis.

²⁰ See also Boas (1893); Braun (1975); Jacknis (1985); Rydell (1984); Starr (1893); and Trennert (1987) for information about ethnographic exhibits at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. For thoughtful analyses of ethnographic exhibits, see Hinsley (1991) and Fowler and Fowler (1991).

²¹ There was a very popular Cliff Dwellers exhibit on the Midway at Chicago, but it exhibited artifacts and ruins of the Southwest, not living Native Americans (*Cliff Dwellers* 1893).

²² Although his photographs of the Snake dance represented his greatest success, the ceremony was also the cause of his demise: Wittick died in 1903 from a snake bite he received at Fort Wingate while he was packing some snakes to take to the Snake dance (Packard and Packard 1970: 46).

²³ I am indebted to Mrs. Mary Jean Cook of Santa Fe for this observation.

²⁴ The Smokis (pronounced "smoke-eyes") is an elite organization that has claimed President Coolidge and Barry Goldwater as initiates. It also has an auxiliary "Squaw" organization. A Smoki museum in Prescott opened in 1935 and has a collection of Southwest Indian material culture and art. Two anonymous articles in the *Santa Fe Magazine*, "Weird Snake Dance of the Smoki People" (1923) and "Arizona Will Be Host to Thousands of Visitors in June" (1929), indicate that the Smoki ceremonials were important tourist attractions. For a fuller discussion of the Smokis and other "Indian hobbyists," see Deloria (1994: 335-95).

²⁵ The Smokis were probably not the first Anglos to perform the Snake dance. In 1906 Edward S. Curtis apparently participated in the ceremony, but not the public dance (Gidley 1982: 72). Years later, however, Curtis described his role thus: "Dressed in a G-string and snake dance costume and with the regulation snake in my mouth I went through [the ceremony] while spectators witnessed the dance and did not know that a white man was one of the wild dancers" (Boesen and Graybill 1977: 136). Gidley suggests that Curtis may have embroidered on the story of his participation, and his claim to have been initiated into the Snake clan and to have danced in the public ceremony may have been exaggerated or untrue (1982: 72).

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