

The Imaginary Southwest. Commodity Disavowal in an American Orient

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This paper seeks first to extend Johannes Fabian's contention that in central Africa, "almost all ethnographic objects were acquired by transactions that ... mostly involved sales and hence the prior constitution of objects as goods, if not commodities" (1998: 88), by comparing some of the market situations in which exoticised objects were embedded in the American Southwest, China and India.¹ It is noted, not only in central Africa were the flows of such objects regulated by hybrid market conditions which articulated previous European and non-western spheres of transactions until their full commoditisation was secured, but that similar patterns of economic incorporation are widespread. A large part of foreign material cultures can no longer be assumed to be particular or diagnostic of specific cultures or societies but needs be viewed as having mediated a variety of multi-junctured, inter-cultural encounters and transactions as part of a global cultural economy seen by Arjun Appadurai "as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order" (1996: 32). This increasingly acknowledged aspect of formative and later contact situations, holds important implications for the way anthropology and art history conceptualise the evidential value of material culture and its use in museum displays and theorisation. Secondly, this essay draws attention to the process in which an object's commodity value can be disavowed, and its extra or interstitial and hybrid condition eluded, and replaced by often exoticised significations. My choice of comparative examples is not accidental, and the strategies used in different parts of the world for promoting the misrecognition of commodities as unique and singular cultural icons bear striking resemblances. So much so, it is argued, that Orientalism, in its organisation as well as its representational strategies, far from limited to the geographical Orient, constitutes a transcontinental imaginary found also in discourses on the American Southwest.

I. The Southwest. Market Transactions and Commodity Disavowal

The American Southwest, depicted as the tri-cultural home to Indigenous, Hispanic and Anglo cultures, is an essentialised ethnoscape² reproduced in tourist literature; official state government publications; popular life style magazines; guidebooks and commercial pamphlets and advertisements distributed by city councils, chambers of commerce, and local businesses. New Mexico, 'the land of enchantment', has defined this imaginary even more precisely by its own hagiography of 'classical' travel writers. The Southwest was one of the seminal regions in which American anthropology and archaeology developed. As one of the most intensely anthropologised areas of the globe, it is not surprising that commercial and academic interests often ran very close together - in parallel, overlapping and intertwining - creating hybrid, often romanticised discourses, intimately linked and dependent on the area's material cultures, and sharing the same imaginary. It is this essentialised and exoticised imaginary whose, to borrow a phrase from Said, "sheer knitted

¹ I am grateful to the Horniman Museum who between 1997-2001 sponsored three periods, totalling five months of fieldwork in the Southwest.

² I use the terms ethnoscape (people including tourists, immigrants, guest workers, refugees and exiles), technoscape (flows of machinery and plant), financescape (flows of money), mediascape, (repertoires of images and information), and ideoscape (ideologies based on elements of the Western Enlightenment world view), to refer to the different flows which, according to Appadurai constitute the experience of globalisation, as well as giving rise to 'imagined worlds' (1996: 33-6).

together strength” continues to nurture the cultural values on which the region’s art and tourist economies now depend.

Early anthropologists and museum curators wrote popular guides and articles and sometimes acted as middlemen to acquire collections which were used for commercial, scientific or artistic purposes and sold to museums, private collectors, emporia, and souvenir shops, or even hotels for interior decoration (Walker and Wyckoff 1983, Weigle and Babcock 1996, Howard and Pardue 1996). Adolph Bandelier’s *The Delight Makers* (1890), a fictional account, by a pioneering archaeologist, of the prehistoric life of the Pueblos presented a romanticised glimpse of the Southwest, which was later reinforced by complementary literature and exotic commercial illustrations that were circulated in the form of posters and calendars. Anthropologists and archaeologists played an exceptional role in the construction of the exoticism on which the commodification of Indian arts and crafts and their incorporation into transnational markets was dependant. They used local knowledge and social networks to collect on behalf of commercial companies. They commissioned and encouraged the development of commercial craftwork. They essentialised, promoted and helped organise the spectacularisation of craftwork through their involvement in museum exhibitions, commercial shows, competitions and popular writing and through their participation on the bodies responsible for evaluating it, they contributed towards its purification into art. Anthropologists connected to the Field Columbian Museum, including Henrich Voth, Charles Owen, John Hudson and Charles Newcombe, helped acquire, identify, catalogue and even provide buyers for the Fred Harvey Company collections (Howard and Pardue 1996: 27). George Dorsey, for example, made collections from the Arapaho, Osage and possibly Kiowa; Hudson collected baskets from the Hupa, Klamath and other Californian groups; Owen collected from the Apache, and with Voth, from the Hopi (Ibid. 30-32). Owen promoted commercial craft production among the Hopi by commissioning kachinas for the Company (Harvey III. 1996: 71). The Company’s museum, containing some of the best pieces it had acquired, housed in the Alvarado Hotel in Santa Fe, reinforced this exotic invocation. According to the writer J.B. Priestley, visiting the region in the early 1950s, the Museum was “... arranged in a haphazard, bazaar-like abundance” which he found preferable “to the rational, hygienic order of an up-to-date museum” (1955: 4)

Archaeology stimulated the copying and commercial production of Southwestern Pueblo pottery. Jesse Walter Fewkes excavations and his friendship with the Tewa potter, Nampeyo led, in 1895, to the rebirth and eventual commodification of Sikyatki pottery. Similarly, Hewett’s 1907 excavations at Pajarito Plateau brought archaeological shards to the attention of women from San Ildefonso Pueblo who revived its production shortly after (Toulouse 1977: 31-2). In the 20th century, the Museum of New Mexico encouraged the revival of Acoma pottery and its adoption of ancient Mimbres style designs. The Museum also strenuously encouraged improvement in the quality of ceramic production to secure and increase commerce, and develop and widen popular and sumptuary markets. Although, the direct role played by potters like Nampeyo, or Maria Martinez from San Ildefonso, in supplying wares to the Fred Harvey Company is unclear, the acknowledged quality of their pottery and the higher prices they could command, encouraged other makers to sign their works, leading market demand to become refocused away from generic pottery types to individual potters.

The commoditisation of the Southwest was however, only achieved using a much wider network than the small anthropological vanguard associated with some of the bigger commercial interests, and included traders and missionaries who repeated the acquisitions of anthropologists many times over. The number of kachinas passing through the Fred Harvey Company in 1901 alone amounted to at least 400 pieces (Harvey III, 1996: 71). In 1908 the Company brought 1,657 textiles and a further 2,094 the following year (Howard and Pardue 1996: 44). Navajo blanket and rug as well as Pueblo pottery styles were promoted and fixed by traders after anticipating western market demands. The expansion of external markets directly changed native craft production. A grey

background colour was introduced by the Ganado Trading Post to satisfy Victorian tastes in interior decoration. The Crystal Post, at roughly the same time, attempted to increase production by introducing a division of labour in which wool was sent east to be cleaned; yarn was made specifically by spinners; dyeing was carried out by the wife of the Post's owner; while weavers were restricted to copying standard patterns, influenced by Persian and Turkish carpet designs. Between 1900-1920, small portable objects, like Tesuque pottery rain gods, Cochiti and Santa Clara pottery models and figurative works, or more recently storytellers and Koshares, were invented and sometimes grafted onto hybrid narratives which borrowed partly from Indian sources to establish and legitimate new genres for the external market. Recently, the Navajo too have entered the pottery market by making moulded opaque cream ware in which horse hair is added to the slip to achieve vein-like patterns, while in the area around Shiprock, particularly fine adaptations of older and much cruder style pottery beakers and related wares are being made entirely for the external market. A fairly limited indigenous technoscape was, in the last decades of the 19th century, dramatically transformed through the importation of foreign technology, raw materials, dyes, and a new division of labour intended to increase production to satisfy new demands stimulated by the construction of a successful exotic imaginary. Although in the case of the Navajo, this new technoscape - initially introduced during their forced imprisonment at Bosque Redonda between 1864-1868 - failed to re-articulate relations between Anglos and Navajo, crucial for developing a coherent production, marketing and distribution system, until the final decades of the 19th century.

Trading posts played a fundamental role in incorporating reservation Indians into a western market. Posts grew up near water sources and at the cross-roads of major trails, where families had already settled. Consequently, they were highly localised and the craftwork they commissioned reflected both the abilities of local Indian artists, as well as the tastes and market acumen of traders. Poor communications and geographical isolation created strong bonds between particular families and traders which often resulted in the monopolisation of much of the weaving within a particular area. The Ganado Post in 1878 for example, employed 300 weavers. A post's endogamous corporate nature was also guarded by the practice, used by some, of paying weavers or other craftpersons in tokens which were redeemable only at the post where the makers traded. Other posts provided neither money nor tokens, preferring instead to limit transactions to personally mediated exchanges. The Lee's Ferry Trading Post, between 1874-5, principally exchanged blankets for horses, with the cost of blankets calculated at 25 cents per pound (Amsden 1934: 173). Another strategy used to tie posts and particular families together was the extension of credit by pawn; accepting silver jewellery, ceremonial costumes, horse tack, guns, for credit and later, cash. In the absence of any general interchangeable currency circulating between different ethnic groups, distinct spheres of exchange probably emerged, in which goods were given differential values depending on the particular sphere in which they circulated. New legislation in 1973 undermined the pawn system on Indian lands, but it still provides an important source of cash in posts surrounding the Navajo Reservations, particularly on roads like Highway 64. By the first decade of the 20th century, successful posts like Crystal and Ganado, printed their own mail order catalogues to expand the market for Navajo rugs, as well as supplying large corporations like the Fred Harvey Company. Taken together, the posts dispersed across the reservation, provided a system of nodal points at which intercultural exchanges were mediated and the demand of regional and even international markets were realised. Trade licences reached their peak in 1943, with 95 registered traders within the Navajo Reservation and nearly fifty operating outside of it (James 1999: 8-9). In the past twenty four years, trading posts have declined sharply due to easier access to the outside world as a result of better roads, higher operating costs on reservations, and sub-urbanisation and the growth of alternative commercial outlets at places like Shiprock and Kayenta. Posts have responded to such changes by either closing their operations or becoming part of convenience stores and diversifying their merchandise. Some new outlets and shops in places like Gallup and Santa Fe retain special

relations with specific reservation families with which they had former connections. This pattern is also reflected in some of the bigger wholesalers in Pueblo pottery, like Palms, in Albuquerque.

In the contemporary Southwest, the ethnoscape of craft production and marketing is far more complex than the common tri-lateral description of the region's cultures suggests. The growth of Santa Fe and Gallup as tourist destinations and the concentration of shops and galleries, has centralised and strengthened the mainly Anglo control over the market, while increasing the distance between production centres and markets. While trading posts have gradually declined on the reservations, other establishments which are able to carry out the highly lucrative business in pawn have been established around the Navajo Reservation, particularly in Gallup, Farmington and Bloomfield. Crafts are now sold direct to wholesalers in Shiprock, Gallup and Albuquerque, many of whom have their own mail order catalogues or web pages, through which their wares are marketed to shops and galleries throughout the world. Longer established trading companies that deal in older Indian crafts are still owned by Anglos, but in Santa Fe and Gallup, some craft shops and galleries have been brought in the past few years by Middle Eastern businessmen. In 2001 there were about five retail stores in Gallup and perhaps four in Santa Fe under Arab ownership. Although these constitute a small minority of the total number of stores and galleries, Anglo traders were often critical of the extent of their expertise, the quality of the merchandise offered, and marketing practices which frequently involved stocking art / crafts for both high and low ends of the market, combining Southwest craftwork with that from elsewhere and using 'sales' and flexible pricing to appeal to the swift tourist turnover.

Anthropologists and art institutions have also marketed indigenous cultures by promoting their greater visibility through the creation or revival of various forms of spectacle. Spectacles divide audiences from performers, making the first into passive spectators, discouraging interaction between them, and, more often than not, scripting the enactments of the performers to give the appearance of a vital and active culture which hides its subjection to external cultural contingencies and demands. The knowledge conveyed by spectacle is selective and inflates the picturesque to obscure all other conditions and expressions of subaltern existence. Spicer (1972: 71-3) identifies three types of contemporary Southwest Indian spectacles. Those modelled on county and state fairs, organised by Indians themselves, and specialising predominantly in the arts and crafts of a single ethnic group, such as the annual Navajo Tribal Fair at Window Rock or the Papago Rodeo at Sells. Secondly, pow-wows, ceremonies or festivals organised and controlled by Anglos. These are secular, commercial events usually organised by a chamber of commerce. Finally, he identifies ceremonials, such as the annual saints day festival at Laguna and San Juan pueblos, or that of St Francis of Assisi at Magdalena, Sonora, where material goods and crafts are exchanged and religious devotions made. Although each of these three types involve distinct political and economic relations, and cultural interests, all have enriched and disseminated a Southwest imaginary which has stimulated commodity production and significantly widened the market for Indian arts and crafts.³

Perhaps the most influential action in rationalising the organisation of an art and craft economy in the Southwest was Hewett's establishment of the Indian Fair as part of the 1922 Santa Fe Fiesta. The Fair sought to stimulate and fix pottery production by improving the technical quality of manufactures; supporting the emergence or revival of distinct designs within the Pueblos, while preserving and guaranteeing the authenticity of established arts; stimulate market demand; and developing a fair pricing system. Prizes were offered for best works and judged by a committee

³ The model for many of the county or state fairs, pow-wows and festivals owes much to W.T. Shelton, the government superintendent of the Shiprock Agency, who in 1909 organised an annual Navajo Fair attracting weavers and silversmiths. The fair combined displays with foot races, horse races and other native sports, as well as religious dances, all of which attracted prizes. The first fair included 255 blankets which had increased by 1912 to more than four times that number (James 1920: 59).

appointed by Hewett in his capacity as head of the Museum and the School of American Archaeology (Toulouse 1977: 35). Similar policies were used for the Gallup Ceremonial; a three day presentation of songs and dances from Indians of the Southwest and other parts of USA, as well as for other fairs including the Flagstaff Pow-wow, the Tucson Festival, and the Casa Grande Aw-awdam Tash.

The Southwest craft and arts market can no longer be narrowly understood in relation to the local or regional, as it was in the early 20th century when George Wharton James could confidently dismiss all fears that Navajo blankets would ever be able to be copied by any other ethnic group or mechanised processes (1920: 159-60). The Southwest has become a global construct, constituted by an interlayering of visual, material and written cultures which produce the appearance of a highly idiomatic and coherently structured mediascape. This mediascape can now reproduce itself only by recourse to an international market. The dramatic increase in the price of Navajo rugs has restricted their market accessibility, displacing them from souvenir to sumptuary markets, and recoding them as markers of elite status. Increased prices and rarity has not extinguished popular visitor demand whose media and ideoscapes have been saturated with the iconic value of blankets and pottery invested with the cultural essence of the region they visit. Consequently, dealers have encouraged new sources of production outside the Southwest. The Mud Creek Hogan near Mancos, carries Navajo style rugs from India, while the Third Phase Gallery in Santa Fe imports blankets made by Zapotec weavers in Teotitlan del Valle in Mexico.

A second strategy adopted to compensate for the high price of Southwest craft items, has been to widen the market to include rural Mexican material culture. Chairs, tables, dressers, tools, and even Huastec pottery, similar in form to those from the Southwest but costing much less, were found in several stores in Santa Fe and Albuquerque in 1999, although by 2001 pottery had become rare. By conflating different Southwest material systems with others from Mexico, a western rustic style, sometimes called Santa Fe style, has been articulated. This reopened the market to middle range customers and revived the use of material culture for interior decoration which provided a central and easily recognisable theme within the established mediascape.

II. Europe's Orient. Hidden Markets and the Obfuscation of Hybridity

The obfuscation of the multi-junctured nature of ethnographic objects, the markets in which they circulate and their commodity status, through their veiling by exoticising tropes, is neither restricted to the Southwest or North America generally. China played an exceptionally important role in ceramic exports and the dissemination of techniques for manufacturing porcelain in both Europe and the Middle East. The Chinese actively sought out new markets, both through overland and sea routes, and developed a sophisticated understanding of foreign tastes which enabled them to adopt their wares to foreign preferences in forms and decorative styles. During the Yuan and Ming dynasties (AD. 1279-1644), ceramic forms were sometimes copied from Islamic metal vessels, to better appeal to the Middle Eastern market. Inversely, Celadon ware and blue and white glazed ceramics, indigenous to China, influenced Middle East production up until the 16th and early 17th century, producing reciprocal influences on the mediascape of both civilisations. Early on in the trade, it was form rather than the decorative design on porcelain that was modified for the European and Muslim markets. By the 18th -19th century, however, this had become reversed. Chinese decoration was substituted by Meissen inspired floral, tree and bird motifs and armorial devices as a result of the circulation of new design sources drawn from western pictures, book plates, engravings, and drawings. These sources also introduced fixed point perspective and European styles which eventually also modified decorative designs intended for the internal Chinese porcelain market (Clunas 1987: 18, Matos 1999: 117, Mackenzie 1995: 111). By the 19th century, with increasing Chinese subordination to European powers, the decoration on export wares again

changed, returning, in a somewhat debased and reductive manner, to indigenous sources for dragon, pagoda and bamboo designs, which gradually led to cruder forms of tourist art (Clunas 1987: 20).

Trade gave some Chinese cities, large multi-cultural populations. There were said to be tens of thousands of foreign residents in the late 8th century Tang capital, Xian, and a century later, Guangzhou was estimated to have 120,000 Arabs alone (Lang 1988: 20). Foreign merchants, visiting China to buy porcelain numbered over 1,200 per year by c. AD. 1423 (Antunes 1999: 17). Portugal not only controlled the important European import / export trade with China but, for a while, in the mid 16th century, through its colony in Malacca, monopolised the highly lucrative silk trade between China and Japan. By 1580, with Lisbon having become a premier European entrepôt in the distribution of exotic goods, the city's Rua Nova had six merchants specialising in porcelain. Forty years later, these had increased to seventeen (Antunes 1999: 19, Matos 1999: 115). Matos dates the commodification of Chinese porcelain proper to 1602 with the emergence of the Dutch East India Company, the refocusing of the market away from Lisbon to Amsterdam and Middleburg, and its widening European appeal which signalled sharp structural alterations (1999: 116). From 1602, chinoiserie became more available, and with its falling cost, increased circulation, and more widespread use, lost its value as a badge of aristocratic exclusivity. In the boom years of the mid 18th century, several hundred thousands of pieces of Chinese ceramics were shipped to Europe each year, some decorated, while other was painted on arrival.⁴ This albeit brief summary of the Chinese trade, discloses the high level of flows of people and finances between three civilisations, and the complex none essentialised nature of the ideoscapes and mediascapes that circumscribed the flow of material cultures, that clearly points to the reductive futility of discourses on 'Chinese art'.

Museum collections in the United Kingdom of export ware, institutionalised within decorative art departments, did not emerge until the 19th century, well after the heyday of its manufacture and usage.⁵ Interpretation was only retrospectively carried out, first within the evolutionary paradigm applied to decorative arts, and latterly by style and technique. Chinese as well as other Asian arts were regarded as mirrors of the cultural stage and character these nations had achieved. Ceramics were interpreted and evaluated by a heterogeneous mix of subject specialists; medical officers, commercial agents, missionaries as well as curators, and early art historians, like Roger Fry and Herbert Read, which could not have led to other than highly subjective, and diverse interpretations.⁶ Clunas has suggested that the Asian collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum were used to constitute the margins, and therefore define and frame the centre represented by the familiar and normal. "These arts are the marginal others that allow the centring of the self" (1997: 231). At the British Museum it was Franks who transformed the interpretation of Chinese art from curiosities to 'types' within a taxonomy of decorative styles, but here as well, western classification ignored 1,000 years of Chinese scholarship and connoisseurship, and eschewed any acknowledgement of their complex interstitial and hybrid character.

Another example of a large corpus of essentialised objects preserved and exhibited in European museums is provided by India. Foreign stylistic intervention in Indian craft production dates at least to the middle of the 17th century, when the East India Company influenced the colours and patterns of textiles destined for European markets. Later, Chinese designs, drawn and modified by Europeans, were sent to Indian cotton painters and textile producers to be copied, and inevitably

⁴ Plain porcelain and some with minimal blue on white glazed designs were decorated with polychromatic enamels in workshops in Delft, Rotterdam and elsewhere in Holland (Matos 121).

⁵ Private collections pre-dated museum collections and were often borrowed, such as the George Salting collection which were displayed in the East Cloister of the Victoria and Albert Museum in the latter half of the 19th century (Clunas 1997: 232).

⁶ According to Barrett, 19th century scholarship on the Orient was far more advanced in France and Germany than in Britain (1989: 73).

modified according to their own experience, for export to the European market. Here, as MacKenzie has commented: “Fantasy was ... built on fantasy; imaginary Orientals overlaid each other” (1995: 114).

The commodification of Indian arts was expanded from the 19th century by the spectacles created by international exhibitions. Through these, the British sought to transform curiosities into commodities by monopolising interpretation, selectively promoting certain arts over others; and deciding on their global presentation. British exhibitions constructed India as a rich cornucopia of natural resources while its peoples were presented bound by centuries old tradition, as evidenced in their richly ornate arts and crafts. The 1886 London Colonial and Indian Exhibition divided its exhibition space into geographical and cultural regions using a series of gateways and screens each supposedly made in a local style while the walls of the main avenues were covered with carpets. In reality the screens and gateways were often of hybrid manufacture and the carpets were copies of older designs supplied by London dealers (Levell 2000: 74-5). Neither was the metalwork of much better provenance, as the industry had been revived sometime in the 1870s or 1880s by British agents in Jeypore and Bombay (Levell 2000: 132-4).

Beginning with the 1886 exhibition special areas were reserved, usually outside the display halls, for the purchase of Oriental wares. The 1888 Glasgow International Exhibition included a street of artisans selling Indian souvenirs, while the 1889 Paris Exposition Universelle had two shops selling pottery, metalwork and embroideries, as well as an outlet of Liberty’s (Levell 2000: 92-3). Moreover, in the Glasgow Exhibition and at Jeypore’s Albert Hall Museum, artefacts were displayed with their prices included on object labels pointing to the process of monetary commodification occurring alongside the phantasmographic commoditisation which the objects were intended to provoke (Levell 2000: 132).

Although these commercial outlets were often supplied by exotic products manufactured in government art schools, intended to guarantee quality and authenticity, once a mass market had been established for Oriental wares, European manufacturers were not adverse to supplying it either through their control over foreign production, or attempting to imitate it using new industrial processes. Levell paints a picture not only of the reproduction of Indian carpets, but metalwork, particularly arms and armour, as well as other crafts which could provide “material signs of the antiquated, the exotic, and the timeless oriental other” all of which was busily being reproduced to satiate the tastes of a growing western market that the exhibitions stimulated (Levell 2000: 132).

The global nature of such trading networks was not only indicated by the effects of foreign tastes in stimulating new forms and designs for export, but in the growth of reverse exports when, for example in the mid 19th century, British manufacturers mass produced Chinese style ceramics, using designs intended to capture Oriental markets. By 1850, no less than eight Scottish companies were exporting ceramics to Asia (MacKenzie 1995: 111). The sophistication of the British understanding of diverse Asian markets is underlined by the different multicoloured designs they produced for their ceramic wares, each one carefully geared to particular regional tastes (Ibid.). Copying of carpets and other oriental manufactures by British companies had become so prevalent by 1851 that the Times commenting on the British displays at the Crystal Palace, opined: “Our potters have sent contributions which illustrate every known style of the manufacture ... the English section of carpets has imitations of India, of Brussels, of French”, and finished by deploring the “imitative rage” that only brought out the worst in British products and design (Briggs 1988: 71-2).

III. The Imaginary Southwest. An American Orient

It is remarkable that the production of so-called indigenous arts in Asia and America was accompanied by such highly sophisticated and encompassing marketing and distribution systems so early in their development. However, in each region both relations of production and the relations between the owners of the means of production and their wider markets were significantly different. In China, from early on, craftsmen and artists were often congregated in studios, workshops or factories and were employed by an owner who had direct control and rights over the technology of production. Marketing was undertaken by either the producer or the distributor of the wares who was able to set design, colour, form, etc., while distinct spheres of exchange and distribution were monopolised by Chinese, other Oriental or even European tradesmen.

In the Southwest production was often centred at home, but geared to the manufacture of goods which were heavily defined by American or European traders who acted as contractors and overseers. These traders, and the network of trading posts they established, were responsible for the radical changes introduced into their respective technoscapes. Trading posts in the American Southwest were a constitutive part of a well defined mode of production and market mechanism in which the relations between traders and producers were mediated through the exchange of western goods for often re-invented, copied or modified Indian arts and crafts. Unlike in capitalist production, the technology for woven or ceramic goods was owned by the maker him or herself and maintained at the domestic family level. Traders could exert control through limiting or denying access to primary productive material and restricting the acceptability and circulation of exchange goods. This enabled an essentially domestic mode of production to be manipulated through the trader's ability to control imported aspects of the technology, regulate access to raw materials, and exert control over access to markets. Marketing was wholly under the control of traders, who negotiated contracts with wholesalers like the Fred Harvey Company, or supplied particular retailers or collectors directly. The trading post system grafted an essentially domestic mode of production onto a western organisation of marketing and distribution, which was, and usually still is, occulted from the presentation of Southwestern material culture in museums, commercial galleries, art books and their associated disciplines, in order to preserve the diagnostic function of its material cultures as systems of symbolic markers of the region's ethnoscape. In the Southwest, anthropology, together with photography, played a key role in essentialising these arts by associating and reproducing discourses and images which affirmed the unbreakable links between ethnic groups and their arts and crafts. Art producers were domesticated - 'Pueblo potters', 'Navajo weavers', 'Zuni silversmiths'. Non art producers were savages - 'Apache raiders'.

In both the Asian and American cases the level of integration of production, marketing and distribution achieved regional comprehensiveness and global extension from an early time - the 17th century in China, or the late 19th century in the Southwest. The economic rationality of western markets may have been so quickly accepted and adopted because both Chinese and Southwestern markets had been developed from earlier regional non-European exchange systems (cf. Hollister 1903: 49). The advantages and mechanisms governing exchange across ethnic boundaries would then have been familiar and needed only to be extended to incorporate western traders. Nevertheless, omitting the process and concomitant changes in the technoscape and finanscape which still require study, it is clear that the flows of culturally diverse peoples, foreign technologies, and diverse consumer tastes, created a complex, fractured, sometimes contradictory, acutely hybridised, global economic system in which the relations between production, markets, distribution and tastes were not without their paradoxes. Nineteenth century Chinese markets, for example, were being supplied by Chinese style goods manufactured in the United Kingdom. In the contemporary Southwest, some 'Navajo' rugs are made in Mexico and India; turquoise is often brought from China, or imitated in plastic, while some silver jewellery is made in the Philippine

town of Reservation, enabling 'Reservation Silver' to be stamped on its US exports. This world system in which production, markets and shifts in taste articulate dynamic, constantly mutating material systems which reformulate and renew the signs of distinction that the advances of mass consumption constantly erode away, is a far cry from popular 19th and 20th century views of Oriental and American Indian arts and crafts as expressions of passive, ahistorical, 'exotic' cultures, autonomous of western rationalised market situations.

How then have commodity markets occulted the operations of these comprehensive and well developed systems of production geared to capitalist demands, to assert the illusory exoticism of their wares? Here, the western produced mediascape with its familiar ideological inflections and tropes has played a paramount function. Essentialised exotic notions have been produced, circulated and reproduced freely in both areas. In the Southwest, the conflation and aestheticisation of scholarly, artistic, cultural, psychological and geopolitical texts and signs, creates an exoticism or picturesqueness not unlike that described and deconstructed by Said for the Orient (1995: 3). In one strategy of domestication, exoticism has lost its virulence through incorporation and subordination within taxonomic discriminations of decorative styles. If we compare, for example, the characteristics and aesthetics of Oriental and Santa Fe styles, using the illustrative criteria found in the prestigious Thames and Hudson guides to decorative interiors, these two forms of exoticism appear starkly dissimilar. Whereas Oriental style is formal, restrained, pure, well defined, even austere and almost monochromatic, Santa Fe style is quixotic, self consciously hybrid, polychromatic, 'loud' and humorous. At the level of appearances, clearly the Orient and the Southwest, and their respective visual cultures differ greatly, but, at a deeper and admittedly more essential level, both styles are 'other' as a result, so Mary Helms has argued, of the valorisation of exoticness being indexically linked to the perceived remoteness of an object's, or in our case a whole simulacra's, place of origin (Helms 1988: 4). Paraphrasing Clunas, we could see Oriental and Santa Fe exoticisms as forming the two extreme points of a scale, in which western styles occupy a central and normative position, while exoticism, split into two opposed systems of values, tastes and ideas, constitute the parameters of a field intended to embrace a total aesthetic valorisation of the world. Although the signs of exoticism differ, the mechanisms and values which underlie Orientalism and the Southwestern picturesque, appear similar, and work equally to seemingly construct their simulacra as a negation of Euro-American values. Said's assertion that Orientalism "is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world" (1995: 14), is equally applicable to the Southwest picturesque; "it is above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power" (Ibid.).

The explicit conflation of the Orient and the Southwest is clearly evidenced in 19th century literature; the passivity of its women, the lethargy, deceitfulness, suspiciousness, orderlessness of the men; the decadence of its civilisation, its timelessness, the picturesqueness of the landscape, which mark the rupture between the east and the Occident (Said 1995: 203). Charles Lummis in what has become a classic description of the Southwest calls it, the 'National Rip Van Winkle' (1893: 1) alluding to its timelessness. He notes: "It is a land of quaint sward faces, of Oriental dress and unspelled speech (1893: 3), and suggests Pueblo architecture possesses hints of 'Gwalior, in the Deccan' (1893: 39). Uriah Hollister, a collector of Chinese and American Indian art, was even more explicit:

"The intelligent visitor to the Pueblo country finds it difficult to avoid an impression that the objects and scenes before him have in them something, which he cannot define specifically, that reminds him of those of the Asiatic cradle-land of the human race. The intangible things which artists call 'atmosphere', and 'local color', are here the atmosphere and local color of western Asia;

and the aspects of a group of Pueblo buildings amid dreary surroundings are strangely like those presented in pictures of life and places in that old land” (1903: 130).

He goes on to compare Pueblo buildings with Indian rock temples; suggests the similar significance of the swastika for Navajo and Hindu; and compares Southwestern origin stories with some of the adventures of Sinbad in the Arabian Nights (Ibid. 131). Bourke’s 1884 description of the Hopi snake dance, similarly is unable to refrain from comparing it to other serpent related ceremonies in Asia.

Part of Orientalism is itself a form of the picturesque, “a form of Romantic restructuring” (Said 1995: 158), which nevertheless disregards, essentialises and denudes the humanity of the culture at which it is aimed (Ibid. 108). The picturesque exoticises, romanticises, and others foreign cultures to obfuscate their real origins in the western classifications that attempt domestication of the boundaries and interstitialities between European, American and other cultures. It is in this sense that Said’s interpretation of Orientalism can be applied to the Southwest. Orientalism performs a similar role in the ideoscape of the marginal West as it does for the East. It provides the veil through which the mode of production, the working and articulation of markets and distributive networks which not only penetrate but constitute the other, are able to conceal their presence.

IV. World Systems, Commodity Disavowal, and the Re-signification of Material Culture

If the wider applicability of Fabian’s contention is accepted, a relevance which even a cursory examination of material systems in Asia and America appears to support, it becomes necessary to re-evaluate the significance of material culture for anthropological and museological knowledge. It is incontestable that large amounts of exotic material culture entered museums through the distributive networks created by international exhibitions, and in the case of the United States and Canada, through wholesalers, as well as private and institutional collectors whose activities had already transformed the technoscapes, finanscapes and ethnoscapescapes of the supposedly remote regions they travelled. Given these diverse and complex material flows which formed part of elaborate global transactions, which defy all attempt to essentialise goods and ethnic origins, much of the material collected for museums must be regarded, at best, in one way or another, as hybrid. And, indeed, there has been a recent tendency in decorative art exhibitions to acknowledge this complexity in a way that anthropology has resisted. If material culture is transnational; not entirely embedding national or ethnic stylistic preferences; if the places of production and the location of markets are culturally disjunctured, we are left with a complex topography of signification, multiple gazes, disarticulated commercial, and use values, and problematic frontiers separating definitions of use and symbolic values, which seriously mitigate against the view of objects as simple portals to other cultural worlds.

If commodity markets did not always precede collecting their development certainly sustained and bolstered it, as an influx of new demands, stimulated counter demands for technology and raw materials to satisfy makers. Fabian’s perspective, notably, refocuses attention on the history of the process and conditions of the appropriation of objects and the subsequent negotiation between ethnic groups over the ascription of their value and relevance. Far from being expressions of any single unicentric culture, a substantial category of objects are multi-junctured and refer to a decentred and ambivalent ‘reality’. Seldom is an object’s value or its significance reducible to the abstract generalisations collectors have attempted to propound, or that anthropologists and curators have retrospectively attempted to reconstruct. On the contrary, identical or near similar objects sometimes circulated in different exchange spheres and therefore possessed different values and meanings. Objects could be differentiated in the spaces they occupied by minor technical modifications, much of what might have been invisible to the western eye. Alternatively, objects

may have lost value in one sphere and were therefore readily transferable to another. External or commodified spheres of exchange could be satisfied by modified, copied, or invented objects, the choice of which might have been partly dependent on the value, for the indigenous customer, of the western trade objects he or she could expect to derive from such exchanges. Although, under these latter conditions, value was ascribed by an indigenous system of cultural needs and desires, exchange equivalencies were usually fixed by western traders themselves. Such circumstances alone allow us to glimpse the great complexity, moral anxiety and pragmatic calculations that were an intrinsic part of many bi or multi-cultural exchanges, which invite more careful study.

Despite observations like these, and the pioneering work of Graburn (1993), Thomas (1991), Phillips (1995), and Phillips and Steiner (1999), to mention just a few of the most prominent sympathisers of such approaches, much of the anthropology of art and material culture still fails to give due consideration to the counter prestations, in the context of an indigenous market, which constitute the missing half of the circle of exchange responsible for the origin and growth of ethnographic collections in the West. Although many of the counter prestations that flowed from the West to other parts of the world may appear utilitarian and unremarkable - the occulted systems of material culture - they represent the means and catalysts, eluded in most ethnographic monographs and displays, whose absence not only prevents a full appreciation of the complex relations between objects and meaning, but more importantly, the material and political connections between European or American societies and the visual cultures whose productive and market conditions they obfuscate and restructure as 'other'. The suppression of market transactions, creates a penumbra, occulting evidence of the material conditions and relations in the production and exchange of material cultures, leaving them empty vessels, repositories to hold whatever, essentialised categories of culture that western tropes of otherness choose to impute them with.

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