



DANCES

*of the Tewa
Pueblo Indians*

Expressions of New Life

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Figure 6. One of the most colorful Tewa dances is the Comanche dance, performed here by San Ildefonso Tewas. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1973.)

Tewa Village Rituals

Tewa village rituals bombard the senses. Through crowds of spectators, the visitor sees masses of rhythmically moving bodies arrayed in colorful costumes and paraphernalia (fig. 6). Excited children run through the village, their laughter mingling with the voices of singers and the repetitive sounds of bells, rattles, and drums. The smells of freshly baked bread, burning piñon, and steaming stews permeate the air. Together, the careful ritual preparations, the group movement sequences, the closely interrelated dance and music, the costumes, and the audience itself create a performance that communicates important images and messages to performer and observer alike.

Some Tewas agree to dance and sing in the village rituals more often than others. Women may be needed at home to care for youngsters or cook food for

feasting. Some people may be unable to take time off from their jobs. Though participating is seen as a community responsibility, no one individual is expected to dance in every ritual event. Those who choose not to sing or dance are still considered important participants in the ritual performance. There is no "audience" in the Western theatrical sense of the word because the Tewas do not passively watch the action but instead consider the role of dance watching to be one of active listening. Tewa audiences contribute their thoughts to the communal prayer that is dramatized by the singers and dancers.

The Performance

Each ritual event is part of an annual cycle of village performances, a cycle that reflects seasonal changes and the traditional subsistence activities associated with each season. Only certain dances can be performed in the spring and others in the summer, winter, or fall. The village council, often referred to by the Tewas as the tribal council, usually selects the dances and dance dates, although a few specific dances must be requested by special groups. For example, at the village of San Juan, the unmarried men request the deer dance each year, and the women's society, the cloud or basket dance.

Once the dance and date are chosen, the war captains and their assistants ask the village composers to prepare the songs. The composers must recall traditional songs for some dances, such as the deer, yellow corn, Comanche, butterfly, and harvest dances, while for others, such as the turtle, cloud, and basket dances, they compose new songs each year. The war captains' group then requests the lead male singers—those considered most musically gifted—to meet and practice with the composers in the kiva. Later, the other male participants join this group for practice and the dance steps are set. Again, for some dances, traditional movement patterns are recalled, and for others new choreographic combinations are created.

Finally, the war captains' group invites the women participants to attend the practice sessions in the kiva. Assistant war captains go to the women's homes and make formal requests: "We have chosen you to enlighten us and to help us gain life" (Garcia and Garcia 1968:239). If the woman is married, they must speak to her in front of her husband, but the decision to take part is hers alone. If she is not married, the request must be made in front of her father, who usually gives his permission.

On the fifth night before the dance, an expedition of young men gathers the evergreens that will be worn or carried by the dancers. Traditionally, they walked

many miles to the mountains, collected evergreen branches with prayers, and carried them back to the village, all in one night. Today, pick-up trucks may take the gatherers into the mountains, but the evergreens are still collected with reverence because they remain powerful symbols of life.

The length of the practice period varies, but four evenings in the kiva are the commonest. Throughout the practice period, costumes and paraphernalia are prepared. On the evening of the performance, the participants may present a short prelude dance in the plaza. The next day, a final practice session may be held before emergence from the kiva.

Tewa dance style is formal, controlled, and repetitive, with relatively simple steps. The dancers move in unison with torsos held erect and limbs close to the center of the body (fig. 7). Tewa dancers usually contract their elbows to about a ninety-degree angle and hold them four or five inches from the body. Most gestures are made through space in a flat arc, rather than in a straight line projecting out from the dancer's body.

For most steps, the dancers contract their knees only slightly, so their feet remain close to the ground. The men usually lift their feet a bit higher than the women. The *antegeh* (from the Tewa "foot," *an*, and "to lift," *tegeh*) is the most basic step in Tewa dance. Kurath and Garcia (1970:82) described it as "foot lift with emphasis on right foot: upbeat of raising right knee while supporting weight on left foot; accented lowering of right foot, while raising left heel and slightly flexing knees; unaccented raising of right knee while lowering left heel. This step may be done in place or traveling forwards, sideways, or diagonally."

Other common Tewa steps include a stylized deer walk and a buffalo walk. The deer dancer holds a canelike stick in each hand and leans forward, bearing his weight on the sticks while bending his legs. He meanders slowly, creating the illusion of a four-legged animal (fig. 8). The buffalo walks upright in a gait that shifts the body weight from side to side, the knees bending deeply in a heavy lumbering walk. Occasionally the choreography calls for small jumps (springing from and landing on both feet), hops (springing from one foot and landing on the same foot), and small, low leaps (springing from one foot and landing on the other). Knee bends in place with weight on both feet are sometimes used, in addition to a shuffle step (see Kurath and Garcia [1970] for notation of the steps).

In the most sacred Tewa dances, a single file of men *antegeh* in place, occasionally pivoting to change their facing direction. This choreographic pattern is considered to be the most sacred and is primarily associated with males because



Figure 7. In classic Tewa style, participants in the yellow corn dance at Nambe hold their bodies erect and arms close to their torsos. Men contract their knees slightly more than do women. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1974.)

it is the same pattern found in the private kachina dances performed by men in the kivas. Other dances may take a double file formation, especially when a large number of women participate. The lines usually alternate men and women, or a line of men faces one of women. Less frequently, the dance formation takes the form of a circle that typically rotates counterclockwise.

The performers usually follow a prescribed spatial circuit repeating a five-verse dance set in each designated area. Sometimes they perform the final set of the circuit within the kiva, then after a short rest, return for another circuit through the village. There rarely are fewer than four, and sometimes as many as ten, circuits completed during the day, and some Tewa dances include extra prelude and postlude sections. A day of dancing often begins at dawn and lasts until sunset.



Figure 8. With blackened face and a headress of antler and yucca stalks, a San Ildefonso deer dancer executes the stylized deer walk. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1974.)

In any Tewa performance, music and dance are tightly interwoven. Each song is a prayer. More than mere accompaniment for the dancers, the songs are an integral part of the event, helping to communicate the meanings of the ritual. Ethnomusicologists have noted this interdependence in their work with Tewa song composers, who find it difficult to perform a song without also dancing or to comment on silent films of Tewa dance. Tewa women caring for infants or preparing food indoors can often describe the section of the dance in progress, simply by hearing the music. Although most Tewa villages permit photography and even silent filming of their public performances, permission to make sound recordings is typically more difficult to obtain; songs are powerful and must be protected.

Only after the singers have learned the songs can the dancers begin their practice using the music to guide them through the choreography. The tempo of the music, of course, sets the dancers' speed. Usually the tempo is constant, but in some cases, such as that of the San Juan cloud dance, a slow beat accelerates until it is very fast, then suddenly drops back once again, the dancers following suit. The tremolo, or rolling of drum or rattle, musical phrasing, and changes in the beat are techniques that cue the dancers to a change in facing direction or formation. A switch from the usual double beat to triple beat—called a *tán*—often signals a slight hesitation in the *antegheh* step.

Self-accompanied dances such as the San Juan turtle dance most dramatically express the relationship between music and movement. Here, the dancers are simultaneously the musicians as they *antegheh* in place, each with a tortoise shell rattle tied behind the right knee. The rattle sounds with each step, and the dancers sing as they move. Other percussion instruments used by male dancers include painted gourd hand rattles and commercially made sleigh bells sewn onto a leather belt. In addition, men who take the role of the buffalo in the buffalo dance wear kilts edged with rows of cone-shaped tin tinklers.

The Tewas purchase or trade for drums which are made from hollowed cottonwood tree trunks. Pueblo drum makers cover the ends with horse or bull hide and sometimes paint the body with bright colors. Drumsticks are carved from soft pine, and a stuffed hide ball is tied to one end. The best known Pueblo drum makers are from the Keresan Pueblo village of Cochiti, where many Tewa drums originate.

Performers treat their drums with respect and sometimes give them names. After using a drum, the performers may ritually "feed" it with a sprinkle of cornmeal. The pitch of a drum can be altered by changing drumsticks or by



Figure 9. Five handsomely clad drummers produce a powerful beat for San Ildefonso singers and dancers. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1973.)

turning it over and beating on the opposite end, changes that a good drummer can accomplish without losing a beat. The number of drummers varies with the dances from one to as many as four or five (fig. 9), and drummers often alternate during a long ritual performance.

Tewa performance costumes vary according to village, dance, and time of year, but there are some common elements in all costume designs (see Roediger 1961). The woman dancer generally wears a *manta*-dress, made of black or white wool or heavy cotton fabric and bordered with geometric patterns in green, black, and white embroidery (fig. 10). Under this heavier garment, she may wear a cotton shirt or dress trimmed in lace. A brightly colored, lace-trimmed shawl may be pinned at her right shoulder, and a red woven sash tied at her waist. For some dances, she will be asked to dance barefooted, and for others to wear moccasins. Silver and turquoise necklaces, bracelets, and pins always decorate



woman's festive attire, and in some dances, a wooden or feather headdress adorns her head. The wooden headdresses, called *tablitas* (see fig. 1), can have elaborately carved or painted symbols of corn, clouds, or the sun. Frequently a woman dancer carries evergreens, and sometimes ears of corn, in each hand.

A male dancer wears a white kilt with edges embroidered in red, green, and black. For some dances his chest and legs are bare except for body paint, and for others he wears a white shirt and crocheted leggings. At his waist, the male dancer usually wears bells, an embroidered sash, or a long-fringed white rair sash. He carries a gourd rattle in his right hand along with evergreen sprigs, while in the left hand he holds only evergreens. Moccasins on the feet and usually a few feathers tied at the top of the head complete the man's costume.

Some Meanings and Messages

Tewa village ritual performances are rich with layers of symbolic meaning and messages encoded in songs, gestures, actions, costumes, and paraphernalia. Along with the central theme of new life, other important Tewa concepts find expression in ritual, including those of subsistence, society, beauty, space, time, and humor. Communication of these concepts is directed toward the performers themselves, toward fellow Tewas, and toward the supernaturals.

Subsistence, Society, and Beauty

Subsistence themes ensure, celebrate, and give thanks for plant and animal life and for the rainfall essential to it. Because the Tewas traditionally depended upon agriculture and hunting, the importance of these messages cannot be overemphasized. Through performances the people communicate statements about the abundance and fertility of plants and animals in their environment.

A key subsistence symbol is corn. For centuries a crucial and versatile food source, corn plays an important role in Tewa mythology, and all aspects of the plant are considered to be symbolically powerful. Its life cycle is seen as a paradigm of all other natural life cycles. Corn designs may be embroidered on a dancer's manta or carved in her wooden *tablita* headdress, and she often carries ears of corn in her hands. Tewas sprinkle cornmeal as they stand watching the

Figure 10. Dancing at the Puye Cliffs ceremonial, a Santa Clara woman wears a traditional white manta-dress, elaborately embroidered, and a lace-trimmed blue shawl over one shoulder. Her male counterpart wears a white kilt, crocheted leggings, a rain sash, and a yarn squash-blossom headdress. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1974.)

village ritual performances, a sacred offering to the supernatural world. Corn and the related need for rain are central themes in many Tewa songs (Spinden 1933:95):

Ready we stand in San Juan town,
Oh, our Corn Maidens and our Corn Youths!
Oh, our Corn Mothers and our Corn Fathers!

Now we bring you misty water
And throw it different ways
To the north, the west, the south, the east
To heaven above and the drinking earth below!

Then likewise throw your misty water
Toward San Juan!
Oh, many that you are, pour water
Over our Corn Maidens' ears!
On our Wheat Maidens
Thence throw you misty water,
All round about us here!

On Green Earth Woman's back
Now thrives our flesh and breath,
Now grows our strength of arm and leg,
Now takes form our children's food!

A second group of symbolic meanings expresses the social dimensions of the Tewa world. The performances make explicit and implicit statements about Tewa society, not only reflecting social roles, relationships, and responsibilities but also helping to establish, shape, and reinforce them. The village performances are arenas for demonstrating how the Tewas interact socially and what it means to be a member of Tewa society. During a performance, for example, an aunt might help a nephew prepare for his first deer dance. The women of a household will work together preparing a feast for dancers and visitors. A clown may ridicule a man because he neglects his family. Each of these acts makes public the Tewas' notions of social roles and responsibilities.

One of the more obvious statements of social responsibility that is expressed during many village rituals is the "throw," "giveaway," or "throwaway." People from the community bring out large baskets filled with fruit, packaged snack

foods, candy, cigarettes, money, and even small household items such as towels, brooms, pots, and pans. These they throw out to the dancers and singers as a statement of community sharing. The performers catch or pick up the gifts as they continue to dance and sing. Relatives of the performers quickly take the gifts home so that the dance is not disrupted. Throws may also be directed toward the observers, both Indian and non-Indian. When this happens, there is often more laughter and scrambling for the goods. Non-Tewa visitors who catch items are expected to accept them as gifts.

The most fundamental social statement is communicated simply by the act of participating in a village ritual performance. When a Tewa decides to sing or dance in, or attend, a ritual performance, he or she demonstrates a commitment to being Tewa and contributes to the cohesiveness of the social group, which is distinguished from all "outsiders." Some Tewa Indians claim that to remain a Tewa, one must, in some capacity, participate in village performances (Ortiz 1979b:287-98). As the Tewas participate, they make commitments of time, effort, and money to traditions and to the community. They may forfeit a few days wages to spend the required time at practice. Their costumes may need costly and time-consuming repairs, and they must purchase and cook large quantities of food for feasting. Through participation they are reminded of their cultural heritage and renew their strength to continue as members of Tewa society.

In addition to subsistence and society, Tewa conceptions of beauty are expressed during a village ritual performance. For the Tewas, beauty is found in the power of group movement, in repetitive and understated choreography and song composition, and in a serious, respectful, and dedicated performance. The motion of the entire group together is more important and more beautiful than the performance of any individual; there are no stars. Those who do stand out are criticized for being "too showy" or for dancing "too hard." A single dancer must not destroy the illusion of the group moving as one.

Group unity is facilitated, in part, by the repetitive or redundant nature of the dances and songs. Redundancy not only makes aesthetic expression predictable and familiar, producing a sense of pleasurable security, but it also simplifies execution. By keeping the movement and song vocabulary relatively simple, and by recombining and repeating this vocabulary, a large group of non-specialists is more likely to dance and sing successfully in unison. Performance in unison is not only an aesthetic imperative, but it also reinforces a Tewa concern for the needs of the whole community over those of specific individuals.

Tewas see beauty in the subtle understatement of the dance performance. Gestures are typically close to the body, and steps are usually small progressions with little elevation. The women keep their eyes cast down and their manner demure and contained. This understated performance style also helps to keep any one individual from standing out from the group.

The Tewas also find beauty in songs. They admire their composers for their skill at creating new songs or remembering the traditional ones. The beauty of repetition and understatement are important aspects of Tewa songs. Singers also bring beauty to the ritual when they sing with strong clear voices. Note the simple yet elegant use of metaphor in the following section of a Tewa song (Spinden 1933:94):

Oh our Mother the Earth, oh our Father the Sky,
Your children are we, and with tired backs
We bring you the gifts that you love.
Then weave for us a garment of brightness;
May the warp be the white light of morning,
May the weft be the red light of evening,
May the fringes be the falling rain,
May the border be the standing rainbow.
Thus weave for us a garment of brightness
That we may walk fittingly where birds sing,
That we may walk fittingly where grass is green,
Oh our Mother the Earth, oh our Father the Sky!

The beauty of the performance results from the concentration and commitment of the participants. Tewas speak of this as dancing and singing with respect, or "from the heart," which, as one Tewa man said, "makes the meaning straight." Another said, "You've got to concentrate a lot. Dance with your whole heart in it. Nothing else in your mind—just what is taking place there. Give it all you've got. Singing is the same way. When I sing, I sing from my heart up."

An example of the communication of all three themes—subsistence, society, and beauty—is the cloud dance, also called the corn maiden dance or the three times dance. It is unique among Tewa dances because each time the long line of male dancers appears, only two women participate with them. Eight women are selected for these roles, a different pair for each of the four appearances. They wear elaborate eagle feather headdresses and brightly colored shawls and carry

an ear of corn in each hand. They travel with small steps in front of the line men, who sing and step in place (fig. 11).

The cloud dance communicates many messages, but those about subsistence, society, and beauty are most obvious. Usually held in February, the dance is a reminder that the cold winter months are nearly over, and spring, with promise of new life, is near. The prominence of the women dancers express this message because Tewas associate femaleness with agriculture and warm (Ortiz 1965:390). The ears of corn carried by the women underscore the theme of agriculture. The women's headdresses symbolize rainbows and clouds, both harbingers of the rain needed for crops, and cloud designs embroidered on the women's dresses also invoke rain.

The men's costumes reinforce the message of seasonal change and a new agricultural cycle. The long fringes on white sashes represent falling rain; tortoise shell knee rattles promote fertility; and evergreen branches symbolize life. One Tewa man described the sound of gourd rattles as "like the sound of summer showers."

The social messages communicated during the cloud dance refer to the structure of Tewa society, carefully classifying the people who make up the village. Cloud dance songs typically mention all the leaders and social groups in the village, such as the women's societies, clown societies, moieties, and native priests. Ties between families and friends find public expression as, for example, an aunt pins a one, five, or twenty dollar bill on her niece's costume, a gesture of appreciation that can take place while the dancer is performing or between dance sets. In either case, the dancer maintains a serious expression and does not overtly acknowledge the gift. Pinning money becomes a public statement about personal relationships. While the cloud dance defines social groups and personal ties, a concomitant "throw" expresses community cohesiveness and social responsibility. As dancers, singers, and observers catch the tossed gifts, the notion of community support is made public.

The choreographic structure of the cloud dance epitomizes notions of beauty. The dancers begin each dance set by forming a long line, shoulder to shoulder. Two women take positions near the ends of the line, and the lead singers stand in the middle. The whole line *antegeh* in place, the movements of individuals subordinate to the powerful totality of the group. Slowly and unobtrusively the two women move out from the line, face each other, and begin to move toward each other with small diagonal steps. They meet, pass, and continue traveling toward the opposite ends of the line, then turn and travel back to their starting position.



Figure 11. This woman's modest style and obvious concentration convey Tewa notions of beauty during the Sani Juan cloud dance. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1974.)

They repeat this pattern again and again. Near the end of the dance set, each woman must be near her starting position so she may slip back into her place in the line as a music cue directs her. Although the cloud dance highlights women, their movements remain small and eyes cast down because those judged most beautiful are the women who contain their movements, appear demure, and dance "from the heart" with deep concentration and quiet dedication. Dancing "from the heart" also helps to unite participants with the supernaturals. The entire performance is a prayer to the supernatural world, the women dancers symbolizing the two corn mothers, central figures in the Tewa origin myth.

Space, Time and Humor

The Tewa Indians give great importance to spatial definitions of their world. In ritual performances, this concern with space appears in frequent and persistent references to the four cardinal directions and their intersection. Through gesture and song, space is symbolically ordered and the Tewa world is spatially defined.

Each direction is designated by a color, an animal, a bird, a mountain, and other natural phenomena. Tewas associate the north with the color blue, the mountain lion, the oriole, and *Tse Shu P'in* (Hazy or Shimmering Mountain), while the west they associate with the color yellow, the bear, the bluebird, and *Tsikumu P'in* (Obsidian Covered Mountain). To the south is assigned the color red, the wildcat, the parrot, and *Oekuu P'in* (Turtle Mountain), and to the east belongs white, the wolf, the magpie, and *K'use' P'in* (Stone Man Mountain) (Harrington 1916:41-45; Parsons 1939:365- 366; Ortiz 1969:19). Tewas view the directional mountains as sacred because they define the boundaries of the Tewa world. These mountains border an area approximately 140 miles by 35 miles, and each contains a lake or pond and a sacred stone shrine. Each Tewa village also holds sacred certain neighboring hills with additional stone shrines. These nearby features both designate the directions and mark the boundaries of the land immediately surrounding each village.

In Tewa ritual performances, gestures and songs refer to the cardinal directions in the sequence north, west, south, and east. Dancers, singers, and religious leaders may gesture in this sequence during rituals, and dancers often change their facing direction, performing first toward the west, then suddenly pivoting to repeat the movements facing east. Most Tewa dance movements, sequences of movements, or entire dance appearances are repeated four times or in multiples of four, indicating a close connection with the four directions.

When asked about the content of Tewa songs, one composer replied:

The words we mention in the songs are the directions. We start from the north, we go to the west, south, and east. And when we mention the colors we start with the blue, yellow, red, and white. And of course we do mention the sacred mountains that are the mountain to the north, the mountain to the west, the mountain to the south, and the one to the east. And then there are some sacred lakes that we have names for there in the north, west, south and east. And then sometimes we mention the rain clouds, the rain, the thunder, the lightning, the rain gods, and sometimes we mention the rattle we use, and the turtle, and the feathers.

A segment of the San Juan turtle dance song of 1974 illustrates the references to the directions in Tewa songs (Ortiz 1979a):

Away over there, at the dawning place,
Dawn Youths are heard, singing beautifully!
Away over there, at the dawning place,
Dawn Maidens are heard, beautifully making their calls!

Away to the north, holy people are gathering from every
direction!
They come, with their corn-growing powers,
And still they come!
Until here they have arrived! (loud rattling)

Away to the west, holy people are gathering from every
direction!
They come, with their wheat-growing powers,
And still they come!
Until here they have arrived! (loud rattling)

Away to the south, holy people are gathering from every
direction!
They come, with their squash-growing powers,
And still they come!
Until here they have arrived! (loud rattling)

Away to the east, holy people are gathering from every
direction!

They come, with their power to raise all cultigens,
And still they come!
Until here they have arrived! (loud rattling)

The intersection of the four directions marks the center of the Tewa world. Each Tewa Indian, however, also sees his or her village as a center because it is the reference point for the cardinal mountains and lakes (Dozier 1970:209). Within each village, the plazas and kivas are additional centers. How can there be more than one center? In cultural groups like the Tewas, where space is regarded as a most important factor in defining the world, the center is often so significant that it is considered spiritually powerful and sacred. Because of its sacredness, the center of the world can be symbolically represented by several actual places. That is, the center, as sacred space, is forever renewable and can symbolically exist in several places at once (Eliade 1954:20-21; Ortiz 1972:142).

By defining the spatial dimensions of their world through ritual, the Tewas reinforce and strengthen their relationship to the physical environment. Tewa history and culture is intimately connected with the land because unlike many Native American groups, the Tewas managed to remain in the territory settled by their ancestors. Indeed, Tewa cultural survival stems partly from their not having been forced from their ancestral lands. A deep relationship with the land, symbolically stated and restated in ritual, helps the Tewas maintain their distinctive culture.

Time, like space, is perceived differently by different cultural groups. Some think of time as exact measurements along a linear progression. Others, like the Tewas, see time as a never-ending cyclical rhythm connected with solar and lunar movements. This view suggests repeated renewal of life as seasons alternate endlessly and all forms of life begin, grow, die, and begin once more (Ortiz 1972:137, 143). The dance circuit patterns of village ritual performances reflect this cyclical concept of time. Throughout the day, the dancers and singers perform in several designated areas, following the same prescribed circuit with each appearance. At times, the entire performance seems to be a continual cycle of repeated movement patterns with only subtle choreographic variations.

The structure of their ritual calendar, in which each event is associated with traditional seasonal tasks, also reflects the Tewas' view of time. The native calendar, however, is not the only one that dictates when a village ritual will be held: since contact with Europeans, the Tewa people have also observed certain Catholic holy days. The Catholic and native calendars coexist, with the result that some traditional winter dances are regularly held on or near Christmas and

some spring dances are held at Easter. In addition, all the Tewa villages have patron saints who are commemorated by native dances on feast days each year. Santa Clara Tewa, for example, celebrate their feast day every August 12, Saint Clare's Day. Some villages celebrate other saints' days, such as Santiago Day or San Pedro Day, with native dances. Dances performed on Christian holidays communicate both native and Christian meanings and messages. Although the Nambe Tewa may perform the buffalo dance "for the baby Jesus" on December 24 or 25, even dancing in the church itself, the choreography remains unaltered and native messages about hunting success and need for snow still predominate.

The equinoxes and solstices mark temporal change and solar reversals. They are important times for Tewa ritual performance because they signal seasonal transitions. Village events acknowledge these transitional times, often through symbolic reversals and inversions and through humor. In September, when the growing season is almost over and the hours of sunlight decrease, the clowns become particularly active, publicly displaying behavior that is backwards, improper, and often very funny. Their performances temporarily turn the social world topsy-turvy. Dancers and singers may also take part in symbolic reversals during the equinoxes and solstices. In some events, men impersonate women, and vice versa. Symbolic reversals may include the imitation of outsiders, as performers dress and act like Anglos, Hispanics, or other Indians such as Kiowas, Comanches, or Navajos. Just as the natural world is in a state of transition and "confusion" during the equinoxes and solstices, so the Tewa world mirrors it through performance.

In order to better understand Tewa symbolic reversals, as well as Tewa notions of humor, consider the antics of the clowns. Tewa clowns are powerful figures associated with fertility, health, and the sun. As masters of burlesque, they make fun of dancers and singers in solemn public performance, village residents and officials including the governor, and even the sacred kachinas. Clowns may also tease non-Tewa people: perhaps the local Catholic priest, a nosy anthropologist, or a curious tourist.

In earlier times, Tewa clowns engaged in extraordinarily licentious and destructive behavior. In the twentieth century, clown performances have become much less sexual and violent, because of years of pressure from neighboring Hispanics and Anglos and from missionaries who failed to understand that clown behavior reinforces acceptable social norms through negative example. Tewa clown performances in fact provide social control by demonstrating how *not* to behave.

Clowns also help integrate foreign institutions, objects, and people into the Tewa world through pantomime and humor. They may poke fun at the Catholic Church by staging a mock Holy Communion during a village ritual performance. After lining up a group of Tewa and non-Tewa observers, they tell each "recipient" to "open your mouth and stick out your tongue." The clowns then give a candy wafer to each puzzled participant. They also play with symbolically loaded objects from outside the Tewa world. A Santa Claus doll might become the object of clown antics around Christmastime, the clown holding and rocking the doll as if it were a real baby. Then suddenly the clown may lose all interest in the doll, dropping it into the mud.

Clowns especially enjoy singling out and embarrassing Anglo tourists. During a harvest dance at San Ildefonso a clown convinced a group of Girl Scouts to join the solemn dance line. To the girls' embarrassment, the war captains immediately told them to sit back down. As soon as they had, the clown again convinced them to dance, and again the officers ordered the confused Girl Scouts to leave the dance line. The clown tried a third time, but the girls would not be convinced.

During a midday break in a San Juan performance, a clown insisted that an Anglo woman dance with him in the plaza. He wanted to "disco." After the clown showed off his version of "bumps and grinds," the woman tried gracefully to leave him. The clown would not allow it, but instead convinced another clown to perform a mock marriage ceremony for them. Only after they "took their vows" did the clown let his bewildered bride go back to her friends.

San Juan clowns also enjoy borrowing a camera from an Anglo tourist and taking pictures of each other in ludicrous poses. They may also take pictures of the tourist who lent them the camera, thus reversing roles with the outsider and subtly posing the question, "see how it feels to be photographed by a stranger?"

In the Navajo dance, all the Tewa performers engage in symbolic reversals and humorous burlesque. Santa Clara and San Ildefonso present different versions of this dance, and the following passage describes it as performed at San Ildefonso in the early spring of 1974 (see Sweet 1979).

The dance was performed by forty women, half of them dressed as Navajo men and half as Navajo women. They wore traditional Navajo clothing, including velveteen shirts and long, full skirts or loose trousers, silver and turquoise jewelry, and Navajo blankets carried over an arm or shoulder. The "women" held ears of corn in their hands and wore their hair tied back with yarn. The "men"



Figure 12. Through humor and symbolic reversal, the Tewas burlesque the Navajos in their Navajo dance. (Drawing by Rita Newberry.)

wore jeans, Western hats, and boots or moccasins. Many dancers also wore sunglasses, and some of the "men" had fake mustaches or beards (fig. 12).

The performers sang as they danced to the rhythm of a single drum played by a woman also dressed in traditional Navajo fashion. Each "man" shook a rattle throughout the dance. The songs delighted the listeners with English and Navajo phrases such as:

I don't care if you've been married sixteen times before,
I'll get you anyway.
I'll treat you better than the one before.
Ya'at'eeh, ya'at'eeh, I'm a Navajo.

A "campsite" complete with tent, tethered horse, and a truck decorated with flowers and the words "Indian Flower Power" had been set up next to the round kiva. Some women in Navajo garb sat around a campfire, two of them holding Navajo cradleboards containing dolls. During the dance, they handed their "babies" to a Tewa man who rocked them, making the audience laugh.

Throughout the event, dancers held out rugs, blankets, jewelry, and ears of corn to the audience, saying "Hellooo, I haven't seen you in so long, got anything to trade? We're from Ganado" (a Navajo town with a famous trading post). Villagers who were not dancing brought bundles of food and goods to the performers, who carried these gifts of appreciation to the kiva at the end of each dance appearance. During the lunch break, a few Tewa men dressed as Pueblo women took food to the dancers in the kiva, and in the late afternoon there was a throw.

The Navajo dance itself, which included some pantomime, encompassed ten dance appearances of approximately twenty minutes apiece. The dancers began each appearance by singing in Tewa as they walked four abreast from the kiva to the plaza, not in a stylized walk but in a relaxed, comfortable stride. As they walked, the "men" sounded their rattles in accent to the drumbeat. In the plaza, the dancers formed two parallel lines, "women" in one and "men" in the other. The "Navajos" traveled down these lines from west to east, turning inward and pairing up at the end of the line, each couple then traveling back from east to west. Upon reaching the other end of the line, the partners split and repeated the whole sequence. The line formation, however, as well as the steps, gestures, and quality of movement, was completely Tewa, even in parody of the Navajos. During some appearances, a few dancers broke from the line and performed part of the *yeibichai*, a Navajo ritual dance. Even then, they did not abandon the Tewa movement style.

At the fifth appearance, the dancers passed a jug down the line and each took a gulp; some then staggered backwards as if drunk. Couples occasionally left the line to "waltz" or to have their picture taken by a friend. The Tewa audience laughed uproariously at these antics because they consider such behavior typical of Navajos but improper for themselves.

An understanding of the relationship between Tewas and Navajos is essential to an accurate interpretation of the meanings and messages of the Navajo dance. The two groups have historically been both friends and enemies, and their relationship is one of ambivalence. Inter-marriage is not uncommon, and some Tewa families have long-established friendships and trading relationships with

Navajo families, whom they regularly visit. Yet because of cultural differences and a history of conflicts (the Navajos were once seminomadic people who raided Tewa farmers for produce, livestock, and women), some Tewas still regard Navajos as lazy folk who lie, drink, steal, and make poor spouses. Furthermore, the Tewas have always regarded as degrading the Navajo practice of sheep herding.

The Navajo dance permits the Tewas to consider their past and present feelings about Navajos. By mimicking the Navajos, they can ritualize and defuse years of interaction, including some dangerous confrontations. Through humor, the Navajos are symbolically brought into the Tewa world. The Navajo dance also plays up the antithesis of appropriate Tewa behavior, and so reinforces Tewa standards. Through symbolic reversals and humor, the performance tells Tewa Indians not to drink and act drunk, not to get divorced, and not to be wandering herdsmen.

Besides defining the differences between Tewas and Navajos, the performance plays with male and female role assignment. Tewa women do not normally dress as men (only recently have pants become acceptable attire for Tewa women), nor do men dress as women. Women do not assume important public roles such as that of drummer, and men do not serve women food in the kiva. The dance temporarily suspends these social rules, and since this suspension is seen as humorous and ridiculous, the norm is reinforced. Village ritual performances like the Navajo dance, along with clown behavior, illuminate what the Tewas find perplexing, paradoxical, or nonsensical about themselves and others; they use humor to communicate Tewa definitions of proper behavior.

An Annual Cycle

To put into perspective this discussion of Tewa village rituals, it may be helpful to describe, as an example, a typical annual cycle of performances at the village of San Juan. Of all the Tewa villages, San Juan is the largest and is one of the four most ritually active. The other villages historically have regarded San Juan as the "mother village" in ritual and political matters (Ortiz 1969:3).

Each year on January 1, San Juan installs its new secular officers. On January 6, or the closest Sunday thereto, the new officers are honored with a ritual performance. Dancers and singers perform first in the plazas, then in the new officers' homes, where they are given food in gratitude for their performance. The buffalo dance is most often selected for this occasion, probably because at

San Juan it involves only a few dancers, and the segments can be relatively short.

After the new officers have met with the other council members, the newly composed village council selects a dance to be held in late January or early February. The choice is usually the basket dance or the cloud dance. By custom, the basket and cloud dances should alternate each year, but this is not always the case. Though both are agricultural dances that once may have been held in early spring, they are now performed in winter because of pressures from early Catholic missionaries who wanted no ritual dancing during Lent.

The night before the performance, male participants hold a short evening dance, a simple line dance offering a prayer for the success of the following day's ritual. A full day of a communal dance such as the basket or cloud dance includes four or more appearances. At San Juan, with each appearance, the group dances first in the south plaza, then in the north plaza, next in the east plaza, and finally in the kiva. Short breaks separate the appearances, and a longer lunch break allows the performers to rest a bit. Often the last circuit is completed just before sunset. Because performances take place on Sunday to accommodate those who work during the week, some families attend mass before the dance begins. While the dance is in progress, women are busy preparing and serving food in their homes. Friends and relatives gather to chat and to share in the feasting.

Unlike the cloud dance, in which only two women at a time dance with the long line of men, the basket dance requires equal numbers of women and men. Before the performance, each man must obtain a pair of notched scraping sticks for his partner; he must either carve them himself or pay another man to make them. Each woman dancer carries these sticks along with a basket, and during part of the dance, she kneels and repeatedly scrapes the sticks over her basket, which functions as a resonator. The result is a beautiful and somewhat eerie droning sound.

San Juan's next ritual performance is selected in January by the unmarried men and boys, who traditionally go to the village game priest and ask if they might hold the deer dance in February. This dance is performed only by men, to songs that are recalled as exactly as possible from previous years. The performance begins with an evening dance, a simple and relatively short prelude in which the dancers *ántegeh* in place in a single line. At dawn the next morning, the deer dancers dramatically enter the village from hills to the east. They meander slowly as a group of singers chants at the eastern edge of the village.

After the dawn entrance, the deer dancers go to their homes and eat. They return to dance in the plazas repeatedly throughout the day. At the end of the

performance, men called "keepers of the deer" shoot rifles and the deer scatter, with San Juan women in pursuit. When a woman catches a dancer, he must give her meat in exchange for stew, bread, cookies, and other cooked foods. As many as a hundred men may participate in the San Juan deer dance.

After the deer dance, the women take a turn at selecting another agricultural dance to be held before Lent. The choice is usually the yellow corn, the spring social, or the butterfly dance, each of which contains agricultural symbols such as corn, squash, or the image of a pollinating insect. They all follow the same basic pattern of appearances and plaza circuits as the basket or the cloud dance. The San Juan butterfly dance, however, features one man and one woman dancer with each appearance, and throughout the day these couples are compared for their dance ability. The choreography of the butterfly dance includes small jumps as the partners move toward or away from each other.

The women may select two of these agricultural dances, and if so, the second will be held on Easter Sunday. When they choose only one dance, and none is scheduled for Easter, the San Juan people frequently spend the day at another village's ritual performance.

June 13 marks the next regular public event at San Juan: the green corn dance, a celebration for Saint Anthony. In this dance the singers stand together to one side of the dancers, complementing the words of the songs with gestures that symbolize rain, clouds, and growth.

The one ritual performance that attracts more visitors to San Juan than any other is the patron saint's day celebration on June 24, Saint John's Day (see Sweet 1978). The villagers cannot remember a time when tourists and neighbors did not flock to the event. As early as 1897, a *New York Times* story about the San Juan feast day reported that "200-300 curious Americans" attended. Public activities actually begin on June 23, with vespers in the Catholic church and a buffalo dance in the plazas. The buffalo dancers appear three times, the last at sunset. Though Tewa Indians perform several types of buffalo dances, this version is said to have been borrowed from the Hopis. Its "foreign" origin may explain why it is held in summer at San Juan, rather than during the winter as are most buffalo dances. It may once have been primarily an imitative dance featuring symbolic reversals, one of them being the season of presentation itself. Today this buffalo dance serves as a prelude to the Comanche dance performed on the following day.

An early morning mass begins the feast day. In recent years, the priest has said much of the mass in Tewa, and sometimes the buffalo dancers perform

briefly in the church. After mass a procession carries the statue of Saint John the Baptist to a cottonwood bower erected in the north plaza. By noon, sixty to or hundred dancers have filed out of the big kiva to perform the Comanche dance. Because this dance is an imitative performance involving a tribal reversal, seems a logical choice for an event so close to the summer solstice. Still, the dance is not invariably performed every year; in 1983, for example, San Juan presented its green corn dance, which carries no connotations of reversal.

The Comanche dance is one in which Tewa men have considerable freedom in costume construction. They enjoy showing off their most elaborate and garish outfits (fig. 13). It is not uncommon to see male Comanche dancers with dye feathered war bonnets and bustles, bone breast plates, beaded mocassins, and wild designs of red, blue, yellow, or green face and body paint. Most elements of a male Comanche costume are traded for or purchased from Plains Indians at intertribal gatherings called powwows. Unlike their male counterparts, Tewa women who perform in the Comanche dance are conservatively attired in typical Pueblo dresses with a lace-trimmed shawl over a shoulder and a woven sash at the waist. The difference in costume is echoed in the execution of the dance steps; the men exaggerate Tewa movements and frequently let out loud yelps while the women remain demure and perform their movements as they would for any other Tewa dance.

All day the village is crowded with Anglos, Hispanics, Tewas, and other Indian visitors. When the dancing and feasting are over, a small group of San Juan Indians, Hispanics, and the Catholic priest return the statue of Saint John to the church. The Hispanic participants are neighbors who often join in the activities of the San Juan church.

San Juan consultants say this event is "to honor the saint," but the performance also celebrates the power of the sun at the summer solstice and symbolically helps the sun change its path. Early descriptions of this celebration mention not only song and dance but also ritual foot races (Jackson 1882:106-7). At San Juan, this traditionally was a relay race between two teams, one made up of men from the north side of the village and the other of men from the south side. The race track ran from east to west, like the path of the sun (Ortiz 1969:108-110). San Juan's patron saints' day celebration clearly has both Catholic and traditional Tewa religious foundations.

Another important part of the feast day is the carnival that is set up at the edge of the village, spatially separated from the plaza dancing. Run by several



Figure 13. A young Comanche dancer at San Juan shows off a gaudy costume and elaborate face paint. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1974.)



Figure 14. San Juan matachines dancers wear miters with long, colorful ribbons hanging down the back and cover their faces with black fringe and scarves. (Photo by Roger Sweet, 1974.)

Hispanic and Anglo families who travel to many summer feast day celebrations around the state, the carnival is one of the day's highlights for the San Juan children. Some tourists complain that the carnival "spoils" the authenticity of the Indian event, but Tewas say the carnival has been part of the celebration for as long as they can remember.

The next public performance at San Juan, though not held every year, is the harvest dance sponsored by the kossa clown society in mid September. One San Juan man explained that its purpose is "to feed Mother Nature for the crops that have been provided you for the year." In the harvest dance, an entrance song and dance sequence is followed by nine more sequences with no breaks between songs, not even a lunch rest. Each sequence is dedicated to a specific ceremonial society or other social group within the community. The dancers form a circle, and as each social group is mentioned in the song, its members identify themselves by moving out from the circle. In this way, the dance publicly defines each dancer's place in the San Juan social system. An impressive throw accompanies the harvest dance, as hundreds of items are tossed to the singers, dancers, and observers.

The Christmas *matachines* dance is the next public performance held in San Juan (fig. 14). Of Spanish derivation, the dance has a European Christian theme; the San Juan Indians say that it was "taught to us long ago by the missionaries." Perhaps because of its foreign origin, the village governor and staff are responsible for organizing the performance.

Some researchers argue that the *matachines* dance symbolizes the battles between Christians and Moors, while others claim that it depicts the legend of Montezuma (see Lyon 1979; Champe 1983). Its European origin, however, is not debated. The music has been traced to sixteenth-century European tunes, and the Tewas often hire Hispanic musicians to play the violin and guitar for the event. *Matachines* dance steps feature skips, turns, and other movements not typical of Tewa dance. One Tewa man observed that the *matachines* dance could not be Tewa in origin because the steps begin on the left foot, while Tewa steps always begin on the right foot.

After the *matachines* dance on December 25, there is a sunset dance or prelude to the turtle dance, which is performed the following day. The San Juan Indians consider the turtle dance to be their most important public ritual. It is not a Christmas celebration but a winter solstice ritual marking the end of one and the beginning of another annual cycle.

For several evenings before the turtle dance, two *tsave yoh* visit San Juan. The village war captains impersonate these beings who live in caves in the four sacred hills. The white-masked *tsave yoh*, associated with the winter moiety, enters the village from the north, while the black-masked *tsave yoh*, associated with the summer moiety, enters from the south. Both carry whips and flog any San Juan residents who have behaved particularly poorly during the year. Although the whipping is more a symbolic gesture than a serious assault, most villagers avoid getting too close to the *tsave yoh*. Despite their masks, these figures are not *kachinas*.

On the day of the turtle dance, the *tsave yoh* police the village, whipping any troublemakers. Tourists are not spared. The clowns also appear in San Juan for the turtle dance, which choreographically is one of the simplest. The single line of male dancers never changes formation as the men *antegeh* in place, occasionally pivoting to face a different direction. The dancers are supposed to sing clearly, with no drum or chorus to accompany them.

The dances in the cycle just described do not exhaust the list, but they do include those most regularly performed. Other Tewa villages perform some of the same dances, in addition to others that are not part of the San Juan ritual cycle. San Juan consultants say that some dances have fallen from their repertoire while others have been consciously revived. Most recent among the revivals is the spring social dance, which in 1972 was performed for the first time in more than twenty years. In 1964 San Juan revived its green corn dance, and in 1951, the yellow corn dance. These revivals occur when individuals in the village become concerned about cultural continuity and encourage the elders to work with village song composers to recall songs and dances that have not been performed for many years.

About the revival efforts, one San Juan man said, "We're trying to get our customs up again instead of them being buried." Another noted, "Within the past few years, more of the younger generation are taking part in it [dance events]—which is good—because we're trying to emphasize to the school kids that this is their doings, their culture, and we want to keep it going." A third San Juan man happily acknowledged the resurgence in dance participation, saying, "The dance lines keep getting longer and younger."