

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

EMBODIMENTS OF POWER:
NINETEENTH-CENTURY WARRIOR ART AMONG
THE CHEYENNES AND KIWAS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2003

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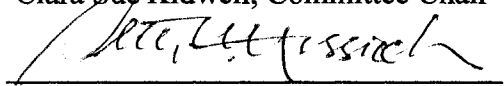
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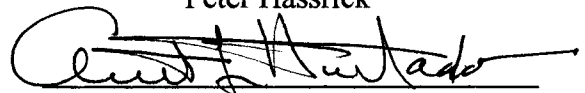
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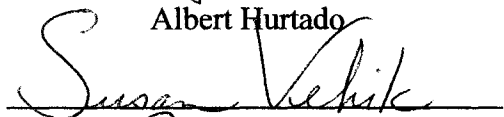
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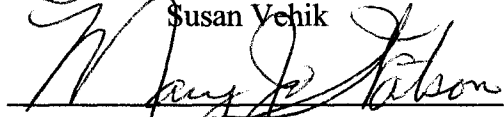
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Acknowledgments

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Ernest Toppah, Director of the Kiowa Tribe Museum for the many hours spent interpreting the oral history tapes held in the museum's archives; to the members of the Kiowa Museum Board for their time and information; to Jim Anquoe, Sr. for his keen insights and observations on Kiowa culture. Also, my thanks to Gordon Yellowman of the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribe for his boundless generosity and patience with my seemingly endless questions. I wish to thank various other members of the Cheyenne and Kiowa communities which participated in this study, and for their peoples' willingness to allow me access to their communities in order to conduct my research.

I thank my committee members for their support and guidance through the course of my doctoral studies. Their knowledge, input, and expertise served me well. Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude to my wife Linnea, and my children, Bradlin, Isaiah, Nathanael, and Kayalan for their patience and endurance. Their support and encouragement throughout made this study possible.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations.....	vi
Abstract.....	x
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Tribal Histories: Beginnings to 1840.....	18
Chapter 2: Tribal Histories: the Changing Face of Trade and Warfare.....	59
Chapter 3: The Warrior Societies: Origins, Validation, and Warrior Ethos.....	94
Chapter 4: Art as a Reflection of Environment: the Created Universe.....	135
Chapter 5: Embodiments of Power: Vision Imagery and Biographic Art.....	174
Chapter 6: Conclusions:.....	217
Bibliography:	225
Appendices:.....	242

List of Illustrations

“The Captured Cavalry Mount.”	3
Bonnet, War Shirt, and Dog Rope	5
“Proving His Medicine	7
Tsistsistas Moccasins	12
Tsistsistas Shield	30
<i>Tsaeigul</i>	36
Lakota Calender glyph	38
“The Girl Who Married the Sun.”	39
Drawing of the <i>Tai ’me</i> Keeper, assistant, and the <i>Tai ’me</i> figures	42
The Arrow Renewal Ceremony	50
<i>Sett ’an</i> Calender glyph	51
“A Bowstring Warrior with Captured Horses.”	76
“Captured Horses.”	76
“Captured Mules.”	79
“Feathered Bear Proves His Power.”	96
Shirt. Upper Missouri Region	139
Left Hand Bonnet	140
Tie Creek Ledger page 188	142
Little Rock Shield	143
Broadhead Shield	143
Black Magpie’s Star Picture Tipi	145

Tsistsistas Woman’s beaded bag	148
Caiugu cradle board hood	148
“The Honoring.”	153
“The Honoring, Cheyenne Ceremony.”	155
“Indian Cavalry Charge.”	160
“Southern Cheyenne Sun Dance or the Great Medicine Lodge Ceremony.”	162
<i>Onhati</i> and <i>Settiia</i> shield designs	168
Dog Man shield	169
The Underwater Monster Tipi	175
Whistling Elk Shield	178
Crazy Mule Shield	178
Tie Creek Ledger page 106	184
Tie Creek Ledger page 107	185
“Tipis and Owners.”	186
“Three Painted Tipis.”	187
“A Cheyenne at Home.”	188
“Three Distinguished Warriors.”	189
Untitled <i>Tickematse</i> drawing	190
<i>Mamante</i> shield design	190
<i>Guata</i> face and horse paint	191
Paints and shield designs	192
<i>Tenadati</i> shield and face paint	194

Burnt All Over shield	195
<i>Okehisvootan</i> shield	198
<i>Okehisvatoon</i> 's face paint	199
Howling Wolf's Bowstring Society lance	200
Howling Wolf paints	201
Iron Shirt face and horse paints	202
Iron Shirt shield number 1	204
Iron Shirt shield number 2	205
Little Horse shield	207
Little Horse face paint	208
<i>Honiamaha</i> 's shield	209
<i>Honiamaha</i> 's face paint	210
<i>Ogihetavoot</i> shield and horse paint	211
"Two Men wearing Face Paint and in Costume..."	213
Tsistsistas: unidentified drawing	214
"Red Otter Comes to the Rescue."	214
"Capture."	224

Maps

Map 1: Caiugu and Tsistsistas migrations and positions circa 1815	242
Map 2: Caiugu and Tsistsistas territories circa 1840	243

Society Paints

Tsistsistas:

Bulls or Red Shields	244
Dog Man	245
Wolf Warrior	246
Kit Fox Men	247
Bowstring Warrior	248

Caiugu:

Tonkongats	249
Koitsenko	250
Tai'me Keeper	251
Hotoyi society	252
Kowde society	253

Abstract

Embodiments of Power: Nineteenth-Century Warrior Art Among the Cheyennes and Kiowas is an inter-disciplinary examination of the role which color/symbol systems played in Cheyenne and Kiowa cultures of the nineteenth century. Art, as a color/symbol system, provided a ready vehicle for statements of identity, place, and purpose in the universal order. Members of the Cheyenne and Kiowa warrior societies also utilized visual symbol systems as cultural modifiers designed to shape and order society. Events recorded in ledger books served to indoctrinate boys and youths into a culturally prescribed martial mindset. Scenes centering on warfare, hunting, or courtship expounded a set of social behaviors that were intended to be emulated and imitated. Vision imagery supported such behaviors by illustrating transcendent themes of supernatural-mortal empowerment. These cosmological associations and sanctions were expressed visually through the designs and compositions made up of these elements, and were applied to shields and shield covers, lodge covers and liners, robes, articles of clothing, society equipment and paraphernalia. Cosmological sanctions rested within a context of permeable time in which mythic events from the past constantly informed the present. This study examines how the Cheyenne and Kiowa warrior societies utilized art as a means for validating their positions of status and authority in their respective cultures.

A number of factors influenced nineteenth-century Cheyenne and Kiowa art, particularly among the warrior societies. Changes in environment, culture, politics, social patterns, trade, and warfare combined to influence the use of art by these societies. These societies were in a state of flux. Life for nineteenth-century Cheyennes and Kiowas was changing rapidly,

particularly in the latter half of the century. Art provided a psychological anchor in an increasingly chaotic world. Environmental changes, shifting alliances and trade patterns, an aggressively expanding American republic, and recurrent epidemic diseases all contributed to a state of flux beyond any one group's understanding or control. These factors had a bearing on cultural response and perceptions, and subsequently affected how the people utilized art as an expression of basic cosmological tenets in regard to who they were, their purpose for existence, and their place in the universe.

This study utilizes a number of sources, including the cultural items previously mentioned, which represent recorded collective memories of personal and tribal importance in the lives of the Cheyenne and Kiowa peoples. Examples of ledger book drawings, painted lodge covers, shield designs, body paints, clothing, and accouterments are drawn on as visual source materials. While these visual sources are not interpreted in the same manner as written documents, they nevertheless present a source that can be "read" from an indigenous point of view. Information about visual elements is validated by written historical sources such as traders' inventories, agents' reports, and other government documents. Both visual and textual sources are given equal validity. An interdisciplinary approach utilizing Historical, Art Historical, and Anthropological methodologies is applied to this examination of men's art and its uses by the nineteenth-century Cheyennes and Kiowas. Oral histories and personal interviews with members of the Native American communities are also utilized to establish an indigenous perspective for the historical context of warrior art.

Two significant periods will be covered. These periods will encompass those years from the turn of the eighteenth century through the 1830s, and 1840 to the reservation era. While

emphasis will be placed on the first period, the second will outline the cultural continuity of men's art traditions among the Cheyennes and Kiowas.

Introduction

The nineteenth-century Plains was an arena in which numerous forces merged to produce one of history's most dramatic episodes. The period roughly coinciding with the end of the eighteenth century through the 1870s saw the rise, fluorescence, and abrupt decline of what are perhaps some of the most colorful and captivating cultures to have crossed the pages of New World history. With the advent of the horse the Nomadic cultures of the North American plains attained an ascendancy that lasted mere decades before they were systematically dispossessed under United States federal policies.

Among the cultures that established themselves in the Plains during this period were the Cheyennes and Kiowas, or as they prefer to be known, Tsistsistas and Caiugu respectively. It is the warrior societies of these two peoples that are the topic of this study. The specific focus is how the warrior societies utilized symbolic visual systems as mechanisms by which to validate their positions of status and authority. Visual expressions composed of drawn and painted designs, feathers, and other animal body parts were applied to a variety of items. These visual systems were routinely used on shields and shield covers, lodge covers and liners, in body paints, society regalia, personal equipment, and ledger drawings.

The iconography of these systems repeatedly points to the cosmological frameworks of these cultures as justification for the assertion of martial authority. This authority provided a framework by which the Tsistsistas and Caiugu defined themselves during a particularly turbulent period in their history. Clifford Geertz states:

“Religion consists of a ‘system of symbols’ which brings about congruence between a particular style of life and the metaphysical world: these sets of

symbols, or 'cultural patterns', give meaning to the world by expressing the relationship between transcendent beings and mortals. Thus, symbols provide a meaningful and ordered model of the universe. Further, the belief in symbols shapes the world by inducing dispositions in men -moods and motivations -...if symbols did not create such dispositions, then religious activities - ritual and other forms of social action - would not exist...In essence, we depend on symbols to shape and order our world, to explain unexplained phenomena, and to alleviate chaos and suffering...these functions are thus related to social and cultural processes."¹

While Geertz is primarily concerned with religious symbol systems as cultural modifiers, this same shaping power is applicable to art as it was used by nineteenth-century Tsistsistas and Caiugu warrior societies. Art comprises a symbol system which is designed to communicate and store traditional knowledge. The warrior societies utilized art as a means to shape and order the world they inhabited. This was accomplished by drawing on cosmological references and associations that formed the basis of society for the Tsistsistas and Caiugu. Art assumed power by shaping and perpetuating the life styles of the nineteenth-century Tsistsistas and Caiugu. Both vision-based and biographic art were metaphorical and realistic representations of the universal order and an affirmation of the supernatural's efficacy. Such representations also served to transmit cultural values and tenets.

Ledger book drawings illustrated art's function as a shaping mechanism. While the images were realistic representations, they also served a mnemonic function. Figure 1 provides an example. This drawing depicts one sequence of an event in an individual's

¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90-108, 123-125.

career. He has participated in a successful horse raid, and drives the captured animal, still

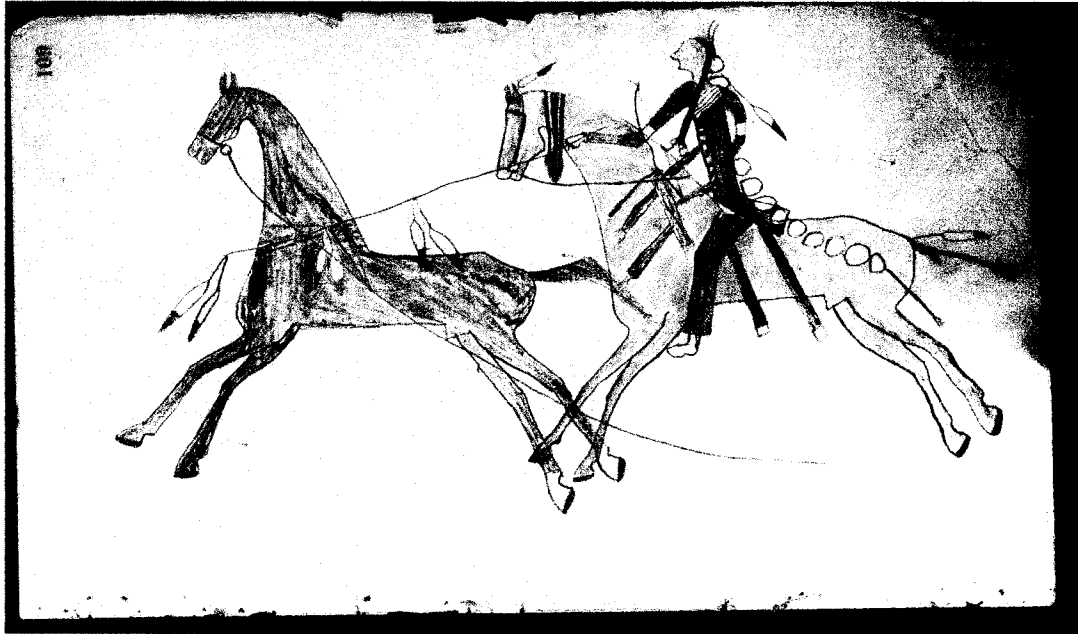


Figure 1.
Tsistsistas. "The Captured Cavalry Mount." Pencil and crayon. Ca. 1865.
Tie Creek Ledger, page 109.
Private Collection. Name withheld by request.

dragging its tether line, ahead of him. The detail given to both horses' hooves marks them as prized animals.² While this depicts only one sequence in the entire event, it was enough to allow anyone familiar with the individual's martial career to recount the entire episode from start to triumphant finish. In this respect the drawings created in ledger books served a mnemonic function, and also expressed part of a warrior ethos central to Tsistsistas and Caiugu thought. The arrangement of the participants, particularly in Tsistsistas ledger art, possibly reflected dominance-submission themes meant to enhance the role played by the warrior. Candace S. Green's structural analysis of Tsistsistas pictographic art illustrates

² Gordon Yellowman, interviewed by author, Concho, Oklahoma, December 12, 2002.

dominance-submission as an underlying theme expressed through visual metaphors.³ However, this may only represent a scholarly interpretation, as other sources assert that this was a characteristic convention of the time.⁴ Nevertheless, such drawings affirmed desired qualities a warrior should possess.

In both Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures it was necessary to inculcate in young males a set of expected behaviors designed to perpetuate a warrior ethos. Standards of expected behavior required exemplary behavior toward one's own people, yet also called for controlled aggression as a means of cultivating martial capabilities. This element of controlled aggression was essential to a man's position in society. Grinnell states:

The Cheyenne men were all warriors. War was regarded as the noblest of pursuits, the only one for a man to follow; and from earliest youth boys were encouraged to excel in it. They were taught that no pleasure equaled the joy of battle; that success in war brought in its train the respect and admiration of men, women, and children in the tribe, and that the most worthy thing that any man could do was to be brave. It was pointed out that death in battle was not an evil, and that such a death, besides being glorious, protected one from all the miseries which threatened later life and are inevitable to old age...The training, and the public opinion which supported it, guided the Cheyenne youth and gave them their motive for that hardship and readiness which were essential to success in war.⁵

³ Candace Schroeber Green, *Women, Bison, and Coup: A Structural Analysis of Cheyenne Pictographic Art* (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1976).

⁴ Gordon Yellowman, Concho, Oklahoma, December 12, 2002;
Sam Hart, interviewed by author, El Reno, Oklahoma, December 12, 2002.

⁵ George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians: Their History and Way of Life*. 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972). Originally published by Yale University

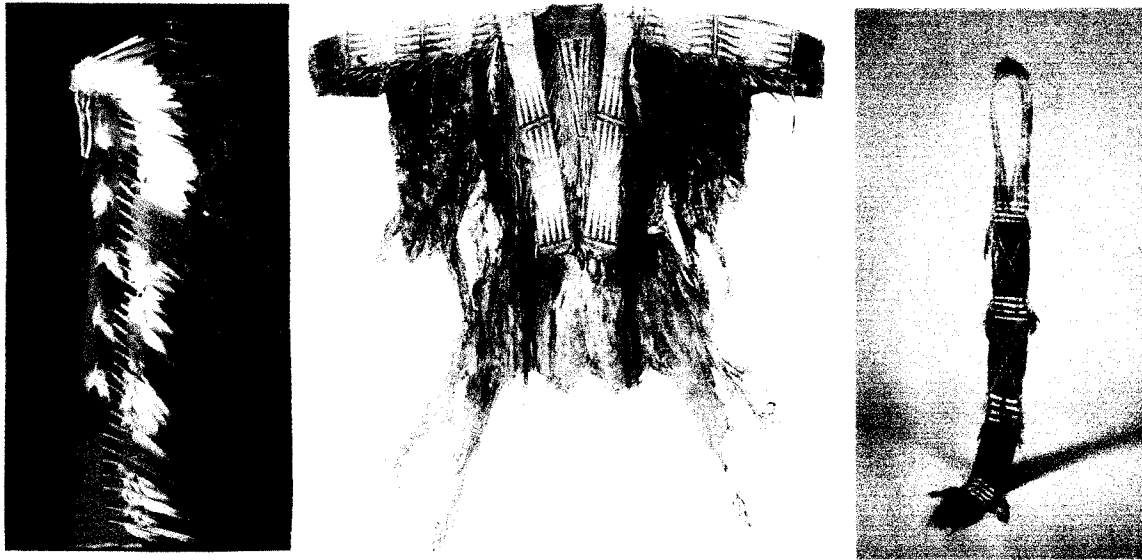


Figure 2.

(L) Cheyenne bonnet with trailer, circa 1880. Eagle feathers, deer hide, wool cloth, glass beads. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution; (M) Cheyenne war shirt, circa 1870. Deer hide, porcupine quills, horse hair. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Catalogue no. 17.6345; (R) Cheyenne Dog rope. Hide, porcupine quills, feathers, pigment. N.D. Collection Native Arts - Native American, Denver Art Museum. #1964.288. Photo courtesy of the Denver Art Museum.

The feathered bonnet with trailer (Figure 2) became a common feature throughout the Plains after the introduction of the horse. The example shown exhibits a characteristic Cheyenne treatment in the grouping of red-dyed feathers, signifying that its owner had shed blood.⁶ The war shirt, with its intricately quilled bands and yoke, was an item that only an individual who had counted coup could own.⁷ While this one is trimmed with horse hair, human scalps were

Press, 1923: I, 4.

⁶ Gordon Yellowman, interviewed by author, Concho, Oklahoma, November 8, 2002.

⁷ Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* I, 58.

often used on shirts (Figure 2). The dog rope was one of only four belonging to the Dog Man society (Figure 2). The warriors who wore these sashes were an elite group, whose war records attested to their bravery and overall concern for the people's well-being.⁸ In each case, such items were marks of honor, and were held as emblems of office by individuals of status and proven martial ability.

Vision-based images as metaphor espoused concepts and ideals that were central to the world views of both the Tsistsistas and Caiugu. Through vision based art, ways of knowing and understanding the nineteenth-century Plains environment were grounded in culturally significant constructs and meanings. These spiritual perceptions were then co-mingled with the physical and revealed the two peoples' origins and destinies. The matter of how such perceptions impacted the socio-cultural order of Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures is central to this study, and will be taken up in chapter three.

Art Historians who have undertaken the subject of Plains art, particularly ledger drawings, include such scholars as Janet Catherine Berlo, Christian Feest, Gloria A. Young, and Norman Feder.⁹ In these works the art is viewed as art, and the focus is largely on elements

⁸ Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* II, 70.

⁹ Janet Catherine Berlo, "Artists, Ethnographers, and Historians: Plains Indian Graphic Arts in the Nineteenth Century and Beyond," Robert G. Donnelly, *Transforming Images: The Art of Silver Horn and His Successors* (Chicago, The University of Chicago in cooperation with the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2000); Christian F. Feest, *Native Arts of North America* (New York: Thames and Hudson, Inc., 1992); Gloria A. Young, "Aesthetic Archives: the Visual Language of Plains Ledger Art," In Edwin L. Wade, ed. *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution* (New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with the Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1986); Norman Feder, "European Influences on Plains Indian Art," In Wade, *The Arts of the North American Indian*.

of style. This is true for individual artists, as in Berlo's essay in *Silver Horn*, and regional styles, as evidenced in Feder's essay on adoption of Euro-American materials and media. The art is viewed as representative of an aesthetic specific to the

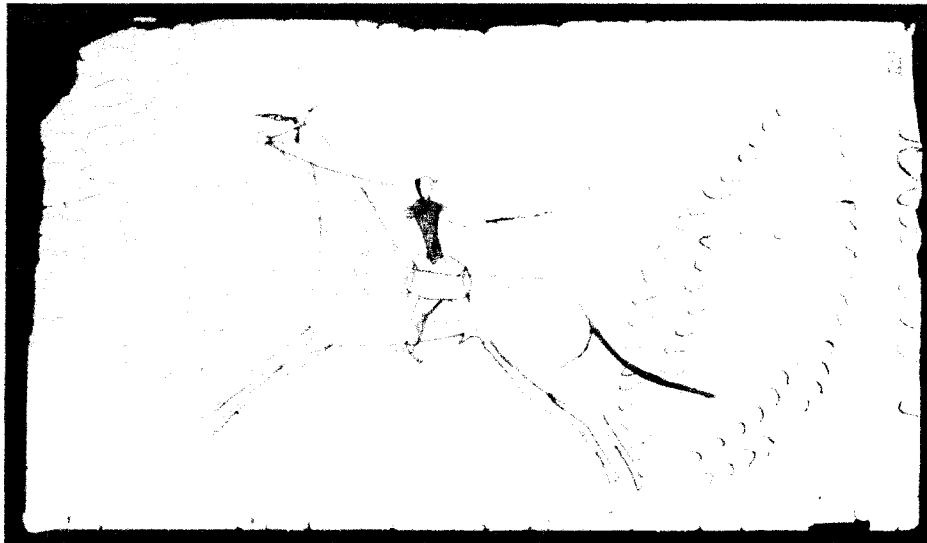


Figure 3.
Tsistsistas. "Proving His Medicine." Ink and colored pencil. Ca. 1865.
Tie Creek Ledger, page 172.
Private collection, name withheld by request.

Plains, with an emphasis on its function as a didactic tool. Within this context attention is placed on the narrative or documentary aspects of the art.

Figure 3 is one of a series of ten drawings depicting sequences of the same event. The warrior has ridden back and forth in front of his companions, indicated by the hoof prints along the page's right border. The concentric ovals of tracks tell us that he made several passes in front of them in an effort to bolster his men's courage. As he rides into the enemy's fire shown by the curved dashes on the left, he looks backward, beckoning his fellow warriors on.

A number of scholars note that Plains graphic traditions provide a window into a Native ethnography. A meticulous recording of details by Native artists has provided historians with material from which they have determined specific historical events based on items such as the types of bridles and rifles depicted in drawings, as well as specifics of dress peculiar to different Native groups and individuals. Art's role in the process of cultural molding has been treated variously as a mere expression of creativity, facet of material culture, or the simple means of recording events. This dissertation places art within the broader context of the cultural values of the Tsistsistas and Caiugu, especially with regard to warfare and social status.

The use of art as a socio-cultural mechanism was influenced by a number of factors. Martial emphasis was a result of endemic warfare. As more people pressed onto the Plains, competition over decreasing resources intensified between various Native American groups, and later between Euro Americans and autochthonous groups. The archaeological record indicates that conflict increased markedly in the Plains after A.D. 1450, and continued into the post-contact period.¹⁰ These pressures exacerbated already existing social tensions between the civil and martial segments within Indian societies, and cosmological associations expressed through the art provided a ready vehicle for asserting the authority of one group over others.

Life was changing rapidly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and art provided a psychological anchor in an increasingly chaotic world. Iconography that pointed directly to

¹⁰ Susan C. Vehik, "Conflict, Trade, and Political Development on the Southern Plains," *American Antiquity* 67:1 (January, 2002): 37- 64.

cosmological foundations reinforced a sense of identity in a world that was steadily unraveling. Native peoples were increasingly restricted through treaties, availability of resources, or a simple desire to remove themselves from further contact with Anglos. Environmental changes created conditions less favorable to bison, and more amenable to horses, which were direct competitors with bison for forage.¹¹ Political alignments among Plains peoples were shifting to accommodate an increased Anglo presence and shifting trade patterns. Also, the incidence of epidemic diseases steadily eroded the population base and moved peoples to turn to cosmological vindications for their existence and way of life.¹²

There is also a consistency in the colors used in nineteenth-century beadwork that underscores a pervasive ideology. While an increasing range of color was available through Anglo trade, Native peoples continued to prefer traditional colors. After the introduction of commercially produced colors through Euro-American trade, specific color repertoires persisted in ceremonial and ritual contexts such as the Sun dance, Arrow Renewal, and Scared Buffalo Hat ceremonies. Howard L. Harrod remarks on the use of a prescribed set of colors in Sun Dance dry painting, and Alice Marriott notes the strict adherence to a specific color repertoire by members of the Southern Tsistsistas women's trade guild.¹³ The quilled or

¹¹ Elliott West, *The Way West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 73-78; Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: the Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," *The Journal of American History* 78:2 (1991): 481.

¹² Ann F. Ramenofsky, *Vectors of Death: the Archaeology of European Contact* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

¹³ Howard L. Harrod, *Renewing the World: Plains Indian Religion and Morality* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987): 149. The pigments used in painting part of the altar used in the Sun Dance ceremony were in powdered form. These were not

beaded medallions incorporated into lodge liners made by members of this guild utilized specific color combinations. Men's representational and women's geometric art forms also adhered to these repertoires. Beadwork also reflected cultural values of the period, and color use in beadwork sheds light on the use of color in men's art forms.

Evidence used in this study of nineteenth-century art includes cultural items in various collections, along with early explorers' and traders' accounts, oral histories, military accounts, personal interviews, journal and diary excerpts, and United States Geological Surveys and Railroad Surveys. The visual items, while not interpreted in the same manner as textual documents, can nevertheless be read. These articles relay specific information about the individuals who owned and used them or were portrayed in them. Numerous details of an individual's martial career can be extrapolated from ledger book art, such as coups counted, horses captured, enemies killed, personal status, specific events that took place, and people involved in those events.

Adequately interpreting these images and other items as well requires a Native perspective. This perspective is contained in personal interviews with members of contemporary Tsistsistas and Caiugu communities, and oral histories. Among the individuals who contributed their input include Sun Dance priests, cultural consultants, elders, artists, and educators. It was the author's good fortune to interact with these individuals in a variety of settings and circumstances, ranging from casual conversations to formal contexts at

suspended in water as were pigments used to paint the dancers, hence the term "dry painting". These were also detailed by Grinnell in *Cheyenne Indians* vol. II, 261-262; Alice Marriott, "The Trade Guild of the Southern Cheyenne Women," Zena Pearlstone Matthews and Aldona Jonaitis, *Native North American Art History: Selected Essays* (Palo Alto: Peek Publications, 1982): 247-255.

ceremonial observances. The interpretations derived from these sources facilitate an understanding of the iconography, and together with the visual works presented in this study comprise the bulk of the primary source material. While textual historical documents provide an invaluable primary source, there is nevertheless a certain cultural bias that is inadvertently expressed in many written accounts. Of necessity the writers of these documents framed their material in contexts that would be readily understood by their audiences. Often this cultural tailoring was at the expense of Native viewpoints.

The potential for bias also exists, however, with Native peoples' interpretations. Where one individual may identify a particular motif as a geometric form, another may well interpret the same motif from a basis of gender. An example would be a triangular motif on a moccasin. The wife or mother who made the form might well have intended it to represent a specific geographic location that held particular meaning for her, while the owner of that moccasin might assign the motif a martial interpretation such as an arrow or lance point (Figure 4). Divergent interpretations give rise to multi-layered meanings that operate within the larger cultural context. Because of this, it becomes important to focus not only on iconography in a cultural context, but within a gender-based context as well.

Both artists and non-artist comprise the interview base. Artists' and non-artists' perceptions vary in terms of the emotive reactions inspired by art. An artist may well have a fixed idea in mind when creating a design or composition, and might consciously seek to relay

a specific intellectual message through that work. Non-artists, on the other hand, more frequently relate to an object for the emotive and psychological responses it engenders. These emotive responses are heightened when the information relayed consistently reflects basic cosmological tenets that are universally recognized throughout the community. The result



Figure 4.
Tsistsistas. Man's moccasins. Late 1800s. Hide and beads.
Oklahoma State Museum of History, Oklahoma Historical Society Native American Collection.
Accession no. 374.

is that the message and interpretation become more consistent and persistent. By utilizing both artists' and non-artists' interpretations, a more accurate reflection of cultural perceptions can be derived.

Approaches to the subject of Plains art traditions have been many and varied. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the prevailing doctrine of the Vanishing American fueled the rush for salvage ethnology. What was viewed as an impending loss inspired ethnographers to record and catalogue as much as possible of Native cultures before they disappeared entirely. This mind set also drove a number of individuals to memorialize

the “Vanishing American” in photographs.¹⁴ Art fit into this scheme as a facet of material culture, or as a component of ritual and/or religion, and was generally not viewed as art per se. Among those who were actively engaged in salvage ethnology were James Mooney and Alfred Kroeber. Mooney’s goal was to point up the intellectual and philosophical complexity of Native systems. His classic study of Caiugu and Kiowa-Apache lodges, Caiugu calendars, and his field notes on shields and Caiugu heraldry explored cultural complexity.¹⁵ Alfred Kroeber, most noted for his work among the Arapaho, compiled a voluminous work on this people that detailed, in a very straightforward manner, the art.¹⁶ In the context of salvage ethnology, Kroeber’s work represents a thorough survey of material culture based on the pieces he examined. A third individual, George Dorsey, best known for his research among the Pawnees, also did extensive work among the Tsistsistas during the same period, with a

¹⁴ See Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820 - 1880: the Early Years of American Ethnology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986); Brian W. Dippé, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U. S. Indian Policy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982); Edward Sheriff Curtis, *The North American Indian* (Cambridge, MA: University Press of Cambridge, 1907-1930); Don D. Fowler, *The Western Photographs of John K. Hillers: Myself in the Water* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989); Jackson H. Clark, *Glass Plates and Wagon Ruts: Images of the Southwest by Lisle Updike and William Pennington* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1998); Dan Aadland, *Women and Warriors of the Plains: the Pioneer Photography of Julia E. Tuell* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2000).

¹⁵ James Mooney, *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of American Ethnology, 1898); “Notes on Kiowa Shields, Tipis, Societies, and Stories,” Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives MS 2531, vol. 6, 1899.

¹⁶ Alfred L. Kroeber, *The Arapaho* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983). First published in three parts in the *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* in 1902, 1904, and 1907.

primary focus on ceremonial aspects and material culture.¹⁷ George Bird Grinnell as well concentrated on the Tsistsistas with an eye toward social structures and general ethnology. Grinnell wrote primarily for a non-academic audience with the intent of educating a wide spectrum of the general public on issues of Native American life and culture. He approached his studies from a basis of interpretive dialogue in which Native Americans were allowed to tell their own stories devoid of outside interpretations.¹⁸ Comprehensive in their scope, the works of Grinnell provide great insight into the culture, and represent a sizeable body of knowledge on the early historic Tsistsistas. Robert H. Lowie, building on the work of his predecessors, provided more analysis of Plains cultures. He recorded details such as colors used in society emblems and paints, and types of feathers incorporated into articles of equipage.¹⁹ John C. Ewers likewise detailed specifics of material culture, and produced a stunning survey of Caiugu and Kiowa-Apache lodges based on Mooney's work done for the Smithsonian Institution's Louisiana Purchase Exposition held in St. Louis in 1904.²⁰ More recent scholars, such as Benjamin Kracht, Colin Taylor, and Thomas Mails, continue to add to the body of knowledge on Plains peoples in their works. They also examine the art

¹⁷ George A. Dorsey, *The Cheyenne* (Chicago: Field Columbian Museum Anthropological Series IX:1, March, 1905).

¹⁸ George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, 1972; See also Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans Through Anglo Eyes 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 45-66.

¹⁹ Robert H. Lowie, *Indians of the Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982). First published by the American Museum of Natural History, 1952.

²⁰ John C. Ewers, *Murals in the Round: Painted Tipis of the Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache Indians* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978).

traditions of these peoples within a ritual and/or religious context.²¹ While the subject of art as a medium through which societies were molded is not the focus of these scholars, the works that they produced are invaluable resources.

The disciplines of Art History, History, and Anthropology have produced a number of works that analyze men's representational art forms in the plains as mechanisms for conveying events or abstract cultural ideas while at the same time acknowledging these visual traditions as art. The majority of these studies focus on ledger book art and its role as a transition from nineteenth-century graphic traditions to twentieth-century artistic developments. Among these are Joyce M. Szabo's and Karen Daniels Petersen's works on ledger book art from Fort Marion, Florida, Candace S. Green's structural analysis of Tsistsistas pictographic art and later work on Silver Horn, Hermann J. Viola's survey of works created by Making Medicine and Zotom, and the study by Jean Afton et al. of a Tsistsistas ledger book captured at the battle of Summit Springs in 1869.²² Green provides an

²¹ Benjamin R. Kracht, *Kiowa Religion: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Ritual Symbolism, 1832 - 1987*. 2 pts. (Ph. D. Dissertation, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, 1989); Colin F. Taylor, *Buckskin and Buffalo: the Artistry of the Plains Indians* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998); Thomas E. Mails, *Mystic Warriors of the Plains* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972).

²² Joyce M. Szabo, *Howling Wolf and the History of Ledger Art* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994); Karen Daniels Petersen. *Plains Indian Art From Fort Marion* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971); Candace Schroeber Green *Women, Bison, and Coup* (1976), and "Changing Times, Changing Views: Silver Horn as a Bridge to Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Kiowa Art," Donnelly, *Transforming Images*; Herman J. Viola, *Warrior Artists: Historic Cheyenne and Kiowa Indian Ledger Art Drawn by Making Medicine and Zotom* (Washington, D. C.: National Geographic Society, 1998); Jean Afton, David Fridtjof Halaas, and Andrew E. Masich, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers: A Ledger Book History of Coups and Combat* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997).

interesting view of the structure contained in Tsistsistas pictographs as metaphors for dominance, while Afton focuses on the details in ledger book drawings as a means of substantiating dates for the events depicted, thus placing them in a specific historical context. While all of these scholars openly appreciate the grace and beauty with which the artists rendered their subject matter, the general perspective is that these works are transitional between nineteenth-century graphic traditions and twentieth-century painting traditions. Each of these scholars has in their own way contributed immeasurably to the body of knowledge surrounding men's representational art in the Plains, and while this is not a complete survey of the literature, it does provide a representative overview of the subject.

The scope of the literature, regardless of discipline, comprises numerous facets of culture pertinent to both Tsistsistas and Caiugu during the nineteenth century. One facet that has not been addressed is the iconographic content of the art used by the warrior societies. In regard to the matter of iconography Imry Nagy has come closest with his work on Tsistsistas shield typologies and cosmological backgrounds.²³ However, Nagy's work focuses on a single format comprised of shields and their covers.

It is these concerns that the present study seeks to address. This study emphasizes a closer examination of the iconography of feathers, society emblems, dress, paints, lodges and their covers, ledger book art, and shields and their covers. It examines the reasons for and historical context of these art forms during the nineteenth century. Despite the thorough and detailed efforts of previous scholars, such investigation is lacking, and a definitive work on the

²³ Imre Nagy, "A Typology of Cheyenne Shield Designs," *Plains Anthropologist* 3:147 (1994): 5-36; and "Cheyenne Shields and Their Cosmological Background," *American Indian Art Magazine* (Summer, 1994): 38-47, 104.

iconography of nineteenth-century Tsistsistas and Caiugu art has yet to be undertaken.

Chapter 1

Tribal Histories: Beginnings to 1840

In this chapter the history of the Tsistsistas and Caiugu on the plains will be delineated. This history includes not only the written historic documentation of these peoples as recorded in the diaries, journals, government reports, and ethnographic works by various Euro-Americans, but extends as well to the oral traditions of these peoples.

The information contained in oral histories should be considered no less valid in its content than textual documentation. Native oral traditions contrast sharply with Western empirical traditions in which the written word represents an authoritative sign.²⁴ The concept of text as an authoritative source began in essence during the European expansions of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Authority figures, whether explorers, members of ruling elites, or Church leaders disseminated knowledge to the larger population through the printed word, thus validating it.²⁵ While some accounts were objective, some were embellished in both positive and negative ways. In this process of disseminating information the mold was cast. Constructs of the Other as possessed of a less capable intellect took hold and created a

²⁴ Edgar Heap-Of-Birds, interviewed by author, Norman, Oklahoma, June 23, 2003.

²⁵ Olive Patricia Dickson, "Europeans and a New World: Cosmography in the 1500s," *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts For Native History*, Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds. (Petersborough, Ontario: Broadview Press: 1996): 9-14; George R. Hecaley, "The French Jesuits and the Idea of the Noble Savage," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd series 15. (Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1958): 143-144.

deep rooted cultural bias founded on empirical Western traditions.²⁶ If information could not be substantiated empirically, it was discounted as unreliable. Despite earlier views advocated by recognized authority figures, attitudes toward non-empirical means of storing and transmitting cultural histories have changed markedly. Many aspects of Native oral traditions can be validated to some degree through archaeological findings.²⁷ Oral traditions have as their basis the concept of permeable time, in which past and present are coterminous and the past is continually referenced as a means of informing the present and future. Victor Montejo states that “The oral tradition is a concrete form of communication constantly repeated to remind the living people of their links to the land and the teachings of the ancestors (religion, medicine, art, folktales, etc.)”.²⁸ In other words, the oral tradition draws on both the mythic and historical as intertwined aspects that reference a culture’s philosophical bases.

²⁶ Such entrenched attitudes had long lasting effects and were advocated well into the Twentieth century. Dickson discusses theories of human ascendancy in pages 5-9 of her article entitled “Europeans and a New World”, and vilifying Native peoples was standard practice in early American educational systems (see the works of Charles and Samuel Goodrich for examples of this). By the Jeffersonian period Native Americans had acquired the most negative aspects rather than positive expectations in the Anglo mind, (See Bernard W. Sheehan, “Paradise and the Noble Savage in Jeffersonian Thought,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd series 26 (July, 1965): 329. Peter Novik makes reference to President Woodrow Wilson’s support of “specific historical views versus eschewing the cold hard facts as an avenue to avoidance of confusion for young students in public schools” in *That Noble Dream* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 71.

²⁷ Roger C. Echo Hawk, “Ancient History in the New World: Integrating Oral Traditions and the Archaeological Record in Deep Time,” *American Antiquity* 65:2 (April, 2000): 271-186.

²⁸ Victor Montejo, “Ancient Words: Oral Tradition and the Indigenous People of the Americas,” *Native American Expressive Culture* (Ithaca: Akwekon Press, Vol. XI, nos. 3 and 4, Fall/Winter, 1994): 141.

Until fairly recently Western ethnographers have viewed oral traditions as the product of the pre-logical mind. This view derives from early evolutionist thought.²⁹ Much of the conflict surrounding the validity of oral traditions can be ascribed to simple differences in cultural perceptions.³⁰ Native American oral traditions do not adhere to a strict linear paradigm such as that embodied in Western thought. A single word or phrase in a story may trigger another story whose basis rests firmly in fact. This then may be followed by a cosmologically based story which further validates the actual event recounted in the first story. An example of this cross referencing is the institution of the warrior societies among the Tsistsistas. These societies were based on models that the supernaturals gave to Sweet Medicine, the Tsistsistas culture hero. Whether or not Sweet Medicine existed as an actual person is beside the point. The story of his life and adventures provides a framework which explains the roles and purpose of the warrior societies in Tsistsistas culture. The historical existence of these societies is beyond question. The events surrounding the origins of these societies, as contained in and relayed by the oral tradition, create the foundations for social and moral behaviors in a culture.

The histories of both the Tsistsistas and the Caiugu predate European knowledge of these peoples either through direct contact or second hand knowledge through other Native American groups. Rather than treat each tribal group separately, I have chosen instead to examine their histories jointly, as the two peoples have a shared history for much of their

²⁹ See Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian*, and Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

³⁰ Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982): 391.

known time on the plains. This relationship was often violently antagonistic, as the Tsistsistas and Caiugu frequently competed for the same territory and resources. Those resources that were of mutual interest were primarily access to and control of trade and hunting territories. The shared history of the Tsistsistas and Caiugu in the Plains can be characterized broadly as highly competitive maneuvering with one another and other Native groups for specific resources. The experiences of the two peoples in many ways reflect common cultural traits developed in response to life in a particular environment, despite numerous differences in regard to origins, societal structures, and ideologies.

Both groups trace their origins through oral traditions to a time when they lived in the north. The Tsistsistas left a land of perpetual ice and snow to arrive somewhere to the west of the Great Lakes where they developed a horticultural lifestyle that included utilization of small game animals. The Caiugu, in contrast, have no memory of horticultural traditions, and profess to have always been a hunting people. Each group entered the plains from a different direction, the Tsistsistas from the northeast and the Caiugu from the northwest as they skirted along the front range of the Rocky Mountains.

Caiugu oral tradition relates a time when their homeland was a place of great cold and deep snows, much as the Tsistsistas' ancient homeland, and also makes mention of a westward flowing river from the *Gai K'op*, or "Kiowa Mountains". Mooney places the Caiugu in the region of the Yellowstone as early as 1700, possibly earlier. During their sojourn in the Yellowstone the Caiugu allied themselves with the Crow people, and continued moving onto the plains. They established themselves in the Black Hills region, and are said to have acquired horses by this time period as well. From the available literature it is evident that both

groups were well established in the northern plains by the turn of the eighteenth century.³¹
(Refer to Map 1 in Appendix A).

While the Caiugu were moving into the Yellowstone region the Tsistsistas were still practicing horticulture in the area of Minnesota, with a vanguard in the plains near the village peoples of the upper Missouri River valley. This assumption is validated by the retention of certain sociocultural traits such as vestiges of corn ceremonialism³² and the basic political structuring of the nation.

Archaeological investigations place the prehistoric ancestors of the plains Algonquians in the area northwest of the Great Lakes circa 12,000 to 1,000 B. C.³³ It is inferred that the proto-Algonquians removed south into the boreal forests due to changes in weather patterns and the advance of pre-Dorset Eskimo populations with whom they were in direct competition.³⁴

³¹ For sources on the two tribes' presence in the Northern Plains see Michael L. Gregg, "Archaeological Complexes of the Northeastern Plains and Prairie Woodland Border, A. D. 500-1500," Karl H. Schlesier, ed. *Plains Indians, A. D. 500 - 1500* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994): 93; Karl H. Schlesier, "Commentary: A History of Ethnic Groups in the Plains, A. D. 150 - 1550," *Plains Indians*, 346; Mooney, *Calendar History*, 155; Hugh L. Scott, "Notes on the Kado, or Sun Dance of the Kiowa," *American Anthropologist* 13:3 (July-Sept., 1911): 368; Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* Vol. I, 8, 9; Truman Michalson, "Notes on the Cheyenne and Sutaio," Smithsonian Institution NAA MS 2684-a, 1913: 5; W. Raymond Wood, ed. *Archaeology on the Great Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998): 332.

³² Robert Anderson, "Notes on Northern Cheyenne Corn Ceremonialism," *The Masterkey for Indian Folklore and History* 32:1 (Jan.-Feb., 1958): 57-68.

³³ Michael L. Gregg, "Archaeological Complexes of the Northeastern Plains and Prairie-Woodland Border, A.D. 500-1500," *Plains Indians*: 91, 93; R. Peter Winham and Edward J. Lueck, "Cultures of the Middle Missouri," *Plains Indians*: 169, 171.

³⁴ Karl H. Schlesier, *The Wolves of Heaven: Cheyenne Shamanism, Ceremonies, and Prehistoric Origins* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

From here two distinct groups known as western and eastern Besant developed into proto-Blackfoot and proto-Tsistsistas. These two groups eventually made their way onto the northern plains. The eastern Besant groups were established in South Dakota by about 250 B.C. These proto-Tsistsistas later retreated from the area toward the northwestern Great Lakes sometime around A. D. 800, presumably under pressure from an influx of peoples identified as proto-Mandan.³⁵ Schlesier also speculates that warfare with these proto-Mandans continued through approximately A. D. 1100. From 1100 until approximately 1680.

Schlesier contends that the proto-Tsistsistas stayed east of the Missouri River until circa 1680.³⁶ It is at this same date that the Tsistsistas are mentioned in the historical record by Louis Joliet and Rene Robert Cavalier de La Salle.³⁷ Joliet places the “Chaiena” among the Dakota peoples of Minnesota early in the seventeenth century³⁸, while LaSalle, in a letter dated 1680, mentions a people known as the “Chaa” seeking to establish trade at Fort Crevecoeur.³⁹ The LaVerendryes recorded a Tsistsistas presence near the Mandan villages they visited, and noted them as the Gens de la Fleche Collee, People of the Glued Arrow or Sioux of the Prairie.⁴⁰

³⁵ Karl H. Schlesier, “Commentary: A History of Ethnic Groups in the Great Plains A.D. 150-1550,” *Plains Indians*: 343.

³⁶ Schlesier, *Ibid.*

³⁷ Robert Anderson, *A Study of Cheyenne Culture and History, with special reference to the Northern Cheyenne* (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1951).

³⁸ Anderson, *A Study of Cheyenne Culture and History*.

³⁹ Anderson, *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ W. Raymond Wood, ed., *The Explorations of the La Verendryes in the Northern Plains, 1738 - 43* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980): 113, 121.

Under pressure from their Assiniboine neighbors the Tsistsistas moved en masse to several village sites along North Dakota's Sheyenne River. Here they gained a small measure of security from their proximity to their Mandan-Hidatsa trading partners. The Tsistsistas forged fairly close associations with the Dakota peoples who began to press onto the plains and thus came under greater Assiniboine scrutiny. This state of suspicion eventually prompted an attack on the Tsistsistas village at Biesterfeldt circa 1790.⁴¹ While the perpetrators of this event have not been conclusively identified as Assiniboine, this event was clearly a seminal point in Tsistsistas history. The destruction of Biesterfeldt seems to have been the catalyst which moved those Tsistsistas still hovering between a horticultural and fully nomadic lifestyle into full fledged nomadism based on bison hunting and horse trading. There is no clear cut reason for this move other than survival. Virtually encircled by a numerous and more powerful enemy and living in a fixed territory where they were dependent on limited resources, the Tsistsistas simply opted for the more logical choice of relocating and adapting to a nomadic lifestyle.

Prior to their transition to the plains environment, the Tsistsistas had situated themselves in a fortified village along the Red River of Minnesota where they practiced a mixed economy based on horticulture and hunting. Mooney conjectured that the Tsistsistas were attempting to distance themselves from their Dakota neighbors, as the early literature records that they were frequently at war. However, a discrepancy arises in light of the close association maintained between the two peoples in later years. Grinnell, while acknowledging the

⁴¹ John R. Swanton, "Some Neglected Data Bearing on Cheyenne, Chippewa, and Dakota History," *American Anthropologist* n.s. 32 (Washington, D. C.: Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, 1930): 156-160.

possibility of isolated confrontations with the Dakotas, discounts the idea of Tsistsistas-Dakota warfare.⁴² Instead he finds the Assiniboines, Crees, and Ojibwa as more likely candidates for martial conflicts that would have led to the abandonment of village life. John R. Swanton brought light to bear on this discrepancy with his examination of journal entries written by Jean Baptiste Cadotte, a Canadian employee of the Northwest Company. Cadotte was in the words of Swanton, “cognizant of the whole affair”⁴³ relating to the destruction of Biesterfeldt. Rather than the Assiniboines, however, Swanton singles out the Chippewa under a chief named Sheshepaskut.⁴⁴

Tsistsistas oral tradition recounts their entrance onto the Plains in different terms. One version of these events is as follows. *Maheo*, the creator, was floating on the water, surrounded by a number of water birds. He summoned them to bring him some earth, from which he fashioned land. He then took a rib and created a man, whom he placed in the south. He then took a rib from the man’s left side and created a woman whom he placed in the north. This man and woman existed as adversarial forces that ruled the seasons. The man was given the power of Thunder with its life giving rains and the secret of fire, while the woman controlled *Ho im aha*, the Winter Man, who controlled snow, cold, sickness, and death. During this time the humans lived under the ground from whence they ventured forth into the upper world, where Thunder gave them the gift of fire and basic survival skills. The people

⁴² Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, 22, 23.

⁴³ Swanton, “Some Neglected Data Bearing on Cheyenne, Chippewa, and Dakota History,”: 156-160.

⁴⁴ Swanton, *ibid.*

had no knowledge of large game animals, but instead subsisted on smaller creatures, such as fish, turtles, and ground squirrels.⁴⁵

It was then that *E hyoph' sta*, the Yellow Haired Woman, taught the people about the buffalo on which they came to rely. But after a time the buffalo disappeared, and famine came upon the people. Two young men, the culture heroes Erect Horns and Sweet Medicine, journeyed to find them and encountered *E hyoph' sta* at the Sacred Mountain. Another version of this encounter is told as the story of the woman in the spring. When the two heroes entered the spring they were painted red by the woman, and also painted with yellow sun and moon symbols as well as stripes around their wrists and ankles. To the one young man she gave corn, to the other, buffalo meat. These they took back to the people for their sustenance.⁴⁶ The story of *E hyoph' sta* is given further detail in accounts recorded by Kroeber and Grinnell in which the circumstances under which the Massaum ceremony was given to Sweet Medicine are included. The importance of the Massaum cannot be underestimated, as it was the giving of this ceremony that cemented Tsistsistas identity and purpose. This story, told by Edward Red Hat,⁴⁷ recounts the institution of the Massaum as follows:

Then the Wolf Man let them see the animals in the four directions, and said, "Now you shall go to your home. Take our daughter [*E hyoph sta*] with you to your camp. It is very fortunate that one of you took her for his wife. She is to be a great helping power to your people. She will take everything that I

⁴⁵ Grinnell, *By Cheyenne Campfires* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962):242-244.

⁴⁶ Alfred Kroeber, "Cheyenne Tales," *The Journal of American Folklore* 13 (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, July-September, 1900): 163

⁴⁷ Schlesier, *Wolves of Heaven*, xiv.

have shown you to your people. Everything will follow her.”

Before the three left, the Wolf Man instructed his daughter, “I send you there for a special purpose. Those poor people have only fish and a few birds to eat, but now that you are there, there will be plenty of game of all kinds; the skins of all these animals will also be useful for wearing”.

When they stepped from the *maheonox* [a ceremonial lodge prepared by the *maiyun*] they faced south, standing in this order: The Old Woman was on the east side; at her right side the Wolf Man, next to him Ehyophsta, then her husband, then the shaman. When they parted, the Wolf Man said, “My daughter, rest four times on your way”. He meant four stops, not four nights, because he had given her the power to travel fast. When the three reached the camp of their people, the hidden animals of the Plains had followed them and let themselves be killed. The buffalo came up to the lodge in which Ehyophsta lived and rubbed against it, and she sat and laughed. She was loved, but she was not like other women; she would hardly ever speak. But the Wolf Man had given Ehyophsta one other instruction: if ever a buffalo calf was brought into camp, she should not express pity. After she had lived with her husband for eight years she disobeyed this rule one day and had to leave the people for her parents’ lodge in the mountain. Her husband went with her, and never returned.⁴⁸

Schlesier goes on to explain that *E hyoph sta’s* leaving held certain ramifications for the people, for when she went, the animals followed her. Her husband made a return journey to *Noaha vose*, where he was given the Massaum ceremony itself, through which the Tsistsistas were able to properly establish their relationship with the animals and spirit world of the plains. It is on the basis of this giving of the grasslands to the Tsistsistas that they as a people laid claim to it. This entire temporal sequence contained in these stories encompasses a time

⁴⁸ Schlesier, 77-78.

span from primordial beginnings up to the formation of Tsistsistas culture as it existed prior to moving onto the plains.

In the oral traditions recorded by ethnographers such as James A. Dorsey, George Bird Grinnell, and John H. Moore, there are references to the proto-Tsistsistas living in a northern land of perpetual ice and snow.⁴⁹ This is echoed in a story recorded by Verne Dusenberry.⁵⁰ In this story the ancestors of the Tsistsistas were crossing a narrow neck of sea, when a young girl sighted a horn sticking up through the ice. Wanting it for a sliding stick, but unable to pull it free herself, she called for the aid of some men. The men, still unable to pull the horn loose, began cutting it free. Blood spurted from the severed stump, and the ice began to tremble and quake. The Tsistsistas believe that the horn belonged to a great water monster that was enraged by the cutting of its horn. Through the monster's thrashing about, the ice began to split apart separating the people into two groups. Unable to reach one another across the gulf that had formed, the two groups went their separate ways, one to the east, the other to the west. The western group was never to be seen again, and it is this people that are believed by the Tsistsistas to be the Suhtaio, another Algonquian people whom they encountered again at a much later date on the plains.⁵¹ However, the origins of the Suhtaio are still a puzzle today. All that is definitively known of their early history is that they were linguistically related to the Algonquians.

⁴⁹ Dorsey, *The Cheyenne*, 1905; Grinnell, *By Cheyenne Campfires*, 1971; John H. Moore, *The Cheyenne Nation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).

⁵⁰ Verne Dusenberry, "Horn in the Ice," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 6:4 (Aug., 1956): 26-33.

⁵¹ Schlesier, "Commentary...": 316, 317.

The shield in figure 5 depicts through its imagery the story of “The horn in the ice.” The central figure is that of the great water monster who lay hidden under the ice except for one horn. The meandering outside border represents the shores of the lake or body of water that was crossed, while the rectangular motif at the shield’s lower border represents the pathway that the people took on their journey following their separation.⁵² This is an excellent example of how nineteenth-century art was used to express episodes from the oral tradition that provided the foundation for Tsistsistas culture. The shield’s design expresses a seminal event in Tsistsistas history. The separation of the two groups of people set the Tsistsistas proper on a course that would ultimately make them a Plains people.

The Sacred Arrows, given to the Tsistsistas by their culture hero, Sweet Medicine, constituted one of two main tribal medicines that insured success and prosperity to the people. In one version of the story as told to Grinnell, Sweet Medicine takes *E hyoph’sta* as his wife, and together the two make a journey to the sacred mountain, *Noaha vose*, where they are instructed by the *maiyn*, spirit guardians of the earth, in the use of four special arrows, two of them red and two black. The red arrows, commonly referred to as buffalo arrows, were for procurement of meat, while the black arrows were for war. Grinnell states:

⁵² Gordon Yellowman, November 8, 2002.



Figure 5.
Cheyenne. Shield. N.D. Photo courtesy of the National Museum
of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Catalogue #16/2489.

“Then they [the *maiyn*] gave Sweet Medicine advice, and gave him the medicine arrows, and told him that he should take them back to the tribe...Then said the chief person: ‘Take these arrows with you, and guard them carefully. They will be a great help to you for a long time; but you will keep them until they will cease to be a help, and will be of no more use to you.’”⁵³

Along with the Arrows came proscribed guidelines for their proper care and proper social conduct on the part of the people. If a breach were committed, the Arrows were to be renewed

⁵³ Grinnell, *By Cheyenne Campfires*: 276.

for the welfare of the people. Of particular concern was the element of “blood on the Arrows”, or an incident of murder within the tribe. If this were to occur, as it did on several recorded occasions, the Arrows had to be renewed before anyone undertook a war expedition or before the buffalo would present themselves again. If there was blood on the arrows, the buffalo would smell the stink and remove themselves far from the camps of the Tsistsistas.⁵⁴ Other versions of the Sweet Medicine stories have been presented in works by Peter J. Powell, although these shed little additional light on the subject.⁵⁵

The name “Cheyenne” is the Europeanized Dakota word *Sha-ha-’ve-na*, or people of white, that is friendly, speech. Verendrye’s sons recorded in their journals that the Tsistsistas were present at the “Mantane” villages in 1742, where they were involved in horse trading with the villagers. They are again mentioned by the Verendryes as “Gens de L’Arc”, and “a tribe of Little Foxes”, these representing probable references to the Bow String and Kit Fox societies.⁵⁶ Later chroniclers record the tribe as inhabiting an area extending from the Black

⁵⁴ John H. Moore, *The Cheyenne* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1996): 215.

⁵⁵ Peter T. Powell, *Sweet Medicine* vols. 1 & 2. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969); *People of the Sacred Mountain: A History of the Northern Cheyenne Chiefs and Warrior Societies 1830-1879*, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981). A great deal of controversy surrounds Powell’s work among the Tsistsistas. Tribal members either look favorably on his work or disdain it. This stems from Powell’s publicizing of the Sun Dance ceremony photographs in *Sweet Medicine*, which was and is viewed by many Tsistsistas as inappropriate.

⁵⁶ Nellis M. Crouse, *La Verendrye, Fur Trader and Explorer* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956): 178, 180.

Hills region south to the Arkansas River.⁵⁷ In the south they were actively engaged in warfare against the Caiugu and their Comanche allies for control of the horse trade and hunting territory.

Unlike the Tsistsistas, the Caiugu appear to have always been a nomadic people whose way of life centered on hunting large game animals. The Caiugu have no recollection in their oral history of an earlier horticultural sedentism. Although the Caiugu are related linguistically to Southwestern pueblo peoples, specifically Tanoan speakers, their oral traditions concern hunting rather than horticulture. Linguistics may indicate that the tribe once occupied an area along the southwestern edge of the Plains. Also, links with the Tiwas and Tanoans of the Rio Grande may be suggested through similarities in ceremonial observances.⁵⁸

Oral tradition relates a time when the earliest remembered home was “a region of great cold and deep snows...and that on the other side of the “Caiugu Mountains”, or *Gai K’op*, “was a large stream flowing westward”⁵⁹. The Caiugu came into the world through the work

⁵⁷ *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition June 10 - September 26, 1806*, vol. 9, Gary Moulton, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998): 352; Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels 1798 - 1846* vol. 17 (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904): 156; *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike with letters and related documents* vol. 2. Donald Jackson, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966): 52, 172; *The Journals of Jacob Fowler narrating an adventure from Arkansas Through the Indian Territory, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico to the sources of the Rio Grande del Norte, 1821 - 22*, Elliott Couse, ed. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1998): 51-52, 65; John Charles Fremont, *Narratives of an Exploration and Adventure*, Allan Nevins, ed. (New York: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1956): 131-132; Gouverneur K. Warren, *Preliminary Report of Exploration in the Northeast and Dakota, in the years 1855-'56-'57* (Washington, D. C.: U.S.G.P.O., 1981): 51.

⁵⁸ Schlesier. “Commentary...”, 376, 377.

⁵⁹ Mooney, 153.

of the Great Caiugu. Today the Great Caiugu is the Pleiades, whose place in the night sky serves as a reminder to the people of their beginnings. The Great Caiugu created the people and placed them on the earth where he taught them to live. According to their mythology, they were summoned from a great cottonwood log from the underworld where they dwelled prior to their emergence. Saynday, the trickster-hero figure of Caiugu tradition, tapped on the log with a stick, and in so doing drew them to the surface. At first they were frightened by the light, as it blinded them. Eventually they became accustomed to it, and eagerly scrambled out of the log. More and more of them climbed out of the log until a pregnant woman got stuck, preventing anymore Caiugu from entering the world. This is the reason they are few in number.⁶⁰

After a time the creator met the Great White Man, yet the meeting was not an amicable one. The two met to discuss how the world should be divided among their children, but the Great White Man, not willing to share the earth, wanted his children to possess everything. Because of the less than favorable encounter with the Great White Man, the creator instructed his children that they should war against the children of the Great White Man, “and never make peace with them.”⁶¹ Tradition also tells that the Caiugu were a fierce people possessed of warrior prowess from a very early time in their history. This is related in a story recorded

⁶⁰ Maurice Boyd, *Kiowa Voices* vol. 2 *Myths, Legends, and Folktales* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1983): 14.

⁶¹ Thomas C. Battey, *The Life and Adventures of a Quaker Among the Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 107-110.

by Elsie Clews Parsons as “How They Got The Sun.”⁶² After Saynday and various animal helpers stole the sun from “the people on the other side,” they were in a camp with a number of different peoples. There was a lake nearby filled with what appeared to be spear or arrow points thrusting up through the water’s surface. These points were so numerous that everyone was afraid to dive in to the lake. After much consideration, one Caiugu decided that he was going to dive into the lake despite the points. If he died, he reasoned, then he died. Plunging into the water, he resurfaced to discover that the points were only water plants. Because of his brave act, the Caiugu gained prowess.⁶³

The appellation “*Caiugu*” is a derivative of the plural form *qocaiugu*, meaning elks. In the past the tribe has also referred to itself variously as *Komfaubidau* (Big Tipi Flaps), *Kutjau* (Coming Out, or Emerging, with the implied meaning being rapid), *Tepjau* (Coming Out, or Emerging, with an implied meaning of slow movement), and less frequently as *Tepkigau* (Blossomed Out Ones).⁶⁴

According to the earliest tribal accounts the tribe was composed of one large group which split following a dispute between two band leaders. The tribe had been involved in a hunt in which antelope had been taken. The two band leaders both wanted the udder of a female antelope, a delicacy, and failing to resolve their differences opted to go their separate ways. One group, the *Auzathauhop* (Those Who Went Away Disgruntled) went north, never to be

⁶² Elsie Clews Parsons, *Kiowa Tales*, Memoires of the American Folklore Society, vol. XXII (New York: Stechert and Company, 1929): 11, 13, 15.

⁶³ Benjamin R. Kracht, *Kiowa Religion*, 196.

⁶⁴ William C. Meadows, *Enduring Veterans, 1800 to the Present: Kiowa, Apache, and Comanche Military Societies* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999): 33.

heard from again, while the other group continued to the south. Of this second group, the northernmost bands came to be known as the *Thoqahyop* or *Thoqahoi*, both of which literally mean “Cold People”. The southern bands of the second group were known as the *Salqahyop* or *Salqahyoi*, the “Hot People”.

James Mooney recorded an early home near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River of western Montana prior to 1700. It was during this time that an alliance was forged with the Absaroke, or Crow peoples, and the migration out onto the plains continued. At a later date in their history, on visits to the Crows, the Caiugu were told of a people possessing language similar to their own among the Salishan peoples of the Plateau region. These are thought to be the *Auzathauhop*. Mooney further states in his *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians*,⁶⁵ that the tribe, enjoying the support of their Crow allies, established themselves in the Black Hills region of North Dakota. By this point in time they had acquired horses, and began to make forays against the Spanish frontiers in the Southwest.

The Caiugu believe that the first time their ancestors saw horses their desire to possess them was overpowering. The attraction of the animals was so great that, failing to capture a wild horse, they attempted to create a horse of their own. Dutifully the men began forming the creature’s body from mud, certain that they had carefully noted the wild horse’s anatomy. The wild horse, through his magic, hid his true form from them, and they misrepresented the animal’s hindquarters. Oblivious to their mistake, they breathed fire and wind into mud horse’s nostrils to animate it. The creature sprang to life, not as a horse, but as a great destructive force, the *ma koi*, or cyclone. This animal is represented as having a horse’s head,

⁶⁵ Mooney, 154.

front legs, and a serpentine body, and it resides in the thunder clouds along with the lightning⁶⁶ (Figure 6). This is the *Tsaeigul*, literally “horse red.” Despite their misguided

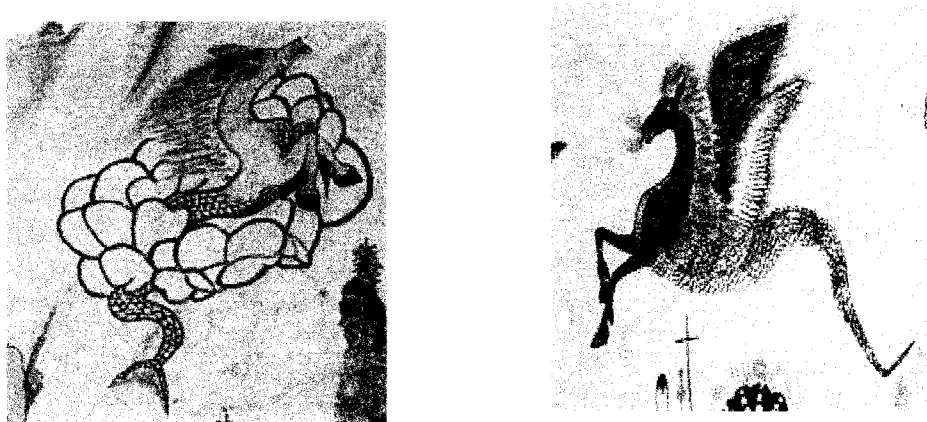


Figure 6.
Haun-gooah (Silver Horn), Caiugu. Two renditions of the *Tsaeigul* from a hide painting depicting various events in the Caiugu oral tradition.
National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. Catalogue #229,900.

attempt, the Caiugu did come to possess horses in great numbers, and with them carved out a niche in the history of the Southern Plains. N. Scott Momaday states: “The Kiowas must have felt they had reached the time and place of their fulfillment. They had become centaurs in their spirit.”⁶⁷ The Caiugu people, recognizing the power inherent in the horse, capitalized on the animal and rode their way to a position of prominence in the Southern Plains equal to that enjoyed by their Tsistsistas counterparts in the Central Plains.

Information on the Caiugu in Euro-American sources is scanty prior to 1830. There are references in Spanish documents from New Mexico and Texas pertaining to interactions

⁶⁶ Parsons. *Kiowa Tales*: 15, 16.

⁶⁷ N. Scott Momaday, *The Names* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976): 28.

between the tribe and northern frontier residents. These accounts suggest a regular presence in the Spanish Borderlands as early as the 1720s, and a fixed presence by 1800.⁶⁸ Pierre Truteau notes the Caiugu as being on amicable terms with the Tsistsistas in the Upper Missouri River basin during the 1790s, in direct contrast to Mooney's depiction of the two peoples as implacable foes during that period.⁶⁹

The Caiugu held an important position in the Upper Missouri River trade until the 1810s, when, under pressure from the Tsistsistas and the advancing Dakotas, they were driven south, and their Crow allies in turn were pushed out of the plains and into the Rocky Mountains. A Dakota calendar relates an incident during the year 1814-1815 which made Caiugu and Dakota coexistence in the region untenable (Figure 7). The *K'urato* band was annihilated during a Dakota attack on what apparently was a gathering of nearly the entire Caiugu tribe. In spite of the overwhelming numbers opposing them, the leader of the *K'urato* urged his band to stand fast and fight. Harkening to his appeals, the band faced the Dakotas, and all were

⁶⁸ John, "An Earlier Chapter of Kiowa History": 379-397.

⁶⁹ Pierre Truteau, "Truteau's Description of the Upper Missouri," A. P. Nasatir, ed., *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri 1785 - 1804* (St. Louis: St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1952): 379-380. Truteau listed the names of several tribes, one of which is the Caiugu (Kiowa), and he referred to them as "all allies of the Cheyenne..." He also noted a joint Tsistsistas-Caiugu war expedition that took place in 1793; Perrin du Lac, *Travels Through the Two Louisianas and Among the Savage Nations of Missouri: also in the United States, along the Ohio, and the adjacent provinces, in 1801, 1802, & 1803. With a Sketch of the manners, customs, character and the civil and religious ceremonies of the people of those countries* (London: Printed for R. Phillips, by J. G. Barnard, 1807): 49-50; Also, Grinnell states in *The Cheyenne Indians* vol. II: 31, 52 that the Tsistsistas and Caiugu camped in proximity to one another, and that the Tsistsistas had learned the process of hide tanning from the Caiugu.

killed. This incident took place sometime around 1770.⁷⁰ Faced with the superior numbers of the advancing Dakotas and their Tsistsistas allies, the Caiugu retreated to the edge of the



Figure 7.
Entry in Lakota calendar for “Smashed-a-Kiowa’s-head-in-winter”.
After Garrick Mallory. *Picture Writing of the American Indians* Vol. 2: 316.

mountains, and abandoned their claim to the Black Hills region.⁷¹ From here they began their journey south to the Arkansas River Valley.

During the time that the Caiugu trekked southward in search of new territory they could claim as their own, they received the tribal medicines known as the “Boy Medicines”, or *Talyi-da-i*.⁷² Variants of the Sun Boy story detail how the Medicines came to the Caiugu. The most detailed account of this story was recorded by Wilbur Sturtevant Nye.

⁷⁰ Mooney, 157-158.

⁷¹ George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent, Written From His Letters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 24.

⁷² Kracht, 73.

A woman was out digging turnips one day when she spied a porcupine. Curious about the creature, she followed it as it went on its way. The animal began to climb a tree, and the woman followed. She climbed higher and higher until she was above the sky (Figure 8). The porcupine left the tree, and the woman followed after him, finding herself standing in the lodge of the Sun. Sun, quite taken with the young woman, took her as his wife. The only condition he placed on her was that she never look through a hole in the clouds where a turnip had been uprooted. Sun implemented this sanction, as he knew she would see her former home, and becoming homesick, would try to leave.

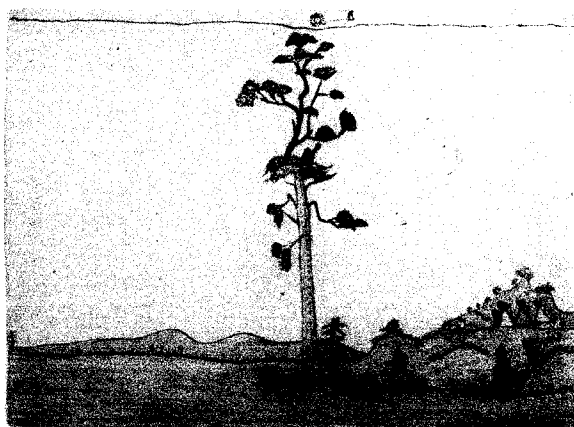


Figure 8.
Haun-gooah (Silver Horn). Caiugu.
“Future Mother of Sun Boy.” Pencil on paper, ca. 1897.
Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico. #55173/13.
Photo by Blair Clark.

Time passed, and the Sun and the woman had a son. For all intents and purposes the woman was happy with her new life, although she did think about her mother and family from time to time. One day, while out gathering turnips, she saw a hole in the clouds where a turnip had been uprooted. Peering through the hole she saw the earth below, and began pining for her former family. She braided a rope from grass, and with her infant son on her back began

her descent. Sun, upon discovering her escape, came looking for her. He shouted through the hole for her to come back, but she continued to climb down the rope. Enraged at her disobedience, Sun hurled a stone at her, knocking her from the rope. She plummeted to the earth and was killed, leaving the child orphaned.

The child stayed by his dead mother for quite some time, crying because he was hungry. Spider Woman came along, rescued the child, and raised him as her own. She taught him the hoop game, but told him never to throw the hoop into the air. Children being what they are, the boy did what he was told not to do. The hoop fell from the sky, striking him and splitting him in two. Now there were two boys. These two boys became culture heroes, dispatching monsters and making the world safe for the Caiugu. After a time, one of the boys walked into a lake where he disappeared forever, while the other boy divided himself into the ten medicines known as the *Talyi-da-ai*.⁷³

This story reflects the basic concept of *dau-dau*, or power, with the sun viewed as its paramount source. In the story, Spider Woman and the porcupine are associated with the sun, and acquisition of power through these sources became a guiding principal in the Caiugu world view. It was sun power, and Sun's *dau*, or medicine that enabled the people to successfully compete for their place on the Southern Plains. Kracht gives an alternate name for the ten bundles as *adalbehya*, or *wdlbeoi*, which translate as "lots of scalps".⁷⁴ This strengthens the idea of sun power as a primary source for martial success, and is also reflected

⁷³ Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *Bad Medicine and Good: Tales of the Kiowa* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962):49; also see Kracht. *Kiowa Religion*.

⁷⁴ Kracht, 147.

in the *K'ado*, or Sun Dance. During the early stages of the ceremony a buffalo bull was killed. It was of the utmost importance that the animal fall facing east. The beast's hide was then taken, and was hung from the center pole of the *K'ado* lodge. Kracht also points out that the Caiugu believed the buffalo to be organized into warrior societies, and the killing of a buffalo was a metaphor for killing the enemy.⁷⁵ The basic concept at work was that the sun nourished the earth which in turn allowed the grasses to grow. The buffalo ate the grass, and the Caiugu ate the buffalo. This sequence represents an implicit transfer of power.

A second element of tribal power was embodied in the *Tai'-me*. The original *Tai'-me* was said to have been acquired from the Crows by an Arapaho man who had married into the Caiugu. A description of this figure is given by several sources. One of these descriptions, given by Nye, is based on William Battey's observations, while the other is derived from a captive named Andele who lived among the Caiugu.⁷⁶ The *Tai'-me* was, according to Andele, a small stone image with its face painted solid yellow. On this background were a series of zig zag lines alternating in red and black that radiate from the eyes and mouth. Nye's description is of a human-like figure dressed in a robe of white feathers and adorned with blue beads. The face, back, and breast of the figure are painted with sun and moon symbols (the colors are not stated).

The descriptions vary greatly, and the variance may be accounted for in the fact that there were at one time three separate *Tai'me* figures in existence (Figure 9). The original figure,

⁷⁵ Kracht, 87-89.

⁷⁶ Nye, *Bad Medicine and Good*, 52; J. J. Methvin, *Andele: the Mexican-Kiowa Captive: a Story of Real Life Among the Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996): 57.

acquired from the Crows, never left the home camp, while two smaller representations , one a male figure, the other a female figure, were frequently carried into battle as war medicines. The two smaller images were purported to have been lost to the Utes in 1868, so a fourth

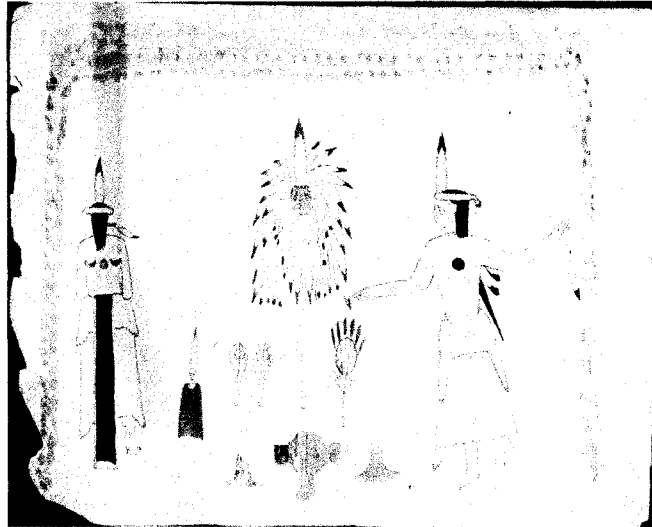


Figure 10.

Haun-gooah (Silver Horn), Caiugu. Drawing of the *Tai'me* Keeper, assistant, and the *Tai'me* figures. Pencil and watercolor on paper, ca. 1897. Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico. # 55717/13. Photo by Blair Clark.

figure was made to replace them.⁷⁷ These were the tribal medicines that the Caiugu carried with them as they made their exodus from the Black Hills region.

In the course of their removal they entered into conflict with the Comanche, a period of warfare that lasted well into the latter eighteenth century.⁷⁸ The Comanches were eventually driven south of the Arkansas River, leaving the Caiugu to establish themselves in their newly

⁷⁷ Kracht, 171-179.

⁷⁸ Mooney, 162.

won territory. Enmity between the two groups continued until 1790, when peace between them was brokered by the Spanish authorities in New Mexico, and accomplished under the leadership of *Guik'ate*, "Wolf Lying Down".⁷⁹ This alliance divided the Central and Southern Plains into two distinct orbits: those of the Tsistsistas and Caiugu. Together, the Caiugu and Comanches dominated the Southern Plains until the 1820s when the Tsistsistas began to vie for proprietorship of the rich hunting and horse territory of the Arkansas River valley. Prior to that time, the only real sources of opposition the Caiugu faced were the Pawnees and Osages.

On the Plains the Tsistsistas, like the Caiugu, became involved in the Spanish trade, as well as the Anglo-American horse trade of the upper Missouri River region. It is evident that by the mid to late eighteenth century the Tsistsistas had established themselves as a prominent participants in plains trade networks. By placing themselves in a position as middlemen between the source of horses and the sedentary villagers of the Upper Missouri River valley, they gained leverage over the horse trade in the central and northern plains by maintaining control over the number of horses that reached the Missouri River villages.⁸⁰ Such a favorable position enabled the Tsistsistas to enjoy the best of both worlds, so to speak. They gained access to British, French, and later Anglo-American trade goods while maximizing their profits on horses. By controlling the horse trade, the Tsistsistas demonstrated a clear understanding of the economic principle of supply and demand.

⁷⁹ Pekka Hamalainen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian trade System," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter, 1998): 506; Mooney, 162.

⁸⁰ Joseph Jablow, *The Cheyenne in Plains Indian Trade Relations*: 39-50.

The Caiugu and Tsistsistas appear to have carried on a reasonably peaceful coexistence prior to 1800 according to French accounts. The idea of peaceful coexistence between the two peoples contrasts with Mooney's assessment of Tsistsistas-Caiugu relations during the period, however. Mooney recorded:

The Northern Cheyenne informed Grinnell that on first coming into their present country they had found the region between the Yellowstone and Cheyenne rivers, including the Black Hills, in possession of the Kiowas and Comanche (?), whom they drove out and forced to the south. When the author was among the Dakota some years ago, they informed him that they had first known the Kiowa in the Black Hills, and had driven them out from that region. This is admitted by the Kiowa, who continued at war with the Dakota and Cheyenne until about 1840.⁸¹

Despite the conflicting reports, the two peoples maintained amicable relations up to the 1790s or about 1800. It was at this time that the two groups began a period of protracted warfare, with the Caiugu eventually being driven from the Black Hills. It becomes evident that after 1790 there was direct competition between the two over their roles in plains trade.

Sources such as Lewis and Clark from 1804, Tabeau in 1804, and Perrin du Lac in 1807, locate the Tsistsistas in the Black Hills region and near the Mandan villages where they carried on a reciprocal trade for agricultural products.⁸² Tabeau notes that they were actively operating in the capacity of intermediaries between the Dakotas and Arikaras at this time, as

⁸¹ Mooney, *Calendar History*, 157.

⁸² Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, June 10 - September 26, 1806* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993): 352; Anne Heloise Abel, trans. and ed., *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Missouri River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1933): 87; Perrin du Lac, *Travels Through the Two Louisianas and Among the Savage Nations of the Missouri*: 53.

well as providing a primary source of horses to the horticulturists of the Upper Missouri River. Perrin du Lac records that he encountered the “Chaguyennes” near White River, and that they seemed eager to establish trade. (Refer to Map 2 in Appendix A).

Tabeau gives evidence in his writings of the intermediary position the tribe held between normally hostile groups, as well as their acting as brokers for others in trade relations with the Europeans. Tabeau records his frustrations over attempts at trade with the “Canannabiches”, the Arapahos, whose Tsistsistas advisors were particularly shrewd in their dealings with the Frenchmen of Regis de Loisel’s party.⁸³ The Tsistsistas continually pressed for higher exchange rates for Arapaho goods, much to the chagrin of the French traders. Clearly they had firmly established themselves in the trade network of the Upper Missouri River and central plains by the early years of the nineteenth century .

Edwin James’s account locates the tribe on the Vermillion branch of Medicine Lodge Creek, where the Tsistsistas acquired items including tobacco plugs, knives, looking glasses, combs, fire steels, awls, and vermilion from Anglo traders.⁸⁴ James noted that the “Shiennes” were well supplied with British trade goods and were intent on trading with the southern peoples for horses.⁸⁵ Fowler noted that the tribe had “nothing to trade except horses,

⁸³ Abel, *Tabeau’s Narrative of Loisel’s Expedition*: 153.

⁸⁴ John R. Bell, *The Journals of Captain John R. Bell, Official Journalist for the Stephen H. Long Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, 1820*: 211.

⁸⁵ Edwin James, *An Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, Performed in the years 1819 and ‘20 by order of the Honorable John C. Calhoun, Sec’y of War: under the command of Major Stephen H. Long*. 2 vols. (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1822): 502.

which they possessed in large numbers”.⁸⁶ In contrast to the southern bands that were moving into the Arkansas River Valley, the northern bands still residing in the Black Hills region were more heavily focused on buffalo robes as trade commodities. While the tribe traded beaver pelts to the Lakotas, they chose not to trade these extensively with Anglos.⁸⁷

This reluctance to trade furs may well be ascribed to a story recorded by Kroeber in which the world is held up by a large tree trunk. This tree is being gnawed by a giant beaver, and when he becomes agitated he gnaws with more vigor. The Tsistsistas believe that when he has finished gnawing through the tree trunk, the world will topple to its final destruction.⁸⁸ It is possible also that they viewed the killing of beavers as tantamount to courting the end of the world. Another possible reason behind Tsistsistas reticence to trade furs is found in one of Sweet Medicine’s prophecies. Sweet Medicine told of a time when the tribe would encounter a new people who possessed wondrous things. The Tsistsistas were not to covet these things or have anything to do with the new people. If they did they would become like them over time and forget their own ways. Soon after this happened they would cease to be a people.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Jacob Fowler, *The Journal of Jacob Fowler Narrating an Adventure from the Arkansas through Indian Territory, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico to the sources of the Rio Grande del Norte, 1821 -22*, Elliot Couse, ed. (Originally published by Francis P. Harper, 1898): 55.

⁸⁷ Truteau, “Truteau’s Description,”: 378. What the Tsistsistas were receiving from the Dakotas is not described by Truteau, although it would be reasonable to assume that the main commodities bartered for were guns and ammunition.

⁸⁸ Kroeber. “Cheyenne Tales”, 161-190; see also Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) for an in depth discussion of Native attitudes toward game animals.

⁸⁹ Grinnell, II, 379-381.

Instead of furs, the focus of Anglo-Tsistsistas trade rested largely on horses and buffalo hides. Henry Atkinson, in 1826 states: “They have had but little intercourse heretofore with traders: their articles of traffic are buffalo robes and some beaver”.⁹⁰

The 1820s also saw the negotiation of the first treaty between the United States and the Tsistsistas on July 6, 1825, for the express purpose of promoting trade.⁹¹ Trade, however, also caused an increasing division of the nation into three parts. The nation had separated into northern and southern divisions as early as 1816.⁹² After the treaty of 1825, two main trade loci developed for the needs of each division. Fort Laramie, originally founded as Fort St. Vrain, was established as a nexus for the northern hide trade, while Bent’s Fort, established in 1828 on the Arkansas River in southeastern Colorado, served the southern bands. Bent established his post at the behest of Gray Owl, the keeper of the Sacred Arrows, who told Bent that if he built his trading post there the Tsistsistas would come to trade there.⁹³

A third division, the Dog Men, came about circa 1840 following the expulsion of Porcupine Bear from the camp circle for the murder of a fellow tribesman. The Dog Men underwent a transition from warrior society to band status due to the influx of tribal members who were sympathetic toward Porcupine Bear, and a close affiliation with certain Lakota

⁹⁰ Brigadier General H. Atkinson, United States Army, *Movements of the Expedition which Lately Ascended the Missouri River*. 19th Cong., 1st sess., Doc. 117, 1826.

⁹¹ *Treaty With The Cheyenne Tribe (1825, July 6)*. 7 Stat., 255. Proclamation, Feb. 6, 1826. Specifically Articles 3 and 4.

⁹² Edwin James, *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*, 502.

⁹³ James P. Ronda, ed., *Thomas Jefferson and the Changing West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997): xix, 156-164.

bands. About 1830 the Masikota band “metamorphosed into the Dog Soldiers, and became famous for valor in battle...They attracted and intermarried with outsiders of war-like ambitions, particularly Sioux of the Republican River, and in later generations were called the Cheyenne Sioux.”⁹⁴

The Tsistsistas and Dakota presence in the Black Hills forced the Caiugu to push further south closer to the source of horse herds in Spanish New Mexico. Here they were also closer to Spanish traders as the source of a number of luxury or status items, such as hatchets and knives, silver pesos, and silver headed canes and medals. Also included among these status goods were red and blue cloth and blue and white beads.⁹⁵ Stephen H. Long mentioned copper bells and Spanish blankets among the trade goods in Caiugu possession.⁹⁶ Francois de Montaignes also included bells, as well as brass wire and vermilion in the list of commodities.⁹⁷ Battey noted the Caiugu preference for Mexican blankets over the Mackinaws available through licensed Anglo traders,⁹⁸ and Nye points to the Spanish as the first known

⁹⁴ George Bent, *The Life of George Bent Written From His Letters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 113.

⁹⁵ Forrest D. Monahan, Jr., *Trade Goods on the Prairie, The Kiowa Tribe and White Trade Goods, 1794 - 1875* (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1965): 36, 64, 79, 80.

⁹⁶ Stephen H. Long, *From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains: Major Stephen H. Long's Expedition, 1819 - 1820*, Maxine Benson, ed. (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Books, 1988): 331.

⁹⁷ Francois de Montaignes, *The Plains: being more or less a collection of various memoranda taken during the Expedition of Exploration in the year 1845, from the Western settlements of Missouri to the Mexican Border, and from Bent's Fort on the Arkansas to Fort Gibson, via the South Fork of the Canadian - North Mexico and Northwest Texas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972): 113.

⁹⁸ Thomas C. Battey, *The Life and Adventures of a Quaker Among the Indians*: 236, 237.

source of iron used by the Caiugu for arrow points.⁹⁹

Prior to 1840 the Caiugu stayed south of the Arkansas River, and the Tsistsistas above it. The area where they met was a contested zone, each group trying to get an advantage over the other. Both groups were encouraged in this through the agency of Anglo traders who established posts specifically to service them in trade. William Bent established Bent's Fort near La Junta, Colorado for the Tsistsistas trade, but also traded intermittently with the Caiugu and their allies the Comanches and Kiowa-Apaches. Warfare between the tribes necessitated extreme caution in this dual commerce to avoid any disruptions to trade. In spite of this, competition between the two groups for horses and bison increased. Competition was further heightened by the trade treaties both groups struck with Anglo-Americans. The Tsistsistas treaty of 1825 and the Caiugu treaty of 1837 ensured access to Anglo goods, including arms and ammunition.¹⁰⁰ The endemic warfare that had dominated Tsistsistas-Caiugu interactions from 1790 to 1840 culminated in two events that brought both groups to the realization that neither would attain a favorable position if conditions persisted. The first of these events precipitated the second, and together changed the histories of the tribes as individual peoples forever by placing them in a more intimate association.

The first event occurred in the summer of 1837 at the insistence of the Tsistsistas Bowstring society. The Bowstrings were anxious to set out on a war expedition against the

⁹⁹ William Sturtevant Nye, *Bad Medicine and Good: Tales of the Kiowas*: 11.

¹⁰⁰ George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945): 49,51; K. N. Llewellyn and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in Primitive Jurisprudence* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1941): 148.

Caiugu, but a violation against the Arrows had occurred within the camp circle prior to the decision, and White Thunder insisted that the Bowstring society wait until the renewal ceremony was performed as “the time and place was not propitious”.¹⁰¹ The Bowstrings were insistent to the point of beating White Thunder with their quirts, despite his advanced age and standing, forcing him to submit to their wishes.

The drawing of the Arrow Renewal in the Tie Creek ledger (Figure 10) depicts the Sun (the figure in the circle) and *Maheo*, above whose head the celestial vault spreads out. They are shown on/in the altar, which is flanked by four smaller rectangles representing the four directions or corners of the universe. The sacred pipe is shown twice on the lower right hand

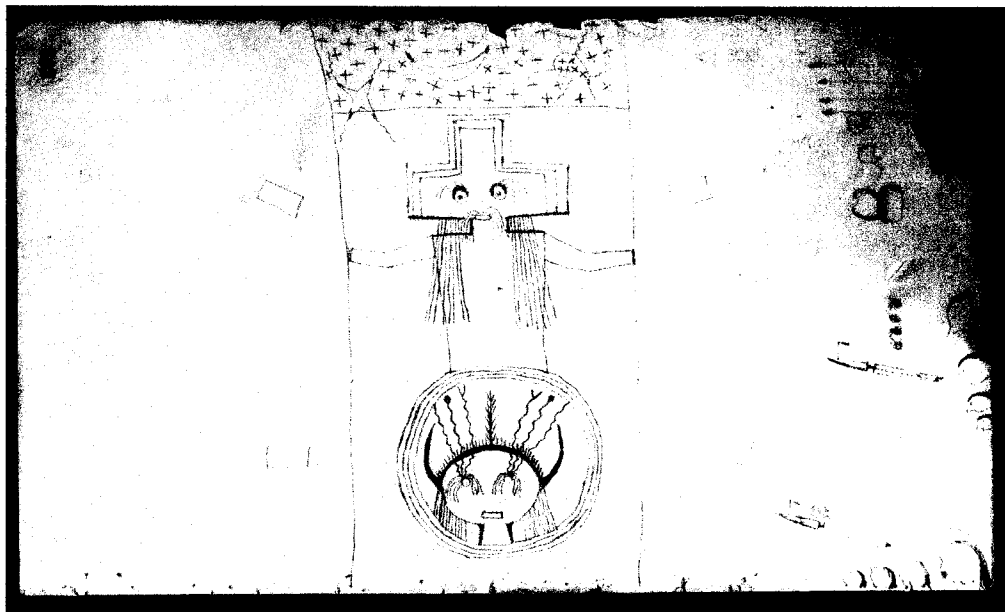


Figure 10.
The Arrow Renewal ceremony. Ink. Tie Creek Ledger page 103. Ca. 1865.
Private collection, name withheld by request.

side, indicating that it was passed from one participant to another during the ceremony. Above

¹⁰¹ Grinnell, 45.

the pipes appear both tribal medicines, the *Issiwun*, or Buffalo Hat, and the Arrows themselves.¹⁰² In depicting *Maheo* and the Sun in the midst of the four corners of the universe, the artist has expressed the importance of the ceremony in Tsistsistas culture. The Arrows, when in proper order, helped to keep the universal order.

This was the ceremony White Thunder performed in an abbreviated form at the insistence of the Bowstrings. In complying with their demands he transgressed the proscribed rituals. The results were disastrous. According to the Sett'an calendar, this was known to the Kiowas as *Sa'k ota A'oton-de Pai*, "Summer that the Cheyenne were massacred".(Figure 11)¹⁰³ The belligerent Tsistsistas Bowstrings, thirty eight in number were accompanied by four Contraries.¹⁰⁴ All died at the hands of the Caiugu on a tributary of Scott Creek in the Texas panhandle.



Figure 11.
Entry from the *Sett'an* calendar. Mooney, *Calendar History*, p. 271.

¹⁰² Gordon Yellowman, December 12, 2002.

¹⁰³ Mooney, *Calendar History*, 271.

¹⁰⁴ Yellowman, December 12, 2002.

The demise of the Bowstrings inflamed the Tsistsistas, and precipitated a moving of the Arrows against the Caiugu and their Comanche and Kiowa-Apache allies. When the Arrows were moved against a foe, this was a formal declaration of war that required participation of the entire tribe. Such an occurrence took place six times between the years of 1817 and 1853.¹⁰⁵

In this instance, along with their Arapaho allies, the tribe attacked the Caiugu encampment on Wolf Creek at its confluence with Beaver Creek in Oklahoma in 1838. Both sides took heavy casualties in this conflict and realized that neither could afford to continue such heightened hostilities. Both groups recognized that they each wanted the same things, namely access to contested hunting grounds and horses. Given the increased Anglo emigration through the region by this time, both the groups came to realize that it was to their mutual benefit to share the resources of the region. The Tsistsistas ascribe their losses at Wolf Creek to another impropriety committed by Porcupine Bear, leader of the Dog Men, in which another individual was killed.

The massacre of the Tsistsistas Bowstrings by the Caiugu in 1837 precipitated a chain of events. The massacre was followed by a retaliatory strike by the Tsistsistas against the Caiugu village at Wolf Creek in 1837, in which both sides incurred heavy losses and the deaths of many prominent warriors with no clear victor. The Arapahos brokered a peace agreement between the two warring parties, and hostilities were officially put to rest at a place about

¹⁰⁵ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 72.

three miles below Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River.¹⁰⁶ The constant warfare had served only to weaken both groups and increased their vulnerability to increased Anglo incursions into the plains. Weighing the consequences carefully, the Caiugu sued for peace through Arapaho intermediaries in the summer of 1840. This is known to the Caiugu as *Guadal Doha K'ado*, "Red Bluff sun dance", and to the Tsistsistas as "Giving presents to one another across the river".¹⁰⁷

A calumet ceremony was conducted, cementing bonds between the two groups. The calumet ceremony itself was a formal establishment of fictive kinship ties that bound both parties to participate in reciprocal trade and kinship obligations.¹⁰⁸ The Caiugu bestowed so many horses as gifts that the Tsistsistas kept count of them by using sticks, and were compelled to drive them away in herds because they did not own enough ropes to lead them with. The Tsistsistas reciprocated with numerous food items such as rice, dried apples, corn meal, and molasses, as well as blankets.¹⁰⁹ From the time of the 1840 peace both groups cooperated in active resistance against other Native American groups and Anglos until their subjugation by United States military authorities in the latter 1870s.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 63; Mary Jane Warde, "Old Story, New Story: The First Battle of Wolf Creek, 1838," Paper presented at the Mid-America Conference on History, Stillwater, OK, September 21, 2001: 21, 22.

¹⁰⁷ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Donald J. Blakeslee, *The Plains Interband Trade System: An Ethnohistoric and Archaeological Investigation* (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1975): 83-92.

¹⁰⁹ Grinnell, 68.

¹¹⁰ Stan Hoig, *The Kiowas and the Legend of Kicking Bird* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000): 220-226.

Post 1830s accounts by Anglos frequently painted the Caiugu as the most blood thirsty and warlike group on the Southern Plains. The historical record points to a disparity between Spanish and later Anglo impressions of the tribe. The Spanish appear to have maintained predominantly peaceful relations based on trade with the Caiugu, whom they courted, along with other *Nortenos*, as a buffer against incursions by other European powers along the northern frontier of New Spain. John states:

Thus were the Kiowas and their associates drawn into a system of trade between settled New Mexicans and their roving Indian neighbors that dated back to pre-colonial times and flourished in the early nineteenth century...it was in fact an efficient ritual exchange of agricultural and manufactured products of New Mexicans from hides and meat and tallow supplied by nomadic hunting peoples.¹¹¹

There is certainly reasonable foundation for suspecting that the discrepancy in the reports of the Spanish and the Americans was based in each nation's goals and intentions in their respective tenures as possessors of southwestern lands. The Spanish seemed quite content to maintain a sparsely populated buffer between New Spain and her European rivals in North America. With this as their primary interest in the plains, good relations with the Native inhabitants were viewed as key to successfully thwarting French, English, and later American attempts at territorial acquisitions in Spanish North America. The Americans, on the other hand, with Manifest Destiny as their guiding principal, viewed the Native inhabitants of the region as an impediment to the fulfillment of divinely sanctioned national designs. Given these differences in ideologies, the divergent accounts assume a sensible place given the

¹¹¹ John, 392.

context.

Following their expulsion from the Black Hills, the Caiugu moved to the headwaters of the Cimarron River. There they permanently located their council fire, and after much fighting secured control of all the country south of Arkansas river and north of the Wichita mountains and headwaters of the Red river.¹¹² Mooney substantiates this through De B. R. Keim's account written in 1870:

[The Caiugu] claim that their primitive country was in the far north, from which they were driven out by wars, moving with the aid of dogs and dog sledges. From the north they reached a river, now the south fork of the Platte. Their residence upon this river is within the recollection of the old men of the tribe. Not satisfied with the Platte country, they moved on across the Republican and Smokey Hill rivers until they reached the Arkansas.¹¹³

Out of self-preservation the Caiugu began warring against the Comanches who blocked their southward movement. After a period of intense warfare, the two groups reached a common ground and became allied, after which they successfully dominated the southern plains until their confinement at Fort Sill during the 1870s.¹¹⁴

Both the Tsistsistas and Caiugu share commonalities in origin tales and early tribal wanderings to find a homeland. Both peoples were summoned from the underworld, a land of darkness, which may be a reference to a time when each people lived in a cold, northern

¹¹² De B. R. Keim, *Sheridan's Troopers on the Borders: A Winter Campaign on the Plains* (Philadelphia: 1885), Quoted in Mooney, *Calender History*, 153, 154.

¹¹³ Mooney, 153.

¹¹⁴ Hoig, *The Legend of Kicking Bird*: 227-236.

environment prior to their entry onto the Plains.¹¹⁵ Additionally, these oral traditions recount separations from larger groups which forced relocations to new territories. The Caiugu oral tradition offers no recollections of a horticultural past, while that of the Tsistsistas does. In either case, both groups found their way onto the Plains where they allied themselves with larger and more powerful groups, and established trade with the peoples of the Upper Missouri river region. The oral traditions of both groups relate the origins of their warrior traditions and, in the case of the Tsistsistas, governmental structures under which they were to live. Along with this governmental structure, the Tsistsistas were also given the grasslands by *Maheo*. This divine injunction played a part in the tribe's efforts at consolidating its control over the Central Plains, and subsequent attempts at the same in the Southern Plains. For a time co-existence was an amicable situation in which both groups shared territory and trade partners, a circumstance lasting up to the turn of the nineteenth century.

Particularly significant events transpired throughout the nineteenth century for both the Caiugu and Tsistsistas. For the Caiugu the first event of note was their expulsion from the Black Hills region and their subsequent establishment along the Arkansas river. This brought them into direct conflict with the Comanche, who later became their staunch allies in wars against other tribes. The first portentous event in Caiugu history is the *Da'-p'gya-de Sai*, "Winter that the stars fell". This entry noted the Leonid meteor shower that occurred in November, 1833¹¹⁶. The event was viewed as an ominous sign by the Caiugu, and indeed represented a portent of things to come. Several important events took place in subsequent

¹¹⁵ Roger C. Echo Hawk, "Ancient History in the New World": 276, 277.

¹¹⁶ Mooney, 260, 261.

years. Following the Cut Throat massacre of 1833, the United States government intervened. An expedition under the command of Colonel Henry Dodge was dispatched to secure the release of the captives taken by the Osages. This was done by the federal government to secure the trust of the Caiugu. The United States sought access to the eastern portions of Indian Territory as a place to resettle eastern Native populations. Formal treaty relations were established between the United States and Caiugu in 1837.¹¹⁷ In the summer of 1837 the Caiugu massacred the Tsistsistas Bowstrings, and during the following summer the Tsistsistas made their attack on the Caiugu camp on Wolf Creek.

The Tsistsistas experienced severe persecution at the hands of the Assiniboine, an enmity culminating in the destruction of the village at Biesterfeldt about 1790. This resulted in the tribe moving from a mixed horticultural-hunting economy to one based entirely on nomadism and bison hunting. Alignment with more populous and powerful Dakota bands gave the Tsistsistas a favorable position over their competitors in the horse trade, namely the Caiugu. Seeking to gain a monopoly on the source of supply, the two groups followed a course of unremitting warfare with neither side gaining an appreciable advantage. This warfare included the massacre of the Tsistsistas Bowstrings in 1837, followed by the attack on the Caiugu village at Wolf Creek in 1839. This led to the aforementioned peace accord of 1840, which placed the Tsistsistas in direct proximity to the source of horses in the Spanish Southwest.

These events led to what would represent a momentous decision for both tribes. The Anglo-American presence in the Southern Plains became more pervasive with the Santa Fe

¹¹⁷ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* vol. II (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1904), "Treaty With the Kiowa, Etc., 1837".

trail providing a trade route to Southwestern markets. More and more whites were crossing the Plains, the implications of which were not lost on either tribe. The peace of 1840 aligned a number of groups throughout the Plains in a vast, cooperative network. It brought together the Caiugu and their allies, the Kiowa-Apaches and Comanches, with the Tsistsistas and their allies the Arapahos and Dakotas. This alignment of peoples brought about increased conflict over trade resources between Native groups and Anglo-Americans. It was in this milieu that the warrior societies sought to assert their prominence in tribal affairs, and men's art played an important role in this process.

Chapter 2

Tribal Histories: the Changing Face of Trade and Warfare

Early studies of Plains warfare stress glorification of the individual warrior as the primary underlying motive. This focus on individualism has frequently eclipsed the larger picture in assessments of plains warfare. Such an emphasis creates the impression that Plains warfare was a game rather than a serious undertaking. However, warfare for the plains Indians was no less serious in its purpose than it was among western nations, and was a matter of contrasting world views and divergent conceptions of how war was to be waged. The goals of Native American warfare and those of Euro-Americans differed vastly in both aims and modus operandi. European aims centered on establishing bases of operation from which to exploit local resources, and frequently the acquisition of slave labor. Profits from these were then funneled back to Europe. In the case of the United States there are two discernable aims that were pursued. Initially Anglo goals were hegemonic. Military superiority and the exercise of indirect control over Native Americans through local authorities was the first goal. This was followed by territorial designs in which the goal was to conquer and directly control defeated peoples with the aim of eventual assimilation into the dominant society. Resource control played a vital role in the realization of this goal.

The control of resources insured the people's survival, as whoever had the most and could prevent their competitors from acquiring the same would succeed. Patricia C. Albers comments that "Indeed, throughout the Plains area warfare increasingly became a fight over access to buffalo-hunting and horse-grazing territories that would sustain an intense and

specialized production for nineteenth-century markets.¹¹⁸ However, an economic motive for warfare alone does not adequately explain the differences between Euro-American and Native concepts of warfare. Neither does the historical fact of an aggressively expanding Anglo state adequately explain nineteenth-century plains warfare. Both anthropological and historical arguments need to be considered, as neither perspective on its own provides sufficient explanation for the nature of nineteenth-century plains warfare. Indeed, as motives for warfare are examined it becomes clear that the issue of causalities becomes a complicated matter involving multiple factors working in concert.

Marian W. Smith stated in 1938 that “Beyond the maintenance of certain hunting privileges the tribes were not interested in land conquest...there is no reason to believe that warfare was ever an integral part of Plains economy...nor that the prevalence of horse stealing rested upon a purely economic motive.”¹¹⁹ Smith viewed the underlying cause of warfare more as a response based in the culturally conditioned interest of the individual for self-aggrandizement. She described the system of war honors and what was of importance to Plains warriors, that is the idea of one’s personal war medicine overcoming that of one’s opponent, versus physically killing that opponent.¹²⁰ “Among the military virtues were fearlessness, the capacity to make successful surprise attacks, the power to overcome an antagonist or show superiority to him, and the ability to carry out successful war projects. All

¹¹⁸ Patricia C. Albers, “Symbiosis, Merger, and War: Contrasting Forms of Intertribal Relationship Among Historic Plains Indians,” Moore, *Political Economy*: 124.

¹¹⁹ Marian W. Smith, “The War Complex of the Plains Indians,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 78: 3 (January, 1938): 433.

¹²⁰ Smith, “The war Complex of the Plains Indians,”: 425-433.

of these were connected with the warrior's relationship to the supernatural."¹²¹ Brian Ferguson et al also raise the question of multiple causalities for warfare, albeit with economics very much at center stage.¹²² Other causes of warfare include ritual obligations and the revenge motive, as well as political ambitions, venting frustration, cultural values, and even reproductive success, or failure, as the case may be.

There are two major scholarly interpretations of plains warfare. The one assumes a basic warlike nature in Plains tribes. Scholars including Clark Wissler, Ralph Linton, and John C. Ewers attribute warfare to an inherently warlike nature.¹²³ Robert Lowie, like Smith views plains warfare as a game devoid of any real purpose other than a quest for glorification of the individual participants.¹²⁴ The second view rests on economic factors as causes for warfare. Jablow, Mishkin, and Secoy see plains warfare as primarily revolving around horses. Lewis, Newcomb, and Secoy favor competition over buffalo as a primary inducement to warfare. These scholars also include displacement of peoples and their encroachment on the territories

¹²¹ Smith, 249.

¹²² Brian Ferguson, ed. *Warfare, Culture, and Environment*. New York: Academic Press, 1984.

¹²³ Clark Wissler, *North American Indians of the Plains*, Handbook Series no. 1 (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1927): 17; Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man: an introduction* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936): 358-360, 445-450, 456, "Forward," Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society: The Psychodynamics Primitive Social Organization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939): xii-xv; Ewers, "Intertribal Warfare as the Precursor to Indian-White Warfare on the Northern Great Plains." In *Plains Indian History and Culture: essays on continuity and change* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997): 166-179.

¹²⁴ Robert H. Lowie, *Indians of the Plains*: 104, 111-112, 202-203.

of others in their assessments. Lewis and Secoy add the need and or desire for captives.¹²⁵

At this point it is necessary to examine how warfare as a sociocultural response changed from the protohistoric through the historic period. Plains warfare before direct Euro-American contact fell into two basic modes, small scale and large scale. Small scale warfare consisted of small parties of raiders or individuals who were bent on securing plunder. Thomas Biolsi refers to this as “more like armed robbery than warfare.”¹²⁶ The second type of warfare, large scale, involved responses to the displacement of peoples, encroachments on territories, and revenge seeking. Warfare early in the nineteenth century was largely geared toward the acquisition of status and prestige through martial exploits that benefitted not only the individual’s career, but took into account the welfare of the people as a whole. Secure hunting territories were a necessity. Failure to keep competitors at bay meant the failure of the people to survive as an ethnic entity.

Another aspect of Native warfare, particularly in relation to contact with expanding states, are the categories of militarization that occurred. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead describe three such categories as war by indigenous peoples against other indigenous peoples, or internecine warfare; ethnic soldiering, in which an expanding power utilizes Native peoples against other expansionist competitors; and, war by indigenous peoples against an

¹²⁵ Oscar Lewis, *The Effects of White Contact Upon Blackfoot Culture. With Special Reference to the Role of the Fur Trade*, Monographs of the American Ethnological Society VI (Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1942): 49-50; Frank Raymond Secoy, *Changing Military Patterns on the Great Plains*, Monographs of the American Ethnological Society XXI (Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1953): 78-79.

¹²⁶ Thomas Biolsi, “Ecological and Cultural Factors in Plains Indian Warfare,” Ferguson, *Warfare, Culture, and Environment*:143.

expansionist state.¹²⁷ Each of these categories had at one time or another assumed its place in plains warfare as a response to the changing political and economic climate of the region.

Before a large-scale European presence in the Plains was evident, warfare largely centered on availability of resources such as buffalo, and trade. During this period the warfare was internecine in nature, with groups vying with one another over resources. Ethnic soldiering was present in the relationships between Native peoples and the Spanish and French, and followed a pattern similar to that played out in northeastern North America. The historical record of the Spanish Borderlands bears this out, and is well documented through the work of Elizabeth A. H. John, Gary C. Anderson, and Thomas Kavanaugh among others.¹²⁸ Native warfare against an expanding Anglo state in the plains is thoroughly documented and needs no referencing.

Prior to the European presence plains trade operated largely on the exchange of what Donald Blakeslee terms “redundant” goods, that is those items that were commonly produced by both parties involved in trade.

The apparently greater importance of the trade in manufactured goods, as opposed to raw materials, may reflect simply the ability to create something recognizably different from the products of other ethnic groups...If this were true, the existence of the trade system may well have been important in

¹²⁷ R. Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead, eds., *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1992): 18.

¹²⁸ Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*; Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580 - 1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1948); Thomas W. Kavanaugh, *Comanche Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective, 1706 - 1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

promoting and maintaining a minimal level of differences between various ethnic groups within the general plains art style.¹²⁹

Both village peoples and nomadic groups procured and processed hides, and meat and vegetal goods were exchanged by both as well.¹³⁰ The disparities were that the village peoples, because of horticulture, naturally had more vegetal produce, while nomadic groups had greater amounts of meat and hides because of their hunting lifestyles. Additionally, not only was quantity a factor in trade, but also the uniqueness of finished products. Trade among disparate groups was ensured through the institutionalized ritual of the calumet ceremony in all its variants, which assured peaceful relations under which trade could ensue and thrive. Raymond Wood, however, subordinates the importance of redundant trade among Plains groups to a desire for exotic materials and goods.¹³¹

Europeans brought with them a variety of new items and materials that radically altered the everyday lives of Native Americans. The introduction of steel and iron for use as weapons and implements enabled more efficient work than could be performed with stone. Articles ranging from fish hooks to military waistcoats had a dramatic effect on Native Americans' lives in countless ways. New materials such as glass beads and commercially produced pigments enriched the arts of plains peoples, replacing more time consuming and arduous means of decoration. Articles such as silver headed canes, military uniforms, medals, and flags were status goods that symbolized authority among Native Americans. Individuals

¹²⁹ Blakeslee, 192.

¹³⁰ Blakeslee, *Ibid.*

¹³¹ W. Raymond Wood, "Contrastive Features of North American Trade Systems," University of Oregon Anthropological Papers no. 4, 1972.

possessing these articles were the ones that European traders dealt with directly, and they in turn distributed goods to their followers.¹³² Europeans fit easily into the existing trade patterns that had operated for centuries.

After European contact trade remained much as it had before, albeit with a new influx of goods and materials that quickly assumed value as status goods. Among those items were horses, brass chains, rings, German silver, hair pipe beads, small bells, brass wire, blankets, calico, guns, powder and lead, glass beads, mirrors, tobacco, and alcohol.¹³³ Horses and guns in and of themselves would quickly alter the nature of trade by thrusting it into the realm of economic enterprise rather than reciprocity. The advantages to a particular group who possessed sufficient amounts of both horses and guns were soon apparent. Native peoples began to compete for control over the flow of these goods to insure their ascendancy over that of surrounding competitors.¹³⁴ A case in point is the way that both the Tsistsistas and Caiugu sought to establish themselves in positions of proprietorship over trade routes along which these items moved.

This view does not necessarily negate the idea of a regional trade system based primarily on reciprocity. Instead it adds another element that formed the basis for a later economic focus. Reciprocal trade primarily served the purpose of establishing and maintaining fictive kinship ties between groups as a hedge against lean times. If drought or harsh winter weather

¹³² Blakeslee, 192.

¹³³ Battey, 325; Fremont, *Narratives of Exploration and Adventure*: 131-132.

¹³⁴ Stan Hoig, *Tribal Wars of the Southern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993): 16.

reduced one group's resources, they were able to go to their fictive kin for assistance, and were expected to reciprocate. Blakeslee states that this pattern of behavior was "an adaptation to the localized food shortages which periodically occurred on the plains", and that "the exchange of food in times of plenty maintained the acceptability of food as an exchange item..."¹³⁵ Such fictive kinship ties were initiated through the calumet complex that diffused through much of the plains.¹³⁶

Prior to the 1830s European economic interests were subordinate to those of Native Americans, who still controlled the terms of trade. European economics were, according to Gary Clayton Anderson, forced to accommodate this pattern of "exchange principally based on morally based value of goods versus profit."¹³⁷ This was in direct contrast to Europeans' interests, which were by and large mercantile in character. The ultimate goal of trade was to enrich the coffers of the mother countries. With the leverage that Native peoples exercised over trade during this period they were able to play one power off against another in order to reap the maximum benefits.

In this same period Europeans needed Native Americans as buffers and allies against other hostile interests. The colonial history of Texas exemplifies this. Spain never undertook any

¹³⁵ Blakeslee, 1.

¹³⁶ Donald J. Blakeslee, "The Origin and Spread of the Calumet Ceremony," *American Antiquity* 48:1 (1981); Susan C. Vehik, "Late Prehistoric Exchange on the Southern Plains and its Periphery," *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 13:1 (1988); W. Raymond Wood, "Plains Trade in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Intertribal Relations," *Anthropology on the Great Plains*, W. Raymond Wood and Margot Liberty, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980): 104, 105; Vehik, "Conflict, Trade, and Political Development on the Southern Plains," *American Antiquity* 67:1 (January, 2002).

¹³⁷ Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580 - 1830*: 5.

serious effort to colonize Texas as a whole, instead preferring to maintain it as a buffer against possible French incursions. As early as the 1760s it was suggested by the Marquis de Rubi that a line of presidios be drawn from La Bahia in eastern Texas to Altar in Sonora as a frontier line. This line was extended northward somewhat, however, to include Santa Fe and San Antonio de Bejar.¹³⁸

Each group in the plains sought to position itself as favorably as possible in relation to resources, including sources of trade goods. This was particularly true for the Caiugu and Tsistsistas. Without buffalo and horses neither group would have survived, as the remaining option would have been horticulture. The niches amenable to successful horticulture, along rivers and their major tributaries, were already occupied by other peoples, such as the Mandan-Hidatsa of the Upper Missouri River valley, the various Pawnee groups in the Republican River drainage, and the Caddoans in the southern plains. Establishing a nomadic lifestyle based largely on trade in buffalo hides and horses appears to have been the most viable alternative for both tribes.

Neither group was very numerous, yet each came to control large amounts of territory in comparison to their small populations. This was largely achieved through shrewd geopolitical maneuvering that aligned each group with more numerous and powerful neighbors with whom they forged symbiotic relationships. Moore states:

During the period of sovereignty and freedom on the Plains from 1780 to 1879, the Cheyennes were central to many events which still occupy the minds of American historians. Although a small group, they dominated a geographical area nearly as large as that of the Lakotas or the Comanches.

¹³⁸ John, 46.

Inveterate traders and politicians, the Cheyennes met Lewis and Clark, lent their auspices to the building of Bent's Fort, and for a century manipulated alliances with all the other central Plains tribes to maximize their advantages in trade and politics.¹³⁹

John Douglas Northcutt views the Caiugu in much the same light. He refers to them as independent thinkers, much like the Tsistsistas, in that they controlled or influenced much beyond their relatively small numbers.¹⁴⁰

In acquiring their territories, both groups gained proprietary interests over trade routes that had been part of the plains trade system for centuries. This gave each group an advantage in controlling the flow of commodities into and out of various subregions of the plains. Both the Caiugu and Tsistsistas filled roles as middlemen in plains trade, and were able to wield considerable influence, particularly in relation to Euro-American interests of the pre-1830s.

With the passing of the Louisiana Territory into Anglo-American hands an economic shift took place in which the focus of trade centered on a world market economy versus mercantilism. Additionally, the hegemony exercised by the United States over the plains eliminated multiple trade partners. No longer could Native peoples play one European power off against another. By the latter 1830s Native Americans found themselves in increasingly subordinate economic roles. The emergence of Anglo-Americans as the dominant party in trade broke down previous reciprocal exchange patterns.

Under the new system of commerce a focus on specific resources ensued. This limited

¹³⁹ Moore, *The Cheyenne*, 102.

¹⁴⁰ John Douglas Northcutt, *Leadership Among the Kiowa 1833 - 1973* (M. A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1973): 43-44.

market situation placed greater strains on specific resources such as bison, and natural resources such as water and forage. Concentration on specific commodities created a situation in which Native American peoples were drawn into trade spheres largely controlled by Anglos. As a result Native Americans' autonomy steadily eroded. Dan Flores states that "...during the nineteenth century not only had the western tribes become technologically capable of pressuring their resources, but year by year they were becoming less 'ecosystem people' dependent on the products of their local regions for subsistence, and increasingly tied to biospheric trade networks."¹⁴¹ Loss of autonomy in any measure placed Native peoples under increasing control of federal authorities. With the decrease in buffalo, an increased reliance on annuities came into play. Native Americans increasingly found themselves in need of government issued annuities to feed themselves through the winters, and became further enmeshed in dependency.¹⁴²

In the decades preceding the 1840 peace several developments placed Native American peoples in more frequent juxtapositions with Anglos in the Plains. European demand for beaver and other exotic furs spurred American and British fur companies into a near frenzied competition for the wealth that fur bearing animals represented. In an effort to maximize their production, many of the fur trappers, known as mountain men, enlisted the aid of various Indian groups, often through marriage into a tribe. Such marriages were often contractual

¹⁴¹ Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy," 476.

¹⁴² Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983). White's monograph, while dealing with the experiences of the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos can readily be applied as a model for interactions with other Native groups.

agreements which assured the white trapper access to fur rich territories within the home range of a particular tribal group.¹⁴³ Also, since he was by marriage a relative, the white trapper could count on that group's protection as he plied his trade. Anglo traders followed suit as well, establishing their posts in locales that favored their Native American kinsmen and established trade patterns. Of particular note were Bent's Fort near present day La Junta, Colorado, established in 1828, and St. Vrain's post on the South Platte River. Both posts were built for trade with the Tsistsistas, who preferred to trade exclusively with the whites as a means of controlling the flow of goods to other Native peoples.¹⁴⁴

The fur trade as a viable enterprise ceased by the 1830s. A marked decrease in beaver resulted from over trapping and the demand for peltries in both Europe and the eastern United States plummeted, signaling the end of the trade. Felt had displaced beaver as the material of choice for the manufacture of hats and other items. The mountain man quickly faded to memory as part of a romanticized past. Those who chose to stay sought their livelihood as traders or went to work for the trading companies. Between the 1830s and the 1840s the amount of traffic across the central Plains was minimal, and centered on the transportation of goods into Indian country and hides to the East. Increased Anglo activity on the Santa Fe trail during the 1830s increasingly brought Native groups into the American trade orbit. For Anglo-Americans the hide trade, already an important fixture in the pre-contact Plains, took

¹⁴³ Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in the Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940): 65,105, 126-127; Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980): 65-66.

¹⁴⁴ Jablow, 35-36.

up where the fur trade stopped. Native peoples were willing partners in the process. Native American involvement in the hide trade held serious and far reaching consequences for Native peoples throughout the plains, however.

The trade in buffalo hides played a major role in later economic developments. In reference to the trade among the Tsistsistas, Donald Berthrong notes that in one year Jim Beckworth showed a \$3,000 profit on robes, and further states that an investment of \$5,000 by the St. Vrain company and “another” in 1849 netted a \$39,000 return on the St. Louis market. The annual income from robes by 1855 was \$15,000.¹⁴⁵ The emphasis placed on robes was so great that over hunting resulted. Selective hunting strained bison herds beyond their capacity to effectively rebound. Dan Flores points out an Indian preference for cows that were two to five years old as possessing the best hides for use in trade.¹⁴⁶ The problem was compounded by competition by horses for forage and periods of intermittent drought.

Native groups moved onto the plains in pursuit of bison herds during a period of climatic shift. Following the large scale extinctions of the Pleistocene, a series of climatic changes ensued.¹⁴⁷ The net result of these climate changes was a drier climate regime amenable to short grasses favored by bison. The latest of these climate shifts occurred in conjunction with

¹⁴⁵ Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963): 91, 92, 113.

¹⁴⁶ Flores, “Bison Ecology”, 479.

¹⁴⁷ Merlin P. Lawson, *The Climate of the Great American Desert: Reconstruction of the Climate of Western Interior United States, 1800 - 1850*, University of Nebraska Studies new series no. 46 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974); Dwight A. Brown, “Early Nineteenth-Century Grasslands of the Midcontinent Plains,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83:4 (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).

Euro-American contact and the introduction of horses and domestic livestock. Horses prefer the same type of forage as buffalo. Also, the disturbance of the bison herds by increased human occupation resulted in relocations of herds to areas less traveled and settled.¹⁴⁸ Added to these factors were seasonality in rainfall, grass production, and temperature, all of which affected the growth and availability of short grasses. In concert these factors combined with hunting to reduce the buffalo herds. As the buffalo herds decreased, Native communities turned to those animals filling the niches vacated by bison, namely horses.

The stress on buffalo hides as a trade commodity necessitated the utmost efficiency in their procurement. Horses provided the most efficient means available to increase production, and such an increase translated into more Euro-American goods which increasingly came to be associated with status. A result of this change in status was the economic power of men and women in plains societies which had undergone a transition from horticulturists to nomads. No longer were women in control of economic resources as had been the case under a horticultural lifestyle. Men now controlled economic livelihood through horses and bison procurement. Under earlier horticultural patterns women had controlled the means of subsistence. In contrast, women, while still maintaining a measure of respect, became the

¹⁴⁸ Elliot West, *The Way West*; Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy"; John R. Bozell, "Culture, Environment, and Bison Populations on the Late Prehistoric and Early Historic Central Plains," *Plains Anthropologist* 40 (1995): 142; Richard Irving Dodge, *The Hunting Grounds of the West* (London: Chatts and Windus, 1877); D. A. Gunnerson, "Man and Bison on the Plains in the Proto-Historic Period," *Plains Anthropologist* 17: 55 (1972):1-10; Frank G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo, A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (1951); James H. Shaw and Martin Lee, "Relative Abundance of Bison, Elk, and Pronghorn on the Southern Plains, 1806-1857," *Plains Anthropologist* 42: 159, memoir 129 (1997): 163-172; Douglas B. Bamforth, "Historical Documents and Bison Ecology on the Great Plains," *Plains Anthropologist* 32: 115 (February, 1987): 1-15.

processors rather than producers in this new economic regime.¹⁴⁹ In nomadic societies increased production of hides for trade translated into a greater work load and polygamous marriages.¹⁵⁰ Also, residence requirements were altered. Horses and their needs increasingly dictated the round of seasonal life, requiring forage and shelter during winter months.¹⁵¹ The Caiugu and Tsistsistas were reliant on the same timber and forage as were emigrants heading west. The inevitable outcome was direct conflict over shared resources. While emigrants needed these resources on a seasonal basis, the needs of the Tsistsistas, the Caiugu, and their horse herds were year round.

The downside for both the Caiugu and the Tsistsistas was that both groups focused on two narrow resource bases, the horse and bison. With the establishment of commerce along the Santa Fe Trail in the south and the Overland Trail in the central Plains, the herds of bison were effectively split into northern and southern herds. Moore states that “the destruction of buffalo ranges [in the south] and the separation of herds left the Cheyennes in control of one

¹⁴⁹ Loretta Fowler, “The Great Plains from the Arrival of the Horse to 1885,” *The Cambridge History of Native Peoples of the Americas*, Bruce G. Trigger and Wilcomb E. Washburn, eds. Vol. 1, pt. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 1996); also, the case for wholesale cultural adaptation to accommodate horses is detailed in John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Culture*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 159: 229-322; and Jeffrey R. Hanson, “Adjustment and Adaptation on the Northern Plains: the case of equestrianism among the Hidatsa,” *Plains Anthropologist* 31: 112 (May, 1986): 93-107.

¹⁵⁰ Fowler, “The Great Plains From the Arrival of the Horse to 1885,”: 20; Jablow. *The Cheyenne in Plains Indian Trade Relations*: 21.

¹⁵¹ Elliott West, *The Contested Plains*. West carefully details the impact that horses and their needs had on the daily lives of the Cheyenne people during the nineteenth century.

of if not the best buffalo hunting grounds between the forks of the Platte River.”¹⁵² With the southern buffalo all but decimated, the Caiugu focused almost exclusively on horses, cattle, and raiding. Monahan quotes Indian Agent Lorenzo Labaldi who wrote in 1867 that “They raise much of their own stock and they now have more than two thousand cows – they also have Texas cattle without number and almost every day bring in more.”¹⁵³ The lack of bison in the southern Plains had obvious ramifications pertaining to food procurement and intensified reliance on horses as an economic mainstay.

The Anglo presence in the southern Plains came about considerably earlier than it did in the central Plains with a growing American nation eager for trade with Spanish Santa Fe. By the 1820s American trade caravans regularly made their way from St. Louis, Missouri to Santa Fe and back. In addition to the hide trade, horses became a bonanza for Native peoples in their dealings with Anglos. St. Louis based traders were in constant need of fresh stock, and the Caiugu were only too happy to accommodate them. The horse industry, involving the acquisition of horses, herding, training, lending and trading, became a major focus. Native peoples were viewed quite frequently as end users of horses captured through raids.

The horse, no longer simply a means to an end for procurement of food or warfare, became a form of capital and a medium of exchange. This was particularly true among the Caiugu, who with their Comanche allies instituted a revolving door horse trade in the southern plains. Raiding parties struck deep into Texas for horses, which were traded in New Mexico to outfitters for use as draft animals for the trade caravans. Frequently large numbers of these

¹⁵² Moore, *The Cheyenne*, 93.

¹⁵³ Monahan, *Trade Goods on the Prairie*, 230.

animals were traded back into Texas, from where they were again taken in raids by the Caiugu.¹⁵⁴ Horses also became so important to the Southern Tsistsistas economy that “herds up to twenty, thirty, and even fifty thousand horses congregated in spots along the Arkansas River”.¹⁵⁵ Donald Berthrong notes that at the Upper Arkansas Agency circa 1855 the Cheyennes had three hundred fifty lodges and seventeen thousand horses.¹⁵⁶

The images in Figures 12 and 13 exemplify the importance of horse raiding as a male activity. Figure 13 depicts a Bowstring warrior driving three captured animals, abbreviated to show only their heads. One horse trails a picket rope, testament to the warrior’s daring. Prized animals were usually tethered outside their owner’s lodge, or in bitter winter weather, inside the lodge itself to prevent theft. The individual depicted in this scene exercised great bravery in stealing into an enemy camp and stealing at least one of the animals from under its owner’s very nose. The scene depicted in Figure 13 similarly testifies to an act of bravery, as both animals are dragging tether ropes. Drawn by separate artists, these two scenes demonstrate a marked difference in the treatment of forms. In both drawings, however, the animals are rendered with an elegance and sureness of hand that aptly captures the triumph of the moment in each individual’s career.

The political alignments of various peoples in the central and southern plains after 1840 created a cooperative trade network which focused on external Anglo markets. Horses and buffalo hides constituted the primary commodities of this trade. Where tribal groups had

¹⁵⁴ Nye, 114.

¹⁵⁵ James P. Ronda, 166.

¹⁵⁶ Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes*, 113.

contended with one another for prime hunting territories and access to Euro-American goods during the protohistoric and early historic periods, warfare's focus changed during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Large alliances of peoples waged war against other alliances



Figure 12.
Tsistsistas. "A Bowstring Warrior With Captured Horses."
Tie Creek Ledger, page 132. Pencil, ink, crayon. Ca. 1865.
Private Collection: Name withheld by request.



Figure 13.
Tsistsistas. "Captured Horses." Pencil, ink, crayon. Tie Creek Ledger, page 152. Ca. 1865.
Private Collection: Name withheld by request.

for access to and control of trade territories.¹⁵⁷ The Tsistsistas, Caiugu and their allies fought against the Shoshonis and the Blackfoot confederacy in the northern plains, southwestern groups such as the Navajo and Utes, and the Pawnees in the central plains. Changing attitudes regarding motives for warfare brought about shifts in power and authority structures.¹⁵⁸

Along with the shift in warfare's focus from internecine struggles over hunting territories to a focus centered on the control of trade came a coincident shift in the way status was acquired. Earlier systems of war honors, which remained intact, were augmented by individuals' economic status. Articles such as guns and ammunition, trade cloth, glass beads, numerous other items of Euro-American manufacture, and particularly horses, were readily sought as a means of upward mobility.¹⁵⁹ Access to such items afforded individuals positions of status previously attainable through martial accomplishments alone.

Tsistsistas and Caiugu agency placed both peoples in positions from which they were able to control trade throughout the southern and central Plains during the mid to latter nineteenth century. Trade in the region evolved from localized markets centered on commonly produced goods to a market driven economy under Anglo domination. Both tribes became major suppliers of hides and horses in this economy, exchanging these for both status and common goods. The Native economy shifted from one based on reciprocal exchange to one geared toward the acquisition of status goods that served to heighten and maintain leaders' positions

¹⁵⁷ John C. Ewers, "Intertribal Warfare as the Precursor to Indian-White Warfare on the Northern Great Plains," 166-179.

¹⁵⁸ Jablow, 84-86.

¹⁵⁹ Meadows, 110; Kracht, 102-104.

in the eyes of their followers. A result of the changing character of Plains trade was a shift from the internecine warfare of the early nineteenth century to concerted resistance against an expanding Anglo state bent on total domination of the region and its inhabitants.

Reliance on a narrow spectrum of trade commodities became the norm in plains trade of the late nineteenth century. The pattern for specialized trade was established fairly early, with Europeans' desires for specific goods such as furs and hides. With the waning of the fur trade buffalo hides became a primary economic focus. Later in the century horses came to hold as much or more importance as hides, with horse raiding as an economic mainstay for both Tsistsistas and Caiugu.¹⁶⁰ Not only did horses gain importance economically, but so too did mules, as shown in Figure 14. Mules, indicated by the elongated ears on the captured animals, prized for their stamina, were routinely stolen. Note also the notched ears on the rider's mount. These indicate the animal as a prized war horse.

As seen from the historical record the focus of trade underwent several shifts from pre-contact times through the nineteenth century. Before contact with Europeans trade provided a means by which individuals increased power, wealth, and prestige through the control of resources. Pre-contact trade revolved around numerous articles in both finished and raw forms. Items such as pipe stone blanks, stone cores for point processing, and exotic shells ranked among the list of status goods. After contact such items were largely supplanted by articles of Euro-American manufacture. Additionally, buffalo hides and particularly horses

¹⁶⁰ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 69. The reason Grinnell cites for the Bowstrings' desire to raid the Caiugu was to acquire horses. Grinnell also mentions prominent men who sought primarily economic gain through warfare in *The Cheyenne Indians* vol. 2, pp. 2-3, 13-14. Jacob Fowler notes the great numbers of horses the Caiugu possessed for trade, attesting to the animal's economic importance in his journal.

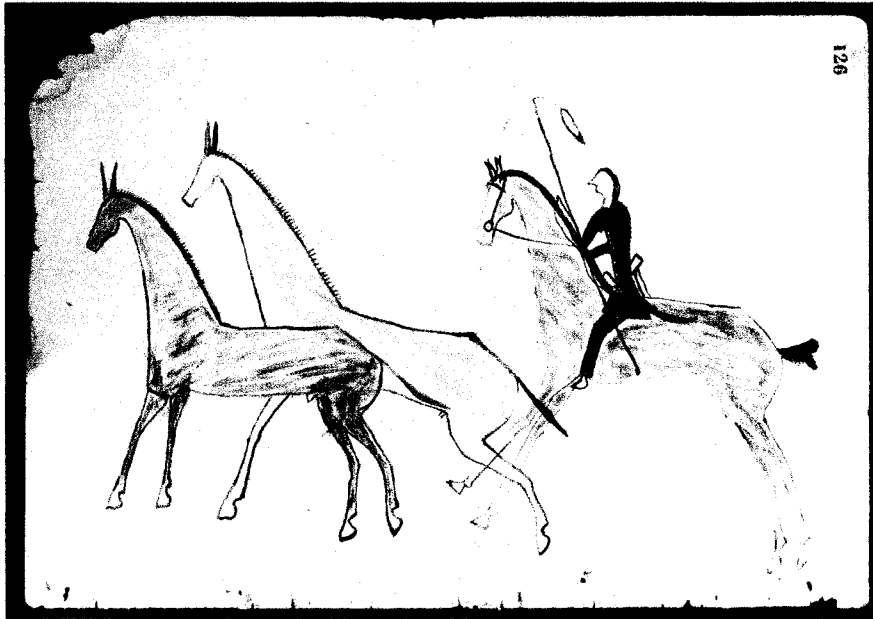


Figure 14. Tsistsistas.
“Captured Mules.” Pencil, ink, crayon. Tie Creek Ledger, page 126. Ca. 1865.
Private Collection. Name withheld by request.

became the standard commodities of an increasingly specialized trade.

Because the sources and markets for horses were centered primarily in regions populated by Euro-Americans, such as New Mexico, Texas, and Missouri, clashes with Anglo-Americans were inevitable, especially after 1830. Jane Richardson comments on the changes that horse raiding exerted on Comanche patterns of martial organization. A late nineteenth-century custom developed in which the expedition leader received all the animals taken in a raid. He then distributed them to individuals in the party. This practice contrasts with earlier customs of each individual claiming animals which he captured or sighted first. Richardson contends that the change was a result of the business-like context that horse raiding assumed in the latter nineteenth century. She states: “This conflict was probably a result of a shift in the organization of the war party which occurred when raiding parties against whites in Texas

grew more and more profitable and business-like, and had to depend more on planned strategy with specialization of function of the members as a result.”¹⁶¹ The nature of Tsistsistas warfare was dramatically altered. The emphasis on horses altered the underlying incentives behind warfare. War became an economic enterprise. Jablow states that after a point warfare became “strictly for economic gain, to the point of forsaking counting of coups or killing enemies”.¹⁶² Grinnell states that:

There were many braves and respectful warriors among the Cheyenne who never went on war paths of this description [i.e. scalp expeditions], who on their war journeys tried to avoid coming in close contact with enemies. Such men went to war for the sole purpose of increasing their possessions by capturing horses; that is, they carried on war as a business for profit...¹⁶³

Increased raids for economic gain prompted the United States to extend its military authority to the Plains. This was initiated through three events. The first was the Dodge-Leavenworth expedition of 1834 which was undertaken as a show of force. The second was a series of treaty negotiations struck between the federal government and the Tsistsistas and Caiugu. In 1835 the federal government brokered a treaty between the Comanches and Wichitas, and in 1837 established formal treaty relations with the Caiugu.¹⁶⁴ In the central

¹⁶¹ Jane Richardson, *Law and Status Among the Kiowa Indians*, Monographs of the American Ethnological Society 1 (New York: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1940): 127.

¹⁶² Jablow, 69.

¹⁶³ Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. 2: 2.

¹⁶⁴ *Treaty With The Kiowa, Etc., 1837*, Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* Vol. 2 (Washington, D. C.: U.S.G.P.O., 1904): 489-491.

Plains the Tsistsistas were courted as trade partners through the treaty of 1825.¹⁶⁵ Later the 1851 treaty of Fort Laramie was drawn up, with the central purpose of defining tribal territories and protection of emigrants on the Overland Trail.¹⁶⁶ Ten years later the treaty of Fort Wise secured safe routes of travel through Indian country.¹⁶⁷ Most of these treaties were contingent on the dispensation of annuities to the tribes. With the emphasis on annuities came a shift in the perception of the federal government's role from one of oversight and coexistence to one of supervision and control. Gift giving, no longer viewed as a diplomatic necessity, was instead replaced with a system of restricted annuities. Monahan comments on United States - Caiugu relations during the mid nineteenth century:

In bringing the Kiowas into its system of Indian policy the Federal government became a significant source of goods even before it signed a treaty which promised annuities...In dealing with the Kiowas, the agent found that the amount and kind of goods determined his influence and the government's prestige among the Kiowas.¹⁶⁸

Part and parcel to this changed perception of the federal government's role in treaty obligations was a decided lack of concern over guarantees of Native sovereignty.

In 1858 a third factor placed further strain on Anglo - Native relations. Gold was discovered in the Colorado front range. With the influx of emigrants into Colorado there were now not two but three main thoroughfares of traffic crossing the Plains, causing a tremendous

¹⁶⁵ *Treaty With The Cheyenne Tribe, 1825*, Kappler, 232-234.

¹⁶⁶ *Treaty Of Fort Laramie With Sioux, Etc., 1851*, Kappler, 595.

¹⁶⁷ *Treaty With The Arapaho And Cheyenne, 1861*, Kappler, 807-811.

¹⁶⁸ Monahan, 191.

strain on resources. The stress on resources needed by both Native peoples and emigrants created an atmosphere of heightened tensions. The federal government sought to keep Indians and Anglos separate in the hope of reducing conflict.¹⁶⁹ While initial policies called for separation of the two races, the underlying interest was not the welfare of the tribes, but the convenience of American citizens streaming westward. Manifest Destiny was the order of the day, and federal policy as well as corporate mentalities revolved around the doctrine.¹⁷⁰

Under the guise of divine sanction, American interests pressed relentlessly into Indian country with a marked ambivalence toward the peoples living there. Ambivalence frequently gave rise to arrogance, and with arrogance came disregard for everything counter to the westering spirit that infused American thought of the period. In a regional context the results of this attitude were the same, yet the responses it elicited from the Caiugu and the southern Tsistsistas bands were significantly different than those of the northern Tsistsistas bands.

The southern Tsistsistas bands actively pursued peaceful interactions with Anglos prior to the 1864 massacre on Sand Creek. Likewise, the Caiugu courted amicable coexistence with

¹⁶⁹ *Treaty of Fort Laramie with Sioux, Etc., 1851*, Kappler, vol. II: 595, specifically Article 6; *Treaty With the Arapaho and Cheyenne, 1861*; Kappler vol. II: 807, specifically Article 1; *Treaty With the Cheyenne and Arapaho, 1865*; Kappler vol. II: 887, specifically Article 2; *Treaty With the Cheyenne and Arapaho, 1867*; Kappler vol. II: 984, specifically Articles 2 and 3; *Treaty With the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho, 1868*; Kappler, vol. II: 1012, specifically Article 2; for the Caiugu, *Treaty With the Comanche and Kiowa, 1865*; Kappler, vol. II: 893, specifically Article 2; *Treaty With the Kiowa and Comanche, 1867*; Kappler, vol. II: 977-978, specifically Articles 2 and 3.

¹⁷⁰ Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981): 247; William H. and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986): 91.

Anglos until the mid 1840s. Tensions boiled over much sooner in the central Plains, however. By 1841 the Tsistsistas in the Platte River valley were noted as increasingly hostile towards whites.¹⁷¹ This was probably due to a combination of factors. Immigrant tribes relocated from the east, such as the Shawnees, were directly competing with the Tsistsistas for buffalo. Emigrants bound for Oregon and California also posed problems.

The reality of travel on the Overland Trail does not match the popular conception. Prior to the 1860s there were few incidents recorded in which Native Americans perpetrated depredations against emigrants. More often than not the interaction was positive, with Native Americans seeking to assist emigrants. This was accomplished in a variety of ways, ranging from directions to water and grass for stock, to trade for utilitarian goods. It was not until the emigration along the trail reached its height in the 1850s and the novelty of the trains wore off that Native Americans began resisting emigration in a martial fashion. Prior to this the majority of depredations appear to have involved stealing stock.¹⁷² Despite the predominantly amicable mind set exhibited by Native Americans, a growing Anglo military presence made itself felt. The period of warfare during the latter half of the nineteenth century and all its attendant details has been thoroughly treated by a number of authors.¹⁷³ Due to the coverage

¹⁷¹ Fremont, 133.

¹⁷² John D. Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: the Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840 - 60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1979): 156-200.

¹⁷³ Many of the histories dealing with Anglo-Indian warfare are undeniably biased in their Perspective. Several of these are noteworthy for their sense of objectivity, however, and the reader is directed to these sources for more complete details on the sequence of events pertinent to Tsistsistas and Caiugu warfare against Anglo-Americans. Sources recommended are Grinnell's *The Fighting Cheyennes*, Hoig's *The Kiowas and the Legend of Kicking Bird*, and the *Life of George Bent Written From His Letters*.

that has been given this period, it will not be discussed in detail except for those events which represent watermarks in Tsistsistas and Caiugu history.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 precipitated the opening of the Colorado territory.¹⁷⁴ Subsequent economic speculation resulted in the 1858 rush to the gold fields along the eastern slope of the Rockies. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act represents a pivotal point in relations between central plains peoples and the federal government, and it precipitated changes in warfare between Indians and Anglos. Elliott West points out that despite persistent rumors of gold in the region, Colorado was viewed as somewhere to pass through on the way to the California gold fields, and the Front Range remained politically unorganized territory. The 1854 legislation changed the public perception of the region, however. West states: "That barrier, [the negative public perception of the region]...was removed with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854."¹⁷⁵ Through this act the flood gates opened into Tsistsistas country.

The rush to the Colorado gold fields brought a new influx of human traffic and its attendant problems. Anglo indifference to Native territorial claims led inevitably to clashes. By 1859 nearly one hundred fifty thousand emigrants flooded the Platte River road on their

Additional sources that are too numerous to mention here are personal narratives and accounts by army personnel stationed west of the Mississippi during the study period. One such account of pertinence to the Caiugu (and the Comanche also) is James T. DeShields, *Border Wars of Texas: being an authoritative and popular account, in chronological order, of the long and bitter conflict between savage Indians and the pioneer settlers of Texas* (Tioga, TX: The Herald Company, 1912).

¹⁷⁴ Elliott West, *The Contested Plains*, 99.

¹⁷⁵ West, *ibid.*

way to Colorado. Restraining their building inclinations toward aggression, the Tsistsistas continued to seek peaceful avenues of coexistence. Southern warrior society leaders and civil chiefs sought to control their young men through various sanctions and the continued distribution of status goods acquired through trade. Bent comments that by 1856 unprovoked attacks by federal troops led by inexperienced officers resulted in a number of incidents, whose frequency increased. Despite their best efforts, the civil chiefs were admittedly unable to control their young men.¹⁷⁶ A report from 1851 states:

These soldiers are the young men of the nation...formed into companies with a head or principal leader and other subordinate officers...They form war parties and often go to war on their own hook, sometimes without the knowledge or consent of the chiefs. They are so numerous, and so well banded together, that the chiefs can do nothing with them.¹⁷⁷

Clearly the situation was one in which the warrior society leaders exercised control independent of Council sanctions as early as mid-century. In the case of the northern bands, they simply tried to distance themselves from Anglo contact by retreating deeper into their own country. This practice of accommodation had serious ramifications for the Tsistsistas, particularly in the tensions created between war and peace factions within the culture.

Caiugu-Anglo relations also centered predominantly around the issue of trade. Specifically, it was the source of trade commodities that became important in Caiugu-Anglo interactions. Texas and New Mexico had provided rich sources of horses, captives, and status goods. Raids

¹⁷⁶ Bent, 99-100.

¹⁷⁷ Stanley Vestal, *Warpath and Council Fire: The Plains Indians' Struggle for Survival in War and Diplomacy* (New York: Random House, 1948):18.

into these regions were necessary for continued Caiugu economic stability.¹⁷⁸ While the Caiugu viewed New Mexicans as Mexicans, and were content to leave well enough alone after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Texans were another matter. There appears to have been a particularly virulent hatred between Texans and the Caiugu throughout their history of interaction. Caiugu perceptions of Texans remained fixed regardless of political changes. Anglo perceptions of Texans conflicted with those of the Caiugu. Caiugu concerns over the activities of Anglo hunters and dwindling bison herds led to the battle of Adobe Walls in 1874,¹⁷⁹ and this coupled with the divergent Caiugu and Anglo perceptions of Texans eventually resulted in the Red River War of 1874. This campaign led to the ultimate military defeat of the Caiugu at Palo Duro Canyon¹⁸⁰ and the subsequent exile of tribal members to Fort Marion, Florida.

The Tsistsistas likewise were subjected to a series of military campaigns designed to break their power and control over large tracts of territory. Successive military campaigns against the Tsistsistas resulted in the massacre at Sand Creek on November 29, 1864,¹⁸¹ the massacre on the Washita in 1868,¹⁸² and the battle of Summitt Springs in 1869.¹⁸³ The significance of each of these battles in Tsistsistas history was a marked change in the perception of warfare

¹⁷⁸ Stan Hoig, *The Kiowas and the Legend of Kicking Bird*, 83.

¹⁷⁹ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 319.

¹⁸⁰ Hoig, 234.

¹⁸¹ Grinnell, 180.

¹⁸² Bent, 315-322.

¹⁸³ Afton, et al, xix.

against Anglos. Following the attack on Sand Creek, Tsistsistas perceptions of the Dog Men changed as well. No longer were they viewed as the exiled criminals of earlier years. The Dog Men would forever after be seen by the Tsistsistas as “the defenders of the people.”¹⁸⁴ The battle of the Washita only served to confirm Tsistsistas beliefs that the Anglos were untrustworthy, and Summitt Springs forced the remaining Dog Men in the south to consolidate in the north near their Dakota allies.

The Dog Men claimed much of Kansas and eastern Colorado as their own, and additionally held shared interests in the Powder River country of Montana with their Dakota allies. Relinquishment of these territories to Anglo authority would have placed the Tsistsistas in a markedly subservient position preventing their economic activities and hunting. A number of treaties were drawn up with the Tsistsistas during the latter nineteenth century, and most were geared toward diminished territories with the exception of the Fort Laramie treaty of 1851.¹⁸⁵ The Fort Laramie treaty of 1868, while representing a victory for the Tsistsistas and Dakotas, nevertheless reflected a reduction of territory. Article 2 of the treaty states:

The United States agrees that the following district of country [followed by a description of the boundaries encompassed under the treaty]...shall be, and the same is, set apart for the absolute and undisturbed use and occupation of the Indians herein named...; and the United States now solemnly agrees that no persons except those herein designated and authorized so to do, and except such officers, agents, and employees of the Government as may be authorized to enter upon Indian reservations in discharge of duties enjoined by law, shall

¹⁸⁴ Afton, et al, xviii.

¹⁸⁵ Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975): 110-111.

ever be permitted to pass over, settle upon, or reside in the territory described in this article, or in such territory as may be added to this reservation for the use of said Indians,...¹⁸⁶

The territory outlined in this document was markedly reduced from that guaranteed through the Fort Laramie treaty of 1851, which encompassed all the lands between the north fork of the Platte River in Nebraska south to the Arkansas River. This territory was eroded away through the subsequent treaties at Fort Wise in 1861 and at the Harney-Sanborn treaty of 1865.¹⁸⁷

Article 2 of the Harney-Sanborn document delineates a territory bounded on the north by the Cimarron River, and on the south by the Arkansas.¹⁸⁸ Article 2 also stipulates the removal of the Tsistsistas to this area. This stipulation provided the basis for increased hostilities between the Tsistsistas and Anglos, as federal authorities perceived the Tsistsistas to be universally bound by the document, and held all the bands to this stipulation. However, the Tsistsistas signatories were not representative of all the bands, especially the Dog Men who were largely ignored by the document. The result was the forced removal of the Tsistsistas to Oklahoma, despite their successes against Generals Custer and Crook at the Little Big Horn in 1876, and later at Wolf Mountain.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Prucha, *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Kappler, 887-891.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Records of the United States Army Continental Command, 1821 - 1920*, Record Group 393. Southern Districts; Dakota-Northwest Area records pertaining to the Middle District 1867 - 79; Annual Report of 1878. This report details at length on operations against the Tsistsistas during October of 1878; Also, District of the Black Hills, 1872 - 1875, Annual Report.

A number of contemporary scholars consistently view nineteenth-century Anglo-Native warfare in the Plains exclusively through the lens of economics. Allen M. Klein views the plains wars as essentially economic in nature, stating that the conflicts after 1870 were based predominantly in economics, and that the "...warfare was a political manifestation of an economic problem."¹⁹⁰ Thomas Kavanaugh views Comanche-Anglo interactions as the "encapsulation of Comanches in resource domains directly controlled by Anglo-Americans,"¹⁹¹ an echo of Richard White's dependency theory. Jablow cites economic concerns as the basis for all the decisions as well as material and cultural changes wrought by the Tsistsistas during the nineteenth century.¹⁹²

These views represent a valid aspect of warfare and changes in warfare that resulted because of trade during the nineteenth century. However, while economic factors can and do exert great influence, ultimately a people's reactions and responses to economic matters are more often dictated by the cultural values and mores which determine individual and societal responses. Tsistsistas and Caiugu resistance based solely on economic reasons fails to account for an important aspect of nineteenth century plains warfare, namely that of the wider cultural response to an expanding state. The rationale behind such behavior is simply a matter of need. Barbara J. Price likens indigenous warfare to an organism's need for resources, or more appropriately, its will to survive. The size and health of that organism relies directly on the

¹⁹⁰ Alan M. Klein, "Political Economy of the Buffalo Hide Trade," Moore, *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983): 156.

¹⁹¹ Kavanaugh, 430.

¹⁹² Jablow, 86.

availability of resources for consumption, and the ratio between energy expended and returns gained in the acquisition of those resources.¹⁹³ The historic period Tsistsistas were known to locate sites for their Sun Dance at or near the boundaries of contested areas as a means of intimidating rivals. Doing this secured access to resources.¹⁹⁴

Throughout each phase of plains warfare there is a constant that reasserts itself. This constant is the mode of warfare itself as a largely individualized undertaking. Warfare among the plains cultures was an institutionalized affair with emphasis placed on individual martial accomplishments as a means of accruing status and prominence in society. This characteristic gave rise to the concept of plains warfare as a “game” more than actual warfare. Commenting on warfare resulting from the displacement of Native peoples and subsequent encroachments, W. W. Newcomb states: “These were not boyish raids for adventure or glory; they constituted serious warfare, fought by men defending their homes and families against invaders...”¹⁹⁵ While this rationalization specifically references groups who attempted to carve out their own niche, the sentiment is applicable to relations with and responses to Anglo encroachments in the Plains.

It becomes readily evident that the context of warfare changed during the latter nineteenth century. The historical record indicates that warfare came to be a constant state of affairs.

¹⁹³ Barbara J. Price, “Competition, Productive Intensification, and Ranked Society: Speculations from Evolutionary Theory,” In Ferguson, *Warfare, Culture, and Environment*: 212-213.

¹⁹⁴ John H. Moore, *A Study of Religious Symbolism Among the Cheyenne Indians* (Ph. D. dissertation. New York University, 1974): 76.

¹⁹⁵ W. W. Newcomb, Jr, “A Re-examination of the Causes of Plains Warfare,” *American Anthropologist* 52:3 (July, 1950): 323.

Concerted efforts on the part of the federal government to subdue and confine tribes in the plains rendered economic interests a secondary concern for plains peoples. The treaty record in itself underscores the character of warfare between Anglos and plains peoples as more than an issue of economics. Clearly it was the intent of the federal government through its Indian policy to neutralize Native peoples as competitors for territory. To accomplish this it became necessary to radically alter Native lifestyles so that they were more conducive to Anglo goals. The alternative to this was to eliminate Native peoples entirely.

Increased contact with an aggressively expanding Anglo state brought about a large scale militarization of Native cultures in which the role and prominence of the individual warrior was heightened. The tribes realized that their way of life and ethnic identities were threatened. Warfare became a matter of survival which subsumed the issue of economic viability. In this sense, then, nineteenth-century Plains warfare was an issue of antithetical world views more so than economics. Euro-American constructs of the Other routinely cast non-European peoples as inferior, even sub-human in many cases, and therefore incapable of attaining a civilized status. Such a view rendered Native peoples as fixtures of the natural landscape which were to be overcome in the name of progress.¹⁹⁶

Jill Lepore comments on the matter of genocide perpetrated against Native peoples in her

¹⁹⁶ Lawrence M. Hauptman, "Mythologizing Westward Expansion: Schoolbooks and the Image of the American Frontier Before Turner," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 8 (Western History Association: Utah State University, 1977); William Brandon, "American Indians in American History," *American West* 2:2 (Palo Alto: American West Publishing Company, 1965); Samuel G. Goodrich, *The American Child's Pictorial History of the United States* (Philadelphia: E. H. Butler & Company, 1865); Charles A. Goodrich, *A History of the United States of America From the First Discovery to the Fourth of March, 1825* (New York: Russell Robins, 1825).

work on King Philip's War. The nature of the warfare conducted by the English was particularly brutal, and designed to eliminate a specific ethnic group. In regard to this approach, she states that many scholars contend that King Phillip's War never really ended. Instead it became an archetype for all successive warfare against Native peoples in North America.¹⁹⁷

Indeed, the examples provided by Sand Creek and the incident on the Washita River support this, as well as numerous other examples from the historical record. Stan Hoig as well points out the change in basic strategy used by the United States Army against Plains tribes during Sheridan's campaign of 1868. Sheridan adopted a year round campaign in order to deny the Tsistsistas and Caiugu any opportunity to rest or re-supply themselves.¹⁹⁸ Karen Daniels Petersen comments on the shifting attitude toward war among the Tsistsistas in stating: "No longer did the Cheyennes make war for the pure joy of it; they were engaged in grim battle for survival".¹⁹⁹ The transition of warfare and the attendant roles of the Caiugu and Tsistsistas warrior societies in this transition placed these organizations in positions of prominence which conflicted with civil structures of authority. This conflict between civil and martial segments of culture required the validation of one over the other. The results of this authority conflict were intra-societal crises from which arose conditions bordering on cultural dysfunction. The former sense of corporate identity was being assailed by divisions in both

¹⁹⁷ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Phillip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998): 177.

¹⁹⁸ Hoig, 24; Bent, 313.

¹⁹⁹ Karen Daniels Petersen, "Cheyenne Soldier Societies", *Plains Anthropologist* 9: 2 (August, 1964): 161.

Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures as factions determined to pursue their separate courses. Traditional institutions and offices were no longer accorded the respect and honor they had formerly enjoyed.²⁰⁰ The place and prominence of the warrior societies in this process, their history, and the use of art as a validating mechanism for their authority will be the focus of the next chapter.

²⁰⁰ Jablow, 84-85; Vestal, 167; Hoig, 93. In this account Tall Bull, the Dog Man chief, threatened Black Kettle, a prominent Council chief, with the destruction of all his horses if he cooperated with the federal authorities at Medicine Lodge in 1867.

Chapter 3

The Warrior Societies:

Origins, Validation, and Warrior Ethos

Increased competition over resources during the nineteenth century created an atmosphere in which authority issues became a focal point. The warrior societies assumed positions of heightened prominence in Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures, and martial prowess was the measure of success for young men. The pervasiveness of the martial ethos reflected the universal order in which birds, animals, and insects were organized into tribes and practiced warfare in the same manner as did men. This world view dictated that success in warfare came through alliance with supernatural forces which manifested themselves as birds, animals, insects, and natural phenomenon. The abilities, powers, and aid rendered by these supernatural agents were indispensable to a warrior's success.

The manner in which a youth sought and acquired power followed two patterns. The first adhered to the general model of the Plains vision quest. Young men would travel to a secluded location, usually a sacred site, and subject themselves to four days of seeking. The process of seeking power involved isolation and deprivation of food and water and was accompanied by supplications to the spirits for assistance. Self denial and isolation brought the individual into a state of mind which enabled discourse with the supernatural forces. Irwin states:

Implicit in such separation is a symbolic dimension expressing movement from socially defined activity to a more liminal condition in which social identity is subordinated to the potency and powers that imbue the visionary ecology. Separation and movement away from communal activity is, at the same time, an immersion in the enfolded realm of the mythic and visionary

world. Outside the camp circle is not a wilderness but an open horizon where encounters with the mysterious beings are more likely. Furthermore, this immersion is heightened by the ever present reality of danger, particularly in the form of hostile human beings...This period of heightened awareness, of increased watchfulness and attentiveness resulting from isolation, is a time during which any sound, movement, or discontinuity in perception might represent danger...Immersion in the potency of the natural world, heightened by the threat of danger and strengthened through stress, hunger, or anxiety, placed receptive individuals in a state of vulnerability. In such a condition the frequent human response...was to call on all the visionary powers for help and assistance. Having no social or communal support led the individual to seek aid from the powers of the religious and mythical world.²⁰¹

In the course of his seeking he would repeatedly implore the spirits to take pity on him.²⁰² If he was worthy, and the spirits took pity on him, he was visited by a manifestation who would instruct him in the proper use of his medicine. Smith states in regard to this:

A man's special powers depended upon the nature of the supernatural powers he had acquired, and, since each man achieved some such powers, each had his role to play. These, like others, were always accompanied by the rites or objects belonging to them. To be a warrior, therefore, meant to assume also these acts or objects. If a man's warrior power was connected with a song of five minutes duration, a hawk wing to be worn in his scalp lock, and a face paint of two colors and an intricate design, he could not manipulate the power unless he sang the song, donned the hawk wing and painted his face. With these he was a warrior, without them he was a desperate man faced by danger

²⁰¹ Lee Irwin, *The Dream Seekers: Native American Visionary Traditions of the Great Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1944): 83-85.

²⁰² Willie Fletcher, Cheyenne elder, interviewed by author, Geary, Oklahoma, April 16, 2002; Irwin, *The Dream Seekers*, 79-97.

to himself and to his family. The assumption of warrior powers was an individual necessity for all fighting, whether defensive or aggressive.²⁰³

The use and importance of these powers is exemplified in the drawing by Feathered Bear, a Tsistsistas Dog Man. Not only is the warrior himself painted in a specific manner, but his



Figure 15.

Feathered Bear, Tsistsistas. "Feathered Bear Proves His Power."

Pencil, ink, and crayon. Ca. 1865. Page 110, Summit Springs Sketchbook. LaMunyon Collection. Photo courtesy of the Colorado Historical Society. Neg. no. 10031344.

horse also is painted in a similar manner. Failure to follow these guidelines would have rendered Feathered Bear and his horse unprotected in the face of the enemy.

The second means of acquiring power rested on economic ability, or purchasing power.

²⁰³ Smith, 435, 436.

The young man who possessed the necessary economic means for purchasing the rights to a particular medicine and its attendant emblems/symbols would often do so. This appears to have been a common practice among both groups, but was particularly common among the Caiugu. For example it is a matter of historical record that Dohausen I formally transferred the rights to his tipi with battle pictures and his shield design to his nephew Agiati. These items were transferred to other family members, the last of whom was *Haungooah*, “Silver Horn”.²⁰⁴ Youths who came from wealthy and prominent families could easily afford to acquire their power in this manner, while those from the lower castes sought *dau* through the process of fasting, or according to Parsons spontaneously,²⁰⁵ that is without the individual’s purposeful seeking for it. An example of this is found in the Caiugu story of how Buffalo medicine was received.²⁰⁶

It was within such a context that a youth sought the power to establish and maintain his place and position as a warrior in society. Supernatural empowerment enabled the aspiring warrior to successfully accomplish the deeds necessary to his recognition as a warrior, with all the attendant honors and privileges that came with such status. The most significant deeds, or war honors, that a warrior could accrue are generally classed together as coups. Counting coup involved an individual placing himself in close physical proximity to an enemy, and escaping unharmed. This involved a number of things, such as touching or slapping a live

²⁰⁴ Candace S. Greene, “Exploring the Three “Little Bluffs” of the Kiowa,” *Plains Anthropologist* 41:157 (Aug., 1996): 230.

²⁰⁵ Parsons, xix.

²⁰⁶ Maurice Boyd, *Kiowa Voices*, 95-102.

enemy, wresting a weapon from his hands, and touching a dead foe's body. Among these the most notable was to touch an armed enemy and escape unscathed.²⁰⁷ Grinnell states that "the Cheyenne counted coup on an enemy three times; that is to say, three men might touch the [dead] body and receive credit, according to the order in which this was done",²⁰⁸ thereby indicating a hierarchy in the coup counting process. Smith states that:

The *coup system* depended upon a system of graded war honors. Two or four specifically defined acts of bravery were singled out by each tribe and arranged in a fixed scale; the warrior performing the deed which held first place, received most honor, and so on down the line. Other brave acts also might be recognized and honor accorded to the men performing them; ...In addition, there seem sometimes to have been a few acts which stood at the pinnacle of bravery which were of such rare occurrence or of such a special nature as not to warrant a place on the regular scale.²⁰⁹

Smith also states that coups "might also be counted on the wounded, or on an unwounded warrior capable of defense and intent on his own offensive attack".²¹⁰ On all accounts, the display of daring involved was worthy of honor accorded for each act performed. Smith states that:

The recounting of war honors, the re-enactment by warriors of their martial deeds, was an elaborate boasting...superiority was figured in terms of war honors and it was in this connection that the minute details of the

²⁰⁷ George Bird Grinnell, "Coup and Scalp Among the Plains Indians," *American Anthropologist* 12 (1910): 296.

²⁰⁸ Grinnell, 298.

²⁰⁹ Smith, 426, 427.

²¹⁰ Smith, *ibid.*

fighting situation gained importance.²¹¹

Grinnell asserts that:

Among the Cheyenne...The drum would be sounded for touching the enemy, sounded again for the capture of the shield, again for the capture of the gun, and - if the man had scalped the dead - for the taking of the scalp.²¹²

The act of scalping itself would seem to have held a less prestigious place in the system of war honors. According to Grinnell the scalp was regarded as a “mere trophy”, and as “an emblem of victory”,²¹³ and Smith states that the Tsistsistas were one of two groups on the Plains that subordinated the role of scalping in the war honors system.²¹⁴ Grinnell assigns the scalp a place as an element of decoration among the Tsistsistas, for use on war shirts, horse bridles, and other articles, while Smith asserts that scalps served primarily to assuage the grief for lost loved ones felt by those who were unable themselves to undertake revenge raids.²¹⁵

An additional set of war honors within the coup system centered on horses after that animal’s appearance on the Plains. Smith notes:

To count as a war honor, horses had to be stolen from the camp of an enemy, and had even to be snatched while picketed in his very shadow. There was no dash or abandon in such an act...success lay in escaping undetected and in evading or outdistancing any pursuit which might be organized when

²¹¹ Smith, 434.

²¹² Grinnell, 303.

²¹³ Grinnell, 303.

²¹⁴ Smith, 452.

²¹⁵ Grinnell, 304; Smith, 453-455.

the theft was discovered.²¹⁶

The entire system of war honors placed particular emphasis on the display of one's superiority over one's foe, or more properly, the superiority of one's medicine over an enemy's. This was dependent upon the individual warrior's relationship to the supernatural.²¹⁷ The goal in most cases was not to kill the enemy, but to defeat him spiritually. Emphasis was placed on proving superiority, and the nature and efficacy of an individual's spiritual aide was paramount. Warfare was not merely a contest between mortal men. Success hinged on the ability of one's spirit helpers to best the enemy's spirit helpers.

Martial success was a driving force which consumed a man from his earliest days. In both Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures men waged war to gain everything from personal accolades and the respect of one's fellows to increased wealth and rank. Success in war gained an individual not only the recognition and validation of his fellow tribesmen, but access to prestige, suitability for political office, economic success, and access to marriageable women as well.²¹⁸ Vestal echoes these sentiments, stating that "By Cheyenne custom a young man was nobody until he had gone to war, counted coup, stolen a horse, or scalped an enemy. None of the girls would look at him."²¹⁹ The emphasis on martial success is again expressed by Grinnell when he states:

The Cheyenne men were all warriors. War was regarded as the noblest of

²¹⁶ Smith, 430.

²¹⁷ Smith, 429, 434.

²¹⁸ Kracht, 367.

²¹⁹ Vestal, 145.

pursuits, the only one for a man to follow; and from earliest youth boys were encouraged to excel in it. They were taught that no pleasure equaled the joy of battle; that success in war brought in its train the respect and admiration of men, women, and children in the tribe, and that the most worthy thing that any man could do was to be brave...This training, and the public opinion which supported it, guided the Cheyenne youth and gave them their motive for that hardihood and readiness which were essential to success in war.²²⁰

A successful martial career assured an individual of esteem in the eyes of his fellows and the people as a whole. Moore outlines three levels of membership in the Tsistsistas societies. There were ordinary members, what he refers to as “little” chiefs, and “big” chiefs.²²¹ The authority that these big chiefs, or society chiefs, wielded later in the nineteenth century was such that they were able to flaunt tradition and re-organize their societies like domestic bands.²²² The most notable of these re-organizations was the Dog Men under Porcupine Bear following his expulsion from the camp circle circa 1837.²²³ The circumstances of the latter nineteenth century also brought about a greater assertion of the warrior societies’ authority over civil matters. This exercise of authority was justified on cosmological bases and resulted in what Hoebel refers to as a “centralization of legal control”.²²⁴

The cosmological premises of the warrior societies represented nothing less than divine sanction. Art was a primary means of expressing this divine sanction. Society paints, shield

²²⁰ Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, 4.

²²¹ Moore, *The Cheyenne*, p.126.

²²² Moore, 156.

²²³ Bent, 337.

²²⁴ Hoebel, 49.

designs, biographical robes and ledger books all played a part in the visual expression of warrior status and prestige among the Caiugu and Tsistsistas. Those elements which were biographical in character, such as painted robes and ledger book drawings, portrayed a set of culturally proscribed behaviors. These behaviors stressed aggression as a means of indoctrinating youths into martial ethos. Cosmological foundations for the existence of the societies, however, were firmly rooted in the iconography depicted in society paints and vision related imagery such as that depicted on shields and their covers. It was through these formats that the expression of divine sanctions was perhaps most prominent.

Tsistsistas oral tradition relates a time in their history when there were no warrior societies and no council of chiefs. The people were lorded over by warriors who held the people in a virtual state of terror. John Stands-In-Timber states:

But during this time they were not an organized people. They had no laws by which to live. There was a group among them that called itself soldiers, but it was not like the military societies that Sweet Medicine started. These men forced their will upon the people, ruling them and telling them what they must do. They were not good men, and the people feared them. But they did not know what to do about them until Sweet Medicine came.²²⁵

What the warriors dictated was law, and fear and anarchy resulted. It was after this time that the culture hero Sweet Medicine received the pattern for government under which the Tsistsistas were to live. This pattern consisted of the warrior societies and the Chiefs' Council, both of which were to serve the people jointly so that the previous state of affairs would never occur again. The Chiefs would provide wisdom and benevolent oversight, and

²²⁵ Moore, *A Study of Religious Symbolism*, 219.

the warrior societies would be protectors of the people against abuses and injustices from within, as well as against external enemies. Included among the virtues expected of warriors was benevolence toward and care of the community as a whole. In order to meet community expectations of service a warrior was to exhibit a specific set of values and behaviors through his daily life and conduct. Some of these values are related in the story of the turtle who went to war.

There was a great camp of water turtles and, not far away, some people were living - many lodges. The turtle sent the pipe about to all the tribes of his friends and they all smoked and all came to his camp. All the grasshoppers, frogs, snakes, butterflies, and rabbits - all the young men of these tribes - came in.

The head turtle spoke to all these people and said: "Now let us go on the warpath. I have found many Indians camping near this place. Let us go on the warpath against them and kill their chief."

All those to whom he spoke agreed. The grasshoppers, butterflies, frogs, and rabbits all were satisfied.

These people were camped in a big circle with the opening to the east. Before they started on their warpath, they all walked around within the circle and afterward around the outside of the circle, and then they started. Some of them carried war bonnets and other war clothing, such as Indians wear. They went on all night, and toward morning, while it was still dark, they reached the Indians' camp. The turtle went into the chief's lodge and took hold of the chief's throat and choked him and he died and the turtle bit off his hair. All the different warriors went into different lodges. When daylight came the turtle leader crawled under the bed and stayed there all day.

In the morning the chief of the Indians was found dead and the old crier went through the camp and called out, directing the people to find out if there

were any enemies about who might have done this thing. All the young Indians got ready and started out to look about and find if near the camp there were any people who were on the warpath. The women acted as if they were frightened.

After the young men had gone, the chief's wife took down the lodge, for they were going to put the chief's body in another place. While they were moving the lodge they found, under the bed, a turtle in the ground. He had not quite buried himself and someone saw the fresh earth and pushed a stick down and felt him. Soon they learned that it was this turtle that had done the injury.

They chose another chief and called upon him to say what should be done. The chief said: "Let us see what we can do to kill him. He is the one who killed our chief." Some of the Indians said: "Let us put him in the fire"; but one said: "No, we cannot burn him, his shell is too hard. Let us cut his head off." Another said, "No, let us hang him"; and a fourth said: "No, let us drown him." To all of them this seemed the best, and they decided that the turtle should be drowned. Then, the next afternoon, they took him down to the water and the man who was going to drown him was painted up and he carried the turtle out to the center of the pond. The turtle acted as if he were very much frightened. As the man was going to let the turtle down into the water, the turtle turned his head and bit the man and the man was frightened and sank into the water with the turtle. Then everyone on the shore was afraid and no one dared to go down into the water to help the man who had sunk.

After the turtle chief had drowned the man, he bit his hair off and waited and, after night came, he crawled over to where the chief's lodge had stood and found there the hair he had bitten off the chief's head. That night all the friends of the turtle had gone away to their camp, for they supposed that he had been killed. He started on his way home, and he was glad that he had done this thing by himself. When he got home it was daylight. He took the

hair and tied it to a stick and then he had two scalps to dance over, but his friends had not done anything. So for a long time they went about the camp dancing and singing for joy. And he continued to be the chief of the turtles.²²⁶

The story of the turtle who went to war expresses a number of things. The behavior that the turtle's story transmitted to young listeners reflects ideals that were meant to be emulated and imitated. This story emphasizes stealth, cunning, bravery, the acquisition of war trophies, and the prestige and honor that accrued from them. These ideals were to be the rule of life and conduct for warriors of all ranks and ages, and as such became the guiding principal for Tsistsistas and Caiugu males.

The idea of the victorious actor being a turtle also spoke of the permeable barrier between the natural and supernatural worlds. The turtle, a creature who lived under the water, represents a mysterious and potent source of power by which warriors were able to successfully compete in martial undertakings. Often these sources of power came in the form of animals and birds. Regardless of the form the supernaturals chose to take, they were always recognized as connected directly to the ultimate source of power, whether the Tsistsistas' *Maheo*, or *Dom-oye-alm-daw-kee* of the Caiugu.

The warrior societies served a number of other functions in addition to their military roles. The warrior societies maintained the order of march when camps moved and provided protection for the people.²²⁷ Individual societies were chosen to regulate the communal buffalo hunts, thus insuring an adequate harvest of meat and hides so that none would lack.

²²⁶ Grinnell, *By Cheyenne Campfires*, "How the Turtle Went to War,": 136-138.

²²⁷ Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Society* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920): 415.

Order in the camps during the major ceremonials was maintained by warrior societies acting under the auspices of civil authorities.²²⁸ And, among the Tsistsistas, at least through the first half of the nineteenth century, a political check and balance in tribal affairs was insured by the societies.²²⁹ Fred Eggan comments on the relationship between the Tsistsistas civil and martial authorities in stating that “The secular activities were in the hands of the Council of Chiefs, assisted by the warrior societies...When the tribe was at war or engaged in the summer hunt, the warrior societies seem to have had more authority...”²³⁰ While this was certainly the ideal, the reality played out much differently as the nineteenth century progressed. In relation to the Dog Men, Ben Clark, writing in 1887, commented that:

Owing to their advantages in number and the prestige of their leaders, they were very arbitrary, and practically ruled the tribe. When the Dog Soldiers wanted war the whole tribe warred. When they wanted the tribe to assemble for some ceremony they generally rounded it in.²³¹

Although the warrior societies in Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures performed many of the same functions, there were also significant differences between their roles in each culture. Tsistsistas governmental structure rested on a joint administration between the Council of Forty Four and the leaders of the warrior societies. In the Tsistsistas governmental structure

²²⁸ Kracht, 224; Marriott, Marriott Collection, Box 8 FF 30: 2031. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

²²⁹ Llewellyn and Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in Primitive Jurisprudence*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941): 96-97.

²³⁰ Fred Eggan. Marriott Collection, Box 8, folders 1 and 30. Western Histories Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norma, Oklahoma.

²³¹ Ben Clark, *Ethnology and Philology of the Cheyenne*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, MS no. 3449, 1887.

the warrior societies normally deferred to the Council's leadership and judgment depending on the circumstances.²³²

There was a sharp division between civil and martial authorities; if a society chief was elected to the council of forty four, he resigned his post as a war chief - this eliminated abuses and rash decisions by war chiefs in favor of cooler headed peace chiefs...The Council was responsible for camp matters such as moving camp or tribal wars; they acted as the judiciary body in criminal cases; and as executive and legislative authorities over the soldier societies, although the latter could and sometimes did exercise the right to countermand Council decisions.²³³

This balance of power was maintained quite effectively until the latter half of the nineteenth century when conditions imposed by endemic warfare created what amounted to a sort of cultural disfunctionality.

Moore states that among the Northern Tsistsistas the modern pattern reflects "the nineteenth-century situation", in that the Council Chiefs "...were still powerful, and could initiate sanctions against those who cooperated too closely with Anglo authorities".²³⁴ They "...wield considerable clout", and are clearly supported in their sanctions and decisions by the warrior societies. This is a pattern that still holds sway today among both the Northern and Southern Tsistsistas.

When the Caiugu made the peace proposal to the Tsistsistas in 1840, an Arapaho

²³² Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 145; E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyennes: Indians of the Great Plains* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960): 47-48.

²³³ Hoebel, *The Cheyennes*, 37, 47.

²³⁴ Moore, "Cheyenne Political History, 1820 - 1894," *Ethnohistory* 21:4 (Fall, 1974): 354.

intermediary approached the Tsistsistas Council with the Caiugu offer. After some debate the Council sent runners to the chief of the Dog Men asking their advice on what to do. The message was delivered with the assurance that whatever decision was reached by the Dog Men, the Council would defer to their wisdom on the matter. In a diplomatic about face, the Dog Men responded to the Council by stating that they would leave the final decision to the Forty Four, and would abide by their decision.²³⁵ The Council chose to accept the Caiugu offer for peace.

The Tsistsistas warrior societies were:

Nahohivas, “Red Shields”, or “Bulls”;

Hotamitaneo, “Dog Men”;

Wok sihitaneo, “Kit Fox”, or “Flint Soldiers”;

Himatanahis, or *Konianqio*. “Bowstring Men”, or “Wolf Warriors”;

Hotamimasaw, “Foolish” or “Crazy Dogs”;

Himoiyoguis, “Elk Horn Scrapers”, “Crooked Lances”, “Bone Scrapers”,
or “Elk Soldiers”.

Among these societies it should be noted that the Bowstring Men and Crazy Dogs represent a southern and northern variant of a single society, or at least the two were linked ceremonially. Many articles of regalia and society paints were shared by both societies.²³⁶ The Elk Horn Scrapers appear to have prehistoric origins, as Truman Michelson comments that they were “originally a Sutaio affair.”²³⁷

²³⁵ Hoebel, *The Cheyennes*, 47-49.

²³⁶ Petersen, “Cheyenne Soldier Societies”: 146-151.

²³⁷ Truman Michalson, “Notes on the Cheyenne and Sutaio,”: 1.

The existence of these societies is corroborated by Grinnell,²³⁸ Stands-In-Timber,²³⁹ and Dorsey.²⁴⁰ The only group mentioned by these sources that was not a society are the Contraries. They had no leader, and no organization, but were made up of a few individuals who are referred to by Grinnell as a dream cult.²⁴¹ Contraries were individuals of great courage, and considered very dangerous as they had dreamed of Thunder power.²⁴²

Petersen has compiled a list of dates for the warrior societies.²⁴³ For ease of discussion I provide her tabular listing of the societies and their operative dates below.

Red Shields or Bulls: prehistory to 1903;

Dog Men: prehistory to present;

Kit Foxes: prehistory to present;

Elks: prehistory to present;

Bowstrings: circa 1815 to present;

Crazy Dogs: possibly 1833 to present;

Of all the societies, the Red Shields, or Bulls, would appear to have been the oldest. Bent

²³⁸ Grinnell, "Some Early Cheyenne Tales II," *The Journal of American Folklore* 21: 8. (Oct.-Dec., 1908): 291-312.

²³⁹ John Stands-In-Timber, *Cheyenne Memories*, Margot Liberty, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967): 38, 39.

²⁴⁰ Dorsey, 24, 25.

²⁴¹ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 209, 360; Dorsey, 15-30; Mooney, *The Cheyenne Indians*, 412 f.

²⁴² Peter J. Powell, "Bearers of the Sacred Thunder Bow - Part 1," *American Indian Art magazine* 27:3 (Summer, 2002): 62-71. Powell discusses the role of the Contrary in Tsistsistas culture in this article, noting it as one of spiritual import.

²⁴³ Petersen, 160.

mentions them as existing as late as 1800 to 1820, after which they sank into obscurity.²⁴⁴ It is possible that the Bulls were the soldiers of the pre-plains period. Petersen goes on to state that they became an “old men’s society”.²⁴⁵ This has added credence through a statement made by Bent to the effect that the Red Shields were primarily a dance society,²⁴⁶ and were associated with the chiefs as well.²⁴⁷

However, it may be conjectured that most of the warrior societies had their origins within roughly the same time frame. Also, the presence of these societies at an early date would suggest that a martial structure had become institutionalized among the Tsistsitas by the time they moved out onto the plains. Four of the five societies are consistently mentioned in most of the Sweet Medicine stories as preceding the chiefs’ council. Those four are the Kit Foxes, Red Shields, Elks, and Bowstrings.

A note of caution should be interjected in regard to the chronology. Some versions of the Sweet Medicine stories place the origin of the Dog Men before, others after that of the chiefs’ council. It is plausible that this reordering of chronology is a result of frictions that ensued during the later nineteenth century between the two groups.²⁴⁸ It would appear that the order of origination for the chiefs’ council and the warrior societies rests largely with the story

²⁴⁴ Petersen, 152.

²⁴⁵ Petersen, *ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Hyde, 7.

²⁴⁷ Michelson, 3.

²⁴⁸ Llewellyn and Hoebel, 97. The authors refer to the newer and secular powers of the warrior societies in juxtaposition to that of the civil, or Council Chiefs.

teller's lineage and affiliations. If an individual is descended from one of the chiefs who sat on the Council of Forty Four, then he may be biased toward their preeminence. Conversely, an individual descended from a member of one of the warrior societies might likewise express a particular bias.²⁴⁹ The hierarchical order of the warrior societies in relation to the Council of Forty Four in story variants bears pertinence to the authority issues that developed during the nineteenth century.

No approximate dates have been ascertained for the other societies, and the question of when they came about cannot be answered with any amount of certainty. We can, however, conjecture that most of the Tsistsistas warrior societies were in place and functioning at a fairly early date. The exceptions would be the Wolf soldiers, who appear to have been either an historic period manifestation, or an historic period revitalization of an earlier society.²⁵⁰ This society was found among the southern bands, and is often referred to as Owl Man's Bowstrings. However, this group, as noted by Petersen, was possibly founded circa 1815.²⁵¹ This would coincide with Tsistsistas and Caiugu oral history, as the Bowstrings were a well established martial entity in Tsistsistas culture before their 1837 massacre. The society as it

²⁴⁹ Ginnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* I: 345-348. Herein Grinnell relates how a woman captured by the Assiniboines brought the model for the Council to the Tsistsistas. This was in a time preceding Sweet Medicine. Llewellyn and Hoebel also acknowledge this event from the oral tradition, but also point out that the Assiniboines are not known to have possessed any such governmental tradition as the Council of Forty Four. See *The Cheyenne Way*, 67.

²⁵⁰ Llewellyn and Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way*, 100.

²⁵¹ Llewellyn and Hoebel, *ibid*; Petersen, "Cheyenne Soldier Societies": 148.

existed after 1837 was a revived organization under the leadership of Yellow Wolf,²⁵² and its late origin was attested to by the fact that an integral element of that society's regalia included guns.

Stands-In-Timber relates that after a period of exile for killing a chief in an argument over a calf skin, the culture hero appeared in the dress of the various warrior societies in succession. First he appeared as a Fox soldier, then an Elk soldier, as a Red Shield, a Dog soldier, then finally as a chief.²⁵³ The culture hero then taught the people the Arrow Renewal ceremony, in the course of which he admonished them to forsake the old ways of living in favor of the new organization that he brought to them. Sweet Medicine told the people, "The gods take no pity on you because you are murderers. That is why you are poor and hungry."²⁵⁴ The model established by Sweet Medicine was one of shared authority as a means to prevent abuses of power. However, during the nineteenth century the warrior societies, most notably the Dog Men, again became the authoritative voice in Tsistsistas culture as a result of warfare with Anglo-Americans.²⁵⁵ George Bent recounted a legend concerning a near-disastrous encounter with un-named enemies. "After this they decided they would become terrible fighters and so become great men. Ever since they had pursued their aim with a vengeance."²⁵⁶

²⁵² Petersen, 148.

²⁵³ John Stands-In-Timber, *Cheyenne Memories*: 30.

²⁵⁴ Stands-In-Timber, 38.

²⁵⁵ Petersen, "Cheyenne Soldier Societies,"154. Petersen comments on the authority over tribal affairs that the Dog Men wielded late in the nineteenth century.

²⁵⁶ Vestal, 63.

The historical record bears out that the Tsistsistas did indeed “pursue their aim with a vengeance,” as they ultimately controlled a geographic area out of proportion to their relatively small numbers.

Partial validation for the exercised authority of the Tsistsistas warrior societies is found in the set of stories revolving around Sweet Medicine, or *Motseyoef*. A common theme in these stories is that the culture hero is an orphan who is raised by his grandmother. He is of poor or humble means, and performs a number of miracles. Among them is his own death and resurrection, and assuming the form of different birds and animals.²⁵⁷ These qualities denote *Motseyoef* as a *maiyn* in physical form. The *maiyn* are responsible for physical life on earth, and are associated with either the deep earth or Blue Sky spaces.²⁵⁸ *Motseyoef's* status as *maiyn* is confirmed by the Tsistsistas elder Willie Fletcher:

Sweet Medicine was a spirit. He was an orphan raised by his aunt. He told her “the people are gonna cut my head off and celebrate my death. As soon as they start dancing and singing drag my body out of the circle so that it is facing east, and put my head back on like it should be.” When the people started dancing and celebrating his death, his aunt done like he told her, and he came back to life, and joined in their dance. Also, he killed a chief in an argument over a buffalo calf’s skin, but the warriors couldn’t catch him because he turned into different birds and animals.²⁵⁹

Sweet Medicine’s existence as a *maiyn* links him with the creative forces of the universe,

²⁵⁷ Grinnell, “Some Early Cheyenne Tales”, II: 271-272, 282-283; *The Cheyenne Indians* vol. 2: 345-347.

²⁵⁸ Schlesier, *Wolves of Heaven*, 7, 8.

²⁵⁹ Willie Fletcher, April 16, 2002; Grinnell, *By Cheyenne Campfires*, 263-278.

which in turn lends validation to the warrior societies, as it was he who instituted them. In other words, these societies were not the creations of mere mortals, but were the products of divine edict.

Authority Structures

Among the Caiugu the warrior societies were structures of authority which by and large determined the makeup of Caiugu society. The hierarchical ranking of the warrior societies depended on family, blood, wealth, and degree of martial ability.²⁶⁰ The warrior societies constituted a caste system which operated as the defining model of Caiugu culture. As far as memory allows through the oral tradition, the Caiugu had always been a militaristic people.

Martial ethos was so pervasive in Caiugu culture that it was accorded a higher level of obedience than was that of civil authority. This elevation of the warrior in Caiugu culture was so predominant that it was carried to the extreme. The status of the *Koitsenko* society became such that they were waited on hand and foot. If one of these individuals desired anything he would blow an eagle bone whistle to summon a young man to either bring the desired article to him or take him to it.²⁶¹ This authority structure was, it appears, accepted without question

²⁶⁰ Richardson, *Law and Status Among the Kiowa Indians*, 11.

²⁶¹ Jim Anquoe, Sr., interviewed by author, El Reno, Oklahoma, April 25, 2002. Mr. Anquoe stated that the status of the *Koitsenko* was such that anything one of them wanted, whether sex, food, a horse to ride, or even to relieve themselves, was facilitated by some subordinate who would either carry the *Koitsenko* outside to attend to his needs or bring the requested item or person into his presence. Because of this extreme pandering, many Caiugu began to view the *Koitsenko* with a sense of diminished respect after the 1860s.

by the Caiugu until late in the nineteenth century when leaders such as Kicking Bird began to exert authority in Caiugu politics of the 1870s.²⁶² During the *K'ado*, or “Coming Together”²⁶³ it was the authority of the society police that was obeyed. Meadows states that everyone, even the Bundle Keepers, were subject to the authority of the society appointed as police. Even though the *Tai'me* Keeper²⁶⁴ was recognized as the paramount civil authority during the *K'ado*, the *topadokis*, band leaders, paid only lip service to him. From this it can be inferred that the *Tai'me* Keeper's authority was ceremonial and largely symbolic, while real authority rested with the war leaders.²⁶⁵ However, the societies often enforced the decisions of the *Taime* and Bundle Keepers.²⁶⁶ Monahan states that “it is indicative of the tribe's values that it allowed its strictest discipline to be exerted on war parties. The expedition leader had greater authority than did a band chief. His authority on going out was complete.²⁶⁷ The authority wielded by the *teyopki*, or “war leader” on expeditions was sought after by boys from the time of their entry into the societies. The ultimate goal was that of

²⁶² Battey, xiii, 151; Hoig, *Legend of Kicking Bird*, xi, 219.

²⁶³ Jim Anquoe, Sr. April 25, 2002.

²⁶⁴ The *Tai'me* was originally a small, human-like figure given to the Caiugu by the Crows. In early historic times there were additional images made, one male and the other female. These figures were tribal war medicines. While the original *Tai'me* remained in the home camp, the smaller figures often were carried on war expeditions. See Battey, Mooney, and Scott for more detailed information on the *Tai'me*.

²⁶⁵ Richardson, 9.

²⁶⁶ Meadows, 85.

²⁶⁷ Monahan, 18.

kataisopan, “great *teyopki*”²⁶⁸

The societies “...fostered and represented military spirit while serving economic functions, validating war deeds and social status, redistributing wealth, and providing a period of socialization.”²⁶⁹ The leadership of a *teyopki* rested on charisma and personal abilities. He was usually the most prominent warrior who “undertook martial endeavors but concentrated on civil matters.”²⁷⁰ Sources such as Mishkin, Richardson, Kracht, and Meadows all aver that status and position in Caiugu society rested on an individual’s martial performance. This in itself was a means to economic advancement which translated into the acquisition of higher rank.

Two separate stories from oral tradition underscore the timelessness of Caiugu martial ethos. The first, detailed in chapter one, was the primordial encounter between the Great White Man and the Great Kiowa.²⁷¹ The second story, also in chapter one, is that of the lake into which the young Caiugu dove, as related in chapter one.²⁷² This individual act of bravery gained both him and his people recognition for prowess, a heritage that continued through their encounters with Anglos in the nineteenth century. This martial ethos served the Caiugu well as they were never a numerous people. This mind set put them on an equal footing with

²⁶⁸ Bernard Mishkin, *Rank and Warfare Among the Plains Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992): 38.

²⁶⁹ Meadows, 85.

²⁷⁰ Kracht, 367.

²⁷¹ Battey, 107-110.

²⁷² Parsons, 13.

more numerous competitors.

The ethnohistoric record indicates that the Caiugu successfully contended with the more numerous Comanches for a number of years. Unable to overcome the numerically smaller Caiugu, the Comanches instead became their erstwhile allies. The Caiugu were noted for their prowess in battle, and Anglo records characterize them as extremely war-like. Spanish documents from the pre-1830s paint a different picture of Caiugu deportment.²⁷³ The state of affairs between the Spanish New Mexicans and the Caiugu is confirmed in early Anglo documents also.²⁷⁴

The Caiugu societies would appear to have been in place at quite an early date, and may well represent a pre-plains manifestation that was retained as a matter of expediency.

²⁷³ Monahan cites letters from Real Alencaster to General Commandante Salcedo in Santa Fe, November 20, 1805, SANM MS 1925: 32 in which the Kiowas were seeking peaceful relations for purposes of trade; letter of September 24, 1807. SANM MS 2076: 1 in which Salcedo grants official approval for such trade; and the Indian Fund, Accounts from 1806-1807, SANM MS 2084 listing goods traded to the Kiowas; also in Charles L. Kenner, *A History of New Mexican - Plains Indian Relations*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969): 79; Kenner cites a letter from Joseph Manrique to Namesio Salcedo, July 20, 1810, SANM MS 2342, in which a trade delegation is to be sent to the Kiowas.

²⁷⁴ Monahan cites Zebulon Pike's *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, to the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, during the years 1805-6-7* vol. II: 758, in which Pike mentions the Caiugu approaching trader James Pursley (Purcell), asking him to act as an emissary to the Spanish for the purpose of advocating for them in regard to trade; George Wilkins Kendall, in *A Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition* I: 213 comments on the Gaiugu disposition toward the Comancheros of New Mexico, in stating "They appear to be on terms of peace with the New Mexicans so far as it suits their interest and convenience – no further..."; also, Kenner, in his *History of Relations*: 115, quotes Chief Dohausen as stating "The Spaniards and myself are men; we do bad things towards one another sometimes, stealing horses and taking scalps, but we do not get mad and act the fool." This quote is prefaced by Kenner's statement that, unlike the Americans, neither the Caiugu nor the Spanish condemned the other race for the rash acts of individuals. They were, it seems, quite willing to live and let live for the sake of trade relations.

Meadows comments that the societies acted as sodalities, that is non-residential organizations. In this context they cut across band lines and served an integrative function in Caiugu society by creating ethnic solidarity.²⁷⁵ Based on the oral tradition the warrior societies in Caiugu culture were a fixed feature from prehistoric times. Allegiance to one's society was of paramount importance and was only superceded by loyalties to one's family and *tepadoga*, or band, which was comprised of brothers and their families, a system which often included their sisters' families as well.²⁷⁶ The *tepadoga* formed the primary political unit. Because the *topadoki* or band leader was an individual possessed of an impressive war record and was also connected to one of the warrior societies, the link between the *tepadogas* and the societies becomes evident.

The Caiugu had six warrior societies and four shield societies.²⁷⁷ The shield societies participated actively in the *K'ado*, while according to Parsons the only warrior society that was actively involved in the ceremony proper was the *Tsentanmo*.²⁷⁸ The Caiugu shield societies were

²⁷⁵ Meadows, 1, 2.

²⁷⁶ Jane Richardson, *Law and Status*, 5- 6.

²⁷⁷ Kracht points out that there was at one time a seventh society, the *Cuate-mgop*, the "Buffalo Society". But this society became extinct in the nineteenth century. At one time it was customary for the societies to go to war as corporate units versus the small scale raiding parties that characterized warfare of the mid and latter nineteenth century. The entire *Cuato-mgop* society was annihilated in battle, and the practice of fraternal war expeditions ceased soon thereafter. However, the shield societies continued the practice of "painting themselves with similar designs" and "prayed together before battle." See Kracht, 207, 247; Meadows, 39.

²⁷⁸ Parsons, 101.

intimately involved in martial aspects of the *K'ado*, and Kracht asserts that these societies served an integrative function, cross-cutting the warrior societies.²⁷⁹ Kracht also states that it was only the upper class men, those holding *Onde* rank, that participated in the *K'ado*, because they were the primary possessors of *dau*, while everyone else was a spectator.²⁸⁰ The remaining societies took part in the sham battle preceding the ceremony, as well as the cutting of the lodge's center pole and construction of the lodge itself.²⁸¹ The warrior societies and shield societies are listed below.

Polanyup, "Rabbits";

Adaltoyui, "Young", or "Wild Sheep";

Tsentanmo, "Horse Headdresses";

Tonkongats, "Black Legs";

Tdai-pei or *Tai-piah*, "Society of the Brave", also referred to sometimes

as *Tsen-adalka*, or "Crazy Horses";

Koi-tsenko, "Real", or "Principal Dogs";

Demguk'o, "Taime Shields";

Te-dlgu-da, "Hotoyi Shields";

Kowde Shields;

and the Buffalo Shields.

The last society, that of the Buffalo Shields, was a doctor's society, and according to Kracht this society was prolific in its membership, as the buffalo doctors readily took on new apprentices. The primary purpose of these buffalo doctors was to accompany war parties and

²⁷⁹ Kracht, 248.

²⁸⁰ Kracht, 260.

²⁸¹ Parsons, 102; Kracht, 265.

treat any wounds received by their participants.²⁸²

No specific dates are assigned by any of the authors for the origins of these societies. This may insinuate that they are of such an early origin that it will suffice to accord them prehistoric origins, or the informants simply did not know or wish to tell. In either case, it becomes clear from the literature that the shield and warrior societies in Caiugu culture were integral fixtures of the societal structure. Meadows cites the probability of the *Koitsenkos'* existence prior to the 1837 battle with the Tsistsistas Bowstrings, and notes that Hugh Scott recorded the existence of the *Tonkongats* operating as tribal police in 1834.²⁸³ This correlates with accounts of the *Tonkongats* having their origins in a battle with Spanish soldiers in that same year.²⁸⁴

Young boys were initiated into the *Polanyup* society at a very early age, and remained in this society until about the age of twelve years. The *Adoltoyui* functioned much like modern boot camp in the United States military infrastructure. It was in this society that young men gained their proficiency at arms and practical hands-on training in war expeditions led by older, more experienced warriors.²⁸⁵ The other warrior societies recruited members based on their family connections and/or war records, wealth, and social charisma, with the *K'aitsenko* comprising the elite organization.²⁸⁶ Kracht asserts that the importance and primary function

²⁸² Kracht, 125.

²⁸³ Meadows, 39.

²⁸⁴ James Anquoe, Sr., April 25, 2002.

²⁸⁵ James Anquoe, Sr., Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Kracht, 242; Meadows, 40.

of these societies' rituals was the glorification of warfare, "which was inseparable from Kiowa religious beliefs. Thus, these institutions supported Kiowa belief systems."²⁸⁷

The intertwined elements of the Caiugu shield and warrior societies are described by Leslie Spier.²⁸⁸ Spier notes that the shields were used only as personal war medicines. When these medicines lost their efficacy, or the owner died, the shield was either destroyed or buried with him. The shields were integral aspects of the *K'ado*, or "Sun Dance." Shields were renewed during this ceremony so that their *dau*, or power was effective.²⁸⁹ The ceremony itself was for the purpose of gaining material benefits by way of the *Tai'me*, the tribal palladium, which was also the most potent war medicine possessed by the Caiugu.²⁹⁰

As can be seen, the origins and sanctions governing the warrior societies of both cultures were deeply rooted in each people's cosmologies. Visual devices developed by which the warrior societies reaffirmed and maintained these cosmological sanctions. Art provided a vehicle for the expression of supernatural sanctions for the exercise of martial authority and maintaining status. Divine auspice and the existence of the warrior societies were inextricably linked, and through this link individuals found their purpose, place, and identity as warriors. The primary means of expressing this link was through body paints, and vision-

²⁸⁷ Kracht, 248.

²⁸⁸ Leslie Spier, "Notes on the Kiowa Sun Dance," *American Museum of Natural History Anthropological Papers* vol. 16, pts. 6 and 7 (New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1921): 437-450.

²⁸⁹ Spier, 443; Ernest Toppah, Kiowa Tribe Museum Director, interviewed by author, Carnegie, Oklahoma, April 18, 2002.

²⁹⁰ James Anquoe asserts that, despite others' assertions of the *K'ado*'s prayerful aspects, the ceremony was not at all about prayer, but was about war, totally and thoroughly.

based imagery.

Society paints are not to be confused with individual paints, which were based on personal vision experiences. The society paints served a function comparable to medieval European heraldry. European heraldic systems not only served as an identifying marker which allowed individual participants to recognize armor-clad leaders during battle, but expressed lineage as well. The function of society paints among the Tsistsitas and Caiugu operated in much the same manner, in that they expressed a particular spiritual lineage.

Specific colors also operated in the major tribal ceremonies of both peoples, as well as the cosmological references of these colors. For the Tsistsistas these ceremonies are the Massaum, the Life Generator Lodge, or Sun Dance, and the Arrow Renewal ceremonies. For the Caiugu, the *K'ado* was the principal ceremony. Most of the colors will receive extensive treatment as regards their iconography within the context of the society paints as well. Color iconography is consistent in its meanings and associations in both ceremonial and everyday contexts. Because of this consistency, both ceremonial and non-ceremonial uses of color were inextricably linked, both rooted firmly in the people's basic cosmology.

In these major ceremonies there are certain color-pairings that occur, such as red-blue in the Massaum, green-white in both the Massaum and Life Generator Lodge, and red-black in the Arrow Renewal. The green-white pairing signifies a shift from the moribund to new life, spring, and, in the context of the Life Generator Lodge, hail that occurs in spring thunderstorms, which is interpreted as semen which fertilizes the earth, making possible the growth of new vegetation after the long, cold winter. *Vovetos*, dragonflies, as well symbolically represent this shift to newness of life, and are used in the paints of the Life

Generator Lodge. The red-blue pairing featured in the Massaum is symbolic of *Maheo*, *Eyophstah* (Thunder's daughter), and Thunder. These three entities were responsible for the establishment of life on the earth in primordial times, and their representation through color was a symbolic manifestation of that creative power. The red-black pairing used in the Arrow Renewal signifies buffalo and men (i. e. enemies) respectively. The arrows were given for procurement and warfare, and this fits within a context of ceremonial color iconography.²⁹¹

The Caiugu *K'ado* expressed a decided emphasis on martial concepts, and was, according to one source, entirely about war.²⁹² This same source stated quite bluntly that during the pre-reservation period the Caiugu were a "brutal people" toward their enemies. There is no specific evidence for directional associations for the colors used in the ceremony.

The *K'ado* was held when the constellation Ursa Major shown high in the northern night sky. It was then that preparations for the ceremony began.²⁹³ The gathering of the people together in a single, unified polity during this ceremony is reflected in the red-black color pairing that was applied in concentric bands around the center pole used in the lodge. The ceremony's focus was on warfare, and a major component of the *K'ado* was the renewal of the various society shields. If the shields were not properly renewed their power and efficacy

²⁹¹ Grinnell, "The Great Mysteries of the Cheyenne," *American Anthropologist* n. s. 12:4 (Oct. - Dec., 1910): 542.

²⁹² Jim Anquoe, Sr., El Reno, Oklahoma, April 25, 2002.

²⁹³ Jim Anquoe, Sr., April 25, 2002.

for war would be diminished.²⁹⁴

Massaum

North:
White

Northwest:
Yellow, 4 Old Men
Voh'kis (Kit Fox), Dog Men

Northeast:
Black, turtle, fog,
The unknown, Kit Foxes

West:
Blue, Maheo,
Thunder,
Rigel, *Voh'kis* (Kit Fox)

East:
Red,
Eyophstah

Southwest:
Red, Aldebaran, tornadoes,
cyclones, the red wolf,
Bowstrings

Southeast:
White, Sirius, the white wolf,
thunder, lightning, Elks

South:
Green, white, yellow,
ripeness, beauty, perfection

Life Generator Lodge

North:
White, snow cold, ice, winter.

West:
Black, night-time, deep water, moon,
death.

East:
Red, Sun, Thunder, life force, warmth.

South:
Spring, hail, *vovetos* (dragonflies),
thunderstorms, new vegetation, rain.

²⁹⁴ Kracht, 258.

Arrow Renewal
Red-black color pairing.

K'ado

Red-blue: Authority, leadership.	Red-black: Southern and Northern people respectively.	Red-yellow: Martial concepts.		
White: Snow, ice, cold, Tai'me.	Red: Sun, buffalo.	Black: Prowess, valor, and service.	Yellow: Tai'me.	Green: Concepts of regeneration.

White and yellow by themselves or together were associated with the *Tai'me*, the preeminent tribal war medicine. The *Tai'me* keeper was usually painted solid yellow with red and black lightning symbols descending from each eye, and also had a green arc encircling his face to the chin. The iconography of this paint scheme represented the gathering of the people together for the express purpose of renewing the shields under the watchful gaze of the *Tai'me* itself.

Red was frequently associated directly with the sun, and also the buffalo. Buffalo were seen as intermediaries between the sun and mortals, and as such were a powerful source of *dau*, or medicine. The red-blue pairing reflected the hierarchical structure of Caiugu society,²⁹⁵ as it was the upper castes that predominantly participated in war. These were the individuals, because of their economic and hereditary status, who were most able to afford outfitting themselves for war, including purchasing the requisite medicines necessary to this purpose.²⁹⁶ Black by itself represented martial prowess, valor, and service to the people.

²⁹⁵ Jim Anquoe, Sr., April 25, 2002.

²⁹⁶ Kracht, 260.

Green may have been associated with the south and may also have symbolically represented general regenerative concepts.

Many of the iconographic associations of colors as expressed in the major ceremonials of the Tsistsistas and the Caiugu were also reflected in the society paints. As for the specific society paints among the Tsistsistas sources sometimes disagree. However, from the information given by various sources society-color associations among the Tsistsistas were:

Red Shields or Bulls: black, red and white stripes;

Dog Men: no set color repertoire;

Wolves: black and yellow;

Kit Foxes: yellow and black;

Bowstrings: red;

Elks: no set color repertoire.

Illustrations for these society paints can be found in Appendix B. Grinnell says that the Bulls were painted overall black, while Powell says they used red and white striped paint, or sometimes overall white.²⁹⁷ The Dog Men used “various paints”, according to Grinnell. According to Erdoes and Ortiz the Wolf Soldiers painted in black and yellow,²⁹⁸ while the Kit Foxes, or Flint Soldiers painted themselves overall yellow, yellow on the body with the lower arms and legs black, or black from the neck to the waist and from the shoulder to the

²⁹⁷ Grinnell 312; Peter J. Powell, “Issiwun: Sacred Buffalo Hat of the Cheyennes,” *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 10:1 (Winter, 1959): 24-40.

²⁹⁸ Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*: 57; Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, eds., *American Indian Myths and Legends* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984): 29.

elbow of each arm.²⁹⁹ The Bowstrings wore an overall red body paint.³⁰⁰ There are no society paints recorded for the Elk Scrapers. However, Michelson notes that they “dressed up in beaded costumes” and “fancy regalia”. He states that their Sutaio origins may well have determined their preference for dress and regalia over body paint.³⁰¹ Despite the conflicting reports on society paints given in the literature, the basic repertoire is for the most part in keeping with that given by Willie Fletcher as red, black, yellow, and white.³⁰² The Caiugu societies’ color associations are:

<i>Tongongats</i> : black and yellow;	<i>Tai’me</i> keeper and assistants: white,
Buffalo Society: red and white;	yellow, and black;
<i>Tdapei</i> : red;	<i>Hotoyi</i> society: white, red, and black;
<i>K’oitsenko</i> : red;	<i>Kowde</i> society: red and dark blue.
<i>Adaltoyui</i> : no set color repertoire;	
<i>Tsentanmo</i> : no set color repertoire.	

The Caiugu society paints can also be found in Appendix B. Among the Caiugu societies, the *Tonkongats* used black and yellow society paint,³⁰³ with black circles on their shoulder blades and buttocks, yellow on the lower legs and upper arms, and black on the forearms, chest, and back.³⁰⁴ Members of the Buffalo society painted their bodies red on the left side

²⁹⁹ Grinnell, *ibid*; Powell, *ibid*.

³⁰⁰ Willie Fletcher, Geary, Oklahoma, April 16, 2002;

³⁰¹ Michalson, 19.

³⁰² Willie Fletcher, April 16, 2002.

³⁰⁴ Kracht, 236, 237.

and white on the right, with the face painted a red-brown with a bright red spot on the forehead and white spots along the jaw line.³⁰⁵ The *Tdapei* body paint was also red, as was that of the *K'oitsenko*.³⁰⁶

The *Tai'me* keepers painted themselves overall white with a yellow line extending from the insides of the arms across the chest. Sometimes there was a black sun flanked by two blue crescent moons on the chest as well. The wrists and ankles were painted with blue or black vertical lines, while the lower legs were painted yellow. The lips and jaws were painted black.³⁰⁷

Hotoyi shield members painted their faces with a “white-red” background, white spots on their chests and arms, black lightning symbols on their cheeks, and painted their lips black.³⁰⁸ *Kowde* members painted their bodies red with two crescent moons flanking a moon symbol, all in dark blue. Their faces were white with blue stripes or dots arranged in a semi-circle on the lower face.

The ankles and feet were painted blue.³⁰⁹

These conventions of painting reflected Tsistsistas and Caiugu cosmology in the following ways. Among the Tsistsistas white signified the southeast and north, sleet, snow, and ice. Red was associated with the southwest and east, and concepts of light, warmth,

³⁰⁵ Kracht, 129, 131.

³⁰⁶ Kracht, 240, 246.

³⁰⁷ Kracht, 211-213.

³⁰⁸ Kracht, 215.

³⁰⁹ Kracht, 219.

blood, and the sun. Yellow was at one time considered a sun color also, and was associated with the northwest, with youth, fecundity, ripeness, and completeness. Black bore more negative connotations. It was associated with the west and northeast, and also concepts of death, deep water, night-time and nightmares, and the moon. The moon could be represented iconographically by black because of its protective agency against the darkness and death. A fifth color, green, bore south directional and water associations. Green was also emblematic of new growth, especially vegetation, springtime, and the hail that occurs in thunderstorms.³¹⁰ Also, the semi-cardinal directions were home to the *maiyun* who guarded the four corners of the universe.³¹¹ The colors associated with the semi-cardinal directions were black with the northeast, white with the southeast, red with the southwest, and yellow with the northwest.

Among the Caiugu green was associated with water also,³¹² and creatures that lived in water, such as turtles, frogs, fish, snakes, and underwater monsters, all of which represented particularly potent sources of *dau*.³¹³ Black signified death and the north, but could also relate to the sun. While this might seem on the surface to be a contradictory association given the death connotations associated with black, in a martial context it could well have translated

³¹⁰ Peter J. Powell, *Sweet Medicine*, 2 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969): 417; Moore, *A Study of Religious Symbolism Among the Cheyenne Indians*,: 151-155.

³¹¹ Schlesier, 7.

³¹² Ewers, *Murals in the Round*, 27.

³¹³ Kracht, 94.

conceptually as the power of death over enemies through the sun's empowerment.³¹⁴ Red was associated with the south, longevity, attainment of old age and by extension wisdom, and with the Caiugu themselves.³¹⁵ Yellow, orange, and white were associated with the sun, and yellow in combination with red evoked martial concepts. Yellow also symbolized life force, growth, and seasonal change.³¹⁶ Red and blue connoted leadership, power, medicine, and healing,³¹⁷ while blue by itself was frequently associated with the culture heros, *Pai-Tsalyi*, the Sun Boys, or more properly, Half Boys.³¹⁸ White was also emblematic of the buffalo as it rolled in its wallow. As the buffalo did this it was perceived that an implicit transfer of power from the sun to the buffalo took place.³¹⁹ Additionally, white could also connote purification.³²⁰

There is a significant dichotomy between Tsistsistas and Caiugu color iconography. The Tsistsistas placed great emphasis on creation and renewal and empowerment through the forces responsible for creation and renewal. This is evidenced in the predominance of colors

³¹⁴ Alice Marriott, *The Ten Grandmothers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945): 41.

³¹⁵ James Anquoe, Sr., April 26, 2002; Forest Solomon, Kiowa, interviewed by author, Norman, Oklahoma, October 6, 1998.

³¹⁶ Gus Palmer, Kiowa Linguist, interviewed by author, Norman, Oklahoma, April 3, 2003.

³¹⁷ Dr. Jerry Bread, Kiowa Educator, interviewed by author, Norman, Oklahoma, January 22, 2002.

³¹⁸ Kracht, 79.

³¹⁹ Kracht, 87, 104.

³²⁰ Karl and Iva Schmidt Collection. Box 4 FF 29. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

that reference male elements of the cosmology, such as the sun, thunder, and *Maheo* himself. The Caiugu focus was pervasively martial. Martial concepts were expressed through sun and celestial designs, bison imagery, and a pervasive emphasis of the colors red, yellow, black, and a red-yellow pairing in shield designs.

The ethos created by references to the cosmological beginnings of the warrior societies and the role those societies performed in the wider culture can be likened to a phenomenon of modern American culture. Becoming a superstar in the arena of professional sports has become an almost consuming passion for countless American youths. To attain such a position of status has become the ultimate achievement. In like fashion, Tsistsistas and Caiugu youths aspired to attain the stature and prominence of their superstars, those individuals who had accrued a successful war record. Such were their role models.

The institutionalized martial values imparted by the warrior societies were key to successful warfare. During the historic period the ultimate purpose of that warfare was displacement of the enemy from contested territory, not mere contentment with counting coup or capturing horses.³²¹ Grinnell states that the risks incurred in war resulted in losses disproportionate to the numbers of the tribe, but the willingness to pursue martial success made the Tsistsistas “A terror to their enemies.”³²²

Martial ethos was inculcated into the young from a very early age. Newcomb views such a mind set as resulting from sociocultural causatives and not as the product of an inherently

³²¹ Moore, *The Cheyenne*, 107; Jablow also deals with this aspect of Tsistsistas warfare as essential to their success in establishing themselves in the Central Plains during the early historic period.

³²² Grinnell, 6.

war-like nature.³²³ Certainly it was necessary, given the level of competition from surrounding peoples over the same resources, for martial ethos to become institutionalized as a social norm. If it had not been so within the context of the nineteenth-century Plains, neither the Tsistsistas or the Caiugu would have survived. Mails points out that as social units the societies were responsible for the performance of ceremonies, provided feasts, and acted as examples of everyday conduct for youths to follow. They also provided the means of socialization and a retreat from the pressures of domestic life by creating a “transcendent man versus the exact self of everyday life.”³²⁴ To use a phrase from popular culture and the Army’s recruitment campaign, the stress was to “be all you can be,” and the means for the accomplishment of this fulfillment was through martial pursuits.

As with Tsistsistas martial ethos, the Caiugu celebrated the accomplished warrior. As a young man gained ‘credits’ through the system of war honors he was required to announce these in a public venue. His society would extol his accomplishments, and there were frequent opportunities allowed for the recounting of deeds within the context of the tribal ceremonies.³²⁵ Feasting and honoring by an individual’s father also promoted the individual warrior in the eyes of the people. Each mode of recognition served a purpose, that being to elevate the individual warrior to a place of position and status. In Mishkin’s words, “Publicity and possession of military attainments combined to determine the selection of the

³²³ Newcomb, 329.

³²⁴ Thomas E. Mails, *Dog Soldiers, Bear Men, and Buffalo Women: A Study of the Societies and Cults of the Plains Indians*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973): 50.

³²⁵ Mishkin, 39, 41.

incumbents of political office.”³²⁶

An integral component in the maintenance and furtherance of martial ethos was found in the oral history of both cultures. Bodies of lore contained within the oral histories and classified as war stories collectively comprised a recounting of deeds by particularly noteworthy individuals. The deeds and accomplishments of these individuals served to underscore the virtues of self aggrandizement, as they typically featured warrior-heroes from recent history. The story teller often knew the individual first hand, and often so too did the young listeners who sat in rapt attention. The element of the main character in these stories as a contemporary figure made the stories and the virtues they extolled relevant to everyday life. Because of this relevance the youth would follow the example set for him by his predecessors. It simply remained for him to attain the proper means to do so. The means were visions or the purchase of power that established a relationship with the spirit world. This was most often accomplished by assuming properties and/or attributes of various animal and bird species that possessed traits deemed appropriate to a warrior’s abilities. Such relationships were manifested in the use of bird and animal body parts, colors, and designs in men’s art and regalia. The elements depicted in men’s art served as embodiments of power. As such they reaffirmed supernatural validation, and this was further reinforced by the oversight of ceremonies by the warrior societies in both cultures.³²⁷ The warrior societies had responsibility for the performance of major ceremonies and authority over religious functionaries. Their accountability in such matters emphasized mortals’ dependency on the

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Hoebel, 10.

supernatural forces of the universe. It was within this milieu that mens' art developed and functioned. Just how a setting, or environment was created that fostered such expressions of power will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

Art as a Reflection of Environment: the Created Universe

Nineteenth century Tsistsistas and Caiugu art provides modern viewers with a reflection of the Plains environment they inhabited. The natural environment was obviously reflected in the materials and pigments derived from animal, mineral, and vegetal sources. Each of these sources in turn represented powerful regenerative forces believed to reside in the earth. Beyond this obvious environment there was also a created and lived environment which was expressed in men's art from the nineteenth century. In this environment the natural and supernatural worlds overlapped and infused one another. Native American cultures recognize no dichotomy between the seen and unseen as Western cultures are inclined to do. Everything that exists, whether animate or inanimate, is regarded as interrelated and integrated into an overarching whole. Brian M. Fagan comments that "...humans never adjust to the physical world as it really is, but to this same world as they perceive it through the conditioning given them by their own culture", and that "the human ability to reason and adjust cultural perceptions played a vital role in the ways in which people interacted with one another and with the environment."³²⁸ Thomas Biolsi comments on human interaction with the environment as well, stating:

A human population does not enter a habitat as a blank slate to be written upon by raw natural forces. It possesses a specific technological, social, and ideological organization that is the product of history. This organization, although not immutable and certainly subject to adaptive modification, is a

³²⁸ Brian M. Fagan, *Ancient North America: the Archaeology of a Continent*, 2nd edition (New York: Thames and Hudson Inc., 1995): 60.

factor in the constitution of the niche because it defines the effective natural and social environment and materially alters that environment.³²⁹

Mircea Eliade adds to the idea of shaping an environment to fit into a particular group's conception of reality. In this process individuals create their own universe by fixing a center and establishing a presence according to a culturally conceived model. Eliade states:

To be "situated" in a landscape, to organize it, to inhabit it, are actions which presuppose an existential choice: *the choice of the "universe" that one is prepared to assume by "creating" it...* every human establishment includes the fixing of a center and the projection of horizons, that is to say the "cosmocization" of a territory, its transformation into a "universe," a replica of the exemplary universe, created and inhabited by the gods.³³⁰

This process was initiated by both the Tsistsistas and Caiugu in demarcating their territories and thereby validating them. For the Tsistsistas *Noaha Vose* was the physical center of the universe, while for the Caiugu it was *Tso'-saw*.³³¹

All of these factors together create an environment that is not limited to the physical world in which an individual or community of individuals exist, but includes human action on an environment as a determinant factor as well. Cultural tendencies and responses interact with physical settings to create a specific environment far beyond that encompassed by climate, land forms, flora, and fauna. Gregory Bateson points out that "The human individual is endlessly simplifying and generalizing his own view of his environment; he constantly

³²⁹ Thomas Biolsi, "Ecological and Cultural Factors in Plains Indian Warfare," Ferguson, 162.

³³⁰ Mircea Eliade, *Symbolism, the Sacred, and the Arts* (New York: the Crossroads Publishing Company, 1985): 119.

³³¹ For both peoples the physical site is Devil's Tower in Wyoming. See Boyd, *Kiowa Voices*: 93; Schlesier, *The Wolves of Heaven*, 4.

imposes on this environment his own constructs and meanings; these...are characteristic of one culture as opposed to another.”³³²

The constructs and meanings applied by the Tsistsistas and Caiugu as a means of knowing and understanding their environments were co-mingled with the physical and spiritual as a template for their origins and destinies. It is the context of this wider environment, and specifically the manner in which this created environment was expressed in Tsistsistas and Caiugu men’s art, that is the subject of this chapter. A great deal of the “simplifying and generalizing” referred to by Bateson directly impinges on social order. Such an ordering of society was largely accomplished through art. Evelyn Payne Hatcher comments that “Art helps hold society together because it reflects and reinforces the relationships deemed proper in that society; art symbols are collective representations which by their form and content are shaped by and help shape the social order.”³³³

Native American art encompassed facets of culture ranging from drama, like the dances and ceremonial enactments of the Northwest Coast cultures, to visual systems of signs and symbols such as those evidenced in vertical series petroglyphs in the Plains.³³⁴ In addition to song and dance story telling as well can be included in the rubric of art in a Native

³³² Gregory Bateson, “Comments,” *Science, Philosophy, and Religion, a Symposium* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942).

³³³ Evelyn Payne Hatcher, *Art as Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Art* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1985): 113.

³³⁴ Vertical Series petroglyphs are comprised of simplified geometric shapes arranged in vertically oriented columns, hence the designation “Vertical Series” applied by various scholars. See James D. Keyser and Michael A. Klassen, *Plains Indian Rock Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001): 281-294.

context.³³⁵ Yet, while art can and does include the performing and plastic arts, the primary concern here is visual expressive traditions.

Visual systems of expression were utilized to espouse, express, and celebrate an individual's participation in the wider dimension of existence created by the interaction of supernatural agency with the physical realm. Art performed a number of functions for the individual and the larger culture. Art, as a dynamic of culture, relayed information about status and social relationships between and within groups. Such displays as coup marks on a garment or a biographical robe were indicators of an individual's status as a warrior. Status could be further denoted by the trappings of office which distinguished society leaders from the common rank and file warriors. Items such as Dog sashes, feathered bonnets, differing types of lances, and certain body paint patterns were indicative of higher rank and status.³³⁶ The deeds necessary to attain such status were a matter of public record, and no man would think of falsifying such information.

An example of such is evidenced by the shirt in Figure 17. This shirt from the northern plains depicts some of its owner's accomplishments as evidenced by the coup marks displayed in the shirt's imagery. The rake-like forms that touch weapons and human forms indicate that the shirt's wearer counted coup on live enemies and in some cases wrested their weapons from them. Such acts of valor were depicted only under the auspices of eye witnesses who verified the performance of such deeds. To either side of the shirt's yoke appear a series of guns, some shown with conventionalized hands indicative of capture, while

³³⁵ Montejo, "Ancient Words", 143.

³³⁶ Greene, "Changing Times, Changing Views: 17.

those on the other side are depicted without these. The latter may represent successful war expeditions this individual led, while those bearing conventionalized hand forms clearly single the shirt wearer out as a warrior of formidable standing. Martial achievements such as those depicted on this shirt clearly identified the warrior as a man of status and prestige.



Figure 17.
Shirt. Upper Missouri Region. N.D. Hide and pigment.
National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Catalogue no. 17.6345



Figure 18.
Left Hand, Tsistsistas. Ca. 1880.
Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, University of Oklahoma.
Bronson Collection, 9-6-49.

The bonnet shown in Figure 18 provides another example of a status item. This bonnet, owned by the Tsistsistas Left Hand is notable for the arrangement of the feathers. Accepted convention dictated that feathers were arranged with the front sides facing the enemy. This meant that all the feathers, whether on the right or left side of a bonnet faced the same direction. The most common arrangement was for feathers to be facing the wearer's left hand side, as most individuals are right handed.³³⁷ This is a flared style bonnet, so denoted by the manner in which the feathers flared out around the wearer's head as opposed to standing upright in a cylindrical fashion. The feathers are tipped with red dyed horse hair, and the

³³⁷ Colin F. Taylor, *Wapa'ha: the Plains Feathered Headdress* (Verlag für Amerikanistik, Wyk auf Foehr, Germany, 1996): 123.

sinew wrappings on the quills are also red. The brow band's field is white, against which are set three stepped triangles. The two outer most triangles are beaded in dark blue with a red interior window, while that in the middle is a reversal of this. Taken together, the colors themselves indicate that Left Hand was an individual of note among his people. Red used in bonnets signified that the wearer was a combat veteran and had shed blood in the service of the nation. The blue, red, and white beading on the brow band could be interpreted as a religious statement, according *Maheo* respect and reverence, and acknowledging him as the source of life's power and essence.

Religious constructs were transmitted through art. Much of Tsistsistas and Caiugu art pointed directly to elements of the cosmology. An integral aspect of Tsistsistas place and purpose was to dominate the grasslands which they believed *Maheo* had given for their specific use. Their world view and religious ideology revolved around this divine injunction.³³⁸ Figure 19, a page from the Tie Creek ledger, testifies to the prominence of religious beliefs among the Tsistsistas. The *maiyn* figure in the center controls the buffalo, indicated by lines of hoof prints, shown here issuing forth from the underground cavern they lived in before they were given to the people.

Because it was believed that *Maheo* resided in the Blue-sky space, the heavens were of particular importance to the Tsistsistas. Consequently designs relating to celestial powers were prevalent themes in the art. Tsistsistas shield designs often incorporated representations of eagles, thunderbirds, and swallows, all thought to be direct intermediaries of *Maheo*, as well as stars and celestial representations. Two examples of such representations are afforded

³³⁸ Schlesier, 76-78.



Figure 19.
Tsistsistas. Tie Creek Ledger, page 188. Ca. 1865.
Private Collection. Name withheld upon request.

by the shields in Figures 20 and 21. The first of these two shields, made by Little Rock (Figure 20), was captured at the Washita River in 1869.³³⁹ The second example is the Broadhead shield, collected at Camp Supply, Indian Territory in 1895.³⁴⁰ Both shields exhibit compositional elements and color symbolism that create what are maps of the Tsistsistas

³³⁹ Michael Kan and William Weirzbowski, "Some Notes on an Important Southern Cheyenne Shield," *Native North American Art History*: 237.

³⁴⁰ Nagy, "Cheyenne Shields and Their Cosmological Background," 40.

universe. Both shields feature thunderbird figures, these interpreted as the direct emissaries

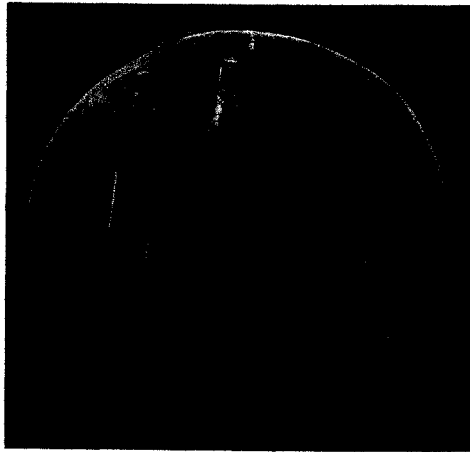


Figure 20.

Little Rock Shield. Tsistsistas (Cheyenne). 1860/1868.

Gift of Detroit Scientific Association. Photograph copyright 1992 The Detroit Institute of Arts.



Figure 21.

Broadhead Shield. Tsistsistas. Nineteenth Century.

Hide, bells, feathers, pigment.

Rochester Museum. Cat. no. AE 8592.

of *Maheo*. Both thunderbirds are rendered in blue-green which references the celestial realm wherein *Maheo* resides. Swallows are also depicted on both shields. These were viewed as intermediaries whose primary function was to relay mortals' messages and prayers to *Maheo*.

The Little Rock shield's field is black, and is circumscribed by a large, open blue-green crescent form which frames the entire composition. The shield also bears vestiges of red pigment at points along its outer edge. The tail of the thunderbird creates the focal point, while the negative space formed between the swallows' wingtips and the thunderbird's head on the Broadhead shield performs a like function. In this way both compositions focus attention on the universal center. The four swallows in the Little Rock shield correspond to the cardinal directions as do the four red discs on the Broadhead shield.

Both compositions reference the source of all power, *Maheo*. The colors in each composition likewise make reference to *Maheo*, as blue-green can be interpreted as representative of the blue-sky space wherein the creator figure resides. The arrangement of the four smaller elements in each composition denote the inclusiveness of the four corners of the universe under *Maheo's* dominion. A number of other references are given in each shield design that point to life, sustenance, and the sun. The buffalo tracks running along the Broadhead shield's perimeter, the use of red in the tails of the thunderbird and swallows in the Little Rock shield and the discs in the Broadhead shield, as well as the yellow treatment of the Broadhead swallows all allude to a number of concepts such as blood, vitality, ripeness, perfection, and wholeness.

The Caiugu also placed great emphasis on stars and celestial forms.³⁴¹ An example of this is seen in Figure 22, the Star Picture tipi of Black Magpie. The lodge cover's design is a

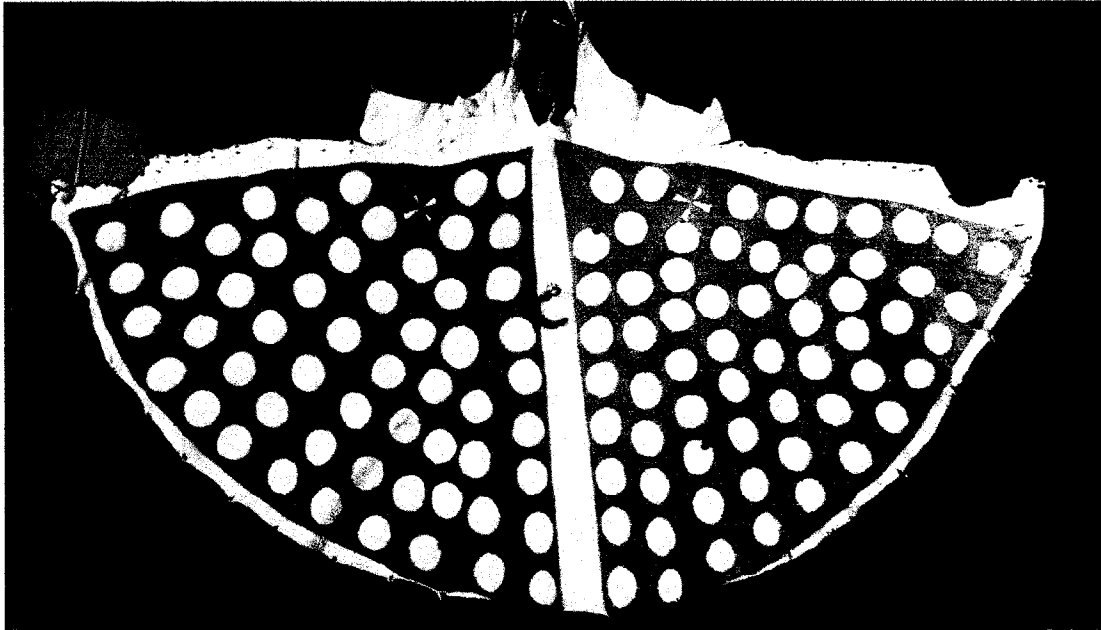


Figure 22.
Replica of Black Magpie's Star Picture Tipi. Caiugu. Nineteenth Century.
Smithsonian Institution. Cat. no. 245,017.

bisected composition featuring the red-blue color pairing that has associations with the Hero Twins and the Caiugu people themselves. Below each of the smoke flaps there appears a representation of the morning star in the form of a Maltese cross, while each field is filled with white stars. The entire composition relays the interconnectedness the Gaiugu felt with celestial bodies and the importance of those bodies to the Caiugu themselves. The Great

³⁴¹ Ernest Toppah, personal communication, November 15, 2003; Hazel Bohtone and Louis Toyebo. The Kiowa Cultural Project, CD 9. Collections, Kiowa Tribe Museum, Carnegie, Oklahoma.

Kiowa himself was thought to be depicted in the stars, as were other culture heroes. Peggy Beck and Anna Walters state that star lore and celestial observation became a descriptive aspect of the oral tradition.³⁴² Representations of these phenomena evidenced sacred teachings and tribal histories.

Political ideology was reflected in the art as well. The Sweet Medicine stories delineate in their telling the political structure that Tsistsistas culture was to adopt, while stories from Caiugu oral tradition clearly outline a martial course for that people. Society paints and their color repertoires, shield designs, and many articles of regalia referenced these traditions. Art was a determinant of ethnic identity. Time and again one hears the elders state that they used to be able to readily identify tribal affiliations simply on the basis of designs and predominant colors.³⁴³ The Tsistsistas were known to have favored particular compositional arrangements in shield designs, and this was a hallmark of their aesthetic. The Arapaho were known as the “Blue Sky People” because of their fondness for beads of a particular value of blue.³⁴⁴ Comanche hide work was distinctive for its overall yellow staining,³⁴⁵ while Kiowa bead work bore a number of distinctive traits, such as reversal of motifs and colors to create a

³⁴² Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters, *The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life* (Tsalie, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1977): 84.

³⁴³ Georgia Dupoint, Kiowa elder, interviewed by author, Carnegie, Oklahoma, April 2, 2002; Kiowa Museum Board, conversation with author, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, September 10, 2002; Sam Hart, Cheyenne elder, interviewed by author, Concho, Oklahoma, June 25, 2002.

³⁴⁴ Mable Morrow, *Indian Rawhide* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974): 70; Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 2.

³⁴⁵ Lowie, *Indians of the Plains*, 15.

positive-negative effect in opposing halves of compositions.³⁴⁶

Art also satisfied the basic expressionistic needs of both the artist and viewer. When asked about the significance of a particular design on a beaded cradle board cover, an individual pointed out that there was no known specific significance.³⁴⁷ It was simply a matter of liking. This same individual, when asked what it was that made Kiowa moccasins Kiowa remarked that “It’s just the way they are put together.”³⁴⁸ Tsistsistas bead workers routinely produced items of purely aesthetic design such as pillows, lodge liners, bags and pouches, and bedspreads.³⁴⁹ Figures 23 and 24 show articles of aesthetic design. The Tsistsistas woman’s pouch features a centipede motif composed of red triangles bisected by a blue line set against a white field, a typical northern design convention. The Caiugu cradle board hood displays the characteristic positive-negative color play utilized by Caiugu bead workers, wherein opposing sides of an article featured mirror image motifs in contrasting colors set against a white field.

A primary function of Tsistsistas and Caiugu warrior art was to transmit culture-specific values which were universally recognized by members of the larger cultures. These value systems were rooted in the cosmologies of both peoples. Within this context men’s art

³⁴⁶ See Barbara A. Hail, ed., *Gifts of Pride and Love: Kiowa and Comanche Cradles* (Bristol, Rhode Island: Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, 2000).

³⁴⁷ James Anquoe, Sr., personal communication, El Reno, Oklahoma, October 1, 2002. Mr. Anquoe stated in this conversation that the only motif in beadwork that was, to his knowledge truly Kiowa is the maple leaf motif. Others commonly used were derived from Embroidered bags and Woodlands floral designs.

³⁴⁸ Georgia Dupoint, Carnegie, Oklahoma, April 2, 2002.

³⁴⁹ Marriott, “Trade Guild of the Southern Cheyenne Women,” 247, 248.

performed an integrative function by representing world views common to members of the larger society. Men's art exerted a profound influence. Because of its primary focus on war,



Figure 23.

Tsistsistas. Woman's beaded bag. Nineteenth Century.
Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History,
University of Oklahoma. NAM 9-6-116

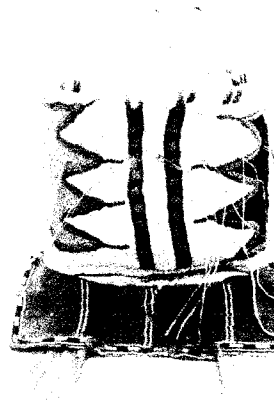


Figure 24.

Caiugu. Cradle board hood. Nineteenth Century
Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History,
University of Oklahoma. NAM 9-13-121

men's art upheld cultural standards of warrior ethos as paramount for males. Economic motives for warfare moved individuals and entire societies to disregard former ceremonial concerns that had previously held center stage.³⁵⁰ The Bowstrings' beating of the Arrow Keeper in 1837 exemplifies this.

The stringent demands of the office elevated the Arrow Keeper in the eyes of the community. He was accorded high esteem because of his ritual knowledge.³⁵¹ However, in spite of the respect accorded the office itself, the individual filling that office was under the control of the warrior societies.³⁵² Additionally, the various societies were responsible for the

³⁵⁰ Jablow, 84-86.

³⁵¹ Sam Hart, El Reno, Oklahoma, December 12, 2002.

³⁵² Gordon Yellowman, Concho, Oklahoma, December 12, 2002.

major ceremonies. A pledger's society was responsible for defraying the costs of a ceremony, maintaining order in the camp for the duration of the observance, setting up the lodge, and, in the case of the Tsistsistas, selecting the priest for the Life Generator Lodge. As a law making and law administering force the warrior societies of the two tribes became more and more potent during the nineteenth century.³⁵³

The institution of warfare increasingly came to be the cultural focal point. Greene states that "Warfare was the driving force behind...nineteenth-century Plains art. When that source of energy was abruptly interrupted by U. S. government intervention, the traditional genres of art faltered, attempted new directions, and ultimately died."³⁵⁴ Not only did the art forms die, or at least pass into obscurity for a time, but so too did the activities which defined a man's place in Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures. With traditional avenues of male expression prevented by the restrictions of reservation life, there was no longer any reason for men to continue depicting scenes of warfare. Shields no longer served a purpose, and those that were created lacked any associations of power. Instead they were means to satisfy the academic investigations of ethnographers and earn a few dollars for their makers. Lodges were, for the most part, replaced with frame structures. Painted robes, like shields, ceased to perform a meaningful function, and these too passed into obscurity. The only men's art form that did survive was that of the ledger book drawing, and this became a launching point for the development of new artistic expressions. This form of expression later developed into a Native painting tradition whose most celebrated adherents came to be known collectively as

³⁵³ Llewellyn and Hoebel, 67.

³⁵⁴ Greene, "Changing Times, Changing Views," 17.

the “Kiowa Five.” Removal of the impetuses behind men’s art, while eliminating certain forms of expression, did not erase the underlying spirit behind the art. This underlying spirit continued to exhibit a belief in the intertwining of spiritual and physical realms into a cohesive whole. Even now, as it did in the nineteenth century, this interplay of physical and supernatural finds expression through art.

While there are no words for art in the Western sense among the Native languages of the Americas, there was and is a clear and unmistakable aesthetic that operated in both Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures. Joseph Epes Brown views Native arts traditions as the “external projections of a people’s inner vision of reality.”³⁵⁵ Emma Hansen states:

Within both Native American and Euro-American cultures, art has served to order and interpret an individual’s role within his or her environment and universe as a whole. Among native cultures, religion, which is integral to all aspects of daily lives, helps to answer universal questions. The designs of many objects of traditional art represent a spirituality which acknowledges the power and authority of the Creator and symbolizes the relationship of the people to the earth and the sky.³⁵⁶

European arts traditions prior to the Renaissance directly impacted a wider range of cultural aspects than they did after the Renaissance. The modern Western concept of art as art is a post-Renaissance phenomenon. Prior to this artists routinely applied their talents and abilities to creating projections of their cultures’ inner vision of reality. Illuminated

³⁵⁵ Joseph Epes Brown, *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian* (New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1982): 128.

³⁵⁶ Emma I. Hansen, “Powerful Images: Art of the Plains and Southwest,” *Powerful Images: Portrayals of Native America* (Seattle: Museums West, 1998): 7.

manuscripts bear this out, as do the medieval artist's workshops and their emphasis on process. In the case of the first, a specific world view embodying a set of cultural beliefs and values was extolled through a functional form, the manuscript.³⁵⁷ In the case of the second, the artist's workshop, the master conceived the art work but directed a number of apprentices in the actual creation of that work in assembly line fashion.

Additionally, artists before the Renaissance frequently operated under the guise of designers and engineers, crafting such diverse items as suits of armor and family crests.³⁵⁸ Leonardo da Vinci's work exhibits a wide range of interests that would not be considered art today. Leonardo's endeavors fell within the scope of engineering, military science, botany, anatomy, geometry, geography, hydraulics, aerodynamics, and optics in addition to painting, sculpting, and draftsmanship.³⁵⁹ Perhaps the earliest examples of the integration of art and life are aptly displayed in the cave paintings at Lascaux, Lot, and Ariege, France, as well as Castellon, Spain.³⁶⁰ Clearly art was a part of everyday life in pre-Renaissance Europe. It was only with the growing emphasis on specialization and an increased interest in creating faithful reproductions of the natural world that the plastic arts came to be recognized as something wholly separate from other spheres of life. The emphasis in Euro-American art traditions was largely one in which creating an illusion of the real world was the priority,

³⁵⁷ Horst de la Croix and Richard G. Tansey, eds., *Gardner's Art Through the Ages* 7th edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1980): 276, 281.

³⁵⁸ Frederick Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*. 4th edition (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994):32.

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 430.

³⁶⁰ de la Croix and Tansey, *Art Through the Ages*, 24-32.

while Native American art traditions were concerned with projecting a lived reality. It was from this point of separation that expressive traditions became divided into categories of “art” and “craft”, with the latter bearing markedly inferior connotations. Reinforcing this element of art’s separateness is the tradition of the individual artist and his personal glorification through the work.

Native arts traditions in contrast functioned as communal edification rather than glorification of the individual. While this may seem contradictory given the nature of ledger art and biographical robes, the communal aspect of the works held primary importance. The individual warrior certainly had performed deeds of valor that were worthy of recounting, but it was the underlying cultural values expressed that were first and foremost. Individuals in the community were involved in visionary art, either as producers or viewers or both. Grinnell relates how medicine lodge covers were dedicated by the group before their use. He states:

In olden times, at the making of some specially painted lodges, the lodge covering, after having been painted, was spread out where everybody in the camp might walk over it. This was believed to drive sickness away from the camp. On such occasions women took their little children by the hand and walked over the lodge covering. If the ornamented pieces of hide representing stars were to be sewn on such a lodge, they were put on as soon as the painting was finished...The day after this was done - the paint thus being allowed to dry - the lodge was spread out in a narrow place between two sand hills, where people were likely to pass, and an old man rode about the village and shouted out that it was desired that everyone should walk over that

lodge.³⁶¹

Irwin comments on this element of community involvement also, pointing out the effect that exposure to art had on children, particularly in the context of rituals in which art held a prominent place.

The power of this imagery would have been particularly strong for children, whose early learning experience is primarily imagistic and eidetic. In a context of ritual enactment...the child would be highly susceptible to the power of the imagery as well as to its evocative emotional contents. All the rich imagery on tipis, horses, and clothing would constantly be communicating its contents nonverbally to a receptive child. Those special times of collective ceremony and enactment would strongly reinforce the importance and primacy of the imagery.³⁶²

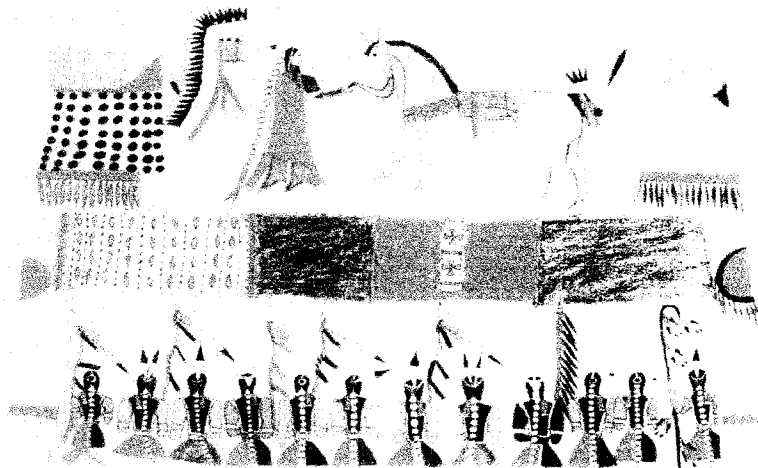


Figure 25.
Bear's Heart. Tsistsistas. "The Honoring."
Colored pencil, crayon. 1875-78.
National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Silberman Collection 1997.07.013.

³⁶¹ Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* vol. 1, 230-231.

³⁶² Irwin, 235-236.

Figure 25 depicts an honoring ceremony in which one individual is being gifted by another. The line of warriors at the scene's bottom edge are Bowstring warriors, as indicated by the bow lances, straight lance, and crooked lance held by society members.³⁶³ These ceremonies were conducted publicly, and would have created a powerful visual impression on those observing them.

The visual impact was also evidenced in the designs and imagery applied to medicine lodges. Gordon Yellowman states that "The tipi is connected to you. The tipi reflects the Cheyenne Universe, and art also expresses a way of life, a life style. This is who we are."³⁶⁴ Also, it should be noted that there is a direct relational association between the colors used on lodge covers among the Tsistsistas and the region they were located in. Lodge covers in the north typically utilized a predominantly blue and yellow color repertoire, while those found in the south featured predominant combinations of green, yellow, and white.³⁶⁵ The reason for these color choices was the manner in which light in both regions reacts on color perception. In the north, closer to the mountains, blues and greens are more readily apparent, while in the south the sun reflects the red of the earth and the yellow and white of the grass during the summer months.³⁶⁶ Examples of these environmentally reflective color schemes are shown in Bear's Heart's drawing in Figure 26.

³⁶³ Gordon Yellowman, December 12, 2002.

³⁶⁴ Yellowman, October 1, 2002.

³⁶⁵ Yellowman, December 12, 2002.

³⁶⁶ Yellowman, December 12, 2002.

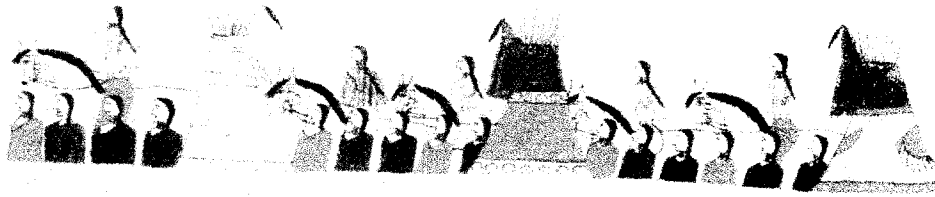


Figure 26.
Bear's Heart. Tsistsistas. "The Honoring, Cheyenne Ceremony."
Colored pencil. 1875-78.
National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Silberman Collection catalogue no. 1997.07.015A.

Obviously art can and does encompass a wide range of pursuits and end products, not the least of which is community cohesion. The narrow definition of art in a Western sense is, in the overall scheme of things, a fairly recent development. In relation to Native American art traditions, then, what aesthetic system governs decisions as to what is and is not art? As with categories of "high" and "low" art forms, a formal construct of aesthetics is a Western invention. This construct has been the defining paradigm for Western cultures not only as regards Euro-American arts traditions, but in encounters with non-Western art traditions as well. The result has typically been a set of culturally laden value judgments designed to make exotic objects more palatable to Western tastes while discounting the aesthetic frameworks of non-Western cultures.

The consequences of such an approach when applied cross-culturally is a reduction of objects to categories such as craft and/or artifact. Western systems typically seek to define art within an archetypal aesthetic frame work. The only real universal aesthetic as such is the intrinsic human desire to create objects of beauty, and in each case the sense of beauty exercised is culturally determined. Because of this an understanding of what is art in a given culture necessitates a grasp of the culture producing the art.

The aesthetic systems of both Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures certainly included beauty as a prerequisite for what was deemed acceptable artistically. An individual's expertise and facility in producing articles that were pleasing to the eye was highly valued in both cultures. The individual who was a skilled painter was routinely employed to paint vision based designs on shields and their covers as well as to produce depictions of personal exploits on hides, robes, and lodge covers. Excellence was the criterion for women's art, especially as regards quilling and beading among the Tsistsistas. Barbara Hail points this out succinctly in noting that "Cheyenne stitching lies flat against the skin, and the rows line up evenly throughout an entire piece due to the technique...This technical precision, with care in choosing color and design, has resulted in the Cheyennes' reputation as being among the finest of Plains bead workers."³⁶⁷

An article's worth was not based solely in its beauty of form or exactness of execution. While these were of importance, the ideal of beauty encompassed more than visually pleasing color, design, and form. The ritual/spiritual efficacy of an article was also of primary

³⁶⁷ Barbara Hail, *Hau, Kola!* (Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, 1980): 59.

importance. The manner in which an item was to be used and its impact as relates to the desired end was a concern at least as important to or more so than its pleasing appearance.

Hansen states:

Rather than being products of an artistic process, the objects serve as reflections of cultural ideals, beliefs, and knowledge. They may manifest the spirituality of a people or support community and individual achievements, aspirations and the proper roles of men and women, children and elders. For the artists, the creative process, with its attendant preparations, songs and prayers may have as much value as the completed work.³⁶⁸

The creation of shields, medicine lodge covers, war shirts, and ledger drawings exemplify the importance placed on process. Each of these items was created as a collaborative piece, and often times involved specific ritual acts and/or ceremonies in its making. The images applied to lodge covers, shields, and war shirts were of a visionary nature. As such their meanings were not known to any but the recipient of those images, however these were commonly rendered by another individual who was recognized as a proficient artist. During the course of the images' executions there were often certain strictures that were to adhered to lest the power inherent in those images be decreased and possible harm befall the owner's person and family. In the case of ledger drawings the recounting of deeds that accompanied the creation of these was of primary importance as a means of reinforcing a culturally accepted martial ethos.

The degree to which an item served to illustrate or reflect cultural "ideals, beliefs, and knowledge" was one of the most important criteria in Tsistsistas and Caiugu aesthetic

³⁶⁸ Hansen, "Powerful Images", 5.

systems. This function and the visual beauty of a piece were interrelated and integrated just as art and life were interrelated and integrated. The one could not exist apart from the other. For an item to be visually pleasing alone and fail in the expression of cultural ideals and values rendered it of no real consequence. W. Richard West, Jr. comments that “Unlike most of Western art, the objects created by those we now call native artists and artisans were not valued by their makers primarily as representations of individual creative and artistic expression. The material, instead, was appreciated by the native maker and community principally for its communal, ritualistic, or ceremonial significance.”³⁶⁹

Great emphasis was placed on articles which embodied basic cultural values and conventions. Figures of men and horses rendered in ledger drawings adhere to a set of specific cultural conventions that do not coincide with Euro-American artistic standards of proportion and realism. If one refers back to Figures 1, 12, 13, 14, and 15 a number of conventions are evidenced in the treatment of forms and their placement in space. Proper proportion of riders to horses is not a concern. The animals themselves frequently were drawn with small heads atop elegantly narrowing necks, while their bodies were often elongated and sported outstretched legs to convey speed. Figures exist on picture planes devoid of either foreground or background features, and appear to float across the page. The emphasis in the maker’s mind was clearly on the event portrayed with no concern for extraneous detail that would otherwise impede the art’s intended purpose. Petersen comments that:

³⁶⁹ W. Richard West, Jr., “Forward,” *This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Contemporary Native American Creativity* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1994): ix.

Plains drawings usually employed shorthand versions of recognizable objects rather than abstractions with “symbolic” meanings known only to the initiated. This was a matter of expediency, for, just as the sign language was the lingua franca among the diverse tongues of the Plains, picture writing was the inscribed equivalent thereof.³⁷⁰

Joyce Zsabo expounds on this in more detail, stating:

Clarity of understanding was the primary purpose which dictated the stylistic approaches that continued into ledger art. The most readily identifiable aspect of a figure or an *object* was portrayed to avoid confusion...Costume elements were sometimes emphasized while facial features were eliminated because paraphernalia or clothing carried complex social messages...and often the actual identity of the figures illustrated. Such messages were less likely to be misinterpreted than attempts at physical portraiture. (*Italics mine*)³⁷¹

An expressive grace of forms and pattern was often the desired visual aim as well.³⁷² Figure 27, “Indian Cavalry Charge” by the Caiugu artist Silver Horn displays a marked emphasis on patterning to achieve an enhanced sense of motion in forms. The line of riders arranged diagonally across the page in an overlapping of forms creates a visual flow conveying the forward rush of warriors in battle. Few riders are shown, and those which are serve to focus the drawing’s context on the movement of the warriors’ mounts. Above all expediency of interpretation was the primary goal in men’s representational art. An example is provided by representations of horses. It mattered less that a horse’s head was disproportionately small in relation to its body, or that legs were drawn in an outward thrusting pose. What did matter

³⁷⁰ Petersen, *Plains Indian Art*, x.

³⁷¹ Zsabo, *Howling Wolf*, 5.

³⁷² Berlo, “Artists, Ethnographers, and Historians,” 28-32.

was the *idea* represented by a horse in the makers' and viewers' minds, a vehicle of grace, power, and speed.



Figure 27.
Haungooah (Silver Horn). Caiugu.
“Indian Cavalry Charge.” Colored pencil, ink, and crayon on paper. 1890-95.
National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Silberman Collection catalogue no. 96.27.834.

Visual symbol systems also acted as “synthesizing symbols”, embodying the paradigm in which the universe is perceived to be ordered and the knowledge of that order.³⁷³ Men’s art accomplished the transmission of cultural values and knowledge through designs received through visionary experiences and traditional depictions. Beck and Walters state:

Knowledge was passed on by word of mouth and through story telling. More elaborately, knowledge was passed through ceremonials, *symbols*, and songs...Knowledge was confirmed over the years by specialists in sacred

³⁷³ Hatcher, *Art as Culture*, 126-128.

ways. (*italics mine*)³⁷⁴

Visionary themes focused on the supernatural powers that inhabited the unseen universe. These powers frequently chose to manifest themselves in animal and or human form, hence their representation as such. As a mechanism for value transmission, art served a synthesizing function by the expression of universally recognized cosmological concepts. Not only were the images and designs recognized by the larger society, but they were given credence through the auspices of spiritual specialists who interpreted visions within their own cultural context. Biographical formats such as painted robes, lodge covers, petroglyphs and pictographs, and ledger book drawings worked hand in hand with visionary designs, each serving to affirm the other. The depiction of a design received through a vision was more than a simple representation of or symbol for a specific item or concept. It was the embodiment of that item or concept. Brown states:

The generally understood meaning of the symbol as a form that stands for or points to something other than the particular form or expression is incomprehensible to the Indian. To the Indian's cognitive orientation, meanings are intuitively sensed and not secondarily interpreted through analysis; there tends to be a unity between form and idea or content. Here, the 'symbol' is, in a sense, that to which it refers. The tree at the center of the Sun Dance lodge does not just represent the axis of the world, but is that axis and is the center of the world. The eagle is not a symbol of the sun but is the sun in a certain sense; and similarly, the sun is not a symbol of the Creative Principle, but is that principle as manifested in the sun.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ Beck and Walters, 71.

³⁷⁵ Brown, *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*, 72.

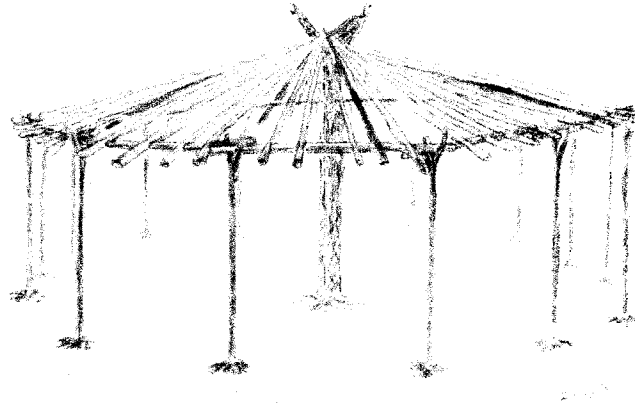


Figure 28.
Sun Dance Lodge.

Figure 28 depicts the center pole of the Sun Dance lodge with offerings tied to it. The center pole functions as a focal point for the participants' attentions. Much the same focus occurred when a specific visionary design was painted on a shield or war shirt was the metaphoric expression of the source of power, whether it was thunder, the buffalo, or sun itself that was referred to.

Irwin refers to visionary art as "holonomic",³⁷⁶ that is an expression of a specific totality or wholeness perceived to exist in the universe. The designs and objects used to express this totality point to the implicit totality rather than operating explicitly in and of themselves. Irwin also points out that vision imagery "...represents the visible portion of the enfolded order and serves as a constant reminder of those powers that remain yet concealed in the

³⁷⁶ Irwin, 212.

world strata and in every object that could potentially transform itself into a visionary appearance.”³⁷⁷ Greene has aptly demonstrated the use of metaphor as an underlying impetus behind Tsistsistas ledger book drawings. In her analysis she points out that scenes of courtship and hunting were metaphorical statements of dominance directly related to warfare.³⁷⁸ Killing the buffalo bull for use in the *K’ado* was equated with killing an enemy. After the animal was killed an eighteen inch wide strip including the horns and tail was cut from its back, with “the remainder left to rot in the sun as an enemy would be left.”³⁷⁹

The power referred to in vision imagery ensured the human partaker assistance for success and victory. When an individual entered a lodge whose cover was painted with visionary imagery he was, in his own mind, literally stepping inside that power represented. Yellowman has pointed out that painted lodges reflect the Tsistsistas universe. The specific power referenced in each tipi design was no less than the Creative Principle, or what would be referred to in a Western context as “God”. Dr. Jerry Bread adds to this in stating that “an individual would want to put something very positive on his lodge. The persons possessing the rights to display such imagery on their lodges would have been recipients of very potent medicine. “Placing these images on their lodges was a positive affirmation of protection as well as communicating to others the ferocity of the owner. A person would not want to put something negative on his lodge, but something positive as the lodge housed his family.”³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ Irwin, 215.

³⁷⁸ Greene, *Women, Bison, and Coup*, 11.

³⁷⁹ Kracht, 302-303.

³⁸⁰ Jerry Bread, February 21, 2002.

This applies as well to shield designs, which were two dimensional maps of the three dimensional universe. Imry Nagy states:

...Cheyenne religious concepts are expressed artistically. The figures and designs on Cheyenne heraldic objects (shields, painted tipis and figurative parfleches) are arranged holistically, as models of the universe. Circular shield designs can be seen as overhead maps of sacred space, while other Cheyenne heraldic objects are equally intended as reflections of the cosmos.³⁸¹

The same holds true for animal and bird body parts that were incorporated into a design. The use of hawk or eagle feathers on a shield, lance shaft, or headdress brought into being those qualities that made birds of prey attractive to the warrior such as speed, sustenance through predation, and proximity to the sun.³⁸² Similarly, bear's claws or a bear paw motif invoked in the warrior's person the power and ferocity of that animal. In this respect then, it was not so much an acquisition of supernatural powers that was effected by the use of designs and/or forms, as a statement of their active involvement in mortals' lives. Brown comments that "...there is no separation between the created form of whatever medium, and the message or power this form bears and transmits...the power is always latently present in the created design or object."³⁸³

The stories contained in biographical renderings, whether on rock, hide, or the pages of ledger books went beyond simple recording of events and deeds performed. The accuracy of

³⁸¹ Nagy, "Cheyenne Shields and Their Cosmological Background," 45.

³⁸² John H. Moore, "The Ornithology of Cheyenne Religionists," *Plains Anthropologist* 31: 113 (August, 1996): 177-192.

³⁸³ Brown, 74.

this form of visual expression as a recording device and as an ethnographic tool has been aptly demonstrated by Janet Berlo and Jean Afton et al.³⁸⁴ Afton has demonstrated that the depiction of saddle types, halters, and firearms in ledger drawings provide good indicators of specific time frames. Biographical compositions were mimetic devices by which an individual recounted the efficacy of the supernatural powers on behalf of a story's protagonist through the use of specific conventions. Such works were essentially expository in nature. The care taken to depict such items was more than a keen observer's eye and love of detail, or the simple need to denote an individual's identity. While attention to detail and the identification of individuals in a narrative were important, a deeper function was fulfilled. Each detail of regalia, paint, and visionary design depicted directly referenced supernatural agency and accorded mythic events relevance to everyday life. While elements, in the form of shield designs, articles of clothing and society regalia, and body and horse paints, were carefully delineated, these drawings were embodiments of an individual's power, not simply recording devices.³⁸⁵

The relationship between vision based art and biographical art was very much one of cause and effect. Without supernatural empowerment a man was naked and defenseless before his enemies. In securing assistance from supernatural forces, however, the warrior was able to fulfill his role in society and achieve respect and status in the eyes of his peers. Viewing items of power reminded the warrior that those powers were present and ready as

³⁸⁴ Berlo, "Artists, Ethnographers, and Historians," 27, 28; Jean Afton, et al, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers*.

³⁸⁵ Gordon Yellowman, December 12, 2002.

a means of attaining success. Brown refers to this as giving the mythical an “immediacy of present tense.”³⁸⁶ The supernatural powers were not fettered by spatial-temporal constraints which would hold them forever in the mythic past. Instead these forces were able to transcend barriers of space and time to inhabit the present, to inform it, and form it. Because of this the concepts relayed through drawn and painted media were not representations of events that occurred in a hazy past beyond living memory. They became part of an on-going process of creation. At the very moment the warrior donned his headdress, applied his body paint, sang his songs, and took up his shield he became fully capable of wielding the powers embodied in those painted designs, totemic articles, songs, and rituals, just as had the culture heroes who first demonstrated them. Brown suggests implicitly that creation does not occur out of nothingness, but is instead an on-going, cyclical process by making “manifest the power or quality...of that which is named.”³⁸⁷ While Brown is specifically referencing the use of the spoken word in ritual, the same applies to visual works which manifest the “power or quality” of a given source. This process of on-going creation is/was based on a conception of circularity in which time wraps back onto itself. Beck and Walters note this element of timelessness in many Native oral traditions.³⁸⁸ This is in contrast to a Western paradigm of linear temporal progression which continually moves away from past events.

The process that was initiated through the painting of visionary images and their subsequent depictions in biographical contexts was much the same as the concept of

³⁸⁶ Brown, 49, 50.

³⁸⁷ Brown, 88, 89.

³⁸⁸ Beck and Walters, 77.

“cosmocization of territory” as expounded by Eliade. In each culture the designs, attendant articles of regalia, colors, and kinetic additions used in the art referenced the cosmology. Men’s art continually called the vital forces of the universe into active being, much like a play composed of a series of never ending acts with no scripted ending. Each element of Tsistsistas and Caiugu cosmology in turn was a manifestation of the ultimate Creative Principle. The representations may have been figurative and some even realistic. Each element of the natural world depicted had a place within the cosmocized territory of each group. This was true whether the image depicted represented a stylized landscape, bear, horse, or steer. Interestingly, in regard to the latter two of these, domesticates came to be associated not only with economic affluence, but also came to be regarded as conduits of power in the latter nineteenth century.³⁸⁹ Irwin asserts that this “mapping” of cosmological realms was “congruent with a Plains ecological setting and a recognition of the relatively stable features of that landscape, particularly in terms of how a specific place relates to its social and mythic history.”³⁹⁰

A bear motif on a Caiugu shield such as those in Figure 29 could evoke associations with *Tso’ saw*, “the rock that pushed up the boys” and enabled them to escape an enraged bear.

³⁸⁹ The use of horse and domestic cattle representations in vision imagery is evidenced in several visual examples. Among these is the Black-Eared tipi of Screaming On High, on which two ungulates flank the doorway of the lodge. The one on the right side is a buffalo, while the one appearing on the left side of the doorway is clearly meant to represent a longhorn steer (see Ewer’s *Murals in the Round*). A similar compositional arrangement is found on the Crazy Bear tipi, also pictured in Ewers; One of Tsetainte’s shield designs recorded in Bill Meadows’s notes has as a central motif a bull with blue forequarters and a dotted mid-section.

³⁹⁰ Irwin, 26.

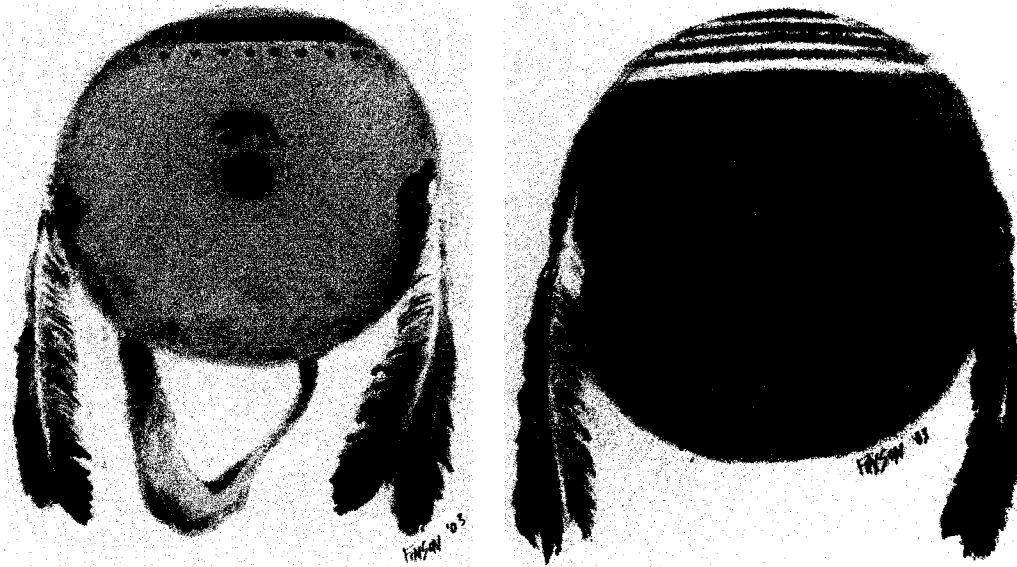


Figure 29.
Onhati shield (L) and *Settiia* shield designs. Caiugu. Hide, paint, and feathers. Nineteenth Century.
National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. Bill Meadow's notes, Box 138, File 4
Catalogue no.s 165 209 and 229 899.

The stylized landscape in a Tsistsistas shield design (Figure 30) might represent the sacred mountain and the caves of the *maiyun*. In both instances the sites referenced actually existed in the physical territories of the two peoples. A horned snapping turtle motif on a shield such as that shown in Figure 5 would potentially elicit in Tsistsistas' minds the separation of the people into two groups, and concepts of the earth's procreative powers as evidenced in the ethonic nature of the turtle. The ability of the turtle to live in both the underwater and above worlds spoke of its mystery and power.



Figure 30.
Tsistsistas. Dog Man shield: Nineteenth Century.
Leather, paint, feathers. Peabody Essex Museum. Cat. no. E26065

The vitality of visual elements resided in their role as direct conduits to and from the Creative Principle itself. Because of this it was not the physical item represented that was of importance. It was the power that resided in the underlying concept behind the design painted on a shield or body paint pattern that was efficacious. The entire corpus of visual symbols, images, songs, dances, and objects associated with a particular source of empowerment became transmitters or communicators of power. Irwin comments that discovering the “living quality of the natural world often leads to a conscious shaping of objects that are

intended to communicate power to others.”³⁹¹

The retention of the rawhide shield provides a case in point for this argument. The use of firearms in Plains warfare eventually rendered the rawhide shield obsolete as a means of protection against an enemy’s missiles. While shields adequately protected against smooth bore muskets, subsequent developments in firearms technology during the nineteenth century negated their practicality as physical protection.³⁹² In spite of the obvious shortcomings shields presented, they continued to be carried into battle.

The reasons for the endurance of rawhide shields as an item of standard equipment were the designs painted on their surfaces, the materials themselves, and the powers believed to reside in these.³⁹³ Enterprising traders did not always recognize the significance of the protective designs on Plains shields. In 1821 Nicholas Garry, Deputy Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company, after visiting the Northwest Territories, recommended for use in the Indian trade “Copper shields or of tin with paintings of a frightful animal, red color, will please the Indians.” Ewers mentions attempts by The American Fur Company to replace Native shields among the Upper Missouri River tribes with those of their own manufacture, an effort that met with strong resistance.³⁹⁴ In this respect art’s agency in life’s activities,

³⁹¹ Irwin, 31.

³⁹² Riku Hamalainen, “The Study of the Plains Indian Shields,” Tuula Sakaranaho, Tom Sjoblom, Terhi Utriainen, and Heikki Pesonne, eds., *Styles and Positions: Ethnographic perspectives in comparative religion* (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2002): 255.

³⁹³ Brown, 72.

³⁹⁴ Nicholas Garry, *Diary of Nicholas Garry: Narratives of His Travels in the Northwest Territories of British North America in 1821, Proceedings and Transactions of the*

particularly warfare, was cosmologically centered, and could not be replaced by facsimiles of the rawhide shield no matter how skillfully crafted. Through this centering the individual himself became the focal point upon which supernatural forces converged through an implicit transfer of power.³⁹⁵

The individual character of a design's power made designs subject to strict rules of ownership. Often when an individual received a design he also received the right to reproduce it a certain number of times before its efficacy was reduced and/or lost. Such duplication was a prevalent feature in Caiugu culture. Certain shield designs proved to be so effective as protective agents in warfare that as many as ten variants of some designs are known to have been produced.³⁹⁶ These design rights were often purchased by other members of the owner's family, such as sons and nephews, but could also be transferred to others outside the family.³⁹⁷ This tradition of intangible property rights was not confined to the Caiugu alone, but was practiced as well by the Tsistsistas and numerous other groups in the Plains. Among the Tsistsistas this was particularly prevalent in relation to quill and beadwork

Royal Society of Canada 2nd Series Vol. VI (Toronto: Royal Society of Canada, 1900): 195; James H. Bradley, "Characteristics, Habits and Customs of the Blackfoot Indians," *Montana Historical Society Contributions* vol. 9. (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1923); Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture*, (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 159): 203.

³⁹⁵ Gordon Yellowman, October 1, 2002.

³⁹⁶ James Mooney, "Notes on Kiowa Heraldry," Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives MS 2538 Box 1, 2; MS 2531 vol. 12.

³⁹⁷ Candace S. Greene, "The Tipi with Battle Pictures," *Natural History* 10, (1993): 68-76; Candace S. Greene and Thomas D. Drescher, "The Tipi with Battle Pictures: The Kiowa Tradition of Intangible Property Rights," In *The Trademark Reporter* 84:4 (July-August 1994): 418-433.

designs. Families and individuals within families held rights to particular designs, and it was considered to be blatant thievery for anyone else to copy these. Cheyenne elder Sam Hart confirms this in stating that he would recognize his mother's designs anywhere.³⁹⁸ Marriott as well points this out in relation to medicine bundles containing design patterns owned by members of the Southern Cheyenne Women's trade guild.³⁹⁹

Art was a pervasive influence in the everyday lives of nineteenth-century Tsistasistas and Caiugu peoples. The synthesis of each people's world views and associated perceptions of place and purpose in the universe was expressed through art. As such, art determined culture and culture in turn determined art. Each article of regalia, every scene rendered on a robe or ledger book page, and each shield design reaffirmed the cosmological bases for the warrior's position in society at large. The art that was produced also reaffirmed cultural constructs of the universal order as defined in the cosmogeny of both the Tsistasistas and Caiugu. Formats encompassing visionary and biographic modes of expression played a part in an on-going creative process as metaphoric and expository statements.

The distinction between metaphoric and expository themes can best be exemplified through an examination of individual works and their possible interpretations. The word "possible" is employed here as it is not plausible, with any amount of certainty, to overlay interpretations from a modern day perspective on articles created nearly one hundred fifty years ago. However, a reasonable postulation can be applied to works based on available ethnographic information. This will be undertaken in the following chapter as vision-based

³⁹⁸ Sam Hart, June 25, 2002.

³⁹⁹ Marriott, "The Trade Guild of the Southern Cheyenne Women," 252.

imagery and records of personal exploits are examined through individual works.

Regardless of the function that art serves in a given context, it is a highly emotive means of communication, and often augments verbal systems of communication. A particular motif, color, or design can evoke associative concepts understood by members of a given culture. Yet expression of these concepts often cannot be adequately conveyed through words alone. Instead the words contained in songs and ritual chants or invocations worked in concert with the entire corpus of visual imagery associated with an individual's power.

Chapter Five

Embodiments of Power: Vision Imagery and Biographic Art

Vision imagery was the individual expression of power clothed in metaphors. These expressions found voice through a number of formats. Lodge covers, shields and shield covers, body and face paints, articles of clothing, and items of personal equipment and regalia all provided formats through which the individual warrior was able to visually express the intangible forces that worked on his behalf. While the formats in which vision based imagery could occur were many and varied, they shared a common element. Vision imagery was of a highly personal nature. This is demonstrated through the images contained in this chapter. Most of these images have not been published previously. The exceptions are Figures 31, 32, 43 (no. 08929700), and 60. A surface level reading of these images' visual elements yields numerous recognizable representations of forms and figures taken directly from the natural world. Elements such as anthropomorphic and human figures, animals, celestial objects such as the sun, moon, and various stars and/or constellations, birds, and aspects of the physical landscape were common motifs appearing in vision art. Often these were rendered in a recognizable fashion, while other examples were schematized or represented mythic creatures such as the *Caiugu zemoguani*, or water monster, as shown in Figure 31.⁴⁰⁰ However these individual representations may have been presented, viewers

⁴⁰⁰ Myers Wahnee, Jr., personal communication, April 18, 2202. Carnegie, Oklahoma. Mr Wahnee related stories he was told by his Kiowa relatives about these creatures. He was told they lived in deep water, and because of that he and his friends were afraid to swim in deep areas of the Washita River. Another story he related told of a group of Caiugu hunters, who, while setting up camp along the Washita's banks, lost one of their horses in the river, the hapless animal having been dragged away by some unseen creature; Dr. Bread, a Kiowa, also cited a story he had heard as a child about this creature. He says he

were able to identify and associate each of them with some element occurring in the natural world. A bear's paw, no matter how schematized is recognizable as a bear's paw, while a crescent is identifiable as the moon. The familiarity of forms ends with this surface reading, however, as each element in a design operates metaphorically. The rainbow borders in the Underwater Monster Tipi design, while depicting a recognizable natural phenomenon, could

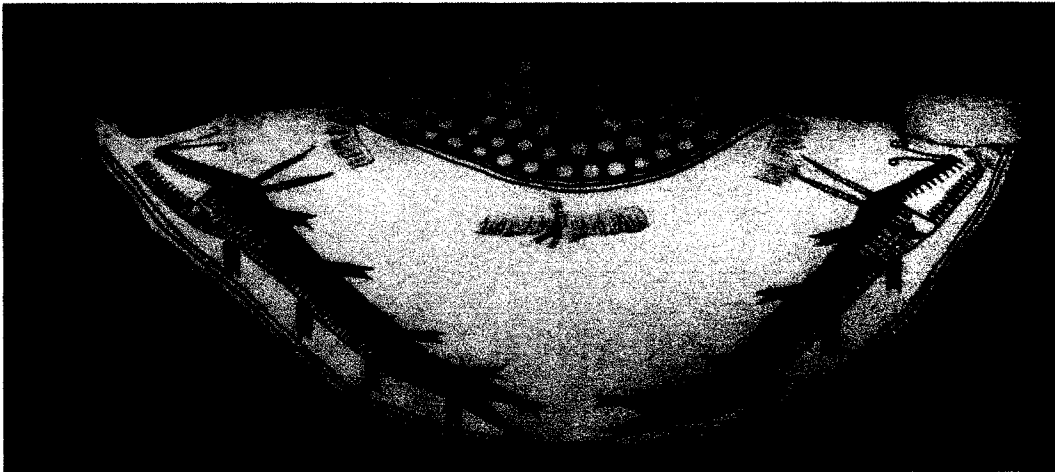


Figure 31.
Caiugu. A replica of "The Underwater Monster Tipi." Nineteenth Century.
National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.
Cat. no. 245,045.

be interpreted as representative of the boundary separating the celestial and terrestrial worlds. Contained within these borders are depictions of the *zemaguani*, which serve as metaphoric expressions for the mysterious realm of deep water. The stars painted in the tipi's upper register can likewise be interpreted as metaphoric embodiments of the celestial powers that provided protection against unseen and potentially malevolent forces.

always thought it was a story to make children cautious about deep water, as the Caiugu are "earth people". He also stated that he thought the representation reminiscent of an alligator or alligator gar. Jerry Bread, January 22, 2002.

The knowledge accompanying power was often known only to the individual. Sometimes this knowledge was shared with a priest or religious practitioner in order that the recipient might gain a deeper understanding of the power itself, but rarely was such knowledge a matter of public record. Reasons underlying this secrecy were that to speak openly about one's medicine lessened its effectiveness. Also, Plains religious beliefs were very much reliant on visual symbols to relay information that was not possible to verbalize. Irwin comments:

Because the contents of any sacred imagery embody a vital expressiveness, they have a communicative efficacy that functions nonverbally to convey the image's significance. The expressivity of the visionary imagery is holonomic: it dramatically communicates a totality of potential meanings, many of which are neither recorded, collected, nor verbally explicit in the mind of the culture member.⁴⁰¹

This sense of the imagery having a nonverbal character is echoed by Edgar Heap-Of-Birds who states that "outside observers of culture feel it is necessary to create or make symbolic references, that is assign explicit meanings to elements of culture, whereas members of a particular culture don't do this because of direct personal involvement and immersion into the ceremonies. One is surrounded by it."⁴⁰² Put another way, the import of the visual imagery is understood by members of a culture even if they are not able to express this verbally, and the imagery simply speaks for itself.

Vision or dream imagery was given with specific knowledge for the proper handling of

⁴⁰¹ Irwin, 212.

⁴⁰² Heap-Of-Birds, June 23, 2003.

the power that was made available through it. This knowledge might, and frequently did, include certain taboos to be avoided, particular songs and/or chants that had to be recited, and rituals to be performed in order for the medicine, or power, to be effective.⁴⁰³ To neglect doing any of those things proscribed by one's spirit helpers would nullify power, rendering it useless and in many cases dangerous to the recipient and his family. A prime example of the risks incurred by an improper handling of power is found in the account of Roman Nose, a prominent Tsistsistas war leader. Roman Nose was under restriction not to eat any meat that had been cooked with metal utensils. Failing to adhere to this stricture ultimately cost him his life at the battle of Beecher's Island in 1868.⁴⁰⁴

The Whistling Elk shield (Figure 32) and the Crazy Mule shield (Figure 33) offer examples of personal knowledge that is guarded. While detailed information is available on the designs' iconography, attendant ritual knowledge about the use of these shields' powers was withheld.

Both shields are discussed by Grinnell who gives the story behind each shield's origin.⁴⁰⁵ Crazy Mule, a Tsistsistas holy man, made four shields bearing the image of a thunderbird and four black discs representing the four semi-cardinal points. Grinnell asserts that the owners of these shields were careful to smoke alone, or only in the company of another who owned

⁴⁰³ Sam Hart. Interviewed by author. El Reno, Oklahoma, December 12, 2003. Mr. Hart states that putting on one's finest clothes and regalia was never a simple matter. "It was not like going to your closet and picking out a suit to wear to the office. Everything had to be done right or the medicine's power was ruined."

⁴⁰⁴ Grinnell. *The Cheyenne Indians* II, 120; *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 276.

⁴⁰⁵ Grinnell, II: 195-197.

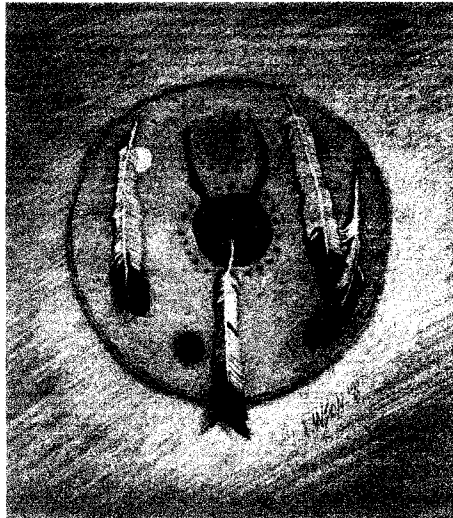


Figure 32.
The Whistling Elk Shield. Tsistsistas. N.D.
Drawn after Grinnell.

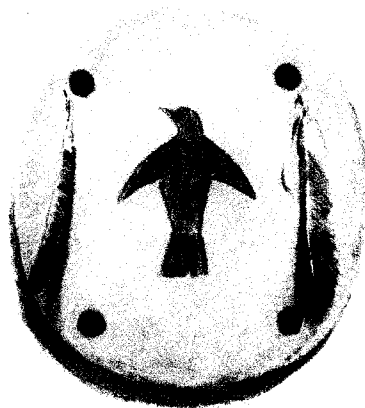


Figure 33.
The Crazy Mule Shield. Tsistsistas. N. D.
Drawn after Grinnell.

such a shield.⁴⁰⁶ Smoking as an activity was meant to reaffirm the bond between individuals or in accompaniment to ritual observances. It is likely that the owners of these shields either performed specific rituals connected with their shields, discussed ritual knowledge connected with these, or both when they smoked. The implication in Grinnell's account is that only privileged individuals shared the pipe, as he specifically mentions that others were asked to leave the lodge and "a stick was placed across the door as a sign that no one should enter." In the case of Whistling Elk's shield design, a buffalo "raised its head above the water and sang a song, directing Whistling Elk to make a shield and describing how it should be made."⁴⁰⁷ Certain strictures and proper rituals for the maintenance of the shield's power would have been included in these instructions, yet Grinnell was not given such details.

The two shields are similar in composition and overall design. Both feature a large central motif surrounded by smaller supporting motifs. The Crazy Mule shield has as its central design element a thunderbird, while that of the Whistling Elk shield is a horned disc. Both shields also bear four small discs corresponding to the semi-cardinal directions. In the case of Crazy Mule's design the four discs are all black, and rely on their placement relative to the viewer to convey directional associations. Black connoted completion, and the design on Crazy Mule's shield could well be interpreted as an implicit statement of finality. The shield's owner would be successful against his enemy. The discs in the Whistling Elk design not only take into account the viewer's perspective, but also utilize specific color associations corresponding to the four directions. The thunderbird figure, as noted in the

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. 195.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 196.

examples of the Little Rock and Broadhead shields, signified a direct link with the Creator, or, put in another way, an assurance of divine protection and sanction.

More details of the meaning behind these shield designs can be found in Grinnell's account,⁴⁰⁸ as well as that of Imry Nagy who sheds further light on the possible underlying significance behind the various design elements.⁴⁰⁹ The central motif's horns represents the buffalo that instructed Whistling Elk in the shield's design and construction, while the disc itself signifies the moon's protection. The small red disc above the central motif represents the sun, while the small dots around both discs are stars. Each of the four small discs at the shield's outer edge represent the *maiyun* who are responsible for life under *Maheo*'s oversight. By referencing the four cardinal *maiyun* and celestial forces such as the moon and stars, Whistling Elk was acknowledging the Creator as the ultimate source of power and protection. Crazy Mule's shield communicates this as well. Both designs focus on a central point surrounded by representations of the universe's four corners, and each serves as a two dimensional map of that universe. The imagery of each design also expresses a particular totality in the unification of both chthonic, or earthly, and celestial powers. The horned disc of the Whistling Elk shield is a reference to the buffalo, which is associated with the deep earth, as is the color black which is given such predominance in the Crazy Mule shield. However, while the information Grinnell and Nagy set forth provides a basis for interpretation, the knowledge of how to properly use and handle the power inherent in the shields was a mystery known only to the shields' owners.

⁴⁰⁸ Grinnell. *The Cheyenne Indians* I, 195-197.

⁴⁰⁹ Nagy. "Cheyenne Shields," passim.

Understanding vision-based imagery was largely dependent on an individual's place and role in the culture, as well as his/her own personal experiences.⁴¹⁰ For instance, there are realms of knowledge that are accessible only to those who function in a priestly capacity. Among the Tsistsistas there was at one time a society of Star People. Their realm of knowledge pertained to the movements of celestial bodies and their influence in mortals' lives. The knowledge possessed by the Star people was carefully guarded, and was passed on only to individuals who were deemed ready and prepared to gain such knowledge. Many individuals never were prepared to receive this knowledge, and because of this there was a dearth of initiates. The result was a loss of knowledge and the eventual extinction of this society.⁴¹¹ Much the same set of circumstances surround the Caiugu medicine bundles. Only the bundle keepers knew the proper manner in which to handle and care for these. Because of the sacredness of the bundles and the secrecy in which they were shrouded, few if any qualified individuals have been entrusted with them since the beginning of the reservation era.⁴¹² A similar loss of ritual knowledge came about in relation to the Tsistsistas Massaum and the Caiugu *Tai'me*.

There was/is men's knowledge and women's knowledge. Within the scope of these knowledge bases were differences in the level of knowledge possessed by initiates of an

⁴¹⁰ Women experienced visions as well as men in plains cultures. The example cited in chapter three (p. 98, f.n. 207) details a vision in which a Kiowa woman received buffalo power for healing.

⁴¹¹ Gordon Yellowman, October 1, 2002.

⁴¹² Harding Big Bow, Tom Little Chief, and James Silver Horn. The Kiowa Culture Project, CD 1 "History and Beginnings." Kiowa Tribe Museum Collections, Carnegie, Oklahoma.

order and those holding positions of authority within a particular organization. Often induction into a society entailed years of work and training before an individual would rise through the various levels of ritual knowledge connected with that society. This was particularly true in regard to the medicine societies. The knowledge pertaining to a specific society's rites and observances was generally known only to members of that society and/or group while remaining a mystery to those outside the bounds of membership. Women's knowledge was fundamentally different from men's, and this is still evident today in the types and makeup of the stories told by each gender.⁴¹³ Exemplifying these differences is knowledge pertaining to society dress and accouterments. Men belonging to a particular society will know not only what dress is connected with their society, but its significance as well. His wife and daughters, on the other hand, will not necessarily share the same of level of understanding about the significance behind such society items.⁴¹⁴

Differences in levels of knowledge and the personal aspect involved render definitive interpretations of men's visionary art as speculative at best. Understanding the meaning of vision based art is further complicated by two additional factors, time and the personal nature of the imagery. Time and distance frequently impact the understanding of an item's

⁴¹³ The Kiowa Culture Project, Oral histories tapes. Collections, Kiowa Tribe Museum, Carnegie, Oklahoma. Passim. In many of the recorded sessions dealing with various realms of knowledge, the men are largely silent on issues concerning women and women's arts, while the reverse is true in relation to men's knowledge. When a member of one gender comments on the activities and affairs of the other, the information is often fragmentary or even superficial. This is in contrast to information given by individuals relating to their own gender, which is quite detailed.

⁴¹⁴ Sam Hart, personal communication, El Reno, Oklahoma, December 12, 2002. Mr. Hart states that it is very important to know and understand the history and significance of each article of regalia, and the proper manner of handling it.

significance, as motifs change and original meanings become modified to accommodate the needs and perspectives incurred through culture change. Such metamorphoses often result in the retention of some forms simply for their aesthetic qualities, while the sociocultural significance of other forms and elements enjoys a marked continuity. However, each composition can be broken down and carefully dissected in its various component parts. Each of these in turn can be examined with regard to cultural significance. And, while individual visual elements can be analyzed, no one can accurately interpret a design or composition's meaning completely. It is simply impossible to know what the individual who created that design and/or composition was thinking. Many times upon being asked about a nineteenth-century design respondents will answer that they do not know. When asked about the possible meaning of the imagery in figure 34, Gordon Yellowman, while able to identify the forms as carp, tadpole, and water bird or kingfisher, stated, "I don't know. It was something that this person got in a vision."⁴¹⁵ This statement underscores the private nature of vision imagery.

Vision imagery, as noted by Irwin, is holonomic, or all inclusive in its character. This holonomic character is particularly evident in the body of imagery that pertained to an individual's visual expressions of power. The lodge, shield design, body and horse paints, and other visual elements such as animal and bird body parts used in regalia, personal bundle items, and portrayals in ledger art were considered part and parcel of a whole rather than

⁴¹⁵ Gordon Yellowman, November 7, 2002.

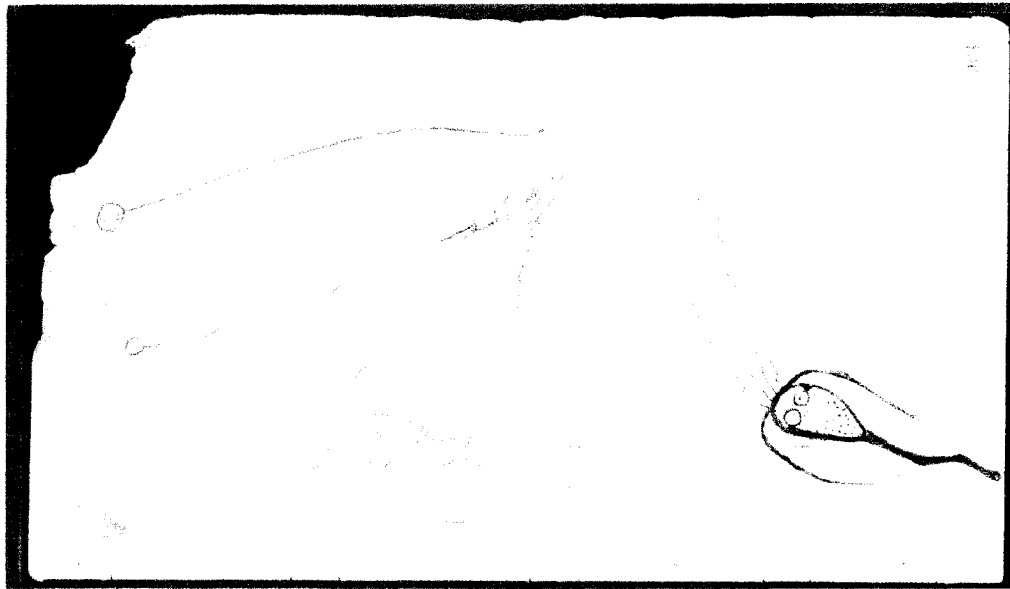


Figure 34.
Tsistsistas. Ca. 1865. Page 106 of the Tie Creek Ledger
Private collection, name withheld upon request.

separate elements in and of themselves. Irwin refers to this as a “repertoire”.⁴¹⁶ This repertory becomes readily evident in examples taken from ledger art and heraldry in general. Each repertoire could be either culturally shared or individual, and in both cases reflected the original visionary experience from which the image arose.⁴¹⁷ This cultural-individual dualism is echoed by Gordon Yellowman in regard to the imagery in another page from the Tie Creek Ledger (Figure 35) which depicts an eagle anthropomorph. Yellowman states that the eagle anthropomorph “shows the sacred eagle paint still used today [in the Sun Dance].”⁴¹⁸ While the eagle paint is recognized by members of the wider community as an element of the Life

⁴¹⁶ Irwin, 216.

⁴¹⁷ Grinnell, I, 188, 189; Irwin, 213.

⁴¹⁸ Yellowman, personal communication. El Reno, Oklahoma, November 8, 2002.

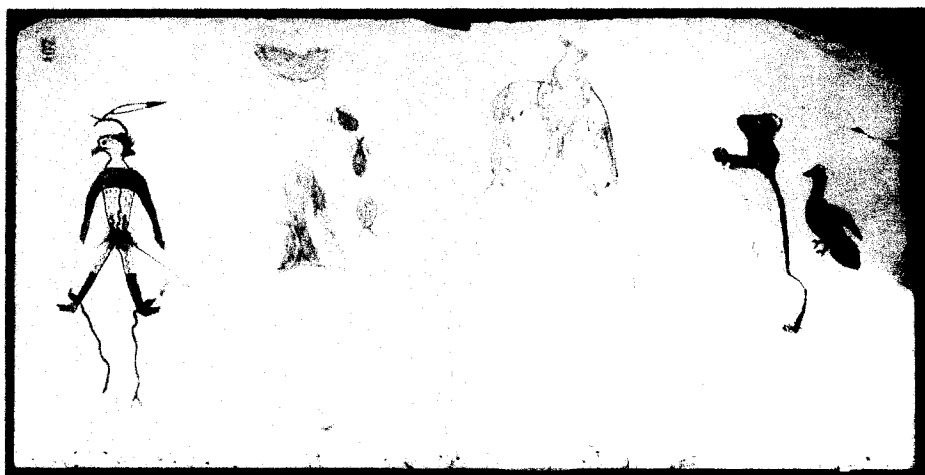


Figure 35.
Tsistsistas. Ca. 1865. Page 107 of the Tie Creek Ledger.
Private Collection. Name withheld by request.

Generator Lodge, the Tie Creek image depicts this as part of a separate and personal visionary expression whose significance was probably known only to the artist. The holonomic character of the imagery is best understood through an examination of these elements as related groups of articles. Lodges, paints, shields, and accouterments, together or in varying combinations, functioned as iconographic groups.

An example of lances, bonnets, and shields associated with specific lodges is seen in Buffalo Meat's scene "Tipis and Owners." (Figure 36). While this study is concerned primarily with men's arts, vision imagery was not relegated to men alone, as evidenced in Buffalo Meat's drawing in Figure 36. The two women beside the lodges with yellow pendants on them are members of the War Bonnet Society of the Lightning Clan.⁴¹⁹ The lodge depicted third from left on the bottom row probably housed one of the society sisters

⁴¹⁹ Yellowman, October 1, 2002.

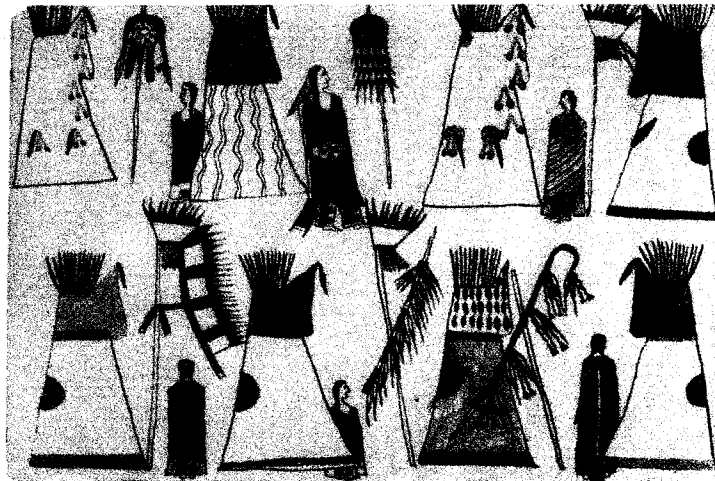


Figure 36.
 Buffalo Meat. Tsistsistas. "Tipis and Owners."
 Crayon, colored pencil, ink, Ca. 1875-1877.
 National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. Silberman Collection. Inventory no. 1997.07.020.

of the Bowstrings, as indicated by the crooked lance beside it.⁴²⁰ The lance pointing downward signifies that it is a woman's symbol.⁴²¹ It is interesting to note that the lance is directed downward toward the deep earth, source of women's power. This directional orientation is in contrast to that shown in the image in Figure 37 by an unknown Tsistsistas artist in which the lance is directed away from the earth. An explanation for this difference in the orientation of men's and women's lances is given by Powell in his article on the sacred bow lance. Powell states that a contrary never pointed the bow lance directly at the earth, as doing so would "wound her, weakening the flow of life from her body."⁴²² While

⁴²⁰ George A. Dorsey, *The Cheyenne. Ceremonial Organization*: 16, 17.

⁴²¹ Yellowman, October 1, 2002.

⁴²² Peter J. Powell, "Bearers of the Sacred Thunder Bow," Part I, *American Indian Art magazine* (Summer 2002): 70.

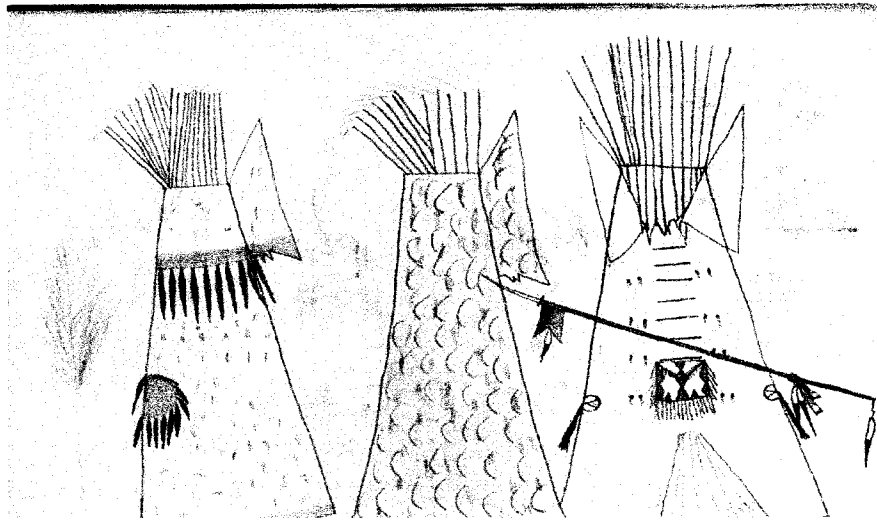


Figure 37.

Tsistsistas. Artist unknown. "Three Painted Tipis, a Feathered Lance, and a Tree." Colored pencil, pencil. N. D. National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 154064c. Inv. no. 08510902.

the lance portrayed in Figure 37 is not a sacred lance, but a personal lance, it is still interesting to note the difference in its display. Regardless of the gender issues that may be involved in these depictions, the association among lodges, lances, headdresses, and shields as iconographically related elements begins to become evident.

The display of articles in conjunction with an individual's lodge as a body of related imagery is again found in Making Medicine's drawing "A Cheyenne at Home." (Figure 38). Both lances and bonnets are displayed outside the painted lodges, and the individuals portrayed wear similar headdresses. These elements indicate that they are members of the same society. Yellowman points out that shields, lances, bonnets, and other articles were hung outside the painted lodges, and the individuals portrayed wear similar headdresses. These elements indicate that they are members of the same society. Yellowman points out that shields, lances, bonnets, and other articles were hung outside where the sun would strike

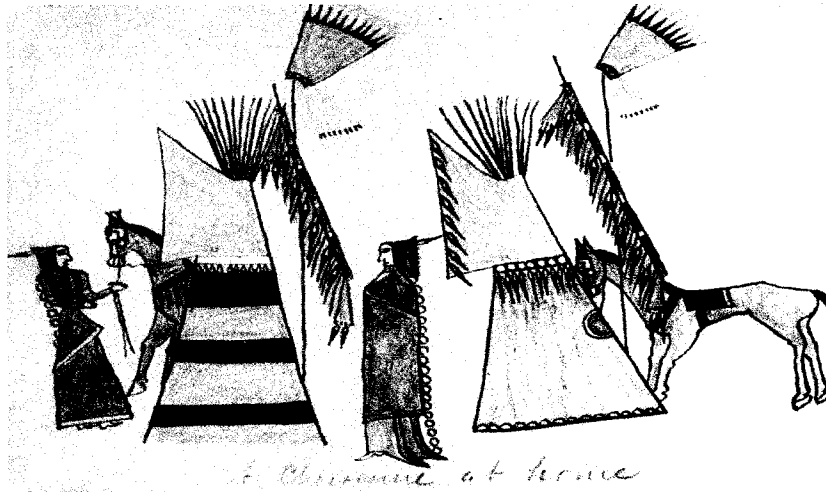


Figure 38.
Making Medicine. Tsistsistas. "A Cheyenne at Home." Colored ink, crayon. 1875-1878.
National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. Silberman Collection. Catalogue no. 1996.27.0542.

them so that their power could be renewed.⁴²³

The drawings in Figures 39 and 40 further exemplify the display of power as expressed in a repertoire of articles. Both drawings by the Tsistsistas *Tickematse*, or Squint Eyes, display shields and lances, and in the case of Figure 40, a bonnet with feathered trailer. The shields in both images are portrayed as hanging on trees which would indicate that these were featured in the Life Generator Lodge ceremony.⁴²⁴ This would place these shields among the seven original society shields mentioned by Grinnell. He states that there were three types of shields among the Tsistsitas. The most important were the group shields, followed by

⁴²³ Yellowman, October 1, 2002.

⁴²⁴ Yellowman, personal communication, March 27, 2003.

dream shields, and finally unadorned shields meant strictly as defensive gear.⁴²⁵



Figure 39.

Tickematse. Tsistsistas. "Three Distinguished Warriors." Pencil and crayon. 1876.
National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. Silberman Collection. Catalogue no. 1997.17.0142.

Such conspicuous displays of an individual's power through a repertoire of regalia and articles was documented by Mooney in his field notes on the Tsistsistas and Caiugu. Figure 42 shows a variant of a shield made for *Kiadotl* by the owl prophet *Mamante*, or "Screaming on High," a prominent holy man among the nineteenth-century Caiugu. Mooney clearly documented face paint that was meant to be worn by the shield's owner. Also shown is the tripod upon which the shield was hung, along with the stuffed skin of an unidentified animal painted yellow. These items together worked in concert as war medicines.

Such repertory is further documented in a number of drawings Mooney had commissioned during his work among the Caiugu. Figure 42 shows the face and horse paint of *Guata*. This

⁴²⁵ Grinnell, I, 188.

individual also is depicted as wearing a transverse eagle feather and a headdress of what

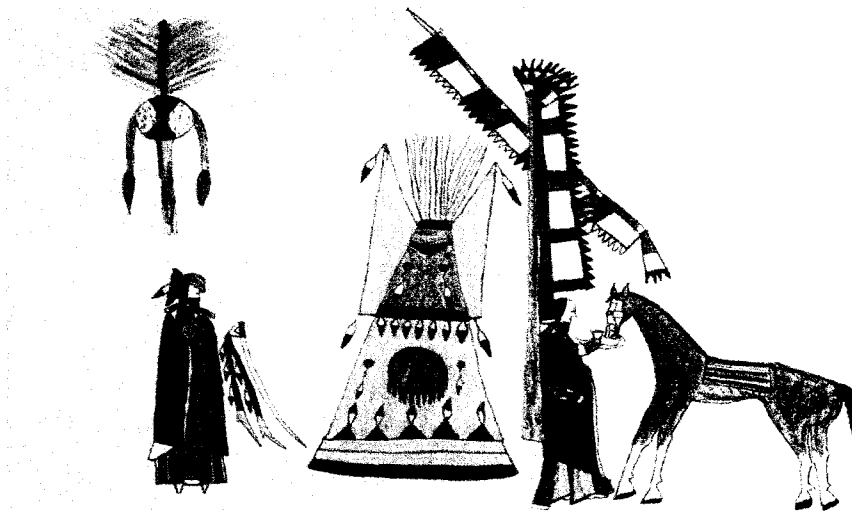


Figure 40.

Tickematse. Tsistsistas. Untitled. Pencil and crayon. 1876.

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. Silberman Collection. Catalogue no. 1997.17.0143.

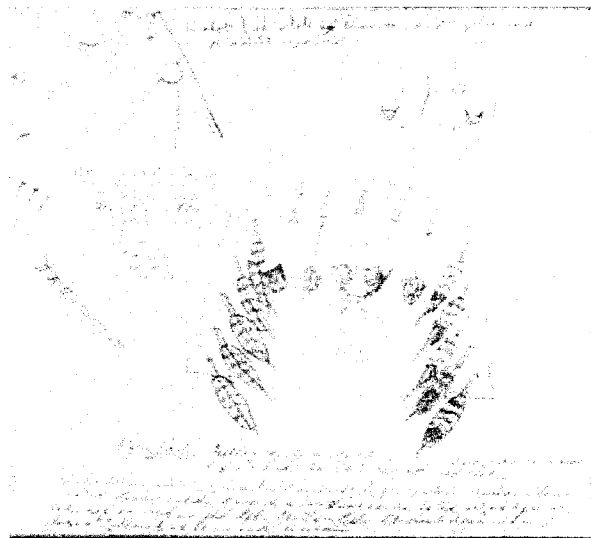


Figure 41.

Mamante shield of Kiadotl. James Mooney. "Notes on Kiowa Heraldry." Detail.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08912300.

appears to be an upright grouping of feathers which have been trimmed in such a way that

only their tips have been left. His horse is painted to mirror his face paint. The yellow neck and painted discs are probable references to the sun. Also depicted in the drawing is a stuffed hawk suspended from the horse's bridle.⁴²⁶

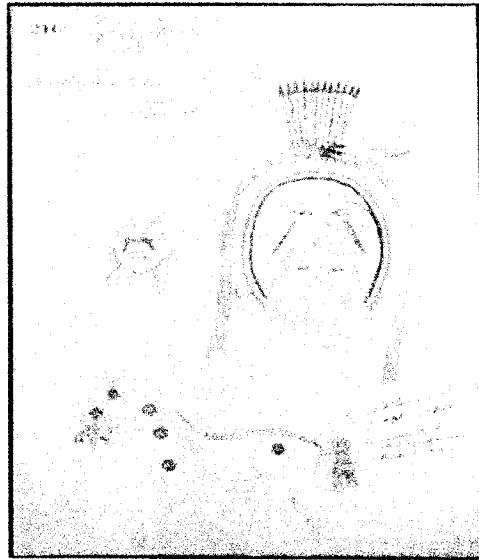


Figure 42.

Guata Face and Horse Paint. James Mooney. "Notes on Kiowa Heraldry."
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08922300.

Examples of body paints corresponding to shield designs occur in Figures 43 and 44. The individual on the left in figure 44 wears red paint on his upper face and upper torso, and down the arms to the elbows. The upper torso paint features white dots corresponding to those found in the shield's upper register above the green crescent moon. Mooney mentions in his notes that certain individuals would uncover their shields during the time of a new crescent moon. This was a means of renewing the shield's power, much in the same way as

⁴²⁶ James Mooney, "Notes on Kiowa Shields, Tipis, Societies, and Stories," Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives. MS 2531, vol. 6., 208.1899.

hanging them in the sun.⁴²⁷ The dots held within the upturned crescent moon form and in the torso paint are probable star representations, while the crescent moon itself is indicative of

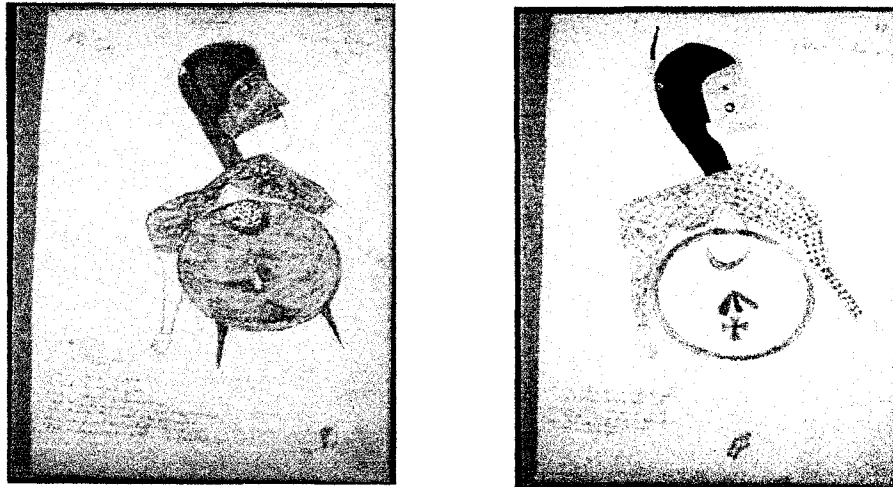


Figure 43.
Paints and shield designs. James Mooney. "Notes on Kiowa Heraldry."
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 2 Folder 1.
Inventory no.s 08928800 and 08929700.

the Creator.⁴²⁸ The feathers attached to the red center disc are unidentified, as is the form in the shield's lower register. This may have been a buffalo ear, a common appendage on Caiugu shields. The color red was associated with Sun, as was the buffalo, so this is a reasonable assumption. Taken together the shield and associated paint indicate this individual's reliance on power from the moon, sun, and stars, all of which were believed to be protective agents.⁴²⁹

The individual depicted on the right in Figure 43 wears *Tai'me* paint with rain drop

⁴²⁷ Mooney, "Notes on Kiowa Shields," MS 2531, vol. 6, 123.

⁴²⁸ Jerry Bread, January 22, 2002; Kracht, 83.

⁴²⁹ Kracht, 83.

symbols. This was a body paint design often used by the *Koitsenko*.⁴³⁰ The shield design incorporates two powerful protective symbols, the crescent moon and morning star. The morning star held associations of superiority for the Caiugu. Between these is a grouping of crow feathers, also associated with the *Tai'me*. The crow was associated with the north, cold, and snow, but was also viewed as a powerful war medicine as it was able to dodge bullets successfully.⁴³¹ The color green also bore *Tai'me* associations, and additionally represents water iconography. Creatures that lived in the water were seen as possessing extremely potent power.

The third individual paint, shown in Figure 44, belonged to *Tenatadi*, whose shield was made for him by *Ka-i-kanbodal*. This design, as in the previous example, features water iconography as a predominant theme. Dragonflies were associated with the *K'ado*, and can also be interpreted as crosses representing the poles used in the *K'ado* lodge itself. The crescent moon motif in the shield's upper register is painted black, another allusion to the *K'ado*. The buffalo tail pendants attached to the shield's inner surface were metaphors for the sun, as the buffalo derived its strength and power directly from the sun. Given all the *K'ado* and sun iconography incorporated in its design, this shield represented particularly powerful war medicine. The individual's red face paint bore reference to the sun.

Colors in the Caiugu language are noun-based, that is they are not used descriptively as adjectives. Instead an item takes on the character of a particular color, becoming infused with

⁴³⁰ Jim Anquoe, June 6, 2002.

⁴³¹ Kracht, 93.

its attributes.⁴³² In this sense a person or object which was red literally assumed within itself

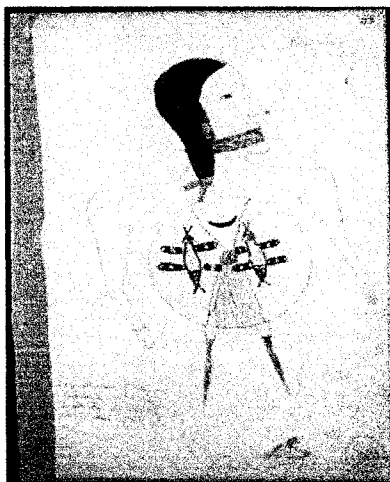


Figure 44.

Tanedati Shield and Face Paint. James Mooney. "Notes on Kiowa Heraldry."
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 2 Folder 1.
Inventory no. 08931900.

the essence of red, and became the sun's power incarnate. A case in point is the use of buffalo ears and tails as appendages attached to the shields. The association between sun and buffalo was such that the one was synonymous with the other in Caiugu thought. The buffalo was merely an earthly manifestation of the abstract reality. An implicit transfer of power was believed to take place from the sun to humans, with the buffalo serving an intermediary function in the process. The physical form in which the sun's power was contained may have changed, but the power itself did not.⁴³³

Tsistsistas heraldry incorporated most, if not all, of the same elements as found in that of

⁴³² Gus Palmer, Jr., interviewed by author, Norman, Oklahoma, April 3, 2003.

⁴³³ Kracht, 258.

the Caiugu. Among Mooney's notes are a number of drawings with descriptions detailing the various paints, shields, and in some cases, other accouterments utilized by Tsistsistas warriors. Seven examples taken from Mooney's notes serve to exemplify iconographic sets among this people.

The first example is that of Burnt All Over whose shield was painted by *Aha'out* (Figure 45). The shield's outside cover was plain buckskin with a white wildcat "belt" fastened horizontally across its face. Often a shield's cover or the inside surface of the shield itself bore the painted design, while the outer surface of the shield itself was left unadorned. While a design painted on a shield's interior surface would not be visible to an enemy, it would be fully visible to its owner, whom it protected.



Figure 45.
Burnt All Over shield. Tsistsistas. Nineteenth Century.
Buckskin, pigment, hide, feathers. Drawing after H. B. Horse.
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08919400.

Burnt All Over's shield design consisted of a plain field with a dark blue sun symbol at its center, an inverted crescent in dark blue above this, and two blue-green dragonflies flanking the central motif. Arranged around the shield's perimeter are four dark blue triangles that correspond to the semi-cardinal directions. Between each of these triangles is suspended an eagle feather, and two groups of peeled owl or hawk feathers are attached to the shield's upper edge. From the central sun symbol hangs a white wildcat pendant upon whose surface are four rows of three eagle feathers. At the pendant's bottom edge are a series of white down or "breath" feathers which complete the overall assemblage.

As in the Whistling Elk and Crazy Mule shield designs, that of Burnt All Over's shield contains numerous iconographic references to *Maheo*, universal wholeness, as well as the *maiyun* responsible for oversight of the universe's four corners, the sun, and the moon. These entities were all subordinate to *Maheo*, and served actively as his agents on behalf of mortals. The sun, as has been pointed out earlier, was the source of life force and continuity, while the moon, sun's counterpart, was a protective agent of the night. The *maiyun* controlled the animals that populated the plains, and by extension the well being of the Tsistsistas. The dark blue sun and crescent moon along with the semi-cardinal triangles served iconographically as reminders of the Creator's overshadowing presence.

The dragonfly motif is a pervasive visual element in the Life Generator Lodge, and appears in various paints throughout the ceremony. The dragonfly is also one of the holy birds in Tsistsistas taxonomy⁴³⁴, a mysterious creature who metamorphoses from white to

⁴³⁴ Moore, "The Ornithology of Cheyenne Religionists," *Plains Anthropologist* 31: 118 (August, 1986): 178.

green as it molts. This color change signifies new life emerging from the moribund. Dragonflies also possessed attributes that were highly desirable to the warrior, such as hunting in cooperative swarms, and the ability to dodge and evade predators.⁴³⁵

The feathers used in the shield's assemblage are significant for their relationship to *Maheo*, and provided kinetic elements whose movements manifested the presence of the Creator's very breath and presence. Eagles at various stages of their development, hawks, and owls were particularly important iconographically. These and other predatory birds were frequently associated with *Maheo*, as well as possessing attributes sought by warriors, such as swiftness, powerful striking abilities, and in the case of owls, the ability to move silently and see in the night.⁴³⁶ Mooney does not provide details of face, body, or horse paint for *Burnt All Over*.

Okehisvootan's, or Crow Neck's, assemblage (Figure 46) consists of a shield design and face paint that Mooney notes as belonging "to the shield."⁴³⁷ The design of Crow Neck's shield consists of a plain field with five black discs, one at the center, the other four at the semi-cardinal points. A plain rawhide cord with an eagle feather attached at its end is suspended from each of the discs. In the shield's lower register is an elongated arc painted white, while a dark blue or black crescent moon is positioned at the shield's top edge. A plain hide pendant of buffalo skin is suspended just below the crescent form. The pendant contains five rows of six feathers each, the top row of white crane feathers and the rest eagle

⁴³⁵ Grinnell, II, 112.

⁴³⁶ Grinnell, I, 183.

⁴³⁷ Mooney, 81a.

feathers. The bottom edge of the pendant is cut to a point, along the edges of which are a series of small yellow triangular appendages. This pendant would hang over the central disc motif until moved by wind or movement of the owner's arm, thus providing glimpses of the sun disc hidden underneath it.

The structural design of *Okehisvootan's* shield is of interest in that it presents a schematized map of the universe, with the sun symbol represented by the central disc also forming the axis of a cross whose arms terminate at the four outside discs. The crescent moon and white arc motifs provide additional visual weight to the composition that compliment the hide pendant attached to the shield's surface. The white crane feathers in the



Figure 46.

Okehisvootan shield. Tsistsistas. Nineteenth Century.

Buckskin, hide, feathers, pigment. Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1, p. 81a.

Inventory no. 08920900.

pendant's top row imparted to the shield's owner a heightened sense of awareness and

inclination to defense of home territory against enemies.⁴³⁸ The yellow triangular tabs arranged along the pendant's lower edges may have referenced the sun or south, or may simply have provided an aesthetic touch that was pleasing to the owner.

Okehisvootan's face paint echoes the shield design, and clearly was meant as a compliment to it. As seen from the drawing in Figure 47 the face, painted yellow, was encircled with a black line from which four inward pointing triangles were painted to correspond to the directional discs on the shield. Below each eye is painted a forked lightning



Figure 47.

Okehisvootan's face paint.

Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 0892800.

symbol. Lightning held several interconnected iconographic meanings. Lightning emanating from the eyes of the thunderbird, a personification of the thunder being, was associated with the spring thunder storms which signaled new growth, and also represented the ability to

⁴³⁸ Grinnell, I, 204; II, 109.

strike quickly.⁴³⁹ The yellow field of the paint could be read as representative of youth, perfection, beauty, ripeness, and the south, a source of new generation and growth of plant and animal species.

Howling Wolf's assemblage (Figure 48) as documented by Mooney consisted of a Bowstring society lance, body paint, and horse paint. The lance shaft was wrapped with alternating red cloth and white rabbit fur, four of each of these covering its length. Suspended from the shaft were eight groups of eagle feathers, four sets of which were white, while the other four were red. At the division between each red and white set hung a cord of alternating black and white beads at whose end was an eagle feather. A feather pendant was attached near the butt end of the lance shaft. This pendant was composed of a tiered series of crow feathers which ended in a group of hawk feathers, the species of which was unidentified.

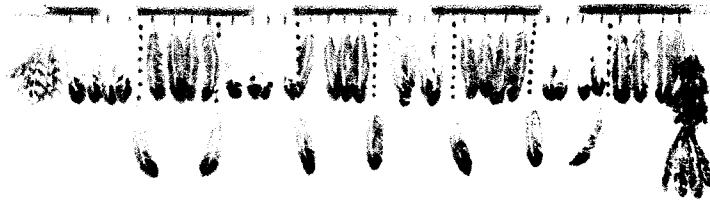


Figure 48.

Howling Wolf. Tsistsistas. Bowstring Society lance. Nineteenth Century.
Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08923000.

Near the lance point was another pendant of swift hawk tail feathers.

Howling Wolf's body paint (Figure 49) consisted of dark blue circles painted in outline on each shoulder and wrist, and at the top of each thigh and on each ankle. Between these

⁴³⁹ Moore, *Ornithology*, 187.

circles on each arm and leg were two broken parallel lines also in dark blue. The horse paint corresponded to this in that each shoulder and wither had a dark blue circle painted on it with similar lines descending from these. Other accouterments of the horse gear included a bridle ornament of a scalp lock tipped with a yellow down feather, and a tail ornament made from the tail of a swift hawk. No details concerning Howling Wolf's shield are given by Mooney.

Mooney documented two shields belonging to Iron Shirt, as well as face and horse paints (Figure 50). The face paint and horse paint are noted as having been received from Whirlwind, and not belonging to the shields. Under one eye was a black line descending



Figure 49.
Howling Wolf paints.
Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08922900.

downward over the cheek, while under the other eye was a lightning symbol. The horse paint consisted of rainbow stripes on the animal's shoulders, withers, cheeks, and along the middle of the back. Above the shoulder and wither stripes were painted dark blue swift hawks, and

a crescent moon symbol was applied to the animal's left side, a sun symbol to its right side.

The face paint, with its two basic symbols, would suggest resolve on the part of the owner toward quick and decisive action. Black frequently represented completion, and was often worn by warriors returning from revenge raids to signify that the fires of hatred had burned themselves out.⁴⁴⁰ The lightning symbol and the swift hawks imply swift action by the warrior, and fleetness for his horse.⁴⁴¹



Figure 50.
Iron Shirt. Tsistsistas. Face and horse paint. Nineteenth Century.
Drawing after H. B. Horse.
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 16400.

A number of things can be read into the horse paint designs. The rainbow is created by the interaction of sun light reflected from water droplets suspended in the air. Rainbows are ephemeral phenomenon, mysterious in both their point of origin and termination. The

⁴⁴⁰ Grinnell, I, 169.

⁴⁴¹ Grinnell, II, 108.

rainbow was “recognized as a device for catching something, a trap.”⁴⁴² In this case it could be interpreted to mean that the rainbow was intended, as a protective device, to trap the enemy’s missiles. It is further explained that because rainbows occur after thunderstorms that they had contained the storm’s fury, causing the rain to cease. Rainbows also suggest through their arced forms a sense of enclosure. The paint may well have been communicating the sun’s encompassing protection over horse and rider. This would be supported by the sun and crescent moon symbols painted on the animal’s sides. The swift hawks represented speed, a necessary attribute for any war horse.

The first of Iron Shirt’s shield designs (Figure 51) is a bisected composition separated by a vertical of plain hide color. The left field is red, the right blue-green. Two swift hawks are painted on the shield, with a crescent moon at the shield’s top edge and a sun symbol in its center. All of these forms are rendered in dark blue. Beside each of the swift hawks is a pendant made from an eagle wing feather, trimmed so that one side is peeled nearly to the quill, and a cord from which is suspended the short wing feather of a crane. Six additional pendants are attached to the shield’s outer periphery. These are also crane wing feathers. The cords holding them are wrapped with alternating red and black porcupine quills. A “belt” of whitened buffalo skin with eagle feathers tipped with yellow down completes the shield.

The swift hawk motifs correspond to those in the horse paint, and carry connotations of speed and predatory abilities imparted to the warrior.⁴⁴³ The red and blue-green fields are indicative of the sun and the Blue Sky space where *Maheo* dwells, and the sun and moon

⁴⁴² Grinnell, II, 96.

⁴⁴³ Nagy, “Cheyenne Shields,”: 40, 43.



Figure 51.

Iron Shirt. Tsistsistas. Shield no. 1. Nineteenth Century.

Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08916200.

symbols are emblematic of protection and life force. The eagle feather pendants beside the swift hawks again suggest predatory attributes, as well as nearness to *Maheo*. Eagles were considered to be close to the Creator, as they were able to fly so high that they disappeared from sight. The crane feathers iconographically represented steadfast defense of home territory against intruders.

The second Iron Shirt shield design (Figure 52) is an asymmetrical composition with a central sun disc in dark blue set against a plain field. Above this disc is a fish and a kingfisher, both rendered in dark blue also. At the shield's top edge is a green crescent moon.

From the center disc hangs a quill wrapped rawhide string of alternating red and yellow porcupine quills. From this cord is suspended a single eagle feather, painted yellow and tipped in black. Attached to the shield's top edge are two red strings, and the shield's perimeter is trimmed all around with eagle feathers mounted into red strouding.

The central disc represents the sun, and its dark blue color refers to *Maheo* and the Blue Sky space, and thunder. The kingfisher also evokes these associations through its color. The kingfisher was viewed as a powerful spiritual aid, particularly in regard to healing wounds. The kingfisher was also venerated for its ability to dive below the water, which was healed after he entered it.⁴⁴⁴ This perceived ability to heal made the kingfisher a particularly potent



Figure 52.

Iron Shirt. Tsistsistas. Shield no. 2. Nineteenth Century.

Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 0891600.

⁴⁴⁴ Moore, 186; Grinnell, II, 151.

medicine that would be highly coveted by warriors. Mooney recorded that the fish represented energy and water.⁴⁴⁵ The crescent moon, painted green, also reinforces water iconography as well as acting as a protective agent. Both water and the moon were associated with female/earth power, while the sun represented male power. The kingfisher, given its placement in the composition, serves as a bridge uniting these two sources of power. The yellow of the pendant feather again bears reference to youth, wholeness, ripeness, and connotations of perfection which are in keeping with the healing attributes ascribed to the kingfisher. The red strings and strouding at the shield's edges implied life force and sun potency.

Little Horse's shield, (Figure 53) features a plain field with a basic quadrilateral compositional scheme. The primary cross form is composed of four swallows painted in the semi-directional colors of black, white, red, and yellow. This is echoed by a secondary cross made up of a green crescent moon, a red hoof print, an owl in black outline, and a geometric block of white. From the owl's eyes emanate two lightning bolts, one in white, the other black. These run diagonally upward to the two uppermost swallows. Four eagle feather pendants set in swivel sockets are also placed at the semi-cardinal points as a reinforcement of the primary layout. The belt suspended from the shield's bottom edge is topped with a cluster of peeled owl feathers. Below this rosette are five rows of eagle feathers. These are arranged according to types or phases of two species, the bald and golden eagle. The top and third rows are of bald eagle feathers, while the second and fourth are golden eagle feathers. The fifth row is made up of bald eagle feathers tipped with yellow down.

⁴⁴⁵ Mooney, 38.



Figure 53.
Little Horse shield. Tsistsistas. Nineteenth Century.
Drawing after H. B. Horse.
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08924100.

The face paint accompanying this shield is described as two lightning symbols below each eye. These were painted in black and white to correspond to those appearing on the shield. The otter skin hat shown in Figure 54 is noted as “not belonging to the shield,” and would appear to have been purely an aesthetic choice. Little Horse’s horse was not painted in any particular manner that is noted by Mooney, but does sport a specific bridle ornament. This was a quilled string of various colors with a down feather attached to its end. The movement of the down feather caused by motion or the wind elicited associations to the four winds blowing from the universal corners. These winds were believed to be the breath of the *maiyun*. The differing eagle feathers are of interest. While they were taken from two different



Figure 54.
Little Horse face paint.
Drawing after H. B. Horse.
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08924000.

species, the bottom row is referred to in Mooney's notes as from the "war" eagle, an important distinction in Tsistsistas ornithological classification. The bald eagle in particular was viewed as separate species dependent on its stage or phase.⁴⁴⁶ Each of these phases embodied different attributes seen as desirable or applicable to specific circumstances.

Owls are considered to be *mistas*, the disembodied spirits of the dead. As such they represented particularly potent medicine power, and were feared by most individuals.⁴⁴⁷ The black-white pairing of the lightning bolts emanating from this creature's eyes would strike viewers with a sense of death and cold, and project the owner's ability to deal death to his

⁴⁴⁶ Moore, 185.

⁴⁴⁷ Moore, 186.

enemies in a sudden and decisive manner.

The *Honiamaha*, or Big Wolf shield (Figure 55) is simple in design compared to previous examples. Its surface was an overall red, to which were attached four pendant feather assemblages. These assemblages were composed of a swift hawk wing feather, one down feather, and two dew claws each. These assemblages were attached at points on the shield's



Figure 55.

Honiamaha's shield. Tsistsistas. Nineteenth Century.

Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08918800.

surface that corresponded to the semi-cardinal directions. Of particular note is the animal's tail which remained "in situ" at the shield's side,⁴⁴⁸ thus designating this as a Bull society shield. The shield's edge was left unpainted. The body paint that accompanied this shield was, in contrast to the society paint described in chapter three, an overall black (Figure 56).

⁴⁴⁸ Mooney, notes, NAA MS 2538 Box 1.



Figure 56.

Honiamaha's face paint.

Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08918900.

The face was painted with a black line that ran across the forehead from one cheek to the other, its ends terminating in forks. Below each eye was painted a lightning symbol, also in black.

The final piece documented by Mooney that is considered is the *Ogiketavoot*, or Little Big Joke, shield (Figure 57). This shield had a solid yellow field with three groups of feathers attached at points near its top. The middle group was a cluster of six peeled owl feathers. The other two were groups of four eagle feathers with red down tips. Fastened to the shield's surface directly below the owl feathers was a belt of red cloth to which were affixed five rows of six eagle feathers, each with a bell attached to its top.

The horse paint to this shield consisted of blue circles on the shoulders and withers with parallel dashed lines below them. A sun symbol was painted on the animal's chest, a crescent moon on its rump, a line down the middle of its back, and a circle around each eye. All of

these were painted in yellow to correspond to the shield. Additional accouterments for the horse included a martingale of alternating red and white eagle feathers, and eagle tail feathers tied to the tail. Whether or not these were connected with the shield was not noted.

The yellow in this shield references northwest directional associations and concepts also associated with the south. Marriott notes that yellow was at one time considered to be a color



Figure 57.
Ogiketavoot shield and horse paint. Tsistsistas. Nineteenth Century.
Drawing after H. B. Horse.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 2538 Box 1. Inventory no. 08923700.

linked with the sun.⁴⁴⁹ When the shield and horse paint are juxtaposed, the sun symbols painted on the animal's shoulders, withers, rump, chest, and around its eyes show the congruence. The parallel lines running down the animal's legs could be interpreted as harnessing the sun's power, which would enable it to run steadily and swiftly.

Both Tsistsistas and Caiugu, vision based art expressed metaphoric concepts through the

⁴⁴⁹ Powell, *Sweet Medicine*, II, 417.

juxtaposition of images and colors in various combinations. These groups consistently display elements contained in the cosmogeny of both peoples. The metaphoric power of the images is particularly evident in Tsistsistas art, where elements of representational forms and color together continually point to the ultimate source of power, *Maheo*, or the founder of the original societies, Sweet Medicine himself.

Power, in order to be validated, needed to be demonstrated. It was this demonstration of power that held center stage in ledger drawings, while the power itself was metaphorically expressed in vision based art. Ledger drawings were a new way of expressing power. In contrast to vision based art's emphasis on metaphor, ledger drawings served an expository function. While elements of an individual's visionary assemblage were portrayed in these drawings, they were more often than not reduced to a bare minimum of detail. This detail was enough to allow one's peers to readily recognize distinctive articles of an individual's dress and equipage, thus verifying the identity of a drawing's protagonist. An example of this identification is provided in Figure 58, a drawing by an unidentified Tsistsistas artist.

The two individuals portrayed wear distinctive face and body paint, as do their horses. The similarities of their lances, headdresses, and paints suggest that they were members of the same society. Their shield designs have been reduced to the most distinctive elements. All of these elements together would have been sufficient for fellow tribesmen to identify the two men by name, as well as enabling viewers to recall the circumstances under which they rode to battle together.



Figure 58.

Tsistsistas. Artist unidentified. "Two Men wearing face paint and in costume..."
Colored pencil on paper. Nineteenth Century.

National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 154064c. Inventory no. 08510802.

A second example, (Figure 59) also unidentified, depicts a Dog Man in pursuit of an Absarokee warrior. While the individual artist remains unidentified, the depicted protagonist would have been known to his peers. The headdresses he wears belongs to the Dog Man society, and the distinctive elements of clothing portrayed would have provided more than enough information for his fellow society members to determine his identity and the event portrayed.

Figure 60, by an unidentified Caiugu artist, depicts Red Otter in the act of rescuing a fellow warrior from Mexicans. The event portrayed was well known to the Caiugu as an episode in the life of *Setainte*, or White Bear, who was lassoed and dragged by Mexicans



Figure 59.
Tsistsistas. Artist unidentified. Nineteenth Century.
National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution MS 4452a. Inventory no. 08666800.



Figure 60.
Caiugu. Artist unknown. "Red Otter Comes to the Rescue," 1880. Pencil and crayon on paper.
Image H: 17.80 cm, image W: 9.938 cm (H: 10.125 in., W: 13.25 in.)
Williams College Museum of Art. Gift of Merritt A. Boyle, grandson of General Merritt Barber,
Class of 1857 Acc. no. 53.7.2.

during a battle.⁴⁵⁰ Red Otter's shield design, horse bridle ornament, and headdress as portrayed in this drawing would have been well known.

Each of these examples, as well as those cited earlier in this document, evidence these characteristics of identity. The drawings also serve as mnemonic devices by which specific events were recalled in which an individual distinguished himself through acts of bravery and daring. Despite their reference to specific events, ledger drawings were much more than the recording of historical events in the lives of warriors. Berlo comments that "...they [the drawings] are palpable representations of a vast, protean oral history rather than simple one-to-one reifications of a fixed text. They served to keep the specifics alive in the memory, and the artist's rendering, in turn, influenced how memory next apprehended the incident."⁴⁵¹

The reason for the oral tradition assuming a "protean" character is that it was not so much the specific event portrayed that was of primary importance, although this was beyond doubt worthy of remembrance. What held primacy in the drawings were the "specifics" and what was demonstrated through these specifics. Ledger drawings were expressions of power in action, and it was through spiritual power that an individual was able to overcome the enemy. In this sense the drawings were expressions of the actualization of the power which was central to the existence of the warrior societies. Gordon Yellowman states: "The art expresses a way of life and a particular life style that was followed in that way of life. It made

⁴⁵⁰ Nye, *Bad Medicine & Good*: 103, 104.

⁴⁵¹ Berlo, "Artists, Ethnographers, and Historians,": 38.

the statement 'This is who we are.'⁴⁵² In each drawing created to celebrate an individual's triumph over an enemy or his feats of daring, a set of culturally accepted behaviors embodied in the warrior ethos was reinforced and expounded upon. This set of behaviors was manifested in its fullest extent through the acquisition of power. In other words, vision based imagery was a manifestation of power, while ledger drawings expressed the results of manifested power. In this way biographic and visionary formats in men's art of the nineteenth century worked in tandem, each one supporting and reinforcing the other.

⁴⁵² Yellowman, October 1, 2002.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The origins and early histories of the Caiugu and Tsistsistas peoples reflect vastly different cultural traditions from one another prior to the seventeenth century. Caiugu oral tradition indicates a nomadic lifestyle from the earliest times of this people. In contrast, the Tsistsistas, once a horticultural group of bands living east of the Mississippi River, made the transition to a plains environment and lifestyle late in the seventeenth century. Following this transition from horticulturists to buffalo hunting nomads, the Tsistsistas shared many common traits with their Caiugu counterparts. The two people co-inhabited the Black Hills region where they enjoyed amicable relations until the turn of the nineteenth century. Competition for hunting territories and control of trade resources forced the two peoples into circumstances of increasing conflict which eventually resulted in a Caiugu withdrawal to the Arkansas River valley in the early decades of the nineteenth century. After decades of protracted warfare in which neither side gained an appreciable advantage over the other, the two tribes settled into an alliance brokered through Arapaho intermediaries in 1840. From 1840 until their subjugation and confinement on reservations in the 1870s the Caiugu and Tsistsistas cooperated in controlling the hide and horse trade of the central and southern Plains, and in a common resistance against Anglo incursions.

During their shared history on the Plains the two tribes created rich traditions involving a well developed warrior tradition. The warrior ethos that permeated both Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures embodied basic tenets of the two peoples' cosmogenies, and became a focal point for men's art during the nineteenth century. Art served as a vehicle by which to shape

and order society. The warrior societies of both tribes utilized art in both vision based and biographical formats. Through these formats individuals and societies asserted their positions of status and authority in their respective cultures. Vision based imagery appeared on painted lodges, robes, shields and shield covers, and society and personal paints. These and other visual elements such as bird and animal body parts, were iconographic referents to the basic cosmological foundations of culture. Elements taken from the natural world, such as animals, birds, and celestial bodies, became metaphors for the unseen forces responsible for the universal order. These referents are not to be confused with icons in the Western sense. In a Western cultural context icons are representations of a specific item, such as the iconic images of Christian saints in the Catholic and eastern Orthodox churches. Usually such icons are the focus of direct reverence by worshipers. No such focus was directed at the image or representation in Native American belief systems, as the representation itself served as a conduit for supernatural power. Any amount of reverence accorded was directed not at the object itself, but to the unseen spiritual force underlying it. It is in this sense that such objects, images, and symbols acted as metaphors for supernatural powers.

Biographical formats, such as painted robes and ledger art, served as historical representations of the actualization of those supernatural powers. These representations of personal power in action also reinforced culturally accepted behaviors associated with success in war. This warrior ethos became the guiding rule for young men of both cultures to follow as they sought to achieve standing and position in the social order.

Representations of personal power acted as implicit assertions of authority. Such assertions conformed to culturally accepted, or traditional, modes of authority exercise until

the middle of the nineteenth century when the Tsistsistas and Caiugu social systems experienced rapid changes. Tsistsistas governmental structures operated on a check and balance system in which the civil Council of Forty Four and the warrior societies shared in the administration of tribal affairs until the mid to latter nineteenth century. Under increasing Anglo pressure for lands and resources the Tsistsistas fought to preserve their autonomy. The warrior societies' response to this threat was to challenge the supreme authority of tribal chiefs by the 1850s.

The Caiugu system, in contrast to that of the Tsistsistas, focused predominantly on the warrior societies as the basic governmental force until the late nineteenth century. During the period of time immediately preceding reservation confinement, peace factions under various Caiugu leaders began to challenge traditional authority structures. Individuals such as Kicking Bird recognized demilitarization as the only tenable course for Caiugu survival in the face of increased Anglo pressure on their home territory.

The commonality for both tribes was a heightened reliance by the warrior societies on art as a vehicle for maintaining and asserting their positions of status and authority in their respective cultures. Continual references to the cosmological foundations of culture through men's art provided validation for the exercise of such authority. Among the Tsistsistas, the cosmological foundations that were referenced can be traced primarily to their transition from a horticultural to a nomadic society. While certain elements of pre-Plains culture were retained, most aspects of the major ceremonies and traditions from the proto-historic and historic periods are reflective of life in a plains environment. The supernatural forces that figure in these plains traditions among the Tsistsistas are pervasive in men's nineteenth-

century art. By referencing elements of the cosmology and oral traditions in the art the warrior societies consistently linked their origins, existence, and purpose to culture heroes who had acted under divine auspices. The settings for these stories are within a plains environment, most notably *Noaha vose*, or Bear Butte. It was not until the turn of the eighteenth-century that the Tsistsistas established themselves in the plains. Sweet Medicine, *Maheo's* prophet, is recognized as the founder of the Tsistsistas warrior societies. The Sweet Medicine stories routinely make reference to plains animals and birds that served as metaphors for supernatural powers. These elements were to be used in the various society dresses.

The Great Kiowa issued his children an edict to never make peace with the white man, and in so doing sanctioned a martial lifestyle for that people. It was upon these premises that the warrior societies operated, and no other lifestyle was known in the traditions of the people. Men's nineteenth-century art held place in this process by giving voice to universally recognized and accepted values and beliefs centered on warfare. Heavily featured in this art were elements derived from a plains environment, such as buffalo tail and ear pendants on shields, and the prolific use of feathers from certain plains birds. Such animals were metaphoric representations of the sun, which in turn was a metaphor for the Great Kiowa himself. Additionally, there is a marked predominance of colors which reflected the physical environment with which both Tsistsistas and Caiugu identified themselves.

The incidence of increased warfare during the nineteenth century placed greater emphasis on the martial traditions of both cultures. The advent of a Euro-American presence in the plains created access to a variety of new materials and goods. These commodities quickly

gained value as emblems of status, and as such were highly coveted by Native peoples. Competition over control of trade in these commodities heightened martial conflicts between Native groups in the plains, and later with Anglos who sought to dominate the region politically and militarily. In both cases competition over natural and commercial resources resulted in warfare. In the case of warfare against Native competitors the goal was domination of trade to ensure tribal supremacy. In the case of Anglo-Native warfare the situation became one of survival and ethnic sovereignty. Under both scenarios the warrior societies became increasingly prominent in tribal affairs. The historical record bears this out. Under the exigencies created by competition over trade and resources the warrior societies frequently acted as the predominant voice for the Tsistsistas and Caiugu. The emphasis on the martial versus civil elements of society required validation. Traditional cultural systems were challenged in this process. In the case of the Tsistsistas, it was martial authority subsuming civil authority. Among the Caiugu, previously unknown modes of civil authority challenged a martial system which had existed from time immemorial. The means for validating martial claims to authority in both cultures rested on each peoples' cosmogeny, and the vehicle for expressing this was art.

The end of war and the general suppression of Native cultures under United States federal policies impacted the operation of the warrior societies in both cultures dramatically. With confinement to the reservations the impetus for men's art was removed, and most men's art forms died out. This was due to a combination of forced acculturation and removal of the basic impetuses for the art itself. Given the importance placed on the cosmological elements that were represented in nineteenth-century men's art and the removal of the underlying

reasons for that art, the question of continuity naturally arises. Time and distance frequently impact the understanding of an item's significance, as motifs change and original meanings become modified to accommodate the needs and perspectives incurred through culture change. Such metamorphoses often result in the retention of some forms simply for their aesthetic qualities, while the sociocultural significance of others enjoys a marked continuity.

The Caiugu societies enjoyed a resurgence during the early twentieth century through the Gourd Dance and revival of the *Tonkongats*.⁴⁵³ Among the Tsistsistas the warrior societies continued to exercise a great deal of influence among the northern bands, while the southern societies have only recently seen renewed activity. Sam Hart states that today the northern societies are and always have been very active in tribal affairs, while the southern societies have been typically less so, taking responsibility primarily for ceremonies. However, especially in the last ten to fifteen years, the southern societies have become more active. He ascribes the differences in levels of active participation to geography and circumstances. The northern Tsistsistas are situated on a reservation and have been able to maintain distance between themselves and the dominant culture. The southern people by contrast are interspersed in white communities throughout western Oklahoma, and have been subject to a greater degree of acculturation.⁴⁵⁴

Both northern and southern Tsistsistas have maintained their ceremonial traditions through the Life Generator Lodge and Sacred Buffalo Hat ceremonies. The iconographic links found in men's nineteenth-century art forms was and is intimately linked with these

⁴⁵³ Meadows, *Enduring Veterans*.

⁴⁵⁴ Sam Hart, December 12, 2002.

ceremonies. Among the Caiugu the *K'ado* has not been observed since 1899. Because of the loss of ceremonial/ritual knowledge most contemporary cultural expression is now found in society songs and dances, and women's art forms. In spite of this there is still a continued awareness on the part of many individuals regarding the visual iconography found in nineteenth-century men's art. The retention of the significance surrounding these elements of culture are attested to by the contemporary sources consulted during the course of this study.

Clearly the importance of the cosmological elements continues in both Tsistsistas and Caiugu cultures. These basic cultural tenets and values continue to be expressed through both traditional and contemporary art forms in ways that make them uniquely Native, vibrant, and enduring. Continuity has been maintained despite confinement on reservations and acculturation. A number of examples support this. Foremost among these is the early twentieth-century development of "Indian" style of painting which built upon nineteenth-century graphic traditions. The most notable proponents of this style are the celebrated Kiowa artists who studied under Oscar Brouse Jacobson at the University of Oklahoma during the mid 1920s, and eventually won international acclaim for their work.⁴⁵⁵ Another continuation of men's art traditions is evidenced in the revitalization of contemporary ledger art by a number of artists, among them Sherman Chaddleson of the Caiugu,⁴⁵⁶ Randy Lee

⁴⁵⁵ Feest, *Native Arts of North America*, 99, 100.

⁴⁵⁶ Patrick D. Lester, *The Biographical Directory of Native American Painters*, (Tulsa: Servant Education and Research Foundation, 1995): 97-98.

White,⁴⁵⁷ and Gordon Yellowman (Figure 61) of the Southern Tsistsistas.

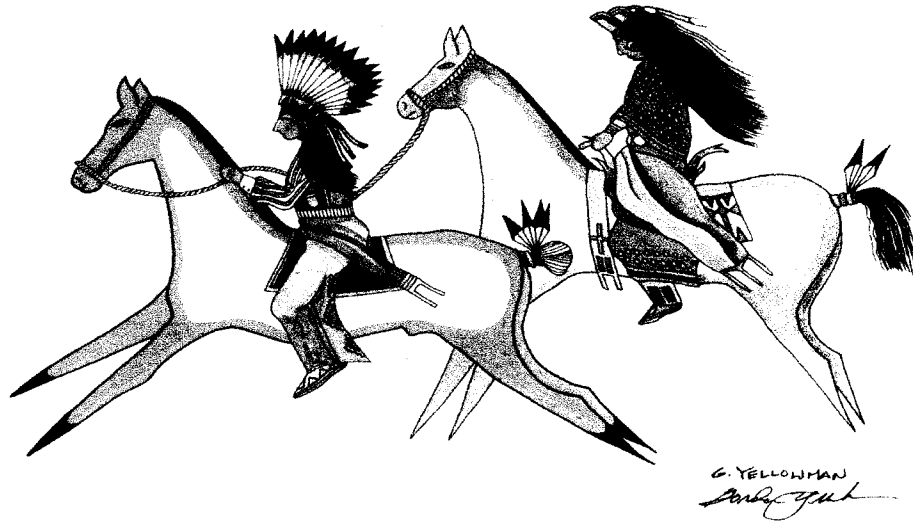


Figure 61.
Gordon Yellowman. Tsistsistas.
“Capture.” Ink and watercolor on paper. 2000.
Artist’s Collection.

The connection between contemporary and nineteenth-century artistic expressions is evident. However, an examination of this relationship is not within the scope of this study. Such an examination, particularly in regard to elements of cosmological significance contained in contemporary work, remains a subject for further study. Also open to future study is the question of how the contemporary warrior societies continue to utilize art, and in what capacity? As Native communities of the twenty first century continue to assert traditional modes of cultural expressions as means to increased autonomy, these questions will assume increased relevance.

⁴⁵⁷ Ronald McCoy, *Painted Words: R. Lee White and Plains Indian Pictography: a cultural presentation of the United States of America*, (Phoenix: The Heard Museum of Anthropology and Primitive Art, 1986).

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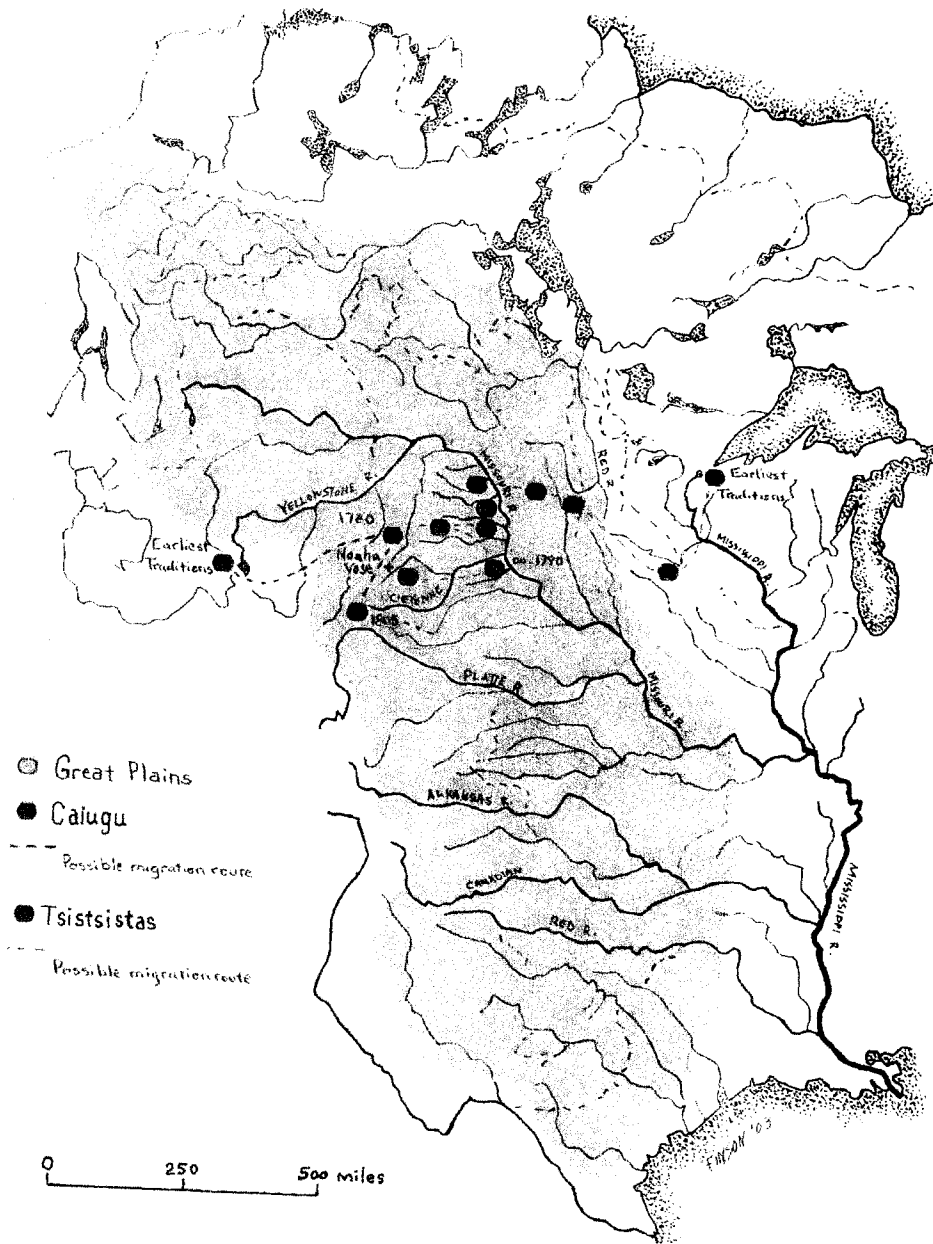
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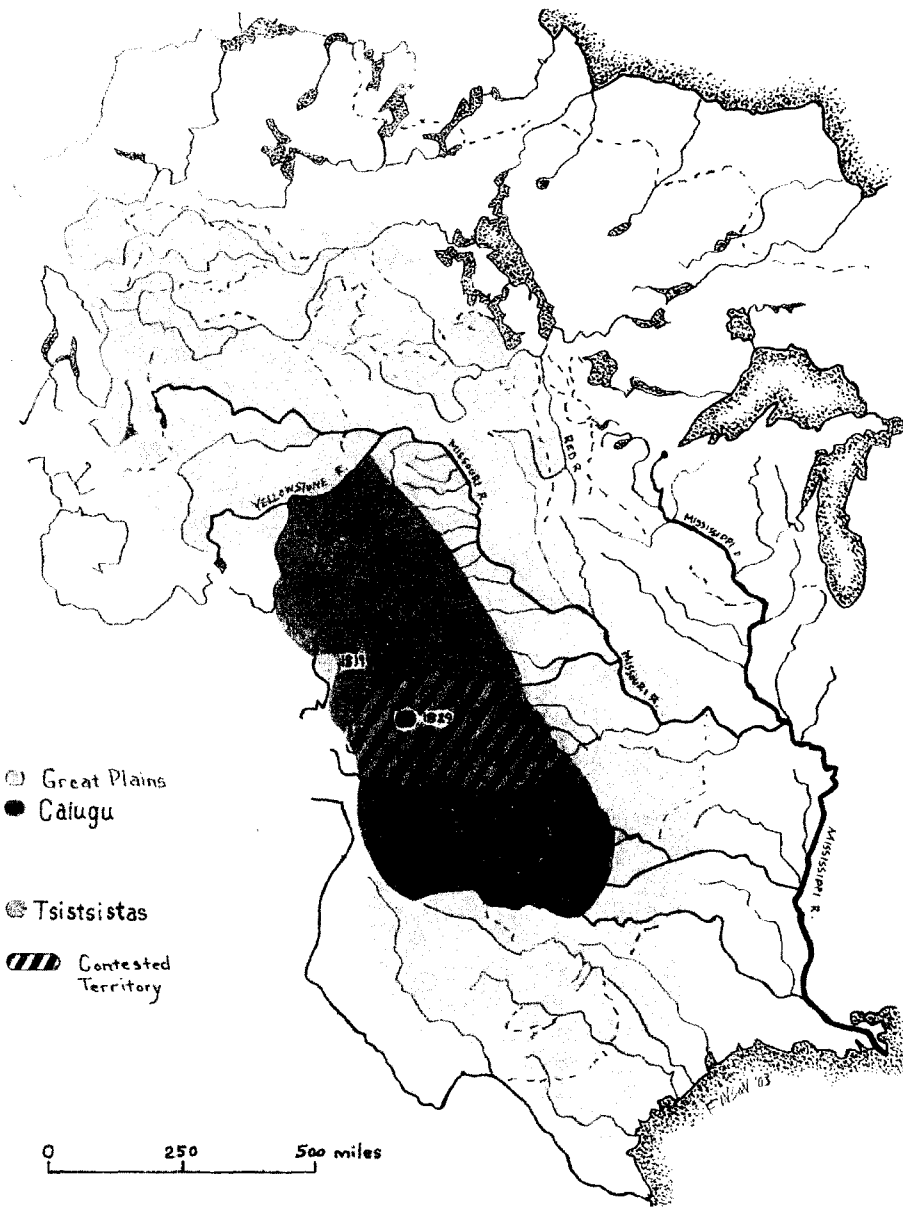
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Appendix A



Map 1: Tsistsistas and Caiugu migrations and locations before 1820.



Map 2: Tsistsistas and Caiugu territories circa 1840.

Appendix B



Bull or Red Shield Society Paint



Dog Man Society Paint



FIX N 2..

Wolf Society Paint



Kit Fox Society Paint



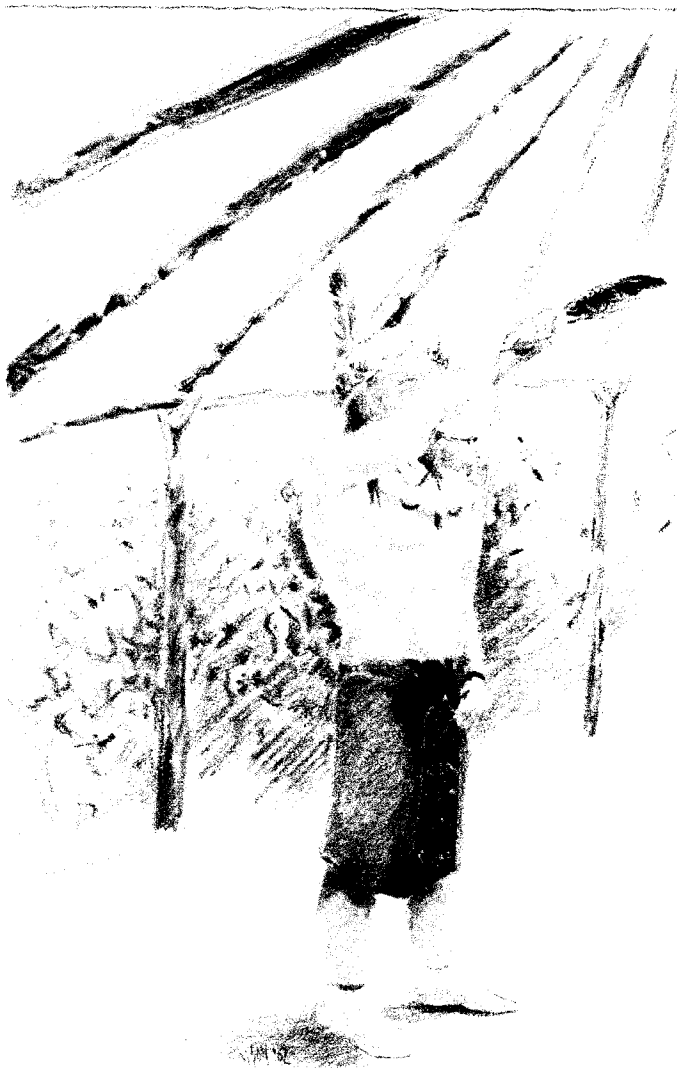
Bowstring Society Paint



Tonkongats Society Paint



K'uitsenko Society Paint



Tai'me Keeper's Paint



Hotoyi society paint



Kowde society paint