O artesão tradicional e seu papel na sociedade contemporânea

The traditional artisan and his role in contemporary society

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The opportunity to hold an essay contest dealing with the subject of this book came about through the participation of the Secretary of Culture in conjunction with the National Institute of Folklore during the meeting of the National Committee to commemorate the Interamerican Year of Craftsmanship, promoted by the OAS.

Presided over by the Ministry of Labor, the Committee decided to adopt several recommendations proposed by the OAS. It was decided that the Secretary of Culture, because of its inherent nature, should organize the event.

The Committee was particularly concerned with the nomination, for the jury, of persons of undoubted authority, who could appreciate the theme in all its complex, social, cultural and economic aspects. This concern suited well the orientation of the National Institute of Folklore, which considers as inseparable goals, on one side the maintenance of the cultural identity, and, on the other, the elevation of the standards of living of the Brazilian population segments, active in the productions of crafts.

Thus, we had the honor of having Professor Gilberto Freyre as chairman of the jury, which also included Professors Marcílio Marques Moreira and Gilberto Velho.

After the contest have been publicized on a national level through a variety of media — press, radio, and TV — twenty-six candidates entered the event. After the decision of the jury was made known, the first prize was awarded to Berta G. Ribeiro. Her paper was then sent to the Committee of the Ministry of Labor, which in turn sent the essay to Washington where it represented Brazil in an international contest which included essays submitted by those countries that participated in the OAS program.

Now, we have the honor of publishing the essays that were awarded prizes in the Brazilian contest.

Notwithstanding the high quality of the essays included in this volume, which are at the same time a most valuable contribution to a subject little explored in the scientific Brazilian bibliography, these essays do not reflect the official view of the National Institute of Folklore but rather represent the various points of view of each author.

This project is designed to encourage the discussion on this complex theme at the highest level and with the greatest degree of embodiment. It means moreover a step of importance for the adoption, in the future, of procedures that will enable the public administration to set lines of action helpful to the understanding and supporting of one of the most extraordinary crafts in contemporary society, such as the one produced by the Brazilian people.

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Artesanato indígena: para que, para quem?

Why and for whom are Indian handicrafts made?

Berta G. Ribeiro
Why and for whom are Indian handicrafts made?

The purpose of this study is to raise certain questions concerning the making of Indian handicrafts and their commercial sale. It is based on observations made at various times beginning in 1977, in shops run by Artindia, the National Indian Foundation (Funai) agency devoted to encouraging and marketing Indian handicrafts; in souvenir shops in Recife, Belém, Manaus, Brasília and Rio de Janeiro; during field research carried out in the Xingu National Park in 1977 and 1980, in the upper Rio Negro in 1978 and in the middle Rio Xingu in Southern Pará in 1981 as well as during interviews with employees of the Indian Arts Division (DAI) at Funai.

Although the study is limited to indigenous tribal groups in Brazil, I believe that the underlying principles are applicable to Brazilian folk art and its counterparts in the rest of Latin America.

A more substantial analysis would require obtaining data from the heads of the Indian Posts maintained by Funai around Brazil, who are responsible for the direct acquisition of handicraft articles, and above all research with this purpose in mind with the Indians who make these articles.

The main focus of questions to be asked should be the following: To what extent does the production of handicrafts for commercial sale benefit the Indians as a source of funds for acquiring industrialized goods that they can no longer do without? To what extent does this activity keep them from leaving their villages to work as peons on ranches or in extractive industries? Does it interfere with their routine subsistence activities? To what extent is trade-oriented handicraft activity a dignifying type of work that feeds tribal pride and bolsters ethnic identity? Does the sale of the handicrafts lead the Indians to lose the characteristics of their particular artistic concepts by introducing new themes, new ways of expressing traditional motifs, and the use of heterochthonous materials? What should be expected of Funai, the official Indian aid agency, which encourages and benefits from this production, in order that it might attain the goal of preserving the economic autonomy that the Indians maintained

(*) The field research in 1977 and 1978 was part of a study entitled “A civilização da palha: a arte do trançado dos índios do Brasil” (“Straw civilization: the art of Brazilian Indian plaitwork”), the theme of the author’s doctoral thesis at the University of São Paulo (USP, 1980ms.), which was financed by the Ford Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution. The 1980-81 research trip was to collect data on the art of weaving among indigenous groups and was financed by the National Geographic Society and the Brazilian National Pro-Memory Foundation (SPHAN). The office work has been done with the financial support of the National Scientific and Technological Research Council (CNPq), under which I hold a scholarship, and the project entitled “Ethnography and the Social Use of Indian and Folk Crafts”, carried out jointly by Finep and the National Museum (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), coordinated by Prof. Maria Heloísa Fénélon Costa. I thank the above institutions for their generous support.
before contact with white people? What measures should Funai take to preserve handicraft activities in order that they may be passed down to future generations and continue to serve as a means by which Indians see themselves as Indians and are thus viewed by the surrounding society? In other words, what measures will help protect handicrafts as visible symbols of the Indians’ ethnic identity, which characterize them as members of a particular ethnic community?

The answer to these queries requires asking what I consider some fundamental preliminary questions. Indian handicrafts contain elements of an ecological, techno-economic, esthetic-stylistic, ritual-religious, educationally-socializing, and inter-tribal or barter-related nature, all of which must be taken into account. Otherwise, any outside intervention in this area may cause irreparable damage to the tribe’s way of life, breaking down its social organization and adversely affecting the Indians’ self-image and ethnic identity. In other words, it is necessary to determine to what extent producing handicrafts for sale outside the tribe may alter the main social institutions that command tribal life as well as the ecosystem in which the Indians participate, since disrupting the latter would mean destroying their traditional way of life and their very existence as an ethnic entity. This is the theoretical basis behind my proposal.

HANDICRAFT PRODUCTION FOR INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY

As with any anthropological fact, Indian art must be viewed in its cultural and time-related context. Thus it is an undeniable fact that Indians are motivated to produce handmade articles to trade for industrialized and even luxury goods, and that there is a national and international public which is more and more interested in acquiring Indian handicrafts. As a result, what traditionally constituted internal production — acting upon nature to provide for subsistence and ritual paraphernalia — became, to a certain extent, production aimed outward. Usually, however, not all of a given tribe’s material culture may take the form of merchandise, nor is it desirable that it do so. It is a complex and heterogeneous problem that does not allow for generalizations. Still, it is possible to pick out some constants for the purpose of analysis:

1. In any given indigenous group, all of the members are capable of making all of the goods which the society possesses, although some are better than others and thus stand out as the tribe’s best artisans.
2. In certain cultural areas like the upper Xingu, the upper Rio Negro and the Guianas, a form of handicraft specialization developed in which each tribe or group of tribes detains a given article, which is considered its property or monopoly and which is traded with other tribes.
3. There is a mutual influence among neighboring tribes regarding material culture, as is the case among the Karajá and Tapirapé groups.
4. There is a division of labor according to sex in relation to the production of certain artifacts which is sometimes rigidly determined.
5. The material culture of an indigenous group may be split roughly into two
major categories, which for the lack of a better term we have called secular artifacts and sacred artifacts. The latter identify the individual’s social condition and are full of symbolism, faith and emotion, while serving as a communications code.

6. Each indigenous group’s art includes a series of techniques, the utilization of certain raw materials, and a repertoire of decorative elements which may belong to given residential segments, household groups or even individuals. The whole of these selective technical procedures contains information of an esthetic, symbolic/religious, and socio-ethnic nature and constitutes the tribe’s style, or macro-style, which corresponds to a cultural area.

7. Surplus production in tribal society is absorbed in such a way as to prevent the accumulation of goods and social inequality. The mechanism utilized is called “balanced reciprocity”, which promotes the distribution of goods among individuals and groups. In this sense, an economic act is experienced in its “multiple functions”: as a form of paying off “social obligations” and as a political act of lending services for establishing relationships of dependency and alliance among individuals and groups (Godelier, no date: 331).

8. Production for a market, that is, “... the capacity to produce a surplus beyond the direct producers’ necessities” (Godelier, 1974: 267) can lead to a dangerous social imbalance by introducing forms of man’s exploitation by man.

All of these factors, which vary from one tribe to another according to the degree of acculturation and interaction with the national society, should be taken into consideration when setting up a project for encouraging the production of indigenous handicrafts for outside the tribe, that is, one aimed at meeting the promotional agency’s interests and customers’ motivations on the one hand and producers’ needs on the other.

There is much controversy among anthropologists, missionaries, Indianists, and all those connected with Indian affairs concerning the benefits and evils of producing handicrafts for commerce. One argument is that mass production for people outside the tribal culture distorts and even degenerates Indian art as an esthetic, stylistic and cultural expression, and that the derisive payment (or worse yet, the lack of payment) does not compensate the artisan for his effort, which keeps him away from his routine activities of farming, hunting, and fishing. According to the same argument, commercial handicrafts lead to the use of heterochthonous materials like chemical dyes, factory-made threads, etc. By the same token, the reification of cerimonial objects made for sale violates the symbolic code and the indigenous view of the cosmos associated with them, while the lack of selective criteria on the buyer’s part leads the Indians to sell ritual objects that use up scarce and non-renewable raw materials. Finally, the shockingly unequal terms of trade are stressed: handicrafts, which require a great deal of time and effort to make, are traded for industrialized goods, which are mass-produced.

I fully endorse the above arguments, which represent the negative side of handicrafts made for commerce. It should be pointed out, however, that handicraft trade has not only saved tribes’ handicrafts in several cases, but has
also reinforced their ethnic identity. Meanwhile, to the extent that Indian handicrafts as objects of art are more and more sought after by an urban public with good taste, the Indians' cultural superiority becomes obvious as compared to the surrounding rural population's esthetic poverty. A worldwide trend towards highly valuing tribal and/or folk art of the Americas, Africa, and Asia has contributed towards this. The demand for handicrafts as luxury items is due mainly to their exotic nature and the fact that, *stricto sensu*, they are 'manufactured' goods with a primitive and ingenuous touch. Suffice it to point out how cloth and clothing from India, basketwork from China and Africa, and costume jewelry from the Near East have spread all over the world.  

Another important aspect is that trade-oriented handicraft production provides the Indians with the opportunity to work at an activity that they are used to and which is part of their cultural patrimony. It helps prevent their leaving the community to hire themselves out at manual labor, extracting spices, hunting and fishing. It provides for the fellowship of men and women during the time of collective handicraft work. It guarantees them an income that I am certain is superior to that they would receive as bottom-level workers at surrounding ranches and extractive industries. The production of Indian handicrafts for sale is thus not an evil *per se* given the above-mentioned conditions. Its most harmful aspects are to introduce changes in the traditional division of labor between the sexes (as in some cases among the Karajá Indians) (Fénelon Costa 1979: 6, 161), to interfere with a cultural area's barter system (which has occurred to a small extent in the case of the upper Rio Negro), and in the latter case, and probably in many others, to reify ritual objects like feather ornaments, necklaces made of mammal teeth or snail shells, or objects made with non-renewable materials.

It is possible to correct all of these ills, especially the worst among them: the exploitation of Indian labor for the derisive payment given for their goods.

**'SECULAR' ARTIFACTS AND 'SACRED' ARTIFACTS**

On several occasions in the Artindia shops I have encountered feather ornaments which the Kayapó use on the backs of their heads and which contain up to 80 macaw tail feathers each. In 1977 I purchased one of these headdresses at the Artindia shop in Belém for 300 cruzeiros. The craftsman had used 60 blue macaw tail feathers to make it. In other words, he had plucked five macaws. The Kayapó, like other feather artists, raise macaws and other birds, like curassows and parrots, which they capture in the nests as baby birds. The most pet birds a village can raise is about ten to twenty, however. Thus it is easy to imagine how

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(1) This is the case with, among others, handicraft production for trade in the upper Rio Negro (Ribeiro, 1981: 302) and among the Karajá (Fénelon Costa 1978: 54/5, 82, 154, 159, 160).

(2) There are several studies on this subject, which has come to be called 'tourist art' or 'ethnic art' (Cf. Nelson H.H. Graburn (ed.), 1976). As regards Brazilian Indians, see Paul L. Aspelin, 1977. A critical analysis may be found in América Indígena, in an issue devoted to Latin American handicrafts (Anonymous, 1981).
producing handicrafts for sale, like the Kayapó headdresses, puts a bind on the Indians' bird population. Considering the progressive deforestation and size decrease in the tribal territory, it is not difficult to evaluate the lack of birds and the useless strain on the pet ones for an insignificant return, assuming that the Indians receive at most about 10 percent of the sales price for their artwork. Besides, when there is a big demand for this kind of article, a situation may occur as in the 1920's in Venezuela, where 20 tons of heron aigrettes were exported, representing the death of 12 million herons (personal information from Dante Martins Teixeira, ornithologist from the National Museum of Brazil).

One must keep in mind further that artifacts which I call 'sacred' are in some cases passed down as an inheritance from either biological or classificatory parents to their children or from one category of individuals to another, along with privileges and prerogatives. This is the case with the Xikrin-Kayapó and their maracás and other ceremonial objects. As an informant said to Lux Vidal, "A maracá must return to its owner's house, it must not be kept away, or it is a bad thing." Lux Vidal adds that this means "... there is a correct place for these objects... The ornaments inherited from an i-ngêt are connected with the matrilocal houses" (1977:116). This also means that such ritual objects should not be put up for sale. I believe that the Indians give them up due only to the absolute urgent need for the industrialized goods they receive in return. There are exceptions. According to personal information from Dante Martins Teixeira, the Karajá use their ritual objects (dance costumes and feather ornaments) just once and then sell them. The same is not true with the Urubus-Kaapor, for example, who never give up their ritual ornaments made from the feathers of rare birds, of which there are a total of only about forty. Feather gathering takes a lot of time and effort on the part of the Kaapor artists and not unfrequently leads to fatal accidents. They rarely eat the meat of the birds. Among the pet birds they keep in the village they only use feathers from the curassows, macaws and other psittacines. (D. and B. Ribeiro, 1957:29).

The cutting down of forests in Kaapor territory and the impact of contact with national society have contributed towards the disappearance of this art in the space of only a few years. Recently the Indian Arts Division at Funai, having received orders for Kaapor featherwork collections, attempted to revive the art by sending these Indians colored-in xerox copies of their original feather ornaments, copied out of the book The feather art of the Kaapor Indians (D. and B. Ribeiro, 1957). However, this splendid art should be revigorated in a different manner: by encouraging the group's total cultural recovery. Furthermore, sales of such artifacts should only be made to museums as properly certified collections, which is a task that only anthropologists would be capable of carrying out.

The large demand for Tapirapé masks, known as caras grandes, or 'big faces', has led these Indians to produce a fair number of them for sale. The body feathers of macaws are needed to make them. A complete mask, or ypé, as is used in tribal ceremonies, takes 28 macaw tail feathers, preferably from the red macaw, "which the Indians consider to be bearers of special magic" (Baldus, 1970:245). Besides the difficulty in obtaining them, the magical association of the tail feathers may be the reason why the Tapirapé do not put them on the masks.
they make for sale. An official of the Indian Arts Division of Funai refused to buy a mask of this type offered to her by a Karajá Indian, since it had been made by him, while it is a well-known fact that this artifact is made by the Tapirapé. The Tapirapé never give up a mask of this kind after having used it in a given ritual since, as Baldus reports, “A dead person is to be buried with all of his feather ornaments” (1970:123). In my opinion the Indian Arts Division should encourage the Tapirapé to make and market their sculpture-like baskets woven out of buriti palm seta, which are extraordinarily graceful and light, rather than this important ceremonial object.

The point I am driving at is that Artindia should systematically refuse to buy ritual objects, like feather ornaments, masks and all of those artifacts which take scarce raw materials. In the upper Rio Negro, tururi maskrobes are made exclusively by the Kubewa but are used in funeral ceremonies by all of the tribes in this cultural area. Lately, with acculturation, they have been made mostly for sale, but still only by the Kubewa tribe. Yet they have been using up a scarce raw material: the underbark of a tree of the Ficus genus. The same is true for the snail shells of the upper Xingu Indians. This craft belongs to the Karib tribes of the area (Kalapálo, Kuikúro, Matipu-Nahukuá), in whose territory the snails are found. The trouble is that the snails have practically run out. An Indian Arts Division employee informed me that the Xingu tribes are now acquiring snails from the Xavante. They may come to be threatened with extinction in Xavante territory as well if the same depredatory trend keeps up. I should add that making necklaces or belts out of circular or rectangular plaques of snail shell is extremely painstaking work. In the Rio de Janeiro Artindia shop these necklaces were being sold for 4 to 6 thousand cruzeiros apiece in 1980. What percentage of this sales price makes it back to the crafts-person? Does it compensate for the Indians’ effort and the risk they run of having to do without the most highly prized item in the barter system of the upper Xingu, a ritual object which represents an ethnic ‘insignia’ for the Kalapálo, Kuikúro and Matipu-Nahukuá? The same thing may happen with the indiscriminate use of wildcat teeth and claws and the teeth of monkeys and other mammals. Their commercialization should be strictly prohibited.

The corollary to this argument is that Indian handicrafts made for sale should consist of specimens which, though individualized according to the tribe that makes them, should not represent the entire stock of material culture that the tribe detains and produces, particularly not the ritual objects. Consequently, it is important to encourage the pottery-making and basket-weaving tribes to perfect their techniques, but to remain faithful to their ancestral stylistic patterns.

Take the example of the Kadiwéu and Terêna. It is a known fact that the Kadiwéu pottery is crude and brittle, but that its decoration is highly elaborate. The Terêna pottery is exactly the opposite. During inter-tribal contact it would be desirable for the Kadiwéu potters to learn technique from the Terêna, but for each tribe to maintain its own artistic originality. This happened in fact, according to information from the Indian Arts Division, but it was a one-way process. A Terêna potter copied the Kadiwéu designs on her ceramics, which will probably lead to conflict with the Kadiwéu potters, since these are the designs which attract buyers. On the other hand, the Indian Arts Division had to
return some ashtrays and elephant figurines that had been made by the Kadiwéu. It sent along copies of an essay by Darcy Ribeiro (1950) in order for them to re-learn how to shape jugs, pots and other traditional types of vessels that they had forgotten, as well as the ornamental designs reproduced in the essay.

This brings us to a new theme: the learning process and the preservation of traditional handicrafts. Before tackling this subject I would like to make another comment on handicrafts for sale. Basket-weaving is mastered by all of the tribes in the upper Xingu cultural area. In the upper Rio Negro, some groups specialize in making certain kinds of baskets. The Maku make aturá (carrying baskets) used by all of the tribes in the area. The Desãna, Wanãna, Tuyúka, and Baniwa make certain kinds of apás (finely-woven bowl-shaped or half-moon-shaped baskets), as well as sieves. This monopoly, except as concerns the Maku, has been progressively broken as the importance of basketwork for sale has increased. Basketry, when made of raw material that is not exhaustible (like palm leaves, arrowroot (Ischnosiphon sp.) and bamboo) is the category of handicrafts which is most adaptable to commercial sale, since it is non-breakable and easy to transport. However, some tribes, like the Maku and Yanomâmi, use raw materials that are exhaustible: the imbé vine (Philodendron imbé) and the titica vine (Heteropsis jenmani), respectively. In both cases, but mainly in the case of the Yanomâmi (personal information, Cláudia Andujar), the Indians are feeling the lack of these raw materials in their territory. The sale of the titica vine in natura for manufacturing brooms is thus doubly condemnable in the case of the upper Rio Negro. Since basketry makes up 90 percent of the production of handicrafts for sale in the Rio Negro (these baskets are highly prized in Brazil and abroad) and 100 percent in the case of the Yanomâmi, a rationalization of the commercial use of these vines is necessary, or else the Indians will be deprived of the raw material they need to make their products.

Xingu basketry, made with strips of the leafstalks of buriti palm shoots, is as rich and varied as that of the Northern Amazonian tribes. Since the Xingu-area tribes have only been making artifacts for sale to Artindia for the last two or three years, it would be recommendable for them to concentrate on producing the carrying baskets (mayáku in the Aruak languages of the area) and other kinds of baskets, which all of the tribe members know how to make and which is men's work; the tuaví or mat-sieves for squeezing the poisonous juice out of manioc, which are woven by the women, and eventually hammocks, which are also woven by women and which are more difficult to make.

In the case of the Kayabi, it would be recommendable that they make their elaborate baskets with raw materials other than the taquarinha (Arundinaria sp.), which they have had to travel to get from their relatives on the Rio Teles Pires.

(3) The name for this basket in língua geral, or the ancient Tupi language of the Amazon.

(4) When I visited museums and handicraft shops in New York and Washington in August, 1980, I found baskets from the upper Rio Negro being sold in all of them at 45 dollars apiece. In other words, one hundred times the price paid to the Indians for this article at the lauareté Mission on the Rio Uaupés.

(5) In 1977, the Indians had not yet begun carrying out this kind of barter. Goods made for barter with the Air Force personnel and other visitors were of bad quality (M.H. Fénelon Costa and M.H. Dias Monteiro (1971)).
since it is scarce in their new habitat, the Xingu National Park. Some Kayabi basket-weavers have been experimenting successfully with strips of buriti leafstalks (*Mauritia sp.*) in the place of *taquarinhã*. They have also been making a large number of *bordunas*, or ritual clubs, out of tucuma heartwood (*Astrocaryum sp.*); what used to be a ceremonial artifact is now produced exclusively for sale.

Waurá and Jurúna ceramics should only be acquired sporadically by Artindia for special collectors, so as not to interfere with its high quality or divert the potters' attention from internal production. The acquisition of snail shell necklaces should be prohibited. Instead there should be encouragement for the production of rings and necklaces made of tucuma and *inajá* nuts (*Maximiliana regia*). Although this activity has already begun to a certain extent, prices so far are unrealistic considering the amount of work that goes into carving the hard nutshells of these palm trees: the Indians receive only two cruzeiros per ring, while the Artindia shops sell them for twenty cruzeiros each (1980 figures). (6)

Tribes that have been contacted only recently by the national society, like the Asurini of the Ipiaçava *igarapé*, a tributary of the middle Rio Xingu, (who have had only ten years of contact with the Brazilian national society), are forced to make a large amount of artwork for sale in order to meet their new need for industrialized goods: guns, ammunition, fishhooks, batteries, kerosene, matches, cloth, soap, etc. In the case of the Asurini the prices obtained for tribal handicrafts (necklaces made of curassow bone beads and nutshell beads, painted and glazed ceramics, box-shaped baskets with lids, benches, and hammocks) are more reasonable, except for the prices paid for hammocks. This is due to a more adequate orientation on the part of the Funai employees who are in charge of encouraging and marketing this tribe’s handicraft production.

LEARNING HANDICRAFTS

Yonne Leite, a linguist from the National Museum, found that the Tapirapé had re-learned how to weave baskets by looking at photos and schematic drawings in Herbert Baldus' book (1970) (personal information). We have already seen Indian Arts Division employees taking the initiative of sending copies of illustrations from books by anthropologists to the Kaapor and Kadiwéu villages in order to give them back information on their own art. The Ministry of Education and Culture, through the PRODIARTE project, has taken on the task of teaching regional handicraft techniques to schoolchildren. What is new about this project is that the artisans themselves are teaching the classes. The Ministry of Labor has set up the National Handicrafts Development Program. This Ministry, in collaboration with regional agencies like SUDENE (the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast), aims at making handicrafts a stable source of income for thousands of craftspeople and turning them into export products. It

(6) This seems to be the saga of craftspeople. When I visited Aracatí, Ceará, in 1977 I discovered that bobbin lace weavers and *labrinho* embroideresses were earning 10 cruzeiros per 8-hour day and that they were prevented from dealing directly with buyers.
has thus organized an exposition which has already visited several European and North American cities. The National Pro-Memory Foundation, an agency of SPHAN, is also engaged in a project to map out Brazilian handicrafts, including both folk and Indian art. This project should be concluded by 1984 and will include a computer bank aimed at improving utilization of the data. At the same time it will be doing a survey of the relevant descriptive and iconographic documentation, both from Brazil and abroad. The Organization of American States had the same goals in view when it chose 1982 as "Inter-American Handicrafts Year".

My proposal regarding handicrafts education is to have the best artisans in each tribe, those who are acknowledged as such by the other tribe members, act as teachers of their arts to the younger generation. According to an Indian Arts Division employee who recently visited Bananal Island to put a stop to the production of ashtrays and kitsch articles, there is now only one Karajá potter who completely masters her art. In the case of the Karajá, this artist (and others who may come to be discovered) should be given access to the books written by Maria Heloisa Fénelon Costa (1978) and Günther Hartmann (1973). The latter includes reproductions of excellent photographs, drawings of recent Karajá dolls and particularly of old dolls in the Ethnographic Museum of Berlin. The Indian Arts Division could also rely on the photo archives of the Indian Museum of Brazil for the same purpose. We would thus be giving back to the Indians the kind of information about themselves that they ask for so much and that they have no other way of obtaining.

The same should be done with similar studies on Kadiwéu and Kaapor art. In the case of the Guianas, there are excellent studies on material culture done by Koch-Grünberg (1910) and W.E. Roth (1924), which would be extremely useful for the Makuxí, Taulipáng and Wapixána who live in the Roraima Territory. They are treated hostilely by the surrounding non-Indian population and have been reduced to a negligible portion of their former tribal territory. These Karib and Aruak groups, who are not on the list of tribes that furnish handicrafts to Artindia, used to do top-quality basketry and pottery. They were the authors of box-shaped baskets with double walls interwoven with finely-plaited strips of arrowroot leaves and elaborate decorative designs, of which there are only a few in existence in museum collections. However, there are numerous illustrations on both their technique and design in Roth’s book. The Karib and Aruak of the Guianas and the Indians of the Río Uaupés and Río Içana also used to weave beautiful loincloths on U-shaped looms which they made with beads (or with seeds, before contact with white people). If they had access to the ample iconographic documentation of Koch-Grünberg’s and Roth’s books they would have the opportunity to recreate their millenary arts. The same can be said about a still unpublished book by Dolores Newton (1970) on the weaving of the Timbira. The survey and photographic documentation of old collections in Brazilian and foreign museums done by Newton constitute a precious source of tribal history that should be given back to the Timbira.

(17) Cf. "Grupos indígenas — localização e artesanato", 1980, mimeographed survey by DAI-Funai. Contains questions on indigenous groups, their habits and customs, and a brief description of their material culture, mainly the articles acquired by the Indian Arts Division (DAI).
It may be possible in time to write up *handicrafts manuals* through joint projects with anthropological research institutions. They would have an accessible approach and would contain the kind of information, mainly iconographic documentation, needed for recovering tribal arts and techniques. While they could be sold in Artindia shops, their main purpose would be for use by the tribes themselves. This is what has been done towards recovering the artwork of North American Indians. One of many examples is a manual published by the Navaho Indian Basket-Weaving School (1971), which contains instructions for students on how to reconstitute their unsurpassable plaitwork art. Another model for this type of publication could be Günther Hartmann’s catalogues put out by the Ethnographic Museum of Berlin (see bibliographic references).

**INDIAN ART AND THE RE-CREATION OF HANDICRAFTS**

A stylistic change in a form of indigenous art can be well illustrated by the case of the Karajá, who provide an example of obviously induced external influences. The Karajá potters used to make dolls out of clay or wax for the fun of it, for their children to play with as toys. Visits by ethnologists and others, who soon became enchanted with the “Karajá dolls”, and later the arrival of tourists, hunters, and sport fishermen on Bananal Island led the Karajá potters to revive this art with a new purpose. Maria Heloísa Fénelon Costa (1978:63/64) reports that in 1957 writer José Mauro de Vasconcellos asked a ceramist to make some “two-headed human and animal dolls” like ones he had seen on an earlier trip. The director of the Indian Post also gave the ceramics artists several suggestions. Anthropologist Mário Ferreira Simões suggested to them in 1958 that they “… document scenes from tribal life”. M.H. Fénelon Costa adds:

“We found in Sta. Isabel that depending on market demand there are given figures that are ‘in style’ for a certain period of time. Sometimes one artist thinks up a given figure, and the others follow suit.” (op. cit.: 63)

The stylistic modification of upper Rio Negro basketry has come about due to incentives from priests at the Salesian Mission and Brazilian Air Force officers who visit the Missions, as well as from pressure on the part of the buying public, who prefer ‘well-designed’ baskets. Thus the upper Rio Negro basket-weavers have begun painting both sides of the arrowroot strips so that the design on the *apás* will appear with both a positive and negative image both inside and out. The Indians are constantly receiving orders for *urutus* (vessel-shaped baskets) with letters woven in, standing for their respective owners’ names. Since they are both highly skillful and literate, the basket-weavers do a perfect job. Another form of outside influence in the Uaupés and Içana (upper Rio Negro) Indians’ basketry is seen in their adaptation of a traditional vase-shaped basket used for smoke-curing pepper into a jar-type basket that customers buy to hold plants or flowers. Another example is the so-called ‘tipiti for tourists’, a miniature version of this stretchable basket-sieve used to squeeze the poisonous juice out of manioc (the *tipiti* is woven with two-toned strips of arrowroot). The success attained in the basket business has led some tribes (Baníwa, Desâna, Tuyuka,
Wanâna) to lose their monopoly over the production of certain kinds of baskets (called urupemas and cumatás in the Tupi language of the Amazon).

One is inclined to believe that a similar process may have occurred in Africa, Asia and Oceania, contradicting the supposition that native arts are irreversibly condemned to disappear under the impact of colonization and cultural breakdown. Raymond Firth has studied this problem and the influence of European techniques and materials, as well as the stimulus exerted on 'primitive' art by Europeans' interest in acquiring it. He looks at both sides of the question. On the one hand, the lack of observance of religious ideas connected with the woodcarving of the Maori in New Zealand led to: "... care less work and little imagination. The art forms lack balance, daring and originality, as if there were no drive behind them. Even when technical competence persists, the results tend to be tedious and insipid" (1974:186).

On the other hand, while reviewing the result of "new artistic sanctions" imposed on artists by shops and schools in various parts of the world, Raymond Firth says:

"They attempt to set commercial handicraft standards, efficient business methods, principles for formally perfecting the artwork, and a little traditional motivation and technique. Results have varied, depending widely on the teachers' enthusiasm and skill and also on their ability to evaluate the real or potential market demand for the handicrafts produced" (op. cit.: 187).

A good example of the latter trend in the Americas is the molakana art of the Cuna Indians of Panama, which may be found in nearly all of the specialized shops in the Western world (Günther Hartmann, 1980).

Getting back to Brazil, the Karajá example also illustrates how producing handicrafts for commercial sale can lead to a change in the traditional division of labor between the sexes. Fénelon Costa has the following to say on the subject:

"The Karajá women now make several hand-crafted articles for sale, like wooden figurines and some kinds of feather ornaments, which were made only by men under the traditional division of labor" (1978:6).

In spite of all this the Karajá art, like that of the Indians of the upper Rio Negro, still expresses their tribal ethos, or in other words the 'national character of the respective ethnic groups, for the very reason, among others, that this ethnicity is what creates a demand on the tourist market. The 11th Regional Funai Agency that works with the Pataxó, Krenak, Fulniô and other tribes of the Northeast had to turn down handmade articles because nobody would buy them. They were kitsch necklaces, bows and arrows, and clubs that could not begin to compare with the splendor of handicrafts made by tribes that still maintain the vigor of their artistic expression. As for the Fulniô basketry, customers complained that the Indians had used extraneous materials like loud-colored (purple, pink and green) industrial dyes in their mats, hats, bags and other woven articles, and had thus devoided them of authenticity. As a result, the Indian Arts Division advised the Fulniô to use straw with its natural color, since the texture of their weaving is excellent. While we are on the subject, the
Kaingáng Indians, who have also been acculturated, have recovered their basket-weaving tradition in the last few years (they use two kinds of bamboo) and are once again producing baskets of extraordinary beauty and perfection. According to Glória Kindell (1971), over a few years the Kaingáng incorporated designs from Guarani weaving and their gourds woven over with straw, and adapted baskets to the buyer market’s needs by making book bags and shopping bags and very well-woven hats with colored strips, as well as their traditional articles.

This re-creation of handicrafts bound for the outside market may also be observed among the Karajá. On her last trip to the area (1979), Professor Maria Heloísa Fénelon Costa collected artifacts that had never been seen before: small mats like the ones the Karajá use to sleep or rest on with miniature benches, canoes, oars, bows-and-arrows, and even lahedó feather ornaments mounted on them. They were apparently made as ‘pictures’ to be used as wall decorations.

Besides giving back information to the tribes on their former material cultural patrimony, it has occurred to me to suggest another area that could become a creatively productive activity for commercial ends. I am speaking of the kind of free drawings on paper that anthropologists have been collecting ever since Karl von den Steinen’s first expedition to the upper Xingu and which have increased in number over the last few years. Fénelon Costa turned over some 900 drawings collected among the Karajá and another 900 from the Indians of the upper Xingu to the National Museum. These drawings display tremendous artistic beauty and portray various aspects of tribal life and even “unconscious images”, or ones which express concern and emotions over supernatural subjects. Fénelon Costa reports that the children who attended school on Bananal Island in 1956 were more motivated to attend class when one of the teachers included drawing and painting among the recreational activities (1978:100). On the other hand, adults who were asked to make drawings declined to do so because “they preferred to spend their leisure time making handicrafts for sale, while free drawing seemed to them to be a futile activity, since there was no specific usefulness to it” (op. cit.: 104).

Drawings collected by other researchers (Lux Vidal 1977; Manuela Carneiro da Cunha 1978) among Jê groups show that they too depict themes related to their social and religious life and their view of the world, including formal and documentary elements of great anthropological and artistic interest. The Yanomâmi are another good example of this (Cláudia Andujar, no date).

Some groups, like the Tukúna and the tribes from the Uaupés and Íçana rivers, have always painted pictures on the underbark of the tururi tree. Besides their traditional masks they are now making wall hangings for sale. Since obtaining the raw material requires cutting down a rare tree and is thus exhaustible, it is inadvisable to encourage making these handicrafts for sale. The

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(8) This is considerably more difficult with the Indians of the Northeast, except with the artistic re-creation of their basketwork and their weapons inventory, the latter of which is of utmost importance as an ethnic insignia. Perhaps this is why the Pataxó Indians insist on selling such poorly-made bows to the Indian Arts Division which seem to highlight the supreme quality of the raw material used, the extremely scarce jacarandá wood. The Maxakali, just as acculturated as the Pataxó, carve very realistic rifles and revolvers out of this same noble hardwood, as if to symbolize the power of the white society that surrounds them and at the same time their unsurpassable skill as Indians.
same themes could be born again by transposing them onto paper and using either indigenous paints or felt pens or tempera paint.

We are, no doubt, talking about a form of interference in tribal art, but one which respects endogenous tendencies. It could also include the transposition of body-painting designs, which are so highly elaborate among the Kayapó, Jurúna, Asurini, Boróro, Karajá, and especially the Kadiwéu, onto other materials. While visiting the Kadiwéu in 1948, Darcy Ribeiro collected over a thousand different drawings from one artist, Anoã, which would have been lost forever otherwise (1950). This would provide another handicraft activity for the women, who are in charge of body-painting among the Kadiwéu, Kayapó, Jurúna, Asurini, and other tribes. It is quite possible that encouragement along these lines would uncover talented new artists among the Indians, as was the case with Amáti, a Trumái Indian who has displayed his drawings in São Paulo, and Feliciano Lana, whose drawings were used to make a film on Desâna mythology called “The Beginning Before the Beginning” (Film Archives, Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro).

WHOM DO INDIAN HANDICRAFTS BENEFIT?

Artindia now has eleven shops spread around the main Brazilian cities: Brasília, Rio de Janeiro (one downtown and another in the international airport), São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Manaus, Belém, Cuiabá, Recife, Roraima, and São Luiz. The latter two are mainly posts for receiving handicrafts from the Indians and operate in the headquarters of the regional Funai agencies. It is known that Funai intends to produce records and cassette recordings of Indian music and posters, photographs, and slides of the Indians for sale in the Artindia shops, and that the proceeds would revert to the respective tribes. It will be necessary to regulate this return in some manner (through a copyright process, perhaps?) and guarantee that it benefit the tribal community as a whole.

Herbert Baldus, who was worried about the state of extreme misery in which he found the Karajá Indians in 1948, recommended even at that early date the ‘industrialization’ of the Karajá dolls and their fishing in a report to the Indian Protection Service (forerunner to Funai):

“In order to connect the Karajá to our economic order, while avoiding as much as possible the harmful consequences (the cultural disintegration under way), I would recommend the industrialization of their fishing. The Getúlio Vargas and Heloísa Alberto Torres Posts, due to their geographical location and their installations already in operation, could play an important role as centers for orientation, production, inspection, storage, and exchange. The making of the dolls that are so peculiar to the Karajá culture is a female activity that could be industrialized” (1948:154).

In a way Funai, through Artindia, followed Baldus’ recommendation, since the Karajá dolls began to be mass-produced. Over a thousand of them were made in a two-month period, according to DAI employees, and their quality suffered, which was unavoidable. On the other hand, the ‘harmful consequences’
that Baldus feared were not avoided. Nowadays the Karajá get drunk and commit suicide by drowning themselves in the Rio Araguaia out of frustration and disgust over the disintegration of their culture, which used to be a source of great pride for them. The young people do not paint themselves any longer, and what they used to consider beautiful now looks ugly to them (M.H. Fénelon Costa, 1978:130). The income from handicrafts, the fishing surplus, and the sale of alligator skins, which now sell for two thousand cruzeiros apiece (personal information from Dante Martins Teixeira) is now spent mostly in drinking and wandering around nearby towns.

In this sense what Godelier attributed to the Sianes of New Guinea is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Karajá. With the Sianes, substituting tools for stone axes did not mean an increase in subsistence production but rather in the groups’ leisure activities “... by multiplying their wars, festivals, trips, etc.” (1974:269). The favorable balance for the Karajá was the conservation of their handicrafts.

The Karajá (Fénelon Costa, 1978:154), like the Indians of the upper Rio Negro (personal observation), are aware that they are exploited, due to the disparity between the payment they receive for handicrafts and other products and what they have to pay for industrialized goods. Since they have no other source of income, they bend their backs submissively to this situation. This most certainly exerts a strong psychological effect which must be taken into account when discussing the nature of works of art or the sociology of art. Artistic production is a reflection of the social conditions that inhibit or encourage its development. In the example of the Karajá and the Indians of the upper Rio Negro we have seen how outside stimuli enriched the themes and techniques in a way, although in some cases at the expense of the objects’ level of elaborateness. In other examples the transformation of tribal artifacts into merchandise led to the production of *kitsch* articles as a sort of compensation for their underpayment.

This will be an inevitable process if the present unbridled exploitation of Indian artwork continues to prevail. The articles will not only lose their quality as they increase in quantity, but will fall into the kind of ‘sclerotic uniformity’ that Fénelon Costa foresees with the Karajá due to the “... tendency to automatically repeat accepted forms” (1978:161).

Another pernicious aspect of handicrafts for sale is the use of heterochthonous materials that distort the Indians’ esthetic conceptions. Employees from the Indian Arts Division report having turned down necklaces strung on nylon thread by the Xavante, even though the Indians claim that they are “stronger” than the ones they used to make with buriti or cotton thread.

An even more harmful aspect is the Indians’ abandonment of objects of daily use, which are often extraordinarily beautiful, but which are substituted for by industrial products (aluminum pans, tin cans, plastics, hammocks, corrugated tin roofs, rectangular plaster-wall houses rather than the traditional indigenous kind, etc.), due to their prestige as goods and techniques coming from the dominating society.

We now come to the last and no doubt most crucial question. Who benefits by the production of handicrafts for sale? What is the economic importance of
this activity for the social reproduction of an indigenous group? Under present conditions, and judging once again from the case of the Karajá Indians, one could say that from an economic standpoint the sale of handicrafts satisfies the interests of the customers. The same process occurs here as when isolated tribal groups are attracted and pacified. Only the national society benefits, since it absorbs new land areas for its expansion and takes over the Indians' natural resources and labor force (Ribeiro, D. 1970:187).

The latter development is not inevitable, however, and the same could be said about the production of handicrafts for sale if Funai, through its Indian Arts Division and with assistance from anthropologists, took charge of the process. A basic supposition would have to be that the commercialization of indigenous handicrafts be kept in the Indians' own hands, to the extent that they were capable of taking on this task. We have an example to illustrate this in the upper Rio Negro. Two indigenous cooperatives were set up and administrated by the Indians themselves. The first was founded in 1974 near the Pari Cachoeira Salesian Mission on the Rio Tiquié — the Christian Encouragement Family Union — with the help of the recently deceased Father Antonio Scolaro. The second was set up in 1978 on the bank of the Rio Uaupés opposite the headquarters of the lauareté Mission in the village of Santa Maria. Both cooperatives face competition from the Mission shops. The latter are able to rely on an infrastructure including a shop which operates in the Mission Museum in Manaus and, above all, free transportation in Brazilian Air Force planes. The Indians had to buy flatboats and pay for fuel and crew expenses. Still, the existence of the two cooperatives led to the closing of the Funai shop in lauareté and it is hoped that with time all of the commerce in the area, including that of the Rio Içana, will be transferred from the traders and missionaries to the Indian producers and consumers (Cf. B. Ribeiro, 1981). This would certainly avoid introducing habits of conspicuous consumption encouraged by the Salesian Mission which are in no way in the best interests of the Indians: the acquisition of luxury goods, like cameras, tape recorders, and boat motors, which they are not able to keep running for very long due to the lack of spare parts and the high price of gasoline.

A short time ago the Indian Arts Division of Funai sent a questionnaire out to the heads of all the Indian Posts with questions on the characteristics of the material culture of the respective tribes. The purpose was to provide ethnographic information for collectors and the public in general who acquire handicrafts from Artindia. This survey included questions on the tribes' location, economic activities, rituals and connected paraphernalia, as well as on "related tribal myths"; information on how the artifacts are made and what materials are used, along with a brief physical description of each object; questions about the commercialization (whether it is run by Artindia or in some other manner); and finally, "what the commercialization of handicrafts means to the Indians and their community".

The latter is certainly the most important question. The margin of profit made by Artindia (and by other agencies) through the sale of Indian handicrafts, as well as this profit's final destination, are not known. Judging from the few examples cited above, one may conclude that the Indians receive at most one tenth of the sales price on their products when sold in the nearest city. In the
shops in Manaus and Belém have seen urutus, apás and other baskets purchased from the Indians in the upper Rio Negro area for 30 to 40 cruzeiros apiece being sold for 300 to 400 cruzeiros, while this price is doubled or tripled in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The most exploited Indians in the upper Rio Negro are the Maku, who receive 15 cruzeiros for a dart-blower and quiver, which are re-sold in Manaus for 250 cruzeiros (1978 figures). Not to mention prices charged in New York, which, as cited above, are truly astronomical when compared to the pittance the Indians receive.

Another problem that should be examined is the fact that Funai does not have a monopoly over this trade. During a handicrafts fair held in the Riocentro (a trade pavilion) in the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1980, a souvenir shop was selling artifacts the upper Rio Negro with better quality and at lower prices than those in the Funai shop. Recently a boat was caught near Manaus 'smuggling' three thousand urutu baskets out of the Rio Negro (information from DAI employees).

To conclude, a project for the renewal of the government agency in charge of promoting and marketing Indian handicrafts should take the following principles into account, in order to:
1. not acquire (and prohibit other agencies from acquiring) ceremonial artifacts or those which use scarce or exhaustible raw materials;
2. take into account that a tribe’s stock of material culture benefits its social reproduction and should not be taken for sale in its entirety, except for museum collections;
3. keep the production of handicrafts from interfering with institutions that regulate tribal life, like the traditional division of labor, the system of distribution of goods, and subsistence activities;
4. encourage the passing down of handicraft techniques to the younger generation through special assistance to the more skilled artisans, for them to become art teachers;
5. encourage more elaborate production and award it through adequate payment;
6. give back information to the tribes that need it by sending them iconographic and technical documentation;
7. support the re-creation of handicrafts by orienting and stimulating production which qualifies as such;
8. avoid by all means possible the substitution of industrialized analogues for autonomously made products; discourage the frequently induced consumption of luxury goods that create an unbearable dependency on the part of indigenous tribes;
9. take into consideration the fact that the production of outward-bound handicrafts should aim at the preservation of inward-bound ones, as a symbol of ethnic identity, cultural and economic autonomy and tribal pride;
10. take into account the fact that Indian art is bound for a selective public capable of paying its due value, and that it should thus not be turned into mass-produced goods. Consider that the organization of national and foreign museum collections must be turned over to qualified anthropologists capable of correctly documenting them.
As regards the latter aspect, we propose that Artindía follow the example of ethnographic and art museums in the United States and other countries and take the initiative of signing contracts with Brazilian museums to set up Indian handicraft shops inside them. As for foreign museums and even shops that specialize in the sale of handicrafts, Artindía should have the monopoly over the marketing of Brazilian Indian artwork in order to avoid the kind of speculation that only benefits the middle-man.

The neglect to follow these principles will contribute towards the continuation of the present trend, by which indigenous handicrafts satisfy whites' tastes and idiosyncrasies rather than the Indians' own interests. Besides, contrary to what some people may suppose, this artwork now represents only an infinitesimal part of Brazil's foreign trade.

One last question I wish to touch on briefly was suggested by an editorial in América Indígena and by several of the authors who wrote in this same issue, devoted to handicrafts, namely the conditions under which the handicrafts are produced, as well as their destination.

While examining the matter of artisans and their handicrafts in Peru, Wiesse (1981: 343/4) proposes that there be an intensification of production in the small villages there, including that of utilitarian ceramics, shoes, cloth, furniture and other items, so that the peasant population might once again become relatively self-sufficient as it was in the past. He also proposes that there be an exchange of artifacts between villages.

Victoria Novelo, writing about Mexican handicrafts, mentions that their most relevant characteristic in some cases is "their cultural value as an integrating factor for national identity. Their value is thus more ideological than economic" (1981: 197). She points out that precisely the poorest states are the ones that produce the most handicrafts, which are made by peasant families penned in by their subsistence farms. She stresses that this activity is not very profitable, but that it is their only alternative given the small size of their farms and the limited job market. The apparently autonomous traditional artisans are at the mercy of the middle-men who finance them, set prices, and monopolize production to keep it from reaching the mass market directly, which is its natural outlet. Novelo concludes that only the artisans' increased awareness and organization will prevent Mexican handicrafts from becoming a good business for a privileged few in the name of "cultural nationalism".

The above studies thus suggest that instead of emphasizing a small urban or tourist elite clientele, whose taste often dictates norms for handicraft production, the focus should be placed on the domestic consumer. This is the only way to keep artisans from falling victim to pressure from alienating industrialized products — plastics, tin, etc. — which compete with, depreciate, and attempt to substitute for autochthonous handicrafts.

One cannot deny that these postulates apply to Brazilian Indian and folk handicrafts.

(9) Recent figures have shown that "...the developed countries import some one billion dollars worth of handicrafts per year from the Third World, of which the Latin American production covers only about 10 percent (one hundred million dollars), while Mexico is the largest exporter among the Latin American countries" (Editorial, América Indígena, 1981: 191).