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A transcendent journey through the motherline: a voyage with Helen Hardin, southwest artist

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“The artist appeals to that part of our being . . . which is a gift and not an acquisition and therefore is more permanently enduring” (Joseph Conrad in Hyde, 1979, p. XI).

Introduction

The artist gives us a gift of her personal images, which can be a bridge to our own personal experience and a portal to archetypal symbols. Ten years ago, I had an extraordinary experience of discovering the artistic work of the Southwest artist Helen Hardin. At that moment, little did I know that her work and her life story would open me to my own experience in a fuller and deeper way, but would also help many other women with whom I have worked discover their own richly layered and complex Motherline stories.

My first glimpse of Helen Hardin’s creative process was through her image *Visions of Heavenly Flight* (see Fig. 1) which I had discovered serendipitously at the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I could not stop looking at this piece and would come back to it several times in that afternoon. What was my attraction? I had always loved the Hopi and Pueblo myth of the eagle as the sacred guardian of the sky, the one who has direct access to the sun Kachina, universal harmony, and the creator. Through the feathers of the eagle, the desires of the humans reach the ears of the Infinite (Parsons, 1939, 1994; Spinden, 1976; Tyler, 1964).

But this eagle was not a traditional Native American eagle. Helen’s eagle was more modern, abstract, stark, and dramatic. Yet, it still conveyed the myth of the eagle as the sacred guardian of the sky. With this piece I started to understand the paradox that each of Helen’s images held. One was simultaneously invited into a familiar modern world with the abstract design and then into an unfamiliar ancient world of the Tewa mythos. Her paradox was also one of precisely conveying modern chaos and an ancient spiritual order with passionate color and composition. With her paradox, precision, and passion, Helen made the ancient Pueblo myth modern (Donohue, 1995).

My desire to know more about this artist led to a penetrating investigation of Hardin’s individuation process as a creative personality (Jung, 1954, 1961, 1964, 1968; Neuman, 1959) and into a profound exploration of her feminine legacy: personally, culturally, creatively, and spiritually, the Motherline (Lowinsky, 1992). Jung’s (1964) definition of individuation is very different than the ego psychologists and thus, much more intriguing in understanding the journey and images of the artist. For Jung (1964), individuation is the process of becoming whole and of the discovery of the personal aspects of the self and the archetypal aspects of the larger Self. A person experiences herself or himself as unique, yet common and linked to others through archetypes and the collective unconscious. This paradox ignites the individuation process and can be revealed through personal images and archetypal symbols.

To fully grasp one’s potential self, a woman must also journey through the Motherline (Lowinsky,

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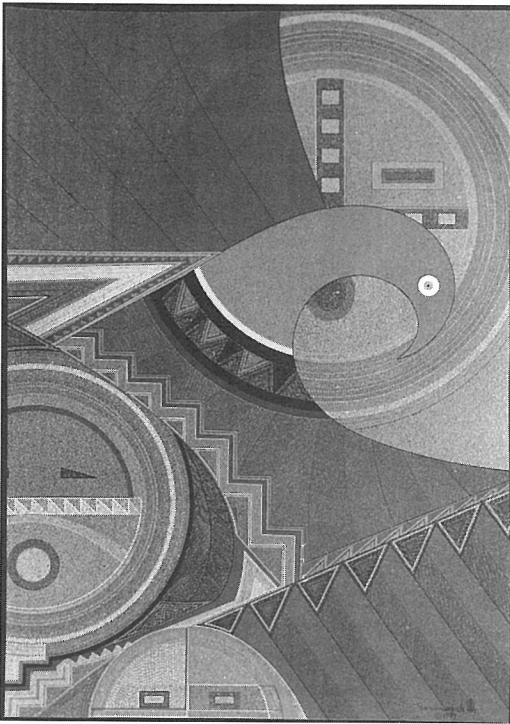


Fig. 1. Visions of Heavenly Flight (1977), Courtesy of the Helen Hardin Estate Gallery.

1992), the biological, historical, and unconscious feminine legacy passed on from mother to daughter to granddaughter and to great granddaughter. Naomi Lowinsky (1992), who coined the concept of the "Motherline," said we discover this lineage through the stories of women's bodies, women's culture, women's history, and women's images. It is through the sharing of these Motherline stories that women help each other discover their full potential, thus reconnecting to their bodies, themselves, and feminine archetypes of Mother (Hansen, 1997; Neuman, 1963).

The life and transcendent images of bicultural Southwest Artist Helen Hardin is a story a creative women's journey of individuation through the Motherline. Her story helps us understand the personal, historical, cultural, creative, and spiritual paradoxes that mold our life experiences. Hardin's images bridge these paradoxes and open her to the power of the transcendent function. By contrasting her early childhood development to her adult behavior, her compensatory function is revealed. Through her images, she formed relationship to her shadow, her animus and to the sacred. Her Motherline legacy led her to numinous experiences and transcendent Tewa and universal images of the feminine. She called these images her *Women Series*, her feminine trinity:

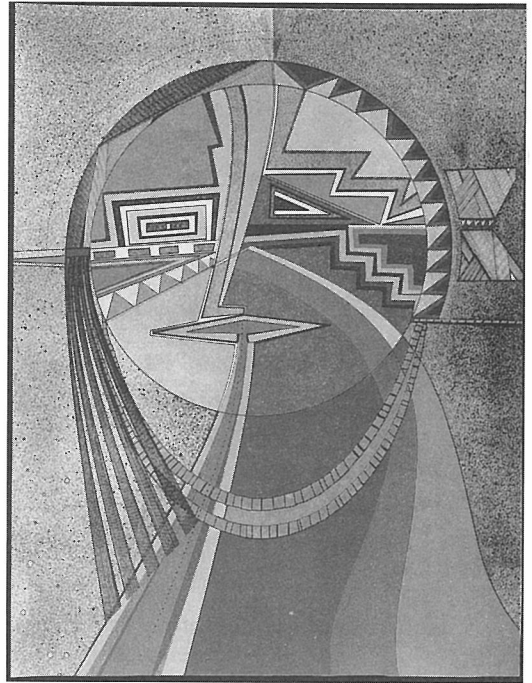


Fig. 2. Changing Woman (1981), Courtesy of the Helen Hardin Estate Gallery.

Changing Woman, Medicine Woman and Listening Woman (see Figs. 2, 3–4). They combine universal themes and Tewa spiritual legends. With these images, Helen Hardin molds the mythology of her grandmother, Marianta Velarde, her mother, Pablita Velarde, and the future mythology of her daughter, Margarete Bagshaw-Tindel, into her own unique mythology of the universal mother.

The personal paradox of the motherline

Helen Hardin was born into an extremely paradoxical world. She experienced personal, maternal, cultural, and spiritual dualities in her family. Her parents were from two very different external cultures and internal worlds. Herbert Hardin was from the Anglo-American world and the logos world of the law, politics and government work. Pablita Velarde, a descendent of the Pueblo People, Tewa Nation of New Mexico found her life's work as a painter and surrounded herself with visual images and her Tewa spiritual world. The Hardin's had two children: Helen and Herby (H. Hardin, personal communication, August 5, 1995).

In a childhood drawing (see Figure 5), Helen reveals the effects of this parental paradox. Created in profile, there are two very distinct sides. On one side

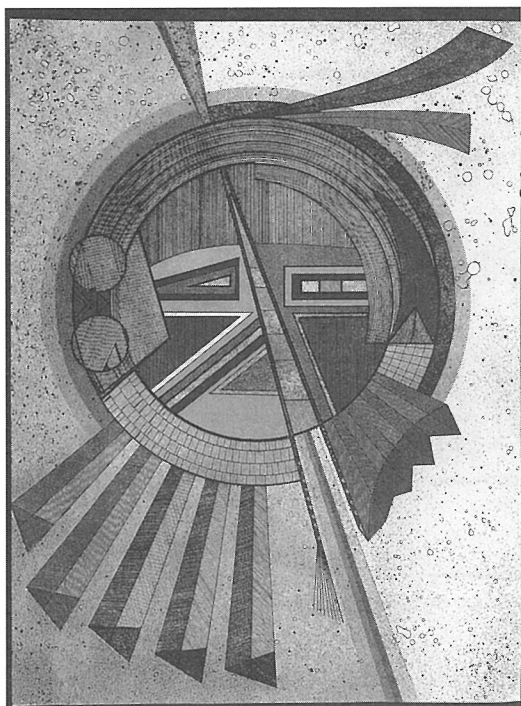


Fig. 3. *Medicine Woman* (1982). Courtesy of the Helen Hardin Estate Gallery.

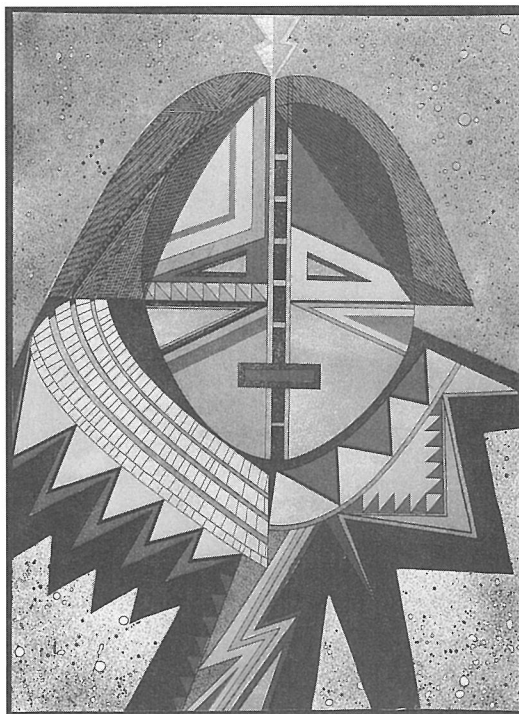


Fig. 4. *Listening Woman* (1983), Courtesy of the Helen Hardin Estate Gallery.

are the men of the family. The father is to the far left facing the center with his small son in front of him. Both are smiling and have their arms extending towards another family member. On the other side in the center right is the mother, smiling and extending her arms out to embrace the son. Behind her is a little girl (Helen) with a down cast face, sad eyes, dragging her doll on the floor. No one is extending an embrace to her. This childhood drawing depicts the emotional tone and shadow aspects of this personal paradox for Helen; one of sadness, distance from the mother that is turned inward on the self. Helen's childhood was a mixture of two very different parents from two very distinct worlds and deep sadness in relationship to the mother. Pablita had a profound effect on her daughter's sense of self, creativity and community, and spirituality.

This intense sense of sadness started with Pablita's tragic experience of the Motherline. She was the daughter of Herman and Marianta Velarde, (born in 1918). Marianta died when Pablita was only 6 years old. By 1921, she had lost her mother and her three brothers. These losses were devastating for the young Pablita. Herman, her father remarried and virtually abandoned his children by sending them to St. Catherine's Indian School in Santa Fe, about 60 miles from their home at the Santa Clara Pueblo. Pablita told stories of being beaten for speaking her native Tewa

instead of English, a common experience for many Pueblo children (Hyer, 1993). The legacy of Pablita's motherline was one of the wounded feminine due the early loss of both her mother and the mother-culture.

This tragic loss was the portal for Pablita's discovery of her artistic ability as a painter. After the religious school, she transferred to the Santa Fe Indian School, which was undergoing a metamorphosis. SFIS became a national center for Indian art and Pablita found her life work as painter. This incredible gift became a source of pain in her culture.

Painting was not considered woman's work in my time. A woman was supposed to just be a woman, like a housewife and mother and chief cook. Those were the things I wasn't interested in (Hyer, 1993, p. 1).

Pablita was censored by the Tewa elders, but continued to pursue art despite the criticism. She became an imagistic chronicler of the ancient stories of the Pueblo, especially the one of *Turkey Girl*.

Like Pablita herself, *Turkey Girl* was an orphan. Her cruel foster mother made her herd turkeys all day and kept her from the social life of the village.

But the kindly turkeys dressed her for the ceremonial dance, the villagers saw that she was very beautiful. Fearing witchcraft, the men of the village

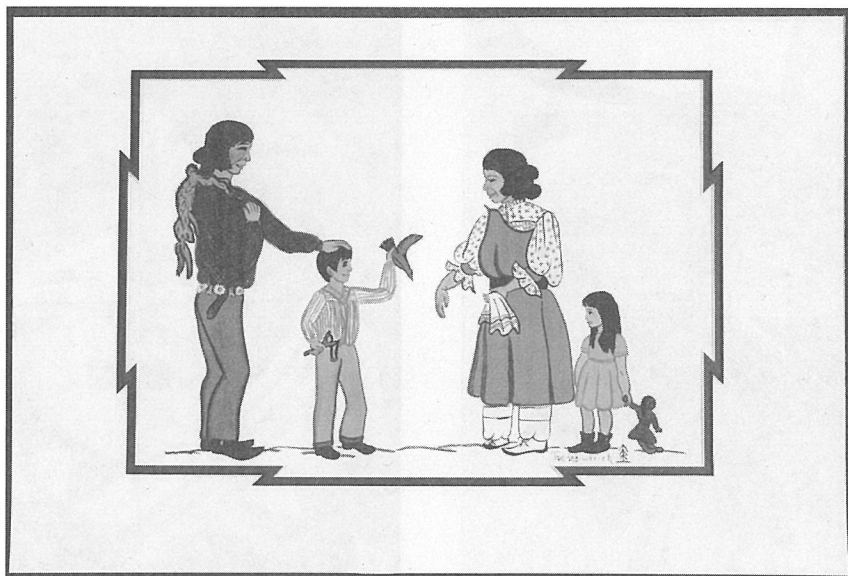


Fig. 5. Untitled, childhood drawing, Courtesy of the Helen Hardin Estate Gallery.

tried to kill Turkey Girl, but she was saved by a weird, beautiful turkey wing that rose from the rocks, giving her and her flock time to enter a sacred cave and disappear forever (Hyer, 1993, p. 3).

Creatively, Pablita did not disappear. She pursued her art and added the duties of motherhood after she married Herbert Hardin in 1941. Attending to both roles was a constant conflict for Pablita, which resulted in another struggle with alcoholism. At times, she did try to disappear into the spirits of alcohol. Her art, especially *Communicating with the Full Moon* (1962) depicts her suffering and loss of self during this time (Hyer, 1993, p. 17).

Pablita's ambition and alcoholism had a profound influence on her family life and marriage. The Hardin's divorced when Helen was 13. This was devastating for Helen for she feared she would lose the parent who understood and protected her. Herbert was the idealized parent in this family who suffered with the struggle with alcoholism (H. Hardin, personal communication, August 5, 1994; Scott, 1989).

Helen, in her early years, was forced to deal with the dual nature of her mother. She could be the loving, sober, and nurturing Pablita, the storyteller and artist. Then, unpredictably, she could become the monstrous intoxicated mother who could also be very abusive towards Helen. This paradox in the personal motherline shaped her shadow sense of family itself as revealed in the childhood drawing, gave her inspiration to find the feminine spirit in her native Tewa myths and created her internal paradox, which Helen would depict in her paintings.

The cultural and spiritual paradox of the motherline

Helen's personal paradoxes were interwoven with deep cultural and spiritual dualities. Being raised in two distinct cultures, Helen had two languages, two names, two spiritual practices, and two world views. Helen spoke only Tewa during the first 5 years of her life. The Tewa language is very different from English. It is more rich, expansive, and imagistic as well as is directly linked to a spiritual nature. Tewa delineates 15 states of time versus English, which has only three: past, present, and future. The Tewa world is dualistic. They recognize the social and symbolic aspects of all elements of life. There are three human and three supernatural aspects to existence. "In the life cycle of an individual this tribal journey is symbolically enacted from birth to death. At death, the soul of each human category becomes the spirit of its linked supernatural category" (Ortiz, 1969, p. xiii). Thought and action in the Tewa world is organized around these dualities (Ortiz, 1969; Ryder, 1986). The Tewa language reflects the Tewa Pueblo religious life. It is

... one of instrumentalism controlling the natural through the supernatural, usually, of course, from a flow of interest, not a planned enterprise. The technique of control is largely magical, that is, ritual acts are automatically effectual: or song or dance, color or line are formalistic or compulsive; but there is more here than magic—there is conceptual control (Parsons, 1939, p. xxxii).

The Tewa world was one full of spiritual and cultural paradox. It is compulsive, yet not planned. It is natural and supernatural. Helen's early world revolved around these spiritual and cultural dualities and added another thick fiber to her internal tapestry of personal and maternal paradoxes.

Hardin had two names Tsa-sah-wee-eh, which means "Little Standing Spruce," and Helen, which she only used after the age of 6 years old. Hardin signed her works as Tsa-sah-wee-eh, rarely as Helen Hardin. She felt the creative source of her imagery was fueled by the expansive, imagistic, spiritual language, and culture of the Tewa world.

In addition to the dualistic nature of the Tewa world, Helen and her brother Herby were raised in two religious traditions: Tewa and Roman Catholic. Helen and her brother talked about their home being filled with Tewa and Roman Catholic icons and they were trained in both traditions. Yet, Helen never painted Christian images. Tewa alone was the source of her spiritual inspiration for her creative work. Tsa-sah-wee-eh felt closely connected to the universality, logic, natural, and mystical elements of the Tewa spiritual world. Living between these two worlds, she felt a kinship with the Kachinas who moved between heaven and earth.

Although Helen had a deep internal connection to the Tewa world, she was considered a "half-breed" in the Pueblo. In the 1940s through the 1960s, children of mixed blood were called this in both the Anglo and Tewa worlds. The Pueblo elders forbade inter-racial marriages for many reasons, one being protection. This sense of marginality created a tremendous loss for Helen. She was not allowed to dance with her Tribe. This is a devastating loss for a member of a Pueblo/Tribe. In the dance, one takes their place in the community, in its history, in its spiritual life and through this, finds a soul place in themselves (Fergusson, 1931).

Like her mother, Pablita, Helen was censored for her creative work. In the 1960's, a woman could paint, but she could not reveal tribal secrets to non-Tewa people. Despite the abstract and modern nature of images, the elders felt she revealed tribal spiritual secrets with her creative work. Her deep intuitive understanding of the spiritual nature of the Kachinas let her brush dance on the canvas and paint the essence of the Tewa spirit world. Without intention to cause harm, nevertheless, she was censored for her creative work. Protection of tradition fueled the elders and intuition fueled Helen. In the outer world, they seemed at odds. Local legend has it that the elders actually said that Helen would die young for violating this taboo. When Helen did die at the age of 41 years from breast cancer, Pablita, devastated, thought the prophecy had been fulfilled. Helen's pro-

found connection to and rejection by the Tewa world would be the paradox that would inspire her creativity in her adult life.

The paradox of motherhood and trickster of success

Hardin's life long paradox of her individuation process was an interplay of gifts and suffering, the legacy of Pablita. Helen's first long-term relationship, with Patrick Terrazas, was similar to her relationship with her mother. She found a former marine who was strong, attractive, alcoholic, and abusive. Helen spoke about this time in her life.

My life between 18 and 25 was holy hell. It was a real torment because I was always leaving Pat and going to my mother, then to Pat and going to my mother, then to Pat and then back to my mother. Both of them were equally bad. They were . . . playing squash with me . . . slamming me against the wall (Ryder, 1986, p.34).

While with Patrick, Helen became pregnant. She was steadfast and excited about having this child. On November 11, 1964, Helen gave birth to Margarete. In Helen's mind and heart, Margarete was her greatest creation. This child was very much loved and grew up with the affection that Helen missed (Margarete Bagshaw-Tindel, personal communication, August 4, 1994). Helen now continued her motherline, not only as a daughter, but also as a mother and soon to be an artist in her right.

Sensing the complexity and danger of his daughter's relationship with her mother and lover, Herbert invited his daughter and granddaughter to stay with him in Bogota, Colombia in 1968. Helen again was embraced by the protectiveness of her father. His lifestyle in Colombia allowed her the safety and luxury to focus on her art. He also became the trickster when he orchestrated her first one-woman show in Bogota that year. His support helped Helen separate from the abusive relationships of her mother and lover, and also gain her own acclaim as an artist.

With her first taste of her own personal identity and artistic success, Hardin returned to New Mexico and her work began to soar. In 1970, the *New Mexican Magazine* featured Helen on its cover; "Tsa-sah-wee-eh Does Her Own Thing." The evidence of her individuation was at hand. Her work was becoming a bridge toward healing the paradoxes of her life, those irreconcilable opposites. Helen Hardin's art is a poignant example of Jung's (1964) transcendent function at work.

Jung (1968) envisioned the transcendent function as the way the psyche unites the conscious and un-

conscious, real and imaginal, and moves beyond its deep divisions of the irreconcilable opposites. The psyche can then create a new image and attitude that heals the divided state. Jung (1968) considered the transcendent function to be the most significant element in one's psychological and spiritual growth and individuation process.

Hardin's individuation journey was tumultuous. The Trickster of Success appeared again in another form. In November 1972, Helen collapsed and was briefly hospitalized for depression. During the months of individual therapy that followed, she began to see the pieces of her life that had closed in on her: the scars of childhood, an abusive relationship, the strain of single motherhood, and her compensations for the past seen in her constant internal pressure and her personal demands of herself as an artist.

Weeks after her hospitalization, Hardin met Cradoc Bagshaw, a free-lance photographer who she married in 1973. Cradoc gave her the security she craved and her art flourished. Within this creative family who loved and accepted her, Hardin finally belonged. As seen in *Visions of Heavenly Flight* (see Figure 1), her work became more complex, layered and bore her geometric artistic signature (C. Bagshaw, personal communication, September 5, 1994). This newfound security allowed her to plunge deeper into her internal terrain.

Hardin's art was her bridge, her transcendent function that helped her explore new images and attitudes about herself. Jung's (1964) belief in the transformative power of art as a bridge to one's potential self now becomes a guiding principal in her life.

Precision: the compensatory aspect of the motherline and emergence of Tewa myths of the feminine

An astonishing precision governed Hardin's life and work. She was the "prophetess of the compass, a sage of the ruler and a high priestess of the protractor" (Scott, 1989, p. 40). Hardin's exactness helped her compensate for her life's wounding as well as became the portal to her Tewa spirituality. This opened her to deeper explorations of the spiritual with images from a universal source, the collective unconscious: this repository of human's psychic heritage and possibilities.

Jung (1961) wrote about a self-regulatory function of the psyche that strives for balance. He called this the compensatory function. The unconscious tries to balance any conscious tendency towards oneness.

Quite in contrast to her unpredictable, abusive,

early years, Hardin's creative work as an adult was very controlled and detailed. She would work for 13 hours a day in her studio and she would not settle for less than a perfect line. If one did not suit her, she would wipe away layers of her work. Etching on copper plates, Hardin had chosen an unforgiving medium, which allowed for no mistakes.

Similar to many people, who are raised in unpredictable homes in which abuse and hostility vie and toy with love and comfort, Hardin developed a compensatory perfectionism out of her striving to balance and heal the initial injury. Within her art, she would control and master her world, thus overcoming the criticisms, rejections, and insecurity of her past. Her drive for perfection was unyielding, but beyond anything that could be seen as animus driven. Jung (1961) talked about the masculine and feminine energies held in each person. In a woman, the masculine energy is called the animus. When a woman is seen as possessed by the need for perfection, she could be seen as animus driven. Her Tewa heritage transformed this drive into an unexpected aspect of the feminine.

This compensatory drive also reflected her internal strength as a fighter. These unexpected aspects of the feminine are embraced in the etching, *Changing Woman* (see Figure 2). Embedded in this etching is the Hopi and Navajo myth of "warrior woman" the story is told by the treatment of the hair. In this myth, a young woman is fixing her hair in a bun (see the right side of the plate). She is surprised by an attack on her village by a warring tribe. All the men are away at another battle. The young woman must leave her hair undone (the left of the etching) and defend her village and her culture. Hardin is a warrior woman and her art would rule with perfect aesthetic integrity. Possibly, seeing herself as the warrior woman was her way of fighting for the love and favor not only of her mother Pablita, but also of the Tewa world (C. Ingram, personal communication, August 3, 1994; Allen, 1986 & 1991).

Yet there is still another unexpected aspect of the feminine embraced by this piece. It is the Navajo myth of *Changing Woman*.

Changing Woman is a model for Navajo women. While changeable, she is not fickle. She is independent, resourceful and capable. Her powerful sense of self does not depend on caprice, coyness, self-deprecation, or self-centeredness, but is derived from a perspective of dignity, equality, balance and reason. She looks to the harmony of the whole over vast lengths of time or the definition of the good (Allen, 1991, p. 71).

The Sun wishes to marry *Changing Woman*, but *Changing Woman* had demands to make. She was the

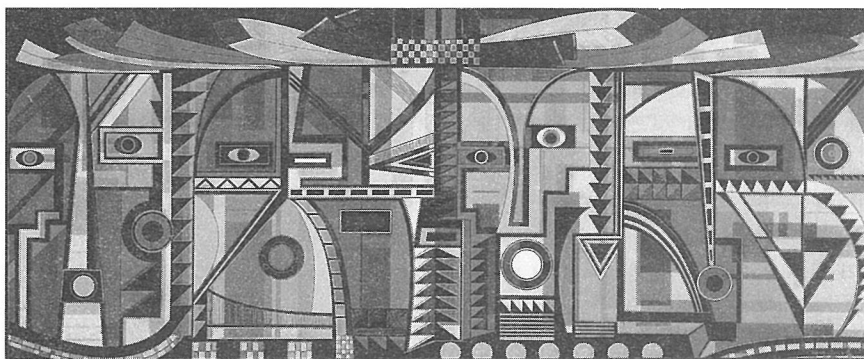


Fig. 6. *Harmony Brings Gifts From the Gods* (1982), Courtesy of the Helen Hardin Estate Gallery.

earth and changed with the seasons and the sun revolved around her. She knows they need each other to make the world whole and to create harmony in the universe. But if harmony was to occur, “each exchange between us must be equal . . . This time they embraced as equals, for Changing Woman could see that he understood” (Allen, 1991, p. 80).

Helen gives us two unexpected aspects of the feminine that emerged from her precision that was intertwined with her beloved Tewa spiritual world. Hardin shows us herself as a warrior and thinking woman. Helen wanted to create women who are like *Changing Woman*. In the contemporary art world, she was also reacting against the artistic treatment of Native woman as fat and idle. Hardin said:

Their woman (treatment of Native American woman by male artists) were large, and lifeless, large blobs. Sort of doing nothing except being idle and fat and wallowing in the daylight. But women do more than this, and I wanted to show thinking women. And my women are not just Indian women; they're universal women. So *Changing Woman* appeals to all because they should change. This is what I personally feel. (I. Yang Slaughter, personal communication, August 3, 1994).

By weaving these two myths, Helen creates a Universal Thinking Warrior Woman. This Archetype will eventually help her heal and create a new image of herself.

The transcendent function does in art what it cannot do in life. Looking at *Harmony Brings Gifts From the Gods* (see Figure 6), it is hard to believe that Hardin failed geometry in high school. In her struggle to gain more class time for her art while in high school, she found her way into the boys' drafting class. Always peeking out of the corner of her eye at what the boys were doing with their instruments, she began unconsciously to incorporate geometry into her work. She would return to geometry later on, with

her studies in anthropology at the University of New Mexico.

It was through her love of anthropological roots and origins that Hardin discovered her ancestral links to geometry. The Hohokam, Mogollan, Mimbres, and Anasazi People were her tribal forebears, and a doorway to the collective unconscious. As well, she particularly embraced the Mimbres geometric traditions in design as can be seen in both *Visions of Heavenly Flight* and *Harmony Brings Gifts from the Gods* (see Figures 1 and 6). When preparing for her major work, she would paint a small Mimbres-inspired piece that she called her “Mimbres potboilers.” Her embrace of her ancestor's use of geometry allowed her access the precision she desired, achieving it with her loved “gadgets,” her drafting tools (M. Bagshaw-Tindel, personal communication, August 4, 1994).

The recovery of native inspiration also opened her to a change in direction, as she began to explore light, space and color as well as the Tewa sense of time in her work. In *Harmony Brings Gifts from the Gods* (see Figure 6), Hardin creates her masterly balanced of composition, line, line form, mass, color, and Tewa time. This painting began with a totally black background. As she developed it, the image grew with increasing bright color, light, and shape. This drive for perfection and integrity in her work was Hardin's way of creating order, an ultimate harmony of elements out of chaos. Her personal ancestry became the doorway to images from a more universal source, what Jung (1954) called the collective unconscious.

Precision also governed Hardin's approach to preparing for her work. Margarete remembers watching her mother's preparation ritual.

My mother would walk into her studio, turn on her 100 watt light bulbs above her drawing table, then turn on her TV for her soaps or music. She would then attend to her hands, which were extremely important to her.

Methodically, like a Zen monk,

She would roll up sleeves and smooth lotion on her hands for at least twenty minutes. She would then process to stir each individual egg carton container of paint twenty times. She would sip her coffee or tea and then she would begin to work. (M. Bagshaw-Tindall, personal communication, August 4, 1994).

Margarete called her mother's preparation ritual "a spiritual awaking" (M. Bagshaw-Tindall, personal communication, August 4, 1994). This ritual allowed her to communicate with her Tewa spirits. The dance that was denied her by the elders is permitted with each stroke of her brush or etching tool. Helen experienced being close to her gods or spirits. In this numinous state, Hardin encountered the god/spirit in its full power (Otto, 1917). Inspired by both dread and devotion, she danced with her Tewa spirits throughout her subsequent creative activity. Ultimately, making art became like a meditation practice, which permitted her spirits to create prayers of almost perfect resolution, her paintings (Scot, 1986).

The passions: Kachinas in the motherline

In contrast to her perfectionist precision, Hardin painted from her own passion, in the manner of a contemporary postmodern artist. Her feelings for an image, song, mask, or myth directed her brush or etching tool. Hardin made each symbols vibrate with emotion and meaning. Lou Ann Farris-Culley (1981) compared Hardin's to many contemporary artists, both Anglo and Native American, and lauded her ability to use metaphors to give a universal spiritual message. Farris-Culley (1981) stated that Helen achieved what many failed to do, look deeply within the painting, not outside to unravel the mysteries.

Passion also directed her personal life and public career. She was a forceful spokesperson for Native American art and women. Stories circulated around Santa Fe about Helen as a sometimes-iconoclastic community member. From those close to her, her passions were as a loving, creative child, an absorbing friend, loving mother and a fascinating and compelling partner and wife.

One's passions in life can be directed simultaneously by feelings of belonging and of abandonment. Hardin's deep attachment to her Native American legacy stemmed in part from the rejection she experienced from this very community. Both mother and daughter were censured and isolated from the Pueblo because of their work as painters. Even more was denied Helen: her place in the Pueblo dance, though her art demonstrated her understanding of her

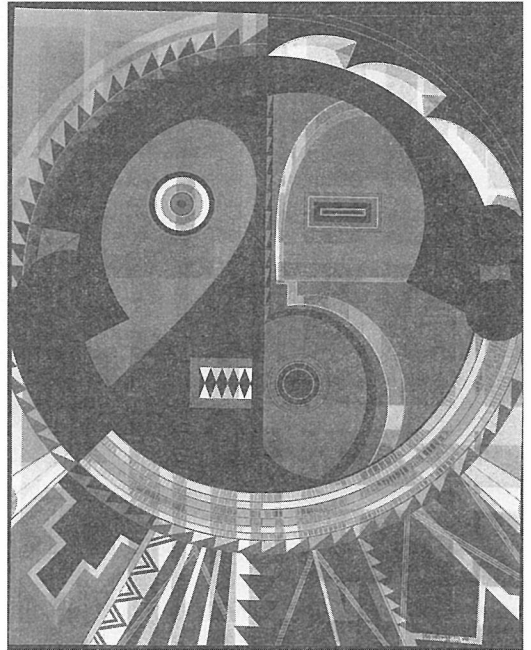


Fig. 7. *Metamorphosis* (1984), Courtesy of the Helen Hardin Estate Gallery.

Pueblo roots. In the Tewa culture, the matrilineal cords link all to their heritage. This cultural and personal motherline cord was wounded for Helen through the feminine body of the dance.

In *Metamorphosis* (see Figure 7), Helen uses the sacred image of the Kachina to depict the love, longing, and resentment that stems from her passionate embrace and rejection by the elders of the dance on her feminine body and psyche. The Kachina cosmology in the Hopi and Pueblo worlds is one of paradoxes and difficult to understand. These spirits are more human and less divine and while they are venerated, they are not worshipped. They are intermediaries and the invisible forces of life (Spinden, 1976; Tyler, 1964). Hardin could not imagine living without her beloved Kachinas.

In *Metamorphosis*, all is held in circle, an archetypal symbol of wholeness, and a symbol of life itself for Hardin. Yet everything else is fragmented. On the right side, the Kachina is the loving serene spirit that is embraced by the culture. With a round open mouth ready to receive, and a calm gaze, she is held in the energy of the eagle's feathers that surround her face. Like the calm side of warrior woman, her hair is in place in a completed bun. On the left side, the warrior woman has her hair undone and holds the disturbing emotions that emerge from rejection. Her eyes are piercing, her teeth are jagged and blades surround her face and are what interacts with the outer world. Turquoise, a symbol of healing encircles both sides,

a striving for individuation, a sense of wholeness. It holds the numenosity of the dread and desire for closeness to the Tewa world. When Hardin was asked what *Metamorphosis* was, Helen Hardin said, "It's a self-portrait" (Scott, 1989, p. 10). With *Metamorphosis*, Hardin had begun the process of transformation that accepts both the pain and love of her existence and of the Great Mother.

Here the Kachina emerges as the symbol that will help her give birth to a new image of herself and her greatest artist creations. With her human and holy feminine spirits, Helen strove to heal this wounded motherline though her creative work. Her art became a bridge across the chasms in the motherline, a means to transcend the pain, connect with her culture to universal themes of other and to realize herself as a universal woman.

The motherline and the sacred feminine

Helen Hardin's internal healing and bridging of the wounds in the Motherline is best depicted by her most ambitious and significant works called the *Women Series*. With her etched *Feminine Trinity: Changing Woman* (see Figure 2), *Medicine Woman* (see Figure 3), and *Listening Woman* (see Figure 4), her sure hand begins to resolve the paradoxes of her life by truly acknowledging the universal and collective in her images and art, to map the true identity of her self.

Created in the 3 years before her death from breast cancer (1981–1983), *Tsa-sah-wee-eh's Women* are the accumulation of all the knowledge and skill that she derived from her life work. Hardin saw her women as sensitive, emotional and intellectual. Her focus was on the face not the body, although the body is inferred by the use of elements of five in each piece. Her women are truly strong androgynous women, able to unite the masculine and feminine, the emotional and cerebral. Jung (1961) postulated that one of the ultimate achievements of one's individuation process was to hold the masculine and feminine in conscious balance. Hardin achieves just this with the *Women Series*.

With this trinity of Madonnas, in striking contrast to the masculine trinity of Christian culture, she created her own spiritual deities. Through these works, Hardin starts to connect to her own divinity by linking herself to the ageless Kachinas. This series represents the pinnacle of her personal and spiritual journey.

Changing Woman (1980–1981), which Hardin considered her most important piece, is both a thinker and a warrior. Similar to *Metamorphosis*, her face is divided in half. Yet, this face represents both the

internal and external struggles. On one side, there is a profile, which may represent her lifelong struggle with family and cultural relationships, Remember one of her first childhood pictures was in profile. Here she looks into herself, the shadow: the pain and inner conflicts that were locked away and unaddressed. By showing us her shadow, she permits herself to confront another Tewa taboo; problems are never addressed publicly, especially to another culture. The frontal gaze is her confrontation with her external Tewa and Angle worlds: her resolution of belonging to neither. Her face is in a circle. She is striving for wholeness and the universal cycle of life. Perhaps it enabled her to hold and resolve both her internal and external conflicts. The turquoise circular beads, a sign of good health and luck, bless her struggle. She has a heart-line to the mouth and is now able to speak openly from her heart. Helen has much to say, but the message is still in flux because she is speaking from four directions. She is the constancy of change.

Medicine Woman (1982), completed before Hardin was diagnosed with breast cancer, is replete with healing imagery. Perhaps her close, delicate link with her personal and collective unconscious informed her of her need for healing medicine. Margarete recalled that while painting *Medicine Woman* her mother had a "sinking sensation" and knew emotionally that she needed "medicine to go on" (M. Bagshaw-Tindel, personal communication, August 4, 1994). Margarete found these notes on *Medicine Woman*:

Not a traditional *Medicine Woman*, she is the side of Woman who expresses the nurturing sense. She is the healing spirit in the woman who calms the earth. She is the only Woman in the series with feathers (Ryder, 1986, p. 149–150).

Plumes and feathers in the Pueblo tradition signify a healing spirit. Perhaps Helen knew she needed nurturing feather spirits to heal and deal with what was about to happen in her life.

Medicine Woman is literally split in two. She is both the hurt woman and the healer of the self. Like *Changing Woman*, she is looking in two directions at once. She is cross-eyed and looks inward, but knows she must do two things at once: "look beyond what is within and know it" (M. Bagshaw-Tindel, personal communication, August 4, 1994). She must find medicine in herself. *Medicine Woman* portrays the ceremonial healer able to hold the broken circle of both her active anguish and her longing for healing. She can now face herself because she can now hold the split in the core and center of herself. *Medicine Woman* was now her ally in her battle with breast cancer.

Cradoc Bagshaw, Hardin's husband, remembers

how important this series was to her. He understood that what she was engaged in depicting was a metamorphosis actually taking place as she created the work. In intense discussions, she communicated the meaning of her women to him. When she started *Listening Woman* in 1983, Cradoc knew she had returned from a distant part of her journey and that “she had her feet on the ground again.” (C. Bagshaw, personal communication, September 5, 1994).

This etching is the third of the trinity, a symbol of creations, perhaps birthing a new image of herself.

Listening Woman is who I am becoming now. She looks straightforward. She is very bold, very strong. She is the strongest of the three so far. She listens. She looks directly at you. She is solid and self-sufficient and able to absorb the sorrow of the universe (C. Bagshaw, personal communication, September 5, 1994).

Listening Woman is the Kachina who can embrace constant change as the dualities are bridged. She holds all in an oval face, more human than the other two. She is returning to the conscious world. Her face has a clarity that can be seen with the horizontal divide. She speaks clearly with one mouth in the four directions. With her head hunched into her shoulders, she has more mass and substance to absorb the sorrows of the universe. Her straightforward glaze assures that she can have compassion and the capacity for forgiveness.

Margarete states that her mother found in *Listening Woman* an “objective self” who was willing to listen to her soulful needs.

She (Helen) needed to be objective and make decisions about her life. Helen needed to get selfish and draw on her objective self and let go of anger and bias (M. Bagshaw–Tindel, personal communication, August 4, 1994).

Listening Woman portrays compassion as the ability to relinquish the anger, pain and resentment and move beyond them. Perhaps this capacity to forgive emerges only when we stop and listen to our “objective self,” our own internal *Listening Woman*.

Helen Hardin seemed to know long before her death that she was making a right angle into people’s souls and lives with her art. Helen made a videotape documentary 8 years before she died of breast cancer. In this film she discussed her life, her art, and her relationship to death. Here again her close link to the unconscious may have guided her to this discussion on her art and dying.

I think the reason I don’t fear death is because I know that I’ll always be here through my paintings . . . It is the reward of living and the reward I have for those who survive me. It is the only thing I can

give that is really me (Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, Inc., video, 1976).

When Helen lay dying in her home, she asked to be surrounded by her *Women*. Her family placed *Changing Woman*, *Medicine Woman*, and *Listening Woman* in her room. On June 9, 1984, when Helen died, the paintings were removed for she was one of them now. She was one of the O-Khoo-Wah. She was one of the cloud people.

The motherline continued: Margarete’s legacy

Margarete feels her most poignant inheritance from her mother is her spiritual vision. Helen is her spiritual heroine. However, Margarete rebelled against following the artistic tradition of her mother and grandmother. She was pursued a career in medicine at the University of New Mexico. Margarete was only nineteen years old when her mother died. A few years later, she married Greg Tindel and had continued the motherline first as mother of two children: Helen and Forrest (M. Bagshaw–Tindel, personal communication, June 11, 2000).

During her pregnancy with Forrest, she began to draw with pastels. Margarete drew in the middle of the night. Art making for her had to be secretive, private, and mysterious. Yet, she felt this was the time to give birth to both forms of creative expression: one as a mother and other as an artist. The birth of Forrest was an opening to a sacred magical territory. She began to draw images that looked like spatial figures. These images were “the body of my soul and what I looked like that day”. From this experience, she began to embrace her creativity and artistic legacy. She continued the artistic motherline after the birth of her children, connecting with the abundant feminine strength of her grandmother and mother. Culturally, she has experienced more of an embrace by the Pueblo, for she was allowed to dance with her tribe. She feels the power and energy of the tribal dance in her creations as in *Twilight Meets Dawn* (Figure 8). Yet she connected in a different way, not as a single mother, but as a mother in relationship (M. Bagshaw–Tindel, personal communication, June 11, 2000).

Margarete is cultivating the Motherline in her daughter, Helen. Margarete’s daughter is not interested in creating art right now, but is “genius that we are trying to keep up with.” Helen is starting to understand the legacy of her great grandmother, Pablita and grandmother, Helen. She discovered them in one of her New Mexican history books and wondered “why do they have to show up everywhere” (M. Bagshaw–Tindel, personal communica-

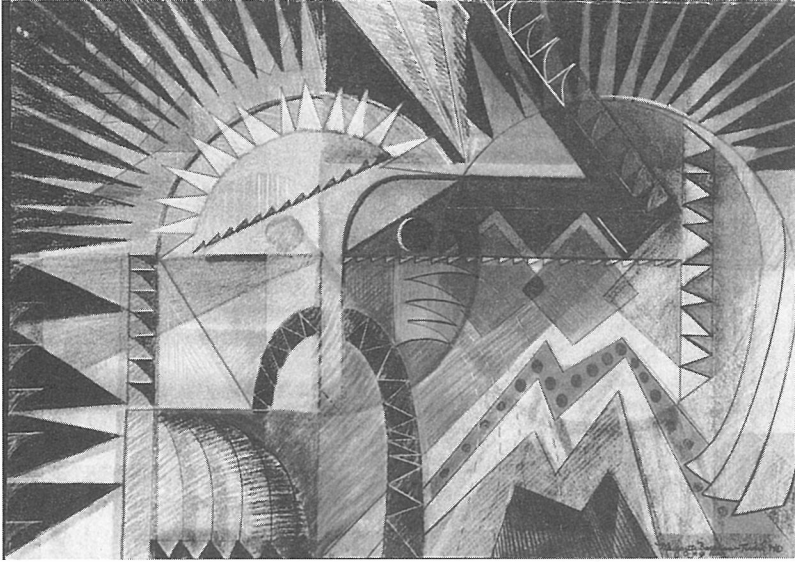


Fig. 8. *Twilight Meets Dawn* (1995), Courtesy of Margaret Bagshaw-Tindel.

tion June 10, 2000). The gifts of the Motherline come in many packages, sometimes wanted and sometimes not.

The gifts of the motherline

Helen Hardin's art has been a gift of passing on the Feminine spirits of the Motherline. When I encountered her work, her images compelled me to grapple with my own Motherline journey of individuation. Hardin's cultural and historical wounding lent support to mine, and inspired me to move beyond the bounds of these personal injuries. Her images opened me in a deeply personal way to the power of the Sacred Feminine.

Her life struggles and transformative creations gave me tremendous support as an expressive arts therapist. Her life and work clearly demonstrate the power of one's creative process and the transcendent function to bridge, to heal and to transform (Chodorow, 1997; Knill, Barba & Fuchs, 1995; Lewis, 1993; Levine, 1999; Neuman, 1959).

Helen's spirit and I have created Motherline workshops, called *A Transcendent Journey Through the Motherline* that weave together her story with participants' personal journey through the expressive arts. We begin to tell our Motherline stories first through the body, our first connection to the motherline. We explore our bodies and what was allowed to be expressed and what was not. Then we imagine our Mother's bodies, what they express, and how it would feel to inhabit her body. What would it be like

to live in our grandmother's body? With these kinesthetic images, we move back to our own bodies and probe for our somatic voice in movement. The energy of the body gives rise to visual images of our body's motherline. Together we paint and draw, finding our way through color, lines, and form. Poetic words emerge to create stories of our voyage through the body, movement and visual images. We share our integrative arts stories and our personal and universal interconnections as women through our Motherline.

With her angles, curves, circles, squares, and lines, Tsa-sah-wee-eh has passed on her feminine spirit of aliveness, creativity, and spirituality. With her Motherline Lineage of Pablita and Margaret, she takes us back to the circle of our beginning to find new healing images of ourselves as women.

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