

Keeping History at Wind River and Acoma

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AMONG THE SMALL frame houses and government buildings clustered together at Fort Washakie, Wyoming, a village of 1700 people on the Wind River Indian Reservation, stands a white Victorian structure that houses the Shoshone Tribal Cultural Center. The building looks different from the prefabricated homes and corrugated sheds that surround it. More stately and aged, it seems a misplaced image of domestic elegance whose height and architecture speak to its importance as vault of tribal history and museum of contemporary culture. Yet there is a certain shabbiness about the house—the porch sags, the screen door needs replacing—that suggests that the history and culture preserved there are not, after all, such vital components of life at Fort Washakie.

The idea of a “cultural center,” located in a particular place and displaying objects for a spectator’s curiosity, is in most ways antithetical to traditional Shoshone methods for maintaining history and culture. Oral narratives, ceremonies, and dances performed those functions in the past, and they still have that authority in contemporary life. Yet this museum-archive makes available to non-Indians as well as Indians the elements of Shoshone culture and history that the tribe itself is willing to contribute to the multi-textured fabric of “American” public culture. In this sense, the Cultural Center presents not a gateway or even a vestibule to the inner sanctums of a more private and sovereign tradition but a sampler of historical material that mutually situates Shoshone and Euro-American cultures in the history of the United States—surely a significant factor in the construction of Shoshone-American identity in the late twentieth century. In this

essay I want to offer some observations about the ways that materials of displayed culture and narratives of history offered to the public at Wind River and at a second Indian community, the Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico, both assert a place for Native Americans in the larger picture of US cultural development and, in varying degrees, contest the dominant narratives of European America.

One of the most extensive collections in the Shoshone Cultural Center's archive consists of a series of articles and essays devoted to Sacajawea, the young Shoshone woman who participated in the Lewis and Clark expedition from 1805 to 1806. Originally from the Lemhi Shoshone group of what is now southern Idaho, Sacajawea was abducted in her early teens by a group of Hidatsa hunters and taken to their villages along the northern bend of the Missouri River. Subsequently, Sacajawea came to be in a liaison with the French trapper Toussaint Charbonneau, who very likely bought or won her from the Hidatsa captors.¹ During the autumn of 1804-05, Charbonneau enlisted with the Lewis and Clark expedition, then quartered near the Mandan villages just south of Hidatsa country. Sacajawea gave birth to her son with Charbonneau, Baptiste, the following winter, and in the spring, when the expedition set out again for the sources of the Missouri, she and the child accompanied Charbonneau. Her familiarity with the area of the Missouri headwaters was useful to the expedition, and her ability to speak Shoshone was important in negotiations with the people there, whose help was necessary for the expedition's successful portage to the Rocky Mountains.

The written materials at the Shoshone centre offer various details of Sacajawea's contribution to the expedition, but many of them focus particular attention on the narrative of her life afterwards. The course of that life is much debated. One argument has it that she lived for only a few years after the expedition, died in 1812 at approximately the age of 24, and was buried near Fort Manuel, a short-lived trading post on the border of North and South Dakota. This account, for the most part, is subscribed to by Euro-American historians, whose evidence comes from contemporary diaries and letters of men who encountered Char-

bonneau and his wife in St Louis and at Fort Manuel in 1811 and 1812.² The other argument constructs a very different story of Sacajawea's life by claiming that she died in 1884 at Wind River, after having lived there for many years as a highly respected member of the community and thus as an important figure in local history.

The Shoshone Cultural Center as an institution supports the latter account, as do most of the Shoshone people living on the reservation today. Several Euro-American writers whose commentaries make up part of the Cultural Center's collections also subscribe to this story, but the 1812 argument is represented as well in the archival materials. Asked if the argument that runs contrary to the centre's own position ever tempted local readers to think differently on this question, a Shoshone researcher told me that no one at Fort Washakie was ever bothered by it, because they knew Sacajawea was there, buried outside of their hamlet.

Indeed, a short drive outside of Fort Washakie leads to Sacajawea Cemetery, in the midst of which stands a large gravestone, marked with the epigraph "Sacagawea, A Guide With the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Identified By Reverend J. Roberts Who Officiated at Her Burial." Those who think Sacajawea died at Wind River in 1884 believe it is in fact she who is buried here, and they have named the cemetery after her. Oral histories related by tribal elders in the early twentieth century to the Euro-American researcher Grace Hebard serve now as textual evidence for this identification.³

Their story is supported in a statement written in 1935 by John Roberts, an Episcopal minister at Wind River from 1883 until 1945.⁴ Roberts explains that the woman he knew as Sacajawea had through the years related to her family incidents of her experience with the Lewis and Clark expedition, and that this information came to him via the Indian agent at the time who had Sacajawea's history from her adopted son, Bazil. As the epigraph indicates, Roberts officiated at her burial in 1884.⁵

In both of these accounts, Sacajawea is considered a brave, generous, and intelligent person whose contributions to the expedition were estimable and whose place in the historical record is highly valued. In this respect, the Shoshone tribal

characterization agrees with that of the Cultural Center and, indeed, with that of the culture at large. As an actor in the chronicle of the American nation, Sacajawea has achieved a good deal of popular recognition; and through her the Shoshone people have been acknowledged in mainstream history more than they might have been otherwise. Since her first appearance as a central figure of the Lewis and Clark expedition in Eva Emery Dye's 1902 novel *The Conquest*, she has become the subject of much popular fiction, a virtual icon of US romantic nationalism.

In such a role, Sacajawea might seem to present a figure of ambiguous cultural value among Native people, since the expedition spearheaded a Euro-American settlement history that overtook the space and resources of all Native American peoples in the trans-Mississippi West. Sacajawea's sisters in expeditionary fame, Pocahontas of the Virginia Powhatans, who assisted John Smith at Jamestown, and the Aztec-born La Malinche, translator and mistress to Cortes in Mexico, have both acquired complex reputations as sensitive diplomats and exceptionally canny women who at some level betrayed their people. Certainly this is more apparent in the case of La Malinche, but the complications of both women's roles as negotiators and interpreters between indigenous leaders and white political-entrepreneurial missions are evident in the extensive scholarship and popular writing on both.⁶

No such ambiguity envelops the figure of Sacajawea. It is evident that the Wind River Shoshone want to claim her as their own. Indeed, the iconic image of Sacajawea, with wind-blown hair and babe on her back, a "Noble Savage" pointing the way west, is affirmed not only in white statues and storybooks but in the writing of one of the most influential Native American cultural analysts and poets of the present day.⁷ Paula Gunn Allen, a radical feminist, celebrates Sacajawea's strengths in the following terms:

When Eva Emery Dye discovered Sacagawea [sic] and honored her as the guiding spirit of American womanhood, she may have been wrong in bare historical fact, but she was quite accurate in terms of deeper truth. The statues that have been erected depicting Sacagawea as a Matron in her prime signify an understanding in the Ameri-

can mind, however unconscious, that the source of just government, of right ordering of social relationships, the dream of "liberty and justice for all" can be gained only by following the Indian Matrons' guidance. (27)⁸

To support her position, Allen then quotes from a 1905 speech by the suffragette Anna Howard Shaw, which begins with the words "[f]orerunner of civilization, great leader of men, patient and motherly woman, we bow our hearts to do you honor" (27).

Allen's praise assumes much about Sacajawea's abilities to make choices and decisions in her role as Charbonneau's bought wife and as figurehead of the Corps of Discovery.⁹ In *The Sacred Hoop*, Allen's zeal to represent Native American feminine authority as a general, viable phenomenon results in what appears to be a somewhat wishful interpretation of Sacajawea's character.

All of this would seem to suggest that the Wind River account as well as the hagiography of Sacajawea in other quarters beg some critical inspection. In their portrait, half of the historical scholarship on the topic of her death is ignored, and the politics of her co-operation with Lewis and Clark are left unaddressed. In their representation of Sacajawea, the Cultural Center's staff and most of the Shoshone people living at Wind River would seem to subscribe to the dominant culture's valuation of her and, in the process, identify the Shoshone people with those values by according her such a central position in their own history. Perhaps one of the more patent indications of this is that the grave marker at Wind River dedicated to her includes, near the bottom, in small print, the notice "Erected by the Wyoming State Organization of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1963."

In certain schools of contemporary postcolonial cultural studies, the position on Sacajawea expressed at the Shoshone Cultural Center likely would be met with some degree of opprobrium, since it indicates assimilation rather than anything particularly Shoshone. There are other ways of looking at this picture, however. The first thing to reconsider is the neglect of the evidence for Sacajawea's death in 1812. In my own experience of studying the characters of United States expeditionary narratives, the 1812 date of death always has seemed the more compelling: passages from journals are cited, with dates, names

(though not Sacajawea's), and places indicating where Charbonneau was seen with his "Snake" (an Anglo term for the Shoshone commonly used in the early nineteenth century) Indian wife, who had participated in the Lewis and Clark expedition. These journals were kept by travellers whom contemporary historians can identify by occupation and origin; indeed, their names ring with familiarity: Brackenridge, Bradbury, Luttig.

But why take this, finally, as the truth rather than the 1884 story? As I spoke with people at Fort Washakie and reviewed their archival material, I found myself "coming around," as it were, to a more agnostic position. Swayed in part by their obvious desire to claim Sacajawea, by the accounts of the people who remembered knowing her at Wind River, and by the power of the Sacajawea Cemetery, with its solemn, indeed sacramental, argument for ownership, I began to feel that my attraction to the 1812 date had been based too exclusively on the textual biases of Western historiography. One thought in particular disrupted the clarity of my earlier position: the fact that everyone involved in this debate admits to Charbonneau's having been a profligate lover, marrying what Harold Howard calls "Indian girls" all over the Western country until he was an old man (185). Any wives he had before 1811 might have accompanied him from St. Louis to Fort Manual. The researchers at the Shoshone Tribal Cultural Center explain that they are approached continuously, through the mail and over the phone, by people who claim to be Charbonneaus and who wonder if their ancestor might have been Sacajawea. This fact is not necessarily testimony to the multiplicity of Charbonneau's amorous connections, but it does point to the difficulty of establishing secure identities in such a case. Moreover, as Howard has indicated, there is a good deal of contemporary oral evidence of Sacajawea's presence in what are now Wyoming and Montana, in which she is identified in the same terms as those used to describe her in the journals of Brackenridge, Bradbury, and Luttig. She is the former wife of a "Frenchman" or of someone whose name is spelled something like "Charbonneau"; and she once accompanied Lewis and Clark to the Pacific.

The significance of this debate in a sense calls for reconsideration of the second objection to the account of Sacajawea's life

propounded at the Shoshone Cultural Centre: namely, the lack of commentary on the politics of Sacajawea's co-operation with Lewis and Clark. We have no evidence to indicate that Sacajawea was in any position to make choices or decisions in joining the expedition or in determining any of its activities, other than to advise certain geographical directions. The problem arises when one considers the fact that the Shoshone people have embraced her for having had this experience. How else, after all, would she even be known in the historical record; what, one might ask, is there about Sacajawea to appreciate besides this role? I think an appropriate response is simply that she is recognized. Several posters and pamphlets at the Cultural Center label her "Sacajawea, Recognized Shoshone Woman." As caretakers of her legacy, the women who manage the museum, and, indeed all the Shoshone people are directly associated with her. Sacajawea's recognition is not theirs, but it is as close as they are likely to come to substantial acknowledgement within the American public sphere, and that is no small effect of Sacajawea's influence. While it is true that the Cultural Center indirectly connects its values with those of the dominant culture's historiography by affirming Sacajawea's heroic status for having assisted Lewis and Clark, the fact that the expedition served to raise her to national fame seems far more significant at Wind River than the broader ideas or aims that the expedition was intended to actualize.

Yet another perspective on Sacajawea's character and destiny in local oral commentary further attests to the way in which the Wind River community asserts its possession of her memory, outside of the roles she occupies in the more hegemonic narrative. As one of the women who work at the Cultural Center told me, many people at the reservation now feel that Sacajawea should have left Charbonneau rather than accompany him on the expedition. His womanizing and ill treatment of his wives seem deplorable by their contemporary standards; and the retrospective advice, or admonition, to Sacajawea effectively separates her from him by prescribing her proper action, even if that action never occurred.

On the other hand, the comment made to me by the woman at the Center would also seem to imply that Sacajawea's participa-

tion in the expedition was not a matter of her choice but part of the generally "bad deal" that she had with Charbonneau. This seems quite plausible. We know, after all, that much of Sacajawea's young life was spent in captivity after her childhood, during which she had apparently been promised, by her father, to another man. Taken together with the fact that she was probably bought or won by Charbonneau, this information can lead one to construct an image of her, not as strong-willed and determined, but rather as a woman whose own desires are quite unreadable, in that her actions are so evidently determined by the series of men in her life, including Lewis and Clark.

The expedition was designed and controlled at a distance by the "Great Father" in Washington, as Lewis and Clark referred to President Thomas Jefferson in the orations about the new nation and the Indians' part in it that they periodically delivered along their way. The bad deal they offered, which the Indians could not refuse, is writ small in the deal offered to Sacajawea and to her descendants, who must rely on her for any recognition within the larger culture. In her capacity as guide and interpreter, Sacajawea acts and speaks for the interests of Lewis, Clark, Jefferson and the mix of European Enlightenment and romantic national ideas for which they stood. As we know her from the expedition texts, she never speaks for herself.

By claiming Sacajawea as one of their ancestors and at the same time imagining her separated from the man who connected her with the activities through which her recognition and, very likely, their knowledge of her comes, the people at Wind River mark their own minor recognition in the narrative of US history while also posing a counter-voice to that history. The critique is aimed at the set of patriarchal relations that kept Sacajawea in a compromised situation, and an indirect connection exists between that patriarchal structure and the national project to which she and Charbonneau contributed. The irony, of course, is that if Sacajawea had cut her connection to Charbonneau, she presumably would never have participated in the expedition and thus never have been represented in mainstream history.

However, in the account of Sacajawea's longer life, ending in 1884, she does in fact leave Charbonneau several years after the

expedition, when he has taken yet another, younger wife, whom he demonstratively favours, to the disadvantage of the increasingly mistreated Sacajawea. From this point on, she figures as a much more self-directed character. Taking her daughter and adopted son with her, she travels to Montana and lives with a group of Comanche, marrying a man named Jerk Meat, who is kind and generous to her. Sometime after his death, she joins the Fremont expedition of 1843 for a short time and finally settles during her last years at Wind River.¹⁰

This account thus constructs Sacajawea as one who is in a position to make some choices and who, in doing so, parts from the man who, in part, determined the course of her life. Accordingly, within this narrative the Fremont expedition is simply a temporary vehicle for passage to Wind River rather than another opportunity for contributing to official US exploration of the West. By the time she arrives at Wind River, the historical character shaped in this narrative is appropriately renamed Wadze-Wipe, "Lost Woman." Disconnected from any sort of tribal or marital relations, she is on her own, a figure of feminine independence who still does not speak and thus still is not known, but who opts finally for life with her people, rather than for association with the white culture of whose history she is now a part.

In this account, Sacajawea's character as expedition participant, and the potential charge of collaboration that it bears, is revised, as she is written out of the earlier histories and re-situated in that of Native Americans. In subscribing to this narrative of Sacajawea's life, the Shoshone people at Wind River claim her participation in the US expeditionary project as well as her distance from it. To understand her in this way is neither to accord her the role of grand matriarch of Native American female strength nor that of heroine of US colonialism; rather it is to portray her as one who turned away from white history in a complex refusal of recognition by the mainstream audience. In doing so, Sacajawea enacts for the Native audience a version of what William Bevis refers to as "homing in" in much contemporary Native American literature, that is, returning to a locus of Native American community and identity after a time of wandering without cultural structure, precisely as a lost woman. The

exclusivity of Shoshone culture is maintained in this narrative, even as it constitutes part of the history that belongs generally to "American" public culture.

II

The museum and information centre at Acoma Pueblo, like the Shoshone Tribal Cultural Center at Fort Washakie, has a special place in relation to the village in which it is located and whose culture it offers to public view. Unlike the Shoshone Center's idiosyncratic appearance, however, the adobe Acoma museum looks like most buildings in the area. This fact, however, cannot be read as an indication of harmonious blending with the local culture, for the structure sits alone below the imposing mesa of "Sky City," where visitors are permitted only in the company of Native guides.

Like other museums, that of Acoma has the effect of reducing the complexities and incompleteness of history and culture to a decontextualized, exoticized collection for tourists' consumption. Artefacts of Acoma history and culture, particularly pottery, are on display; the cases are filled with pieces dating back as far as the tenth century, many of which are placed beside recently made clay pots that resemble them precisely in shape and design. This display of continued competence in the ancient craft certifies the traditionalism of present-day potters; it also defines these works as copies and as products of an effort to duplicate earlier technologies and aesthetics as if no time or sensibility interceded between then and now. Other display cases offer the paraphernalia of nineteenth-century battles—bows and arrows, guns, war bonnets, maps, US Army uniforms and charts. Just like any display case in any museum around the world, these offer the objects as synecdoches of the history of which they are parts. Like the Shoshone Tribal Cultural Center, the Acoma museum seems at first glance to cater to the curiosity and interests of visitors.

Yet in Acoma, unlike Wind River, the home of the objects in the museum, Acoma itself, is visible from the doorway, approachable via a short, winding drive up the steep mesa wall. After registering and paying an admission fee to visit Sky City, tourists are shuttled in small buses to the venerable Pueblo. Once atop

the mesa, a guide leads each group through a range of narrow streets and narrates Acoma's history. Pottery is for sale from vendors who appear as if on cue, and visitors are notified in advance of the two-minute time limit allowed for making purchases at any particular stand along the route. Picture-taking is permitted with the purchase of a ticket at the information centre, but the church interior and graveyard cannot be photographed, and permission must be requested from Acoma's residents before anyone can take their portraits.

When our bus arrived at the Pueblo, a young man in dark glasses rose and introduced himself as our guide. After restating the rules, he led us off of the bus into a small square, where he began narrating Acoma's history from the thirteenth-century settlement to the present. At one time inhabited by more than 1000 people, the pueblo now has about 30 year-round occupants who take up some 13 of the approximately 400 houses; the rest are used only in summer and during holidays. These population figures seemed to imply at the outset of the tour that the living-of-Acoma is simultaneously an actual and a performed phenomenon, for much is made of the fact that it is the oldest continuously occupied village in the continental United States. With only 30 people to sustain this identity year-round, several of whom are involved in the tourist trade, Acoma may be construed as a kind of quaint memorial to its former living self. A woman in our group asked the guide if he lived there. "No," he said; like most of his generation, he had chosen to live where schools and jobs were within easier reach. By his account, most Acoma people live within the region and return to the mesa often, even if they cannot call themselves residents. During our visit, approximately 25 or 30 people turned out to sell goods, and a few others emerged here and there, going about their business without referring to us. Aside from these, we saw only other tourists, who, like mirrors of ourselves, would appear now and then in groups at the end of a street or across a plaza.

Thus the Pueblo appeared to be remarkably empty. It seemed to exist, by and large, as a perfect but modest display: like the contemporary imitations of ancient pottery, present-day life in Acoma seems committed to the forms and styles of an uncon-

taminated, classical past. Isolated and remote, the Pueblo indeed looks disconnected from the culture and history that surround it and have framed it as a reservation.

Indeed, the framing of Acoma as a perfect remnant is so intense that it seems to work against authenticity and the preservation of "real" culture. The museum displays and the controls to which tourists are subjected can easily contribute to a sense that this is all a sort of para- or pseudo-experience. Yet there are clearly other dimensions to this story, and what appears at first to be a concession to tourism that sustains the status-quo perception of Native American culture as exotic and intellectually collectible is only the initial impression. For as much as it makes Acoma look like a fossil trying to perform the part of a living community, the tour continually calls attention to itself as a tour and thus positions the visitor as a self-conscious stranger whose presence in the village is in some sense already scripted. Our comments and questions echoed off the close walls as if they had been asked many times before; the confined spaces through which we walked seemed themselves to prescribe body movement and posture. With no other sounds or activities in which to contextualize our own, we seemed the only players on an otherwise quiet and empty stage. We had paid to look at the Pueblo itself and were given an opportunity to see ourselves in Acoma as part of the bargain.

The invitation to view the village as an object of the spectator's interest was patently and visibly limited. The narrow channels of the tourist's Acoma, sealed off from the domestic interiors of sparsely occupied homes, the few residents, whose exchanges with the visitors have only to do with selling goods, and the rules of the game, which control the visitor's visual experience as well as her movements—all of these conditions of the tour work to wall off the unvisited quarters of the Pueblo. Its unseen residents, engaged in whatever banal or dramatic activities, are free from the curious eye of the stranger. Beyond the walls, daily life went on among however few people actually live there; and whatever their regard for the visitors, it was not for us to see.

Our guide's narrative worked in concert and counterpoint with this chiselled experience. His distantly ironic tone and

the memorized sound of his material kept the fact of our being "on tour" continuously in focus. He did not dwell at length on the horrors of Spanish occupation or the manipulations of the Anglo-American government. Rather, his basic rhetorical method was to string together different kinds of information, for example, the measurements of a wall, followed by a particular practice of contemporary life, then an anecdote of local folklore, and, in conclusion, to narrate one of the many horrors committed by the Spaniards at Acoma during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Finally, without a pause or change in pitch, he would ask in an uninviting and monotone voice, "Are there any questions?"

His discourse, however, did have the potent effect of bringing his listeners into the history he narrated by making their (our) European predecessors as much a part of the story as his own. Perhaps more than the particular data, however, the tone of irony in his oration served to implicate the listeners' culture in the account of his own. On the surface, this strategy seemed to have little effect on the majority of tourists in our group. Some of them appeared uninterested in questions of history or culture and chose to ask instead about the physical construction of the village. A gregarious older man, rotund and flushed from the walk and the heat, was particularly curious about the composition of the adobe, and his probings led to questions by others on the same topic, as well as to the matter of the shift in building trends from adobe to brick. Similar discussion arose concerning pottery: when did people begin using ceramic instead of simple clay, and what were the differences in firing? A khaki-clad, tense-looking young man with the demeanour of an anxious graduate student asked a few tentatively formulated questions about the density of walls, strength of beams, and so on. There were others who, like this fellow's female companion, covered in white cotton and veiled in gauze, never touched or questioned anything. The guide was probably accustomed to this range of interest, for he seemed to have ready at hand all sorts of information about heights, depths, and lengths of nearly every structure we encountered. Such dialogues recurred several times during our visit, particularly after the guide had been describing some of the

atrocities committed by the Spaniards. His phrase, "Are there any questions?," which typically followed these descriptions, often had the odd effect of eliciting queries about building materials. Its way of deflecting attention to the simple materiality of Acoma's construction left the unaddressed questions of history dangling in hollow air.

Dialogues of this sort tended to focus on spatial measurements and the construction of boundaries, the sort of data regularly offered at such tourist sites. Yet, whether or not our guide was merely anticipating the typical interests of tourists when he responded to these questions as thoroughly as he did, it was impossible to resist thinking that there was something allegorically appropriate in the discourse about the composition of walls and ceilings. Data of this type appeals strongly to rationalist imaginations and can give one the sense of possessing real knowledge about space and objects in a strange location. Boundaries are also very important in most Native American societies, where spiritual as well as geographical and political limits are crucial to the articulation of community and identity. Rather than elicit transgressive desire, as boundaries commonly do in European-American culture, however, they are respected and preserved as the marks that indicate home. All the talk about walls and what material is used to construct them seemed to me like a walking trope for the barriers existing between our guide and his culture, on the one hand, and, on the other, the traditions of the Anglo tourists, which include the desire to know about the Natives and Acoma.

To my mind, the guide's presentation seemed rich enough to satisfy familiar touristic desires at the same time that it could be said to position the tourist as one who is also returning to Acoma, that is, to a scene preserved from history, where the determinations of European culture in the lives of indigenous people are massively evident. His genre permitted him to lecture very subtly to his audience and to present for its consumption the details of a limited number of horrors in a history that belongs to them as much as it does to Native Americans. The stories of Spaniards enslaving Natives and throwing reluctant or recalcitrant workers over the mesa's rim, of beatings, mutilations, and forced conver-

sions, make the tourist recognize the European past in the conditions and situations that the guide described concerning the history of his own people.

Looked at in this way rather than as an "inauthentic" reproduction of Native American life, the tourist's Acoma would seem to be the product of a concerted and well-organized effort on the part of the people who claim the Pueblo as their home to preserve a traditional lifestyle from the curiosity of strangers. Rather than speculate on the traditional content of what we do not see, however, it seems more plausible to consider what we do see and what we are not told unless we ask. The relation of touristic representation to actuality is difficult to trace, since the tourist market is certainly part of actuality and since it is being re-negotiated continuously.¹¹ A few more details of our conversations with the guide may serve to indicate how the issue of traditionalism was evinced by this particular tour through Acoma.

My companion asked the guide at one point how extensively traditional religious practices were followed in present-day Acoma. He replied that they are still followed by many, but added that this does not mean people have relinquished Catholicism. Neither does it suggest some sort of hybrid faith. Given the intensity of their ancestors' sacrifices in the long and bloody process of the establishment of the Spaniards' religion, he remarked, the contemporaries of Acoma feel that if they do not maintain their Catholicism, the ancestors will have suffered and died in vain. Yet the two sets of religious practices are kept largely separate. Only on two occasions during the year are they joined: on September 2, the feast day of Saint Stephen, patron saint of the Pueblo, and for four days during the Christmas season. The guide was very clear on this point, as if he wanted particularly to disabuse people of the notion that Native American Catholicism, like the Native American Church, always mixes indigenous with Christian forms.¹² Yet he gave little information about Native religion, other than to explain what the kiva was and to point out a few other places in the village where festival events take place. His narrative included more information on the history of Christianity in the Pueblo. Again, in this sense the tour and

accompanying narrative concentrated attention on the European presence in Acoma's history and kept the data of the guide's own culture and ritualistic traditions to a minimum.

The two centres of religious practice at Acoma, the church and the kiva, seem to illustrate this point in their very different architectural forms. The disparity suggests the respectively announced and unannounced relations to spirituality that they represent. Between them, one sees a contrast something like that between the Vietnam and Lincoln Memorials in Washington, DC.¹³ These secular temples, located in close range of each other, differ markedly in their conceptualizations of the histories they recall. The Lincoln Memorial, projecting the transcendent authority of US democracy in the figure of the hallowed president, rises nearly 30 metres above the park in which it is located, visible from kilometres away, while the Vietnam Wall is almost hidden, designed to work with the landscape to evoke a different but equally "deep" range of emotions. St. Stephen's at Acoma, like many European Catholic churches, rises well above the heights of all other structures in the village, and its two bell towers reach upward for another 2.5 metres or so. The crosses planted above them fade at a distance, but there is no mistaking the Christian design of the highly visible building itself. The victory of the mission over indigenous secular as well as spiritual powers is advertised across the land. The kiva, on the other hand, sits in a row of houses made from the same adobe stucco and brick, largely unnoticeable from the outside. Beyond our guide's identification of it, there was no evidence that this particular structure was other than one of the houses. We were not taken inside; and we were told only a few details about how one enters the kiva, how long one stays, who goes in and who does not.

I will not attempt to analyze the differences in conceptualization and practice of spirituality that the church and kiva suggest, since they have been addressed extensively by scholars of comparative religion. It is worth remarking, however, that the contrasting notions of power implied by the two buildings seem to have had curious effects upon the guide's own sense of religious identity. Whatever powerful spiritualities are sponsored by the kiva, they do not fuel evangelical practices nor demand overt

expressions of belief from those who are not already so inclined. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, has been notorious for these things, and its political power through history has left its mark on contemporary life. The kiva's silent reverence for the spiritualities it hosts and the lack of attention it calls to itself seemed to be respected in our guide's spare references to the religion practised there and in his insistence on its discreteness from Catholicism. Yet it was not at all clear that he was especially devoted to Native religion or that he was designedly preserving its values and practices from public knowledge. My companion, whose own religious imagination is rather eclectic, asked the guide where he stood on these matters. He replied that he was "sort of stuck in between," but offered nothing more to explain what this meant. He admitted with great candour that he did not know the old stories very well, since they had been passed along to him, as he claimed they often are, by grandparents who had not really listened very carefully. Nor does he speak Keresan, the language of Acoma Pueblo.

In this peculiar position of representing the village to outsiders while remaining something of an outsider to its traditions himself, our guide resembled other famous go-betweens, Sacajawea among them, whose lives are situated in at least two cultures but who are "proper" to neither of them. Yet in most ways it seemed that he was quite representative in precisely this in-between status. His comment about the stories being passed down incorrectly implied a dilution of older forms and practices generally, in an era in which for several generations indigenous customs have been in competition with those of Europe and the United States. As a result, the inheritance of culture has become a somewhat kaleidoscopic process, with once-opposing terms shuffled into different and still-changing relations.

On such an eroded and heterogeneous cultural terrain, differing religious forms may be compartmentalized clearly, but the standards for determining what should be regarded as imported and what should have the status of Native are not always easy to predict. My friend asked if "the Protestants," meaning evangelicals, had become much of a presence in the Pueblo. The guide answered that "some people are jumping the fence. You can see

the missions along route 40." Route 40, formerly route 66, is the major interstate highway between Gallup and Tucumcari, but at points it diverges into a desolate-looking road that might be described as a belt of former strip culture. Abandoned gas stations, bars, and restaurants from the 1950s and 1960s dot its borders; the ghost cabins of defunct motels line up in shabby disrepair. One can find here and there a Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist, or Mormon mission.

The fence-jumping phenomenon that, according to our guide, represented only about 10 per cent of the population, occurs off the mesa. Protestantism is not gaining much of a foothold in Acoma itself, which accordingly represents it as a marginal movement. Catholicism, by contrast, stands on "this" side of the fence; indeed, our guide's explanation that the people of Acoma would not give up their Catholicism because their ancestors had sacrificed and suffered so much for it, affirms what might be called the "negative inclusion" that the Catholic Church enjoys within the Pueblo culture. In this sense, compared to Protestantism, the Catholic Church acquires a virtually indigenous status, a "rootedness" that persists even if practised in complete separation from Native religion. If our guide's condition of being "stuck in-between" is a matter of moving back and forth between two compartmentalized religious bases of cultural identity, then he is not culturally mixed but doubled.

Such a characterization and the complex dynamics that produce it speak to the difficult subject (in every sense) of post-colonial identity. None the less, I will risk saying that this model of cultural doubling seems like something of an ideal, and that the maintenance of subjectivity that it presupposes is more schematic and linear than one would think possible. If, on the other hand, the guide's condition is a matter of really, literally, being "stuck in-between," such that he inhabits neither a Native nor a European cultural imaginary but some as-yet unarticulated zone that runs parallel to both, then a whole range of questions arises about what constitutes the "traditional," "indigenous," and "Native." Whether tradition is something experienced as such in certain practices or something recognized intellectually becomes a significant issue, in that it bears heavily, although not exclusively, on the question of who determines what tradition is.

These are not new questions, but in the context of late twentieth-century American cultural formations they have to address as well the puzzling area of Native-hosted tourism and Native self-representation in the market of public culture. In the wake of the Columbian quincentenary and the many revisionary critical interpretations of conquest history sponsored by that anniversary, respect for Nativeness in the United States is probably higher than it has ever been, even as the status-quo response to Native Americans retains the familiar tones of exoticization, "Noble Savagism," and racial prejudice. For Native Americans, and for non-Natives who seek to learn from them about systems and ideas that the West badly needs to inculcate, the returning or "homing in," in Bevis's terms, to indigenous community and identity, as most people who are interested know by now, is no direct route.

It is easier these days to speak of reconstruction and re-invention than of return. Accordingly, much attention has been devoted to the notion of hybridization among indigenous peoples of the Western hemisphere, as if this were in some way a desirable and particularly rich way of being. Yet for our tour guide at Acoma, I would venture to say hybridization was at best a source of wry, ironic humour, at worst a source of confusion and alienation. He works, like many people in this country today, in a service industry, but in addition to entertaining and educating, his service is to challenge the status-quo knowledge of the typical tourist. The familiar southwestern vacation experience of visiting a Native reservation is framed by thick walls of resistance. The much-discussed brick and adobe walls of the houses perform this role literally by limiting visitors' access to the "inner life" of Acoma. Rhetorically, the guide did the same with his narrative skills and with his authentic lack of knowledge.

III

Sacajawea's historical afterlife is as vexed in some ways as her life itself: it is another story of captivity, servitude, and partial escape. The mainstream record eventually positions her as a quintessential element of US national culture, while alternative accounts work to distance her from that position and to recuperate her for

Native American representation. Her recognition among Native as well as European-American audiences results from her place as a Native American woman participating in the Lewis and Clark expedition. Thus the oppositional value she acquires in Native America exists within the fabric of contemporary US public culture generally. Yet the story of her long life among the Comanche and Shoshone gives us a solitary Sacajawea who guides no one, but wanders somewhat haphazardly in the direction of Wind River. The Shoshone are not quite her own people, and the place is not her home, any more than the expedition was something in which she chose to participate. Rather than returning to her country of origin and to her aboriginal self, she becomes Lost Woman, a somewhat worldly veteran of losses, gains, and strange experiences in a frontier of many cultures. Similarly, the possession of Sacajawea at present-day Wind River does not foster a classic Shoshone identity but instead affirms the interconnection of the tribe's history with that of the United States. The recognition that identification with Sacajawea allows is simultaneously oppositional to and embedded in the terms of the larger public culture.

The tour leader I encountered at Acoma revised the relationship between Native guide and European travellers evident in older expedition narratives such that the Native, rather than showing the Europeans something they do not really know, offers them some of their own history. His mild manners and Elvis Presley haircut, his dress and dark glasses were familiar details of a particular kind of "cool" persona that one sees almost anywhere in the US these days. Characteristically "American," our guide conducted a tour through Acoma that implicitly critiqued the role of the visitors as unimplicated strangers. Some of the tourists were more interested in the history of adobe walls than in the history of the European presence, and for all I know they had their reasons. My companion and I went with the expectation of learning about the old culture, but our guide, like the women who run the Shoshone Cultural Center, demonstrated in very interesting ways that Native Americans have found their own way of teaching history at Wind River and Acoma.

Michel de Certeau, who studied extensively the history and politics of indigenous and European relations in the Western hemisphere, wrote in *The Practice of Everyday Life* that

the ambiguity that subverted from within the Spanish colonizers' "success" in imposing their own culture on the indigenous Indians is well known. Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often made of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. They were other within the very colonization that outwardly assimilated them; their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it. The strength of their difference lay in procedures of "consumption."

(xiii)

Our Acoma tour guide affirmed de Certeau's account, while updating it in somewhat different terms. His representation demonstrated that the Natives of contemporary Acoma, like those of Wind River, rather than glossing their own cultural practices with those of the dominant culture, have appropriated familiar methods of mainstream tourism and historiography, and in the process offered Euro-Americans information about *their* culture and history. In this sense, the Natives have "consumed" some of the narrative mechanisms of late twentieth-century American culture and, in de Certeau's terms, have made for themselves a place as "other within the very colonization that outwardly assimilated them." Thus, it seems, they have "escaped it without leaving it."

NOTES

- ¹ Harold P. Howard writes in his book *Sacajawea* that at this point in her life, Sacajawea "was now one of Charbonneau's chattels" (17). Howard's account of this exchange is that Charbonneau "had probably acquired her in a gambling game or by barter" (17). Howard's is considered by several contemporary academic historians to be one of the more respected narratives of Sacajawea's life and role in the Lewis and Clark expedition. While his book presents the evidence for both sides of the debate, described below, concerning the date of Sacajawea's death, he subscribes to the conclusion of most Euro-American historians, namely, that she died in 1812, shortly after the expedition ended.
- ² See Ronda; Lewis and Clark; Wissler; Larson; Schroer; and Howard (191).

- ³ Hebard's *Sacajawea: Guide of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, published in 1932, was to a great extent based on interviews with Shoshone people living at Wind River who told Hebard that they had known Sacajawea, also known by them as Porivo and Wadze-Wipe, or Lost Woman, during her later years. Hebard's argument has not been given much credit by other historians, who claim that she ignored the evidence of contemporary witnesses Henry Brackenridge, John Luttig, and John Bradbury that Sacajawea died much earlier. Hebard has also been criticized for wrongly assuming that Sacajawea was mistaken for one of Charbonneau's other wives by Brackenridge, Bradbury, and Luttig. See Howard 157-58, 178-84.
- ⁴ 1945 is the date given for Roberts's death, which occurred while he was still working at Wind River, in *Wind River: The People and Place*, published by the North American Indian Heritage Center.
Howard writes in his *Sacajawea* that Roberts remained at the reservation for 49 years after his arrival in 1883, which would mean that his time there concluded in 1934 rather than 1945. No sources for these dates are given in either text.
- ⁵ Roberts narrates his experience in "The Death of Sacajawea." An enlarged print of his article is on display at the Shoshone Tribal Cultural Center.
- ⁶ On La Malinche's reputation, see, for example, Todorov; and Paz. Discussions of Pocahontas's reputations appear, for instance, in Dearborn and in Sundquist.
- ⁷ Since 1904, six statues have been erected to Sacajawea in different parts of the United States. In addition, four mountain peaks, two lakes, a state park, a spring, at least five historical markers, an airplane, and a Girl Scout Camp have been named after her. She also has been the subject of three musical compositions, several paintings, a museum, the design of a silver service, and much other memorabilia. All of these memorials have been sponsored or produced by European-Americans. For a list, see Howard, Appendix A.
- ⁸ Several different spellings of her name are used, even among contemporary writers. "Sacajawea" generally is considered the Shoshone spelling and translates as "Boat Launcher." "Bird Woman" is the equivalent of the Hidatsa "Sacagawea." "Sakakawea" is a variant spelling of the Hidatsa name and is common in North Dakota, particularly in the area of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Reservation at Fort Berthold. Lewis and Clark multiply these spellings many times over, each of them using at least five or six variations of the name in their journal entries.
- ⁹ Concerning Sacajawea's place in the expedition, William Clark wrote in his journal that "her presence reconciles [sic] all the Indians as to our friendly intentions [sic], a woman with a party of men is a token of piece [sic]" (*Journals* 2:266). Later, as they entered the Columbia River, Clark noted that the Umatilla people apparently were pacified at the sight of Sacajawea:
as soon as they saw the Squar wife of the interpertrs [sic] they pointed to her and informed [the others who had not seen her]. [T]hey imediately [sic] all came out and appeared to assume new life, this sight of This Indian woman, wife to one of our interprs. confirmed those people of our friendly intentions, as no woman ever accompanies a war party of Indians in this quarter.
(*Journals* 5:306)
- ¹⁰ See Hebard; Cody; Eastman; and Howard.
- ¹¹ In 1979, when Peter Matthiessen tried to visit Acoma, it was still not open to tourism, and, with his Mohawk travelling companion Craig Carpenter, he was effectively shunned from the Mesa. They were pleased with this experience, and in spite of being denied access, Matthiessen did gather a very distinct impression of the Pueblo and its peoples' attitudes towards strangers. In *Indian Country*, he recorded this peculiar tourist experience in the following way:
Although it could trade on what must be the most striking location of all the pueblo villages of the Southwest, Acoma has so far resisted the temptation of

both electricity and running water, and its people are silent and reserved. Resistance to the intrusion of our truck was so manifest in the dead silence of the stone dwellings in the rock that we turned around and left immediately, on a shared impulse, feeling exhilarated rather than rejected, as if we had glimpsed a rare vanishing creature without scaring it away. (301)

- ¹² The Native American Church developed early in the twentieth century and combines elements of Sun dance religion, peyotism, and Christianity. It is still practised by many peoples at the present time, but legal issues concerning preservation of and access to sacred places as well as the consumption of peyote have in many instances complicated the performance of rituals. See Deloria; Slotkin; and Aberle.
- ¹³ The contrasts between these monuments have been analyzed, for example, by Sturken and by Scott.

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