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11. See Ibid., pp. 122–76.


16. John Withoff, Green Corn Ceremonial in the Eastern Woodlands, Occasional Contributions from the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1949); see especially the section on Creek, pp. 52–70.


Among the most beautiful Navajo poems are the horse songs.

Its feet are made of mirage. 
Its gait was a rainbow. 
Its bridle of sun strings. 
Its heart was made of red stone. 
Its intestines were made of water of all kinds. 
Its tail of black rain. 
Its mane was a cloud with a little rain. 
Distant lightning composed its ears. 
A big spreading twinkling star formed its eye and striped its face. 
Its lower legs were white. 
At night beads formed its lips. 
White shell formed its teeth. 
A black flute was put into its mouth for a trumpet. 
Its belly was made of dawn, one side white, one side black. 1

The horse is described in the song to correspond with the shape of the Navajo world. The history and present status of the Navajo people have been deeply influenced by the horse. Even though pickup trucks have now replaced the horse for transportation, horses are still kept by many Navajo
families as an expression of their wealth and status. The pickup truck can also be seen as an extension of the horse in the sense that it provides a means of movement by which the people may continue their way of life—a way defined by that paradox of choosing to occupy vast regions of land while restlessly, even aggressively, seeking mastery over distance.

In historical perspective the horse, now an image of cosmic proportion for the Navajo, was introduced to North America by the Spanish only four centuries ago. This raises fundamental questions not only with regard to the Navajo but to the consideration of Native American religions. For this image, which we recognize as traditional for Navajos, is actually a product of the same European influences often identified as threatening the existence of Native American cultures.

The most traditional, typical, and distinctive features of Native American religions are commonly entwined with their histories including elements of outside influence originating both in Europe and in other native cultures. Native American traditions must be also understood in light of their histories. Every aspect of Native American religions has a place in a long, complex history, and every form of expression and religious act is part of a history. While it has been impractical to give more than occasional reminders of this fact in previous chapters, these historical processes are the focus in this chapter because they are as important and distinctive as any other dimension of Native American religions.

Persistent colonial efforts have long been directed to suppress, alter, and eliminate Native American traditions. Yet many of these traditions have survived by a skillful management of historical events that has permitted Native American people to protect and strengthen their traditions as well as to adapt them to the changes forced on them. In light of the actual survival of these traditions under such oppressive conditions, it is clear that historical processes are among the most distinctively important aspects of Native American religious traditions.

History, in the technical sense, denotes a written record or account of the past, a narrative in which meaning is constructed through the presentation of temporally causal sequences. For Native Americans, until recently, this sort of narrative did not exist. What is the constant concern however, that it be considered history, is the developmental sequence, the creative management of change, the acknowledgment that tradition implies a meaningful interconnection and ongoing sequence of change.

The history of Native American religions is complex and difficult to piece together because of the short span of recorded history. Even in the historical period, which is coincident with the period of European contact, there has been little concern with recording the religious histories of native cultures. What written histories that do exist, usually focus on European interests in native cultures. Thus, the known and recorded history of Native American religions is linked directly to the eradication of native traditions and to their Christianization.

**RIO GRANDE PUEBLOS**

From a tourist turnout on Interstate 40 west of Albuquerque, New Mexico, one can see the Pueblo village of Laguna. The houses of the village span the southeast side of a small hill. Pueblo houses dot the hillside, but the sight is dominated by the Catholic church that stands near the hilltop, easily identifiable by its massive size in contrast to the small houses and by its cross-topped steeple.

One early spring morning, I observed Laguna from a different perspective. I ventured off the highway and drove into the village. Even from this perspective, the Catholic church was dominant, for the people from the village were making their way to the church for the celebration of mass. It was a minor fiesta day in Laguna, a gala event with concession stands selling food and numerous visitors from other pueblos arriving throughout the morning. In the afternoon of this chilly, windy day, I went to the village plaza to watch the Laguna dances, but the plaza was deserted. As I awaited the appearance of the dancers, I began to hear the beat of drums, the shake of rattles, and voices singing the Laguna songs. The sounds carried on the wind led me to the Catholic church, where I watched the Laguna dancing. The dancers, both men and women, wore European-American clothing, but some wore moc-casins and others wore brightly colored scarves as headbands. All carried rattles as two parallel files performed the dance steps. The priest of the church in his rope-sashed brown robe appeared at the front apparently performing ordinary custodial duties. He seemed to pay little attention to the Pueblo activities that occupied the church.²

From the door at the rear of the church, I looked past the dancers to view the Christian symbols—the altar, crucifix, stations of the cross—but some architectural features, numerous designs painted on the beams, and other items were distinctively Puebloan. I thought of the Catholic mission church at the Pueblo village of Zuni, where larger-than-life paintings of koko (fakchima) figures dominate the walls. I thought of the numerous Pueblo villages that cluster along the Rio Grande River, villages in which the mission church is the dominant building. I thought of the large dance plazas adjacent to these churches, where Pueblo dances, highly religious in character, are frequently performed. These observations of common features reflect certain peculiar anomalies as witness to the present moment in a long and remarkable religious history. It is a history in which Christian and native religions have been in almost continuous contact for 400 years. The first Franciscan missionaries began establishing themselves among the Pueblo people nearly 40 years before the Mayflower sailed in 1620. The city of Santa Fe, which lies amidst the Rio Grande Pueblo area, became the provincial capital of New Mexico in 1610.

Most remarkable is that after this long history, the Pueblo people have maintained their native religious tradition and way of life. Indeed, the Pueblo people are closely associated with the idea of an ancient, strongly indigenous tradition.
Yet it is nonetheless obvious that the Pueblo people (the Hopi far to the west somewhat excepted) have also accepted Christianity and incorporated it into their Pueblo way of life. The tenacity, adaptability, and ability to compartmentalize are all characteristics of Pueblo religious historical processes, which cannot be understood or appreciated apart from at least an outline of Pueblo religious and cultural history.5

Based on linguistic and archaeological data and the projections that can be made from the ethnographic record, the outlines of the prehistoric period that preceded Coronado’s entrance into the Rio Grande area in 1540 can be sketched. The people who lived in the area during this time can definitely be identified as comprising two distinct traditions that had entered the area at different times. Probably first to enter were the Tanoans, believed to have come from what is now the northeastern corner of Arizona and the northwestern corner of New Mexico. They came from the areas known today as Anasazi, Mesa Verde, and Chaco, probably entering the Rio Grande area between 1100 and 1200. They were followed by the Keresan people, believed to have come from the area of today’s east-central Arizona. Their descendants have remained linguistically distinct, and they continue to bear basic cultural differences.

During this early period, these groups established themselves in settlements along the Rio Grande River and its tributaries and turned to an agricultural subsistence pattern adapted to the ready water supply from the river. Their former agricultural methods had depended more on rainfall, but in this new environment they could use irrigation. Close community organization was necessary to build and maintain the irrigation system.

There is evidence that contact among these two traditions was widespread during this prehistoric period, but it is likely that these cultures also had much contact with other cultures. Certainly there was contact with the Apachean people who were entering the area from their former homelands in distant western Canada. There is also evidence of widespread contact with the Plains cultures who, at this time, were sedentary agriculturalists. Thus, during the several centuries before the initial European contact, the people living in the Rio Grande valley experienced frequent cultural interaction accompanied by borrowing and cultural innovation.

The Pueblo ceremonial system was well developed and, while there were basic differences in approach and emphasis, the Tanoan and Keresan traditions focused on controlling weather, curing the ill, and maintaining good health, warfare, and controlling game animals and fowl. The Tanoan approach emphasized works, in the manner of the Tewa, while the Keresan approach emphasized magical practices to accomplish these concerns.

History, in its written form, began for the Rio Grande Pueblo people in 1540 with the appearance of Coronado, who was accompanied by five missionaries, several hundred armed horsemen, and a group of native servants from Mexico. The first encounter was not a happy one for the Pueblo people, for Coronado demanded much from them during his two-year stay in the area. Accusations to protest were answered by executions numbering in the hundreds.

Second and third Spanish expeditions followed some 40 years later. The second was short, but two missionaries were left behind, and it is believed that they were soon killed by the Pueblos. The third expedition, led by Espejo in 1582, inspired much interest in colonization of the area. In 1598, Juan de Oñate established the first colony in the province of New Mexico near San Juan. During the next century, the Pueblo people were constantly confronted by a demanding Spanish presence. The major areas of contact were in the Pueblo villages, with the intrusive establishment of Franciscan missions, and in the Spanish settlements, where Pueblo people were forced to work for the colonial governors and settlers.

The missionary attitudes toward the indigenous people is important. Franciscan policy frequently rotated their missionaries from station to station and back and forth between Mexico and these northern posts. Consequently the Franciscans took little interest in making enduring associations with the Pueblo people. With rare exception, the missionaries did not learn their languages, engage in translating Christian scripture or beliefs into their languages, or adapt their efforts to suit Pueblo cultures. Instead they primarily exerted themselves to accomplish several goals, each of which they approached in a manner that bred only antagonism and distrust between themselves and the native people.

A major concern of the missionaries, still in evidence, was an enormous building program. Large chapels and mission compounds were built in the villages accomplished by forced Pueblo labor. The size of these buildings testifies to the measure of labor that was invested. The huge timbers that supported their roofs often had to be cut and hauled by the Pueblo workers from a distance of 20 to 30 miles. By 1630, it was reported that 90 chapels existed in as many villages. The missionaries introduced Christianity in a manner similar to the way they built their chapels. Under punishment of whipping, they forced the native people to be baptized, to attend mass, and to make confession. They physically discouraged the performance of native religious practices. Many were the occasions when native religious leaders were hanged as witches and when kivas (religious chambers) were raided for the ceremonial paraphernalia and masks, which were collected and burned. Missions, like the colonists, also forced the native people to tend their gardens and domestic animals and to perform other personal services. The effect was to force the practice of Pueblo religion underground, to introduce a participation in Christian acts but with little internalized meaning, and to breed a deep resentment of the Spanish and the Christian church.

The colonial arena of contact was no more pleasant. It was a period of encroachment on Pueblo lands. While enslavement was illegal, a system of encomienda was established that gave colonists control of the native people on the land granted to them. This permitted colonists to force the Pueblo people to work for them without compensation.

The supremacy of the Spanish, fully realized by the Pueblo people, fostered a resurgence of loyalty and dedication to traditional ways. This resurgence of identity, encouraged by ever-increasing bewilderment and resentment, set the
scene for a Pueblo revolt throughout the area in 1680. Carefully planned by a Pueblo man from San Juan by the name of Popé, who had been one of 47 religious leaders punished by the Spanish authorities in 1675, the revolt effectively removed the Spanish from the entire Rio Grande area. Twenty-one of 33 missionaries and nearly 400 of 2,500 colonists were killed, the rest fled to the El Paso area. The missions were destroyed together with all their records and furnishings and the Pueblo people lived free of Spanish influence until De Varga arrived to reconquer the area in 1693. At this time, many Pueblo people fled from the area to live among the Pueblo people to the west and even among non-Pueblo people like the Navajo and Apache. The village of Laguna was founded to the west of the Rio Grande in an attempt to avoid Spanish domination. During the seventeenth century, epidemics, violent deaths, and dispersal had greatly declined the Rio Grande Pueblo population.

The extensive changes that occurred during the seventeenth century were surprising in character. While not forced to do so, the Pueblo people effected a wide range of changes in their culture. By 1700 they had added wheat, melons, apples, peaches, apricots, pears, tomatoes, and chiles to their crops. They had acquired chickens, goats, and sheep as domestic animals, adding not only to their diet but introducing craft items made from wool. They had begun to use mules, horses, and donkeys for transportation and for assistance with their labor. These additions revolutionized their cultures and have been so totally incorporated that they are now an integral part of the traditional ways of these cultures.

But while the Catholic chappels had by this time come to dominate the village architecture, the Catholic missions apparently had little effect on the Pueblo religious beliefs and practices, apart from forcing it to secrecy performance of the native tradition and forcing the tacit public performance of Christian acts. More extensive effects on Pueblo religion resulted from contact with the native people brought from Mexico and increased contact among native people in the Rio Grande area.

During the seventeenth century, Spanish had become a second language, providing a lingua franca among the many native people whose languages were unintelligible to one another, yet they retained their own languages and even made efforts to keep them free of Spanish words. Because the Spanish language permitted them to better communicate among themselves, it became an instrument used by the Pueblo people against Spanish intrusions. It helped support the growing sense of unity and common identity that replaced the antagonisms that existed prior to Spanish contact.

While the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also witnessed strong external influence in the Rio Grande area, it was, in many respects, less threatening to the Pueblo people than the influence that had occurred before. Spanish attitudes and policies changed after reconquest to emphasize colonization, and efforts to Christianize the Pueblos were relaxed. As colonization progressed, the frequent raids by non-Pueblo native people harassed colonists and Pueblo

people alike and they joined together in an effort to combat these threats. The influx of colonists provided another major change for the Franciscan missionaries in serving these growing communities.

The eighteenth-century relations between Pueblo and Spanish people was generally friendly, both parties being occupied with maintaining their own ways and identities. The remaining thorn for the Pueblo people was the Spanish clergy, who continued, though with less vigor, to force Pueblo participation in the Catholic missions and to infringe upon them for labor and other services. During this century, the Pueblo people apparently perfected ways of accommodating the demands of the Spanish and especially the missionaries by yielding to the performance of certain acts with little or no commitment or internalization of their European meanings, while retrenching and deepening their commitment to their own traditions. When borrowing did occur, it was usually accomplished in direct continuity with the Pueblo tradition.

The nineteenth century saw the appearance of Anglo-Americans and the U.S. government in the area. The largest cultural group was Hispanic, and because these people were most concerned with continuing to establish themselves in the area, they had little interest in changing Pueblo life. New Mexico became a U.S. territory in 1850, however, and this new government influence only added to the confusion about land rights among the several people in the area. This period was most difficult for the Pueblo people because their legal status with respect to their ownership of lands was in general dispute. By 1881, railroads had penetrated the area, and with them came a new economic base for the Pueblo people. A flood of tourists who were curious about Indians began to wash over the area. Their eagerness to buy from the Native Americans contributed to the introduction of a cash economy to the Pueblos. In one report from this period, a Pueblo woman expressed how odd these Americans were, for one of them had bought the stone that covered the chimney.

Despite all of the innovations accepted in terms of material culture by 1700, the traditions of the Pueblo people had remained firm through the two following centuries. The village locations, social order, value system, and ceremonial system had remained in good health. The Pueblos had continued to tightly integrated, self-sustaining communities living full ceremonial lives. By 1900, several of the mission churches had fallen into ruin, but the Pueblo religious tradition continued to be vigorously practiced, now under the veil of intense secrecy.

With the rapid rise of the Anglo-American influence in New Mexico, the first half of the twentieth century was a period when changes occurred on an order far more profound than the Pueblos had undergone in the previous three centuries of contact. Prior to the Anglo-American dominance, the Pueblo cultures had been challenged largely by the Spanish Catholic missionaries who had attempted to destroy the traditional Pueblo religion and introduce Christianity. This effort backfired and resulted in a deeply entrenched Pueblo religious tradition protected by the range of isolating protective mechanisms that had been
carefully developed over centuries. Yet, the Pueblo people had readily accepted innovations in material culture and had established them firmly in continuity with their traditions. These innovations were of a type that supported the closely integrated, separate identity of each Pueblo community.

But with the Anglo-American dominance came basic economic changes: the introduction of the credit system by establishing trading posts and the expansion of a cash economy. These economic conditions fostered sweeping changes in the character of Pueblo society. In the 1930s, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs engaged in a construction program aimed at bringing Native Americans into fuller participation in a complex U.S. economy. This tendency was further expanded during World War II. Not only were many Pueblo people engaged in the armed services, but jobs could be easily obtained outside the Pueblo villages. This broad-scale participation in a complex cash economy, once accepted, has continued to expand. Today, most Pueblo communities continue to farm and maintain some semblance of a subsistence-type economy, but this is almost a token effort. Most Pueblos depend on wage and salary incomes from outside the community, often in major urban centers. This has engaged the Pueblo people not only in broader interaction and interdependence with non-Pueblo people, it has also introduced to them the importance of a pan-cultural identity. They have come to interact and identify more completely with other native people, a development evidenced by their participation in numerous intertribal affairs and also in the activities of major urban centers that contain a significant Native American population.

The ceremonial system and the practice of traditional Pueblo religion have undergone and survived their greatest challenges during this period. The official position of the Bureau of Indian Affairs before 1928 was openly antagonistic toward Indian ceremonials. It outlawed them and made every effort to discourage the continuity of such traditions, attempting to bring the Pueblo communities into complete assimilation with the Anglo-American majority culture. The Pueblo people had well-developed and well-practiced mechanisms to meet this challenge and to renew dedication to their religious traditions. These methods helped encourage a unified resistance among the members of the Pueblo communities.

When John Collier became head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs he soon changed this position. He respected the traditions of Native Americans and supported the practice of their ceremonials. He encouraged programs to support the survival of Native American communities by helping to establish them in the vital areas of economy, education, and health services.

The result was a series of developments that have greatly transformed the Pueblo communities since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Today, while most Pueblo villages have survived, the compact village structure has given way to isolated single-family dwellings, often built in new settlement areas. These houses are patterned on American suburban homes with garages, lawns, electricity, plumbing, and all of the furnishings one would find in the average Anglo-American home. Cars and pickup trucks are essential in connecting the communities with job locations and with the external sources of food and other items purchased on credit or for cash. Television has replaced, to a major extent, the sessions of storytelling. Dress and hair styles are largely Anglo, yet still serve to indicate the degree to which a person is traditional or progressive. English has become the second language, replacing Spanish, and with each generation English is increasingly becoming the primary, often the only, language known.

Broadening of the Pueblo subsistence and economic base has brought greater possibility for the people to internalize the traditional meanings of Christianity and to recognize that it serves the same general needs as the traditional Pueblo religious practices, the health and well-being of all humanity. Still, the ceremonial organization and practice of traditional religions have been retained to a remarkable degree, though finding sufficient numbers of people to fill the necessary societies and religious offices has become increasingly difficult for many villages. In this area of culture, however, lies the future continuity of identity and tradition for the Pueblo communities.

On fiesta day in Laguna, what I observed was the present phase in a long and complex religious history. Against the outline of this history, the separateness of the Catholic and native practices is unclear, yet the genuine meaningfulness of both these forms of religious practice for contemporary Pueblo people is as well. While the separate performance attests to the remarkable persistence and self-preservation of the Pueblo traditions, the voluntary participation in Christian practices and the adjustment of native practices to correlate with the Christian liturgical calendar attests to the present most remarkable stage in Pueblo religious history. It indicates the extent to which Pueblo people can extend their ideas about religion to encompass even the Christian beliefs they have carefully isolated for centuries in their continuing efforts to meet the new needs of their rapidly changing cultures.

YAQUI

On the south side of the Phoenix area, just three miles from where I used to live, is the Yaqui community of Guadalupe. For many years during Easter week, I went to Guadalupe to observe the celebration of their highest religious occasion. The Yaqui church at Guadalupe stands beside the Spanish Catholic church, facing east and overlooking a large plaza area. During Easter week, this plaza area is remarkably transformed. On the side in front of the Spanish Catholic church, a carnival is set up complete with ferris wheel, tilt-a-whirl, merry-go-round, and game booths with their barkers. In front of the Yaqui church, the plaza area is roped off and reserved for the dramatic ritual performances of the Easter pageantry. This area is surrounded by temporary stands, erected by the Yaqui people, in which they prepare and sell a variety of food and craft items to the many people who come to observe the events.
The Easter Festival engages the Yaqui community throughout the period of Lent, but many in the community are totally immersed in the dramatic activities that unfold during Holy Week. At this time, the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is enacted to ritually dramatize the basic struggle between good and evil. These forces are presented by groups or societies of Yaqui performers.

The Fariseo society is in charge of the Easter ceremonies. In the Easter pageant, this society provides several groups of performers. The Soldiers of Rome are a small group whose members wear ordinary dress but serve as officers to the other Fariseo performers. It is their responsibility to direct the fiesta and they must remember every detail of the extensive performance.

The Pilatos, who represent Pontius Pilate, are the ritual heads of the Fariseo society. They wear black shirts and wide-brimmed hats, and they carry spears. The largest group of Fariseos are the Chapayekas, who are masked figures. Several types of masks may be worn, but the most characteristic is distinctive for its big flat ears and sharp nose. Indeed, the word Chapayeka is derived from Yaqui words meaning sharp and nose. These masks may serve as caricatures of all sorts of figures associated with evil. The Chapayeka performer always carries the cross of his rosary in his mouth to protect him from the evil he serves to manifest. Chapayekas wear an overcoat or a blanket wrapped around them like a coat with a belt of rattles. They also carry a wooden sword and dagger.

Another group, not a part of the Fariseo society but associated with them in the Passion performance, is the Caballeros. They march with the Fariseos and try to keep the Chapayekas from going too far in their threatening antics.

On the side opposing the Fariseos is the society of the Matachinis. This society presides over all other ceremonial activities performed during the year. As a group of male dancers, they appear wearing no special costume other than a headdress made of crepe paper strips wrapped around a bamboo frame. They carry a brightly colored gourd in one hand and a brightly colored feather wand in the other. Several other groups also perform during the Easter pageant: the Maestros (teachers), who read the services and serve as church officials; the Cantoras, women who sing the chants in the choir; and several others that perform custodial activities throughout the performance.

Some performances during the Easter Festival have origins which predate Christian influences. The Pascola (old man of the fiesta) dances to the alternate accompaniment of the drum and flute, and the harp and violin. He wears a cotton blanket sashed with a belt of sleighbells around his hips. Barefooted, he wears cocoon rattles around his ankles. He carries a bottle that he sounds by beating it against his open palm. His long hair is tied with a red ribbon, and he wears a black wooden mask decorated with white designs. The performance of the Deer Dancer is also well known at this time. The Deer Dancer wears a dark-colored shawl around his hips over pants rolled up almost to the knees. He wears cocoon rattles on his ankles and a deer-hoof rattle belt. On his head over a white cloth is a deer head, worn during the dance performance. The Deer

Dancer performs to the accompaniment of percussion music made by scraper rasps and a half-gourd, beaten while held in a pan of water which serves as a resonator.

Throughout Lent the forces of evil slowly engender more and more power. This rising threat is dramatically portrayed on such occasions as the Friday evening services when the community celebrates the Way of the Cross following a path of several city blocks around the village area immediately surrounding the church and plaza. By Holy Week the presence of evil has become so strong that it begins assaulting the church in an effort to take control of it. On Wednesday (Tenebrae), the Fariseos begin their search for Jesus. On Thursday, they chase Viejito, an old man who is like Jesus. They taunt and make fun of him but do not kill him, for he is old. They continue to search for Jesus and finally find him (a sculpted representation) in a cottonwood bower, which has been constructed to represent the Garden of Gethsemane. They destroy the bower and capture the figure of Jesus, taking him to the church, where he is held captive while the Chapayekas stand guard over him all night. In control of the church with Jesus as their captive, the forces of evil seem to have triumphed. There is apparent confirmation of this on Good Friday, when Jesus is crucified and entombed.

But the triumph of evil is short, for in the predawn hours of Saturday morning, the Fariseos discover that Jesus has risen. With the resurrection, the forces of good slowly begin to reassert themselves. A new fire ceremony is celebrated. Later a straw figure of Judas, the betrayer of Jesus dressed like a Chapayeka, is borne by the Chapayekas on the back of a burro around the Way of the Cross but in the wrong direction. Judas is fastened to a cross in the plaza. The Chapayekas dance before this figure thus honoring their chief. Sensing their loss of power, the Fariseos repeatedly launch attacks upon the church, but they are repelled by flowers and confetti thrown at them. Flowers and confetti, the blood of Christ transformed, are deadly ammunition against evil. Repelled again and again, the Fariseos (including the masked Chapayekas) finally run back to the Judas figure. Here they remove their masks and place them, along with their swords and daggers, around the figure. Guided by their kin and with heads covered, they run back to the church to be rededicated to Jesus and to receive flowers. Judas, surrounded by the masks, swords, daggers, and all the refuse from weeks of ritual preparation, is ignited, and all these symbols of evil are consumed in the flames. The Pascolas, Matachinis, and the Deer Dancer celebrate the victory by dancing the rest of the day in front of the church.

On Easter Sunday during a final procession with the infant Jesus, the Fariseos make final assaults on the church. Again they are repelled and finally surrender their weapons, this time only switches and twigs. The procession continues around the plaza, and the holy figures are placed on the altar. The people form a large circle near the church cross and the head Maestro delivers a sermon from the center of the circle about the meaning of the Easter ceremony. Then the Fariseos and Caballeros go around the circle three times saying farewell until the following year.
Quite in contrast to the response of the Rio Grande Pueblos to Christian-ity, the Yaqui Easter Festival is evidence of a complex integration of native ceremonial dance practices with Christian liturgy and beliefs. The Christian elements and beliefs may appear even to dominate, but there is evidence of the festival’s continuity with important aspects of the native tradition. To more fully appreciate the Yaqui Easter Festival it must be seen in terms of its history, which stems from Sonora, Mexico, more than four centuries ago.

At the time of first contact with the Spanish in 1533, the Yaquis were the northernmost of the Cahita tribes who lived along rivers in Sonora, Mexico. Their well-developed military abilities at the time of this first contact enabled them to repel a party of slave raiders under the leadership of Diego de Guzman. Yet while the Yaquis could not resist when threatened militarily, they apparently had no general tribal organization. They lived in perhaps 80 rancherias, each consisting of about 300 or 400 persons, spread along the flood plain of the Yaqui River. Their principal mode of sustenance was cultivation, yet they maintained control of large areas of land from which they could supplement their livelihood by hunting and gathering wild foodstuffs.

Little is known of their religion at this early time, but it is believed that they sought individual visions in order to acquire personal spirits. Shamanic practices focused on curing and hunting. These shamanic performances were individually conducted affairs, while ceremonials involving the community were concerned with war, hunting, and initiation.

During the sixteenth century, there was little contact between the Yaquis and the Spanish. By 1590, Jesuit missionaries who had worked their way up the west coast of Mexico as far as the Cahita tribes. The Spanish were gradually moving in this direction in conquest of lands but did not reach the Yaquis until 1608, when they suffered defeat by the Yaquis. They suffered another defeat in 1610, as the Yaquis made clear that they would not submit to Spanish power. For almost three centuries, the Yaqui people would retain something of their autonomy.

While the Yaquis did not want to be under Spanish rule, they did not reject all Spanish influence. Soon after defeating the Spanish the Yaquis asked that Jesuit missionaries be sent to them. The request was fulfilled in 1617 with the arrival of two Jesuit missionaries. The Yaquis received them enthusiastically and immediately engaged in extensive transformations of their culture as they accepted the innovations introduced by the Jesuits. Within two years, all 30,000 Yaquis had been baptized. Within 6 years, the 80 rancherias had been consolidated into 8 pueblos or towns built around the mission churches, the plan modeled on the Jesuits’ idea of European towns. This town structure soon became deeply embedded in Yaqui tradition. By 1700, their mythology had incorporated the importance of the towns and the surrounding land. Each town was said to be founded by a prophet on the mandate of the gods.

The Jesuit missionaries maintained long-term commitments to the Yaqui people. They learned their language and taught the Yaqui people to read and write not only Spanish but also their own language. They made little attempt to suppress the native traditions, focusing their concerns more on the translation of prayers, the mass, and Scripture into Yaqui language. Certain Yaqui men were given positions in the church and assisted in the celebration of mass. Some also aided Jesuit attempts to force the Yaquis to attend mass.

Another important facet of the Jesuit approach was their teaching of music and introduction of dramatic presentations of Christian belief. These were New World adaptations of the widespread European miracle plays that dramatized such things as the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary and the Passion of Jesus. Besides the Passion Play itself, the Yaquis performed others, such as one that told the story of the first Indian conversion in Mexico.

For more than a century, the Yaquis had a peculiar relationship with the Spanish. They had successfully defended themselves against Spanish colonial efforts and remained free of influence by civil authorities, yet they enthusiastically undertook extensive innovations under the guidance of a few Jesuit missionaries.

Not until the 1730s, when some Spaniards had established themselves as large agricultural proprietors in the land area adjacent to Yaqui territory, did the Yaqui people begin to feel the pressure of Spanish civil interests. These Spaniards were not sympathetic to the Jesuit mission program, and their anti-Jesuit disputes led to the Yaqui revolt in 1740. The great military strength of the Yaquis initially permitted them to scourage the area of Spaniards, but the Spanish strength was finally too great and the Yaquis were defeated in a battle that may have claimed as many as 5,000 Yaqui lives. The Yaqui territory then became an outpost of New Spain. For a time they continued their relationships with the Jesuits and expanded their program of innovation, which included establishment of an organized school system that extended even to advanced schooling in Mexico City of select graduates of the Jesuit school.

Finally in 1767, 150 years after their arrival, the Jesuit missionaries were expelled from the Yaqui towns. The Spanish-Yaqui differences had become too great. But in this period of a century and a half the Yaquis had undergone transformations that had completely reshaped their culture and religious traditions. They had accepted a host of techniques and forms from the Jesuits. In many cases, they invested these with their own set of meanings quite different from those taught by the Jesuits. For example, the Jesuits made extensive use of the cross. The Yaquis quickly accepted it but associated it with a female deity they called Our Mother. They treated the cross as a female deity. At the spring festival that became known as Finding the Holy Cross, they dressed it and gave it appropriate ornamentation. This identification of the cross as a mother goddess still exists.

According to Edward Spicer, a longtime student of Yaqui history and culture, the Jesuit influence in transforming the Yaqui way of life during this period amounted to an extensive enrichment of the content of Yaqui culture. The precontact concerns and worldview persisted but were enriched by acceptance of Spanish-introduced forms of expression. Three areas in Yaqui tradition underwent perceivable change during this period. There was a decrease in warfare activities; the Yaquis did not take up arms against anyone from 1620 until the Yaqui revolt in 1740. Second, because the Jesuit mission...
had to be supported by Yaqui labor, the considerable change in farming techniques resulted in increased production, which created a shift from subsistence farming to production of a surplus to support a modest export economy. Third, ceremonial activities were intensified as associated with the greater concentration of people in the towns and with Jesuit influence. Concentration of population was accompanied by pressures to engage in certain governmental innovations.

The great Yaqui defeat in 1740 marked the beginning of a gradual decline in Yaqui population and autonomy during a period when the Spanish government asserted increasing pressure. The Yaquis, who never simply gave up the idea of their autonomy, shifted their focus again to military activities. Population loss resulted from a number of difficulties. They were visited by epidemics of smallpox and measles, which to this time they had somehow escaped. Their military efforts frequently resulted in considerable loss of life. People began to leave the Yaqui towns to work in mines and at other jobs, assimilating into other populations in Sonora.

With the Jesuit missionaries now gone, they retained their ceremonial activities, which had been partly derived from Christian ritual forms, and continued to develop them. They were unable to maintain the high level of agricultural production achieved during the mission period. While they attempted to produce crops adequate for self-sufficiency, often even this much could not be accomplished.

Threats to the existence of the Yaquis, especially to the autonomy of the religiously sanctioned towns, engendered much effort to develop methods by which the communities could become highly integrated and protected against outside influences. Maintaining autonomy was increasingly difficult, however, and finally became impossible with the military defeat of the Yaquis in 1887. Their leader, Cajeme, was executed. This defeat resulted from, among many things, the decline in Yaqui population and the rise in strength of the Mexican government, which had been established in 1820. But development of the mechanisms for integrating and maintaining the culture continued even beyond the existence of the eight Yaqui towns. These mechanisms rested firmly on a highly developed system of religious beliefs and practices. This system, as it existed in the 1880s, was richly developed and vital to the identity of the Yaquis.

After their defeat in 1887, the Yaquis entered a period of history that saw the people widely dispersed from their homelands. Their lands were divided and distributed to Mexican settlers, and many Yaquis were forcibly deported and relocated by the Mexican government. Although guerrilla activities continued for a long time after their defeat, the Yaqui communities no longer existed. The people had been dispersed in every direction. Many lost their identity as Yaquis, but others persisted. Some groups crossed the border into the United States and, by the turn of the century, Yaqui settlements had been established at three locations in Arizona. Others were located in Sonora. Not until 1906 did the Yaquis in Arizona realize that they had been granted political asylum and could reinstitute the Easter Festival and other customs that were part of Yaqui tradition. The revival was partial but had a strong Yaqui identity nonetheless, and tradition continues in the Easter Festival still celebrated every year in the Arizona Yaqui communities.

By the 1880s, the Yaquis had enjoyed a period of a century and a half without the presence of missionaries. It was during this period that the religion of the eight towns took fullest shape. The eight towns were closely integrated and the religion may be understood in terms of four cults that took responsibility for specialized ceremonial activities. These activities were sanctioned because the accounts of their origins had become myth.

The Yaqui tradition holds that Jesus was born in the Yaqui town Belem and that he went about the Yaqui country curing and helping the people who were constantly threatened by evil beings. The principal religious order of the Yaquis was the cult of Jesus, commonly called the Lord (El Señor). This cult was comprised of two societies: the Horsemen, who were devotees of Christ the child, and the Judases, devotees of the crucified Christ. This cult was responsible for the major festival of the year, the Easter Festival. Of central importance here is that the stories of Jesus were given a geographical place in the territory of the Yaquis. This served to establish the Yaqui identity and encouraged them to defend their lands against encroachments.

An indigenous religious belief of northern Mexican people had focused on a female deity associated with the rainy season of growth. With the introduction of Christianity, this belief in the figure of Mary, mother of Jesus, changed into the formation of what became, by the late nineteenth century, a cult of the Virgin. The figure on which this cult focused was called both Our Mother and Blessed Mary. She was represented both by the wooden or plaster Catholic images and by a rough cross of mesquite, which was dressed and ornamented in special devotion during the spring. This cult remained strongly associated with spring and was marked by the characteristic Yaqui use of bright colors and flowers. The most important devotees of the cult were the Matachin dancers who vowed service to the Virgin in return for help in curing. Their dance was originally introduced by the Jesuits as part of the drama that depicted the first conversion of a Mexican Indian, but this dramatic context had been lost by the late nineteenth century and was replaced by devotion to the emergent figure of the Virgin.

The cult of the dead centered on Yaqui interest by means of the ancestral dead, whom they remembered in books of family records ritually handled at fiestas. Monthly gatherings at the village cemeteries and special celebrations at the annual All Souls Feast in November integrated this cult with the other two.

The fourth cult was perhaps an aspect of the cult of the Virgin. Its patroness was the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. This cult was primarily concerned with military activities.

The ideology and beliefs of these cults were based on or derived from the aboriginal tradition, but they were influenced, especially in form, by the Christian and European innovations introduced by the Jesuits more than two centuries earlier. In the period that ended in 1887, the Pascola and Deer Dancers were a constant presence at ceremonials throughout the year. They
maintained direct continuity with the aboriginal Yaqui tradition. Their performances were unlike those of the other cults. They served in the capacity of clowns and entertainers, and maintained the lively art form of storytelling. The Pascola and Deer Dancers maintained the aesthetic and cultural vitality in the Yaqui towns through their music, dance, and stories. Notably, the Yaquis had a complex oral tradition suffused with historical and mythic events by the 1880s. The many difficult events in their history were remembered in stories that collectively comprised a narrative of Yaqui suffering and survival.

By 1887, when the Yaqui towns in Sonora fell, they enjoyed a new religious culture that had emerged from a period of development beginning at the time of the Jesuit missions more than a century and a half earlier. This religious culture arose in a historical process directed primarily by the Yaqui people themselves. They had invited and accepted broad changes, but they had generally controlled what had influenced them. The emergent religious tradition was a creative fusion of select elements from their aboriginal tradition and from the Christian-Spanish contacts they had sought. Though Christian terminology and symbols were widely used by the late nineteenth century, these seem to have been so extensively transformed by Yaqui tradition that they cannot correctly be considered Christian.

With this history as background, the Yaqui religious tradition as it appears in the celebration of Easter takes on new significance. Once reestablished as communities in Arizona, the Yaquis sought a revival of their old traditions. The cults, except for the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, were revived in somewhat truncated form. The major ceremonial that was revived was the Easter Festival, which was conducted by the cult of Jesus, the Fariseos. This was the revival of the primarily non-Christian tradition on the new image of the culture as it had been developed in the structure of the eight towns that created a religious history and landscape for Yaqui culture.

Yaqui communities were generally well accepted and have even been supported by the communities of Tucson and Phoenix, to which they are neighbors. The Yaquis have had to depend largely on wage labor to support themselves and thus they accepted a cash economy. They have found themselves in constant contact with non-Yaquis. In the context of these major cultural transformations, the Yaqui acceptance of actual Christian beliefs has occurred only during the period since resettlement. Still, the Yaqui church is not recognized by the Catholic church.

During Easter Week, the distinction between Yaqui and Christian beliefs takes concrete architectural form. The Yaqui and Spanish Catholic churches stand side by side in Guadalupe. During Easter Week, the plaza before the Christian church is filled with the bright lights and happy noises of a carnival, while in the plaza in front of the Yaqui church, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are dramatically enacted through ritual, dance, and music. The comrades of Judas, the representatives of evil, are once again overcome by the brightly colored flowers, the transformed blood of Jesus, that are victoriously hurled at them by the people.

**THE PLAINS**

The horse-mounted, war-bonneted figure of the Plains tribesman has been a dominant image of the Indian in America. This romantic image has only recently begun to fade from the screens of motion-picture theaters. As a noble profile, this figure once appeared on the nickel with a buffalo on its flip side. It is this image that stands predominant in the minds of most Americans as representative of that aboriginal race of noble savages who lived in tipis on the high plains, following the endless herds of buffalo in their timeless, nomadic ways. This is the image tied to the whooping and scalping savagery directed toward innocent settlers and falling before the gunfire of the U.S. Cavalry.

While the image has some real basis in Plains cultures and American history, the archaic, timeless attributes of which we identify with are far from accurate. A broad general review of the history of the Plains tribes will serve not only to correct these impressions but also will introduce a complex past in which the religions of these people were constantly engaged in change and innovation to meet rapidly shifting needs. This noble image as well as the religions most closely identified with Plains traditions are partly products of the European presence in America.

The story begins with a general picture of the culture types that lived on the prairies and plains 1,000 years ago. Evidence concerning these cultures reveals the influence of several culture types and the necessity of their adapting to ecological conditions. Along the Missouri River and its tributaries were sedentary corn-growing people. They spent most of their time near their villages tending their crops, but they also engaged in seasonal hunting. They had been influenced in both agriculture and religion by the high Mexican cultures, doubtless introduced to them by cultures bordering east of the plains region along the Mississippi River. These influences had spread northward from Mexico along the Mississippi. Among these people were the ancestors of the Mandan, who lived along the Missouri River, believed to have been the first users of the famous feathered war bonnets. Here too were the ancestors of the Pawnee, who probably originated the calumet or peace pipe. Ecological conditions were a large factor in keeping these people confined to the river corridors, along which they could grow corn and occasionally hunt to provide for their livelihood.

To the far western side of the Plains near the Rocky Mountains lived groups of nomadic buffalo hunters. Because of the ecological conditions, few of these groups existed at this early time, and they were widely scattered throughout the area. Their religious patterns were not elaborate and probably focused on individual needs in ways like vision fasting, thus emulating mythic culture heroes.

During the centuries that followed, increasing intermingling and interchange occurred among these cultures, but the most significant appearance in the Northern Plains, that is, of the people known as Sioux (Lakota or Dakota), did not occur until the seventeenth century. Before this time, these people had
lived for a long time on the prairies and in the woodlands of today's Minnesota and Wisconsin. Those who lived in the western part of this area were hunters. Those in the east were hunters, fishers, and corn farmers. These are the people that we most closely associate with the war-bonneted image. Around the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Ojibwa, who lived adjacent to the Sioux, armed themselves with guns they received from white fur traders. Around 1640, they succeeded in evicting the Sioux from their area, thus forcing them to take residence in the area of the northern plains. Displaced from their homelands and way of life, these people became nomadic and lived by plundering the villages along the Missouri. In the early eighteenth century, horses, which had been introduced by the Spanish in the Southwest and Southern Plains, began to arrive in the Northern Plains in sufficient numbers to permit a major transformation of the Sioux. By integrating the horse into their nomadic way of life, they achieved a power that soon brought them into commanding control of the Northern Plains. The village cultures entered a period of decline.

The Sioux demonstrated their capacity for innovation and creative borrowing not only in terms of subsistence patterns and life ways but also in religion. The old fertility rites, which were the center of the corn-growing cultures, were transformed to fit the needs of the nomadic hunting people. Their central concern with corn was complemented by, and shifted to, a concern for buffalo and other game, while the communal orientation was complemented with a concern for the individual by giving emphasis to vision experiences. The result of these religious innovations was the Sun Dance, the most common and typical of religious practice of the Plains. The Sun Dance, performed annually, was a ceremonial effecting a world renewal that promoted prosperity for the tribe.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the nomadic tribes of the Northern Plains, especially the Sioux, had developed a way of life that dominated the Plains. Their life way was linked with the horse and the buffalo, both of which had become dominant religious symbols. Their religious practices were focused on individual vision experiences, shamanic practices associated with hunting and curing, and the Sun Dance ceremonial, which had established itself as a tradition rooted in the era of creation. Yet, from the perspective of American history, the presence of the Sioux in the Plains and the way in which their religion had developed resulted, though indirectly, from the presence of Europeans in America. The horse, by which they had come to power, was itself a European introduction. This fact, of course, takes nothing away from the significance of the religions and cultures of the Plains people. Rather, it celebrates their capacities to engage in a history of development and radical innovation that permitted them not only to survive, but also to achieve heights of cultural and religious development.

The first half of the nineteenth century was simultaneously a period of great strength for the northern Plains cultures and of the increasing presence of American settlers. This threatening pressure was being felt by Native Americans throughout the United States. The Removal Act of 1830 resulted in displacement of the populations commonly known as the Five Civilized peoples (because of their great efforts to acculturate themselves to European-American ways) from the southeastern United States to the Oklahoma territory. Sporadic military efforts by Plains tribes attempted to repel the American settlers, but such efforts eventually proved futile. As other means of resistance also began to fail, millenarian movements based on messages revealed to prophets began to erupt and spread. In the eighteenth century, a prophet arose among the Delaware and foretold that the land taken from them by the French and English would be returned to them by divine intervention. He told his people that, in the meantime, they should behave themselves, give up drinking alcohol, and act like brothers to one another.7

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the Shawnee Tenskwatawya, brother of Tecumseh, arose as a prophet and made similar predictions, advocating a reform ethic. He traveled widely and attempted to build an inter-tribal confederacy. He was killed in the War of 1812, and his efforts never developed.8 Numerous other prophetic movements arose and religious organizations such as the Indian Shakers of the Puget Sound area developed as a result. In the 1850s and 1860s, another movement arose around Smohalla, a Wanapum in today's state of Washington, whose alleged statements about the Indians' relationship to the earth as mother have been so often quoted. This movement, facing the devastation and cultural deprivation being suffered, focused on the belief in an impending destruction and renewal of the world during which the dead would return. The performance of a dance imitating the dead conjointed with millennial expectations gave rise to the Ghost Dance movement of 1870, widely practiced throughout the northwest United States.9 These prophetic and millenarian movements were akin to the Ghost Dance of 1890, the best known of such movements, which was widely practiced among the Plains tribes. There is doubtless a historical connection between this and the earlier Ghost Dance movement.10

The origin of this movement was not in the Plains but in Nevada. Its source was a Paiute man named Wovoka, who lived on the Walker Lake Reservation. Wovoka had participated in the Ghost Dance of 1870 and he may have been familiar with Shaker religion. His background was somewhat characteristic of Native American prophets. He learned something of Paiute shamanism from his father and practiced it among his people. He also had considerable contact with Americans. He worked for a settler family, who named him Jack Wilson, acquiring from them knowledge of Christianity. Though he traveled little outside the area of his home, he served as a bridge between cultures, typifying prophetic figures in this regard.

In the winter of 1888-89, Wovoka became ill. Coincident with a January solar eclipse that alarmed the Paiute people, he reported having had a vision in which he had gone to the spirit world and visited with the dead. He had received a millennial message and had been told what the people should do in
preparation for the coming end of the world. They should perform trance dances and uphold right living by not drinking, fighting, or quarrelling. Wovoka’s message spread rapidly, especially among people on the Plains, who even sent delegations to visit Wovoka in order to receive his message first hand. The Ghost Dance of 1890 brought to many cultures a message of hope in a world of increasing despair. It reflected the effects of the major transformations forced on the Plains people in the decade ending in 1890.11

In June of 1876 came the Battle of the Little Bighorn in which Custer suffered defeat. The Sioux still asserted the vitality of their culture. In the summer, autumn, and winter of 1876, the Plains tribes continued to defend themselves and their way of life against American troops but with decreasing success. Many Sioux surrendered in May of 1877. Bands of hostiles managed to remain free until 1881 when they too finally surrendered. The Sioux were promptly placed on reservations.

On reservations, the traditional means of attaining prestige, wealth, and rank vanished. There was no war, no hunting, and no raiding. The traditional tribal economy collapsed, and this collapse forced radical changes in diet, clothing styles, and housing. The people had no choice but to accept rations and annuities from the U.S. government, which supported them in this way while attempting to turn the people into farmers like the settlers. Because of the climate, land conditions, and temperament of the people, this effort failed miserably. The native people were forced to undergo political reorganization in order to have a means of meeting demands, and this conflicted with the traditional political organization, which itself could no longer function.

In 1883, a policy set forth by the Bureau of Indian Affairs prohibited the practice of the Sun Dance as well as other feasts and dances. Christian missionaries, especially the Episcopalians, entered to fill the gap by quickly establishing churches and schools throughout the reservations where they introduced Christianity and schooled education. The decade of the 1880s saw completion of the railroad across the plains bringing increasing numbers of setters and visitors to the region.

The famous Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, which also began in 1883, exploited Native Americans as curiosities for audiences throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. Even Sitting Bull traveled with the show in 1885. The show was a major influence in spreading the Plains costume and war-bonneted images that are still familiar. It served even to teach Native Americans how they were supposed to dress and act in conformance with their growing awareness of being Indians. In the show, members of many cultures that had been enemies came together and found a common bond in their Indianness.

Another notable event of the decade was the establishment in 1887 of Indian schools such as Carlisle of Pennsylvania. Young people from many cultures were sent to these schools to be educated. The common bonds they acquired, accompanied by education in the ways of the dominant culture, prepared many of these students to lead movements for the preservation and protection of the rights of all Native Americans. The efforts of these early pan-Indian movements have actively continued to the present.

The decade of the 1880s saw the entire collapse of the traditional Sioux religion and way of life. Forced innovations had been introduced on a massive scale. The Ghost Dance came at a time of desperate need, broadly felt among the Plains people. It was quickly accepted and practiced by many as the last hope for recovery of the old ways. Throughout 1890, the people participated in the Ghost Dance in anticipation of the end of the world, a return of the dead, and a rebirth into the world as it had been of old. But this spark of hope contained, at least for the Sioux, a militant element, for it was prophesied that those who wore special ghost shirts would be impervious to the penetration of bullets. This made the U.S. government troops nervous and in this context came the senseless killing at Wounded Knee of hundreds of Sioux men, women, and children on December 29, 1890. The spark of hope carried by the Ghost Dance was snuffed out with the lives of these people.

The 1890 Ghost Dance movement, which had sought restoration of the physical, social, and cultural conditions of the past, had failed to obtain these goals, but it played a major role in bringing together and unifying people that had previously had little association. It diffused among them new religious patterns, which were adapted in a variety of ways to maintain some continuity with the old religious traditions. In the decade of the 1880s, more extensive travel by Native Americans and concentrated contact with European-American people (especially in terms of religion and education), coupled with the loss of tribal functions in warfare and hunting, promoted the rise of an Indian as distinct from a tribal identity among the Plains people.12

As the Plains cultures entered the twentieth century, they were forced to adjust to a complex and difficult situation. Prevented from following their old way of life, they found it impossible to simply import a new tradition. Three main paths were entered by various groups, and these paths were often combined. One path was to hold to those practices that have threads of continuity with the old tradition and to try to revive them as much as possible. Along this path the Sun Dance and other ceremonial activities were eventually revived. Another path was to encourage pan-Indian identity as much as possible and to develop traditions that were Indian in character. Numerous political organizations and ceremonial practices like the powwow arose as a result. Another path was the attempt to drop tribal and Indian identity as much as possible and to assimilate completely into majority culture. One step in this direction is the acceptance of Christianity and the acquisition of employment apart from the native reservations and communities.

One means of accommodating some aspects of all three paths was found in peyote religion, which spread across the Plains early in the twentieth century and which has continued to spread among Native Americans. As the most significant pan-Indian religion of the twentieth century it deserves further consideration.13
The cactus commonly known as peyote (Lophophora williamsii) has long been used for religious purposes by Native Americans in Mexico, where the cactus grows. Its use was introduced to the Kiowa and Comanche tribes in the southern plains about 1870. By the time of the Ghost Dance movement of 1890, it was still not widespread, but the pan-Indian awareness and broadening of friendly relationships among Native Americans throughout the Plains established conditions conducive to its diffusion. Certainly peyote religion did not spread among cultures in North America at anything near the feverish rate that had the Ghost Dance religion. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, peyote religion slowly grew among cultures throughout the Plains and surrounding areas.

An important diffusionist mechanism for peyote religion was the traveling peyote leader. A number of such figures traveled from community to community to spread their version of the religion and its ritual performances. One such leader was Quannah Parker, a Comanche chief and famous war leader. His mother, who was white, had been captured as a child and raised as a Comanche. He held out against European-American pressures until 1875. Upon his surrender, he set about establishing a new way of life for his people, a way that would combine Comanche and Anglo-American ways. He prospered as a farmer and rancher. Encouraging the pursuit of education, he sent three of his children to Carlisle. He became a friend of President Theodore Roosevelt who visited Parker and went on hunting trips with him. In 1884, Parker became seriously ill. He attributed his recovery to peyote. This made him a convert to peyote religion and he entered a lifelong effort to spread the practice of peyote religion among native people. Because Parker did not abandon his efforts to accommodate Anglo-American culture in peyote religion, peyote beliefs and practices thus incorporated some Christian elements.

Another figure instrumental in the spread of peyotism was John Wilson who was Delaware and Caddo with one-quarter French. Wilson established widespread contact among Native American cultures in the last half of the nineteenth century. He had taken up peyote religion in 1880 when, subject to a number of revelations under the influence of peyote, he was given a body of moral and religious teachings that included instructions for the ceremonial procedures and preparation of the paraphernalia. Central to such preparation was the construction of a moon-shaped altar with which his version of peyote came to be identified. Wilson was engaged in peyote religion at the time of the Ghost Dance, which he accepted as well, becoming a leader of the Ghost Dance among the Caddo. After the Ghost Dance movement had run its course, Wilson returned to his efforts to spread the peyote way until his death in 1901. Wilson's version of peyote religion also incorporated many Christian elements.

As peyote religion came to be widely established by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, it began to draw fire from U.S. authorities. A series of legal efforts, which have yet to cease, has attempted to prevent Native Americans from practicing peyote religion. The attack has centered on the use of the peyote cactus.

Native Americans who had to fight these legal battles incorporated themselves as churches in order to gain legal status and to find shelter under the protection of religious liberty guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. The first incorporation under the name Native American Church occurred in Oklahoma in 1918. Federal legislation introduced to prohibit the use of peyote failed to be enacted into law, but several states outlawed its use that year. More and more groups of peyotists incorporated in order to obtain a church-like base on which to maintain the legality of their religious practices.

Peyote religion could enter any of the three paths of accommodation, even combining them in varying degrees. Most distinctive is the Indian character of peyote religion. It is not a religious practice introduced by European-American culture and its history is deeply rooted in aboriginal America. Yet it is Indian as opposed to tribal in character. This development has accommodated the growing pan-Indian awareness throughout this period in history. The most widespread feature that distinguishes peyote religion, aside from the use of peyote, is the ethic it has preached and strongly supported. This ethic focuses on problems that Native Americans recognize as threatening their existence. Notably, peyote religion prohibits the use of alcohol.

While in many cases the traditional religions could no longer be practiced, the practice of peyote religion was not difficult. It required only the acquisition of peyote and a few items of ritual paraphernalia. Furthermore, peyote religion could be construed as continuous with the old ways. The acquisition of visions under the influence of peyote was linked with the older practice of seeking visions on such occasions as puberty, preparation for war, and initiation into societies. The use of peyote has also been widely associated with medicine and thus carries on the native healing practices.

Finally, the practice of peyote religion could either exclude or incorporate Christian beliefs and practices. The peyote ritual has commonly been defended as corresponding to the Eucharist in Christianity. Jesus has been commonly identified with the spirit of peyote. Quannah Parker, for example, is reported to have said, "The white man goes into his church house and talks about Jesus, but the Indian goes into his tipi and talks to Jesus."14

Peyote religion is most remarkable in its capacity for meeting the complex needs of Native Americans throughout North America during this most difficult period in their history. It carries on the traditions of ritual curing and the seeking of individual visions. It has created a new ethic focused on the rejection of alcohol. It has created a new base for communal organization to support the continuity of tribal identity. It fosters the growth of Indian identity. It even provides for the embracing and nativizing of elements of Christianity. While all of these factors were fitted into a matrix for rejection of the non-Indian world, peyote religion nonetheless has been capable of establishing an appearance that has permitted it to survive, although under constant threat.15

The threats and criticisms of peyote religion have come not only from European-American culture but also from staunchly traditional elements within tribal cultures that have seen it as too accommodating to nonnative ways.16
CONCLUSION

Language plays a central role in the maintenance of cultural and religious tradition. The distinction of a culture usually corresponds with language. The importance of language is evident in the examples presented. The approach of the Franciscans and Jesuits was distinguished in one way by their interest or noninterest in native languages. The Franciscans generally did not learn the Pueblo languages and their greater hostility to native religious practices is compatible with that disinterest. In such a context, it would have been difficult for the Pueblo people to have given more than compartmentalized responses to the missionaries. The Jesuits were deeply interested in learning and translating Christian materials into the Yaqui language, thus providing a context for greater assimilation of European symbols and values. European languages, particularly Spanish and English, have played important roles in providing a lingua franca for Native Americans, thus giving to people who otherwise did not easily communicate a common language. This development accompanied and helped create their sense of a shared oppression and identity as Indian. A common language has been fundamental to the development of pan-Indianism.

In these examples, there appears to be a relationship between the extent and character of intercultural contact and the reaction made by the traditions of these cultures. When cultures are threatened by oppressive forces, they apparently respond with a series of actions that serve to strengthen tradition and to intensify unity and identity. The degree and intensity of the oppressive forces is met by differing kinds of cultural responses, but at every level, religion plays a central role, for it is through religion that the worldview and broad, meaning-giving perspectives are taught, effected, and developed. The Rio Grande Pueblo people tended to reenact through their religious organizations and actions, they developed protective and isolationist mechanisms. The Yaqui extensively incorporated innovations from Spanish culture and religion, but they radically transformed these borrowings to maintain continuity with their own traditions. In the northern plains, a range of cultural influences were at play in the formulation of the Sun Dance tradition and later the Ghost Dance and peyote religions. When oppressive external pressures were reduced, acculturative processes were often accelerated.

Another important factor is the openness of a tradition to change. The Pueblo cultures appeared less open to the incorporation of change in tradition than the other examples. Perhaps this is related to their deep connection to specific lands. The Pueblos and the sedentary Plains people seem to have been less open to change and incorporation of elements borrowed from other cultures. They tended to seek isolation and protection. At the time of European contact, the Yaquis were a sedentary agriculturalist culture, but elements of a former hunting-type culture are evident in their concerns for individual visions, healing, and war. They, along with the Sioux, were the grander innovators in the examples considered.

Economic factors are significant. The difference between a subsistence and a money economy goes far beyond the simple economic aspects of alternative systems, for these systems reflect and influence the entire way of life. A subsistence economy encourages and even requires a closely unified community that may, with relative ease, avoid extensive contact with other cultures. Status, prestige, and human value are not linked to economic factors nearly as much as to knowledge, clan and society membership, and religious roles. On the other hand, a money economy encourages and even necessitates a much broader interaction among people, tending to discourage the intensive unity of small groups. Even more important, a money economy introduces a system of value, prestige, and meaning based on the possession of money and goods. The effects of such a system on religion and tradition are far-reaching.

Religious forms of expression—symbols, rituals, and stories—have histories. While these forms are commonly cast in the language of primordiality, the "in the beginning" time, they nonetheless are not survivals in the sense of being witnesses to some ancient past. Native American people may quickly reformulate their traditions including their fundamental principles and perspectives. Hence the religious symbols of the Sun Dance, the Yaqui Easter, and the Pueblo fiesta express and affect the most basic and fundamental dimensions of reality, those dimensions formulated in the beginning by sanction and action of the deities. From another view, however, these symbols, rituals, and stories arise in the history of a tradition and are constantly subject to revision and alteration. This process of change is what constitutes a living tradition.

New forms of religion emerge to meet the exigencies of history. They help in the translation of worldview and way of life. They help cultures deal with the changes, gradual or radical, that are constantly encountered. These emerging religious forms, whether protective or accommodating, are essential to bridge that seeming paradox between constancy and change, a paradox that is identified by the word tradition.

NOTES


8. See Benjamin Drake, Life of Tecumseh and his Brother the Prophet, with a Historical Sketch of the Shawano Indians (Philadelphia: Quaker City Publishing House, 1856).


Epilogue

STORIES

From the viewpoint of the novel's wisdom, that servile readiness to judge is the most detestable stupidity, the most pernicious evil.—Milan Kundera

Ethnography is autobiography.

We make up stories about others so as to better know ourselves.

Epilogue means to say in addition, a sort of postscript that suggests speech more than writing. Speech seems appropriate to stories and to Native Americans. I particularly like the ambiguity of the word story. It is commonly used to refer to myth, folktale, anecdote, history, as well as an out-and-out lie. Often we never know.

So in this saying-in-addition I use personal voice and celebrate story. This book, as are all books, is both a story about others and one facet of my personal story. I occasionally revealed my personal presence in the obviousness of first person, but the rest is, in some sense, also my story. I intend the following stories to engage each reader in his or her story.

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One of my favorite books on Native Americans is Don Talayesva's autobiography Sun Chief (Yale University Press, 1942). Reading Talayesva's story has brought Hopi culture and religion to life for me and for my students. One day while I was teaching at Arizona State University I received a surprising call. I suppose it was in the mid to late 1970s. It was a woman who told me that