Chapter 9

Signs of Power and Resistance:

The (Re)Creation of Christian Imagery and Identities in the Pueblo Revolt Era

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Archaeology . . . contributes a detailed picture of the objective conditions and cultural forms inhabited by mass populations, while historical records may tend towards the official records of dominant groups. Archaeology itself therefore becomes an instrument of the limits of dominance by recovering that history which time itself was expected to repress in favour of the state chronicler

—(Miller 1988:76).

Following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, leaders of the rebellion encouraged Pueblo peoples to eliminate the Spanish influences from their world and return to "traditional," pre-Hispanic ways of living. Archaeological evidence documents this re-creation of traditional Pueblanness in architecture (Ferguson and Preucel 2000; Snead and Preucel 1999) and artifacts (Adams 1981, 1989; see Mobley-Tanaka, Chapter 5 and Capone and Preucel, Chapter 7), and indeed, many Spanish elements were purged from the Pueblo world during the brief period of decolonization from 1680–1692. However, archaeological and ethno-historic data reveals that even though Pueblo leaders, "ordered the churches burned and holy images broken up" (Hackett and Shelby 1942:251), Catholic characteristics were not completely eradicated during this period. In fact, Christian imagery and material culture continued to be used by Pueblo peoples following the Revolt; upon their reconquest, Spaniards found crosses, altars, chalices, and lamps in use at pueblo villages. However, these Christian elements were often used in very different ways in the post-Revolt Pueblo world than they had been under Spanish domination.

Pueblo responses to Catholicism following the Revolt were varied and complex. During Antonio de Oterón's unsuccessful reconquest attempt of 1681, the Spaniards found the churches and convents of Sandia, San Felipe, and Santo Domingo destroyed and lying in ruin (Hackett and Shelby 1942:259–260). Yet, at these same villages, they found ecclesiastical objects, such as incensories, censors, and boxes of holy oils, carefully preserved in the homes of the leaders of the Revolt. Pueblo opinions regarding Christianity were multiple, shifting, and contested during this period. The testimonies of Pueblo persons recorded in Spanish court documents attests to this ambivalence within the Pueblos: "some said that if the Spaniards should come [back] they would have to fight to the death, and others said that in the end they must come and gain the kingdom because they were sons of the land and had grown up with the natives" (Hackett and Shelby 1942:235; see also Espinosa 1942:134–135).

What then are we to make of the conspicuous adoption of Catholic imagery by some Pueblo persons in the Revolt period? A straightforward interpretation might suggest that Pueblo use of Christian symbolism is evidence of
Catholic belief and practice, and that these signs simply document the extent of Spanish dominance and influence, even in the Revolt period. This position assumes that the use of Catholic symbols by Pueblo peoples at this time is evidence of false consciousness, that the dominant Spanish ideology had convinced Native persons to believe in the system by which they were subjugated. Such an interpretation not only denies agency to Pueblo peoples in the seventeenth century, but also presumes that Christian symbols meant the same things to all people at all times, ignoring the context in which these signs were employed. Thus, the assumption of the straightforward practice of Catholicism among the Pueblos during the Revolt period (based on the presence of Christian symbols and artifacts) is an oversimplification of the complex relationships that exist between material signs and their interpreters. Following the Revolt, Christian symbols were appropriated and reinterpreted by Pueblo peoples, often imbued with radically different meanings than those endorsed by the Spanish. In fact, Christian imagery was manipulated and invested with new meanings that were not contrary to traditional Pueblo identities, but played a role in the resistance that helped to formulate new Pueblo identities. Pueblo opposition was not only articulated via passive, subversive, and veiled means, but Native persons also made use of Christian symbols as polysemous signs, resisting the Spanish while simultaneously creating and asserting new identities in the wake of the Revolt.

The (Re)Creation of Pueblo Tradition

Identity is a notoriously difficult concept to define. The Oxford English Dictionary characterizes identity as “the sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances.” In fact, Revolt leaders employed this notion of a single, bounded, unchanging Pueblo identity following their victory in 1680 when they encouraged Pueblo peoples to renounce all Spanish beliefs and customs in order to return to traditional ways of life. In practice, however, this notion of immutable identity becomes problematic and untenable. For the purposes of this chapter, I conceive of identities as recursive, constantly shifting, negotiated strategies of alliance building. They do not remain static at all times or in all circumstances; rather, they constantly shape and are shaped by perceived similarities and differences. To speak of identity (on either the group or individual level) is to examine the complex intersection of social groupings of ethnicity, gender, class, faction, race, etc. Moreover, because these categories are continually negotiated, identities are constantly changing, malleable concepts. Thus it comes as no surprise that the identities formed by Pueblo peoples following the Revolt are new (re)creations, based in notions of traditional Pueblo concepts, but inevitably different from those of their ancestors.

Ethnohistoric documents reveal that following the Revolt of 1680, Pueblo leaders made a conscious effort to create new Pueblo identities based in the revival of traditional beliefs. Popé, Alonso Catiti, and others preached the renunciation of all Spanish beliefs and customs, commanding their people to undergo ritual purification and renewal of traditional ceremonies. According to a declaration made by Pedro Naranjo (San Felipe) in December 1681, Pueblo men were encouraged to, “break up and burn the images of the holy Christ, the Virgin Mary and the other saints, the crosses, and everything pertaining to Christianity, and that they burn the temples, break up the bells, and separate from the wives whom God had given them in marriage and take whom they desired. . . . They did this, and many other things . . . they thereby returned to the state of their antiquity” (Hackett and Shelby 1942:247–248).

Indeed, many Pueblo persons did adopt these ideals, and the archaeological record attests to this re-creation of traditional Pueblo identities. Churches and haciendas were burned and destroyed, while many new refugee villages were constructed on or adjacent to ancient pueblo sites, denoting a return by the people to the ways of their ancestors. The form and plan of some of the Revolt period plaza pueblos has been interpreted as an architectural assertion of these traditions (Ferguson and Preucel 2000; Snead and Preucel 1999). Furthermore, studies of the ceramics of the Revolt period suggest that pottery designs
played a part in the resistance to the Spanish as well as in the construction of "traditional" Pueblo identities. Spanish motifs and forms abruptly disappear from Hopi ceramics at this time (Adams 1981:325) and the use of crosses on Pueblo ceramics virtually ceases after 1680 (Frank and Harlow 1974; see Mobley-Tanaka, Chapter 5).

However, the development of "traditional" Pueblo identities was not simply a return to pristine pre-Hispanic Puebloanness. Rather, this was a contemporary construction of new identities, based in notions of traditional Pueblo practice. In fact, the native inhabitants of the northern Rio Grande did not completely return to pre-Columbian lifeways following the Pueblo Revolt. They were selective in their rejection of Spanish influence, retaining many Spanish crops and animals, including sheep, cattle, goats, wool (Adams 1981:325), oxen, horses, mules (John 1996:105), wheat, tomatoes, and chiles' (Riley 1999:212). In fact, following the Revolt, Popé reportedly assured the people that if they followed the old practices, they would "harvest a great deal of maize, many beans, a great abundance of cotton, calabashes, and very large watermelons and cantaloupes" (Hackett and Shelby 1942:248). The irony of this statement is that melons were originally Old World crops introduced to the Southwest via Spanish contact (Ford 1987:78–79). Here Popé (allegedly) incorporated elements of Spanish influence, albeit unconsciously, into his depiction of "traditional" Pueblo life. By the 1680s, a restoration of pre-Hispanic Pueblo life was impossible; any return to tradition was inevitably and inherently also a new invention, recursively creating and recreating Pueblo identities.

This selective eradication of Spanish influence has led archaeologists and ethnohistorians to theorize that Pueblo peoples of the Revolt era retained the more functional, utilitarian Spanish elements (Adams 1981:326; John 1996:105–106), while simultaneously rejecting the symbolic and religious aspects of colonialism—most notably Catholic signs and practices. While there are drastic changes in symbolic material culture following the Revolt, Christian symbols were not entirely purged from the Pueblo world. But neither were they utilized in a conventional Spanish Catholic manner. Pueblo appropriation and manipulation of Christian imagery during the Revolt period suggests that Catholic symbols were re-interpreted by Pueblo peoples, and used in new forms of resistance during the Spanish reconquest of New Mexico. This was not an example of typical colonial syncretism; in this case, indigenous peoples appropriated the symbolic weapons of the colonizers in the formation new Pueblo identities, turning those weapons back on their oppressors, and hoisting them with their own petard.

**Ethnohistoric Evidence**

Multiple examples of the overt appropriation and manipulation of Catholic imagery following the Revolt are found in ethnohistoric documents and oral histories relating to the Spanish reconquest of New Mexico. On October 25, 1692, Diego de Vargas made his first trip to San Diego Mesa and the ancestral Jemez pueblo of Patokwa (Elliot, Chapter 3; Figure 9.1). Upon his arrival, hundreds of armed Pueblo warriors appeared ready for battle. Jemez leaders greeted the Spaniard outside the pueblo, where "their captain and governor" met Vargas with "a cross in his hand." After dismounting his horse in honor of the holy cross, Vargas found himself surrounded by an armed crowd in the plaza, "while others prepared a great war dance" (Kessell and Hendricks 1992:521). Understandably uncomfortable with this situation, he shared a meal with the leaders of the pueblo "so they would not suspect the bad opinion [he] had formed and was forming against them," and left that same day, requesting that they come down from their mesatop fortress to live in the pueblo they had abandoned (Kessell and Hendricks 1992:522).

As this narrative demonstrates, the people of Patokwa actively used Catholic symbols during the period of Pueblo independence and Spanish reconquest. However, the display of this cross was clearly not a straightforward symbol of Pueblo Catholicism. Here the Jemez seem to have employed Catholic imagery as a weapon to take in and reassure the Spaniards. Once Vargas and his men were coaxed off their horses and into the pueblo, the cross was retired in favor of conventional weapons, asserting
Native warriors found themselves trapped. A bloody battle ensued in which 84 Indians were killed; including five burned alive, two executed before a firing squad, and seven warriors who hurled themselves from the edge of the mesa in desperation. Spanish sources attest to the discovery of seven bodies at the base of the mesa following the battle (Espinosa 1942:199). However, according to Jemez legends (Sando 1982:120), just as these men jumped, an apparition of San Diego appeared, and the warriors “float like butterflies” landing safely in the valley below (Dougherty and Neal 1979). The image of San Diego is still visible today on the side of this mesa, and is visited frequently by the descendents of these warriors (Dougherty and Neal 1979; Sando 1982). The appearance of San Diego is another example of the overt utilization of Christian imagery by Pueblo peoples in resistance to the Spanish during the “Bloodless Reconquest” of the northern Rio Grande. The appropriation of San Diego—the patron saint of the Spanish army—by Pueblo warriors is another example of active manipulated resistance, turning the weapons of the Spanish back on themselves. Here the warriors of Astialakwa were able to exploit a Catholic symbol in the derivation of power for Pueblo peoples, stealing the Spanish army’s patron saint and usurping its power for Pueblo use. (Though in the end, the warriors of Astialakwa lost this battle.) Again, this legend is not necessarily indicative of a Christian identity for the people of Astialakwa; rather, it can be viewed as an example of the manipulation of Catholic imagery that characterized the complex negotiation of power and identities during the Revolt period.

Another example of the appropriation of Christian imagery by Pueblo peoples during the Revolt comes from an unpublished translation of Silvestre Vélez de Escalante’s *Extracto de Noticias*, which tells of Pueblo warriors wearing Catholic vestments as war trophies following the Revolt. A captain from Alameda Pueblo is said to have worn “an alb and a surplice with a scarlet band over it and a maniple for a crown” (Kessell and Hendricks 1992:16). The same document tells of a Navajo man meeting with Keresan leader Alonso Catiti, wearing
an alb and chasuble, with an altar cloth tied around his head. Catiti's home was reportedly decorated with carpets, cushions, and a chalice looted from churches. These Christian objects were thought to retain the power of the Spaniards' God, and were appropriated by the Pueblos (and Navajos) in the same way they venerated the scalps of brave enemies, using them in ceremonies to bring rain and other blessings to their people (Kessell and Hendricks 1992:16).

Archaeological Evidence of Catholic Symbols in the Revolt Period

An archaeological example of the appropriation and manipulation of Spanish imagery in Pueblo resistance during the Revolt period comes from the cavates of Frijoles Canyon, located today in Bandelier National Monument. Sometime following Spanish contact, a small group of persons reoccupied the homes of their ancestors in a remote and largely inaccessible area (a pattern typical of Revolt period settlements), known today as Group M (Hendron 1943:ii-iv). The presence of Kapo Black, Tewa Polychrome, and a few Glaze F sherds from excavations suggests that the reoccupation of this area of Group M likely took place during or just after the Pueblo Revolt or reconquest (Turney 1948:70). The hidden and protected nature of these dwellings would make this an ideal refuge in the wake of the Revolt/reconquest. In fact, oral histories from San Ildefonso Pueblo recount women and children fleeing their villages to take shelter at Nake'muu, a remote village north of Frijoles Canyon, during the turbulent and violent period following 1680 (Vierra et al. 2000).

The refugees in Frijoles Canyon made incised drawings on the plaster walls of some of the cavates of Group M (Hewett 1938; Toll 1995). Quite often these illustrations exhibit the imagery one would expect to find accompanying a return to tradition, including depictions of katsinas, clowns, snakes, and other customary Pueblo iconography (Figure 9.2). However, there is evidence of Spanish influence represented on these walls as well—an influence that, according to ethnohistoric documents, should be absent from the Pueblo world at this time. On the west wall of M-100, just above and beside the remnants of two mealng bins, one curious image stands out from the rest (Figure 9.3)—a representation bearing evidence of obvious European influence. European-style facial features (the eyes, eyebrows, and nose) and a halo or crown seem to suggest that this may be a Christian figure, similar in many ways to Catholic icons. The figure strongly resembles Spanish colonial depictions of the Virgin Mary, saints, and even the Holy Trinity (see Palmer and Pierce 1992; Figure 9.4). If this is true, it is a surprising image to find in this context, created during the Revolt/Reconquest period and surrounded by traditional Pueblo drawings of katsinas. Yet, upon initial
examination, this appears to be a decidedly non-traditional Puebloan image.

However, this is not a straightforward Christian icon. Comparisons with katsina representations in rock art and on ceramics reveal that this Christian symbol has been manipulated and infused with traditional Pueblo characteristics. The crown/halo may be illustrative of Spanish influence, but similar points are also found adorning katsina masks (often in depictions of the sun katsina), as exemplified on ceramics from Awatovi (Schaafsma 1994:Plate 16), Homol'ovi (Hays 1994:50), and Tsukuvi (Hays 1994:58) and in petroglyphs from the Cochiti Reservoir District (Schaafsma 1975:77; Figure 9.5). Similarly, the two concentric circles surrounding the face in both the petroglyph and the cavate icon image are examples of a stylistic element found in traditional Pueblo art as well as Spanish colonial depictions of the Virgin Mary. Finally, while the eyes and nose of this image are undoubtedly in the European style, the mouth is represented by a rectangle—a characteristic of katsina masks throughout the Pueblo world. This depiction is therefore not simply Catholic—it is an interesting combination of traditional Pueblo and Christian imagery, an illustration of the appropriation and manipulation of European symbols to
fit into the formation of traditional Pueblo identities during the Revolt period.

This transformation of colonial imagery can be seen as a strategy for cultural preservation and the re-creation of traditional Pueblo identities, an example of "Pueblofication," to modify a term coined by Hartman Lomawaima (1989). The appropriation and transformation of outside influences in Pueblo spirituality is not unique to the Revolt era; in fact Pueblo people have long pioneered creative solutions to meet new challenges, manipulating and transforming hardships into benefits, and dangers into strengths (Collier 1949:71). It has been argued that ancestral Pueblo people previously adopted outside influences in their spirituality, most famously the Tlaloc from Mesoamerica; but these influences were significantly modified to fit Pueblo culture. The katsina cult itself may have originated to the south of the Pueblo world, but it was undoubtedly adapted to suit Pueblo ceremonial practices (Brew 1943:243; Schaaafsma 1994:66). In the same way, Catholic iconography such as that exhibited in cavate M-100 was reconfigured to serve the needs of Pueblo persons during the Revolt era.

Lomawaima states, "The fabric of Pueblo culture was and continues to be tough and flexible, giving wherever and whenever necessary, but scarcely tearing, much less shredding. The Pueblo allowed alien patterns to enter the weave, as they had for many centuries, but incorporated them into a truly Pueblo pattern" (Lomawaima 1989:97; see also Riley 1987:169). In the cases examined here, Pueblo culture was stretched to accommodate Catholic imagery, possibly to assist in bringing Christianized Pueblo peoples back into the fold of traditional Pueblo spirituality. Leaders of the Revolt would not have needed to convince more traditional members of their villages to "return" to traditional ways—it was only those who had adopted Christian beliefs and practices that needed to be recaptured (Robert Preucel, personal communication, 2000). Spanish court documents report that Popé and other leaders threatened those who did not purge all Catholic elements from their lives with death (Hackett and Shelby 1942:248). Rules such as this are created only out of necessity, when people are not behaving in the ways sanctioned by those in authority, and attests to the fact that a significant segment of the Pueblo population was still making use of Christian influences following the Revolt.

Alternatively, the icon in cavate M-100 could be interpreted as an example of resistance through inversion. Catholic imagery may have been infused with Pueblo characteristics explicitly because the Spanish priests viewed "pagan" Pueblo katsina ceremonialism in opposition to Catholicism in the pre-Revolt Southwest. Missionaries viewed katsinas as devils—the opposite of Christian saints—and for this reason, Pueblo people may have infused Catholic images with katsina characteristics in explicit protest of the Spanish—a type of resistance also exhibited through post-Revolt architectural renovations of mission sites.

Resistance through Architecture and Inversion

Pueblo resistance through the inversion of Spanish meanings is exemplified in the architecture of mission sites occupied prior to the Revolt period as well. At some Eastern Pueblo villages, kivas were intentionally placed on the grounds of churches and missions. At Abó and Quarai, kivas were constructed deliberately within the confines of the conventos at a considerable distance from the Pueblo dwellings. Conscious efforts seem to have been made to place traditional Pueblo ceremonial structures in the areas consecrated by Spanish missionaries, even though this was not a conventional location for a kiva (in relation to habitation structures). This type of overt, active resistance appropriates and usurps the sacred ground delineated by the Spanish friars. Indeed, the concept of "holy ground" was almost certainly foreign to a Pueblo population who did not rigidly separate the sacred from the secular—this was a deliberate strategy of resistance on the part of the leaders of Abó and Quarai to reclaim and invert the power usurped by Christianity, reaffirm traditional practices, and recreate new identities for their people.4

The practice of resistance expressed in architecture was continued and intensified in the Pueblos after 1680. Spanish
Figure 9.4. Spanish colonial art (after Palmer and Pierce 1992):

(a) Virgin of Guidance, detail;
(b) Virgin of Guadalupe detail;
(c) cavate M-100 icon, Frijoles Canyon, New Mexico;
(d) Santa Rosa de Lima, detail;
(e) The Coronation of the Virgin.
documents indicate that following the Revolt at the Pueblo of Cebolleta the “hermitage where the holy sacraments were administered” was destroyed, and the wood was appropriated for the construction of a new kiva (Hackett and Shelby 1942:207). While at Sandia, the fleeing Spaniards reported that cells in the convent of St. Anthony had been converted into “a seminary of idolatry” (Hackett and Shelby 1942:225, 259), with katsina masks hanging on the walls. Leaders of Sandia and Cebolleta utilized, modified, and inverted Christian structures for their own religious practices. This exploitation of Catholicism is very different from the usual colonial syncretism documented elsewhere in the New World (and in other colonial contexts). At Sandia, there was not a seeping of Christianity into the kiva; instead, traditional Pueblo ceremonialism seems to have overwhelmed Catholicism, making use of the remnants of Christianity that were left behind for Pueblo purposes.

In the above cases, Catholic spaces and architectural elements seem to have been appropriated for the opposite of purposes for which they were intended—“pagan” Pueblo ceremonialism, the contradiction of Christianity (at least to Spanish missionaries). Resistance to the Spanish was here expressed through symbolic inversion, a well-documented strategy in numerous other colonial contexts. Folktales of African-American slaves (such as

Figure 9.5. Katsina images:

(a) mask from an Awanotó Polychrome canteen (Schaafsma 1994:Plate 16);
(b) Sun katsina from Homol’ovi II, Paayu Polychrome (Hays 1994:50);
(c) caviate icon, M-100, Frijoles Canyon;
(d) Jeddito Spattered sherd design (after Hays 1994:88);
(e) petroglyph, Cochiti Reservoir District (after Schaafsma 1975:77).
Br'er Rabbit tales) and festivals such as Carnival turn the world upside down, with actors adopting behavior opposed and contradictory to that expected and intended by dominant forces (Scott 1990:162–182). The same type of resistance was carried out by Pueblo leaders who conducted kiva rituals in churchyards, in convents, and even in kivas literally made from churches. Inversions also occur in modern Pueblos, when on specially sanctioned occasions, tribal members occasionally impersonate priests and imitate Catholic rituals for the entertainment of the crowd (Kenagy 1989:327–328). This inversion of conventional roles is similar to the resistance conducted in the Revolt era (albeit with different meanings in contemporary practice). Resistance through inversion is a type of defiance that typically follows rebellion.

Modes of Resistance

The modes of resistance examined here are very different from the passive forms examined in pre-Revolt contexts by Mobley-Tanaka (see Chapter 5) and made famous by Scott’s superb study of Malay resistance, Weapons of the Weak (1985). The defiance of Spanish influences prior to the Revolt was largely a passive, subverted resistance, masking traditional beliefs in the symbols of the dominant ideology. Following 1680, Pueblo peoples manipulated Spanish colonial symbols in active, explicit resistance; assuming and transforming the symbols of the colonizer in the liberation of the colonized, and forming distinctive identities in opposition to colonial powers. The explicit adoption of the signs of the dominant ideology by those previously dominated is an inherently different type of resistance than the subversive, everyday defiance employed by powerless underclasses in colonial and postcolonial contexts. This manipulated resistance of appropriation undermines the power of domination once held by these symbols by turning them back on the colonizers. In twenty-first century U.S. contexts, this type of resistance is most closely approximated by the use of the term nigga in African-American communities, an appropriation and modification of a word used to dominate that group. Similarly, the use of the terms queer and dyke by gay communities manipulates and empowers these groups via words used in their subjugation. Pueblo peoples were able to manipulate Spanish colonial imagery in much the same way following the Pueblo Revolt—not only in obscure, hidden transcripts but often in overt, explicit transformations of resistance.

The Revolt era is a unique liminal stage between discrete periods of colonization; as such, the resistance practiced by Pueblo peoples at this time does not fit neatly into typical categories of defiance. Scott identifies two realms of resistance: public transcripts, “the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate” and hidden transcripts, “discourse that takes place ‘offstage,’ beyond direct observation by powerholders” (1990:2–4). The above examples show Pueblo resistance via Catholic imagery to be sometimes public (use of the cross to deceive Vargas at Patokwa), sometimes hidden (the cave images in Frijoles Canyon), and sometimes somewhere between the two. The appropriation of mission architecture and Spanish saints are forms of defiance that are not completely open (that is, they were likely not meant to broadcast meaning to the Spanish), but they are not totally offstage, either. This unique liminal position produced many interesting and innovative transcripts of resistance that fall somewhere between the open and clandestine discourses that normally characterize resistance.

Parallel instances of this manipulated resistance of appropriation occur in many post-colonial situations. The Tshidi of the South Africa/Botswana borderland, for instance, appropriate polysemic biblical metaphors and signs in their resistance to mission Christianity, where “the submission to authority celebrated by the Christian faith was transformed into a biblically validated defiance” (Comaroff 1985:2). Similar re-workings of Judeo-Christian tradition and texts have occurred in the Philippines (Ileto 1979); and among the Rastafarians of Jamaica (Campbell 1987), who relate their post-colonial exile at the hands of Europeans to that of the Israelites in Babylon. In none of these situations, however, do the anthropologists and historians interpreting Judeo-Christian influence mistake resistance via appropriation for the straightforward
acceptance of colonial religion (Scott 1990), and neither should archaeologists examining Pueblo uses of Christian symbols following the Revolt.

Comaroff (1985:12) interprets Tshidi Zionism as, “a bricolage whose signs appropriate the power both of colonialism and of an objectified Tshidi ‘tradition,’ welding them into a transcendent synthesis.” Yet, while this situation is very much analogous to the use of Christian imagery in Revolt-era pueblos, my interpretation of this resistance is slightly different. Pueblo peoples actively chose to adopt Catholic signs. Viewing this resistance of manipulation and appropriation as syncretism or bricolage disregards the importance of agency in the formation of new identities, lending credence to interpretations of Pueblo persons of the Revolt era as manipulated victims of false consciousness. Following the Revolt, Pueblo peoples appropriated symbols useful to them to make an effective response. This is very different from Levi-Strauss’s bricoleur (1966), which “condemns the dominated to reproduce the material and symbolic forms of a neocolonial system” (Comaroff 1985:261). The application of notions of syncretism and bricolage overlooks the nuances of resistance in the post-Revolt Pueblo world. Pueblo peoples were not forced or duped into adopting Catholic signs—this was an intentional strategy employed in the (re)creation of traditional Pueblo identities.

Conclusions

Pueblo identities during the Revolt period were not devoid of Spanish influences, either on a functional/utilitarian level or in the symbolic realm. Christian imagery was appropriated and transformed in the discourses of resistance that formed during the Pueblo Revolt era. However, the assumption that Catholic symbols and traditional Puebloness are mutually exclusive is an over-simplification. As Kopytoff (2000:377) states, “what is significant about the adoption of alien objects—as of alien ideas—is not the fact that they are adopted, but the way they are culturally redefined and put to use.” I assert that the Pueblo adoption and redefinition of Spanish imagery in the Revolt period was a form of active resistance in the formulation of new identities in opposition to colonial structures.

Some persons reading this will no doubt be surprised and perhaps skeptical of the notion that a discourse of Pueblo resistance might incorporate Catholic imagery. However, this reaction may be yet another example of the Euroamerican tendency to expect traditional Indianness to be found in a pristine pre-contact Indian identity. Non-Indians are often surprised when Native peoples incorporate symbolism from outside influences in the construction of their modern Indian identities. But the identities that Native peoples construct and reconstruct for themselves (sometimes based in notions of pre-contact tradition) often adopt external influences without contradiction for those people. Non-indigenous imagery undergoes a transformation during its incorporation into new Native identities. At times, this adoption can include the use of these symbols in differing, opposed, and even contradictory manners. Lomawaima (1989:98) notes that at Hopi, the decision to accept compulsory education was a form of empowerment for the Hopi people, not a sign of defeat: “Not learning English was seen, in effect, as an unwitting way of giving the white man power over Hopi lives.” In a similar way, Catholic symbols were adopted and reintered in the Revolt era—not as an assertion of Catholic power, but a refutation of it.

Resistance and revolution are, by definition, responses to force. However, as noted by Hegel and Foucault, power and domination are not one-way streets. The very concept of power asserts the mutuality of the relationship between dominant and dominated. Power is a dynamic association, not merely the force of an active agent (in this case mission Christianity) against a passive (Pueblo) subject. For Pueblo people, the Revolt of 1680 was fundamentally an act of independence, not simply resistance. Just as Americans view the Revolutionary War as more than just a response to British Imperialism, Pueblo people remember 1680 above and beyond the rejection of Spanish colonization. The Pueblo Revolt was a declaration of liberty and sovereignty. Contrary to conventional wisdom, this assertion of independence included reference to and
adoption of Christian influences. In fact, the formation of traditional Pueblo identities in the Revolt period sometimes involved the adoption and transformation of Catholic influences, explicitly (re)constructing Pueblo identities through active manipulated resistance to the Spanish.

Acknowledgments
I would like to thank Bob Preucel for his advice in the writing of this chapter, as well as Clark Erickson, Charles Golden, Adam Mohr, Robert Schuyler, Andrew Schwalm, and Miranda Stockett for providing critical comments on the thoughts therein. Any errors are solely my own, however.

Notes
1. Tomatoes and chiles were indigenous to the New World, but were introduced to the Pueblos by the Spanish.
2. James Ivey (1998) hypothesizes that the convento kivas at Abó and Quarai were constructed by Franciscan missionaries to aid in the instruction of Catholic converts. However, I believe that the construction of these kivas by Pueblo persons following the Franciscan abandonment of the missions is a more plausible scenario (based on features such as a sipapu in the Quarai convento kiva).

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Vierra, Bradley, Larry Nordby, Gerald Martinez, and John Isaacson