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THE GREAT WHITE DAWN OF THE PUEBLO: REVOLT AND PUEBLOAN WORLDVIEW IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NEW MEXICO

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Abstract

Previous historical scholarship on the origins of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt argues that the rebellion resulted from either poor environmental conditions, harsh Spanish treatment of the Pueblo Indians, or a combination of the two. Using Puebloan myths, Spanish documents from colonial New Mexico, and anthropological studies of various Puebloan groups and religions, this paper contends that the Pueblo identified the disease, worsening environmental conditions, and harsh Spanish treatment as an indicator that they had failed to meet their ceremonial obligations to their ancestors. Therefore, Spanish occupation and prohibition of customary Pueblo religion acted as a barrier to their restoration of harmony. Thus given a tangible cause for their suffering, the Pueblo people rebelled to rid themselves of the Spanish in order to practice rituals and secure their prosperity. [Keywords: Pueblo Indians, New Mexico, Spain, Native American religion]

In 1680 the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico rose in rebellion, quickly regaining their sovereignty by removing their Spanish overlords. Historians intrigued by the unique, but limited, success of the Pueblo Revolt have struggled to explain the origins of the Indian insurrection. Scholars such as Henry Warner Bowden, Ramón A. Gutiérrez, and Jack D. Forbes have cited religious differences and Spanish suppression of native Puebloan rituals as the chief determinants of the uprising. Specifically, the authors see the Franciscan missionaries' violent and despotic enforcement of decrees prohibiting "idolatry" and traditional native religious practices as the motivations for Puebloan assault against their colonial oppressors.¹ Contrasting the claim that the revolt was the result of the Indians' desire for religious self-determination, historian Van Hastings Garner attributed the revolt to economic and environmental conditions. Garner argues that increasingly poor crop yields due to drought, fierce outbreaks of disease, and repeated Navajo and Apache forays against Puebloan settlements demonstrate that the Spanish were not as powerful as they had initially seemed and could not guarantee prosperity or protection.² Similarly, Andrew L. Knaut contends that the proliferation of drought, pestilence, and violence significantly increased the burden of Spanish demands for tribute. This, he reasons, prompted the Pueblos to challenge Spanish authority and rise in rebellion.³

Although the aforementioned arguments acknowledge many of the conditions in seventeenth-century New Mexico that antagonized the Pueblos, they do not adequately account for the cultural context in which the revolt occurred. The Pueblo Indians possessed a worldview that connected prosperity with the timely performance of traditional rituals and misfortune with the failure to appease their ancient gods and grandmothers through the fulfillment of their

ceremonial duty.⁴ The Pueblos' worldview helps to compensate for the lack of Puebloan documents describing the rebellion and the surrounding events, subsequently improving the historical understanding of the revolt.

The Pueblo Indians experienced the Spaniards' religious repression and the proliferation of poor environmental conditions within the context of their cultural understanding of the world. They identified their suffering as the result of a failure to adhere to their ceremonial and ritual norms, which their myths and oral histories confirmed would guarantee prosperity. Thus, the Pueblos revolted in order to remove Spanish authority, which prevented them from paying homage to their ancestors and assured a perpetual decline in security for the indigenous people of New Mexico.

With the advent of Spanish colonization of New Mexico, two distinct changes to the Puebloan experience occurred, subsequently challenging the natural order of their world and motivating the Indians to rebel. First, in 1598 Franciscan missionaries began to destroy all signs of Puebloan religion in their campaign to convert Indians to Christianity. Later, during the seventeenth-century, the Spanish colonial government and missionaries instituted an era in New Mexico where violent repression of native religion was the norm. Then, with the arrival of Governor Juan Francisco Treviño in 1675, the Spanish commenced a crusade against native religion and "witchcraft" that resulted in the execution or imprisonment of those accused. In one instance, "forty-seven medicine men who admitted practicing witchcraft were arrested, flogged, and sold into slavery."⁵

Second, from the onset of Spanish-Puebloan contact, European diseases had decimated native populations in New Mexico. By 1680, the Puebloan population was reduced to one third of estimates from 1600.⁶ Beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century drought, famine, and Apache raids further worsened environmental conditions in New Mexico. In the 1660s, the Pueblos suffered a succession of crop failures that led to widespread famine in the 1670s, which prompted starved Athapascan tribes to raid Puebloan settlements in search of sustenance.⁷

The changes in seventeenth-century New Mexico prompted Puebloan medicine men and religious leaders to argue for the revitalization of native religion and the overthrow of the Spanish in order to restore cosmic order. Popé, a Puebloan religious leader from San Juan and an instrumental organizer of the revolt, told the Pueblos that, if they killed the "priests and Spaniards" and returned to their ancient traditions, "they would gather large crops of grain, maize with large and thick ears, and everything else" they needed.⁸

The absence of historical documents regarding the Puebloan interpretation of the 1680 insurrection poses a significant hurdle in the understanding the revolt. Thus, the Pueblo worldview offers the best available insight into how the Indians interpreted their predicament under Spanish colonial rule. The Pueblo peoples are comprised of two major groups: the eastern Pueblo, centered in New Mexico along the Rio Grande, and the western Pueblo, whose villages

dominated Arizona and western New Mexico. The eastern Pueblo include smaller Indian tribes that speak the Keresan and Tanoan languages. Additionally, the western Pueblos include the Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and Laguna Indians.⁹ Although the different Pueblo tribes have their own distinct myths, reciprocity between man and god is an overreaching trait not unique to any one tribe.¹⁰

Puebloan myths and oral histories establish a relationship between the Pueblos and their gods based on mutual exchange. The Pueblos' primogenitors expected their descendants to honor them with gifts and prayers; in return, the ancestors answered the requests of their descendants. According to Pueblo theology, "The gods control more than man and they, therefore, are basically under the same obligation to share their bounty as man is."¹¹ Historian Ramón Gutiérrez argues that the Pueblos desired to achieve cosmic harmony through the careful maintenance of their relationship with the gods:

So long as people performed religious rites joyfully and precisely, careful that every prayer was word-perfect and full of verve, and that the ritual paraphernalia was exact to the last detail, the forces of nature would reciprocate with their own uninterrupted flow. The sun would rise and set properly, the seasons of the year would come and go, bringing rainfall and verdant crops in summer, and in the winter, game and snow.¹²

Clearly, the Pueblos attached a strong importance to the relationship between themselves and their gods. The Pueblos concluded that through the repeated performance of rituals they secured a prosperous and harmonious future.

The ritual obligation of ceremonial dancing stimulated the gods to reciprocate the Pueblos' gifts. Within the nature of Puebloan reciprocal obligations, dancing indicated service to the gods which, if done properly, encouraged the gods to "honor man's claims."¹³ Similarly, presents of corn given to Puebloan gods produced a return on investment. The Pueblos believed that an oblation of cornmeal required the gods to honor the Indians' requests or, at least forced them to consider their appeal.¹⁴

The creation myth, *The White Dawn of the Hopi*, demonstrates the idea of reciprocity between the Hopi and their gods. In the legend, the Huruing Wuhti of the east and the Huruing Wuhti of the west, goddesses of the east and west, dried the land once covered in water and brought life to the world. The goddesses made a Hopi man and woman out of clay, brought them to life, and taught them their language; in this way the goddesses populated to world. When the goddesses departed they left clear instructions for the Hopi:

Finally the goddess of the west said to the people: "You stay here; I'm going to live in the middle of the ocean in the west. When you want anything, pray to me there." Her people were sorrowful, but she left them. The Huruing Wuhti of the east did the same...Hopi

who want something from them must deposit their offerings in the village. And when they say their prayers, they think of the two goddesses who live far away.¹⁵

Similarly, the Acoma creation myth, *Emerging Into the Upper World*, also placed a strong significance on the offering of prayer and cornmeal to obtain happiness and worldly success. In the legend, the Acoma spirit Tistctinako told the first two Acoma sisters to “Pray to the sun with pollen and sacred cornmeal...Ask for a long life and happiness, and for success.”¹⁶ Creation myths instilled the belief that gods would fulfill the the people’s requests as long as they continued to pray and make offerings.

Other legends clearly identify reciprocity as the crucial aspect of the relationship between the Pueblos, their ancestors, and prosperity. The myth, *A Journey to the Skeleton House*, describes the Hopi interpretation of the afterlife and the role that deceased ancestors play in the lives of Hopi Indians. In the story a young man, with the help of a medicine man, embarks on a long journey to the skeleton house, where the dead reside, in order to better understand the afterlife. Upon satisfying his curiosity, the young man returns home and tells his mother, father, and the medicine man about what he has learned: “Then he told them about the nakwakwosis and bahos. ‘If we make prayer offerings to them, they will provide rain and crops and food for us. Thus we shall assist each other.’ ‘Very well,’ they said. ‘Very well; so that is the way.’”¹⁷ In myths discussing both creation and death, tales stressed the importance of reciprocity between the gods and the Pueblos. If the Pueblos pray and make offerings to their gods and ancestors, they will be rewarded with prosperity.

Although Puebloan religious figures held the potential to grant comfort and security, they were also to be feared. If the Pueblos disregarded their ceremonial duties or shunned their ancestors, the gods would punish the Indians. Anthropologist Leslie A. White argues that the Pueblo understood that “to ignore or violate, to lose the customs of the old days, is, according to native feeling and belief, to bring misfortune and disaster, even extinction, upon themselves.”¹⁸ The Pueblos believed, as an Isleta Pueblo tradition demonstrates, that their ancestors created misfortune and sickness to remind the Pueblo of their ritual obligations:

The Mother thought that nobody would remember her after they had come up into this world. So Weide had the Witch chief born with us, come up with us, through whom we could remember the Mother. That is why there are witches, we believe; from getting sick through witches, people will remember the Mother and Weide.¹⁹

Failure to make proper offerings to the Puebloan gods and purify oneself against the dead could harm cosmic equilibrium and result in negative consequences such as disease, drought, and misfortune.²⁰

The cultural importance of the reciprocal relationship between the Pueblo and their gods, and the significance of ritual offerings, sheds light on the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. This worldview

defined the Pueblos' interpretation of the Spanish occupation of New Mexico. The strict religious repression, poor environmental conditions, and events leading the seventeenth-century insurrection challenged the Pueblos' notions of reciprocity between man and the gods. Thus, the Puebloan insurrection should be understood within the context of Puebloan beliefs.

In January 1598, Don Juan de Oñate, a Spanish explorer who had assisted Hernán Cortés in the conquest of Mexico, departed with 129 Spanish soldiers on an expedition to colonize New Mexico.²¹ "Your main purpose," his superiors stated, "shall be the service of God Our Lord, the spreading of His holy Catholic faith, and the reduction and pacification of the natives of said provinces."²² With the party's arrival in New Mexico on April 20, 1598, the Spanish Pueblo quickly submersed the Pueblo Indians in a European-dominated society that demanded acculturation. Ten days after his arrival, Oñate ordered a chapel to be constructed, held High Mass, and forced the Pueblos present to kneel and kiss the feet of the Franciscan missionaries.²³ Quite apart from Oñate's mission of reduction and pacification, and the symbolic loss of Puebloan authority that kneeling in front of the Franciscans represented, life under Spanish rule grew much worse.

Upon the missionaries' arrival, they quickly identified Puebloan religion as a challenge to Christianity. During a late-sixteenth century expedition to New Mexico, a Franciscan friar stated, "Here in this pueblo of Aguico and in the others are some small prayer houses where the Indians speak to the devil and give him offerings."²⁴ The friars began the Christianization process by removing all forms of Puebloan religion. They instructed the Pueblo Indians to abandon their gods or, according to the missionaries, their devil worship and witchcraft and to disavow their belief in idols. Furthermore, the friars sought to remove all evidence of Puebloan religion through the destruction of their idols. For example, Fray Alonso Benavides described a collection of over one thousand idols, which he took from the house of elderly Indian and promptly burned in a public square.²⁵

In addition to the destruction of native idols, the Friars demanded a strict obedience to Christian values and behavior, which they enforced with the use of violence. One method of securing the Indians' abandonment of native ideology was with the use of "spiritual police" and "church wardens," Puebloan subordinates who enforced Christian norms. These religious officers "freely administered half a dozen lashes to anyone found negligent in their Christian duties."²⁶ Thus, the Spanish incursion into New Mexico forced the Pueblo to renounce their ancestors, an ominous event in Puebloan worldview that guaranteed the gods' abandonment of the Pueblos and the advent of their suffering.

Although the Pueblos appear to have accepted Christianity, at least outwardly, many natives reverted back to their traditional religious beliefs. The Franciscans' entrance into New Mexico convinced many Puebloans that the Spanish were gods who, in accordance with their worldview, would bring prosperity. However, by 1640, "The novelty of their gifts had worn off and their magic had been had proven ineffectual in producing rain, health, prosperity, and peace."²⁷

With the world apparently out of order, Puebloan medicine men began an attempt to restore harmony by ridding their communities of Catholic friars and praying to their ancient gods. Several Pueblo towns rebelled against Spanish colonial authority, destroying all signs of Christian culture. In a 1641 report on the state of Christian conversion in New Mexico Fray Bartolomé Márquez writes, “The Pueblo of Taos rebelled, killed its minister, destroyed a very beautiful church and convento, and profaned everything relating to divine worship; a very barbarous people.”²⁸ Similarly, Fray Márquez notes that the Zuni province was “severely punished” for destroying churches and killing a minister who was working to convert Zuni Indians.²⁹

With the realization that the Pueblos had returned to idolatry and devil worship, Spanish government officials and missionaries set out to quell native revitalization by again using violence to enforce Christian norms. Don Fernando de Villanueva, during his service as governor between March 1665 and November 1668, pacified idolatrous Indians who had reverted to their old ways. Villanueva’s service record documents one such example in the pueblo of Senecú where he apprehended several Indians who conspired against the Spanish:

And without any consideration given either to the inconvenience of time or to his man years...he went to the Pueblo of Senecú where the major danger emanated and he had six of the principal heads of the mutiny executed by harquebuses and he punished other delinquents who were the keepers of many idols and instruments of witchcraft and rancor.³⁰

In another particularly vicious example, Fray Salvador de Guerra discovered that a Hopi Indian man, Juan Cuna, had been practicing “idolatry” and subsequently whipped him until he was covered in blood. After issuing a second beating, Guerra poured burning turpentine over Cuna killing him, as one historian writes, “in flames that surely resembled those of hell.”³¹ While Cuna’s death was particularly savage, the Spanish use of violence as a method of enforcing Christian conformity characterized their war against native religion.

In spite of the Spaniards’ violence, by the 1670s they began to lose control of New Mexico. The Pueblos openly attacked the Spaniards and practiced their traditional religion. In 1672, Indians from Abó Pueblo attacked the Franciscan missionary Fray Pedro de Avila y Ayala, beating him to death with a bell and setting fire to the town’s church. Moreover, Puebloan medicine men began proclaiming that the root of their suffering was the abandonment of their ancestors and ancient gods. With the hope of restoring order to their world, the Pueblos began to defy Spanish prohibitions against native religion, performing ritual dances and making offerings to their ancestors.³²

Puebloan revitalization became so widespread that Spanish clerics from the districts of Teguas, Taos, Acoma, and Zuni complained of “being unable to work and fulfill completely their obligations as ministers in the midst of so much idolatry.”³³ Governor Don Juan Francisco

Treviño dealt with the Puebloan challenge to authority by launching a crusade against native religion. Treviño ordered the arrest of Indians accused of witchcraft and seized idols from the houses of the accused. During the explosion of Puebloan revitalization, the Spanish arrested forty-seven Puebloans from the Teguas nation for the bewitching of the missionary Fray Andrés Durán and his native interpreter Francisco Guiter. Sargento Mayor Diego López Sambrano, a Spanish soldier, attested to Treviño's use of the arrests to demonstrate that native religion would not be tolerated under the Spanish crown:

Forty-seven Indians were arrested...four of whom, because of having declared that they had committed the witchcraft referred to, were sentenced to be hanged, both for the above crimes and for the other deaths which were proved against them...and of the others who remained, numbering forty-three, some he released with a reprimand, and others he condemned to lashings and imprisonment.³⁴

Governor Treviño's campaign against native religion only reinforced Puebloan anger at the Spanish. The Pueblo, with guidance from their traditional spiritual leaders, had identified revitalization as the path to peace and happiness, but continued Spanish attacks on native attempts to restore cosmic order directly challenged native ideas of reciprocity between man and their ancestors, further fueling Puebloan frustrations.

Compounding the effects of Spanish attempts to suppress native religion, poor environmental conditions in the second half of the seventeenth century further challenged Puebloan ideas of proper world order. Beginning in the mid-1660s, New Mexico entered a period characterized by drought, famine, and the proliferation of disease. Between 1666 and 1670, a severe drought initiated the decline of the region's agricultural yields. Despite Spanish attempts to distribute food, the native population of New Mexico plummeted from around 40,000 in 1638 to 17,000 in 1670.³⁵ In a letter to the king, Fray Francisco de Ayeta documented the bleak outlook of Puebloan life in drought and famine afflicted New Mexico:

In the year 1670 there was a very great famine in those provinces, which compelled the Spanish inhabitants and the Indians alike to eat the hides that they had and the straps of the carts, preparing them for food...by this means almost half the people in said provinces escaped [starvation].³⁶

Although the Spanish attempted to aid the starving Indians, a wave of pestilence swept over New Mexico. On June 18, 1669 Fray Juan de Talabán wrote his colonial superiors regarding the spread of famine and disease stating, that the Indians were "dying without any human means of remedy. The conclusion to be drawn from what had been said is that there is no recourse what so

ever there.”³⁷ In 1671, disease struck again, further worsening conditions in New Mexico and resulting in the deaths “of many people and cattle.”³⁸

Also, constant attacks from Apache raiders plagued the Pueblo Indians. In a 1669 letter, Governor Juan de Medrano Messía wrote of the repeated sorties against Puebloan villages:

The Apache Indians, common enemies, who during the seven months I have been governing have killed six Spanish soldiers and 373 Christian Indians, stolen more than two thousand horses, mares, and mules, and more than two thousand head of ganado menor [sheep], the property of the conventos of this holy custodia and of the citizens and inhabitants of these [provinces] so ravaged and destroyed, that it is a miracle anyone remains in them.³⁹

The Apache raids constituted such a significant problem that the colonial government of New Mexico commissioned several expeditions to take revenge for the combative tribe’s attacks. Similarly, missionaries frequently complained to the colonial authorities about the devastating effects of the Apache forays.⁴⁰

The drought and great famine of the 1670s, and the subsequent spread of hunger, motivated Apache tribes to increase their attacks on Puebloan and Spanish settlements with a renewed ferocity.⁴¹ In response to a September 1670 Apache raid, Governor Messía described the attack and ordered Spanish retaliation:

By my order, reprisal and just war is to be made against the Apache enemies of the cordilleras [mountains]...because on the third of this month they launched a great ambushade on the pueblo of Humanas, took possession of it, and killed eleven persons, carrying off thirty-one captives, destroying the holy temple...and committing many other atrocities.”⁴²

Despite the swift Spanish response to the attacks, the raids continued to plague the Pueblo Indians. Again, Francisco de Ayeta attested to the devastating effects of the Apache incursions:

In the year 1672, the hostile Apaches who were then at peace rebelled and rose up, and the said province was totally sacked and robbed by their attacks and outrages, especially of all the cattle and sheep...They killed, stole, and carried off all except a few small flocks.⁴³

Certainly the famine, disease, and Apache raids during the two decades preceding the 1680 rebellion caused the Pueblos to question the power of the Spanish. Contrary to Puebloan assumptions that the Spanish were gods, the Europeans in New Mexico failed to exert control over the environment: They could not provide rain and successful harvests, nor could they halt

the onslaught of disease and Apache incursions. In accordance with Puebloan tradition, the Spanish failure to secure prosperity contradicted native ideas about world order. This realization prompted the Pueblos to question their acceptance of the Spanish and their Christian culture. At this point Indian medicine men began claiming that the source of the suffering was the Spanish and their Christian friars.⁴⁴

The Spanish colonization of New Mexico had forced the Pueblo into a foreign cultural system that actively suppressed their native beliefs. The Spanish government and Franciscan missionaries repeatedly used violence to quell native attempts to restore their ancient belief systems, which the Pueblo believed guaranteed success and prosperity. Then, in 1666, a series of ecological disasters struck the Pueblo. Drought and famine decimated the Indian population and forced them to eat hides and the leather from saddles. Similarly, a wave of disease further reduced the native population. As a result, the Apache, who also suffered from the same natural disasters, renewed their savage campaign against Puebloan settlements in search of sustenance. As the Spanish occupation dragged on, the Pueblo became increasingly frustrated with their colonial overlords.

Medicine men began to argue that the reason for the Pueblo's troubles was that their ancient ancestors and gods were angry. If the Pueblo returned to their old ways and offered maize and deference, the Indian religious leaders argued, the gods would answer their prayers with rain, prosperity and happiness.⁴⁵ One such religious leader was a Pueblo Indian from San Juan named Popé. Jerónimo, a Tigua Indian, later described Popé's role in the revolt against the Spanish:

He [Jerónimo] knows that the said Indian Popé presented himself as a great captain, and that it was said that he was the one who made them kill priests and Spaniards, together with their women and children, and burn images and churches...and he caused them to wash their heads in order to take away the water of baptism, so that they might be as the had been in ancient times; and he told them that they would gather large crops of grain, maize with large and thick ears, many bundles of cotton, many calabashes and watermelons, and everything else in proportion.⁴⁶

Soon, the fear of Spanish punishment for practicing idolatry forced Popé to flee to the Pueblo of Taos, where he continued to argue for the return to ancient Puebloan tradition. While in Taos, Popé claimed to enter a kiva, an underground Puebloan ceremonial chamber, where he spoke with ancient spirits from the underworld. The gods told Popé to overthrow the Spanish and to tie knots in a cord that would signify the coming of the revolt and to pass the cord from village to village spreading word of the rebellion. Popé organized a group of Indians who went to other pueblos, ordering all that they encountered 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.”⁴⁷

On August 9, 1680, Popé set the planned rebellion in motion, sending two messengers carrying deerskins with two knots to all the pueblos, letting the Indians know that two days remained until the revolt. The couriers repeated Popé’s message and told the Pueblos “that the father of all Indians,” Po-he-yemu, “their great captain, who had been such since the world had been inundated,” had ordered all pueblos to rebel. The messengers stated that Popé commanded all the Spanish to be killed, and with this accomplished, “they would live as in ancient times...and gather a great many provisions and everything they needed.”⁴⁸

Despite Popé’s attempted secrecy, the pueblo of San Cristóbal was unwilling accept the message of Po-he-yemu and subsequently refused to participate in the revolt. It is unclear why the San Cristóbal Indians refused to rebel, however, it is clear that they choose to side with the Spanish authorities, whom they promptly notified of the planned attack. Before the Spanish could react to allegations of the impending insurrection, the Pueblos rebelled. On August 10, 1680 Fray Juan Pío, went to collect the Indians for mass in the pueblo of Tesuque only to find it deserted. Pío continued to search for the Indians, who he found gathered outside the village “wearing war paint, with their bows, arrows, lances, and shields.” The father approached them asking, “What is this children; are you mad? Do not disturb yourselves,” and prompted them to return to the pueblo to receive mass. However, the Puebloans dismissed the priests demands, killed Fray Pío, and attacked a Spanish soldier, Pedro Hidalgo, who had been traveling with the priest.⁴⁹

The revolt continued over nine days as Popé and the Pueblo’s ancient ancestors had commanded. Antonio de Otermín, the residing governor during the revolt, stated, “In a single day and hour they broke with everything, renouncing their obligation as Christians and vassals of his Majesty, and waging war hennery throughout the kingdom.”⁵⁰ “With barbarous ferocity” Otermín continues, the Pueblos razed everything associated with Spanish rule and the Christian faith. The rebelling Indians killed twenty-one Christian missionaries including eighteen clerical ministers, two lay brothers, and the head of a church. The rebels burned churches, destroyed images of Christianity, and performed ceremonial dances. The Pueblos continued their campaign, killing three hundred and eighty Spaniards, many of whom were women and children, and mutilating their bodies. They proceeded to rob the “whole kingdom, taking possession of the cattle and horses and of everything in the entire kingdom.”⁵¹

On August 13, 1680, the Pueblo surrounded Governor Otermín’s villa in Santa Fe, sending in an elected native representative to offer the Spanish peace if they agreed to leave New Mexico. Otermín refused and the siege of Santa Fe began. During the nine-day siege, the Pueblos killed four more Spanish soldiers and threatened to annihilate all the remaining Spanish men in New Mexico. On August 21, 1680, Otermín and the remaining Spaniards abandoned Santa Fe, with the hopes of regrouping with other surviving colonists in the pueblo of La Isleta.⁵²

Afterwards, the Spanish were determined to learn the reasons for the revolt. In their quest for answers, the Spanish questioned captured Indians. Although Spaniards wrote the records of these interrogations, portraying the Indians from a Spanish perspective, they grant significant insight into the stimuli that motivated the Pueblo to rebel.⁵³

Don Pedro Nanboa, an elderly Pueblo Indian whom the Spanish captured after the revolt, answered the Spaniard's questions about why the Indians had risen against the Spanish. On September 6, 1680, when asked why the Indians rebelled "forsaking their obedience to his Majesty and failing in their obligations as Christians," Nanboa stated that for a long time the Pueblos, "because the Spaniards punished sorcerers and idolaters," had been constantly "plotting to kill the Spaniards and the religious." He continued declaring:

That the resentment which all the Indians have in their hearts has been so strong, from the time this kingdom was discovered, because the religious and the Spaniards took away their idols and forbade their sorceries and idolatries; that they have inherited successively from their old men the things pertaining to their ancient customs; and that he heard this resentment spoken of since he was of an age to understand.⁵⁴

Nanboa was not the only Indian to express bitterness over the treatment of ancient Pueblo tradition. Pedro García told Spanish authorities that the Pueblo had rebelled "because they resented it greatly that the religious and the Spaniards should deprive them of their idols, their dances, and their superstitions."⁵⁵

Another Pueblo, Josephe, mentioned similar motivations for the revolt. He stated that the leaders of the insurrection told the Indians to never mention Jesus or Mary again and ordered the destruction of all the churches, rosaries, and crosses. Once the images of Christian religion had been removed, the pueblos "went to offer flour, feathers, and the seed of maguey, maize, and tobacco, and performed other superstitious rites, giving the children to understand that they must all do this in the future."⁵⁶

Other Puebloan testimonies supported Nanboa, García, and Josephe's stories. Two Indian brothers, Juan and Francisco Lorenzo, argued that Popé and the other chiefs of the rebellion had instructed them to burn the churches and images of Christianity and were to observe their ancient gods and that in this way, "they would have everything they might desire."⁵⁷

Popé and other religious leaders' assertion that the Puebloan tribes suffered because they had abandoned their ancestral gods indicated that the Pueblos still clung to their cultural perspective of the world. Despite the significant changes that the Spanish brought to New Mexico, the Pueblo remembered the way in which their forefathers taught them to secure a harmonious world order and prosperous future.

The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico possessed a worldview emphasizing a relationship between man and god characterized by reciprocity. Their oral histories, creation myths, and stories of the dead instructed the Pueblos to remember their ancestors and the gods who created

their world. These narratives instructed the Pueblo to perform ceremonial dances, make offerings of maize, and to pray to their gods and ask for happiness, rain, and prosperity. The Puebloan Indians believed that as long as they continued to fulfill traditional ritual duties, their ancestors would continue to grant them wealth, comfort, and success, and the world would continue as it should. Pueblo cultural traditions also told the natives of New Mexico that if they abandoned their ancestors, the result would be suffering, disease, and an end to their world.⁵⁸

From the onset of Spanish colonial expansion into New Mexico, they attempted to exploit the Puebloan worldview by portraying themselves as gods. Initially, the Pueblo Indians interpreted the foreign presence and demands for conformity within the context of their cultural understanding of the cosmos. However, in 1598, the arrival of the Franciscan missionaries subjected the Indians to an alien ideology that demanded they abandon their customary religious practices. The Spanish outlawed Puebloan rituals, destroyed their idols and ceremonial chambers, and ordered them to live according to Christian values.⁵⁹

The Pueblos soon realized that the newcomers were not omnipotent and were even less successful at bringing rain and happiness to New Mexico than their traditional gods. With this awareness, the Pueblos began to revert to their old ways, performing ceremonial dances and making offerings to their ancestors. In an attempt to enforce conformity to European and Christian values, the Spanish colonial authorities and Franciscan missionaries began to use violence to purge native traditions from the Puebloan New Mexico.⁶⁰ This only fueled the prevalent belief that the Spaniards were preventing the Pueblo from worshiping their ancestors and achieving the prosperity they desired.

Additionally, environmental conditions in New Mexico worsened throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1666, drought vastly reduced agricultural yields, giving rise to widespread famine while forcing Indians to eat leather and hides in order to survive.⁶¹ In the midst of this ecological disaster, disease further reduced native populations. Other hostile Indian tribes, such as the Apache, who were affected by the same environmental conditions, began a renewed campaign of violence against Puebloan settlements. Despite Spanish attempts to curb the Apache raids, the Pueblo's enemies continued to destroy their villages and steal what little food they had left. By 1670, these conditions had reduced the native population of New Mexico by over forty-two percent, as compared to 1638.⁶² The suffering brought on by drought, famine, the profusion of disease, and the forced desertion of their ancestors aligned with Puebloan traditions, which told the Indians that if they ignored their ancestors, their gods would not grant them happiness and instead would allow the Pueblos to suffer.

The result of Spanish cultural repression, famine, disease, and hostile raids by their traditional enemies gave the Puebloans a grim outlook on their lives under Spanish rule. Puebloan religious leaders, such as Popé, began telling other Puebloans that the cause for their misfortune was the abandonment of their ancestral traditions. The Pueblos identified the Spanish as the barrier that prevented the proper performance of their ceremonial obligations and the observance of their customary belief system. With an explanation for their problems, the Pueblo

rebelled to restore the cosmic order of their world. They sought to remove the Spaniards from New Mexico and return to their traditional lifestyles, thus pleasing their gods and securing a prosperous future with all that they desired.

¹ Henry W. Bowden, "Spanish Missions, Cultural Conflict and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680," *Church History* 44, no. 2 (1975): 221-222; Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 47-49 and 127-131; Jack D. Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 178.

² Van Hastings Garner, "Seventeenth-Century New Mexico," in *What Caused the Pueblo Revolt of 1680*, ed. David J. Weber (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 69-70.

³ Andrew L. Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 152-155.

⁴ Mathew Liebmann, *Revolt: An Archaeological History of Pueblo Resistance and Revitalization in 17th Century New Mexico*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), 45-46.

⁵ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 47-49 and 127-131.

⁶ Liebmann, *Revolt*, 39.

⁷ Garner, "Seventeenth-Century New Mexico," 69-70.

⁸ Charles Wilson Hackett, "Declaration of Jerónimo, a Tigua Indian. Place Opposite La Isleta, January 1, 1682," vol. 2 of *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermin's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, ed. George P. Hammond (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 360-361.

⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Pueblo Indians," accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/EBchecked/topic/482769/Pueblo-Indians>.

¹⁰ Byron Harvey III, "An Overview of Pueblo Religion," in *New Perspectives on the Pueblos*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972), 198 and 208.

¹¹ Harvey, "An Overview of Pueblo Religion," 208.

¹² Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 23.

¹³ Harvey, "An Overview of Pueblo Religion," 208.

¹⁴ Harvey, "An Overview of Pueblo Religion," 208.

¹⁵ "The White Dawn of the Hopi," in *American Indian Myths and Legends*, ed. Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 115-116.

¹⁶ "Emerging Into the Upper World," in *American Indian Myths*, 97-105.

¹⁷ "A Journey to the Skeleton House," in *American Indian Myths*, 442-445.

¹⁸ Leslie A. White, *The Pueblo of Santa Ana, New Mexico* (American Anthropological Association, 1942), 88.

¹⁹ Elise Clews Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion*, vol.1 pt. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), 255.

²⁰ Harvey, "An Overview of Pueblo Religion," 208; Edward P. Dozier, *The Pueblo of North America*, (Illinois: Waveland Press Inc., 1970), 151.

²¹ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 47.

²² George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, "Instructions to Don Juan de Oñate, October 21, 1595," vol. 1 of *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1598-1628*, ed. And trans. Hammond and Rey (Albuquerque, 1953), 65-68.

²³ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 47-49.

²⁴ George P. Hammond, "Diego Pérez de Luxán's Account of the Antonio de Espejo Expedition Into New Mexico, 1582," in *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 186.

²⁵ Frederick W. Hodge et al., *Fray Alonso de Benavides' Revised Memorial of 1634* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1945), 204-205, 43.

²⁶ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 81.

- ²⁷ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 43-44, 127.
- ²⁸ Frances V. Scholes et al. eds., "The State of the Conversions, Churches and Conventos of the Custodia de San Pablo in New Mexico in the Matter of Granting Forty Friars," trans. Eleanor B. Adams in *Juan Domínguez De Mendoza: Soldier and Frontiersman of the Spanish Southwest, 1627-1693* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 294.
- ²⁹ Scholes et al. eds., "The State of the Conversions," in *Juan Domínguez*, 294.
- ³⁰ Scholes et al. eds., "Account of the Services of Don Fernando de Villanueva, Governor and Capitan General of the Provinces of New Mexico by Appointment of the Marqués de Mancera, Viceroy of New Spain," in *Juan Domínguez*, 313.
- ³¹ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 127-128.
- ³² Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 130; Hodge et al., *Fray Alonso*, 292.
- ³³ Hackett, "Declaration of Sargento Mayor Luis de Quintana December 22, 1681," vol. 2 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 289.
- ³⁴ Hackett, "Declaration of Diego López," vol. 2 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 300-301.
- ³⁵ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 130.
- ³⁶ Charles Wilson Hackett ed., "Petition of Father Fray Francisco de Ayeta, Mexico, May 10, 1679," in vol. 3 of *Historical documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and approaches thereto, to 1773; Spanish texts and English translations*, (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926), 302.
- ³⁷ Scholes et al. eds., "Documents Concerning Provisions and Livestock Given by the Conventos for an expedition against the Apaches," in *Juan Domínguez*, 135.
- ³⁸ Hackett, *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, xix.
- ³⁹ Scholes et al. eds., *Documents Concerning Provisions*, in *Juan Domínguez*, 137.
- ⁴⁰ Scholes et al. eds., *Juan Domínguez*, 132-145.
- ⁴¹ Garner, "Seventeenth Century New Mexico," in *What Caused the Pueblo Revolt*, 69.
- ⁴² Scholes et al. eds., *Juan Domínguez*, 139-140.
- ⁴³ Hackett ed., "Francisco de Ayeta, Mexico, May 10, 1679," vol. 3 of *Historical Documents*, 302.
- ⁴⁴ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 130.
- ⁴⁵ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 130.
- ⁴⁶ Hackett, "Declaration of Jerónimo, a Tigua Indian. Place Opposite La Isleta, January 1, 1682," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, 360-361.
- ⁴⁷ Hackett, "Declaration of Pedro Naranjo of the Queres Nation December 19, 1681," of vol. 2 *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, 247.
- ⁴⁸ Hackett, "Autos as a Result of the Rebellion of the Christian Indians, vol. 1 of *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*," 4-5; "Declaration of Diego López," vol. 2 of *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, 295.
- ⁴⁹ Hackett, "Autos as a Result," vol. 1 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 5-6.
- ⁵⁰ Hackett, "Auto of Antonio de Otermín October 9, 1680," vol. 1 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 194-195.
- ⁵¹ Hackett, "Otermín October 9, 1680," vol. 1 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 195.
- ⁵² Hackett, "Letter of Antonio de Otermín to Fray Francisco de Ayeta September 8, 1680," vol. 1 or *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 98-99; *Autos as a Result*, 16-21.
- ⁵³ Hackett, vol. 1-2 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 60-62, 239-240, 251.
- ⁵⁴ Hackett, "Declaration of One of the Rebellious Christian Indians Who Was Captured on the Road September 6, 1680," vol. 1 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 60-61.
- ⁵⁵ Hackett, "Statement of Pedro García September 6, 1680," vol. 1 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 62.
- ⁵⁶ Hackett, "Declaration of Josephe December 19, 1681," vol. 2 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 239-240.
- ⁵⁷ Hackett, "Declaration of Juan Lorenzo and Francisco Lorenzo December 20, 1681," vol. 2 of *Revolt of the Pueblo*, 251.
- ⁵⁸ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 23; "The White Dawn," in *American Indian Myths*, 115-116.
- ⁵⁹ Hodge et al., *Fray Alonso de Benavides' Revised*, 204-205, 43.
- ⁶⁰ Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 127-128.
- ⁶¹ Hackett, "Petition Francisco de Ayeta," in vol. 3 of *Historical Documents*, 302.
- ⁶² Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 130.

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