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Essay

Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism

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POSTMODERN WRITERS SAY THAT IN HYPERREALITY the reproduction is better than the original; for example, a museum diorama is more vivid and effective than the scene represented (Eco 1986:8). Jean Baudrillard writes that Americans construct imitations of themselves and that the perfect definition of the simulacra is when the reproduction is “more real” than the original (1988:41; see also Eco 1986:18). Meaghan Morris writes that once we have a simulacra, “the true (like the real) begins to be reproduced in the image of the pseudo, which begins to become the true” (1988:5). Umberto Eco contends about America that “the past must be preserved and celebrated in full-scale authentic copy; a philosophy of immortality as duplication” (1986:6). Eco takes us on a “journey into Hyperreality in search of instances where the American imagination demands the real thing, and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake” (1986:7).

Is this just postmodern gibberish, and are the writings of Baudrillard and Eco simply the babblings of a long series of Europeans who have “rediscovered” an America of the Continental imagination?

Baudrillard (1983) writes that in this postindustrial era, we have entered a new stage of history, an electronic one, marked by changes in information flow and patterns of reproduction. In the Renaissance we had originals and counterfeits; in the industrial period we had the serial repetition of the same object; but in this postmodern phase we have simulation, without origins, referential values, or beginnings, where the simulacrum becomes the true. For Baudrillard and for Eco, America is hyperreality. “America cultivates no origin or mythical authenticity; it has no past and founding truth . . . it lives in a perpetual present . . . it lives in perpetual simulation” (Baudrillard 1988:76).

My objectives in this essay are to examine critically the postmodern perspective of Baudrillard and Eco; to develop a view of historical reproduction based on a constructivist position that sees all culture as continually invented and reinvented (Bruner 1984); and to argue for transcending such dichotomies as original/copy and authentic/inauthentic. My interest is in a critique of postmodernism, but as the term is used so loosely, in such diverse ways—from architecture to the arts to scholarship to popular media—in the interest of clarity, I take postmodernism to refer specifically to the writings of Baudrillard and Eco, two of the more prominent practitioners, and even more narrowly to their work on copies and originals in America. Lest the focus seem too narrow, it should be noted that the theory of simulacra is an essential component of many different postmodern positions.

I argue also that in the work of Baudrillard and Eco about America, despite their theoretical arguments against origins, there is an implicit original, and it is Europe, for America is seen as essentially a satellite of Europe (Baudrillard 1988:76). I will show also that not only Baudrillard and Eco but scholars such as Dean MacCannell and Richard Handler, in their writings on authenticity, retain an essentialist vocabulary of origins and reproductions. Derrida (1974) has taught us that these either/or binaries are built into Western metaphysics, and that not only are such oppositions established but one term is privileged at the expense of the other.

In order to examine these issues, I turn to an ethnographic example, to Lincoln's New Salem, a historic site in central Illinois, and to the museum professionals in charge of producing New Salem. A historic site is a good place to gather data on issues of reproductions, originals, and authenticity¹ because museum professionals struggle with these issues daily. They are the working practitioners who take responsibility for the staging of the site. They continually construct and reconstruct New Salem as they change exhibits, develop new story lines, and train interpreters and guides. Among historic sites, New Salem is a particularly appropriate place to study as the literature at the site calls New Salem an "authentic reproduction," an intriguing oxymoron, as we are not sure if it is an original or a copy; we will want to explore the meaning of this term.

Baudrillard and Eco do not deal with the significance of historic reproductions to the tourists and visitors except by implication. As this essay rejects some of the postmodernist generalizations, in the concluding section I present an alternative reading of the significance of New Salem that contrasts with the views of Baudrillard and Eco. My alternative view is derived from preliminary fieldwork with the tourists themselves. While this segment of the essay is admittedly speculative, it contains the seeds of a revisionist position focused on the construction of meaning by visitors to sites. My hypotheses are that the tourists at New Salem are (1) learning about their past, (2) playing with time frames and enjoying the encounters, (3) consuming nostalgia for a simpler bygone era, and simultaneously (4) buying the idea of progress, of how far we have advanced. Finally, they are also (5) celebrating America, which at New Salem means the values and virtues of small-town America. These experiences go well beyond a search for authenticity. The New Salem experience provides visitors with a sense of identity, meaning, and attachment.

In the conclusions, we apply what we have learned about New Salem to postmodernism and to the literatures on the invention of tradition, authenticity, and historic sites in America. Rather than more grand theorizing about the postmodern condition, this essay offers an alternative perspective based on a specific case study utilizing the methods of ethnography and the concepts of performance and practice.

New Salem

New Salem Historic Site² is a reconstructed village and outdoor museum in Illinois where Abraham Lincoln lived in the 1830s (Thomas 1934). Most Americans know that Abraham Lincoln was U.S. president during the Civil War, that he freed the slaves, and that he was assassinated in 1865. Arguably the greatest American folk hero, Lincoln's life is an embodiment of the American success ideology. Abraham Lincoln came to New Salem at the age of 22, and he lived there between 1831 and 1837. In his own words, Lincoln arrived as "a piece of floating driftwood," "a friendless, uneducated penniless boy," and by hard work and strength of character this humble backwoodsman left New Salem to become a lawyer and politician in the state capital. An Illinois Historic Preservation Agency handout distributed at the park, entitled "Lincoln's New Salem" (n.d.), says,

The six years Lincoln spent in New Salem formed a turning point in his career. From the gangling youngster who came to the village in 1831 with no definite objectives, he became a man of purpose as he embarked on a career of law and statesmanship.

The same theme appears in Sandburg's famous biography, where he calls New Salem "Lincoln's 'Alma Mater'" (1954:743) and refers to the site as Lincoln's "nourishing mother" (1954:55). Implicit in the story is the "frontier hypothesis" of Frederick Jackson Turner, which suggests that, just as the United States was formed by overcoming the obstacles of the wilderness, so too Lincoln was formed by overcoming the hardships of frontier life. Also implicit is the notion that America is an open society, that the American dream of success can be achieved by anyone willing to work hard by day and study by night. New Salem, then, is a national shrine, a site of America's civil religion, because it was the locality that gave birth to the adult Lincoln. New Salem was the site of transformation, and Lincoln's story is the story of America, the rags-to-riches, log-cabin-to-White-House American myth.

The premier tourist attraction in Illinois, drawing over a half million visitors a year, New Salem Village is located in a 640-acre park that also contains a campground and picnic areas. The site is a public facility owned by the state of Illinois. The village consists of 23 log houses, and in most of the houses there are interpreters in period dress who greet the tourists, discuss aspects of life in the 1830s, tell about the original residents of the house, and answer the tourists' questions. It is third-person interpretation, although in practice it sometimes slips into first person.³ The site features craft demonstrations, including blacksmithing and cooking, carding, spinning and dying of wool, and the making of candles, soap, brooms, shoes, and spoons. New Salem is one of a number of reconstructed prairie villages in the Midwest, and indeed, Baudrillard and Eco are correct: there are many reconstructed historic sites in America (Anderson 1984).

Authenticity, Copies, and Originals

Ada Louise Huxtable (1992:24) writes that "It is hard to think of a more dangerous, anomalous, and shoddy perversion of language and meaning than the term 'authentic reproduction'." She is writing about Colonial Williamsburg, but the term is used at many other historic sites.⁴ New Salem is one of the sites that describes itself in its own brochures as an "authentic reproduction." We ask, What does this mean? Rather than to give a general answer to the question, I turn first to the discourse produced by museum professionals, by the staff and the interpreters at New Salem, to learn how the term *authentic reproduction* is used. As anthropologists know, the meaning of any expression is not a property inherent in the wording or in the dictionary, but rather is dependent on the perceptions and practices of those who use the expression.

By *authentic reproduction*, the museum professionals acknowledge that New Salem is a reproduction, not an original; but they want that reproduction to be authentic in the sense of giving the appearance of being like the 1830s. Most aim for what Taylor and Johnson (1993) call "historical verisimilitude," to make the 1990s New Salem resemble the 1830s New Salem. *Authentic* in this sense means credible and convincing, and this is the objective of most museum professionals, to produce a historic site believable to the public, to achieve mimetic credibility. This is the first meaning of *authenticity*.

Some museum professionals go further, and speak as if the 1990s New Salem not only resembles the original but is a complete and immaculate simulation, one that is historically accurate and true to the 1830s. This is the second meaning of *authenticity*. In the first meaning, based on verisimilitude, a 1990s person would walk into the village and say, "This looks like the 1830s," as it would conform to what he or she expected the village to be. In the second meaning, based on genuineness, an 1830s person would say, "This looks like 1830s New Salem," as the village would appear true in substance, or real. I found that museum professionals use *authenticity* primarily in the first sense, but sometimes in the second. Handler and Saxton (1988:242) write that for all living-history practitioners, authenticity is an exact isomorphism, the second meaning; but I found at New Salem this was so only for some practitioners, some of the time. In order to achieve authenticity, museum professionals rely on historical scholarship, on such sources as

archeological research, deeds, court documents, diaries, letters, newspaper accounts, recorded statements and memories of older settlers, and comparative evidence of other 1830s villages in the Midwest, as these sources are interpreted by scholars and experts.

There are at least two other meanings of *authenticity*. In the third sense, it means original, as opposed to a copy; but in this sense, no reproduction could be authentic, by definition. New Salem Historic Site, however, claims to have some original objects and one original building,⁵ so the aura of authenticity pervades the 1990s site, as if the luster of the few originals had rubbed off on the reproductions. In the fourth sense, *authenticity* means duly authorized, certified, or legally valid; in this sense New Salem is authentic, as it is the authoritative reproduction of New Salem, the one legitimized by the state of Illinois. There is only one officially reconstructed New Salem, the one approved by the state government. This is a fascinating meaning because, in this sense, the issue of authenticity merges into the notion of authority. The more fundamental question to ask here is not if an object or site is authentic, but rather who has the authority to authenticate, which is a matter of power—or, to put it another way, who has the right to tell the story of the site. This question emerged late in the 19th century when the term *authenticity* first appeared in New Salem discourse.

After William Randolph Hearst purchased the site in 1906 and donated the land to the local Chatauqua Association, the movement to reconstruct New Salem appeared poised to achieve its objective, for a reconstructed New Salem had become a real possibility. The question emerged, What did the 1830s New Salem look like? The village had been abandoned in 1839 and, by 1906, the site was simply a barren plot of ground on the top of a hill with no remaining buildings or markers. Local historians, journalists, politicians, entrepreneurs, businesspeople, the descendants of the original settlers, and residents in the surrounding Menard County who had an interest in the reconstruction all voiced their views and their interests. Authenticity committees were formed. This concern with authenticity began even before any museum professionals or scholars became involved in the reconstruction. Questions surfaced, such as: Where should the buildings be located? Should they be built with one story or two? What were the details of construction? Which material objects should be in which houses?⁶

From the late 19th century to the present, experts gave different answers to these questions, reflecting their own understandings and concerns. Even before it was given to Illinois in 1919, the reconstructed New Salem was a contested site. The layers of contestation—scholarly versus popular views of Abraham Lincoln, various descendants of the original settlers defending their family names, New Salem as a public park versus as a historic site, the Lincoln message versus craft activities, and historical versus business interests—have hovered over New Salem as the dark clouds of a thunderstorm engulf the Illinois prairie (Bruner 1993b).

Because of conflicting interests and the struggle over meaning at New Salem, the fourth sense of *authenticity*—who has the authority and the power to authenticate—is always present in the background, at least for museum professionals, insiders, locals, and scholars, and at times of open dissent becomes even more prominent. However, most tourists are not aware of authenticity in this fourth sense, unless a particular dispute over interpretation becomes a public issue. The museum staff rely on the authority of professional and local historians, but frequently the scholars do not agree. Because the state of Illinois owns the site and provides the funding, some (e.g., Wallace 1981) might expect the site to reflect the interests of the dominant classes and the elite; but the administrators at New Salem report that in practice state officials will rarely interfere, and then only when an issue has become openly politicized. The problem is not one of the establishment versus the people, but rather one of multiple competing voices, even within what may appear to be such homogeneous blocks as the scholars, the people, the locals, or the establishment. There are many different views, and the question is, Who has the authority to decide which version of history will be accepted as the correct or

authentic one (Bruner 1993a)? The issue of who constructs history is a familiar one in this age of multiculturalism.

In summary thus far, we have identified four meanings of *authenticity*⁷ based on verisimilitude, genuineness, originality, and authority. Museum professionals at New Salem accept the first and strive for a New Salem that resembles the 1830s and is credible to the visitors; they occasionally lapse into the second and speak of an accurate simulation; they tend to ignore the third as New Salem is an acknowledged reproduction, except for a few originals; and they cannot avoid the fourth, the question of authority. The problem with the term *authenticity*, in the literature and in fieldwork, is that one never knows except by analysis of the context which meaning is salient in any given instance. My aim was to understand the different meanings of *authenticity* as employed in social practice rather than to accept at face value the usually unexamined dichotomy between what is and what is not authentic.

The staff at New Salem use the term *authenticity* consciously and frequently, and they want to work toward the approximation of a believable simulation, if not an accurate one, in part because their reputations and their professional identities depend on it. They are defined by others and define themselves as experts on the 1830s. We may then ask, Have the museum professionals achieved authenticity at New Salem in either the first or second senses? Is New Salem either a credible simulation or true to the 1830s original? How well do the museum professionals achieve their objectives? I begin with some trivial examples and then move to deeper levels, from the explicit to the implicit, as we penetrate the unexamined and the taken-for-granted.⁸

The Site

One day the superintendent saw a gasoline can exposed to public view in the cooper shop, and he requested that in the future it be hidden from the visitors. If the gasoline can was needed, he said, it could be retained, but it should not be visible. On another occasion, one of the interpreters constructed a flower bed outside the Sam Hill house, as after the construction of a new road there was a patch of ground that got muddy in the rain and the tourists tracked mud into the house. When the assistant superintendent saw the flowers she said they looked "ridiculous" and were not "authentic," as there were no flower beds in the 1830s, and she promptly replaced the flowers with less obtrusive wood shavings. Although one could raise questions about the shavings, in these two cases items considered inappropriate, a gasoline can and flowers, were simply replaced or removed from the tourist view. Authenticity in either the first sense of believable or the second as genuine cannot be taken for granted; there is backsliding, and the site needs constant monitoring and editing.

At New Salem there are many conscious compromises to authenticity. Some are necessary for the creation or longevity of the site, while others (most) are designed to make the visitors' experience more enjoyable. These compromises are the little white lies of historical reconstruction. They make the reconstructed New Salem better than the original, at least for contemporary tourists.

Here are examples. Gutters are constructed on the log cabins to channel rainwater. In the past the animals would roam free, but now they are fenced in so that animal waste is not scattered throughout the village and so that visitors are protected. There are fences, made to look as if they were original, that are designed to direct the flow of tourist traffic. Unobtrusive restrooms have been built with drinking fountains on the side, a convenience not found in the 1830s. Along the path, benches have been erected so that the visitors may sit and rest. The road is now paved so that when it rains the tourists do not have to walk in the mud. The schoolhouse in the 1830s was located 1.5 miles away from the village, but it has been reconstructed inside the compound for the convenience of the visitors. The carding mill is supposedly operated entirely by animal power, by oxen moving in a circle, but it has a hidden motor. The Rutledge Tavern and

the first Berry-Lincoln Store have electric heaters placed so that they cannot be seen by the tourists. The caulking between the logs on the sides of the cabins is now made of cement, but in the 1830s cement had not yet been invented. There is a disguised security gate around the entire village to protect against vandalism, as well as a security system and alarm boxes, which the tourists never see. At one time New Salem provided self-guided commentaries from recording devices, which have since been removed; but there are still small wires sticking out from some of the houses. As the houses are old, they periodically need renovation. In one case over 50 percent of a house was renovated, and the state building codes required that a ramp be built for persons who use wheelchairs. A flagstone ramp was constructed as required, but is kept covered up with leaves and dirt so that it will be less conspicuous. At New Salem the lawn is now mowed. I asked the superintendent if they mowed in the 1830s and he replied that they probably did not, adding that if you do not mow your lawn in central Illinois now you are not regarded as a good citizen. Many more such examples of conscious compromises to a believable or precise replication could be presented, but more subtle factors are at work, to which I now turn.

The houses at the 1990s New Salem represent the original 1830s houses, thus they are weathered to look old so that they will be more credible, as the original houses existed 160 years ago. The 1830s houses, however, actually looked much newer, as the village of New Salem was founded in 1829 and abandoned by 1839, a period of only ten years. The 1830s houses were not occupied long enough to look aged, hence the 1990s houses at New Salem appear older than the originals. This example shows that there is a tension between the first and second meanings of *authenticity*. To the degree that the houses look old and weathered, they are more credible to the visitors but are a less accurate reproduction of the 1830s. The houses also look more respectable than those of the original village, as all are substantial log houses and there are no cabins, shacks, or flimsy structures, which may well have existed in the 1830s village. Thus 1990s New Salem presents a more suburban version of history, and this is built into the construction of the houses and the site. Again, it makes the site more believable to 1990s tourists, but less true to the 1830s original.

In the 1830s, over the ten years of occupation, the surrounding trees were cut down to obtain lumber for building and for firewood; but in the reconstructed New Salem, the trees have been allowed to grow and hence the foliage is more dense and lush. In the 1990s the thick stand of trees at New Salem gives the village a much more rural and rustic appearance than in the 1830s.

The interpreters are in period dress, but they have a special problem with eyeglasses. The volunteers and the staff do wear their own eyeglasses, which they need, but some have bought small round "granny" glasses, as these are somehow thought to look more "old-fashioned." The costumes in general present a dilemma, as no one really knows about the dress of the original occupants of New Salem. There are no specific records about attire.

A June 19, 1936, newspaper account from the *Peoria Journal* reads as follows: "Four guides at the village wear jeans jackets and trousers, linsey-woolsey shirts and leather boots as part of their costumes, to portray the role of the original residents." Although jeans, wool shirts, and boots may have been an acceptable version of 1830s dress for the 1930s, this is no longer the case in the 1990s, as most students and many visitors themselves now wear jeans. There has to be some difference in attire to distinguish between the tourists and those who play the parts of the original residents. What was proper 1830s dress in 1930 is not proper in 1990; in terms of the concepts developed in this essay, what was considered authentic in the sense of credible in one historical era has changed in the course of 60 years. Standards change, and what any era considers authentic moves in and out of consciousness. The museum professionals at historic sites realize that they need to be aware of the public's sense of what is believable—a complex problem, because there are many publics; because some persons are more aware,

knowledgeable, or skeptical than others; and because the professional's and the public's view are not independent, for each shapes and is shaped by the other, in dialogic interplay.

When I initiated research at New Salem in 1988, there was little discussion of the interpreter's costumes; but this changed during the summer of 1990. At that time some of the staff made the criticism that too many interpreters dressed the same, that all the costumes seemed to be derived from the television series "Little House on the Prairie," that everyone wore work clothing, and that they all looked like farmers. As the accuracy of the costumes was called into question, an internal dialogue began among the staff about authenticity. As Lionel Trilling (1972) notes, authenticity becomes an issue only after a doubt arises.

The debate about clothing reminded me somewhat of Victor Turner's concept of social drama, and illustrates the constructivist process at work in showing how the culture at New Salem is continually reinvented. At first the style of clothing was simply accepted and was neither examined nor discussed. The critique of clothing practices emerged as an abrupt breach, as a rupture of accepted custom, leading to a period of doubt, wide discussion, and a mounting crisis. Alternative clothing styles were explored, and experts were consulted. New dress patterns were devised and the issue was at least temporarily resolved. The dispute was less about what genuinely existed in the 1830s New Salem, which no one knew, and more about the issue of credibility, about what was currently acceptable 1830s dress. In all probability, the issue will arise again in the future and the cycle will be repeated.

During the discussion about clothing, someone made the point that costumes should reflect class distinctions. It was argued that as the residents of the Sam Hill house were rich, as Hill was a successful merchant, and those of the Burner house were poor, they should have different costumes. Current views of class disparities were projected into the past. Thus the interpreters at the Hill house, for example, were to wear upper-class clothing, and those at the poorer Burner house were to wear working-class dress—except for Mrs. Hinsley.⁹ She was a volunteer interpreter assigned to the Galihier house, known to be a poor 1830s family. In the new vision, Mrs. Hinsley was expected to wear poor work clothing; but she was interested in clothing, had nice outfits of her own design, wanted to dress well, and wore what was considered to be inappropriate "rich" clothing. Mrs. Hinsley was a point of resistance, and no one could change her. She expressed her own individuality in dress.

Authenticity is a struggle. From the point of view of the professional staff, who have the goal of making New Salem a believable or genuine reproduction, one constantly has to be aware of possible inauthenticities. But there are even more fundamental problems, as the inauthentic is built into the fabric of New Salem, into the details of construction, and into the social practices of production of the site.

Each log house is named for its most prominent resident, and when the visitors come, the interpreters tell the story of the occupants of that particular house. For example, there are the Rutledge Tavern, the Onstot house, the Hill house, and so forth. Many of the buildings in the 1830s, however, were occupied by a series of families, and the Onstots lived in three different residences, as did others. The first Berry-Lincoln store was only a store for a few months, but because of the importance of Abraham Lincoln and the widely known story that he was a shopkeeper, the Berry-Lincoln name has been given to the residence. The consequence is to fix history, to solidify and to simplify it.

Although the focus is on a single resident family for each dwelling, the story told about that particular family is one of transitoriness, of when the family arrived, what they did at New Salem, and when they departed. Although these narrative histories are not necessarily inaccurate, they would not appear to be the stories that 1830s residents would have told about themselves, at least not in their finality, for at the end of each story the family leaves the community, providing an absolute ending. Each narrative contains a complete cycle of transition, beginning with when the family came and ending when it

left. Clearly, such stories could not have been told until at least 1839, after the village had been abandoned. This retrospective perspective serves to reinforce the master narrative of New Salem, the transition of Abraham Lincoln from common laborer to educated lawyer and politician, in preparation for his life work of leading the nation in the Civil War and saving the Union. If New Salem is seen as a site of transformation for its hero Abraham Lincoln, then the individual stories of each family replicate the larger narrative structure.

Not only is each house given the name of only one former resident, but in each house there is only a single interpreter, a concession to a limited state budget. The visitors move from house to house, serially, and in each house the interpreter provides information about one or another aspect of life in the 1830s. There are no groups talking and visiting together, no scenes of surrounding farmers coming with their families to town to sell grain, to repair tools, to see a doctor, to buy supplies, or to pick up their mail at the post office. New Salem is thus presented as a village of autonomous homes and isolated individuals, without any sense of group or community activity, with the consequence that the 1990s representation provides a distorted view of 1830s life. There are special events at New Salem, like craft or quilt shows, but even then the visitors move serially through the display booths, visiting them in sequence. The result is that 1830s life is devoid of its group character and is presented much more like 1990s suburban life in America, where neighbors live in their individual homes and are socially isolated from one another.

Taylor and Johnson (1993) note that New Salem does not have any interpreters representing the frontier toughs, "Clary's Grove boys," and the carousing, gambling, cockfighting, hard drinkers who were part of 1830s pioneer life in New Salem. The roughnecks have been left out of history. This concession to middle-class sensibilities is similar to Colonial Williamsburg ignoring blacks, the "other half" of Williamsburg life (Gable et al. 1992), at least until recently. There is, however, no current movement to represent the frontier roughnecks in New Salem.

New Salem is an outdoor museum, and like all museums, the way it is apprehended by the visitors is primarily visual. The tourists do hear about the 1830s from the interpreters inside the homes, generally in the form of oral narratives, and there is conversation, but as the tourists walk about the village their mode of perception is mainly visual. Basically, they look. They almost never hear two or more interpreters talking to each other. However, the 1830s may well have been more of an oral than a visual culture, characterized by the exchange of information, by talking, gossiping, and telling. As this dimension is less dominant in the 1990s New Salem, the way the village was experienced and the sensory mode through which it was perceived in the two eras may be fundamentally different.

As we can see, it is impossible to make a historic reproduction accurate in every regard, especially with limited knowledge and resources; the best one can hope for is a representation that the tourists are willing to accept. Even if the log houses of the 1990s prairie village were an exact physical replica of the original 1830s, in every detail, the question could then be raised: How does one make authentic the sensory mode of experiencing and indeed the very meaning of the site?

There are truly momentous differences between the 1830s and the 1990s. One difference, almost too obvious to mention, is that most persons in the 1990s New Salem are tourists, while in the 1830s there were no tourists, although there were visitors, travelers, and traders. Also, the 1990s New Salem is an idealized community that leaves out the conflict, tension, and dirt of the 1830s. New Salem in the 1990s is presented as an idyllic, peaceful, harmonious village.

The craft activities in New Salem in the 1830s were considered to be the most modern and advanced technology of the time, designed for efficiency and survival, but in the 1990s the same handicrafts represent nostalgia for an earlier period when material culture was made by hand and was locally produced. The meaning of *craft* was completely

different in the two historical eras. In the 1830s New Salem was a commercial trading center, and when Lincoln migrated there he probably thought he was moving to an urban center; but in the 1990s New Salem, for many, is rural, isolated, self-contained, rustic, and folk-like (cf. Whisnant 1983), in opposition to the commercialism, materialism, and fragmentation of 20th-century America.

The 1990s New Salem features Abraham Lincoln—indeed, the site is called Lincoln's New Salem, or as an official in the state tourist bureau told me, "What we sell in Illinois is Lincoln"—but Abraham Lincoln was not that prominent in the 1830s village. Lincoln left New Salem in 1837, and by 1839 the village was abandoned when the county seat was moved to another location. Thereafter, from 1839 to 1860, New Salem was unmarked and effectively out of history. Then, in 1860, when Lincoln became the presidential nominee of the Republican party, campaign biographers and politicians constructed the political image of Abraham Lincoln as Honest Abe, the rail-splitter, the common man of the prairies, the man of humble origin who stood in opposition to the Eastern establishment. In fact, in 1860 Lincoln was a corporate lawyer in Springfield, a man of wealth and power, who had married into a socially prominent family. After Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, he became the martyred leader, the Christ figure who gave his life so the nation might live, who was sacrificed for the Union. Thus arose the mythic Lincoln, the great American folk hero, celebrated in novels, songs, poems, plays, biographies, and textbooks, known by every schoolchild in America.

In 1897 local residents formed a Chautauqua Association to reconstruct New Salem, 60 years after Lincoln had left the village. The interest in restoration arose after most of the original settlers who had known Lincoln had passed away. Possibly the movement to restore the site was an effort to preserve the memory of a way of life fast disappearing, as the old pioneers who had first settled the land were dying off. The oral traditions about Abraham Lincoln were recorded in a number of books (Herndon and Weik 1889; Onstot 1902; and Reep 1927) long after Lincoln had lived in New Salem. The Old Salem Lincoln League gathered the elders together to tell their stories in 1918, after the village of New Salem had already been abandoned for 79 years. The present-day New Salem was reconstructed during the 1930s, a full century after the old village had been occupied. The point is that the present-day restoration of the 1830s New Salem attempts to reconstruct the historical and the mythic Lincoln, but this history and myth did not yet exist in the 1830s, for it emerged only after 1865, a disjuncture illustrative of the many built-in paradoxes, ambiguities, and ironies at this historic site.

Two Stores

The challenge in this anthropological analysis is to transcend the opposition between the authentic and the inauthentic. In considering the 1830s and the 1990s, there is no need to prioritize, to define one as better than, more real than, more basic than, or more authentic than the other, nor does such a qualitative comparison typically occur to visitors at historic sites. There is the 1830s New Salem and there is the 1990s New Salem. The 1830s village was historically prior, it came first, whereas the 1990s New Salem came later and conforms to 1990s sensibilities, allowing visitors to attribute their own meanings to the site. The point may seem obvious, but the implications will be developed by examining two New Salem stores.

The first Berry-Lincoln store, where Lincoln worked in the 1830s as a storekeeper, has been reconstructed as a store selling souvenirs to the visitors, unlike other reconstructed stores in New Salem such as the second Berry-Lincoln, the Hill-McNeil, and Offutt's, which do not have items for sale. The first Berry-Lincoln store is operated by the New Salem Lincoln League for profit, with volunteer salespersons in period dress. It is quite successful and the proceeds are used to support the activities of the site. When the store first began, the New Salem Lincoln League formed an authenticity committee to check on each item sold; but these early efforts met with limited success. They

eventually hired a professional manager for the store who had an eye on the bottom line. The new manager selected inventory that sold, and the authenticity committee no longer met.

It will be instructive to examine the inventory of the Berry-Lincoln store. It has become a craft shop, with many handmade items, including pottery, baskets, quilts, rugs, stuffed dolls, brooms, large wooden ladles, copper pots, products of the carding shop such as small barrels and tubs, pattern books of early American clothing, coonskin caps, and candles. I was told that many tourists come asking for objects made in the craft shops of New Salem, but my observation was that they did a brisk business in all items, and that the shop was frequently crowded with tourists. When I asked the volunteer if their inventory was representative of the items sold in the 1830s store, the answer was that they want everything they sell to be "authentic to the era," which means that it could have been made in the 1830s. This is authenticity in the sense of credibility. When I inquired if tourists ask for authentic items, the reply was that the question rarely comes up.

The setting is a log cabin; the storekeepers are dressed in 1830s clothing; the objects sold look "old fashioned," "country," or "folk"; and my interviews suggest that the tourists accept it as such. To the degree that the museum professionals are successful in adhering to the goal of creating a credible reproduction based on verisimilitude—that is, a historic site believable to the visitors—the probability will be greater that the tourists will be satisfied with what they find at the site. It is important to note that the discussion has turned from the museum professionals to the tourists. It would be a mistake to assume that the distinctions made in this essay about the concept of authenticity used by museum professionals would necessarily be the same distinctions made by the tourists. Museum professionals are the producers, whereas tourists are the consumers, and they do not approach the site in the same way. Tourists know, of course, that the objects they purchase are not from the 1830s and that many are not even reproductions of 1830s objects, and they may realize that no store in the 1830s ever had an inventory like the present first Berry-Lincoln store. They are buying souvenirs, mementos of their trip to New Salem, gifts for those back home, and not necessarily "authentic" objects or even objects that are "authentic reproductions."

We have no direct knowledge of the inventory of the first Berry-Lincoln store in the 1830s at New Salem, as no records have been found; but we do know that other stores in the prairies at that time period stocked items such as varnish, shellac, paint ingredients, dyes, spectacles, spices, knives, axes, tools, pens and ink, hardware, thread, buttons, needles, jewelry, liquor, china, books, textiles, hats, window glass, tin pans, nails, gunpowder, door locks and hinges, and foodstuffs such as coffee, tea, sugar, flour, rice, cheese, and molasses (Atherton 1939; Kwedar et al. 1980). There were fashionable goods from Eastern wholesalers, manufactured items, and products from Europe. Tourists in the 1990s are not interested in these 1830s items, or if they are, the items are better purchased elsewhere than in the New Salem craft shop.

Given the inventories of the 1830s and the 1990s stores, we can see clearly that each of the first Berry-Lincoln stores stocked items that met the needs of their respective clientele. The older store sold items necessary for the survival of the 1830s prairie pioneers, while the contemporary store with its handmade crafts sells souvenirs to the 1990s tourists. Each store is meaningful in its era, and I do not see what we gain by privileging one at the expense of the other. It is the postmodernists and the social theorists who make judgmental evaluations, as I will show in the next section.

Discussion

My argument about authenticity and reproductions is different than the postmodern one presented by Baudrillard and Eco and is also different than the position taken by such theorists as MacCannell and Handler in their writings about tourism, authenticity,

and historic sites.¹⁰ I begin by framing my argument in terms of the postmodernist vision, then turn to MacCannell and Handler, then develop some of the implications of my constructivist perspective.

For Baudrillard and Eco, the simulacrum becomes the true, the copy becomes the original or even better than the original. In postmodern hyperreality, all we have is pure simulacra, for origins are lost, or are not recoverable, or never existed, or there was no original reality. As Baudrillard (1983:48) says, "it is always a false problem to want to restore the truth beneath the simulacrum." This is the postmodern condition, one specific to our electronic era, argues Baudrillard. I argue that this is the human condition, for all cultures continually invent and reinvent themselves. In the 1830s during the development of New Salem, there was a prior image, the cultural knowledge of how other prairie villages in central Illinois were built in the 1820s. We could say that the 1830s village was a copy based on a model of 1820s villages, adapted to the conditions of the 1830s, modified in accordance with the particular situation of the New Salem locality, and subject to whatever creative modifications were devised by the New Salem residents. We all enter society in the middle, and culture is always in process (Turner and Bruner 1986).

This perspective, which I have been advocating for the past few decades (e.g., Bruner 1973, 1984, 1993a), has sometimes been known as the constructivist position. Recently it has been called the "invention of culture" tradition, and has produced important studies (e.g., Babcock 1990; Borofsky 1987; Handler and Linnekin 1984; Hanson 1989; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Hymes 1975; Wagner 1975). But the roots of the perspective are really very old, going back to Wilhelm Dilthey, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and the American pragmatists; to the writings in the 1920s of the great Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin; to Roland Barthes and the poststructuralists; and to performance theory (cf. Bauman 1992).

The constructivist view that culture is emergent, always alive and in process is widely accepted today (Lavie et al. 1993). This is not the place to present an intellectual history of the perspective or to discuss its variations, but what all proponents have in common is the view that the meaning of the text is not inherent in the text but emerges from how people read or experience the text. All share the view that socialization is at best an imperfect mechanism for cultural transmission, and that each new performance or expression of cultural heritage is a copy in that it always looks back to a prior performance, but each is also an original in that it adapts to new circumstances and conditions. As Handler and Linnekin (1984:288) argue, "All genuine traditions are spurious . . . all spurious traditions are genuine"; or as Geertz (1986:380) says, "It is the copying that originates." We could say that the 1990s New Salem is an original because each reproduction in the process of emerging constructs its own original—or better yet, as I advocate in this essay, we could just abandon the distinction.

In our era both the 1830s New Salem and the 1990s New Salem are continually being constructed in an endless process of production and reproduction. All we have of the 1830s now are a few artifacts, archeological remains, old records, stories, and mental models of the old prairie village, models that may exist vividly in the imagination of the public and the historians, but that are ever-changing. We are continually reconstructing the 1830s New Salem, rewriting history to fit the era, just as we rewrite Abraham Lincoln (e.g., Basler 1935). The 20th-century New Salem has changed many times and has been totally rebuilt at least twice. An earlier effort to restore the village in 1918 was razed to the ground in 1932, and a second restoration occurred in stages during the 1930s. Periodically, the log houses receive additions and modifications, as do the interiors. In the 1990s, a new visitor and orientation center was opened, the location of the store was moved, and a restaurant at the entrance to the park was built.

It is not just that the 1990s and the 1830s New Salem are always in process of construction, but that the 1990s New Salem influences our conception of the 1830s. In other words, what is called the copy changes our view of the original, a problem that

haunts Taussig's (1993) book on *Mimesis and Alterity*. Academic historians would agree that the 1990s New Salem, by its very presence, overemphasizes the importance of New Salem on the early Abraham Lincoln, to the neglect of the formative influences of the earlier Indiana years and the time spent at Vandalia. Lincoln was 22 years old when he arrived at New Salem, already an adult, and his truly formative adolescent years were spent elsewhere. The historian Mark E. Neeley (1982:222) suggests that New Salem as a tourist attraction may have served to inflate the importance of the New Salem years in Lincoln biographies. Thus a 20th-century touristic representation may have distorted the discourse of professional historians, and hence our understanding of the 1830s.

In their work on authenticity, hyperreality, and the simulacrum, Baudrillard, Eco, MacCannell, and Handler all are making a critique of the culture of the West and of America. MacCannell (1976) makes the claim that tourists are so dissatisfied with their own culture that they seek authentic experiences elsewhere. MacCannell's work was rooted in the 1960s and repeated the old 19th-century critique of Western civilization, of alienated man in search of self.

Handler and Saxton (1988) have a similar position. They write, "For living-history practitioners, as for many of us, everyday experience is 'unreal' or inauthentic, hence alienating. Practitioners seek to regain an authentic world, and to realize themselves in the process, through simulation of historical worlds" (1988:243). For MacCannell, tourists seek authenticity in another place, in a tourist site; for Handler and Saxton, it is in another time period, in a historic site. Authenticity for Handler (1986) has to do with our "true self," and for him and Saxton (1988:243), "an authentic experience . . . is one in which individuals feel themselves to be in touch both with a 'real' world and with their 'real' selves," which assumes that our everyday worlds are not experienced as real or authentic. In the work of MacCannell and Handler and Saxton, the quest for authenticity is doomed, or as they point out, it is a failed quest, because the very search destroys the authenticity of the object, which before the quest was presumed to be pristine and untouched. These authors thus assume an original pure state, an authentic culture in the third sense, like the ethnographic present, before contact. It is as if history begins with tourism, which then pollutes the world.¹¹

MacCannell and Handler say that tourists are looking for authenticity, but it may be these contemporary intellectuals who are the ones looking for authenticity, and who have projected onto the tourists their own view of themselves. The museum professionals who say that a historic site is an authentic reproduction use *authenticity* in the first and second senses, not the third. The question is, who are the ones seeking authenticity? Trilling's (1972) insight again is that authenticity emerges to consciousness when a doubt arises. Those in the early 20th century in central Illinois who found themselves in the predicament of having to reconstruct an 1830s New Salem without adequate knowledge became concerned with authenticity. In our era, anthropologists, museum curators, historians, serious collectors, and art dealers as well as some tourists acknowledge that they are seeking authenticity. I agree with Appadurai (1986:44-45) that authenticity today is becoming a matter of the politics of connoisseurship, of the political economy of taste, and of status discrimination; beyond that, I would claim, it is a matter of power, of who has the right to authenticate.

The concept of authority serves as a corrective to misuses of the term *authenticity*, because in raising the issue of who authenticates, the nature of the discussion is changed. No longer is authenticity a property inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history. Culture is seen as contested, emergent, and constructed, and agency and desire become part of the discourse. When actors use the term *authenticity*, ethnographers may then ask what segment of society has raised a doubt, what is no longer taken for granted, what are the societal struggles, and what are the cultural issues at work. These are ethnographic questions, empirical questions, requiring investigation and research. Grand theorizing gives way to ethnography.

There are two fundamental problems with the essentialist vocabulary of originals and copies, of the authentic and the inauthentic. One is that, despite claims to the contrary, there frequently is an implicit original, an authenticity in the third sense. For the postmodernists the original is Europe and America is a satellite. Baudrillard (1988) says that he knew all about America “when I was still in Paris” (1988:5), claims that America “was born of a rift with the Old World” (1988:10), asserts that “the truth of America can only be seen by a European” (1988:28), and contends that America is “the only remaining primitive society” (1988:7). If for the postmodernists the original is civilized Europe, then for MacCannell and Handler the original is before alienation, the pure state, located elsewhere, around the bend, beneath or behind the touristic or the historic site.

The second problem with essentialist vocabulary is that there is a built-in judgmental bias that regards one side of the dichotomy as better so that the other side becomes denigrated. It usually implies that originals are better than copies or, as the postmodernists Baudrillard and Eco say, the exact opposite, which is still the inverse of the same binary logic. The consequence of the project of Baudrillard, Eco, and MacCannell (and Boorstin 1961) is to diminish historical sites like New Salem because they are seen as inauthentic, as pseudo, as surface, as plastic, as simulacra, as hyperreality, even as fakes. It also implies that copies are based on originals, but from a constructivist perspective, the process may not be that simple. Sometimes an object is constructed in the contemporary era and then an older form is somehow “discovered” as a hypothetical original to add historic depth and legitimacy. To label one form a copy highlights the features that are similar to the supposed original, and may not adequately take account of the differences or of the variations in the societal context within which the originals and the copies were produced. The vocabulary of origins and reproductions and of the authenticity and the inauthentic may not adequately acknowledge that both are constructions of the present.

Conclusion

Let us turn to my speculations about the tourists. If the tourists are not buying into scripts of postmodern hyperreality or authenticity, then what are they buying at New Salem? In their writings, Baudrillard and Eco make grand generalizations about America, without nuances. They use homogenizing monolithic language when they write about Americans, and they do not differentiate among the many kinds of tourists of historic sites. They fail to recognize the constructed nature of the meanings of historic sites.

In the view argued here, the meanings of New Salem Historic Site for tourists are constructed in the performance of the site, as visitors move through the village and as they interact with the interpreters. Experiencing the site gives rise to meanings that might not have been predicted before the visit, so that the site in this sense is generative. It is not that all meaning is individual and idiosyncratic—for of course there are cultural patterns, as I will demonstrate—but meanings are generated in a social context. An ethnographic perspective is needed to examine the social organizational settings within which New Salem is experienced. Baudrillard and Eco reflect none of this complexity.

For example, many visitors to theme parks come as family groups, not as isolated individuals, so that the family becomes the basic social unit for processing the touristic experience, and as such the visit frequently assumes an educational focus (Willis 1993). At New Salem, especially when school is in session, busloads of schoolchildren arrive with their teachers on class outings to the site. One day there were forty different busloads of schoolchildren at New Salem, and the educational function was quite explicit. Another time a group of immigrants from Chicago, taking their citizenship training class, spent a hurried two hours rushing through New Salem. In these cases, parents or teachers or immigration officials were explaining the meaning of New Salem, empha-

sizing the role of Abraham Lincoln in American history. The recipients of the knowledge had come to New Salem as children, students, or learners.

I have shared the New Salem experience with a troop of 7- and 8-year-old girl scouts, on an all-day outing with their scout leader, supported by a few parent volunteers, and the main attraction appeared to be cooking beef stew for lunch on a wood-burning fireplace. It seemed to take hours for the stew to cook, everyone was hungry, and the conversation centered on the life of the early pioneers who settled in central Illinois, and particularly on the difficulty of that life. This was a recurrent theme among many of the visitors.

One farmer from Illinois entered a log house where one of the interpreters was spinning wool. The farmer stated that when he was a child there was a spinning wheel in his home very similar to the one at New Salem, and he recalled images of his grandmother sitting at the spinning wheel telling stories about her early life on a family farm in the prairies. That experience of New Salem was very evocative, but many tourists make associations between what they see at the site and their personal lives. The meaning of New Salem is emergent in the social context of the visitor's experience of the site.

A judge told me how he loved to come to New Salem very early on snowy winter mornings so that he could walk, in solitude, on the same hallowed ground that Abraham Lincoln had walked. The judge had practiced law in the same district as had Lincoln. He had a bronze bust of Lincoln in his office, he had played the part of Lincoln in local theatrical productions, he was tall and thin, he physically resembled Lincoln, and clearly he had made a personally meaningful identification.

Visitors to New Salem include Lincoln buffs, antique collectors, retired people making their way through the theme parks of America, sophisticated urbanites from Chicago on a visit to the "rural" hinterlands, and university professors entertaining foreign visitors. It is indeed a varied audience. Tourists are not monolithic, and neither is the meaning of the site. There are many New Salems (Bodnar 1992). Tourists construct a past that is meaningful to them and that relates to their lives and experiences, and this is the way that meanings are constructed at historic sites.

What encourages the local production of meaning is the format of dialogic interaction between the interpreter and small groups of tourists who move from house to house. As the interpreter tells about Lincoln or about the 1830s village or about the history of the original residents, the tourists have an opportunity to ask questions and to interact with the interpreter. Although the tourists have received the main message of the museum professionals, of New Salem as the site of Lincoln's transformation presented to them in the orientation video and the brochures, their relationship to the interpreters has a more personal and immediate quality. The interpreters, too, have received the official messages of the site, primarily in training sessions and in manuals, but they frequently depart from the official scripts and move off in their own directions.¹² The tourists, as we have seen, bring their own concerns and interests to the interaction. The result is a very open format, more like a discussion than a lecture, one that allows for improvisation and that facilitates the constructivist process.

I found many instances of a playful quality to the interaction, whereas much of the literature emphasizes the seriousness of the tourist quest and experience.¹³ The interaction between interpretive guides and visitors at historic sites may be oriented to enjoyment as much as to discovery of historic fact. For example, one time on the reconstructed Mayflower in Plymouth, which does first-person interpretation, I saw a woman guide in period dress. She told me that it was a long and arduous journey across the ocean, that she had lost her husband on the voyage, and that she felt so lonely in this vast new country. Then she looked me straight in the eye and winked, and I could not tell if it was a 1620s wink or a 1990s wink. On numerous occasions, interpreters at New Salem will engage in light banter and joking behavior with the visitors. A woman storekeeper in period dress will say to the assembled tourists, "What have you come to

purchase today?" Such an inquiry, an example of slippage from third to first person, will lead to humorous conversation about the goods sold in the store or the 1830s prices, noting how low they were compared to today's prices. In these settings, many tourists play with time frames and experiment with alternative realities; it is a good way to learn about the past. Visits to historic sites have a strong entertainment and playful quality.

In the course of my fieldwork, I often remained in one location and noted how the topic of conversation changed with the arrival of each new group of tourists. Also, I followed some groups from house to house, and noted how the discourse and even the roles changed as persons moved through the village. The roles of tourist and interpreter are not fixed. A mother who had been a tourist began to explain New Salem to her children, and at that point she was in a sense becoming an interpreter, switching roles. Subjectivities and motives change, even within one individual, even during the course of a single visit.

Although individuals construct their own meanings, I found there were clearly recurring patterns and generalizations that emerged. In reporting on what I learned about the meaning of New Salem to the tourists, I acknowledge that my findings are hypotheses and that they are my own constructions of meaning, open to further study and testing. In addition to learning about the past and enjoying the historic site, I found the following three major themes.

First, some tourists to New Salem are consuming nostalgia, the hand-crafted and the locally produced, in opposition to machine age materialism. Many tourists to New Salem view the village with a sense of nostalgia for a vanished past, for an imagined time when life was more natural, purer, and simpler—in effect a Midwest equivalent of the Garden of Eden. Many see in New Salem the image of early pioneer life in the prairies, a return to the first settlers in central Illinois. For these tourists, New Salem is an Illinois origin myth, a prairie pastoral.

Second, as visitors walk through the village they are also buying the idea of progress, of how far we have advanced, for the one question that the interpreters repeatedly ask is, Would you like to live back in the 1830s, when life was so hard? The answer is invariably no. The theme of progress is prominent in New Salem discourse. The emphasis is on the contrast between the hardships of the 1830s and the conveniences of the 1990s. The two themes mentioned thus far are not in conflict, because where the first focuses on the simplicity of life in the past, the second focuses on the severity of that life. In the first, technology is seen as evil; in the second, as progress. Many visitors hold both views simultaneously. In their imagination, they yearn for a simpler life. But they are not alienated beings; they want modern 1990s conveniences, and they would not be willing to give up their 1990s lives in exchange for the 1830s.

Finally, many tourists are also buying a commemoration of traditional America, of honest values, good neighbors, hard work, virtue and generosity, the success ideology, and the sense of community in small-town America. The tourists are seeking in New Salem a discourse that enables them to better reflect on their lives in the 1990s. New Salem and similar sites enact an ideology, recreate an origin myth, keep history alive, attach tourists to a mythical collective consciousness, and commodify the past. The particular pasts that tourists create/imagine at historic sites may never have existed. But historic sites like New Salem do provide visitors with the raw material (experiences) to construct a sense of identity, meaning, attachment, and stability. In the America of Baudrillard and Eco, copies refer only to themselves, no origin myths pertain, and no collective reality is invoked. This, however, is an America of their own imaginations and not an America of everyday practices.

Following Zipes (1979), New Salem can be read in two different ways. There is the pessimistic view (Haraway 1984; Wallace 1981), which sees museums and historic sites as exploitative, as strengthening the ruling classes, as deceit, as false consciousness, as manipulation of the imagination of already alienated beings. Or there is the optimistic view, which focuses on the utopian potential for transformation, offers hope for a better

life, says people can take charge of their lives and change themselves and their culture. The story of Abraham Lincoln is, as Zipes writes (1979:119), the "folk tale motif of the swineherd who becomes a prince," but there is revolutionary potential in this fantasy, for it can be heroic and can lead to greater—not less—contact with social life. In this respect, fantasy, art, and historic sites have a similar function.

In postmodern writings, contemporary American tourist attractions tend to be described in ways that replicate elements of the theory of postmodernism, emphasizing the inauthentic constructed nature of the sites, their appeal to the masses, their imitation of the past, and their efforts to present a perfected version of themselves. This is a narrow and distorted view that fails to account for the popularity and frequency of such sites on the American landscape, that begs the question of the meaning of the sites to the participants, and that by its denigration of popular American culture and mass tourist sites imposes an elitist politics blind to its own assumptions.

Notes

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1. Relevant literature on authenticity includes Trilling 1972, MacCannell 1976, Handler 1986, Appadurai 1986, Cohen 1988, Morris 1988, Handler and Saxton 1988, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Bruner 1989, and Bruner 1993a.

2. Following the suggestion of the students in my seminar on tourism that we take a field trip to explore some of the theories we were reading about, the class went to New Salem in April 1988. It was my first visit. I became fascinated with the site, returned later that season, and worked on New Salem full time during the summers of 1989 and 1990, with financial support for fieldwork from the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend and the University of Illinois Research Board. Part of the time was spent in the library doing historical research on New Salem and the early Abraham Lincoln; the remaining time was devoted to participation, observation, and interviewing at New Salem.

3. In third person, the interpreter talks about the 1830s; in first person, the interpreter adopts an 1830s persona and speaks from that time perspective.

4. Relevant literature on reconstructed villages, historic sites, theme parks, and museums includes Wallace 1981, Anderson 1984, Schechner 1985, Lowenthal 1985, Dorst 1989, Karp and Lavine 1991, Gable et al. 1992, and Willis 1993.

5. The Onstot house, which was moved from New Salem to Petersburg and then, with the reconstruction, back to New Salem, is an original. The interpretive guides at New Salem point this out to the visitors.

6. This paragraph relies on Taylor and Johnson (1993), historians at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the branch of state government in charge of the interpretive program at New Salem.

7. I make no claim that there are only four meanings of *authenticity*, only that these four emerged in my fieldwork. There are other shades of meaning (see the *Oxford English Dictionary*). If one says, for example, that an object is a counterfeit or a forgery, it implies that the object is not authentic but was falsely or mistakenly presented as an original. To be authentic in this sense would mean that the object actually is what it professes to be.

8. After presenting my findings to the superintendent at New Salem, he said that he had never thought about some of the issues raised in my study, but that the issues now made sense to him, which is what I mean by penetrating the taken-for-granted.

9. This is a pseudonym.

10. My criticism in this essay is of the assumptions in Handler (1986) and Handler and Saxton (1988), not of Handler and Linnekin (1984) and not of the Colonial Williamsburg research conducted with Eric Gable. I criticize MacCannell 1976, not MacCannell 1992.

11. Criticisms of this position in the tourism literature include Van den Abbeele 1980, Goldberg 1983, Cohen 1988, Morris 1988, and Bruner 1989 and 1991.
12. Gable and Handler (1993) have made a similar observation at Colonial Williamsburg.
13. Exceptions are Schechner 1985 and Cohen 1988.

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