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## *Refugees: a world made of fragments*

Human populations construct their cultures in interaction with one another, and not in isolation.

Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*

The Frenchmen who traveled into the *pays d'en haut*, as they called the lands beyond Huronia, thought they were discovering new worlds. They were, however, doing something more interesting. They were becoming cocreators of a world in the making. The world that had existed before they arrived was no more. It had been shattered. Only fragments remained. Like a knife scoring a pane of glass, warfare apparently far more brutal than any known previously among these peoples had etched the first fine dangerous lines across the region in the 1640s. Broad cracks had appeared, as epidemics of diseases unknown before in these lands carried off tens of thousands of people. And then, between 1649 and the mid-1660s, Iroquois attacks had fallen like hammer blows across the length and breadth of the lands bordering the Great Lakes and descended down into the Ohio Valley.

The Iroquois desired beaver and the hunting lands that yielded them, and they wanted captives to replace their dead or to atone at the torture stake for their loss. The coupling of the demands of the fur trade with Iroquois cultural imperatives for prisoners and victims created an engine of destruction that broke up the region's peoples. Never again in North America would Indians fight each other on this scale or with this ferocity. Amid the slaughter people fled west. The largely Algonquian-speaking world west of Iroquoia broke up, and the Iroquois pushed the fragments west.<sup>1</sup>

Shattered peoples usually vanish from history, and many of the Iroquoian peoples – the Eries, the Neutrals – who fell before the epidemics and the

<sup>1</sup> For recent accounts of the Iroquois wars, see Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 84–113; Daniel Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (1983): 528–59; and Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 2 vols. (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1972), 2:767–97, 820–21.

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warfare, disappeared as organized groups. But most Algonquians did not disappear. Instead, together with Frenchmen, they pieced together a new world from shattered pieces. They used what amounted to an imported imperial glue to reconstruct a village world. This village world sustained, and was in turn sustained by, the French empire.

The story of the creation of this world forms the beginning of this book, and it must begin with the often horrific fragments left by the shattering of the old. To write a coherent story of the Iroquois hammer striking Algonquian glass, historians have traced the blows of the hammer. When they have featured the victims of the Iroquois, they have written about other Iroquoians – the Hurons, Petuns, Neutrals, and Eries – because these groups either had Jesuit missionaries among them or lived beside neighbors that did. They have not concentrated on the shattering Algonquian world, because it is hard to tell a story of fragmentation. And in any case, the very events grew vague as the Iroquois blows fell farther and farther west among peoples the French barely knew. When the French did come to know these peoples, the blows were still falling and the story seemed only chaos.

The result is a historical landscape that consists largely of dim shadows. There are tribal traditions collected a century and a half or more after the fact. There are the memories of French traders – their recollections in old age of a youth among strangers. There are contemporary accounts, vivid renderings of events in which details are unfamiliar and without apparent meaning. Thus a fractured society has been preserved in fractured memory. To pretend this world exists otherwise is to deceive. And in any case, this fragmentary, distorted world is, for the historian, good enough. For the history in question during the horrible years of the mid and late seventeenth century is a history of perceptions, of attempts to make sense, of attempts to create coherence from shattered parts. For the French and the refugees alike, older patterns and older routines were in collapse. For all concerned this was a world where dreams and nightmares happened. It was a desperate world where accidental congruences and temporary interests became the stuff from which to forge meaning and structure. The fragments are the history. It is, therefore, a world best initially perceived in fragments, as both Algonquians and Frenchmen perceived it and tried to make sense of its danger, strangeness, and horror.

The horror that the Iroquois would bring to the *pays d'en haut* was first prefigured by another confederation of Iroquoian-speaking peoples. The Neutrals, soon themselves to become Iroquois victims, obtained iron weapons from Europeans when their enemies to the west still relied on stone. In the mid-1640s a large Neutral war party “to the number of 2,000” attacked a stockaded Algonquian village in Michigan. These Algonquians were a

people the Neutrals called the Nation of Fire. Most likely, they were Fox or Mascoutens. After a siege of ten days, the Neutrals captured the fort. They killed many on the spot, but they retained eight hundred captives – men, women, and children. Of these, they burned seventy warriors. The old men had a crueler fate. The Neutrals put out their eyes and girdled their mouths, leaving them to starve in a land they could no longer see.<sup>2</sup>

As Iroquois attacks depopulated the lands around Lake Ontario, refugees fled west and the Iroquois followed. Refugee Ottawas and remnants of the Hurons and Petuns fled in stages as pressure from the Iroquois increased. In 1653 eight hundred Iroquois cornered their prey at Green Bay, one of the stops on this staggered flight west. Many of the besiegers were, it turned out, “the offspring of the people whom they had come to attack.” Far from their original home, Hurons adopted by the Iroquois attacked refugee Hurons. For a long time, the Iroquois besieged the fort and villages. But in this siege it was the attackers rather than the besieged who grew hungry, and so eventually the two sides negotiated a truce. In exchange for food and a safe withdrawal, the Iroquois agreed to surrender the Hurons who were among them.

Some of these Hurons, however, had developed ties to their captors. On the eve of the departure of the Iroquois, the Ottawas at Green Bay gave each Iroquois warrior a loaf of poisoned corn bread. A Huron woman, who had married an Iroquois man but had fled west with the refugees, knew the secret. She told her son, who, apparently, had come with the Iroquois, not to eat the bread. The son informed the Iroquois of the plot, and they escaped.

The salvation of the Iroquois proved temporary. They divided into two parties. The smaller party went north, where warriors from the bands of the people who were to become the Chippewas and the Mississaugas attacked and defeated them. Few escaped. The main force pushed south into the prairie country. They reached a small Illinois village. The men fled, and the Iroquois killed the women and children. But other Illinois were nearby, and the warriors surprised and overwhelmed the Iroquois. In this warfare their deaths only became the seeds for new attacks.<sup>3</sup>

The Iroquois onslaught did not halt other wars in the *pays d'en haut*, and sometime during the Iroquois wars, four or five hundred Miami warriors marched against their southern enemies. In their absence, a band of Senecas destroyed their village. Only one old woman, left for dead, survived. She told

<sup>2</sup> JR 27:25–27.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolas Perrot, *Memoir on the Manners, Customs, and Religion of the Savages of North America*, in Emma Helen Blair (ed.), *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1911), 1:151–56.



Although such portraits emphasized the exoticism of Indians, the trade blanket, the trade beads, and the breech cloth all testify to the mixing of European and Indian worlds. (Mackinac State Historic Parks)

the returning Miamis that the Senecas had marched the women and children east.

Every night as the Senecas traveled home, they killed and ate a Miami child. And every morning, they took a small child, thrust a stick through its head and sat it up on the path with its face toward the Miami town they had

left. Behind the Senecas came the pursuing Miamis, and at every Seneca campsite, brokenhearted parents recognized their child.

When the Senecas were within a day's march of their own village, they sent their people a message telling them to prepare a great kettle and spoon to enjoy the good broth they were bringing them. It was at this last campsite that the pursuing Miami warriors at last caught the Senecas. But the Senecas had guns and the Miamis did not, and so the Miamis decided to set an ambush rather than attack the camp directly.

Two Miami spies watched the Seneca camp. And that night, as usual, for the evening meal one of the Senecas decapitated a child and prepared its body for the kettle. Hearing a noise outside the camp, the cook tossed the head into the bushes and told the wolf he imagined lurking there that he was giving it the head of a Miami for its supper. The Miami spies carried the head back to their companions who sorrowfully recognized it.

When the heavily laden Senecas reached the Miami ambuscade, they were overwhelmed. The Miamis killed all but six. Two escaped. Four were taken prisoners. The Miamis killed two of their captives and beheaded them. They ran a string through the ears of the heads and hung the heads around the necks of the remaining two prisoners whose hands, noses, and lips they cut off. They then sent them home to tell of the vengeance of the Miamis. At the Seneca village all was horror and confusion. The Miamis returned home with those of their relatives whom the Senecas had spared.<sup>4</sup>

Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law Médard Chouart, better known as Des Groseilliers, were the bravest and most experienced of the French who followed the refugees west. In the late 1650s and early 1660s when Iroquois war parties haunted the rivers and portages, they made several voyages, going as far as the Mississippi in search of furs. Sometimes they traveled with Jesuits in search of souls; always they traveled with Huron-Petuns, Ottawas, and other refugees who had come to Montreal for guns and other goods. Their travels took them into a world of horrors. They recorded events that they could not fully decipher.

In 1658 Radisson and Des Groseilliers departed on the voyage which eventually took them to the Mississippi. Their own party contained twenty-nine Frenchmen, who desired "but to do well" for themselves, and six Indians, all or mostly Hurons. As was customary, they formed a convoy, with others going west. Of the French, only Radisson and Des Groseilliers had experience in the western woods. The novice voyageurs advanced carelessly

<sup>4</sup> C. C. Trowbridge, *Meeameer Traditions: Occasional Contributions from the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan*, no. 7, ed. Vernon Kinietz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1938): 75-76.

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upriver, laughing at the caution of Radisson and Des Groseilliers and calling them women. After three days' travel, a single Iroquois appeared on shore with a hatchet in his hand, signaling the French to land. Even after the Iroquois threw his hatchet away and sat on the ground, the novices feared to approach him. The Iroquois finally rose, advanced into the water, and said (in the fractured English of the Radisson manuscript): "I might have escaped your sight, but that I would have saved you. I fear not death." When the canoes finally closed on him, and their occupants, binding him, took him on board, he began to sing his death song.

When he had finished singing, he made a speech. "Brethren," he began, "the day the sun is favorable to me [it] appointed me to tell you that you are witless, before I die." The enemy, he told them, was all around. The enemy watched the French; it listened to them. It regarded them as easy prey. "Therefore I was willing to die to give you notice. . . . I would put myself in death's hands to save your lives." He instructed them on how to proceed if they were to save themselves. The "poor wretch," wrote Radisson, "spoke the truth and gave good instructions." The next day, the party met Iroquois warriors on the river. After initial panic, the French and Hurons forted up. They then brought in the prisoner "who soon was dispatched, burned and roasted, and eaten. The Iroquois had so served them." Why the Iroquois warrior had surrendered to save the French, the French never knew. In the end, all the French but Radisson and Des Groseilliers decided to return to the French settlements. The two brothers-in-law, endangered and saved by events they did not understand, continued in company with the Indians. They could explain cruelty; they could not make sense of kindness, if that is what the Iroquois by the river had intended.<sup>5</sup>

The refugee villages in the West welcomed Radisson and Des Groseilliers and those who followed. Those who had no traders eagerly sought them. In the 1660s, the Miami and Mascouten refugees who had settled inland from Green Bay invited Nicolas Perrot and a companion to visit them. When the French landed at the Mascouten village, an old man carrying a red stone calumet – a long-stemmed pipe decorated with feathers – and a woman with a bag containing a pot of cornmeal met them. Behind the old man and the woman came two hundred young men with "headresses of various sort, and their bodies . . . covered with tattooing in black, representing many kinds of figures." The young men carried weapons. The old man first presented the calumet to the French on the side next to the sun. He then presented the calumet to the sun, the earth, and all the directions. He rubbed Perrot's head, back, legs, and feet.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Adams (ed.), *The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson* (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1967), 80–84; also see Introduction.

The old man spread a painted buffalo skin and sat Perrot and his companion upon it, but when he tried to kindle a fire with flint, he failed. Perrot drew forth his fire steel and immediately made fire. "The old man uttered long exclamations about the iron, which seemed to him a spirit." He lighted the calumet and they smoked. They ate porridge and dried meat and sucked the juice of green corn. They refilled the calumet, and the Mascouten blew smoke into Perrot's face. Perrot felt himself being smoked like drying meat, but he uttered no complaint. When the Mascoutens tried to carry the Frenchmen into the village, however, Perrot stopped them. Men who could shape iron, Perrot said, had the strength to walk.

At the village the ceremonies were renewed. The Miami chiefs, entirely naked except for embroidered moccasins, met them at its edge. They came singing and holding their calumets. A war chief raised Perrot to his shoulders and carried him into the village where he was housed and feasted.

The next day the French gave a gun and a kettle as presents, and Perrot told the Miamis and Mascoutens that acquaintance with the French would transform their lives. "I am the dawn of that light, which is beginning to appear in your lands, as it were, that which precedes the sun, who will soon shine brightly and will cause you to be born again, as if in another land, where you will find more easily and in greater abundance, all that can be necessary to man." The gun, he said, was for the young men, the kettle was for the old; and he tossed a dozen awls and knives to the women, adding some cloth for their children. The French expected gifts of beaver in return, but it turned out that the Miamis singed their beaver in the fire, burning off their fur, before eating them. They had no beaver skins.

A week later a leading chief of the Miamis gave a feast to thank the sun for having brought Perrot to them. He made the feast in honor of a medicine bundle which contained "all that inspires their dreams." Perrot did not approve of the altar. He told the chief that he adored a God who would not let him eat food sacrificed to evil spirits or the skins of animals. The Miamis were greatly surprised. They asked Perrot if he would eat if they closed the bundles. He agreed. The chief then asked to be consecrated to Perrot's spirit "whom he would . . . prefer to his own who had not taught them to make hatchets, kettles, and all else that men needed." Perrot departed leaving the Miamis and Mascoutens to make sense of him while he tried to make sense of them. Neither Perrot nor the Indians were sure of the intentions of the other. Both sides, however, knew what they wanted from each other.<sup>6</sup>

Refugees were never quite sure what to make of Catholic priests. On August 8, 1665, Father Claude-Jean Allouez embarked from Three Rivers with six

<sup>6</sup> Claude Charles Le Roy, Sieur de Bacqueville de La Potherie, *History of the Savage Peoples Who Are the Allies of New France*, in Blair (ed.), *Indian Tribes*, 1:322–32. Hereafter cited as La Potherie, *History*.

other Frenchmen and four hundred Indians who had come to Three Rivers to trade. The Indians objected to taking Allouez. They thought he was a witch. They thought the baptism that he administered caused children to die. A headman threatened to abandon the Jesuit on an island if he persisted in following them. When Allouez's canoe broke, the Hurons reluctantly agreed to carry him. They changed their minds the next day, however, and Allouez and his companions had to repair the broken canoe and follow as best they could.

Eventually the Indians relented again and agreed to take all the French except for Allouez. He, they said, did not have the skill to paddle nor the strength to carry loads on a portage. Only after Allouez prayed for divine assistance did the Indians consent to take him, but he became the butt of their jokes, and they stole every item of his wardrobe that they could lay hands on.

Allouez endured the usual hardships of the dangerous passage to the lakes, and he created other hardships for himself. The Indians ate lichen soup; they once ate a rancid deer that had been dead for five days. When the Indians were careless with the powder they were transporting, it blew up and badly burned four warriors. Allouez interfered with the shaman's attempt to cure a burned man. Furious, the shaman smashed the canoe that carried Allouez.

In September Allouez reached the mission of Saint Esprit at Chequamegon. He discovered that the Indians there had abandoned their belief that baptism brought death. They now thought the rite essential for a long life. Not all Indians proved to be so taken with Christian ceremonies. Allouez preached to more than ten visiting nations only to be often greeted with contempt, mockery, scorn, and importunity.<sup>7</sup>

Allouez only tasted the hardships the northern Great Lakes offered; Radisson and Des Groseilliers drank more deeply of them. In 1661–62 they wintered with a band of Huron-Petuns, a farming people driven to the inhospitable shores of Lake Superior. The Huron-Petun men were not as skilled hunters as the surrounding Crees, Ojibwas, or even the Ottawas. They had few food reserves. Snow usually aided hunters, but this winter the snow fell in such quantities and was of such a lightness that the hunters could not go forth. Even though they made snowshoes six feet long and a foot and a half wide, the snow would not support them. Those who did struggle out made such noise floundering in the snow that the animals heard them at a distance and fled. Famine overtook the Huron-Petuns.

Apparently (the broken English of Radisson's manuscript is unclear), the

already hungry Huron-Petuns were joined by 150 Ottawa families who had even less food than the Hurons. They, too, had to have their share, although Radisson regarded them as the "cursedest, unablest, the unfamous, and cowardliest people I have ever seen amongst four score nations." The Indians ate their dogs. They retraced their steps to earlier kills to eat the bones and entrails that they had discarded. The men ate their bowstrings, lacking strength to draw the bow. Starving, the women became barren. The famished died with a noise that made the survivors' hair stand on end. The living scraped bark from trees, dried it over fires, and made it into a meal. They ate skins; they boiled and ate skin clothing. They ate the beaver skins their children had used as diapers, although the children had "beshit them above a hundred times." Five hundred died before the weather changed. Then the snow crusted, and the deer, breaking through the crust, became trapped. Hunters could walk up to them and cut their throats with knives.<sup>8</sup>

Four years after his difficult passage into the *pays d'en haut*, the Fox greeted Father Allouez as a manitou, or an other-than-human person. The previous winter, Senecas had attacked a Fox village while the warriors were away hunting. The Senecas had slaughtered seventy women and children and the few men in the village. They had led thirty more women into captivity. Allouez gave the Fox presents to dry the tears caused by the Iroquois attack. He then explained to them "the principal Articles of our Faith, and made known the Law and the Commandments of God."

Later, in private, a Fox told Allouez that his ancestor had come from heaven, and that "he had preached the unity and Sovereignty of a God who had made all the other Gods; that he had assured them that he would go to Heaven after his death, where he should die no more; and that his body would not be found in the place where it had been buried." And this, indeed, the Fox said, had happened. The man informed Allouez that he was dismissing all his wives but one and was resolved to pray and obey God.

As for the other Fox, Allouez wrote his superior, "Oh, my God! What ideas and ways contrary to the Gospel these poor people have, and how much need there is of very powerful grace to conquer their hearts." They accepted the unity and sovereignty of God, but "for the rest, they have not a word to say." Allouez credited their resistance to an earlier visit by "two traders in Beaver-skins." If these French "had behaved as they ought, I would have had less trouble giving these poor people other ideas of the whole French nation." The Fox asked Allouez to stay near them, to teach them to pray to "the great Manitou." Allouez could protect them from their enemies and intercede with the Iroquois to restore their relatives. Allouez

<sup>7</sup> JR, 1666–67, 50:249–99.

<sup>8</sup> Adams (ed.), *Radisson*, 131–33.

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postponed his answer, telling them in the meantime to obey the true God, "who alone could procure them what they asked for and more." That evening four Miami warriors brought more immediate consolation. They gave three Iroquois scalps and a half-smoked arm to the relatives of the dead.<sup>9</sup>

A few days later, entering the village of the Mascoutens, Allouez received the same treatment earlier accorded Perrot. They summarized in their requests to him the horrors of the period:

This is well, black Gown, that thou comest to visit us. Take pity on us; thou art a Manitou; we give thee tobacco to smoke. The Nadouessious and the Iroquois are eating us; take pity on us. We are often ill, our children are dying, we are hungry. Hear me, Manitou; I give thee tobacco to smoke. Let the earth give us corn, and the rivers yield us fish; let not disease kill us any more, or famine treat us any longer so harshly!

Toward evening, Allouez gathered the Mascoutens together. He was not, he told them, the manitou who was master of their lives. He was the manitou's creature. The Mascoutens, he reported, only "half understood" him, but they "showed themselves well satisfied to have a knowledge of the true God."<sup>10</sup>

On his way to the Illinois country in the late winter of 1677, Father Allouez passed near the Potawatomi villages around Green Bay. He learned that a young man whom he had baptized had been killed by a bear in a particularly gruesome manner. The bear had "torn off his scalp, disembowled him, and dismembered his entire body." The bear had, in short, treated the young man as a warrior treated the body of an enemy. Allouez, being acquainted with the hunter's parents, detoured to console them. He prayed with the parents, comforting the distressed mother as best he could.

Afterward, "by way of avenging . . . this death," the relatives and friends of the dead man declared war on the bears. They killed more than five hundred of them, giving the Jesuits a share of the meat and skins because, they said, "God delivered the bears into their hands as satisfaction for the death of the Young man who had been so cruelly treated by one of their nation."<sup>11</sup>

## II

In these fragments of contact and change are glimpses of both a world in disorder and the attempts of people to reorder it through an amalgam of

<sup>9</sup> *JR* 54:219–27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 229–31.

<sup>11</sup> *JR* 60:151–53.

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old and new logics. The very nature of the Iroquois assault shaped the Algonquian response. Because distance from Iroquoia created some measure of safety, the Algonquians and the remnants of other Iroquoian peoples – for the Iroquois were just one of many Iroquoian-speaking groups – fled west. Because the Iroquois had guns and their opponents initially did not, the refugees clustered together hoping to counter Iroquois firepower with their own numbers.<sup>12</sup>

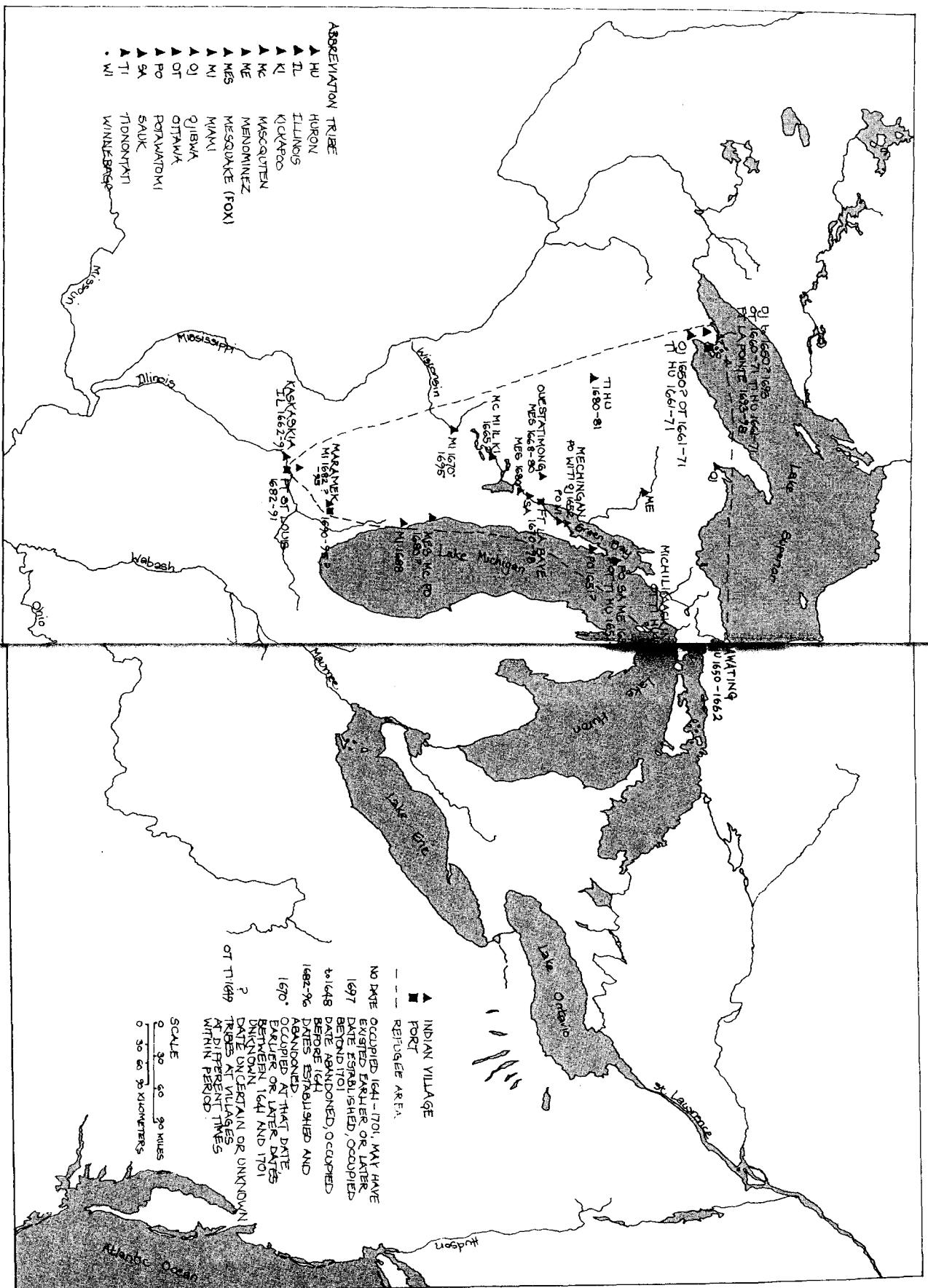
This clustering produced refugee centers that occupied a strip running north–south between the western Great Lakes and the Mississippi. As refugees moved west to avoid the Iroquois hammer, they encountered an anvil formed by the Sioux, a people whom the Jesuits called the Iroquois of the West. Antagonized by refugee aggression, the Sioux proved more than capable of holding their own against the Hurons, Petuns, and the various Algonquian groups who opposed them.<sup>13</sup>

The refugees recoiled and concentrated themselves within an inverted triangle whose point rested on Starved Rock in the Illinois country and whose base ran between Sault Sainte Marie and Michilimackinac in the east and Chequamegon in the west. Green Bay was approximately at its center. Inhabiting this triangle were Iroquoian-speaking groups (Huron-Petuns) and Siouan speakers (Winnebagos), but, for convenience, its peoples can be referred to as Algonquians, since Algonquian-speaking groups – Ottawas, Potawatomis, Fox, Sauks, Kickapoos, Miamis, Illinois, and many others – dominated these settlements. To the east and south of this core of village clusters was a huge area between the Ohio River and the northern shores of the Great Lakes emptied of inhabitants by the Iroquois. Geographically bifurcated into two sections – refugee and emptied lands – and peopled by inhabitants whose original coherence came largely from the homes they had lost and the enemies they shared, the *pays d'en haut* thus had meaning not because of its isolation from outside forces, but because of the very impact of those forces.

This clustering of diverse peoples had its own social and environmental consequences. It disrupted older notions of territory; geographical boundaries between refugees became difficult to maintain. Ethnic or local distinctions remained, but now villages of different groups bordered on each

<sup>12</sup> For these attacks, see Trigger, *Children of Aataentisic*, 2:767–97, 820–21; *JR* 47:145–49; 62:209; 53:245–47, 255; 54:115–17; *Lettre du découvreur à un de ses associés*, 1679, 29 sept. 1680, in Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et établissements des Français... de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 1614–1698, 6 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie, 1879, repr., New York, AMS, 1974), 2:33. Hereafter cited as Margry, *Découvertes*. For the wars around Green Bay, see La Potherie, *History*, 1:293–94, 310.

<sup>13</sup> For the flight of some of the Ottawas and Petuns to the Mississippi and subsequent war with the Sioux, see Perrot, *Mémoire* 1:159–65; Adams (ed.), *Radisson*, 95–96; *JR* 49:249; *JR* 50:279; *JR* 51:53; *JR* 54:115.



other, or previously separate groups mingled in a single village. These survivors of the Iroquois shatter zone and of the epidemics that preceded, accompanied, and immediately followed the Iroquois attacks came to be intimate neighbors and kinspeople.

During the 1650s and 1660s, for example, the Fox, the Sauks, the Mascoutens, the Potawatomis, the Kickapoos, the Noquets, the Atchachangouens (or Miamis proper), some Weas and members of other groups of the Miami confederation, the Ottawas, and refugee Petuns and Hurons invaded lands at Green Bay previously held by the native Winnebagos and Menominees. Reduced in numbers by disease and war with other nations, the Menominees and Winnebagos had little choice but to accept the newcomers. Eventually even a few Illinois settled in the region. The precise mix of the area changed constantly as some groups moved away and others entered. The region became a hodgepodge of peoples, with several groups often occupying a single village. Other groups inhabited separate villages, but these villages were often contiguous. On Green Bay proper in the mid-1650s, for example, a mixed village of Kiskakon Ottawas, a group identified as the Negaouichiriniouek, and some Petuns lived together near a large Potawatomi village, with a third village of Menominees, Winnebagos, Noquets, and, apparently, other Ottawas close by. Conditions were similar in 1670 when the Jesuits found a mixed village of Sauks, Fox, Potawatomis, and Winnebagos living near two other, separate villages. Further inland groups of Miamis and Mascoutens lived within a single palisade, and several other nations had joined with the Fox to make their village a seeming Babylon of tribes and dialects. In such conditions, there were no separate homelands at Green Bay. According to Jesuit estimates of the 1670s, 15,000–20,000 persons lived in these settlements, all of which were initially either along Green Bay or within a two- or three-day journey of it. Around Starved Rock in the Illinois country during the 1680s even greater numbers lived in a more confined area.<sup>14</sup>

Within this mixing of peoples lay the elements of the *pays d'en haut* as a distinct social formation, but a political glue was needed to hold the fragments together. A common residence and a common enemy could not alone produce social bonds among the refugees; indeed, proximity and tension more often than not produced conflict. In the seventeenth century, western Algonquians repeatedly murdered one another in the hunting grounds. On occasion, different nations thought it better to divert the Iroquois threat by betraying other peoples than to unite against the Five Nations. Mourning the loss of relatives to disease and seeking a reason for their loss, the refugees often accused each other of witchcraft. For these

<sup>14</sup> For mixed and contiguous villages, see *JR* 44:245–49; *JR* 54:197; *JR* 55:199, 219.

Algonquians, there were few accidents; most causes were personal and they traced them either to other humans or to manitous – the other-than-human persons with whom they shared the land. Blame had to be assigned. If the perpetrators were human, then deaths and insults were remembered, awaiting either revenge or compensation.<sup>15</sup>

Nicolas Perrot, a French trader who lived much of his life among the Algonquians, knew firsthand the strength of the hatred between different groups and the bitterness of their quarrels. He came to think of the refugees as uniformly treacherous, busily plotting one another's destruction when they were not contemplating killing the French. This assessment, overstated as it might be, is based on the observations of a man who lived among the western Algonquians for more than forty years, knew them well, and was respected by them. It also reflects his understandable frustration. Perrot spent much of the period resolving countless quarrels and thwarting many plots, and he nearly ended his days in the midst of the slow torture fire of the same Mascoutens who had first welcomed him as a manitou. His outbursts are exaggerations, but they are exaggerations that underline the reality of the deep animosities smoldering among these peoples. It was precisely because the divisions, suspicions, dangers, and rivalries inherent in the refugee centers were so intense that Algonquians worked so purposefully to overcome them.<sup>16</sup>

Each group of refugees sought ties with strangers precisely because they feared outsiders. The whole logic of Algonquian actions was that dangerous strangers had to be turned into either actual or symbolic kinspeople if the refugees were to survive hunger, disease, and Iroquois attack. The creation of such ties had also been possible in the older Algonquian world, but the need for them had seemed less pressing in that roomier and more secure past. Then a people could attack strangers or withdraw from them, but in the refugee centers both violence and withdrawal were far more difficult.

To create real or metaphorical kinspeople, the Algonquians turned to familiar cultural forms and borrowed new ones. Gift exchanges, through the conventions of reciprocity, created channels of mutual aid. Intermarriage created bonds of kinship and obligation. The Algonquians eagerly adopted the calumet ceremony, a political ritual of reconciliation. It stayed vengeful hands, brought reflection, and established ties of symbolic kinship. A dense

<sup>15</sup> For murders, see La Potherie, *History*, 1:310–11; *JR* 58:49, 55; James Clifton, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture* (Lawrence: Regents Press, 1977): 62–63; Perrot, *Memoir*, 163, 182. For personal causes, see Irving Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and Worldview," in A. Irving Hallowell, *Contribution to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 381–83; *JR* 57:233; *JR* 61:149. La Potherie, *History*, 2:83. For manitous as cause, see *JR* 56:125–27.

<sup>16</sup> Perrot, *Memoir*, 252, 258, 260; La Potherie, *History*, 2:83.

network of mutual obligation gradually developed in each refugee center. Cumulatively, each person marrying outside his or her group, each calumet smoked, each gift offered and accepted tied these disparate peoples closer together than before. War, famine, and disease, which had been the executioners of the older, familiar world of the Algonquians, were also the gruesome midwives attending the birth of the new world of the *pays d'en haut*.

In our attempts to understand these bonds, the conventional units of discourse about Indians – tribes with their distinct territories and their chiefs – are misleading. These peoples are almost classic examples of the composite groups described by Elman Service as the product of “rapid depopulation by disease which, when combined with the ending of hostilities among the aborigines themselves under the dominance of the common enemy, resulted in the merging of previously unrelated peoples.” At their most enduring, the connections between groups were not so much diplomatic ties between clear political entities as social bonds between much smaller social units.<sup>17</sup>

The ethnological details concerning these peoples have to be examined with care. The refugees ranged from hunting bands such as the various Ojibwa groups to the Miamis, who initially may have verged on being a chiefdom. Structurally, they ran the gamut from remnants of eastern confederations like the Hurons and Petuns to relatively intact western tribes like the Fox. Except for the Huron-Petuns, who were matrilineal, and the Ojibwas and Ottawas, who seem to have originally lacked clans, they were all patrilineal village peoples who were organized into exogamous clans which often had ritual functions. Such clans were sometimes grouped into paired moieties and sometimes organized into many phratries. The accounts of early ethnologists who studied these tribes and codified them are full of internal contradictions because they sought to freeze and codify what was, in fact, a world in flux.<sup>18</sup>

What is clear is that, socially and politically, this was a village world. The units called tribes, nations, and confederacies were only loose leagues of villages. The nature of authority within a Potawatomi village and that within a Miami village might, at least initially, differ significantly, but in neither case did authority extend beyond the village. Nothing resembling a state existed in the *pays d'en haut*. The entities that the French called nations, and which were later called tribes, thus had only the most circumscribed political

<sup>17</sup> Elman Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1972), 97.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Callender, *Social Organization of the Central Algonkian Indians*, Milwaukee Public Museum, Publications in Anthropology 7 (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1962): 19–28, 34–35, 38–41, 65, 70, 82–83.

standing. Nations shared a common language, culture, and ethnic identity, but the various villages of a nation did not necessarily share a common homeland. Whatever distinct homelands these villagers had once possessed, the diaspora provoked by the Iroquois had made irrelevant. The refugee nations now lived in contiguous villages or even in mixed villages. To decide, for example, what was Huron or Petun or Ottawa or Ojibwa territory at Chequamegon was both impossible and meaningless. Without a clear national territory and lacking even the most rudimentary national government, villages of the same nation, often located in separate refugee centers, could and did pursue independent policies. The Ottawas of Green Bay at a given moment might have closer relations to, and a greater community of interest with, their Potawatomi neighbors than they did with Ottawas at Chequamegon.<sup>19</sup>

Lacking political coherence beyond the village, groups had to forge connections at the village level. By standard ethnological reckoning, descent from male ancestors formed the key element in conceptualizing a person's place in this village world. The structural principle behind the Fox, Sauk, Potawatomi, and Kickapoo kinship systems, for example, has been described as “the unity and solidarity of the patrilineal lineage,” and these same tribes had exogamous patrilineal clans “composed of either actual kin or conceptually related lineages,” as did the Menominee and Shawnee. Most likely all the other people of the *pays d'en haut*, except the Iroquoian, matrilineal Huron-Petuns, shared in this system, but not enough information is available to be sure.<sup>20</sup>

This strong conceptual patrilineal emphasis is not, however, much of a guide to practice. These people reckoned descent patrilineally, but they were not patrilocal; that is, when a man married, he did not necessarily live with his own lineage. He often moved in with his wife's lineage; in practice, these peoples were bilocal. This bilocality takes on great significance given the prevalence of intertribal marriages. Intertribal marriages, as Frenchmen such as Perrot correctly perceived, created a larger community of interest among the refugees. Intermarriage solidified ties with outsiders who could assist a people in times of war and hunger, but the price paid was a weakening of the patrilineages – adult men left their own patrilineages and their own villages to reside in villages where they had only affinal relatives. Such bilocality mattered less in the mixed villages of the refugee centers, where a man residing with his wife's people initially remained in close touch with his own lineage, than it did later when villages dispersed. As villages

<sup>19</sup> Patricia Albers and Jeanne Kay, “Sharing the Land: A Reevaluation of Native American Territoriality,” unpublished paper.

<sup>20</sup> Callender, *Social Organization*, 25–27, 35.

separated, the social unit with which a man lived was made up of his wife's relatives rather than his own.

There were other surprising twists in this patrilineal society. When a man married out of his own group, his children did not necessarily take his clan identity. Unless, as sometimes happened, their father began a new clan, the children of intermarried fathers belonged to the clan of their mother. Her clan adopted them. Among the Winnebagos, Sauks, Menominees, Fox, and Potawatomis, where a nephew was under strong obligations to assist his maternal uncle in war, this combination of clan adoption and obligation to maternal uncles linked the children of intermarried men to their mother's village despite patrilineal descent.<sup>21</sup>

Tribal identity and the technicalities of kinship reckoning thus did not dictate political behavior in this world of refugees. All kinship obligations were in a sense contingent, since they had to be activated and maintained by the person who embodied them. At birth every Algonquian, by virtue of his or her descent, clearly belonged to a patrilineage and patrilineal clan, but in daily life, that clan or lineage was not effectively composed simply of those genealogically assigned to it. A person's obligations to patrilineal relatives were necessarily inoperative on a daily basis if he or she lived far away in a different refugee concentration. But in an emergency, such ties beckoned and kinspeople might very well attempt to aid each other. Loss of population, loss of territoriality, extensive intermarriage, and the creation of multiple ties of actual and symbolic kinship between neighboring peoples heavily modified actual patrilineal organization.

In practice, kinship as an organizing principle moved far away from actual descent. The widespread custom of adoption forged social ties that had nothing to do with birth. If one person adopted an unrelated person as a relative, the adoptee acquired subsidiary kinship relations – a new mother, father, sisters, and brothers – while maintaining his or her old ones. In the case of a captive, adoption supposedly erased the social identity of the captive and replaced it with the preexisting social identity of a dead person. This process, while often effective, was apparently rarely complete. Many captives, though integrated into a new group, retained lingering ties of affection to their old ones. On a different level, sodalities or pan-tribal organizations formed other units that transcended kinship. The Catholic Church took on aspects of an intertribal sodality during this period, but the

<sup>21</sup> For intermarriage, customs, and ties, see Perrot, *Memoir*, 69, 188, 270; Callender, *Social Organization*, 23, 26; La Potherie, *History*, 1:277, 301. Conference between Frontenac and the Ottawas, 15 Aug. 1682, *NYCD* 9:176. For nephew, see *HBNI* 15:612. For clans, see *ibid.*, 614, 694–95. Also see Marshall Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1968), 54.

most famous pan-tribal organization was the midewiwin society. Its lodges and curing rituals could be found in most of the villages of the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>22</sup>

As the French came to realize, the boundaries between the various tribes were not always clear. Perrot, in a proposed speech to the western Algonquians of Green Bay, emphasized the consequences of the refugee experience and widespread intermarriages at that refugee center: "Thou Pouteouatimais, thy tribe is half Sakis; thou Sakis are part Renards; thy cousins and thy brother-in-law are Renards and Sakis." Similarly, the Winnebagos, according to La Potherie, were composed largely of adoptees and intermarried peoples.<sup>23</sup>

The extreme political result of these denser connections between refugee groups was the dissolution of old groups and the creation of new ones. Various patrilineal bands – the Amikwas, Maramegs, and others – coalesced to form the two large divisions of the Ojibwas – the Chippewas, or the Southwestern Ojibwas, and the Mississaugas, or the Southeastern Ojibwas. The earlier bands apparently became clans within the new aggregate villages. This process was not complete until after the end of the refugee period, but its beginnings are apparent in the merging of several proto-Ojibwa groups with the Saulteurs at Sault Sainte Marie.<sup>24</sup>

Fragments of larger groups also merged. The remnants of the Petuns or Tionontati (the Tobacco Nation) and smaller numbers of Hurons who had fled west merged to form the Huron-Petuns, whom the French called the Hurons. Iroquoian in language and matrilineal in social organization, these refugees retained a sense of their separateness from the patrilineal Algonquian speakers who surrounded them. Their union was in this sense natural. In the collapse of remnants of two large leagues into a single village much disappeared. The Huron-Petuns organized themselves into three phratries, two of which, the Deer and the Wolf, clearly came from the Petuns. The Hurons proper formed a lineage, the Hatinnionen (Those of the Bear), within the Deer phratry. The origin of the third phratry, the Turtle, remains unclear and is a matter of controversy, but it probably

<sup>22</sup> For adoption, see Callender, *Social Organization*, 64. For connections between behavior and formal relations, see Ladislav Holy, "Kin Groups: Structural Analysis and the Study of Behavior," *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1976): 107–31. For midewiwin, see Harold Hickerson, "The Sociohistorical Significance of Two Chippewa Ceremonials," *American Anthropologist* 65 (1963): 67–85.

<sup>23</sup> For quotation, see Perrot, *Memoir*, 270. For intermarriage as bond, see La Potherie, *History*, 1:277. For Winnebagos, see La Potherie, *History*, 1:301. French sources, using the original French sense of the word *alliance*, often identify intermarriage with political alliances.

<sup>24</sup> Harold Hickerson, "The Feast of the Dead among the Seventeenth-Century Algonkians of the Upper Great Lakes," *American Anthropologist* 62 (1960): 81–107.

comprised outsiders who affiliated with the Huron-Petuns. Sastaretsy, the ritual name for the leader of the senior lineage of the Deer phratry, was always the titular head of the Huron-Petuns.<sup>25</sup>

Multiple ties, the dissolution of some social units, and the creation of others – all made the network of social and political loyalties within the refugee centers extremely complicated. In a given situation, people might very well have had to choose between several competing social groups that had claims on their loyalty. As a result, in the historical record the simple categories of tribe, village, and clan sometimes hold and sometimes break down as people consciously evaluated their conflicting loyalties.

The French chronicler La Potherie recorded a dispute among the Potawatomis at Green Bay that illustrates the complexity of these connections. A French trader assaulted a leader of the Red Carp clan of the Potawatomis, which led to a brawl in which Red Carp warriors knocked another Frenchman unconscious. The unconscious Frenchman was, however, a great friend of the “head of the Bear family” (or clan). The leader of the Bear clan seized a hatchet and declared that he would perish with the Frenchman. The daughter of the head of the Bear clan had married a Sauk headman and he, on hearing the brawl, gathered his Sauk followers and came to join his father-in-law and the Potawatomi Bear clan warriors. Only the recovery of the Frenchman prevented bloodletting between two groups for whom clan membership and relations through marriage overrode tribal affiliation. Tribal affiliation was always an unreliable predictor of social or political action in the *pays d'en haut*. There were too many other potential loyalties.<sup>26</sup>

Intermarriage and adoption formed one path to peace and solidarity, but the calumet was part of a more overtly political and ceremonial way of achieving peace. The calumet was the great token of peace. The name referred to the decorated stem of a pipe such as the one offered to Perrot and to Allouez when they appeared as strangers in the villages of the

<sup>25</sup> The organization of the Huron-Petuns is a matter of some controversy. See Lucien Campeau, *La Mission des Jésuites chez les Hurons, 1639–50* (Montreal: Editions Bellarmin, 1987), 362–67. See also HBNI 15:404–05, and James Clifton, “The Re-emergent Wyandot: A Study in Ethnogenesis on the Detroit River Borderland, 1747,” *The Western District: Papers from the Western District Conference*, ed. K. G. Pryke and L. L. Kulisek (Essex County Historical Society and Western District Council, 1983): 7–8, 12–13. Also see Raudot lettres, AN, C11A, v. 122 (carton 64), f. 200f. Parolles, 14 juillet 1703, AN, C11A, v. 21. Part of this document appears in NYCD 9:752–53. Claude Charles Le Roy, Sieur de Bacqueville de la Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale...* (Paris: J-L Nion & F. Didot, 1722, microcard, Lost Cause Press, Louisville, 1967), 3:298–99. Where the full French text is referred to instead of the abbreviated English text, the reference will hereafter be La Potherie, *Histoire*.

<sup>26</sup> La Potherie, *History*, 1:319–21.

Mascoutens and Miamis. Father Hennepin described the calumet itself in 1679 as

a large Tobacco-pipe made of red, black or white marble [catalanite]: the head is finely polished, and the quill, which is commonly two foot and a half long, is made of a pretty strong reed or cane, adorned with feathers of all colors, interlaced with locks of women's hair. They tie to it two wings of the most curious birds they find which makes their calumet not much unlike Mercury's wand or that staff ambassadors did formerly carry when they went they went to treat of peace. The sheath that reed into the neck of birds they call huars [loons] . . . or else of a sort of ducks who make their nests upon trees. . . . However, every nation adorns the calumet as they think fit according to their own genius and the birds they have in their country.<sup>27</sup>

There was a pipe for peace, one for war, and others for other purposes, each distinguished by the color of its feathers. The calumet, according to Father Gravier, an early missionary, was “the God of peace and of war, the arbiter of life and of death. It suffices for one to carry and show it to walk in safety in the midst of enemies who in the hottest fight lay down their weapons when it is displayed.” Similarly, Hennepin called it a “pass and safe conduct amongst the allies of the nation who has given it.” Perrot, who used the calumet often, wrote that it compelled obedience from those who conducted the ceremony to the person in whose honor it was “sung.” It halted the warriors of those who sang it and arrested their vengeance. When offered to another people and accepted, it stopped hostilities so that negotiations could take place.<sup>28</sup>

The calumet had originated beyond the Mississippi among the Pawnees who claimed to have received it from the sun. It had spread to the Sioux and to the Illinois and was, during the mid and late seventeenth century, adopted by the nations of the Great Lakes. The French, too, would use it, and, eventually, in the form of the Eagle Dance, so would the Iroquois.<sup>29</sup>

The importance of the calumet ceremony can hardly be overstated. It formed a part of a conscious framework for peace, alliance, exchange, and free movement among peoples in the region. By arresting warriors, the calumet produced a truce during which negotiations took place; when

<sup>27</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *Father Louis Hennepin's A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America* (facsimile ed., Toronto: Coles, 1974 repr. of 1903 ed.), 125.

<sup>28</sup> For Gravier quote, see JR 63:123. See also Perrot, *Mémoir*, 185; JR 65:123–25; Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *New Voyage to North America by the Baron de Lahontan*, 2 vols. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1905), 1:75–76.

<sup>29</sup> Perrot, *Mémoir*, 186; Clifton, *Prairie People*, 124; William Fenton, *The Iroquois Eagle Dance: An Offshoot of the Calumet Dance* (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 56, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953).

negotiations were successful, the full calumet ceremony ratified the peace and created a fictive kinship relation between the person offering the pipe and the person specifically honored by the calumet. These people became responsible for maintaining that peace.<sup>30</sup>

According to Perrot, violation of the calumet was a crime that could not be pardoned. Yet, as Perrot admitted and witnessed, the calumet was violated. It appears that in practice the calumet was far more effective in settling disputes among peoples already allied – in this case allied against the Sioux and Iroquois – than between those allies and their enemies. This was not the fault of the Sioux, who apparently honored the calumet far more diligently than any other group, but who found their faith betrayed by the Algonquians. Sometime about 1669, the Sinago Ottawas killed and ate the ambassadors that the Sioux had sent them. This attack was countenanced by their headman, Sinago, to whom the Sioux had sung the calumet. He violated the calumet at the urging of the Huron-Petuns, the longtime allies of the Ottawas. Here alliance triumphed over the calumet, but to the Sioux the power of the pipe was vindicated when they defeated the Ottawas, captured Sinago, and subjected him to a grisly death.<sup>31</sup>

In their relations with the Iroquois, however, it was the western Algonquians who paid the greater honor to the calumet. René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, reported that the calumet was by 1680 the ordinary means of terminating wars in the Illinois country. The weaker party brought the calumet and bestowed presents on the “conquerors,” thus preventing vengeance killings from escalating into prolonged wars. Such methods, however, did not work with the Iroquois who continued their attacks even after accepting the pipe.<sup>32</sup>

Intermarriage, gift exchanges, and ceremonies such as the calumet exerted their greatest force among peoples living in a single refugee center; their strength diminished with distance. They did, nonetheless, link one refugee center with another. The Ottawas of Chequamegon, for example, depended on kinship to obtain aid from the peoples of Green Bay against the Sioux, and the Illinois intermarried as far away as Michilimackinac. In the end, however, it would not be Algonquians who would bear primary

<sup>30</sup> Perrot, *Memoir*, 186; Donald Blakeslee, “The Calumet Ceremony and the Origin of Fur Trade Rituals,” *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 7 (1977): 81–82. Also see Alice C. Fletcher, “The Hako: A Pawnee Ceremony,” *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1900–1901* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), pt. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Perrot, *Memoir*, 186–90.

<sup>32</sup> Lettre du découvreur à un de ses associés, 29 sept. 1680, and Lettre de Cavelier de La Salle, automne de 1681, in Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:33, 141–42, 145; Narrative of... Occurrences... 1695, 1696, in *NYCD* 9:644.

responsibility for creating a larger alliance of all the refugee centers. It would be the French.<sup>33</sup>

### III

The first Frenchmen who appeared in the West in the footsteps of fleeing Hurons and Ottawas did not come with any conscious desire to unite the refugees. Jesuits came in search of earlier converts dispersed by the Iroquois and for new souls to save. Traders came for furs. The traders obtained their furs and the Jesuits their converts, but they also became the mediators of a regional Algonquian alliance.

The fur trade and the missions enhanced the appeal of existing refugee centers. Frenchmen with their small but dazzling supplies of goods, their crude forts, their guns, and their powerful shamans – the Black Robes (the Jesuits) – became powerful figures within the clusters of refugee villages. But the French presence must be kept in context. Missions and forts were not magnets that pulled the Indians together. Missions did not attract Indians; Indians attracted missionaries who usually came to existing settlements. When missions did precede Indians, the missionaries were clearly anticipating movements by the Indians. A Jesuit mission, for example, preceded the Indian resettlement at Sault Sainte Marie in the late 1660s, but the Jesuits knew that this was an old village site whose primary attraction was the fisheries. Renewed war with the Sioux and temporary peace with the Iroquois made its resettlement attractive because it was farther away from the Sioux country than either Keweenaw or Chequamegon. The Jesuit mission was, at best, a secondary attraction. To argue that either this mission or the later fort and mission at Michilimackinac led the Indians to settle the area is like arguing that people go to airports to be solicited by religious zealots and only incidentally to catch airplanes.<sup>34</sup>

Missions and forts could buttress but not sustain population concen-

<sup>33</sup> Perrot, *Memoir*, 188, 270; La Potherie, *History*, 1:277, 301; Conference between Frontenac and the Ottawas, Aug. 15, 1682, *NYCD* 9:176.

<sup>34</sup> The classic statement of European dominance is in Louise Kellogg, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1935), 137–38. Other, more recent scholars have taken roughly similar positions; see *HBNI* 603–04; Harold Hickerson, “Fur Trade Colonialism and the North American Indians,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 1 (1973): 21–31.

For Sault Ste. Marie as a summer fishing ground in the 1660s, see *JR* 50:266. By 1669 there were 2,000 people at the Sault and a Jesuit mission had been established there, but whether this was a permanent population or only a summer fishing population is not clear, *JR* 52:213. For overstatement of French role, see *HBNI* 603. For Jesuit recognition that the mission was not the reason for settlement, see *JR* 55:161; *JR* 56:115–17.

trations. Certainly the strenuous attempts of the Jesuits to hold the Indians at Michilimackinac later failed. Similarly, at Starved Rock, in the Illinois country, La Salle did help create the large refugee concentration that numbered 18,000–20,000 persons by the mid to late 1680s, but this represented only the resettlement of the earlier refugee center of the Great Village of the Kaskaskias which had been destroyed by the Iroquois. As Iroquois pressure lessened, La Salle was unable to hold the settlement together. Internal tensions split the community, it disbanded, and the French abandoned their fort and followed the Illinois to Lake Peoria.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, the ability to obtain valued French goods certainly increased the attraction of refugee centers for the Algonquians, but such goods did not reorient Algonquian life around the fur trade. As the French repeatedly discovered, no matter how much the refugees desired their goods, the Algonquians' most pressing needs remained food and defense. When French goods helped fill those needs, the refugees would go to great ends to obtain them; when they did not, the refugees did without them. Hunting beaver for exchange and undertaking the long and arduous journey to transport the beaver to Montreal could be justified only in years free from the threat of Iroquois attack, when ample food supplies were available. The priority Algonquians gave safety and security repeatedly overrode the French desire to increase the scale of exchange in the 1650s and 1660s. As La Potherie complained of those nations living around Green Bay in the late 1660s: "As the savages give everything to their mouths, they preferred to devote themselves to hunting such wild beasts as could furnish subsistence for their families rather than seek beavers of which there were not enough."

The French urged the Indians to come to Montreal to trade for iron weapons and guns to defeat their enemies. Indians balanced the admitted advantages of the weapons against the virtual certainty of combat with the Iroquois who awaited them along the Ottawa River. In the 1650s and 1660s, as often as not, they preferred to stay home. Even after the fur trade was firmly established during a period of peace with the Iroquois in the late 1660s and early 1670s, defense often came first. In 1675 Potawatomi elders

<sup>35</sup> For Starved Rock, see Le Clercq Memoir in Isaac J. Cox, *The Journeys of Robert Cavelier de La Salle*, 2 vols. (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1905), 2:155; Recit de Nicolas de La Salle, 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:570; De La Salle arrive aux Illinois, c. 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:175–76; Lettre de Cavelier de La Salle, 22 aout a l'automne de 1681, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:149–58; Feuille détaché, n.d., *ibid.*, 2:201–02. La Salle à M. de la Barre, nov. 1683, *ibid.*, 2:314, 317–18. Tonty à M. Cabart de Villermont, 24 aoust 1686, *ibid.*, 3:559; "Voyage of St. Cosme" in Kellogg (ed.), *Narratives*, 350. For movements in the Illinois country in the 1680s and 1690s, see Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians," *Ethnohistory* 3 (Summer 1986): 198–201. For later French attempts at relocation, see Narrative of... Occurrences, 1694, 1695, NYCD 9:623.

blocked trading and trapping expeditions among the young men because they needed them at home for defense against the Sioux.<sup>36</sup>

In countering such concerns individual French traders quickly discovered that their most effective tactic was to claim that trade alone made victory in the war against the Iroquois and Sioux possible. The failure of any nation to sustain the trade would lead the French to look for other allies and customers. Such a threat certainly gave the Algonquians greater incentive to hunt and trade beaver, but it also clearly committed the French to helping defend them. The trade voyages of the 1670s also became diplomatic missions cementing the alliance between the trading Indians and the French. For both the French and the Indians trade and alliance thus became inseparable.<sup>37</sup>

Yet in the 1660s and 1670s it was still too early for a pan-Algonquian alliance under the leadership of the French. Instead, there were in practice only a series of individual alliances. The idea of a larger regional alliance was at least present by 1671, when the Intendant Talon wanted to establish the French as the mediators of all Indian quarrels, but neither agreement on such an ambition nor the means to fulfill it were yet apparent. The French were a formidable people in the West, but their early status depended as much on Algonquian misperceptions of them as on their real material advantages.<sup>38</sup>

The Algonquians received the first Frenchmen who arrived in the lands between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi during the 1650s and 1660s as *manidowek*, or manitous. As a noun, *manitou* meant an other-than-human person, a spiritual being capable of taking manifold physical forms. In greeting Perrot or Allouez, however, the Algonquians seem to have used the word more tentatively, as an adjective: These were strange and powerful men whose real significance was not yet apparent. The Ottawas, Hurons, and Petuns, who knew all too well the limits of Frenchmen, were initially apt

<sup>36</sup> For quotation, see La Potherie, *History*, 336–37. For fears of trade voyage, see La Potherie, *History*, 371–72, and Adams (ed.), *Radisson*, 99–100. For Potawatomi elders restraining young men, see *JR* 59:165. For Mascouten concern with subsistence hunting, see La Potherie, *History*, 372.

<sup>37</sup> For French arguments, see Adams (ed.), *Radisson*, 98–100; La Potherie, *History*, 337; Lettre du decouvreur à un de ses associes, 1679–29 septembre 1680, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:39; W. J. Eccles, "The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (July 1983): 341–62. This linkage of trade and alliance has inspired some controversy. For major statements of two positions, see Abraham Rotstein, "Trade and Politics: An Institutional Approach," *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 8 (1972): 1–28. Arthur Ray and Donald Freeman failed to find any such linkage in the Hudson's Bay region, but this settles little since the groups in this area were hunting and gathering bands, not the settled agricultural peoples farther south. Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman, *Give Us Good Measure: An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company Before 1763* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 6, 232.

<sup>38</sup> Talon au roi, 2 nov. 1671, AN, C11A, v. 3, f. 159–60.

to treat the first missionaries harshly. They scorned Allouez for being unable to row or do his share on a portage. But the more westerly peoples regarded the Jesuits as men of power and treated them and the early traders with courtesy. As the Potawatomis told Perrot when he came among them: "Thou are one of the chief spirits, since thou usest iron, it is for thee to rule and protect all men. Praised be the Sun, who has instructed thee and sent thee to our country."<sup>39</sup>

The Algonquians expected benefits from these men of power, but the possibilities they envisioned clearly went beyond the acquisition of trade goods. The Jesuits recognized, for instance, that they were invited to many feasts "not so much for the sake of eating as of obtaining through us, either recovery from their ailments, or good success in their hunting and war." The Algonquians expected protection, aid against their enemies, cures, and a secure subsistence. They expected, in short, far more than the French missionaries or traders could ever deliver.<sup>40</sup>

To escape this dilemma, the priests denied that they were manitous and presented themselves only as ambassadors of Christ, the Master of Life. They sought to emphasize the transformative aspects of Christianity, but in seeking to convert Algonquians by attacking native beliefs, they, for tactical reasons, often themselves accepted native premises. The Jesuits ridiculed the manitous, but they did so in Algonquian terms. They often did not challenge the Algonquian logic of why fish or game appeared or did not appear. Instead, they denied credit to the manitous and gave it to Christ. Success in war, success in the hunt, survival after falling through the ice, all were evidence of the power of Christ. Victory in such debates over the causes of events in the Algonquian world only meant that heads of animals once offered to the manitous at feasts were now offered to Christ. Public offerings went to the cross and to the Christian God, the "Great Manitou." Indians were not so much being converted to Christianity as Christ was being converted into a manitou. As a Sauk headman told Father Allouez: "We care very little whether it be the devil or God who gives us food. We dream sometimes of one thing, sometimes of another; and whatever may appear to us in our sleep, we believe that it is the manitou in whose honor the feast must be given, for he gives us food, he makes us successful in fishing, hunting and all our undertakings."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> La Potherie, *History* 1:309. *JR* 54:219, 229; Perrot, *Memoir*, 37, 332; Adams (ed.), *Radisson*, 128, 130; *JR* 55:203–05, 217. *JR* 50:255–57, 303–05.

<sup>40</sup> *JR* 55:203.

<sup>41</sup> The newer literature on missions stresses the ways in which missionaries transformed Indian cultures, but these authors emphasize that these people's lives had to be already severely disrupted by whites and that for success, domination by whites was a prerequisite, not a result. See Neil Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The Praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *William and Mary Quarterly* 31 (1974): 27–54; Robert Conkling, "Legitimacy

The initial Indian assessment of Frenchmen and their God was quite pragmatic. And the predictable result of a French failure to deliver all that they had promised was an Algonquian reassessment of French capabilities. The Jesuits, for instance, claimed that Christ, rather than either the manitou Mitsipe (the Great Water Spirit) or the sun, brought the sturgeon in the spring. And for a season or more prayer might yield fish, but linking Christ's influence to the mating habits of a large fish did not contribute greatly to lasting Jesuit success in the region. When the fish failed, Christ failed. He was and remained a potent manitou, but Indians sought his aid so long as he delivered it reliably. Similarly, the Jesuits declined from spirits to, at best, powerful shamans. At worst, Indians regarded them as dangerous witches. In time the Jesuits would profoundly alter the way some Algonquians viewed the world, but for very many others these priests and their God could fit easily into the existing religion.<sup>42</sup>

The status of other Frenchmen declined more precipitously than did that of the Jesuits, since traders failed far more rapidly and seriously to fulfill Algonquian expectations. In 1686 Nicolas Perrot gave the mission of Saint François-Xavier at Green Bay a silver soleil whose brilliant sun with a cross above it was meant to evoke the glory of the Sun King, Louis XIV. For the Algonquians, however, the ornament probably recalled Perrot's original reception, as an emissary not of the Sun King but of the sun itself. By the 1680s such a status was largely a memory. The French had not acted as manitous. They were not, after all, powerful and wealthy beings who had come to grant the Algonquians protection and aid. The French were greedy and often quite vulnerable men with an insatiable desire for old, greasy beaver robes. According to Perrot, Indians who had initially welcomed the French as powerful benefactors came to "regard those of the French nation as wretched menials and the most miserable people in the world."<sup>43</sup>

and Conversion in Social Change: The Case of French Missionaries and the Northeastern Algonkian," *Ethnohistory* 21 (1974): 1–24; James P. Ronda, "We are Well as We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions," *William and Mary Quarterly* 34 (1977): 66–82. For missionaries as emissaries of Master of Life, see *JR* 55:201. For denials of manitou status, see La Potherie, *History* 309–10. *JR* 54:231. For claims of efficacy of Christ's aid, see *JR* 57:209, 223, 231–33, 261, 289; *JR* 55:123–31; *JR* 60:151; *JR* 58:61; *JR* 61:149; *JR* 56:145. For feasts and offerings to Christ instead of manitous, see *JR* 57:23, 287–91; *JR* 58:63; "Jolliet and Marquette," 233–34. For the Sauk quotation, see *JR* 57:283.

<sup>42</sup> For sturgeons, see *JR* 57:287–89, 293; *JR* 58:275. For Jesuit claims of conversions, see *JR* 61:69, 71, 103, 153–54, 131; *JR* 57:233. For doubts about how Catholic such converts were, see "Journey of Dollier and Galinee," in Milo Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country in the Seventeenth Century: The Memoirs of Lanothe Cadillac and Pierre Liette* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1917), 206. *JR* 59:229.

<sup>43</sup> For the soleil, see facing page, *JR* 65. For Perrot quotation, see Perrot, *Memoir*, 63–64. See also La Potherie, *History*, 319, 333; *JR* 54:225; *JR* 55:185–87; Thwaites (ed.), *Hennepin's A New Discovery*, 82; Duchesneau to de Seignelay, 10 Nov. 1679, *NYCD* 9:133, Duchesneau's

Once they ceased to be manitous, the French were in danger of becoming merely rich, powerful, arrogant, and quarrelsome strangers to be appeased when necessary and looted when possible. They were as yet in no position to unite the Algonquians. How could they be, when they themselves often seemed more diverse and fractious than any single Algonquian group? The French, after all, had conflicting purposes for coming west. Saving souls, gathering furs, and gathering allies against the Iroquois were endeavors that could not always be easily reconciled. For example, coureurs de bois – the illegal traders who despite French efforts could not be removed from the West – diverted Miami war parties against the Iroquois by falsely telling them Onontio, the French governor, wished them to hunt beaver instead.<sup>44</sup>

Even a cursory examination of the accusations of Jesuit missionaries against traders and coureurs de bois, of the governor against the Jesuits, of the Montreal traders against the governor, and of the various trading factions against each other reveals the depths of French suspicion. A man like La Salle, who sought to carve out his own fur trade empire in the *pays d'en haut*, might be more willing in theory than the Algonquians to admit the role of chance or accident in human affairs, but in practice he was apt to detect malevolent agents behind every misfortune. He suspected that the Jesuits had sent the Iroquois against the Illinois in order to ruin him. He thought that rival traders might have conspired to sink his ship, which had vanished without a trace in Lake Michigan, and that they worked actively to lure away his men, who seemed to desert him every time he turned his back. His supporters thought that the Iroquois had pillaged Frenchmen on the order of the governor of Canada, La Barre. The French, too, sometimes seemed far more ethnically diverse and culturally mismatched than the refugees. Father Hennepin wondered in 1678 how the mix of Italians, Normans, Flemings, and French (all of “different interests . . . and . . . humours”) going west with La Salle could ever hope to cooperate. They couldn’t. Most of them deserted and left La Salle in the lurch. Forging a coherent policy in such conditions was difficult and the inability of the French to discipline and control the coureurs de bois was only the most prominent sign of this.<sup>45</sup>

Memoir on the Western Indians, Sept. 13, 1681, NYCD 9:161–62; Perrot, *Memoir*, 263–64; Denonville à M. de Seignelay, aoust 1688, AN, C11A, v. 10.

<sup>44</sup> For diversion of war party, see La Potherie, *History*, 2:97.

<sup>45</sup> For Jesuit conflicts with Frontenac, see W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 126. For differences between civil officials, see Duchesneau to Seignelay, Nov. 10, 1679, NYCD 9:131. For accusations revolving around the La Salle expeditions, see “Le Clercq Memoir,” Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 98, 109–110, 126–27. Lettre de La Salle au Ft. Frontenac, 22 aoust 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:214–20, Lettre de Cavelier de La Salle à un de ses amis, Oct. 1682, *ibid.*, 2:295–301 and Extrait du mémoire (1682), *ibid.*, 2:347–48; De la Barre à Colbert, 14 nov. 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:303–04. La Salle à M. de la Barre, 2 avril 1683, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:320–31, Lettre de Cavalier de La Salle (1681), *ibid.*, 2:116, 121, and Lettre de Cavalier

The political coherence of Algonquian and French societies might never have extended beyond the individual refugee concentrations if the Iroquois had not once again forced the peoples of the *pays d'en haut*, both French and Algonquian, to move toward a larger unity. The French had made their own peace with the Iroquois as early as 1667, and this peace had been extended uneasily over much of the West in the late 1660s and the 1670s. At the time the Iroquois had other wars on their hands. The end of the fighting with the Susquehannas of Pennsylvania and the decision of that people to relocate in Iroquoia, however, both reinforced the Iroquois and allowed the Five Nations to turn once more toward the West. In 1680 they launched the second phase of the Iroquois wars by attacking the Illinois, destroying the Great Village of the Kaskaskias and threatening to embroil the entire upper country in renewed warfare.<sup>46</sup>

These attacks prompted a crisis both in the refugee centers and Quebec. During the years of dwindling Iroquois pressure, Algonquian rivalries had reemerged. The Fox had antagonized most of the nations at Green Bay. The Miamis, as it turned out, had conspired with the Iroquois to destroy the Illinois but had themselves been betrayed by the Iroquois, who, after their successful attack on the Great Village of the Kaskaskias, had fallen on the Miamis. The Ottawas and their allies at Michilimackinac, instead of aiding the victims of the Iroquois attacks, desperately sought to conciliate the Iroquois and escape renewed war following the murder of a Seneca chief, Annanhae, by an Illinois at the Kiskakon Ottawa village at Michilimackinac. Divided among themselves, the Algonquians were equally at odds with the French, whose traders had so deeply antagonized Algonquian hunters that murder had become a commonplace of the trade.<sup>47</sup>

The Ottawas and Illinois thus desperately needed French aid, but they deeply distrusted the French. In 1681 the Ottawas piteously appealed to the

de La Salle, 22 aoust 1680 – automne 1681, *ibid.*, 2:145–47. For Hennepin quotation, see Thwaites (ed.), *Hennepin's A New Discovery*, 73. Mémoire . . . 1687, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:346–47; Relation des découvertes et des voyages, 1679–81, Margry, *ibid.*, 1:504–13.

<sup>46</sup> For Iroquois, see Jennings, *Ambiguous Empire*, 137–40, 155–56. Chrétien Le Clercq, *The First Establishment of the Faith in New France*, 2 vols. (New York: J. G. Shea, 1881), 139–45; Relation du voyage de Cavelier de La Salle, du 22 Aout 1680 à l'automne de 1681, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:128–35. Duchesneau's Memoir on Western Indians, Sept. 13, 1681, NYCD 9:163–64. De la Barre au Ministre, n.d. (1682), AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 60–61; Enjairan to de la Barre, Aug. 26, 1683, WHC 16:110–13. The Iroquois, in an attempt to maintain peace with the French, argued that they did not wish war in the West but would defend themselves. Conference de M. de Frontenac avec un députation des Iroquois, 11 sept. 1682, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 14.

<sup>47</sup> For Miamis, see Le Clercq, *First Establishment of the Faith*, 139; La Salle, Relations des découvertes, Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:525–29. For La Salle's original wish for neutrality, see Relation des découvertes, Margry, *ibid.*, 1:502–03; for Ottawas, Duchesneau's Memoir on Western Indians, Sept. 13, 1681, NYCD 9:163–64; for Fox, La Durantaye, 22 avril 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 521; for murders, see next chapter.

French for protection. Without it they considered themselves, in their words, already dead, yet they were not sure that some Frenchmen were not plotting with the Iroquois to destroy them. Rumors, believed by both Frenchmen and Indians, were rampant in the upper country that various French factions had encouraged the Iroquois attacks. It was true that Henry de Tonti, La Salle's lieutenant, had been wounded by the Iroquois during the attack on the Illinois, but it was also widely believed, by La Salle among others, that the Jesuits had condoned the Iroquois assault. In Quebec Governor Frontenac equivocated; he attempted to secure peace with the Iroquois while promising the Algonquians new protection that he did nothing visible to provide.<sup>48</sup>

At Quebec and Montreal French officials received these pleas for aid from the West and considered their options. Slowly they came to recognize the need for unity among the Algonquians and a joint French-Indian alliance to defeat the Iroquois. If the Illinois were lost, French strategists reasoned, Green Bay and the Ottawas would follow. The fur trade would vanish. Canada would be isolated and vulnerable to Iroquois attacks, and England, whom the French regarded as the sponsor of the Iroquois, would control the continent.<sup>49</sup>

As these discussions proceeded, French divisions did not disappear, but among those active in the West, those debating policy in Quebec and Montreal, and those overseeing the policy in Paris a consensus on the need to unite the western tribes began to emerge. Such an alliance, they agreed, depended on the ability of the French to protect and supply their allies and,

<sup>48</sup> For Tonti's actions, see Tonti Memoir, in Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 1:8–13. For Frontenac's attempts to secure peace, see Discours de M. de Frontenac au député de Iroquois, 12 sept. 1682, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 46. JR 62:151–55; lettre à M. de la Barre, 14 aoust 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 293–94, Enjairan à M. La Barre, 7 mai 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6; Presents Made by the Onnontagues to Onontio . . . 5 Sept. 1684, DHNY 1:119. For La Salle's accusations against Allouez and other Jesuits, see Lettre de La Salle au Ft. Frontenac, 22 aoust 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:214–20, Lettre de Cavelier de La Salle à un de ses amis, oct. 1682, *ibid.*, 2:295–301, and Extrait du mémoire (1682), *ibid.*, 2:347–48.

<sup>49</sup> La Salle's actions encouraged an alliance of western villagers, Le Clercq, *First Establishment of Faith*, 156; Relation des découvertes, Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:525–34. Other officials and La Salle, fearing his trade, wanted peace with the Iroquois, Lettre de Cavelier de La Salle à un de ses amis, oct. 1682, *ibid.*, 2:294–96. Duchesneau's Memoir on Western Indians, Sept. 13, 1681, NYCD 9:164–65; Conference on Intelligence Received from Iroquois, Mar. 23, 1682, NYCD 9:171, also JR 62:157–65. For Frontenac's decision to accord "la nouvelle protection" against the Iroquois, see Mémoire . . . à l'égard des sauvages . . . , 12 sept. 1682, RAPQ, 1948–49, 141–42. For king's orders to maintain peace among allies and defend them from Iroquois, see king to La Barre, May 10, 1682, in Theodore C. Pease and Raymond C. Werner (eds.), *The French Foundations, 1680–93, Collections of the Illinois Historical Library* (Springfield Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1934), IHC 23:17. For La Barre's measures, Abstract of Letters Received from Canada, NYCD 9:196–97. He, like other French officials, thought the English were behind Iroquois attacks, De la Barre au ministre, n.d. (1682), AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 60–61; M. de la Barre au ministre, nov. 1683, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:331.

above all, to mediate the differences between them. In 1681 the Intendant Duchesneau advised that it was in "our interest to keep these people united and to take cognizance of all their differences, however trifling these may be, to watch carefully that not one of them terminate without our mediation and to constitute ourselves in all things their arbiters and protectors." From the West, Father Le Clercq, who had accompanied La Salle, reached similar conclusions: "If we wish to settle in those countries and make any progress for the faith, it is absolutely necessary to keep all these tribes, as well as others more remote in peace and union against the common enemy – that is, the Iroquois." Finally, in 1684, an anonymous memorialist restated the policy while warning against the selfish interests that might undermine it:

Take heed of their plans, of their disagreements, and do not allow any of them to terminate without the participation and without the orders of those who, representing the person of the king, ought not to be so mean as to sell them [the Indians] their mediation at so high a price that they [the Indians] are forced to disregard it and come to terms without having recourse [to us].<sup>50</sup>

Even as the French in Quebec debated unifying the western tribes, the French in the West, who were more immediately threatened by the Iroquois than officials at Quebec, took the first hesitant steps to secure such an alliance. In order to resist the Five Nations, they moved somewhat clumsily toward healing divisions both between themselves and the Algonquians and between the various Algonquian groups. As Iroquois warriors plundered Frenchmen in the West, La Salle fortified and garrisoned Starved Rock and gathered Miami, Illinois, and Shawnees around him. Daniel Greysolon Dulhut acted forcefully to halt the murders that plagued the trade and to try to reconcile warring Algonquian groups. Governor La Barre, who had succeeded Frontenac, garrisoned and provisioned Michilimackinac. In 1684 Frenchmen and Algonquians in concert turned back an Iroquois attack on the Illinois, and Governor La Barre summoned western warriors for an assault on Iroquoia. Working deftly out of Michilimackinac, the first French commander in the West, Oliver Morel de la Durantaye, secured the warriors. The alliance seemed a reality.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> For divisions, see Lettre de La Salle au Ft. Frontenac, 22 aoust 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:214–20, Lettre de Cavelier de La Salle à un de ses amis, oct. 1682, *ibid.*, 2:295–301 and Extrait du mémoire (1682), *ibid.*, 2:347–48; Lettre M. de la Barre à M. Colbert, 14 nov. 1682, *ibid.*, 2:303–04. For Duchesneau quotation, see Duchesneau's Memoir on Western Indians, Nov. 13, 1681, NYCD 9:162. For Le Clercq quotation, see *First Establishment of Faith*, 156. Mémoire sur quelques . . . dans la ferme de Canada (1684), AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 480.

<sup>51</sup> Recit de Nicolas De La Salle, 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:570, Tonti Memoir in Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 1:31; M. de la Barre to M. de Seignelay, 4 Nov. 1683, NYCD 9:202; De Baugy, 24 mars 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6; Memoir of M. de la Barre, Oct. 1, 1684, DHNY

Unfortunately La Barre's attack failed miserably. The French militia fell sick, Governor La Barre panicked and signed an embarrassing treaty abandoning the Illinois to the Iroquois, and the worst Algonquian fears of French craveness and untrustworthiness seemed true. To recoup, the French court removed Governor La Barre and renounced his treaty. His successor, Jacques-René de Brisay Denonville, attached great importance both to protecting the western allies and mobilizing them against the Iroquois. He gave gifts of guns to the Illinois and other allies, maintained fortified posts not only at Michilimackinac and Starved Rock, but also at Saint Joseph, Maramek (near present-day Kalamazoo) and eventually many other places, and summoned the Algonquians for a second joint attack on Iroquoia in 1687.<sup>52</sup>

All of this only partially reassured the allies. The Ottawas, in particular, never lost their fear that the French would abandon them. The Iroquois preyed on this fear and, with English encouragement, sought to transform it into temptation. The Iroquois assured the Ottawas and also the Huron-Petuns that if they deserted the French, the Five Nations would secure them a trade with the English that would provide better European goods at cheaper prices. Even as the French-Iroquois war resumed with Denonville's attack, even as it became subsumed in a larger imperial war between France and England in 1689, the mutual distrust of the French and the western Indians, particularly the Ottawas and Huron-Petuns, persisted. Both nations repeatedly seemed on the verge of deserting the French. The Indians were motivated sometimes by the lure of English goods, at other times by the reasonable fear that the French would betray them. Separate French peace negotiations with the Iroquois disposed the allies to make a separate peace of their own.<sup>53</sup>

The French-Algonquian alliance rested on a delicate balance of fear and temptation. Renewed Iroquois attacks created the impetus for the alliance,

1:109–16. For Dulhut, see Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:73; Enjairan to M. de la Barre, 26 aug. 1683, Margry, *Découvertes*, 5:3–7. For Durantaye, see M. de la Barre to M. de Seignelay, 4 Nov. 1683, NYCD 9:202.

<sup>52</sup> For La Barre's failure, see Presents Made by the Ononotagues to Onontio, 5 Sept. 1684, DHNY 1:117–19; De Meulles to Minister, Oct. 10, 1684, DHNY 1:120–271. For crown's disavowal, see Instructions to M. de Denonville, Mar. 10, 1685, IHC 23:68–78; Mémoire: De Denonville, Sept. 8, 1686, AN, F3, Moreau-St. Mery, v. 6, f. 270–71; Mémoire instructif, AN, F3, Moreau-St. Mery, v. 2, f. 218.

<sup>53</sup> For discontent of allies, see Denonville Memoir Concerning Present State of Canada, Nov. 12, 1685, DHNY 1:199–200. Instruction to M. Denonville, Mar. 10, 1686, IHC 23:68–78. See also Denonville's letter to Seignelay and reply, Aug. 20, Sept. 3, Nov. 12, 1685, NYCD 9:274; For initial English threat and French response, see Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:98–101; Denonville au Ministre, 13 nov. 1685, AN, C11A, v. 7, f. 105; Denonville to Seignelay, May 8, 1686, NYCD 9:287–92, and Oct. 9, 1686, NYCD 9:286–303; Denonville to Seignelay, June 8, 1687, NYCD 9:324–25; *ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1687, NYCD 9:336–37; Denonville au Ministre, 15 juillet 1687, AN, C11A, v. 9, f. 36. For Huron-Petun

but trade with the English allies of the Iroquois perpetually threatened its dissolution. French denunciations of their allies as unfaithful and treacherous were as self-serving as they were common, but they also contained significant elements of truth. Particularly for the Huron-Petuns and the Ottawas at Michilimackinac, alliance with the French always had to be weighed against its alternative: rapprochement with the Iroquois and trade with the English. The French could not assume loyalty or dictate to the Algonquians as long as that risky alternative remained.<sup>54</sup>

From its inception, then, the alliance was not simply the natural result of poor and shattered peoples' seeking to share French wealth and power but, rather, an initially precarious construction whose maintenance seemed as essential to Canadian as to Algonquian survival. The alliance endured not because of some mystical affinity between Frenchmen and Indians, nor because Algonquians had been reduced to dependency on the French, but rather because two peoples created an elaborate network of economic, political, cultural, and social ties to meet the demands of a particular historical situation. These ties knit the refugee centers to each other and each center to the French. Central to this whole process was the mediation of conflicts both between the French and their various allies and among the allies themselves. In the end the alliance that the French and Algonquians created in the last two decades of the seventeenth century rested on the willingness of the French to undertake such mediation and their ability to perform it effectively. As in an Indian confederacy, the mobilization of force against outsiders was only a secondary achievement of the alliance. Primarily, the alliance sought to insure peace among its members. Ideally, of course, all the allies would agree to fight a common enemy, but before that could happen, all had to agree not to fight each other. As Governor Denonville realized, it was "absolutely necessary to reconcile them before thinking of deriving any advantage from them." Because mediation secured peace, mediation was at the heart of the alliance.<sup>55</sup>

#### IV

It is hard, accustomed as we are to think of European dominance in terms of conquest and commercial advantage, to accept mediation as a source of

measures to disrupt French-Iroquois negotiations, see Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:220–25; also Mémoire: Chevalier de Callières, 1689, AN, C11A, v. 10. For separate peace, see Relation de ce qui s'est passé d l'année 1694 jusqu'au mois de nov. 1695, AN, F3, Moreau-St. Mery, v. 7, f. 341.

<sup>54</sup> For both recognition of and frustration at this situation, see Mémoire instructif de l'estat des affaires de la Nouvelle France . . . Denonville à M. de Seignelay, aoust 1688, AN, C11A, v. 10, f. 64–70.

<sup>55</sup> Memoir of Denonville, Nov. 12, 1685, DHNY 1:198–99.

power, but power it was. Admittedly, without goods to give as presents or French troops to aid the Algonquians against the Iroquois, mediation would have been impossible. But it is equally true that neither trade nor military force alone could have held the alliance together. It was the ability of the French to mediate peace between contentious and vengeful allies that did that. Anyone who has attempted to follow in La Potherie's *History* the tangled and dangerous negotiations conducted by men such as Perrot or has looked at the career of Henry de Tonti or of Daniel Greysolon Dulhut has some sense of both the immensity of the task and the difficulty of the achievement. Even with new Iroquois attacks imminent, Tonti in 1685 had to make a present of a thousand ecus worth of merchandise to reconcile the Miamis and Illinois. In effecting such reconciliations the French found a niche in Algonquian political systems, whose organization, as the Intendant Raudot later noted, made it easier to declare war than to secure peace.<sup>56</sup>

The alliance that took shape following the Iroquois attacks of 1680 survived the seemingly endless string of internal crises that afflicted it during the 1680s and 1690s to become the vehicle for the defeat of the Iroquois. It transformed the Algonquians from a terrified people confined to a few crowded and impoverished settlements to a confident and expanding people reoccupying country long denied them by the Iroquois. Once armed and organized, the Algonquians themselves became the protectors of Canada. They carried the war home to the Five Nations. It was they, as Governor Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil would stress in the early eighteenth century, who had defeated the Iroquois. It was they whom the Iroquois most feared. It was on them that French security came in large measure to depend. The refugees recognized full well the implications of their military victories and came to possess, as Perrot said, the "arrogant notion that the French cannot get along without them and that we could not maintain ourselves in the colony without the assistance that they give us."<sup>57</sup>

The alliance was based on mediation, but mediation was only possible because of what might be called the infrastructure that supported the alliance itself. In the late seventeenth century this infrastructure consisted of the refugee centers themselves, which concentrated Indians in large, easily accessible numbers; French missions and forts located in these refugee centers; and the *congé*, or permit, system of trading, which not only supplied

<sup>56</sup> For Perrot, see La Potherie, *History*, 1:309, 311, 2:61–78, 84–85, 111–13. For others, see Boisguillot à M. de la Barre, 7 mai 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 528; Tonti à M. de Villermont Margry, *Découvertes*, 3:559; Raudot lettres, AN, C11A, v. 122 (carton 64) f. 200ff.

<sup>57</sup> For examples of attacks, see *Narrative . . . of Occurrences, 1697–98*, NYCD 9:680–81; *Narrative . . . of Occurrences, 1696–97*, *ibid.*, 672; Vaudreuil & Raudot to Minister, Nov. 14, 1708, MPHc 33:402; Yves Zoltvary, "New France and the West, 1701–13," *Canadian Historical Review* 46 (1965): 304. See also Tonti à M. de Villermont, 28 mars 1689, Margry, *Découvertes*, 3:564; JR 64:37. For quotation, see Perrot, *Mémoir*, 262.

goods to the West but, by giving officials some control over traders, made them potential French emissaries and diplomats. French wealth and Algonquian and French military strength sustained this infrastructure. And the combination of French literacy – at least among Jesuits, officers, and a few traders – and the presence of Frenchmen in all the major refugee centers bound it together. The French established a command of distant events that allowed them to intervene propitiously in Indian politics at critical moments and coordinate their own actions with a precision and secrecy Indians could not match. The many occasions on which Frenchmen disrupted Indian "plots" that threatened to destroy the alliance or gathered widely separated nations for common endeavors testify to the importance of this communication network.<sup>58</sup>

Looked at from this perspective, the alliance was a French construction, but other angles of examination yield other perspectives. The underlying premise of the alliance – mediation as a source of influence – was essentially Algonquian. The precursors of the alliance were the Potawatomis who, in effect, showed the French the possibilities of mediation. According to La Potherie, the Potawatomis' role as mediators had made them the most influential group at Green Bay.

The old men are prudent, sensible, and deliberate; it is seldom that they undertake any unseasonable enterprise. As they receive strangers very kindly, they are delighted when reciprocal attentions are paid to them. They have so good an opinion of themselves that they regard other nations as inferior to them. They have made themselves arbiters for the tribes about the bay, and for all their neighbors; and they strive to preserve for themselves that reputation in every direction.<sup>59</sup>

In the early 1680s, the Potawatomis responded to Iroquois attacks and to their own conflicts with the French by attempting to expand their role as mediators to include both the Illinois and the Miamis, who had by then once more moved south of Lake Michigan. These attempts, however, exacerbated conflicts with the French – with both the Jesuits at Green Bay and La Salle, who was establishing the French as the dominant people at Starved Rock – and overtaxed Potawatomi resources. And when, in retaliation for epidemics they believed to have been caused by Jesuit witchcraft, the Potawatomis

<sup>58</sup> For examples, see Boisguillot à M. de la Barre, 7 mai 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 528; M. De la Barre au Ministre, 9 juillet 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 284; Denonville à M. de la Durantaye, 6 juin 1686, AN, C11A, v. 8, f. 51–56; Tonty Memoir in Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 1:37–38; Mémoire instructif des mesures que M. Denonville a prises pour la guerre . . . 26 aoust 1686, AN, C11A, v. 8, f. 98. Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:149–63. Denonville to Seignelay, Jan. 1690, NYCD 9:440.

<sup>59</sup> La Potherie, *History*, 1:302.

murdered Jesuit donnés, a display of French force at Green Bay led them to concede leadership to the French.<sup>60</sup>

The French, not the Potawatomis, would lead the alliance. The Algonquians acknowledged the French governor of Canada, who bore the title of Onontio, as the head of the alliance. *Onontio* was an Iroquois word meaning great mountain. It was the Mohawk rendering of the name of Charles Jacques de Huault de Montmagny, an early French governor. Both the Iroquois and the Algonquians applied the name to all later French governors. Onontio was a person of real power, but none of the French governors who led the alliance was regarded as a conquerer. Instead, western Indians regarded Onontio and the Frenchmen who followed him as their allies, protectors, suppliers, and as the mediators of their disputes. Or, in Algonquian terms, Onontio was their father and thus they addressed him in council. Becoming fathers was, in a sense, a demotion for the French. They originally had been manitous – that is, in metaphorical kinship reckoning, grandfathers. They had taken a step down the generational ladder.<sup>61</sup>

Onontio deployed his power by directing French resources along Algonquian channels. Or, rather, goods that originated in French society were distributed according to customs that originated in Algonquian society for, as we shall see, it increasingly became meaningless to speak of the alliance as French or Algonquian. It was both. As Perrot noted, liberality was highly regarded among the Algonquians; it was both a mark of and a route to status and power. No request had significance and no agreement was binding without an exchange of presents. In the words of Intendant Duchesneau, “These tribes never transact any business without making presents to illustrate and confirm their words.” The importance of any agreement was measured in terms of the gifts which accompanied it. Goods, bestowed wisely, were the mark of leadership and the route to influence; it was the route the French took.<sup>62</sup>

French agents of the alliance – the priests, officers, and traders – could,

<sup>60</sup> Lettre du Pere Enjairan à M. de la Barre, 26 aoust 1683, Margry *Découvertes*, 5:3–7; Perrot, *Mémoir*, 188.

<sup>61</sup> For origin of *Onontio*, see Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, p. 201, n. 15. I’d like to thank Ray Fogelson for pointing out the generational progression here. There remains much interesting work to be done in sorting out the complex metaphorical network the Algonquians used to govern political and social relations. For an attempt to do this for the Iroquois, see Mary A. Druke, “Linking Arms: The Structure of Iroquois Intertribal Diplomacy,” in *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600–1800*, ed. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987).

<sup>62</sup> Perrot, *Mémoir*, 291; for quotation, see Duchesneau’s Memoir on the Western Indians, Nov. 13, 1681, *NYCD* 9:161. Frontenac to Duchesneau, July 28, 1682, *NYCD* 9:175, Lettre de Cavelier de La Salle, 22 aout à l’automne de 1681, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:150. Callières au Ministre, 20 oct. 1699, AN, C11A, v. 17, f. 7.

however, only act with the cooperation of Algonquian leaders. The alliance essentially merged the French politics of empire with the kinship politics of the village. The men – French and Algonquian – who translated one politics into the other were the people the documents refer to as chiefs. Frenchmen so often used the term *chief* as a generic tag for any Indian who showed signs of having influence within his own society that trying to give the word an operational meaning is hopeless. There was no more an office of chief in Algonquian societies than there was in French society. The men, and sometimes women, of influence whom the French most often took for chiefs were *okamas*, or village civil leaders. In most of these groups, leadership was clan- and lineage-based, with separate leaders for war and for peace.<sup>63</sup>

Leaders in the alliance were thus often leaders in their own society as well. Just as Onontio was the governor of New France, with duties, obligations, and interests totally distinct from those of the alliance, so chiefs could hold positions both within their own society and within the alliance. But Algonquian village leaders, unlike Onontio and his French officials, were not rulers. The French equated leadership with political power, and power with coercion. Leaders commanded; followers obeyed. But what distinguished most Algonquian politics from European politics was the absence of coercion.

Only among the Miami did the French recognize leaders who seemed to possess power in the French sense. The first Jesuit accounts thought the leading man of the Miami was “the King of the nation.” And Chichikatolo of the Miami later seemed to the French a formidable leader of a hierachial society. On seeing Chichikatolo at Montreal in 1701, La Potherie reported that he carried himself with the bearing of a Roman emperor. When Chichikatolo gave orders, his people obeyed them, or so, at least, the French thought. But Chichikatolo was an exceptional figure; no later Miami chief equaled him.<sup>64</sup>

The normal influence of an Algonquian *okama* was far different. As Chigabe, a Saulteur chief, and probably a lineage head of one of the proto-Ojibwa bands of Lake Superior told Governor Frontenac: “Father: It is not the same with us as with you. When you command, all the French obey and go to war. But I shall not be heeded and obeyed by my nation in a like manner. Therefore, I cannot answer except for myself and for those immediately allied or related to me.”<sup>65</sup>

Except for war leaders during a war expedition, chiefs could command no other men. There were people of power and influence among the Algonquians, but their power was, as Pierre Clastres has argued, non-

<sup>63</sup> *HBNI* 15:649, 693, 712–13, 732.

<sup>64</sup> For Miami chiefs, see La Potherie, *History* 2:330–31. For talk at Detroit, July 30, 1704, see *MPHC* 33:192, *JR* 55:215. For Chichikatolo, see La Potherie, *Histoire*, 4:202, 207–8.

<sup>65</sup> For Chigabe quotation, see *Narrative of... Occurrences*, 1694–95, *NYCD* 9:612.

coercive; it was a type of power that Europeans failed to recognize. In Algonquian village societies, people conceived of power as arising from outside. Power came from manitous, who gave it to individuals or to ancestors of the group. The power of clans usually derived from an ancestral vision, and that power was actualized in a ritual bundle consisting of objects that symbolized the original vision. Each bundle had its attendant ceremonies. A clan chief was the person responsible for these ceremonies. A village chief often was the head of the senior lineage of the chiefly clan, but this was not always so. Often leadership was not hereditary, and, even when it was, the leading candidate might be unsuitable. In such cases a village council composed of the elders and leading men met to select and to ratify the occupant of the office.<sup>66</sup>

To be a chief within a village seemed to many French observers a thankless task. The chief was under an obligation to give to all who asked. Villages were not homogeneous; they contained members of different lineages, clans, and families. The chief intervened to mediate quarrels between them, but they were under no obligation to listen to him. Chiefs and elders deliberated on what course a village should pursue, but no one was obliged to obey them. Chiefs were men with large responsibilities and few resources. But chiefs were also widely acknowledged as men of influence; they were not the same as other men.<sup>67</sup>

The French desired to transform this noncoercive leadership into a coercive leadership. Like the manitous the Algonquians originally equated them with, the French brought power in from outside. To chiefs in need of goods to redistribute to followers and in need of help in protecting the village, an alliance with the French was natural. And as the French singled out certain leaders to be the channels by which French power entered the villages, they created a new kind of chief which can best be distinguished as an alliance chief.

As used within the French alliance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the word *chief* came to refer to both Algonquians and Frenchmen. Alliance chiefs were people who represented their society to outsiders. They mediated disputes among allies and acted to focus the military power of the alliance against outside enemies. Any man who performed such tasks, no

<sup>66</sup> The most intriguing and suggestive discussion of chieftainship and politics in North and South America is Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology* (New York: Zone Books, 1987); see particularly 7–47.

Clastres's argument that the chief was the speaker for the group does not always literally apply to Algonquians. Chiefs usually employed special speakers to speak for them in council. Similarly, polygamy, while important among Algonquians, did not seem to have the same political significance as it did for Clastres's South American villagers, but this is a matter for additional research. For Algonquians, see *HBNI* 15:617–18, 649–50, 661, 732.

<sup>67</sup> For a discussion of chiefs as mediators, see Clastres, *Society Against the State*, 59–60.

matter what political or social position he held within his own society, was an alliance chief. Both the Sieur de Louvigny, a military officer who commanded the French expedition sent against the Fox, and Nicolas Perrot, a trader, were French chiefs despite the sizeable differences of their status within French society. As alliance chiefs, however, they, in effect, lost their French attributes of power: the ability to command. They acquired the Algonquian obligations of power: the obligation to mediate and to give goods to those in need. Alliance chiefs among the Algonquians did not claim the power to command. They always needed the consent of their councils.<sup>68</sup>

The prototype of Algonquian alliance chiefs was Onanghisse of the Potawatomis. His exact social position among the Potawatomis is difficult to determine. Like his French equivalent, Perrot, Onanghisse, however, increased his influence among his people because of his success as an intermediary with foreigners. Onanghisse had led Potawatomi attempts to negotiate an anti-French axis with the Miami and Illinois in the early 1680s, but with the birth of the French alliance, he had become one of its leading figures. His standing increased as he mediated among neighboring peoples and the French as well as among his own people. His activities at the great peace conference of 1701 which ended the Iroquois wars are typical. He spoke to the French for the Sauks in order to arrange compensation for a Frenchman the Sauks had killed among the Sioux. He spoke for the Mascoutens who wished to make retribution for pillaging Perrot's goods and attempting to burn him at the torture stake. On different occasions at the same conference, he spoke for the Potawatomis, Fox, and Winnebagos. He was, in short, a mediator for the alliance among all the peoples gathered about Green Bay, and his activities extended beyond it into the Illinois

<sup>68</sup> For Indian reference to French chiefs, see Marest to Vaudreuil, Aug. 14, 1706, *MPHC* 33:268; Marest to Vaudreuil, July 2, 1712, *MPHC* 33:557; Speech of Illinois, 1725, *WHC* 16:456–57; Narrative of de Boucherville, 1728–29, *WHC* 17:40. For the king as a great chief, see La Potherie, *History*, 1:347. For French use of the term, see Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, June 9, 1706, *NYCD* 9:777; Parolles Des Outtaouois de Michilmakina . . . 23 juillet 1708; Reponse, AN, C11A, v. 28, f. 215; Beauharnois & D'Aigremont au Ministre, 1 oct. 1728, AN, C11A, v. 50, f. 32.

For examples of chiefs saying their authority was delegated by the council or by the elders, see Narrative of . . . Occurrences, 1694–95, *NYCD* 9:610; Conseil, 27 sept. 1703, AN, C11A, v. 21 (Niquimar); Words of Ottawas, Sept. 24, 1707, *MPHC* 33:346–47; Words of Ottawas, 23 June 1707, *MPHC* 33:327.

The Algonquian system of alliance chiefs and native *okamas* did not parallel the Pueblo system of an internal religious leadership and a separate set of leaders to deal with the Spanish. Algonquian alliance chiefs might or might not be *okamas*, shamans, or clan leaders. Nor does this Algonquian system parallel the absorption of native leaders as vassals by the Spanish in Florida; see Amy Turner Bushnell, "Ruling 'the Republic of Indians' in Seventeenth-Century Florida," in Peter Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, *Pocahontas's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 134–50.

country. It was no wonder that he identified so strongly with French chiefs, telling Governor de Callières that Perrot was his "body," aiding him in all the lands of Algonquians to *autoriser the parole* of Onontio.<sup>69</sup>

The alliance grafted together imperial politics and the village politics of kinship; the two became branches of a single tree. The politics of kinship remained strongest within the villages and among contiguous peoples. This was not a harmonious politics. Factionalism divided the village councils; and because village boundaries themselves were permeable, factions formed links with outsiders. The chiefs struggled to mediate these quarrels, but the politics of kinship grew weaker with distance. Imperial politics thus grew more significant as geographical scale increased. Distant groups were united within the French alliance not so much by their real or metaphorical kinship relations with one another as by their common standing as children of Onontio, who was the representative of the French king. The alliance had a center, an imperial center, and from this center the French focused their efforts to influence peoples who were allies rather than subjects of the empire. Where the bonds of kinship failed, French and Algonquian alliance chiefs interceded. They came with their calumets, their presents to cover (that is, to offer compensation for) the dead, and their captives to replace or raise up the dead. Those who refused to accept the mediation of the alliance chiefs risked the threat of having the united force of the alliance brought against them.<sup>70</sup>

## V

The social and political bonds forged by the refugees and the French, for all their strength, could not hold the refugee centers together. The centers were the creations of desperate people who in seeking to create political and military security created ecological and economic instability. The centers concentrated large numbers of people who were often hungry and often sick. They became easy targets for the virgin soil epidemics ravaging the Western Hemisphere.

Among American Indian peoples there had been no prior exposure to

<sup>69</sup> James Clifton, "Potawatomi Leadership Roles: On Okama and other Influential Personages," in William Cowan (ed.), *Papers of the Sixth Algonquian Conference, 1974*, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper no. 23 (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1975), 43–99, Onanghissee, 58, 63, 65–69. See also Lettre du Pere Enjalran à M. de la Barre, 26 aoust 1683, Margry, *Découvertes*, 5:3–7; La Potherie, *Histoire*, 4:208–11, 212–13, 224, 234; Le Clerq, *Memoir from Membre Papers*, in Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 125.

<sup>70</sup> As Marshall Sahlins observes, tribes overcome local cleavages only insofar as necessary to prevail militarily, Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, 45.

diseases long endemic to Europe. Indian populations had not been selected over time for resistance to such diseases, nor had individuals developed antibodies to these diseases from previous exposure during childhood. Smallpox and measles struck virgin populations in the Western Hemisphere, and these so-called virgin soil epidemics carried off huge numbers of people. No matter how well fed or secure the Indians might have been, a significant proportion of them were doomed to die in such epidemics, but when virgin soil epidemics hit hungry people forced into crowded and contiguous settlements by warfare, the toll became enormous. The Iroquois, in effect, pushed the Algonquians onto a killing ground where smallpox and measles took a far greater toll than Iroquois muskets or scalping knives during the late seventeenth century. There are no reliable estimates of how many died, but calculations on selected tribes indicate a decline of anywhere from 25 percent to over 90 percent in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>71</sup>

Hunger exacerbated disease, and the refugees were often hungry because, in seeking to create a safe and familiar world, they taxed the natural world to its limits. The predictability of the natural world became uncertain. The Algonquians had recognized and depended on seasons of plenty and seasons of scarcity that were determined by the great natural rhythms of the planet. There were seasons when fish spawned and deer rutted, and both could be taken more easily. There were seasons when game animals were fat, their coats sleek, their fur heavy, and seasons when they were weak and emaciated and provided little food. There was spring when women could plant and fall when they could harvest. The subsistence cycles of the refugees, with variations according to skills, technologies, and cultural tastes, moved to these rhythms. These larger patterns were recurrent and predictable. Indians noted them and provided against expected times of dearth.

In the Great Lakes settlements scarcity came in the late winter and early

<sup>71</sup> Disease was depopulating the Ottawas in the mid 1660s, (*JR* 50:287). A little later the Mascoutens prayed for relief from the diseases killing their children (*JR* 53:229); in 1670–71 "bloody flux" was among the Ottawas (*JR* 55:117–31). In 1672 the people at the Sault Sainte Marie had been reduced to extremity by disease (*JR* 57:223). In 1676 disease followed a poor harvest among the Fox (*JR* 60:199, 151). In 1677 many died of an unnamed sickness around Lake Huron (*JR* 61:69–70). In 1679–81 there was smallpox among the Iroquois and at Montreal (*NYCD* 9:129, 154). This probably spread west. There was an epidemic that killed many at Green Bay in 1683 (La Potherie, *History*, 1:354), and there was sickness among the Menominees in the early 1680s, but it is unclear if this was smallpox (*JR* 62:205).

For Winnebagos, see La Potherie, *History*, 293–300. For Sauks, Fox, Winnebagos, and Menominees, see Jeanne Kay, "The Fur Trade and Native American Population Growth," *Ethnohistory* 31 (1984): 265–87. For a discussion of Iroquois demography, see Ann F. Ramenofsky, *Vectors of Death: The Archaeology of European Contact* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 71–102.

spring when game animals were emaciated and yielded little meat. Horticulturalists in this area depended on their cached corn to pull them through until the sturgeon ran and plenty returned. In the Illinois country the season of scarcity extended from late winter into early summer. This was the period between buffalo hunts and before new crops could be harvested. Then the Illinois depended on dried buffalo meat and stored corn. Indians could and did meet predictable seasons of scarcity by storing a surplus from the seasons of plenty.<sup>72</sup>

In the refugee centers this environmental stability failed. Well before the Iroquois wars there had inevitably been bad game years due to drought or bitter winters. Fish populations fluctuated naturally. Poor weather disrupted spawning runs and Great Lakes storms prevented fishing in late fall. And drought, pests, or early frosts could kill or limit corn crops. Any such failure of one component of the system obviously increased reliance on the others. In this sense, there had never been a single, "normal" subsistence cycle. There were only series of contingencies as annual variations shaped food procurement. The refugee centers suffered these normal fluctuations, but in the centers, precisely because they were in marginal agricultural and over-crowded hunting areas, resource depletion compounded the usual seasons of scarcity. From necessity, the Algonquians came to rely on a narrower range of resources.

By virtually all French accounts, it was corn and fish that made the refugee concentrations possible outside of the Illinois country. Along the Great Lakes there was no concentration of refugees where the fisheries and the potential for corn agriculture did not coincide. According to the Jesuits, the people of Chequamegon lived only on corn and fish. At Green Bay corn was the Potawatomi protection against the famine "that is only too common in these regions." The land cleared for cornfields stretched for three leagues around the French post at Michilimackinac, and at both Green Bay and Michilimackinac the French relied on Indian surpluses for their own corn supply.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> For storage of food, see Lettre du découvreur à un de ses associés . . . 29 sept. 1680, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:36–37. De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC*, 23:310–14; Thwaites (ed.), *Hennepin's A New Discovery*, 154; *JR* 54:223, *JR* 51:27; *JR* 57:265; *JR* 55:111; Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:143–48, 168. Sufficient corn was available at Michilimackinac and Green Bay for sale to the French; see Le Clercq Memoir and Joutel's Journal, both in Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 1:128, 2:228–29.

<sup>73</sup> Perrot, *Memoir*, 120; La Potherie, *History*, 305; *JR* 54:151, 166; Thwaites (ed.), *Hennepin's A New Discovery*, 116; Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:146–48. For Michilimackinac, see "Journey of Dollier and Galinee," 207; and "The Memoir of Lamothe Cadillac" in Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country*, 12–15; and Letter of Cadillac, Aug. 3, 1695, in E. M. Sheldon, *The Early History of Michigan from the First Settlement to 1815* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1956), 74; Narrative of . . . Occurrences in 1694, *NYCD* 9:587. For Green Bay, see *JR*

Culturally, the consumption of corn and the idea of security were closely intertwined. As Perrot noted:

The kinds of food which the savages like best and which they make the most effort to obtain are the Indian corn, the kidney bean, and the squash. If they are without these, they think they are fasting, no matter what abundance of meat and fish they have in their stores, the Indian corn being to them what bread is to the French.<sup>74</sup>

This need for corn prompted these fleeing and desperate peoples to seek arable lands in unpromising regions where agriculture yielded only a tenuous subsistence. The skilled Huron and Petun horticulturalists who fled into the Lake Superior region went well beyond the climatic edge of the reliable 160-day growing season needed for corn agriculture. There were, however, pockets of land where microclimates suitable for agriculture existed. These areas offered 140-day growing seasons that made agriculture risky but possible. At each of these pockets along southern Lake Superior and northern Lake Michigan – Chequamegon, Keweenaw, Michilimackinac, and Sault Sainte Marie – refugees eventually settled. Farther south, at Green Bay, the line of refugee villages hugged almost exactly the edges of the 160-day growing season. Because the refugees lived along the margins of the lands where corn could be grown, however, crop failures were a constant possibility. Agriculture, particularly at Chequamegon and Michilimackinac, ran great risks of late-spring and early-fall frosts. Repeated losses of corn crops at Michilimackinac in the 1690s helped to prompt the eventual abandonment of that place by the Ottawas and the Huron-Petuns. At Green Bay harvests were more certain, but the harvest failed there in 1675. It appears, too, that the crop failures like those at Michilimackinac later in the century may also have occurred at Green Bay, where the French Intendant Raudot claimed that corn no longer provided much security to the Fox, Mascoutens, and Kickapoos.<sup>75</sup>

With the precariousness of corn growing and the large populations the

56:121; *JR* 57:265–67. For evidence that Indians regarded fish and corn as necessary staples, see Perrot, *Memoir*, 237, and Narrative of . . . Occurrences, 1695, *NYCD* 9:606.

<sup>74</sup> Perrot, *Memoir*, 102.

<sup>75</sup> A vivid graphic representation of how village sites related to climatic zones is available in Helen Hornbeck Tanner (ed.), *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 20–21. The climate appears to have grown colder and moister beginning about 1400 A.D.—David Baerreis, Reid Bryson, and John Kutzbach, "Climate and Culture in the Western Great Lakes Region," *Mid-Continental Journal of Archaeology* 1 (1976): 52. For crop losses, see Narrative of . . . Occurrences . . . 1695, *NYCD* 9:607; *JR* 60:199; Antoine Raudot, "Memoir Concerning the Different Indian Nations of North America," in W. Vernon Kinietz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965); Cadillac's Account of Detroit, Sept. 25, 1702, *MPHC*, 33:138.

fisheries became a critical resource. François Dollier de Casson and Renée de Bréhaut de Galinée claimed that the fisheries alone could support 10,000 persons at Michilimackinac. And Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac, was only slightly more conservative when he claimed that fish alone could support most of the 6,000–7,000 Indians there. At Green Bay, the French were more restrained in their claims. They thought the net fisheries, snagging as they did fish, diving birds, and waterfowl on their flyways, sufficed for three months' subsistence, and this apparently did not include the sturgeon taken in the spring at fishing weirs or the fall catch of herring, which, smoked and stored, fed people over the winter. Father André in November 1672 found the Potawatomi cabins at Chouskouabika so full of nets and herring that he could hardly enter them.<sup>76</sup>

The fisheries tended to be more reliable than agriculture because the Algonquians were not at the margins of the fisheries but at their centers. All the great concentrations of refugee population on the Great Lakes were located at the best fishing sites on Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. Michilimackinac, the longest lived of these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century settlements, was, in Algonquian terms, the "native country" of the fish themselves. Yet fishing also remained a precarious endeavor that demanded precise skills and a suitable technology that not all refugees possessed. Those tribes who did fish extensively were at the mercy of the weather. Storms during spawning season, or a warm winter and weak ice, could doom a fishery. Fisheries at their most successful could provide only seasonal abundance. Algonquian techniques of drying could preserve the fall catch of herring and whitefish through the winter, but the yields of the spring runs of sturgeon could not be preserved long during the warm and humid summers.<sup>77</sup>

The hunt, the last major element in the food cycle of the refugee centers, was the least important in terms of yield, but still a critical seasonal resource and the last defense against famine. In most years the largely hunting peoples regularly resorted to fishermen and horticulturalists for food, but in

<sup>76</sup> La Potherie, *History*, 305. JR 54:151, 167; Thwaites (ed.), *Hennepin's A New Discovery*, 116; Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:146–48. For Michilimackinac, see "Journey of Dollier and Galinee," 207; and "The Memoir of Lamothe Cadillac" in Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country*, 12–15; and Letter of Cadillac, Aug. 3, 1695, in Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 74; Narrative of... Occurrences in 1694, NYCD 9:587. For Green Bay, see JR 56:121; JR 57:265–67.

<sup>77</sup> Charles Cleland, "The Inland Shore Fishery of the Northern Great Lakes: Its Development and Importance in Prehistory," *American Antiquity* 47 (1982): 761–84, particularly map on 765; For quotation, see JR 55:159–61. The Bell site, an early historic Fox village, shows numerous fish remains, but most of those came from rivers and from smaller lakes near the Fox village. Paul W. Parmalee "Vertebrate Remains from the Bell Site, Winnebago County, Wisconsin," *The Wisconsin Archeologist*, NS 44 (March 1963): 62. For lack of ability to use canoes, see JR 58:63. La Potherie, *History*, 2:20.



This sketch by Decard de Granville shows Indian fishing techniques and equipment on the Great Lakes about 1700. (New York Public Library)

years when crops or fisheries failed only hunting and gathering stood between the Algonquians and starvation. The anomaly of hunters clustering on overcrowded lands, whose major attraction is fisheries that the hunters themselves do not efficiently exploit is explained as soon as the context is broadened. Corn and fish sustained large settlements, and around these settlements hunters came for trade and protection. Around the horticultural villagers who relied heavily on the fisheries, therefore, were other villagers, some horticultural, some not, who relied more heavily on the hunt. This pattern predated the fur trade, but the fur trade reinforced it.<sup>78</sup>

This combination of marginal agriculture, sometimes precarious fishing, and the clustering of hunters for defense and trade set the stage for environmental disaster. As hunters depleted game around the refugee centers, hunger and famine ensued when the fisheries or the corn harvest failed. Pierre Esprit Radisson and the Huron-Petuns endured such a famine. Five hundred died, and hunger continued into the summer of 1661, when Father Menard died trying to reach the Huron-Petuns. In 1670 the Jesuits found the Potawatomis and other tribes of Green Bay proper pinched with hunger. The Mascoutens, Fox, and other outlying villagers complained of hunger during the 1670s. Even in the best years, the surplus stored from horticulture was relatively small. In 1671, Father Allouez claimed that a family with ten or twelve bags of corn considered itself wealthy. The Potawatomis might strive to fill their cabins with herring, but by late winter the fish were gone and they anxiously awaited the coming of the sturgeon.<sup>79</sup>

Winter became a time of particular horror. Those groups that did not fish extensively regularly departed on winter hunts, but when corn and fish were abundant, the fishing peoples preferred to remain in their villages taking what game they could obtain nearby. By staying home they avoided the prolonged winter hunts that had become the most dangerous point in the refugee subsistence cycle. To embark on a winter hunt was to leave stored

<sup>78</sup> The tribes who did not fish have been cited previously. The Ojibwa groups around Chequamegon, Keweenaw, Green Bay, and Sault Sainte Marie usually did not plant crops. The Fox, who did plant crops, also relied heavily on hunting, Parmalee, "Vertebrate Remains," *Wisconsin Archeologist*, 65. For game animals at each location, see *ibid.*, 65, and James E. Fitting, "Patterns of Acculturation at the Straits of Mackinac," in Charles Cleland (ed.), *Cultural Change and Continuity: Essays in Honor of James B. Griffin* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

<sup>79</sup> For the Radisson account, see Adams (ed.), *Radisson*, 131–34; and for death of Father Menard, *JR* 48:127–37. Exact dates are hard to determine from the Radisson manuscript; Adams dates the starving winter of 1661–62, but the *Jesuit Relations* clearly date it as 1660–61. That this was the same winter seems certain because both accounts have it followed by a Feast of the Dead with the Sioux. *JR* 46:143. For other accounts of famine diets, see Perrot, *Memoir*, 102–03; *JR* 48:119; *JR* 50:177; Adams (ed.), *Radisson*, 130–33; *JR* 46:139–43, *JR* 48:119, 261–65; *JR* 51:171. For Green Bay in 1670, see *JR* 54:203, 207, 213. For Mascoutens, Fox, etc., see *JR* 59:229. For Allouez's claim, see *JR* 55:111.

supplies behind; without pack animals and with canoes useless on frozen streams or lakes, only small amounts of corn and fish could be carried on the journey. Echoes of disasters on the winter hunt reverberate through *The Jesuit Relations* and other early French sources. Jacques Marquette, at the beginning of his Mississippi voyage of 1673, reported that late fall and winter, when they moved into their hunting camps, was when the Mascoutens, Miamis, and Kickapoos most feared famine, and he later described the fatigues of such hunts as being "almost impossible to Frenchmen." Father Allouez, however, did endure them. He accompanied eighty cabins of Miamis and some Shawnees who were reduced to a famine diet of such roots as the women could grub as they staggered through half-frozen marshlands. He claimed later that such experiences were the common expectation of hunters. The Miamis survived their ordeal. But other hunters starved when game failed them and they could not get back to the food caches they had made. Starvation and hunger on the hunt were never predictable. In the winter of 1675–76, during a lull in the Iroquois wars, sixty-five Mississaugas starved to death north of Lake Erie, while several days away the Ottawas enjoyed abundant game.<sup>80</sup>

Such disasters were not the simple exigencies of the hunting life; they were the special problems of refugees crowded into lands which could not sustain the hunting pressure put upon them. Hunters eventually eliminated large game from the vicinity of the refugee centers. According to the Baron de Lahontan, no large game existed within twenty leagues of Michilimackinac by 1688, and this is supported by archaeological excavations which show few remains of large mammals in village middens. By 1675 the French noted

<sup>80</sup> For hunting patterns, see Fox: *JR* 54:223; *JR* 58:47–49; Miamis: *JR* 54:23; *JR* 68:63; *JR* 59:225, 171; Perrot, *Memoir*, 109, 118–19. Le Clercq says the Illinois hunted in large village groups. LeClercq Memoir in Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 1:102. According to Margry (*Découvertes*, 1:460), La Salle said the Illinois hunted by families "ou par tribus" meaning, apparently, clans. Each party consisted of 200 to 300 persons. By 1699 hunting parties composed only of active men and women departed from the winter camps, *JR* 65:73, 83. For variable hunting patterns of fishing peoples, see *JR* 51:29; *JR* 54:203–05, 211, 213; *JR* 55:191; *JR* 57:265–67, 291–93; *JR* 58:39, 63, 289; *JR* 55:43; *JR* 59:165–67. *JR* 57:249–55, 261; *JR* 61:103–05. The demographic composition of these parties changed over time. The large hunting party reported by the Baron de Lahontan in 1688 probably included women and children, Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:143. In the same area during 1685–86, the Iroquois had captured children as well as adults when they raided winter hunting camps. Denonville to Seignelay, June 12, 1686, *NYCD* 9:293–94. La Potherie, who wrote in the early eighteenth century, indicated largely all-male hunts occurred out of Michilimackinac in the 1690s, La Potherie, *History*, 1:281–82.

For Marquette's statements, see "Jolliet and Marquette" in Kellogg, (ed.), *Narratives*, 233–34, and *JR* 59:171. For Allouez, see *JR* 62:207, 208. For starvation of smaller hunting bands, see Perrot, *Memoir*, 103, and La Potherie, *History*, 1:280. For praise of Fox hunting grounds, see *JR* 54:219. For starvation and hunger among the Fox, see *JR* 59:229. For death of Mississaugas, see *JR* 60:215, 229. The Mississaugas died on lands apparently often hunted by the Iroquois.

that deer grew noticeably more abundant as one traveled away from the Potawatomi villages on Green Bay. Buffalo had markedly diminished on the lands near the Great Village of the Kaskaskias by 1680.<sup>81</sup>

Game remained most abundant in the lands the Iroquois had emptied. These, as French accounts make clear, were war grounds where all who entered were in danger. Hunting nations confined to relatively small areas thus depleted game locally, even though abundance might exist just beyond them. Normal cultural controls for conserving game seem to have failed when several nations competed for, or were compressed into, the same hunting area. Baron de Lahontan and French traders mention hunting practices which took care to spare breeding stock during hunts, but such methods proved inadequate in the 1670s and 1680s. One of the Iroquois complaints against the Illinois was that they slaughtered all the beaver and failed to leave any breeding stock.<sup>82</sup>

The refugee centers became barometers of Algonquian fortunes: They swelled with defeat and shrank with victory. The requirements of defense acted as a centripetal force, holding the refugees around the centers, while hunger and disease, acting as centrifugal forces, pushed them out. The price of such defensive concentrations was very often misery. Their residents endured the centers only because the alternatives were worse. Those who escaped them did not seek to return. Three Shawnees, probably from the Great Village of the Kaskaskias, summarized the everyday horrors faced by the refugees. Captured and adopted by the peoples of Saint Louis Bay on the Gulf of Mexico during La Salle's 1682 foray down the Mississippi, they showed no desire to return to the *pays d'en haut*. When the French offered them a chance to return to their villages, the Shawnees replied:

They were not unnatural enough to abandon their wives and children; . . . moreover, being in the most fertile, healthy, and peaceful

<sup>81</sup> For initial hunting on Green Bay and for Summer Island as a summer hunting station, see David S. Brose, "Summer Island III: An Early Historic Site in the Upper Great Lakes," *Historical Archaeology* 4 (1970): 24. Michilimackinac, Sault Sainte Marie and surrounding regions were praised as good hunting areas in the late 1660s and early 1670s, Perrot, *Memoir*, 221; *JR* 50:263. Compare this to Lahontan's statements in Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:148; Perrot, *Memoir*, 120, and Cadillac Memoir in Quaife, *The Western Country*, 15, and Fitting, "Patterns of Acculturation," 325. For deer diminishing near Potawatomis, see *JR* 59:173. By 1699 St. Cosme reported a dearth of meat in the area almost all the time, "Voyage of St. Cosme" in Kellogg (ed.), *Narratives*, 343. For buffalo, see Voyage de M. de La Salle à la rivière Mississippi, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:95.

<sup>82</sup> For neutral grounds, see Lettre de Cavelier de la Salle, 11 aout 1682, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:236–37, and Lettre du Découreur à un de ses associés, 1679 – 29 sept. 1680, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:59–60, and Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:318–20. The area around the Detroit River and Lake Erie that Father Henri Nouvel described in 1676 was an old neutral ground that was now being hunted, *JR* 60:219–21, 227. For attempts to conserve game, see Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:82, 114; Mémoire que la direction . . . 16 avril 1703, AN, C11A, v. 24. For Iroquois complaints of Illinois, see Du Chesneau's Memoir

country in the world, they would be devoid of sense to leave it and expose themselves to be tomahawked by the Illinois or burnt by the Iroquois on their way to another where the winter was insufferably cold, the summer without game, and ever in war.<sup>83</sup>

In the 1690s, the horrors of the *pays d'en haut* eased as the French and Algonquians put the Iroquois on the defensive. French and Algonquian invasions of Iroquoia burned villages, killed warriors, and disrupted subsistence cycles, leaving the Iroquois hungry and poor. As the losses of the Five Nations mounted, the Iroquois ineffectually sought English aid. The Iroquois wars, sometimes as part of larger imperial wars, sometimes as a separate struggle, continued until 1701, when the exhausted Iroquois sought peace with Canada and its allies. The result was the so-called Grand Settlement of 1701 which established a general peace. The Iroquois essentially abandoned hunting territories west of Detroit and agreed to allow Onontio to arbitrate their conflicts with his allies. The Iroquois promised to remain neutral in all future Anglo-French wars.<sup>84</sup>

The triumph of the alliance over the Iroquois during the 1690s meant the decline of the very communities that had produced the alliance. The refugee centers, protected from Iroquois attacks, disbanded; their inhabitants moved into the more fertile and temperate lands opened up by Iroquois decline. Neither the alliance nor the common European-Algonquian world forged in these centers died, however. They continued to grow.

on Western Indians, Nov. 13, 1681, NYCD 9:162–63; Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 1:82.

<sup>83</sup> Cavelier's Account of La Salle's Voyage to the Mouth of the Mississippi . . . , Cox, *Journeys of La Salle*, 277, 283.

<sup>84</sup> For the end to these wars and the Grand Settlement, see Richter, "War and Culture," 546–53.

## The middle ground

For every time we make others part of a "reality" that we alone invent, denying their creativity by usurping the right to create, we use those people and their way of life and make them subservient to ourselves.

Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture*

In action, people put their concepts and categories into ostensive relations to the world. Such referential uses bring into play other determinations of the signs, besides their received sense, namely the actual world and the people concerned.

Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History*

### I

Because the French and Algonquians were trading partners and allies, the boundaries of the Algonquian and French worlds melted at the edges and merged. Although identifiable Frenchmen and identifiable Indians obviously continued to exist, whether a particular practice or way of doing things was French or Indian was, after a time, not so clear. This was not because individual Indians became "Frenchified" or because individual Frenchmen went native, although both might occur. Rather, it was because Algonquians who were perfectly comfortable with their status and practices as Indians and Frenchmen, confident in the rightness of French ways, nonetheless had to deal with people who shared neither their values nor their assumptions about the appropriate way of accomplishing tasks. They had to arrive at some common conception of suitable ways of acting; they had to create what I have already referred to as a middle ground.<sup>1</sup>

The creation of the middle ground involved a process of mutual invention by both the French and the Algonquians. This process passed through various stages, of which the earliest is at once the most noticed and the least interesting. It was in this initial stage that the French, for example, simply

<sup>1</sup> The impossibility of considering any society in isolation is one of the major themes of Eric Wolf in *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 3–23, 385. It is also a position taken by Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 23–24.

assimilated Indians into their own conceptual order. Indians became *sauvages*, and the French reduced Indian religion to devil worship and witchcraft. Algonquians, for their part, thought of the first Europeans as manitous. On both sides, new people were crammed into existing categories in a mechanical way.<sup>2</sup>

Literacy gave this initial stage a potency and a durability for Europeans it might otherwise have lacked. Because the French were literate, knowledge of Indians was diffused far from the site of actual contact. Such knowledge, unchallenged by actual experience with Indians, survived as a potent cultural relict. Long after it ceased to govern the actions of those who actually lived among Indians, the idea of Indians as literally *sauvages*, or wild men embodying either natural virtue or ferocity, persisted among intellectuals and statesmen in France. Assimilated into European controversies, these imaginary Indians became the Indians of Chateaubriand and Rousseau. They took on importance, but it was one detached from the continuing processes of contact between real Algonquians and real Europeans. In the *pays d'en haut*, actual Indians and whites of widely different social class and status had, for a variety of reasons, to rely on each other in order to achieve quite specific ends. It was these Frenchmen (for Frenchwomen would not appear until much later) and Algonquian men and women who created a common ground – the middle ground – on which to proceed.<sup>3</sup>

This process of creation resulted quite naturally from attempts to follow normal conventions of behavior in a new situation. Each side sought different goals in a different manner. French officials and merchants sought to rationalize and order what they saw as the unpredictable world of the *sauvage*; Algonquians sought, in a sense, the opposite. They wanted to change or readjust the given order by appeals for personal favor or exemption. In much the same way that they sought special power to readjust the order of the world of plants, animals, and spirits by appealing to the

<sup>2</sup> For concentration on European images, see Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Olive P. Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984); Cornelius Jaenen is correct when he points out that the French lacked the power to force American Indians to acculturate. Cornelius Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 195. James Axtell's work is an exception to the usual tendency to impose static categories on Indians and whites, and Karen Kupperman disputes the extent to which cultural concepts derived from early accounts actually governed relations, Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580–1640* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1980).

<sup>3</sup> Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Les Sauvages Ameriquians: Persistence into the Eighteenth Century of Traditional French Concepts and Constructs for Comprehending AmerIndians," *Ethnohistory* 29 (1982): 43–56.

manitous, so they sought beneficial changes in the social world by appeals to the French. Often, in the examples that follow, when the French sought the imposition of hard-and-fast rules, the Algonquians sought the “power” that comes from knocking the order off balance, from asserting the personal, the human exception. The result of each side’s attempts to apply its own cultural expectations in a new context was often change in culture itself. In trying to maintain the conventional order of its world, each group applied rules that gradually shifted to meet the exigencies of particular situations. The result of these efforts was a new set of common conventions, but these conventions served as a basis for further struggles to order or influence the world of action.<sup>4</sup>

The middle ground depended on the inability of both sides to gain their ends through force. The middle ground grew according to the need of people to find a means, other than force, to gain the cooperation or consent of foreigners. To succeed, those who operated on the middle ground had, of necessity, to attempt to understand the world and the reasoning of others and to assimilate enough of that reasoning to put it to their own purposes. Particularly in diplomatic councils, the middle ground was a realm of constant invention, which was just as constantly presented as convention. Under the new conventions, new purposes arose, and so the cycle continued.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the central and defining aspect of the middle ground was the willingness of those who created it to justify their own actions in terms of what they perceived to be their partner’s cultural premises. Those operating in the middle ground acted for interests derived from their own culture, but they had to convince people of another culture that some mutual action was fair and legitimate. In attempting such persuasion people quite naturally sought out congruences, either perceived or actual, between the two cultures. The congruences arrived at often seemed – and, indeed, were – results of misunderstandings or accidents. Indeed, to later observers the interpretations offered by members of one society for the practices of another can appear ludicrous. This, however, does not matter. Any con-

<sup>4</sup> A useful discussion of these processes is found in Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 1–70, particularly 46–52, 87–88. Many Frenchmen of peasant backgrounds were probably closer to what Wagner calls the differentiating mode of tribal peoples than to the systematizing mode of French officials.

Attempts to get around the confining model of a basically static structure which is combined with an ephemeral history has been most thoroughly developed by Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); *Critique of Historical Materialism*; and *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). It has simultaneously emerged in anthropology, see Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> For this, see Wagner, *Invention of Culture*, 52–55.

gruence, no matter how tenuous, can be put to work and can take on a life of its own if it is accepted by both sides. Cultural conventions do not have to be true to be effective any more than legal precedents do. They have only to be accepted.

The middle ground of the *pays d’en haut* existed on two distinct levels. It was both a product of everyday life and a product of formal diplomatic relations between distinct peoples. For historians, however, the middle ground is initially easiest to perceive as it was articulated in formal settings.<sup>6</sup>

In June 1695 the alliance of the Huron-Petuns, Ottawas, and French was in one of its recurrent crises. The Ottawas and Huron-Petuns, fearing that the French would make a separate peace with the Iroquois, had undertaken secret negotiations of their own with the Five Nations. These negotiations had received added impetus from English promises of trade at rates considerably below those of the French. The French commander at Michilimackinac, Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac, suspecting the existence of such talks but not knowing the details of them, attempted to halt the negotiations by soliciting war parties led by French partisans among the Ottawas. Though relatively few, the war parties threatened the Iroquois and thus disrupted plans for peace. The leaders of those who favored peace, particularly a Huron chief known as the Baron, sought to stop the war parties without mentioning the Huron-Petuns’ negotiations with the Iroquois. To succeed, the Baron had to accomplish one of two things. He had to provide reasons acceptable both to the French and to their partisans as to why the war parties should not depart. Or, failing this, he had to alienate the pro-French Ottawas from Cadillac and the Jesuits. To achieve these ends, he convened a “grand and numerous” council of the nations of Michilimackinac to meet with one another as well as with Cadillac, the Jesuits, and “the most respectable Frenchmen of the post.”<sup>7</sup>

The council convened to do little more than hear a story from the Baron. He told his listeners that recently there had been discovered in the country around Saginaw Bay an old man and his wife, each about a hundred years old. They had resided there ever since the expulsion of the Hurons from their own country. The old man knew and had related all that had passed in the western wars since the destruction of the Hurons and had paid particular attention to the embassies of the Iroquois to Onontio. He knew all these things because of his communications with the Master of Life who spoke directly to the old man and who sent him animals and made his fields abound with corn and pumpkins. The old man, too, knew of the present de facto

<sup>6</sup> The creation of the middle ground might serve as an example of what Anthony Giddens calls structuration. Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*, 2–7, 69–73, 82.

<sup>7</sup> Callières au Ministre, 20 oct. 1696, AN, C11A, v. 14, ff. 216–17. Narrative of... Occurrences... 1694, 1695, NYCD, 9:604–9.

truce with the Iroquois and insinuated that the first side to break it would inevitably be destroyed.<sup>8</sup>

The old man exhorted the Indians to be attentive to the Black Gowns and to apply themselves to prayer because, if the Master of Life "who is one in three persons, who form but one Spirit and one Will" was not obeyed, he would kill the corn as he had last year. Finally the old man had told them the eighth day should be observed by abstinence from work and should be sanctified by prayer. The dead, he said, should be given scaffold burials instead of being buried in the ground, so that they could more easily take the road to Heaven. Finally, the old man had urged that they all hearken to the voice of Onontio and follow his will. On concluding his recitation of the old man's message, the Baron offered Cadillac a present of beaver from the old man himself. Cadillac, who thought that of the whole story only the beaver was not imaginary, refused the present, "this voice being unknown to him."<sup>9</sup>

The Baron's story was an attempt to use and expand the middle ground so that his own interest – peace with the Iroquois – could be secured. Peace could not be protected through normal Huron cultural forms. If the matter had depended only on non-Christian Ottawas and Huron-Petuns, the Baron would not have had to resort to the story of the old man, with all its Christian and prophetic elements. If he had been addressing Indians only, the council could have been convened to consider a dream that contained the same message. Dreams, however, as the Baron realized quite well, had no legitimacy for the French who were urging their partisans to action. What did have legitimacy for them was divine revelation, and so the Baron gave them one. Baron's attempt failed because, as the chronicler of his speech huffily observed, the French only attached "belief to certain revelations and visions . . . because they are authorized." The old man was unauthorized and so proved an unsuccessful device for conveying a message in a manner that had legitimacy for Europeans.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, the Baron's tactics were both clever and revealing. He had consciously tried to buttress the legitimacy of the old man's message by filling it with fragments of Christian doctrine (the Trinity, exhortations to prayer, attentiveness to the missionaries) and with the commands to follow the will of Onontio, the French governor. These were all items the French could hardly quarrel with. Yet the Baron also gave the message a definite Huron tinge. The prophet was an Indian who changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the eighth. It is unlikely this was accidental. As early as 1679, the Jesuits had praised the Huron-Petuns for their particularly scrupulous

<sup>8</sup> Narrative of . . . Occurrences . . . 1694, 1695, NYCD 9:607.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; it is interesting to note here that some Ottawas eventually did adopt scaffold burials, HBNI 15:777.

<sup>10</sup> Narrative of . . . Occurrences . . . 1694, 1695, NYCD 9:607.

observance of Sundays and feast days. The Huron-Petuns even had a special officer of the faith who gave notice of the meeting days. It would be surprising if the Baron had forgotten all this. It seems more likely that the Baron's movement of the Sabbath was intentional and that he meant it, along with the command for scaffold burials, to set the old man apart as an Indian prophet with an Indian message from the Christian God. It is unclear if the Baron seriously believed the French would accept the legitimacy of an Indian prophet, but by framing the story as he did, he created a situation in which even their rejection of the old man might serve his purposes. When Cadillac and the Jesuits rejected the old man, they rejected, too, exhortation to prayer and obedience to missionaries and Onontio. More than that, by rejecting the story, the French seemed to insinuate that God spoke directly only to whites, and not to Indians.<sup>11</sup>

Cadillac denounced the story as ridiculous, mocked the Baron's apparent confusion about the Sabbath, and demanded that the Indians strike the Iroquois. He left behind a troubled council. To the gathered Ottawa and Huron-Petun elders it now seemed that "the French were unwilling to listen to the voice of their pretended man of God, alleging that the Black Gowns were very desirous of being heard when they recounted stories about Paul and the anchorites of olden times; wherefore then, they asked, shall not our old man possess the same light?"<sup>12</sup>

The council was merely a skirmish within the larger diplomatic battle being waged over participation by the Michilimackinac Indians in the Iroquois war, but it reveals the process that formed the middle ground and made the boundaries between French and Algonquian societies so porous. To further its interests, each side had to attain cultural legitimacy in terms of the other. The Baron and Cadillac, as much as each might mangle the subtleties of the other's cultural view, had created a forum in which they could speak and understand each other. They did so by using, for their own purposes and according to their own understanding, the cultural forms of the other. The Baron appealed to a Christian tradition of prophecy and put it to Indian purposes. He sought to validate it, in Indian terms, by a gift of beaver. Cadillac, appearing in an Indian council, followed Algonquian forms and, knowing what acceptance of the gift signified, refused it. To accept the gift was to acknowledge the old man, whom the Baron would then make "talk on every occasion that he would judge favorable for his pernicious designs." He rejected an Indian adaptation of a Christian device through his own use of Algonquian-Iroquoian diplomatic forms. Both used the cultural

<sup>11</sup> For Huron-Petuns and Sabbath, see *JR* 61:105.

<sup>12</sup> Narrative of . . . Occurrences . . . 1694, 1695, NYCD 9:608. For a similar instance, see *JR* 59:223.

forms of the other cleverly, if crudely. The crudeness of the Baron's Christianity or Cadillac's mastery of Indian diplomacy mattered less than the need for each to employ these foreign elements at all. They merged them into something quite different from the Algonquian, Iroquoian, and French cultures that gave them birth.

The Baron's encounter with Cadillac took place in a diplomatic forum where representatives of each culture dealt with a well-formulated body of ideas and practices. This was one aspect of the middle ground and the one in which its methods are best documented and exhibited. The middle ground itself, however, did not originate in councils and official encounters; instead, it resulted from the daily encounters of individual Indians and Frenchmen with problems and controversies that needed immediate solution. Many of these problems revolved around basic issues of sex, violence, and material exchange. The need to resolve these problems, perhaps even more than the problems of alliance, forced the middle ground into existence. But even this misstates the issue, for the distinction between official dealings and personal dealings was a hazy and confusing one in Algonquian society, where coercive mechanisms and hierarchical structures were notoriously weak.

Although French officials spoke of their relationship with the Algonquians in economic, political, and, less often, religious terms, paradoxically economic and political institutions could not control the context of contact. In the day-to-day relations of the western country, the relationships of Algonquians and Frenchmen as trading partners and allies were abstractions, pertinent, perhaps, to Indians and French as aggregates, but having little to do with actual people in face-to-face relationships. In another society, with more coercive mechanisms at an elite's disposal, personal relations between intruders such as the French and the members of the host society might be kept to a minimum and mattered little. Traders might be isolated in special quarters and granted special privileges; they might be governed by separate rules and taxed at stated rates. Isolation, however, was impossible among the Algonquians, who lacked a state with coercive institutions and in whose society obedience to authority was usually neither a social fact nor a social virtue.<sup>13</sup>

This weakness of political authority and lack of subordination in Algonquian society struck both the Algonquians and the French as a major difference between the two peoples. For the French this lack of subordination, not the Algonquians' state of material or technological development, was at the heart of Algonquian "savagery." The northern Indians, according

<sup>13</sup> Narrative of . . . Occurrences . . . 1694, 1695, NYCD 9:608. For the development of trading enclaves, see Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 11–12, 38, 46–49, 111–15.

to the Sieur d'Aigremont, "possess no subordination among themselves . . . being opposed to all constraint. Moreover, these peoples [have] no idea of Royal grandeur nor Majesty, nor of the powers of Superiors over inferiors."<sup>14</sup>

Father Membre, traveling south along the Mississippi with La Salle in 1682, clearly regarded authority as being at the heart of not only society but humanity. The Natchez and the hierarchical societies of the Mississippi were technologically like the Algonquians. They were a Stone Age people, but they were "all different from our Canada Indians in their houses, dress, manners, inclinations and customs. . . . Their chiefs possess all the authority. . . . They have their valets and officers who follow them and serve them everywhere. They distribute their favors and presents at will. In a word we generally found men there."<sup>15</sup>

The French did not err in noting the absence of class divisions and state and religious institutions among northern Algonquians, but they were mistaken when they took this for an absence of social order. Tradition was the storehouse of a tribal people's knowledge of themselves as a people and a guide to how they should act. As war and disease reduced populations and forced the amalgamation of previously distinct peoples, the survivors seemed to cling to their traditions. But they were like infants sucking the breasts of their dead mothers; tradition could no longer sustain them.<sup>16</sup>

The weakness of coercive authority among the Algonquians would have mattered less if French authority had officially reached the West. With the decline of the trade fairs, however, official French supervision of exchange became a mirage. Indians no longer traveled long distances to fortified European towns or outposts to exchange furs. Some limited exchanges of this type took place at Fort Saint Louis, in the Illinois country, and at Michilimackinac and the posts Perrot erected among the Sioux, but most trade was the work of small groups of Frenchmen traveling to Indian villages and hunting camps. Once these traders had lost their status as manitous, they were strangers without social standing in Algonquian villages. They were also wealthy strangers, with goods far in excess of their own immediate needs, who stood virtually defenseless. If they were to succeed as traders, they had to find means to protect themselves either through force or by establishing personal ties within the communities in which they traded.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For Sieur d'Aigremont, see D'Aigremont to Pontchartrain, Nov. 14, 1708, *WHC* 16:250.

<sup>15</sup> Chrétien Le Clercq, *The First Establishment of the Faith in New France*, 2 vols. (New York: J. G. Shea, 1881), 192.

<sup>16</sup> See Giddens, *Critique of Historical Materialism*, 93–94, 160, for a general discussion of these issues.

<sup>17</sup> *JR* 65:239. W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 110; Champigny au Ministre, 4 nov. 1693, AN, C11A, v. 12; Memoire . . . Denonville, aoust 1688, AN, C11A, v. 10 (765–66); Callières au Ministre, 15 oct. 1694, AN, C11A, v. 15; Memoire sur le ferme . . . 10 fev. 1696, AN, C11A, v. 16; Commerce du

The French elite feared the consequences of such contact. French authorities thought that Frenchmen moving within Algonquian society would slip the net unless kept under tight control. What horrified French officials quite as much as the economic damage they believed the coureurs de bois did was the social threat they represented. According to officials, the coureurs de bois were metamorphosing into *sauvages*, that is, men beyond the control of legitimate authority. What was particularly horrifying about the “savagery” of the coureurs de bois was that they seemed to glory in it. They used their freedom to mock the men who never doubted that they were their betters. On his return to the Illinois in 1680, La Salle found that his men had not only deserted but had also demolished his fort, stolen his goods, and, in the hand of a man La Salle recognized as Le Parisien, had left scrawled on a board a parting epithet: *Nous sommes tous Sauvages* (“We are all savages”).<sup>18</sup>

Le Parisien, of course, was no more a *sauvage* than La Salle. He merely shared with his superiors a common misunderstanding of Algonquian society as a place of license without order. It was this misperception that gave the word *sauvage* its power as a metaphor for what officials regarded as a danger and men like Le Parisien saw as an opportunity – the escape from subordination. That most coureurs de bois could fully escape the restraining hands of the state and the church was an exaggeration. Yet, in another sense, the fear of the authorities and the hope of Le Parisien were not fully misplaced. Frenchmen in the West could to a remarkable degree act independently, if only temporarily, in reaching accommodations with the Algonquians among whom they traveled and lived. They made contact a complex social process only partially under the control of church and state. In the West, this process centered on Frenchmen whom the authorities did not regard as legitimate representatives of their own society and who were actually seen as a danger to it. There was always a tension between these men and those other Frenchmen who possessed legitimate standing: men who like La Salle, came with grants from the Crown; or missionaries, like the Jesuits; or military commanders; or licensed traders. Frenchmen in the West often cooperated, but such cooperation could never be presumed. Indians thus had to establish appropriate social ties with a diverse and often quarreling group of Frenchmen.<sup>19</sup>

castor . . . 1696, AN, C11A, v. 14; Milo Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country in the Seventeenth Century: The Memoirs of Lanothe Cadillac and Pierre Liette* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1917), 16–18. Untitled mémoire (Par tout ce qui . . .) AN, C11A, v. 17 (f. 193).

<sup>18</sup> Duchesneau to M. de Seignelay, 10 Nov. 1679, NYCD 9:133–34; Denonville à Seignelay, 13 nov. 1685, AN, C11A, v. 7; Champigny Memoir, 10 mai 1691, AN, C11A, v. 11; Denonville to Seignelay, Jan. 1690, NYCD 9:442–43. For quotation, see Relation du voyage de Cavelier de La Salle, du 22 Aout 1680 a l'automne de 1681, Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:133. On coureurs de bois, see Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 115; Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, 90.

<sup>19</sup> Louise Dechene, in examining records of those going west between 1708 and 1717, found

Certain of these diverse Frenchmen, in turn, posed dangers to Algonquian social order because they struck at the heart of Algonquian identity by arguing that traditional practices were not innate, but transferable from one people to another. Missionaries and Christianity, in this sense, represented a potentially subversive force that, if not assimilated into Algonquian traditions, could destroy the very identity of those who accepted it. Only in the Illinois country was this threat soon realized, and there, where the dangers of Christianity were most fully faced, the arguments of the opponents of the missionaries are revealing. The adversaries of the church based their attack partially on the argument that prayer was ineffective and baptism brought death, but they also worked from the assumption that Christianity displaced traditions central to the identity of various Illinois groups and appropriate to them. In a style of argument that foreshadowed later appeals to an “Indian way,” Illinois elders contended that since identity was innate, Christianity was proper for the French; Illinois beliefs were proper for the Illinois. As a leading Peoria chief, an opponent of Christianity’s, phrased it:

I shall hold a feast . . . and I shall invite all the old men and all the chiefs of bands. . . . After speaking of our medicines and of what our grandfathers and ancestors have taught us, has this man who has come from afar better medicines than we have, to make us adopt his customs? His fables are good only in his own country; we have ours, which do not make us die as his do.

Or, in the words of a Kaskaskia elder, “full of zeal for the ancient customs of the country and apprehending that his credit and that of his class [*son semblable*] would be diminished if their people embraced the faith”:

All ye who have hitherto hearkened to what the black gown has said to you come into my cabin. I shall likewise teach you what I learned from my grandfather, and what we should believe. Leave their myths to the people who come from afar, and let us cling to our own traditions.<sup>20</sup>

The operation of the middle ground must be understood within a dual context. First, there was the weakness of hierarchical controls within Algonquian villages and the frailty of any authority French officials exerted over Frenchmen in the West. Second, there was the cultural threat each society seemed to pose to the elite of the other. What this meant in practice was that both the extent and meaning of social relations between Frenchmen

that of a total of 373 different individuals, 179 made just one trip and 112 made three or more. These 112 formed “l’armature du commerce interieur.” The others made such voyages “une activité temporaire ou occasionnelle”; De Chene, *Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au xvii siècle* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1974), 219–220.

<sup>20</sup> JR 64:173, 183.

and Algonquians were often negotiated largely on a face-to-face level within the villages themselves, and that these relations were not what either French authorities or Algonquian elders might have preferred them to be. This does not mean that there was no official element involved, but rather that official decisions could not determine the course of actual relations.

## II

The array of relations negotiated in the middle ground was quite large, but leaving aside for now the liquor trade, problems in two arenas of contact – sex and violence – seem to have been particularly acute. Sexual relations between Frenchmen and Indian women and violence between French and Indians, both men and women, accompanied trade throughout the West. One facilitated trade, and the other threatened to destroy it; both presented problems of cultural interaction that had to be negotiated. Sex and violence are thus important not only in their own right but also as avenues for understanding how cultural accommodation on the middle ground, in fact, worked.

What made sexual relations between Frenchmen and Indian women so central to contact in the West was that until the 1730s relatively few Frenchwomen ever came west. Frenchwomen were a curiosity in the upper country. The appearance of Madame Le Sueur at Fort Saint Louis in the 1690s created such an uproar that she, like Indians visiting Europe, had to consent to a public display so that the curious could see her. The absence of Frenchwomen meant that French males actively sought out Indian women as sexual partners. Not all French males did so, of course. The Jesuits and often their *donnés* were celibate. This was a condition which, if not unknown among the Algonquians, was regarded by them with the same combination of curiosity and revulsion with which the French regarded the berdaches of the Illinois and the acceptance of homosexual relations among many Algonquian peoples.<sup>21</sup>

Algonquians eventually accepted Jesuit celibacy, but the Jesuits never accepted Algonquian sexual mores, particularly when other Frenchmen proved so enthusiastic about them. Sex was hardly a personal affair; it was governed and regulated by the appropriate authorities. The supreme arbiters of sex among the French were precisely those who, theoretically, had the

<sup>21</sup> For Madame Le Sueur, see De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:338. For berdaches and homosexuality, see De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:329–30; Le Clercq, *First Establishment*, 135; Relations des découvertes, in Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et établissements des Français... de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 1614–1698, 6 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie, 1879, repr. New York, AMS, 1974), 1:488.

least practical experience, the priests. The Jesuits took a vocal and active interest in the sexual activities of both the French and the Indians.<sup>22</sup>

It was the interest of the Jesuits in other people's sexual conduct, along with the more immediate experience and observations of men like Perrot, Lahontan, and Deliette, that makes possible reconstruction of their contemporaries' sexual relations, but the very nature of these sources requires that they be used carefully. To understand sexual relations between Algonquians and Europeans, we must remove the combination of sexual fantasy, social criticism, and Jansenism with which the French often veiled their descriptions. A few relatively straightforward descriptions of sexual relations exist, but sources are often openly polemical. The Jesuits were interested in denouncing and restraining what they regarded as Algonquian and French sexual immorality – polygamy, adultery, and prostitution – whereas, at the other extreme, the Baron de Lahontan sometimes delighted in using Indians as weapons in assaulting European law, custom, and hypocrisy.<sup>23</sup>

Despite their differing purposes, nearly all French accounts were united, first, by their inability to understand the status of women vis-à-vis men except in terms of conjugal relations and, second, by their tendency to group actual sexual relations in terms of two opposite poles of conduct, with marriage at one extreme and prostitution and adultery at the other. In attempting to impose their own cultural categories on the actions of Algonquian women, the French tended to select material that made the women seem merely a disorderly and lewd set of Europeans, not people following an entirely different social logic. The immediate result was to define a woman in terms of a person – her actual or potential husband – who may not have been anywhere near being the most significant figure in the woman's life. Depending on her tribal identity, an Algonquian woman often had a more durable and significant relationship with her mother, father, brothers, sisters, or grandparents, or with other, unrelated women than with her husband or husbands. Nor was an Algonquian woman's status dependent solely on her husband. Her own membership in ritual organizations or, among some tribes such as the Shawnees, Huron-Petuns, and Miamis, her own political status in offices confined to women had more influence on her social position than the status of her husband did.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *JR* 54:179–83; *JR* 65:235–45; Cadillac, Account of Detroit, Sept. 25, 1702, *MPHC* 33:143. Ordonnance du M. le Comte de Frontenac pour la traite et commerce du outaouacs... 8 avril 1690 (avec remarques faites par l'intendant), AN, F3, v. 6, f. 366.

<sup>23</sup> *JR* 65:193–99, 229–43; Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *New Voyage to North America by the Baron de Lahontan*, 2 vols. (Chicago: A. C. McClury, 1905), 2:455–56, 460–61, 605–18.

<sup>24</sup> For general difficulties with European observations on Indian women, see Katherine Weist, "Beasts of Burden and Menial Slaves: Nineteenth-Century Observations of Northern Plains Indian Women," and Alice Kehoe, "The Shackles of Tradition," both in Patricia Albers and

Even when the most careful and sensitive of the European observers talked about the status of women and sexual relations, therefore, they eliminated much of the actual social world that gave those relations their full meaning. Perrot and Father Lafitau, for example, wrote dispassionate accounts of Algonquian marriage customs. They recognized marriage as a social contract between families, as it was in Europe, even if gifts were given to the bride's family, in exchange for, as Perrot said, the bride's body, instead of to the groom as in Europe. In marriage coercive authority, elsewhere so weak in Algonquian society, stiffened. Once married, a woman was clearly subordinate to her husband. The French viewed the harsh punishments inflicted on women for adultery among the Illinois and the Miamis as the most graphic evidence of subordination. Deliette said that he had seen evidence that more than a hundred women had been executed for adultery during the seven years he had spent among the Illinois. Others emphasized the mutilation of adulterous women by husbands, who cut off a nose or an ear, and the gang rapes inflicted on unfaithful wives by men solicited for the purpose by the husband. There were no equivalent penalties for adultery by men. For Frenchmen, these property exchanges, the subordination of women, and the double sexual standard made this a harsh but recognizable and comprehensible world.<sup>25</sup>

The problem was that this portrait, as the French sources themselves make clear, was incomplete. A woman's subordination to her husband was not necessarily permanent. She could call on male relatives to protect and vindicate her. She could leave her husband and return to her own family whenever she chose. Among many groups adultery was not harshly punished. According to Cadillac, the sexual freedom of married Ottawa and Huron-Petun women was so great that it made adultery a meaningless category. And, indeed, it was the categories themselves that were the problem.

Beatrice Medicine, *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1983), 29–52, 53–73. Women among the Illinois gained power from visions and could become shamans. The culturally very similar Miami had female chiefs whose duties paralleled the male chiefs'. They inherited their status from their fathers and did not obtain it through their husbands. See *HBNI* 15:675, 677, 684–85.

<sup>25</sup> For Perrot and Lafitau on marriage, see Nicolas Perrot, *Memoir on the Manners, Customs, and Religion of the Savages of North America*, in Emma Helen Blair (ed.), *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1912), 1:64–65; Joseph-François Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1924–77), 1:336–37, 339. For adultery among the Illinois, see De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:327, 335–37; Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *Father Louis Hennepin's A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America* (facsimile ed., Toronto: Coles, 1974, repr. ed. of 1903 ed.), 167–68; Jolliet and Marquette, in Louise P. Kellogg (ed.), *Early Narratives of the Northwest, 1634–1699* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), 243.

European conceptions of marriage, adultery, and prostitution just could not encompass the actual variety of sexual relations in the *pays d'en haut*.<sup>26</sup>

Jesuits and other Europeans did not impose these cultural categories as an ethnographic exercise; they did so in an attempt to understand and regulate sexual activity. This was a task that missionaries saw as an essential part of their purpose in the West. Adultery, prostitution, and marriage obviously existed, but most sexual contact took place between Frenchmen and single Indian women, who enjoyed considerable sexual freedom but were not prostitutes. There was no appropriate French category for such free, unmarried Algonquian women.

Because of this lack of readily available parallels from French society, and because of differences between the hierarchical Miamis and Illinois, on the one hand, and the remaining Algonquians, on the other, French accounts of the sexual standards expected of unmarried young women among the Algonquians vary widely and are often internally contradictory. Deliette, for example, says the Illinois valued chastity highly, but he then goes on to say that virtually all women, even married women, took lovers.<sup>27</sup>

Lahontan credited unmarried Algonquian women with virtually complete sexual freedom.

A Young Woman is allow'd to do what she pleases; let her Conduct be what it will, neither Father nor Mother, Brother nor Sister can pretend to controul her. A Young Woman, say they, is Master of her own Body, and by her Natural Right of Liberty is free to do what she pleases.

The only social barrier to premarital intercourse was fear of pregnancy, which would make it impossible to obtain a high-ranking husband, but Lahontan said women knew how to abort unwanted pregnancies. Among most groups such sexual freedom apparently ended with marriage. But some women never did marry. There was, according to Lahontan, a class of women called Ickoue ne Kioussa, or Hunting Women – "for they commonly accompany the Huntsmen in their Diversions." Such women argued that they could not endure "the conjugal yoak," that they were incapable of bringing up children and were "too impatient to spend winters in the village." Lahontan regarded all this as a "disguise for lewdness," but he noted that these women were not censured by their parents or other

<sup>26</sup> For Cadillac, see Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country*, 63. For references to prostitution, see *JR* 65:241; *Memoire touchant l'ivrognerie des sauvages*, 1693, AN. C11A, v. 12, f. 384.

<sup>27</sup> De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:328–37; Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 2:453. Joutel gives a contradictory account similar to Deliette's; see Joutel's Memoir, in Isaac J. Cox, *The Journeys of Robert Cavelier de La Salle*, 2 vols. (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1905), 2:222.

relatives, who asserted, for instance, "that their daughters have the command of their own Bodies and may dispose of their persons as they think fit." The children these women bore were raised by their families and "accounted a Lawful issue"; they were entitled to all privileges except that they could not marry into families of noted warriors or councillors.<sup>28</sup>

Such quotations from Lahontan must be read with caution, since Indians often served him as mere vehicles for his own critique of French society, and his analysis often differed from those of more experienced observers of the Algonquian nations. Lahontan, for example, made divorce among the Algonquians a far more trivial event than did Perrot, who spent much of his life among the western Indians. And certainly among the Illinois, women were not totally free before marriage; brothers greatly influenced their sisters' sexual lives. Nevertheless, despite Lahontan's tendency to over-generalize and his notorious inventions, his assertions cannot be dismissed as simply romantic fabrication. Other accounts corroborate his descriptions of young Algonquian women. Joutel's memoir about the Illinois, although it confuses cohabitation with hunting women and marriage, substantiates Lahontan's description. According to Joutel, the marriages of the Illinois lasted no longer than the parties desired to remain together, for they "freely part after a hunting bout, each going which way they please without any ceremony," and he notes, "There are women who make no secret of having had to do with Frenchmen." Cadillac, too, noted that girls "are allowed to enjoy themselves and to experiment with marriage as long as they like and with as many boys as they wish without reproach."<sup>29</sup>

Younger women and hunting women thus enjoyed substantial freedom in engaging in sexual relations with Frenchmen and played a major part in establishing the customary terms of sexual relationships between the Algonquians and the French. Initially, many Frenchmen, like the Jesuits, may have viewed this sort of relationship as simple prostitution or, like Joutel, as a loose, easily dissolved marriage, but by the 1690s they recognized it as a separate, customary form for sexual relationships in the fur trade. Basically, women adapted the relationship of hunting women to hunters to the new conditions of the fur trade. Such women not only had sexual intercourse with their French companions, they also cooked and washed for

<sup>28</sup> For quotation, see Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages*, 2:453; *ibid.*, 454, 463. For pregnancy, see *ibid.*, 454, 463; for hunting women, see *ibid.*, 463–64.

<sup>29</sup> On divorce, compare Lahontan to Perrot and Cadillac; Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyage*, 2:453; Perrot, *Memoir*, 64–65; Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country*, 38–39. For brothers' control over sisters, see De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, IHC 23:332, 337, and Raudot, "Memoir," in W. Vernon Kinietz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), 389. For Joutel, see Joutel Memoir, in Cox (ed.), *Journeys of La Salle*, 2:222. For Cadillac quotation, see Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country*, 45.

them, made their clothes, and cut their wood. In denouncing these women, the Jesuit Father Carheil described them in terms similar to Lahontan's:

The traders have become so accustomed to have women for their use in the trading-places, and these have become so necessary to them, that they cannot do without them even on their journeys. . . . I refer to single women, women without husbands, women who are mistresses of their own Bodies, women who can dispose of them to these men, and whom the latter know to be willing to do so – in a word, They are all the prostitutes of Montreal who are alternately brought here and taken back; and They are all the prostitutes of this place, who are carried in the same way from here to Montreal, and from Montreal to here. . . . The pretext that they usually allege for taking women in preference to men on these journeys is, that women cost them less than men, and are satisfied with lower wages. They speak the truth; but the very Fact of their being Satisfied with less wages is a Manifest proof of their dissoluteness. . . . The women, Being depraved, want them as men; and they, on their part, want them as women, on all their journeys – after which . . . they quit one another. They separate from these only to Seek others.<sup>30</sup>

What Father Carheil misunderstood and denounced as *prostitution* had little to do with that term as commonly understood. These women did not solicit customers, and they did not sell discrete sexual acts. Sex accompanied a general agreement to do the work commonly expected of women in Algonquian society. Nor was the relationship a temporary marriage. In marriage a wife received no payment from her husband, nor was she as free as a hunting woman to dissolve one relationship and begin another. Finally, these relationships were not contracts between families. They were, instead, a bridge to the middle ground, an adjustment to interracial sex in the fur trade where the initial conceptions of sexual conduct held by each side were reconciled in a new customary relation. The appeal of unions that offered both temporary labor and sexual companionship to the *coureurs de bois* is obvious, but these relationships also may have flourished because of the badly skewed sex ratios within Algonquian societies, apparently the result of warfare.

Many late seventeenth-century accounts of western Algonquian population stress both sexual imbalance and the presence of soral polygamy – the practice of a husband marrying two or more sisters. Sexual relations with the *courieur de bois* offered an alternative to polygamy. Polygamy was also a particular target of Jesuit missionaries, who were not reluctant to assert a connection among the famines, the epidemics sweeping the villages, and

<sup>30</sup> For customary relation, see JR 65:233. For quotation, see *ibid.*, 241.

plural marriages. Jesuit denunciations of polygamy appear to have achieved at least some temporary success in the Michilimackinac region. In 1670, in response to an epidemic, the men at Sault Sainte Marie took back their first wives and put away those wives they had taken since their first marriage. Subsequently, the Kiskakon Ottawas, the most Christianized of the Ottawas, were also the Ottawa group with the fewest polygamists, and, supposedly, the Kaskaskias abandoned polygamy entirely by the early eighteenth century. Elsewhere the Jesuits never succeeded in completely eradicating polygamy, but even partial success yielded ironic results. Given the population imbalance between men and women, any increase in the class of single women yielded more women who might be willing to attach themselves to the French.<sup>31</sup>

That Jesuit battles against polygamy may have increased the number of women who consorted with Frenchmen was only one of the ironies created by French and Algonquian attempts to arrive at mutually intelligible patterns of sexual conduct. Hunting women, as a group, carried and modified one Algonquian pattern of sexual relations into the fur trade in their liaisons with the coureurs de bois, but a smaller group of Christian Indian women were also influential in creating other patterns of sexual conduct through their own relationships with both Algonquian men and Frenchmen. The influence of these women was not felt everywhere; necessarily, it was confined to groups in which the Jesuits had succeeded in making a significant number of converts: the Huron-Petuns, the Kiskakon Ottawas, and above all the Kaskaskias of the Illinois confederation.<sup>32</sup>

The influence of Christian women emerged most clearly among the Illinois. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, there were signs of sexual crisis among the Illinois. They had a badly skewed sex ratio, which Deliette, probably exaggerating, estimated at four women to each man. The Illinois themselves thought that their traditional marriage pattern was in decay, and in French accounts, they combined draconian punishments for adultery with widespread sexual liaisons between Frenchman and Indian women. By 1692 the Illinois had largely abandoned Starved Rock and had built villages at the southern end of Lake Peoria, thus creating a new

<sup>31</sup> For references to sexual imbalance and soral polygamy, see *Relation du voyage de Cavelier de la Salle, du 11 aout 1680 à l'automne de 1681*. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:157; *JR* 54:219, 229; La Salle on the Illinois Country, 1680, *IHC* 23:10. De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:329. *JR* 54:219. For Jesuit attacks on polygamy and connections between polygamy and disease, etc., see *JR* 57:215–19; *JR* 57:231; *JR* 56:113. For renunciation of wives, see *JR* 55:129–31. For decline of polygamy, see *JR* 61:1312; *JR* 57:231, 81. Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians," *Ethnohistory* 3 (Summer 1986): 386–87.

<sup>32</sup> *JR* 65:67, 79; De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:361. For emphasis Jesuits placed on sexual conduct among Kiskakon Ottawas and Kaskaskias, see *JR* 54:179–83, and *JR* 65:67–69.

collection of villages at Pimitoui. The French who accompanied the Illinois had built the second Fort Saint Louis near these villages. Pimitoui also served as the headquarters for Jesuit mission activity among the Illinois and surrounding nations. Father Gravier, missionary to the Illinois since 1688 or 1689, established a permanent mission there in 1693. By 1696 the priest estimated that over the preceding six years he had baptized some two thousand persons. Even allowing for large numbers of deathbed baptisms and baptisms of infants who did not grow up to be practicing Catholics, this is a substantial figure. Much of Gravier's lasting success took place among the Illinois, particularly among the young women, who, according to Deliette, "often profit by their teaching and mock at the superstitions of their nation. This often greatly incenses the old men."<sup>33</sup>

By the 1690s the differential sexual appeal of Catholic teaching began to have significant repercussions among the Illinois. This, in turn, influenced the way the French and Illinois societies were linked. Jesuit teaching among the Illinois in the 1690s stressed the cult of the Virgin Mary, and with it came a heavy emphasis on chastity and virginity. This stress on a powerful female religious figure, whose power, like that of the Jesuits, was connected with sexual abstinence, attracted a congregation composed largely of women, particularly young women and older girls. How these young women understood Christianity and the cult of the Virgin is not entirely clear. They may have identified it in terms of women's ritual organizations, but given their tendency to mock Illinois traditions, they also clearly saw it in opposition to existing religious practices. During a period of warfare, direct cultural challenge by the Jesuits, population decline, and, if French accounts are correct, widespread violence of men against women, the actions of these women had direct social and cultural implications. Women took the common Algonquian dictum that unmarried women were "masters of their own body" and justified not sexual experimentation but sexual abstinence. They then assayed the religious powers they derived from prayer and Catholic doctrine against the powers the elders derived from visions and tradition.

<sup>33</sup> De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:329–30, 335–37; Joutel Memoir, in Cox (ed.), *Journeys of La Salle*, 2:222. Emily Blasingham estimates the ratio of adult warriors to the rest of the population at 1:3.17 which obviously would not allow for Deliette's estimate, but her estimate is perhaps even more of a guess than his. Blasingham, "Depopulation of the Illinois," 364. For village sites, see J. Joe Bauxar, "The Historic Period," in Elaine Bluhm (ed.), *Illinois Archaeology Bulletin No. 1*, Illinois Archaeological Survey, Urbana (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959), 49. For Gravier's mission, see Mary Borgian Palm, "The Jesuit Missions of the Illinois Country (1673–1763)," Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1931 (Cleveland, privately printed, Sisters of Notre Dame, 1931), 22, 24–25. For Father Gravier's claim of baptism, see *JR* 65:33. For conflict, see *JR* 65:67, and Fr. Rale quoted in Mary Elizabeth Good, "The Guebert Site: An Eighteenth-Century Historic Kaskaskia Indian Village in Randolph County, Illinois," *Central States Archaeological Societies Memoir*, 2 (n.p., 1972), 14.

Their actions outraged both the young men, who found their own sexual opportunities diminished, and the elders and shamans who were directly challenged.<sup>34</sup>

In this dispute, Christianity and the Algonquians' social and cultural world were becoming part of a single field of action, and the outcome influenced not just Algonquian but also French society. Frenchmen in the West were no more enthusiastic about the new Christian influence among Illinois women than were Illinois men. Frenchmen, too, resented the new ability of Jesuits, through their influence over women, to control the sexual lives of the coureurs de bois and the voyageurs. Their resentment went beyond this.

Jesuit influence threatened not only sexual activity but also the ability of traders and coureurs de bois to create the ties to Algonquian society on which their trade, and perhaps their lives, depended. The critical issue here was not casual liaisons, but marriage. Formal marriages between Indian women and Frenchmen were quite rare during the seventeenth century. Marriage *à la façon du pays*, that is, according to local Algonquian custom, may have occurred, but there are few references to interracial marriage of any kind until the 1690s. In 1698 Father St. Cosme mentioned voyageurs with Illinois wives, and about the same time Father Carheil mentioned other voyageurs at Michilimackinac who had married among the Indians. In theory, the Jesuits and the colonial elite in general might have been expected to approve marriage between Frenchmen and Indian women as an alternative to the unregulated sexual relationships of the *pays d'en haut*. Along the same line, the French voyageurs, operating in a world of abundant sexual opportunities, might have been expected to be indifferent to formal conjugal ties. In fact, however, their positions were nearly the opposite during the 1690s. The seemingly sudden rise of interracial marriages in the 1690s may be connected with the increasingly serious attempts of the French to force the coureurs de bois out of the *pays d'en haut*. These culminated in the French abandonment of most western posts in the late 1690s. Through marriage, the coureurs de bois may have been attempting to establish the necessary kin connections with Indians that would be vital to the ability of any Frenchman to remain safely in the West.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For Virgin Mary, see *JR* 59:187; 193, 201, 207, *JR* 63:217–19. For opposition of young men, see *JR* 65:67.

<sup>35</sup> For marriages, see *JR* 65:241; *JR* 65:69; St. Cosme, in Kellogg (ed.), *Narratives*, 251. The best work on intermarriage on the Great Lakes is by Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Metis," *Ethnohistory* 25 (1978): 41–68. For intermarriage in the Northwest, see Olive Dickason, "From One Nation in the Northeast to New Nation in the Northwest: A Look at the Emergence of the Metis" in Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985). Interracial marriage within the later

Such attempts met with considerable sympathy from French commanders, usually with trading interests of their own, who were responsible not for larger policies but for day-to-day relations with the Indians. Both Henry de Tonti and the Sieur de la Forest at Fort Saint Louis supported attempts to fortify ties with the Illinois through intermarriage. Cadillac's plan for Detroit in the early eighteenth century included the promotion of marriages between soldiers and Indian women. He explained: "Marriages of this kind will strengthen the friendship of these tribes, as the alliances of the Romans perpetuated peace with the Sabines through the intervention of the women whom the former had taken from the others."<sup>36</sup>

Indians, like the commanders, saw marriage as an integral part of their alliance with the French. Male heads of families, at least, greeted marriages enthusiastically. Marriage, far more than the prevailing French liaisons with hunting women, put sex firmly in the political arena. As both sides recognized, marriage was an alliance between families that concerned many more people than the marital partners. Not only did property move into the hands of the bride's family, but kinship relations were established that enabled both families to call on their relatives for aid and protection. Because of the wider social implications of marriage, as compared to relations with hunting women, a woman found her family much more interested in her choice of a permanent French partner than in her casual liaisons.<sup>37</sup>

Jesuits and higher French officials, however, were unenthusiastic about marriage both because it gave voyageurs and coureurs de bois an independent hold in the *pays d'en haut* and also for racist reasons. The Jesuits did not favor interracial marriage in the seventeenth century. Their preferred solution to the problems of sexual morality was to banish most Frenchmen from the upper country and to place those who remained under strict Jesuit supervision. Gradually, however, the Jesuits and other priests in upper

fur trade has been the subject of two recent books, but both studies look at situations significantly different from those of the late seventeenth-century West, where many of the earliest Catholic marriages were solemnized by priests. See Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), and Jennifer S. Brown, *Strangers in the Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980).

<sup>36</sup> *JR* 64:201–03; Cadillac to Minister, 18 Oct. 1700, *MPHC1* 33:189. For Cadillac's later opposition, see *Mariage des français avec les sauvages*, 1 sept. 1716, AN, C13A, v. 4, f. 255.

Who was commanding at Fort St. Louis in the Illinois at the time is unclear. Tonti was there in April 1694, *Declaration de Henri de Tonti*, 11 avril 1694, AN, C13A, Louisiana, v. 1 (fol. 27), but in the fall of 1693 he was in Montreal. Engagement of Vieu to La Forest and Tonti, Sept. 11, 1693, *IHC* 23:273–75. Given the absence of Tonti and La Forest, Deliette may have been in command.

<sup>37</sup> *JR* 64:195, 197, 207, 211. Quaife (ed.), *The Western Country*, 39, 45; Perrot, *Memoir*, 64–69; Lafitau, *Customs*, 1:336–37.

Louisiana came to condone interracial marriage if the wife was Catholic. Of twenty-one baptisms recorded at the French village of Kaskaskia between 1704 and 1713, the mother was Indian and the father was French in eighteen cases. In 1714, the Sieur de la Vente, the curé for Louisiana, praised intermarriage as a way to people the colony. He contended that the women of the Illinois and neighboring tribes were "whiter, more laborious, more adroit, better housekeepers, and more docile" than Indian women found elsewhere in the West and the South.<sup>38</sup>

Leading colonial officials were much more consistent in their opposition to intermarriage than the priests were. In Canada they preferred that Frenchmen marry and settle around Quebec or Montreal. As long as official policy involved the suppression of the coureurs de bois and their removal from the West, officials could not be openly enthusiastic about marriages there. They coupled such policy considerations with racist disgust at the results of French-Indian intermarriage. As Governor de Vaudreuil explained in opposing interracial marriage at Detroit in 1709: "Bad should never be mixed with good. Our experience of them in this country ought to prevent us from permitting marriages of this kind, for all the Frenchmen who have married savages have been licentious, lazy and intolerably independent; and their children have been characterized by as great a slothfulness as the savages themselves." By the time he was governor of Louisiana, Cadillac, who had once advocated intermarriage, and his intendant, Duclos, opposed intermarriage in the same terms. Indian women were, they said, licentious and would leave men who did not please them, and even if the marriage lasted, the result would be a population of "mulattos [mulâtres], idlers, libertines, and even more knaves than [there] are in the Spanish colonies."<sup>39</sup>

Given this range of social and cultural concerns, the divisions within each society, and the inevitability of members of both societies being integral figures in deciding outcomes, it is not surprising that the prospect of a marriage between a Christian Illinois woman and a Frenchman precipitated a crisis that was ultimately decided on the middle ground. In 1694 Michel Accault's attempt to wed Aramepinchieue brought to light both the full

<sup>38</sup> For official attitudes toward marriage, see Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 164. For Father de la Vente, see *Mariage des français avec les sauvages*, 1 sept. 1716, AN, C13A, v. 4. For banishment and supervision, see *JR* 65:233–45. For baptism, see Palm, "Jesuit Missions," 43–45.

<sup>39</sup> For governor's opposition, see Vaudreuil and Raudot to Minister, Nov. 14, 1709, *MPHC* 33:454. For Duclos and Cadillac, see *Mariage des français avec les sauvages*, 1 sept. 1716, AN, C13A, v. 4, f. 255. For renewed concern in 1730, see Bienville et Salmon au Ministre, 16 mai 1735, AN, C13A, v. 20, f. 85. *Mémoire concernant les Illinois*, 1732 AN, F3, v. 24.



This sketch of about 1700 by Decard de Granville shows a tattooed Sioux chief with a calumet. (New York Public Library)

complexity of the relations between the two societies and the processes by which the middle ground was emerging.

The controversy over the marriage of Accault and Aramepinchieue did not pit the Illinois against the French. Rather, it divided each group in a way that can only be grasped by looking at the social positions of the bride and the groom. Aramepinchieue was the daughter of Rouensa, a leading

Kaskaskia chief. She was a fervent Christian and the pride of the Illinois mission. Michel Accault was a Frenchman who had first come west with La Salle. He had later accompanied Father Hennepin on his voyage to the Sioux. Afterward, he had traded widely in the West and had established a reputation among the Jesuits as a libertine and an enemy of the faith. Aramepinchieue thus had links both with the Kaskaskia elite and Father Gravier. Accault was leagued with Henry de Tonti and the Frenchmen around him at Fort Saint Louis and was an enemy of Gravier's. His marriage with Aramepinchieue would strengthen the connections of a prominent Kaskaskia family with the French to the benefit of both. Rouensa announced the marriage in precisely those terms. He was strengthening his alliance with the French.<sup>40</sup>

The problem was that this proposed union, while it might link French and Algonquians, also emphasized the internal divisions within each group. Aramepinchieue refused to marry Accault. Father Gravier supported her decision. His immediate target was Accault. He would not sanction the influence within Indian society of a Frenchman he regarded as dissolute. He might grudgingly permit the marriage of Catholic Frenchmen with Christian Indian women, but he would do so only in circumstances that would advance the cause of the true faith. He told Aramepinchieue's parents and her suitor that "God did not command her not to marry, but also that she could not be forced to do so; that she alone was mistress to do the one or the other." Gravier's statement demonstrates that no matter how repressive Catholic morality may appear in retrospect, it could be used to buttress women's influence over their lives and their families. Women like Aramepinchieue had always had some control over their choice of marriage partners, but Christianity presented them with a new mechanism of control. What made this unique was not the woman's ability to reject unwanted suitors but, rather, the allies who could be mustered to maintain her decision against family pressures.<sup>41</sup>

In one sense, Aramepinchieue's decision represents a clear rejection of Algonquian norms and an appeal to an alien set of standards, but in another sense Aramepinchieue was appealing to such standards only to strengthen a very Algonquian sense of a woman's autonomy. Gravier's assertion that she was "mistress to do either the one or the other" did, after all, echo the Algonquian tenet that unmarried women were "masters" of their own bodies. Gravier, who sought to subvert traditional Illinois sexual practices

<sup>40</sup> For Accault, see *JR* 64:213, 180. For Aramepinchieue and Rouensa, see *JR* 64:179–81, 193–237. Aramepinchieue took the Christian name Mary or Marie; see Palm, "Jesuit Missions," 38.

<sup>41</sup> *JR* 64:205–07, 213, 280. *JR* 64:211, 195. For Aramepinchieue, see *JR* 64:193–95, 205–07, 213–29.

because they contradicted Catholicism, and Aramepinchieue, who used Catholicism to maintain the values that supported those same practices, thus found themselves allies. By definition, then – the involvement of both French and Indians, the need for members of each group to get assistance from members of the other to fulfill desires arising within their own society, and the inability of either French or Indian norms to govern the situation – this was a conflict of the middle ground.

The initial result of the bride's refusal was a standoff, which both Rouensa and the French commander tried to break with the limited coercive means available to them. Rouensa drove Aramepinchieue from his house, but she was protected by Father Gravier, who secured her shelter with a neophyte family. Her rejection of her parents' wishes pained her deeply, but she justified her actions by appeals to Catholic doctrine. The chiefs in council retaliated by attempting to halt Catholic services at the chapel. At least fifty persons, virtually all of them women and girls, persisted in going to church. The council then (although they denied it) appears to have dispatched a warrior armed with a club to disrupt the services. The women defied him. Among the Illinois, the opposing sides had clearly formed along gender lines. Not all of the women abandoned the chiefs, but Christianity was, for the moment, a women's religious society acting in defiance of a male council. Among the French, the division was necessarily among males. The French commander, far from stopping this interference with the mission, gloated over it and denounced Gravier publicly before both the French and the Indians. When these tactics failed to sway the priest, neither the commander nor Rouensa felt confident enough to escalate the level of violence, although the Kaskaskias left the option of further coercion open.<sup>42</sup>

Such a face-off did not serve the interests of either side. Aramepinchieue was in turmoil over her alienation from her parents, to whom she was closely attached. Gravier found further missionary activities virtually impossible in the face of council opposition, which threatened to confine his promising mission to a besieged group of young women and girls. On the other hand, Gravier and the bride together blocked a marriage that both the Kaskaskias and the French deeply wanted.

The situation, in the end, was solved by a series of trade-offs. Aramepinchieue, in effect, negotiated a compromise with her father. She told Gravier, "I think that if I consent to the marriage, he will listen to you in earnest, and will induce all to do so," and she consented to the marriage on the terms that her parents, in turn, "grant me what I ask." They agreed. Rouensa disavowed his opposition to Christianity in full council and urged those present to "obey now the black gown." His agreement was sincere,

<sup>42</sup> *JR* 64:195–205.

and he and his wife began instruction for baptism. Accault, too, became a practicing Catholic once more and an ally of the Jesuits'. In return, the Kaskaskia chief, as he informed the other headmen of the confederation with considerable presents, was "about to be allied to a Frenchman."<sup>43</sup>

The marriage, therefore, was a great coup for Gravier. It brought into the church the most prominent Kaskaskia civil leader and his brother, an equally prominent war leader, and opened the way for making the Kaskaskias the most Catholic of the western Algonquians. The main agent in these events was a seventeen-year-old woman who appealed to alien standards both to control her condition and, eventually, to alter the condition of her nation. By 1711 the Kaskaskias were supposedly virtually all Catholic, and missionaries had made significant inroads among other Illinois groups. Aramepinchieue had maintained and strengthened the relationships that mattered most to her – those with her parents and the Christian congregation of women. The price was marriage to Accault, but this may very well have remained for her a subsidiary social arrangement. Christianity did not immediately transform marriage. French officials would later claim that Christian Illinois women less devout than Aramepinchieue still felt free to leave their French husbands whenever they chose.<sup>44</sup>

Women like Aramepinchieue are rarely visible in the documents, but their traces appear everywhere. Diplomatic negotiations and warfare, the large trading expeditions, these were the work of men, but the Frenchmen who appeared in Algonquian villages either traveled with Algonquian women or had liaisons with them there. Much of their petty trading was probably with women. The labor they purchased was usually that of women. On a day-to-day basis, women did more than men to weave the French into the fabric of a common Algonquian-French life. Both in and out of marriage, these women bore children with the French, some of whom in time would come to form a separate people, the *métis*, who themselves mediated between French and Algonquians and became of critical importance to the area.

Gravier himself would continue to make his greatest gains among the women of the Illinois, but in other tribes of the confederation he would not acquire allies of the status of Aramepinchieue. In 1706 Gravier returned to Pimitoui. The Kaskaskias had by now left to resettle on the Mississippi, the French had abandoned Fort Saint Louis, and the Peorias who remained at the site resented Gravier's aggressive tactics enough to attack him physically.

<sup>43</sup> For Aramepinchieue quotations, see *JR* 64:207–9; otherwise, *JR* 64:179, 213, 211.

<sup>44</sup> *JR* 64:79–81, 231–35; Palm, "Jesuit Missions," 38; André Penicault, *Fleur de Lys and Calumet: Being the Penicault Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana*, ed. Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), 139–40. For claims of success among other Illinois nations, see Callières et de Champigny au Ministre, 18 oct. 1700, AN, C11A, v. 18.

They wounded him and, revealingly, left him in the care of "some praying women" until Kaskaskias sent by Rouensa rescued the priest. Father Gravier never fully recovered from his wounds, and eventually he died of complications. His death, a reminder of how tentative and tenuous the middle ground could be, also serves as a transition to the second issue demanding French-Algonquian cooperation – violence and interracial murder.<sup>45</sup>

### III

Although not all murders, as the killing of Father Gravier demonstrates, grew out of the trade, violence and interracial murder as a whole were inextricably bound up with commerce. In 1684 alone, the only year for which a summary is given, thirty-nine Frenchmen trading in the West died at the hands of their Algonquian allies. Indians murdered Frenchmen during robberies, killed them in disputes over debt or gift exchanges, attacked them in attempts to stop weapons from going to their enemies, killed them to avenge killings by the French, and, as the liquor trade expanded, killed them in drunken quarrels. The French, in turn, used force against thieves, which did not prevent theft from becoming as established a part of the exchange as gifts or bargaining.<sup>46</sup>

Commerce, in short, was not a peaceful process; violence was an option both for acquiring goods and for protecting them. In part, violence was so prevalent in the early trade because common agreement on the nature of the exchange itself developed only gradually. Frenchmen did not always meet Indian demands for gifts; they did not act as generously as friends and allies should; they, as the Indians soon discovered, asked more for their goods than the English asked; and finally, Frenchmen supplied arms to their allies' enemies. The Indians, in turn, stole. French traders readily classified Algonquian nations by their propensity to steal. The Fox were thieving; the Illinois carried off everything they could lay their hands on; the Chippewas on the north shore of Lake Superior would pillage any French canoe they

<sup>45</sup> *JR* 65:101–03; Palm, "Jesuit Missions," 36, 47; Blasingham, "Depopulation of the Illinois," 201; Bauxar, "Historic Period," 49. For Gravier, see *JR* 66:51–63.

<sup>46</sup> Some historians continue to divide Indian-white relations between peaceful commerce and violent conflict. For such a position, see Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 83. In fact, violence cannot be separated from the trade. The larger question of the role of violence in commerce has recently been raised by Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade*, 41–45. It is a question still illuminated by the work of Frederic Lane, *Venice and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 412–28; see, particularly, the "Economic Consequences of Organized Violence." For the number of murders, see *Raisons qu'on a proposee a la Cour*, 1687?, AN, C11A, v. 15, f. 271.

caught alone. The Sauks were also thieves, but they did not have the skill of the neighboring Fox. When the French were supplying the Sioux, small-scale theft gave way to organized plunder, so that Father Nouvel thought no Frenchman's life was safe journeying to or from the Sioux country. Eventually theft itself became institutionalized, as French traders learned to leave out small items to be pilfered, but a certain level of violence remained endemic to the trade.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps the most perplexing intercultural concern of the French and the Algonquians was how to settle and limit the number of murders arising from the trade, when there was no authority in the West capable of creating a monopoly on violence and establishing order. Violence became one of the central concerns of the middle ground. When murders occurred between Algonquians and Frenchmen, each side brought quite different cultural formulas to bear on the situation. For northeastern Indians, both Algonquians and Iroquoians, those people killed by allies could be compensated for with gifts or by slaves or, failing these, by the killing of another member of the offending group. The decision about how to proceed was made by the dead person's kin, but extensive social pressure was usually exerted to accept compensation short of blood revenge, since killing a person of the offending group often only invited future retaliation. Among the French the matter was simpler. Society at large took the responsibility for punishing murder. Punishment was not left to the kin of the victim but rather to the state. The expected compensation for murder was the death of the murderer.<sup>48</sup>

Of the obvious differences here, two were particularly important. In the French scheme of things, exactly who committed the murder was of supreme importance, since the individual killer was held responsible for the crime. Only when a group refused to surrender a known murderer did collective responsibility arise. For the Indians, identifying the murderer was not as important as establishing the identity of the group to which the murderer

<sup>47</sup> For Fox, see *JR* 54:225; Illinois, see Joutel Memoir, in Cox (ed.), *Journeys of La Salle*, 2:212; Chippewas, see Raudot and De Gannes (Deliette) Memoir, *IHC* 23:328, Memoir in Kinietz, *Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, 374; Sauks, see *ibid.*, 381–82. For dangers of Sioux trade, see Pere Nouvel à M. de La Barre, 23 avril 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 523. For institutionalization of theft, see Gary C. Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1680–1862* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 63.

<sup>48</sup> In the cases that follow both sides try to make these positions clear. See, e.g., extract from a letter by Dulhut, April 12, 1684, *WHC* 16:120, hereafter cited as Dulhut's letter. For Algonquian custom, see Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 123. For a discussion of murder, revenge, and compensation that stresses revenge rather than compensation among the Cherokee, see John Phillip Reid, *A Law of Blood: The Primitive Law of the Cherokee Nation* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 73–112. Reid says that a retaliatory killing does not bring revenge (78). This does not appear to have been true among the Algonquians. Note how in the Dulhut case below Achiganaga is given presents to compensate for his son's death.

belonged, for it was the group – family, kin, village, or nation – that was held responsible for the act. Both sides established cultural measures of equivalence in compensating for the dead, but the French equivalence was invariably another death. As the French emphasized again and again in the cases that follow, death could only be compensated for by more death. Indians would, if necessary, also invoke a similar doctrine of revenge, but their preference was always either, in their words, "to raise up the dead," that is, to restore the dead person to life by providing a slave in the victim's place, or "to cover the dead," that is, present the relatives with goods that served as an equivalent.<sup>49</sup>

Most murders in the West left no trace in the documents, but an examination of those that are recorded can be rewarding. Three incidents in particular offer enough documentation for cultural analysis. The first occurred in 1682 or 1683, when two Frenchmen were waylaid on the Keweenaw Peninsula in Lake Superior and murdered by a Menominee and several Chippewas. These murders took place when the *pays d'en haut* was in a state of near chaos. Iroquois attacks, which had devastated the Illinois, had so far gone unavenged. Iroquois parties had recently struck the Illinois and the Mascoutens and were edging closer to Green Bay itself. Not only did the French seem unable to protect their allies, but an epidemic that the Potawatomis blamed on Jesuit witchcraft had recently ravaged the villages around the bay. The Potawatomis had murdered two French *donnés* in retaliation and had begun efforts to create a larger anti-French alliance. A recent alliance between the Saulteurs and the Sioux, which Daniel Greysolon Dulhut had helped orchestrate, had further inflamed the peoples of Green Bay against the French. They attempted to block French trade with the Sioux. The Fox had already fought and defeated a large Sioux-Chippewa force at a considerable loss to themselves, and a full-scale Chippewa-Fox war seemed imminent. But apparently not all the Chippewas relished the new alignment. Achiganaga, an important headman at Keweenaw, had attacked the Sioux and planned further attacks. His war parties, as well as those of the peoples at Green Bay, threatened the lives of French voyageurs.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Report of Boisbriant Diron Desursins Legardeur De L'isle Ste. Therese Langloisere, June 17, 1723, in J. H. Schlarman, *From Quebec to New Orleans: Fort De Chartres* (Belleville, Ill.: Beuchler, 1929), 226–31. See also Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 97. Jaenen makes the distinction between the French emphasis on punishment and the Indian emphasis on compensation.

<sup>50</sup> For conditions at Green Bay, see Enjalran à Lefevre de La Barre, 16 aoust 1683, Margry, *Découvertes*, 5:4–5. For Saulteur-Fox conflict, see *ibid.*, 5; Claude Charles Le Roy, Sieur de Bacqueville de la Potherie, *History of the Savage Peoples Who Are the Allies of New France*, in Emma Helen Blair (ed.), *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1912), 1:358–63; Dulhut letter, *WHC* 16:114. Durantaye à A. de la Barre, 11 avril 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, 1.521–22. For activities

In the midst of this turmoil a party led by Achiganaga's sons and including at least one Menominee, a member of a Green Bay tribe, murdered two Frenchmen. Their motive may have been robbery. Or Achiganaga may have sought to disrupt the Sioux trade, break the new alliance of other proto-Ojibwa bands with the Sioux, and join with the peoples of the bay in a larger anti-French movement. In any case, his sons murdered two Frenchmen and stole their goods. Dulhut, despite the powerful kin connections of the accused murderers, seized the Menominee at Sault Sainte Marie and sent out a party that successfully captured Achiganaga and all his children at Keweenaw. The local Algonquian peoples reacted to Dulhut's acts by resorting to customary procedures. The Saulteurs offered the French the calumet – the standard ceremony for establishing peace and amity – and then they offered slaves to resurrect the dead Frenchmen and end the matter. Dulhut's emissary refused all such offers and denied the legitimacy of such cultural equivalence, telling them "that a hundred slaves and a hundred packages of beaver could not make him traffic in the blood of his brothers."<sup>51</sup>

Up to this point, all seems to be merely another example of something that appears in the literature many times: an ethnocentric European imposing by force proper cultural forms on a people he regards as savages. Savagism as a way of looking at Indians was, however, of limited utility in the woods. Dulhut was hardly in a position to act as if Indians were without culture. The French state did not command a monopoly of violence in the West and its authority was feeble. Dulhut did not have an established judicial system to appeal to, unless he wished to try to convey his prisoners to Quebec or Montreal. When the murderers had been disposed of, he and his men would remain to travel among the surrounding Indians who were not likely to forget whatever action he took. Their thoughts on the matter could not be safely ignored, and Dulhut having rejected Indian norms, relaxed his own considerably.

What followed at Michilimackinac was a series of rather extraordinary improvisations as Dulhut and various Ottawa, Huron-Petun, and Chippewa headmen and elders struggled to create a middle ground where the matter could be resolved. Dulhut's primary appeal throughout was to French law and custom, but he tried repeatedly, if necessarily somewhat ignorantly, to justify his recourse to law and custom by equating them with Indian practices. Having rejected the preferred means of settling killings among

of French traders and danger they were in, see Denonville au Ministre, aoust 1688, AN, C11A, v. 10, (f. 66); Nouvel à M. de la Barre, 23 avril 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6.

<sup>51</sup> The only detailed account of this murder is Dulhut's own, but since he was in a position to justify his actions, he provided considerable detail. See Dulhut letter, April 12, 1684, WHC 16:114–15, 123.

allies – the covering or raising up of the dead – he insisted on the penalty exacted from enemies: blood revenge. The Indians, for their part, paid little attention to what mattered most to the French, the proper way of establishing guilt and punishing the perpetrator. They only sought to offer suitable compensation to the living and reestablish social peace.<sup>52</sup>

The result was a series of bizarre cultural hybrids. The various Ottawa, Chippewa, and Huron-Petun bands convened in council with Dulhut only to find themselves transformed into a jury by the French for the trial of the Menominee, Achiganaga, and two of his sons. Kinsmen of the accused were drafted as lawyers, testimony was given and written down, and the murderers, with the exception of Achiganaga, freely admitted the crime. The elders cooperated with this French ritual, apparently believing that after it was performed the French would accept appropriate compensation. Instead, Dulhut demanded that the Indians themselves execute the murderers. To the Indians, Achiganaga's failure to confess constituted acquittal, and he was no longer part of the proceedings, but execution of the remaining three men, after compensation had been refused, would have been the equivalent of a declaration of war on the Saulteurs and Menominees by the executioners. The elders were so shocked and confused by this demand that they did not even make an answer.<sup>53</sup>

Dulhut, at this point, decided unilaterally to execute the Menominee and the two sons of Achiganaga as the admittedly guilty parties. This decision not only upset the Indians at Michilimackinac, it also appalled the French wintering at Keweenaw, who sent Dulhut a message warning that if he executed the murderers, the Indians' relatives would take revenge on the French. They begged him to act with restraint. French standards simply could not be imposed with impunity. Dulhut, after consulting with the Sieur de La Tour, the man longest among the lake tribes and most familiar with their customs, sought once more to appeal to Indian custom and return the matter to the middle ground. He again tried to find some connection between French law and what he regarded as Indian custom. Since two Frenchmen had died, Dulhut would execute only two Indians – the Menominee and the eldest of the two sons of Achiganaga – for "by killing man for man, the savages would have nothing to say, since that is their own practice." He announced this decision in the cabin of an Ottawa headman the French called Le Brochet, adding that although French law and custom demanded the execution of all the men involved in the robbery, he would be content with a life for a life.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Dulhut letter, April 12, 1684, WHC 16:119.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 118–20.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 119–21.

By his decision, Dulhut established a tenuous connection between Algonquian and French customs – a life for a life – but he also revealed the very different meanings such a dictum had in each culture. Only now, according to Dulhut, did the Ottawas believe that the French would actually execute two of the men. The headmen of the Sable Ottawas and the Sinago Ottawas, themselves uninvolved in the murder, begged Dulhut to spare the murderers. They, too, sought a middle ground and appealed to French precedent. At the request of Onontio, the Ottawas had spared an Iroquois prisoner. The French should now do the same for them. Dulhut denied the situations were equivalent. The Iroquois was a prisoner of war; these men were murderers. Here the glaring differences between Ottawa and French cultural categories emerged in action.<sup>55</sup>

Blood revenge was appropriate in each society but for different categories of killing. For the Algonquians there were two kinds of killings – deaths at the hands of enemies and deaths at the hands of allies. The appropriate response depended on the identity of the group to whom the killer belonged. If the killer belonged to an allied group, then the dead were raised or covered. If the murderers refused to do this, then the group became enemies and the price appropriate to enemies, blood revenge, was exacted. For the French also there were two kinds of killings – killings in war and murders. Killing enemies in war theoretically brought no retribution once the battle ended. For them, the battlefield was a cultural arena separate from the rest of life. Releasing the Iroquois was thus only appropriate; he was a soldier, not a murderer. Algonquians in practice recognized no such cultural arena as a battlefield; they killed their enemies when and where they found them unless they were ritually protected. For the French it was murder that demanded blood revenge; for the Algonquians, it was killings by enemies, killings which the French saw as warfare. The French insistence on blood revenge in an inappropriate category, therefore, created great confusion. To the Ottawas the logic of such a response – that enemies should be spared but that allies should be killed – was incomprehensible.<sup>56</sup>

The way out of this deadlock was created by a man named Oumamens, a headman of the Amikwas (a proto-Ojibwa group). He spoke for the Saulteurs in council and resorted to the kind of cultural fiction that often disguises the beginnings of cultural change. He got up and praised, of all things, Dulhut's mercy, because he had released Achiganaga and all but one of his children. In effect, Oumamens chose to emphasize those of Dulhut's actions which conformed to Algonquian custom. He announced that the Saulteurs were

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 120–21.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*. See also Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 132–34. It should be noted that by 1690 the French had begun imitating the Iroquois and were torturing and killing prisoners of war, *Narrative of... Occurrences 1690, 1691, NYCD* 9:518.

satisfied. Dulhut, for his part, stressed not mercy but deterrence. If the elders "had from the beginning made known to the young men that in case they committed any evil deed the tribe would abandon them, they would have been better advised, and the Frenchmen would still be alive." Both sides thus tended to stress the aspect of the affair that made cultural sense to them. An hour later, at the head of forty-eight Frenchmen with four hundred warriors watching, Dulhut had the two Indians executed.<sup>57</sup>

The executions did not establish the legitimacy of French justice. Indeed, in the days that followed the executions, the Indians treated them as two more murders to be resolved, and Dulhut consented to their proceedings. Because Achiganaga's son and the Menominee had been executed in the territory of the Huron-Petuns and the Ottawas, these groups were implicated, and they took steps to settle the whole affair.<sup>58</sup>

Three Ottawa tribes – the Sables, Sinagos, and Kiskakons – gave two wampum belts to the French to cover their dead and two other belts to Achiganaga and to the Menominee's relatives. The next day the Huron-Petuns did the same. Dulhut, for his part, held a feast for Le Brochet, the Sable headman, to "take away the pain that I had caused him by pronouncing the death sentence of the two savages in his cabin, without speaking to him of it." Dulhut then loaded Achiganaga with presents, and the Saulteurs gave the French at Keweenaw additional belts "to take good care that no trouble be made over the death of their brother; and in order, should any have evil designs, to restrain them by these collars, of which they are bearers."<sup>59</sup>

The incident is revealing precisely because it was so indecisive, so improvised, precisely because neither French nor Algonquian cultural rules fully governed the situation. Both French and Algonquian customs were challenged, consciously explained, and modified in practice. Dulhut did not establish the primacy of French law, and he did not prevent further killings. What he did do was to shake, but not eliminate, the ability of Algonquian norms to govern murders of Frenchmen by Indians. Both sides now had to justify their own rules in terms of what they perceived to be the practices of the other. What happened in 1683 was, in the end, fully in accordance with neither French nor Indian conceptions of crime and punishment. Instead, it involved considerable improvisation and the creation of a middle ground at a point where the cultures seemed to intersect, so that the expectations of each side could find at least some satisfaction. At Green Bay the next spring, Father Nouvel thought that Dulhut's executions had produced a good effect,

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 120–21.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 124–25.

but at the same time he attributed the Potawatomi and Sauk desire for reconciliation with the French to their growing fear of the Iroquois, not their fear of French reprisals. Nouvel, for his part, demanded no further executions; he was willing to accept the Potawatomi and Sauk offer to cover the deaths of the two French donnés they had murdered.<sup>60</sup>

At Michilimackinac in 1683, Dulhut had operated without specific authority from the French government for his actions. He had improvised his solutions. The killings at Detroit, some twenty years later, in 1706, led to negotiations with the highest colonial officials, at a time when the French-Algonquian alliance had created a considerably more elaborate middle ground on which Indians and Frenchmen might work. Indeed, it was the alliance itself that both created the conditions that caused the murders and provided the ceremonial forms that compensated for them.

#### IV

In 1706, as Ottawa warriors departed to attack the Sioux, a Potawatomi warned them that in their absence the Huron-Petuns and the Miami would fall on the Ottawa village and kill those who remained. The Ottawa war leaders consulted with the civil leaders and, although some wavered, the old and powerful Sable chief whom the French called Le Pesant convinced them to strike first. The Ottawas ambushed a party of Miami chiefs, killing five of them, and then attacked the Miami village, driving the inhabitants into the French fort. The French fired on the attacking Ottawas and killed a young Ottawa who had just been recognized as a war leader. Although the Ottawa leaders tried to prevent any attacks on the French, angry warriors killed a French Recollect priest outside the fort and a soldier who came out to rescue him.<sup>61</sup>

The Ottawas tried all the ceremonial means at their disposal to effect a reconciliation with the French, but they were rebuffed by the man com-

<sup>60</sup> Fr. Nouvel à M. de la Barre, 23 avril 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6, f. 523. Reconciliation was also forwarded by Governor de la Barre who approved of Dulhut's actions, but the French court, which often had only a shaky grasp of what was going on in the upper country, confused Dulhut's executions with the killing of an Iroquois at Michilimackinac and denounced Dulhut and his presence in the backcountry, De la Barre au Ministre, 5 juin 1684, AN, C11A, v. 6. Louis XIV to De La Barre, July 21, 1684, DHNY, 1:108–9.

<sup>61</sup> For the Ottawa version of these events, see Speech of Miscaouky, Sept. 26, 1706, MPHc 33:288–92. For the French investigation, see Report of D'Aigremont, MPHc 33:435. For Cadillac's account, see Cadillac to de Vaudreuil, Aug. 27, 1706; E. M. Sheldon, *The Early History of Michigan from the First Settlement to 1815* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1956), 219. For mention of a second French soldier killed later, see Instructions to D'Aigremont, June 30, 1707, WHC 16:243.

manding in Cadillac's absence. In subsequent fighting, the French sided with the Miami, as did the Huron-Petuns (the nation the Ottawas claimed had actually organized the plot against them). Before the Ottawas withdrew to Michilimackinac, three Frenchmen, about thirty Ottawas, fifty Miami, and an unknown number of Huron-Petuns were dead. The critical issue between the French and Ottawas, however, was the men killed during the first exchange: the young Ottawa leader, another Ottawa man with powerful kin connections at Michilimackinac, the Recollect, and the first French soldier killed.<sup>62</sup>

The fighting at Detroit in 1706 sprang from some basic breaches in the alliance the French had constructed and threatened to dissolve the alliance completely. In his zeal to promote Detroit, a post he had founded in 1701, Cadillac had recruited French allies to settle there without much thought for the outstanding disputes among them. In 1706, the residents included, among others, members of three Ottawa tribes – Sinagos, Kiskakons, and Sables – Huron-Petuns, and Miami. Basic to the alliance and critical to such multatribal settlements was mediation. The French had to make sure that killings between the tribes were settled and the dead covered. Cadillac had promised to do this, but uncovered and unrevenged dead continued to poison the relations between the Miami and the Huron-Petuns, on the one hand, and the Ottawas on the other. Le Pesant himself had presented a list of the dead left uncovered and unavenged before the departure of the fateful war party. The result of the French refusal to act was the fighting of 1706 and a threat to the entire alliance.<sup>63</sup>

The killings at Detroit produced a situation neither the French nor the Ottawa leaders desired. As Vaudreuil lamented in his report of the affair to

<sup>62</sup> For Ottawa attempts to negotiate, see Speech of Miscaouky, 26 Sept. 1706, MPHc 33:290–92; Report of D'Aigremont, MPHc 33:435–36. For various casualty figures in the fight, see "Council with Ottawas, June 18, 1707," in Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 228, where Jean le Blanc puts the Ottawa dead at 30; Speech of Miscaouky, Sept. 26, 1706, MPHc 33:294, where the figure is 26 for the Ottawas and 50 dead and wounded for the Miami. For the significant Ottawa dead, see Speech of Miscaouky, Sept. 26, 1706, MPHc 33:290, and Fr. Marest to Vaudreuil, Aug. 14, 1706, MPHc 33:262–69. For the French emphasis on the priest and the first soldier killed, see Council with the Ottawas, June 20, 1707, Speech of Vaudreuil, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 242; Speech of Vaudreuil, June 21, 1707, *ibid.*, 245.

<sup>63</sup> "Account of Detroit," Sept. 25, 1702, MPHc 33:137–38, 147; Cadillac to Pontchartrain, Aug. 31, 1703, in Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 105–6. For mention of quarrels and unsettled killings, see Cadillac to Vaudreuil, Aug. 27, 1706, in Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 218–19. For earlier attack, see Memorandum of... Cadillac, 19 Nov. 1704, MPHc 33:234; Report of D'Aigremont, Nov. 14, 1708, MPHc 33:432–37. For a Miami-Huron-Petun rapprochement as early as 1703, see Speeches of Ottawas... 24 Sept. 1703, MPHc 33:223–25. For Vaudreuil's orders to keep the peace, see Vaudreuil au Cadillac, 10 juin 1706, AN, Moreau St. Mery, F3, v. 7, f. 308. For Huron-Petun resentment, see Vaudreuil to Minister, May 5, 1705, MPHc 33:242.

Count de Pontchartrain, the fiasco at Detroit threatened to "begin a war which can cause us only considerable expense, the loss of a nation that has served us faithfully, and, in addition to that, a considerable trade, every year." For the Ottawas the outcome looked no more favorable. Cut off from trade goods, impoverished, and driven from their fields, they found that "all the land was stupefied, and want had taken possession of our bones." Settling such a conflict was, however, far from simple. The prominence of the dead on both sides intensified the difficulties of settling the killings. The dead Ottawas had powerful kinspeople; the French stressed the particular horror of killing a priest; and Cadillac promised the Miamis and Huron-Petuns the destruction of the Ottawas as revenge for their own dead. The negotiations to resolve these killings would be, according to Governor de Vaudreuil, one of the most important affairs in the history of the upper country.<sup>64</sup>

The ceremonial forms of the Ottawa-French alliance shaped the negotiations from the beginning. The alliance was centered on Quebec, the home of Onontio, and it was formulated in the language of kinship to which both the French and the Algonquians attached great significance. Leaders of both the French and the Algonquians negotiated according to ritual forms which placed the French governor, Onontio, in the position of father to the Indians, of whom the Ottawas were his eldest sons. The French were quite at home with such patriarchal formulations and attached quite specific meanings to them. For them all authority was patriarchal, from God the Father, to the king (the father of his people), to the father in his home. Fathers commanded; sons obeyed. The Ottawas understood the relationship somewhat differently. A father was kind, generous, and protecting. A child owed a father respect, but a father could not compel obedience. In establishing a middle ground, one took such congruences as one could find and sorted out their meanings later.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> For Vaudreuil quote, see Vaudreuil to de Pontchartrain, Nov. 4, 1706, *WHC* 16:242. For Ottawas, see Words of Ottawas to Cadillac, Sept. 24, 1707, *MPHC* 33:349. For difficulties, see Father Marest to Vaudreuil, Aug. 14, 1706, *MPHC* 33:262–69; Council with the Ottawas, Speech of Vaudreuil, June 20, 1707, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 242. Cadillac to Vaudreuil, Aug. 27, 1706, *ibid.*, 228–29. For importance of negotiations, see Vaudreuil to Father Marest, n.d. (1707), Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 273.

<sup>65</sup> Many examples of the French councils survive. For examples for the period under consideration here, see Parolles des sauvages . . . , Archives Nationales, Archives Coloniales, F3, v. 8, f. 136–41; Talk between Marquis de Vaudreuil and Onaskin . . . , Aug. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:258–62; Speech of Miscouaky . . . to Marquis de Vaudreuil, Sept. 26, 1706, *MPHC* 33:288–96; Conference with Ottawas, June 18, 1707, in Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 232–50. For the differences in how the Great Lakes Indians and the French perceived the relationship between parents and children, see Father Gabriel Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* (Toronto: Champlain Society 1939, facsimile ed., Greenwood Press), 130–31; Pierre de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America* (London: R. & J. Dodsley, 1761, Readex microprint facsimile ed., 1966), 2:55, 89–90, 109,

Within the alliance, these ritual forms for father and son thus had a built-in ambiguity that would influence the course of the negotiations that followed the fighting at Detroit. Negotiations in the West (at Sault Sainte Marie and Michilimackinac) covered the Ottawa dead to that nation's satisfaction, but covering the French dead proved more difficult. Many of the matters at issue here revolved around questions of the proper way for a father to act toward his errant sons. At Quebec, Vaudreuil, in his negotiations with the Ottawas in the fall of 1706 and the spring of 1707, insisted on phrasing the alliance and Ottawa obligations in terms of Christian patriarchy. The governor demanded that the Ottawas appear before him as penitent sinners appear before the Christian God. The customary Ottawa compensation for the dead was inadequate and inappropriate.

I am a good father and as long as my children listen to my voice, no evil ever befalls them . . . It is not belts that I require, Miscouaky, nor presents when my children have disobeyed me and committed such a fault as yours; the blood of Frenchmen is not to be paid for by beaverskins. It is a great trust in my kindness that I demand; a real repentance for the fault that has been committed, and complete resignation to my will. When your people entertain those feelings, I will arrange everything.<sup>66</sup>

The Ottawa response to these demands, in the usual manner of the middle ground, was to seek cultural congruence. They, too, focused on patriarchy, but of a different kind. Otontagan (or Jean le Blanc), the Sable chief second in influence to Le Pesant, spoke for the Ottawas when they came to Quebec the next summer. He admitted his guilt (even though he had, in fact, tried to save the Recollect) but attempted to place the primary responsibility for the affair with Le Pesant. Otontagan's major concern, however, was to get Vaudreuil to act like an Ottawa, not a French, father. He stressed Vaudreuil's beneficence. Vaudreuil certainly had the power to kill him, but "I have nothing to fear because I have a good father." Since

114–15; Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indian* 1:362; Perrot, *Memoir* 1:67; Thwaites (ed.), *Lahontan's Voyages* 2:458. See also Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 94–97.

<sup>66</sup> Kisckouch, the young Sinago chief killed at Detroit, had a brother, Merasilla, who had actually gone among the Saulteurs and Amikwas to raise a party to avenge his brother "and restore the name of Kisckouch." In the end, Merasilla excused himself from the war party, despite reproaches that he showed "no love for his brother," and helped negotiate a peace. The war party went to Detroit, accompanied by other Ottawas, but did not attack. Another Ottawa killed at Detroit had as relatives two of the principal women at Michilimackinac, and they went from cabin to cabin, weeping and demanding the deaths of Frenchmen there until negotiations covered their loss. Marest to Vaudreuil, Aug. 14, 1706, *WHC* 16:232–34; Marest to Vaudreuil, Aug. 16, 1706, and Aug. 27, 1706, *MPHC* 33:262–71; Cadillac to Vaudreuil, Aug. 27, 1706, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 226–27. For quote, see Reply of Vaudreuil to Miscouaky, Nov. 4, 1706, *MPHC* 33:295.

Vaudreuil had specifically rejected covering the dead, Otontagan concluded that he must want the dead raised up. The delegation accordingly brought two adopted captives to give to Vaudreuil "to bring the gray coat again to life." Vaudreuil held out for a stricter patriarchy. He demanded vengeance; he demanded the head of Le Pesant because "the blood of French is usually repaid among us only by blood." But such a demand, Otontagan told Vaudreuil, was impossible. Le Pesant was allied to all the nations of the Great Lakes. They would prevent his delivery and execution.<sup>67</sup>

On the surface, the negotiations at Quebec appear to be another example of a stubborn French refusal to compromise. The situation was, in fact, much more complex. Vaudreuil knew that no Ottawa leader possessed sufficient authority to hand over anyone, let alone someone of Le Pesant's stature. His intention was not to secure Le Pesant's death, rather it was to cut him off from the French alliance, destroy his influence, and demonstrate that any chief held responsible for the death of a Frenchman would suffer the same fate. Since Vaudreuil did not expect Le Pesant to be surrendered, the actual restoration of the Ottawas to the alliance would involve a compromise of some sort. Since patriarchs do not compromise, he sent the Ottawas back to Detroit, telling them to negotiate a peace with Cadillac. He would approve such a peace as long as Le Pesant was not included in any pardon Cadillac granted. By this maneuver Vaudreuil could make an impossible demand, while leaving the responsibility of negotiating what might be an embarrassing compromise to his rival and subordinate, Cadillac.<sup>68</sup>

At Detroit the larger issue remained – how the alliance could be restored within the cultural parameters of the parties involved. Le Pesant was called "that great bear, that malicious bear," and Vaudreuil's demand for his execution loomed over the proceedings. The people struggling with this problem were themselves political actors who were not necessarily wedded to the welfare of either Le Pesant or Vaudreuil. The chief Ottawa negotiators, Otontagan and Onaske from Michilimackinac, were Le Pesant's political rivals. They protected him not out of love but because they had no means at their disposal to deliver him, and they feared the repercussions if they tried. Cadillac, for his part, was a long-standing opponent of Vaudreuil and only too glad to use the affair to benefit himself and embarrass the

<sup>67</sup> For Otontagan, see Vaudreuil to Minster, July 24, 1707, *MPHC* 33:328–29, Council with Ottawas, June 18, 1707, Speech of Jean le Blanc, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 233–39. For Vaudreuil's position, see Council with Ottawas, June 20, 1707, Reply of Vaudreuil, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 242; Reply of Jean le Blanc, June 21, 1707, *ibid.*, 243–44.

<sup>68</sup> See the speech of Vaudreuil to Jean le Blanc, June 22, 1707, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 245–47; Vaudreuil to Minster, July 24, 1707, *MPHC* 33:328–30. For the rivalry of Vaudreuil and Cadillac, see Vaudreuil to Minister, Nov. 12, 1707, *MPHC* 33:371–72.

governor. Both Cadillac and the Ottawa chiefs could conceivably use the cultural demands of outsiders to advance their interests within their own society while simultaneously renewing the alliance.<sup>69</sup>

The willingness of both Cadillac and the Ottawa negotiators to move from their initial positions reflects this sense of their own political advantage. They could also violate the usual norms of their own cultures because the alliance, itself the middle ground, created cultural demands of its own. Cadillac shifted his position first. He indicated that the surrender of Le Pesant was more important than his death. "I wish him to be in my power, either to grant him his life or put him to death," he told Otontagan. Cadillac was, in effect, putting Le Pesant in the place of the slaves or captives usually given to raise the dead. Such cultural logic was more comprehensible to the Ottawas than a demand for execution, even if the surrender of a chief was without precedent. These were unusual conditions; the alliance itself was at stake. Otontagan agreed to deliver Le Pesant: "He is my brother, my own brother, but what can we do?" Since Otontagan and Kinouge, another headman, were, like Le Pesant, Sable Ottawas, they agreed to take responsibility for his surrender, thus making the matter an internal Sable matter and limiting the repercussions. In effect, a cultural fiction was agreed on. Cadillac and the Ottawas agreed to act as if Le Pesant were a slave being offered to the French in compensation for their dead. Cadillac would then determine if he lived or died. This made cultural sense in a way that Le Pesant's execution did not; it preserved the alliance, and it served the personal interests of both French and Ottawa negotiators.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Otontagan (Jean le Blanc), Kinouge, Meatinan, and Menukoueak were joined partway through the proceedings by Kataolaubois (Koutaouileone) and Onaske, who was headman of the Kiskakon Ottawas at Michilimackinac. Council held at Detroit, Aug. 6, 1707, Aug. 8, 1707, *MPHC* 33:331, 334; Speeches of Three Indians from Michilimackina (*sic*) Oct. 7, 1707, *MPHC* 33:362–64.

From the beginning of these negotiations, Otontagan and his brother, Miscoukay, had tried to lay the blame for the incident on Le Pesant. Speech of Miscoukay, Sept. 26, 1706, *MPHC* 33:288–89; Council with Ottawas, Speech of Jean le Blanc, June 18, 1707, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 234–35. Onaske and Le Pesant were engaged in a rivalry over whether the Ottawas should concentrate their settlements at Michilimackinac or Detroit. Onaske accused Le Pesant of giving the Iroquois gifts to come and attack the Ottawas of Michilimackinac. Father Marest to Vaudreuil, Aug. 14, 1706, *WHC* 16:238. Cadillac had earlier accused the Michilimackinac Ottawas of soliciting other nations to attack Detroit to force the Ottawas there to withdraw to Michilimackinac, Sheldon, *Early History of Michigan*, 196–97. Koutaouileone was also involved in the attempt to reunite the Ottawas at Michilimackinac. Marest to Vaudreuil, Aug. 27, 1706, *MPHC* 33:271. Cadillac's maneuverings will be discussed below. The French, of course, tried to use Ottawa divisions to their advantage, see Vaudreuil's comments on Cadillac's letter of Aug. 27, 1706, *MPHC* 33:282.

<sup>70</sup> Council Held at Detroit, Aug. 6, 1707, Speech of Cadillac *MPHC* 33:332. Council Held at Detroit, Replies of Otontagan, Aug. 6, 1707, Seventh Council, Speech of Onaske, *MPHC* 33:332–33, 335–36. Speeches of Three Indians from Michilimakina (*sic*), Oct. 7, 1707, *MPHC* 33:363–64.

There were two formidable obstacles to this solution. The first was the Miami and the Huron-Petuns, whom Cadillac had made simple observers of the whole affair. For their benefit, Cadillac treated the Ottawa delegation imperiously. He gave the Huron-Petuns – and tried to give the Miami – the Ottawa captives intended for Vaudreuil in order “to revive your dead a little – I do not say altogether.” He even, in council, made the Huron-Petuns the elder brothers of the French alliance in place of the Ottawas. But he denied them revenge. He warned both nations that with the delivery of Le Pesant, he would consider the matter closed. “There shall be no blood left to be seen.”<sup>71</sup>

The second obstacle was a practical one: Who exactly would persuade or force Le Pesant to consent to serve as a slave to the French? Who provided the solution to this problem is not known, but how it was solved is clear enough. A proceeding that had been half theater and half negotiation now became fully theater. After considerable negotiations at Michilimackinac, Le Pesant agreed to come to Detroit and surrender himself as a slave to the French. According to Vaudreuil, all that followed was prearranged between Le Pesant and an emissary of Cadillac. How much the other Ottawas or other Frenchmen knew of these arrangements is not clear.<sup>72</sup>

Cadillac compared the astonishment provoked by the appearance of Le Pesant at Detroit to that produced by the arrival of the Doge of Genoa in France. To evoke such a response, to make the Indians marvel at the culturally unimaginable things Cadillac and the French could achieve, was, in fact, the sole point of the drama now enacted at Detroit. Cadillac’s production of “The Surrender of Le Pesant,” however, had to play to a suspicious and critical audience of Miami, Huron-Petuns, and those French officials who watched from afar. All of them were concerned not so

<sup>71</sup> The Huron-Petuns and Miami wondered out loud why Cadillac should bother to demand Le Pesant when there were so many Ottawa chiefs in Detroit upon whom they could take revenge. Council Held at Detroit, Aug. 7, 1707, Aug. 9, 1707, *MPHC* 33:333–35; Speeches of Three Indians from Michilimakina (*sic*), Oct. 7, 1707, *MPHC* 33:363–64.

<sup>72</sup> How Le Pesant was persuaded, or forced, to come was not clear. Kataolaubois told Vaudreuil that it was Onaske, Sakima, Meyavila, and himself, all of them Kiskakons and Sinago Ottawas from Michilimackinac, who compelled Le Pesant to embark. He minimized the role of Otontagan, even though Onaske had stressed at Detroit that the surrender of Le Pesant was Otontagan’s responsibility. Kataolaubois’s account of negotiations is, however, sketchy and he told Vaudreuil that he would leave it to the Sieur de St. Pierre, who had been present, to give a full account. It appears clear, however, that Le Pesant in reaching his decision to come had to deal with strong pressure from leading men that he go. The pressure was strong enough so that Kataolaubois feared Le Pesant’s revenge if Cadillac did not execute him. Speeches of Three Indians from Michilimakina (*sic*), Oct. 7, 1707, *MPHC* 33:365. Vaudreuil, deriving his account from the Sieur de St. Pierre, says that Le Pesant made private arrangements with the Sieur d’Argenteuil, Cadillac’s emissary, to come to Detroit. Vaudreuil to Minister, Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:354.

much with the plot as with the culturally symbolic details that gave the drama its meaning. Vaudreuil delivered the most extended review of the performance, although, as shall be seen, the Miami were the most critical.<sup>73</sup>

Le Pesant, until now the Godot of this drama, put in his appearance at Detroit on September 24, 1707. He delivered his only recorded lines while looking to shore from the canoe that brought him. He trembled, either from malaria or fear, and said, “I see I am a dead man.” Yet what Vaudreuil noted was his escort. He came with ten warriors who were not Kiskakon or Sinago Ottawas, but Sable Ottawas from his own village. They were sent, Vaudreuil said, not to deliver him but to protect him from angry Huron-Petuns and Miami. Cadillac verbally abused Le Pesant, referring to him as his slave, but Cadillac spoke to Le Pesant on a wampum belt. One did not speak to slaves on wampum. One spoke to representatives of nations in that manner. The Ottawas then asked for Le Pesant’s life and, offering a young slave, asked that they be allowed to return to Detroit.<sup>74</sup>

With Le Pesant’s ritual submission, the first act ended. Le Pesant, Vaudreuil pointed out, had served his purpose. His continued presence now became a problem for Cadillac. Vaudreuil had ordered his death and Cadillac had earlier promised the Miami and Huron-Petuns that he would kill him. But if Cadillac actually killed Le Pesant, he risked conflict with the Sable Ottawas and their allies on the Great Lakes. Le Pesant’s surrender was useful; his continued presence was not.<sup>75</sup>

Cadillac and the Ottawas solved the problem by writing Le Pesant out of the script. That night, leaving behind his shoes, his knife, and his shabby hat, Le Pesant escaped from the fort at Detroit. Cadillac, in retaliation, locked up his escorts for a day and then released them, contending that Le Pesant would perish in the woods, and, in any case, his influence was now gone. Vaudreuil was skeptical. Le Pesant – whose name translates from the French as the heavy one, or the fat one – was notoriously obese and nearly seventy years old. That a seventy-year-old fat man whose surrender had been the object of French policy in the upper country for more than a year could escape past sentinels from a French fort on the first night of his captivity strained credibility. Cadillac’s only explanation was that Le Pesant had lost a lot of weight lately. With Le Pesant gone, Cadillac assured the Ottawas that

<sup>73</sup> Cadillac to Vaudreuil (copy made), Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:352–52. Words of the Ottawas to Cadillac, Sept. 24, 1707, *MPHC* 33:346–50. Vaudreuil to Minister, Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:350–53.

<sup>74</sup> Cadillac to Vaudreuil (copy made), Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:351–52; Words of the Ottawas to Cadillac, Sept. 24, 1707, *MPHC* 33:346–48; Vaudreuil to Minister, Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:354–57.

<sup>75</sup> Vaudreuil to Minister, Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:355–58.

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he had intended to pardon him anyway, thus freeing himself from complicity in his death if the Huron-Petuns or Miamiis should catch him.<sup>76</sup>

Vaudreuil, skeptical and critical as he was, appreciated good acting and clever staging, even as he deciphered the drama and explained away the illusions it sought to create. With both the Ottawas and the French acting according to script, the cultural demands of each had been met by creating an artificial and controlled stage, a special kind of middle ground. Vaudreuil appreciated this.<sup>77</sup>

The Miamiis and Huron-Petuns were less enthusiastic. Their response to the drama was so harsh that Cadillac did not choose to fully report it. Instead, he reported only the closing part of the council that followed Le Pesant's escape and was attended by the Miamiis, the Huron-Petuns, the French, and the Ottawas. In council, following the usual ritual forms, he calmed the waters, removed the fallen trees, smoothed the land, and opened the way for peace and the return of the Ottawas to Detroit.<sup>78</sup>

Unfortunately for Cadillac, the audience in historical dramas of this sort must consent to the script, for they always have the option of adding a final act. Le Pesant returned to Michilimackinac in the same canoe and with the same warriors who had escorted him down to Detroit, but this did not close the play. Cadillac had gained the Ottawas but lost the Miamiis, who soon killed not only Ottawas but also Frenchmen, and so began yet another round of negotiations. The resolution of the killings at Detroit was thus only partially successful, but the negotiations are, nevertheless, illuminating. They reveal the substantial and expanding middle ground the French-Algonquian alliance had created. Here common problems could be worked out and mutually comprehensible solutions arrived at. The negotiations also reveal the extent to which solutions could be elaborately scripted cultural fictions, political theater. Such fictions deeply influenced events in both societies.<sup>79</sup>

## V

Once established, the middle ground was extended in surprising directions. Killings the French once considered solely their own concern became

<sup>76</sup> Cadillac to Vaudreuil (copy made), Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:351; Vaudreuil to Minister, Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:355; Words of Ottawas to Cadillac Sept. 25, 1707, *MPHC* 33:348–50.

<sup>77</sup> Vaudreuil to Minister, Oct. 1, 1707, *MPHC* 33:355.

<sup>78</sup> Words of Ottawas to Cadillac, Sept. 25, 1707, *MPHC* 33:348–50.

<sup>79</sup> For the retaliation of the Miamiis and the events which followed, see Vaudreuil and Raudot to Minister, Nov. 14, 1708, *MPHC* 33:403–5, 408; Father Marest to De Vaudreuil, June 4, 1708, *MPHC* 33:383–87; De Vaudreuil to Minister, Nov. 5, 1708, *MPHC* 33:395–99;

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issues to be settled on the middle ground. On April 25, 1723, a French soldier spoke "impertinently" to a warehouse keeper, a man named Perillaut, who responded by running his sword through the soldier's body. The French tried Perillaut and condemned him to death, but Perillaut, as warehouse keeper (or *maître de la marchandise*, as the Indians called him), had had many dealings with the Illinois, and his death sentence disturbed them deeply. On April 29 three chiefs of the Kaskaskias, accompanied by thirty warriors, appeared to plead for his life. They were followed in early May by a Cahokia delegation that included Marie Rompicoue (or Rokipiekoue). This woman, who was "greatly respected in her village and among the French," was the wife of a Cahokia, Joseph Ouissakatchakoue. In all likelihood, Marie Rompicoue was Aramepinchieue, the daughter of Rouensa who had married Michel Accault thirty years earlier. The actions and speeches of these delegations, particularly those of the Kaskaskia chiefs Kiraoueria and Michel, present a clear picture of eighteenth-century Algonquian views on murder and revenge, and of how such views could influence French actions.<sup>80</sup>

Kiraoueria, a Kaskaskia chief who was "of the Prayer" (a Christian), held a particularly advantageous position for articulating Indian logic and extending it to French affairs. The Kaskaskias opened matters by presenting the calumet, a symbol of friendship and alliance. The French knew from a half century of experience that to accept the calumet was to grant the giver's request. Kiraoueria then tried to bring the French to their senses. "Would you," he asked, "spill the blood of a Frenchman to blot out the blood of another and would you add to the loss of one man the loss of another?" This was folly. If the French insisted on killing someone to cover the body of the soldier, then they should strike the Fox and Chickasaws, their enemies. These people would be full of joy when they heard that the French had, in

Report of D'Aigremont, Nov. 14, 1708, *MPHC* 33:937–40. For the reaction of the Ottawas to Le Pesant's surrender, see Speeches of Three Indians from Michilimakina (*sic*), Oct. 7, 1707, *MPHC* 33:365.

<sup>80</sup> This account is partially drawn from the report of Boisbriant Diron Desurins Legardeur De L'isle Ste. Therese Langloisere of June 17, 1723, in Schlarman, *From Quebec to New Orleans*, 225–31. For original, see Chefs du villages . . . , 17 juin 1793, AN, F3, v. 24, f. 157 Moreau St. Mery. The account of the Cahokia delegation and Marie Rompicoue is from a document of May 11, 1723, entitled Remis par M. Diron, AN, C13A, v. 7, f. 322. That Marie Rompicoue was Aramepinchieue is made likely by (1) the similarity of their names, (2) the fact that Aramepinchieue's baptismal name was Marie (see Palm, "Jesuit Missions," p. 38), and (3) the high standing of both women among the Illinois and the French. Aramepinchieue was still alive in 1723 because four years later the French ransomed "the Illinois woman who passed as the wife of michelako" from the Fox who were about to burn her. Accault was by now presumably dead. Deliette to Lignery, Oct. 15, 1726, *WHC* 17:18. For an additional, briefer account of the murder, see "Journal of Diron D'Artaguette . . .," in Newton D. Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 75–77.

effect, avenged the Chickasaws and Fox's dead by killing one another.<sup>81</sup> Kiraoueria then went on to explain the Algonquian view of murder. Murderers were madmen, and no nation could glory in being free of them. But they were not permanently mad. They could be redeemed, and rather than their being killed, the relatives of their victims should be compensated and the blood of the victim covered. More blood should not be spilled on top of it. But Kiraoueria did not expect the French simply to accept Algonquian logic. In the usual manner of creating the middle ground, he connected what he was saying with French culture. He joined it with Christianity:

I know that the Great Spirit, the Spirit Creator, God, forbids us, my father, to kill our children. . . . But does not God, who is Master of all, raise his eyes above our follies when we ask him to be no longer angry? He forgives; pardon as He does, my fathers, and for the love of Him.<sup>82</sup>

Finally, Kiraoueria and Michel, a war chief, appealed to the underlying basis of the middle ground, the alliance, and the symbol of peace and alliance, the calumet. Kiraoueria begged the French not to humiliate him and his chiefs by refusing their request. Michel cited times when Kaskaskias had lost their lives to avenge the French and how those warriors remained unavenged at the request of the French. Those men, warriors for whom revenge should be taken, lay uncovered, and now the Kaskaskias were being asked to watch the French take inappropriate vengeance on one another.<sup>83</sup>

The affair, so phrased, was, as the French commander Boisbriant realized, "a delicate matter." To send the Illinois away without a concession was dangerous, particularly when Michel had obliquely raised the matter of the uncovered Kaskaskia dead. Boisbriant, in delivering his response, insisted that the affair set no precedent, but he agreed to petition the king for Perillaut's pardon and release. Those Kaskaskias who "have died to avenge the Frenchman, cover the body of the one who has now been killed." So ended the first recorded criminal case tried by the French in Illinois. Perillaut was free that May. He owed his freedom, just as fifty years before the son of Achiganaga owed his death, to an evolving cultural logic that sprang from the convergences, some accidental, some quite close, of two different cultural systems faced with a common set of problems.<sup>84</sup>

Separately, the stories of Dulhut and Achiganaga's sons, of Le Pesant and Cadillac, and of Perillaut and Kiraoueria are incidents widely scattered over

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 226–27. Kiraoueria's position was not unusual; Joachim, a Michigame chief, was also of the prayer. He had married three of his daughters to Frenchmen. St. Ange au Ministre, n.d., (1733) AN, C13A, v. 17, f. 248. For an Illinois interpretation of patriarchal relations, see Parolles de Chachagouesse . . . chez Illinois du 20 aoust 1712, AN, C11A, v. 33.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 227–30.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 228–31.

time and space, but together they form an evolving ritual of surrender and redemption that would be central to the French-Algonquian alliance. This ritual of the middle ground clearly drew elements from both cultures but fully corresponded to neither. The ritual operated by analogy. The murderer was to the governor as a sinner was to God. The governor was to the murderer as a stern but forgiving father was to an erring son. Such analogies were hooks, both attaching the new ritual to the purely Algonquian or French way of settling murders and pulling elements of the older process into the middle ground. As under the French system, Indian murderers would be imprisoned while their crimes were investigated; as under the Algonquian system, Indian and French dead would be covered or raised up.

Once formulated, this ritual of surrender and redemption became a centerpiece of the middle ground. Orders from Governor Duquesne to the Sieur de Pean in 1754 expressed its basic elements well: "He must manage to see that he obtains the murderers, to whom he will grant pardon in the customary manner." The ritual, however, was under constant pressure from Frenchmen who, having seen to it that murderers were surrendered, wished to see these murderers executed, and from Algonquians who hesitated to surrender kinspeople for even temporary imprisonment before their pardon "in the customary manner." Each murder, each surrender, and each pardon thus became a test of the health of the alliance. Onontio's failure to pardon and his children's failure to surrender signaled crises that only a renewal of the ritual could resolve. Like all structural elements of culture, the ritual remained meaningful only insofar as it was constantly replicated in action.<sup>85</sup>

What was being created in social action was a world very different from the one historians would expect to find if they relied on the older ethnographies. Nor does the evolution of this world conform to much acculturation literature with the gradual adoption by Indians of certain European values. Instead, members of two cultures established an alliance that they both thought furthered interests generated within their own societies. They maintained this alliance through rituals and ceremonials based on cultural parallels and congruences, inexact and artificial as they originally may have been. These rituals and ceremonials were not the decorative covering of the alliance; they were its sinews. They helped bind together a common world to solve problems, even killings, that threatened the alliance itself. These solutions might have been, as at Detroit, elaborate cultural fictions, but through them change occurred. Such changes, worked out on the middle ground, could be remarkably influential, bringing important modifications in each society and blurring the boundaries between them.

<sup>85</sup> Instruction de Duquesne à Pean, 9 may 1754, in Fernand Grenier (ed.), *Papiers Contrecoeur, et autres documents concernant le conflit anglo-français sur l'Ohio de 1745 à 1756* (Quebec: Les presses universitaires, Laval, 1952), 122.