Through a Glass Darkly

REFLECTIONS ON PERSONAL IDENTITY IN EARLY AMERICA

EDITED BY RONALD HOFFMAN,
MECHAL SOBEL, & FREDRIKA J. TEUTE

Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill & London

"ALTHOUGH I AM DEAD, I AM NOT ENTIRELY DEAD. I HAVE LEFT A SECOND OF MYSELF": CONSTRUCTING SELF AND PERSONS ON THE MIDDLE GROUND OF EARLY AMERICA

Richard White

With all the attention given to the discovery of the other, it was only a matter of time before historians returned to the discovery of self. Since otherness presumes and demands a self, discovering or creating others implies discovering or creating oneself. Using encounters with the other as an avenue for examining colonial self-fashioning has a nice logic to it.[1]

During the seventeenth century and much of the eighteenth, many colonial Europeans and Indians presumed an ability to shape and change one's identity. Malleable identities put Indians and Europeans in complex relation with each other. On each side there was a presumption not just that self-fashioning was possible but that in the other—no matter how abhorrent—was also a self capable of change and self-fashioning. This mutual conviction created the opportunity for a dialogue about self and identity. This dialogue was the result of a dynamic encounter in a colonial America where cultures—and selves—did not simply clash like so many competing authenticities but instead intersected. Cultures and selves were porous and contested. As Inga Clendinnen has writ-

I would like to thank John Toews and Laurie Sears for help with this essay.

1. James Clifford, "Introduction," in James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, Calif., 1986), 23. For "ethnographic self-fashioning" in general, see Clifford, "On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski," in Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 92–113. The issue of self-fashioning and the creation of identity precedes the explosion of interest in the other. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), 1–9; Michael Zuckerman, "Fabrication of Identity in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., XXXIV (1977), 184–214; Mitchell Robert Breitwieser, *Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin: The Price of Representative Personality* (Cambridge, 1984); and Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, Conn., 1975), are just four examples. Both Zuckerman and Greenblatt stress the role of the other in self-fashioning.

ten, "Colonial situations breed confusion." They "spawn multiple realities."[2] Conversion and adoption, for example, both assumed, though not necessarily in the same way, an ability in the other to change identity, to move from one reality to another.

Various soliloquies and dialogues about identity and self create a continual murmur in the records of both formal and everyday relations between colonial Europeans and Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples. The struggle to change oneself merged with the struggle to change the other. These were complicated conversations because they concerned not only who people were but who people might become. There were limits. From the beginning, these discussions of identity were gendered, but they were not usually racialized. Male and female were master categories that rarely were transcended. Race would not clearly limit the possibilities of self-fashioning among Indians and whites in the same way until later.

Such conversations about identity tended to arrange themselves around two axes. The poles of the first axis were self and person, with self, for now, understood as a self-conscious subject and person understood as a socially constructed identity. The poles of the second axis were feeling and reason. Europeans and Indian peoples could talk to and not past each other because in Eastern North America groups in contact shared overlapping categories of self and person, feeling and reason. The actual content of these categories differed from group to group and changed over time, but they were, like kinship, similar enough to permit a dialogue on self and identity (which was as much creative misunderstanding as mutual understanding). In the complications of this dialogue arose the possibility of colonial identities in which self and feeling, person and reason became open to reflection and revision.[3]

2. Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517–1570* (Cambridge, 1987), 127. Indians as well as colonial Europeans could see their lives as, in Mitchell Breitwieser's words, "conscious projects," although they were far less likely to seek to exemplify in individual lives what they regarded as universally human; see Breitwieser, *Mather and Franklin*, 3. Two books on the Iroquois underline the emphasis that people put on shaping identity. Indeed, the founding myth of the League of the Iroquois is about Deganawidah's effort at self-fashioning, his mastery of himself, and his ability to transform others. Hiawatha stands as an example of self-transformation. The Iroquois League of Peace, with its vision of indefinite extension, assumed that such transformations could continue. See Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993), 85–115; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992), 30–35.

3. Natalie Zemon Davis has stressed both the changing contextual elements of self-definition and the way in which "virtually all the occasions for talking about or writing

To give this dialogue some substance, let me start with two emblematic moments in individual lives. In 1674, Father Claude Dablon ordered Father Jean Pierron to go among the Iroquois, despite his "very great natural repugnance" for them. Father Dablon recorded that Father Pierron was grateful for "sending him among the Iroquois, because in that I had acted against his own feelings." Father Pierron vowed to lose his own will and to "comply unquestioningly with the orders of his superiors."[4]

In 1655, during a council with the French and Hurons to propose peace, an Iroquois offered the last of a series of ritual presents. The speaker had once been a Huron captain, and then "a captive of the Iroquois, and now a Captain among them." He had a new name, new kinspeople, a new country, a new social place. He spoke of the Iroquois proposals as "our proposals." Yet he told the French and Hurons: "My brothers, I have not changed my soul, despite my change of country. . . . My heart is all Huron, as well as my tongue."[5]

These two brief glimpses of individual lives each contain illuminating flashes of self. Father Pierron was struggling not so much with the Iroquois as with himself. It was the difference the Iroquois embodied that excited a feeling of alienation and repugnance in him. These feelings were intensely personal. They were his own and not necessarily shared by other Jesuits. In order to change the Iroquois, he, in a real sense, needed first to change himself, a self that he fully discovered only by contemplation of the Iroquois.

The Iroquois captain, on the other hand, had seemingly already changed everything. He had become the other. The markers of his Huron identity had vanished. He had become a new person. Yet, he announced, he had only changed his country; he maintained the same heart. His speech and actions would match his heart. His heart corresponded to his old "self."

Both of these speeches are declarations of self that, as any proclamation of identity must be, are full of elaborate social and cultural cross-references. Father Pierron's identity takes shape with reference to the Iroquois, to his Jesuit superiors, to God. They prompt and organize his feelings. The Iroquois captain similarly speaks from an Iroquois body with a Huron heart. He needs to be accepted as honest and coherent by Frenchmen.

---

about the self involved a relationship"; see Davis, "Boundaries and the Sense of Self in Sixteenth Century France," in Thomas C. Heller et al., eds., *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought* (Stanford, Calif., 1986), 53–63 (quotation on 53).

4. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France*, 73 vols. (Cleveland, Ohio, 1896–1901), LIX, 79.

5. Ibid., XLII, 57.

In different ways, Father Pierron and the Iroquois captain were searching for a coherent human self, and the proof of coherence seems to be a proper matching of affect and action. Father Pierron's feelings and will struggled against necessary action, so he sought to surrender his will. The captain declared a congruence between his heart and action, but the declaration was necessary because he spoke to an audience skeptical of the truth of such a congruence since he was no longer the person he had been.

The marking of incongruent selves was common among both seventeenth-century Indians and Europeans. In their own lives, they resisted feelings incompatible with culturally prescribed actions. And they marked otherness in part by this incongruity of affect and action. Europeans repeatedly observed, for instance, that Indian affect was inappropriate to Indian action. When the Jesuits in 1637 watched Hurons gruesomely torture an Iroquois at the stake,

> anger and rage did not appear upon the faces of those who were tormenting him, but rather gentleness and humanity, their words expressing only raillery or tokens of friendship and good will. There was no strife as to who should burn him—each one took his turn; thus they gave themselves leisure to meditate some new device to make him feel the fire more keenly.[6]

Indians noticed a parallel incongruence. Europeans were foolish and passionate over trivial things. In 1634, after watching a Frenchman in a fit of anger, a Montagnais shaman told Father Paul Le Jeune that the man had "no sense, he gets angry; as for me, nothing can disturb me; let hunger oppress me, let my nearest relation pass to the other life, let the Hiroquois, our enemies, massacre our people, I never get angry."[7]

These soliloquies on appropriate feelings—one's own and others'—are revealing, but only if we historicize feelings. Even now, we routinely expect differences in thought, belief, social organization, but we expect a set of feelings that, although culturally organized in particular ways, are universal in the manner that humans with two arms and legs are universal. We still tend to think of feelings as a sort of magma of human life—a hot-bloodedness, as we say, seething below a rational crust.[8] But emotions like Father Pierron's do not

6. The French often regarded the Algonquians as emotionally duplicitous. See ibid., XIII, 67, LII, 203–205; Gabriel Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* (Toronto, 1939), 86; A. Irving Hallowell, *Culture and Experience* (Philadelphia, 1955), 134.

7. Sagard, *The Long Journey,* 58; Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations,* VI, 231; Hallowell, *Culture and Experience,* 134.

8. Peter N. Stearns with Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *American Historical Review,* XC (1985), 813–836. The Stearnses, for example, although arguing for changes in emotional expression and organiza-

just burst forth like some paradoxical substance, at once universal and purely personal, before cooling and hardening into particular cultural forms such as stoicism, resignation, revenge, or mercy. We know emotions, like we know thought, *only* in a cultural form. "Affects," as Michelle Rosaldo wrote, "are no less cultural and no more private than beliefs."[9]

With the matching of affect to action as a common criterion for the creation of a coherent self, the colonial dialogue of self often revolved around feelings. And, again, there was a culturally exploitable convergence. Feelings were, in different ways for many of those concerned, both a mark of identity and something to be subdued. Like his seventeenth-century Puritan and Iroquois contemporaries, Father Pierron reacted to feelings and to the self they asserted by straining to conquer them.[10] To vanquish self by his own will, however, only ensured the triumph of the self in another form. The self was what was to be governed, not what governed.[11] His solution, the resort to the will of his superiors, was French and Catholic.[12] But self, of course, reappeared, for he had to willfully subject himself to the will of another.

The irony of self-denial and self-abnegation—so commonly praised by Protestants and Catholics in the seventeenth century—was that they depend on a constant monitoring of self and feelings. And an identity based on the monitoring of self and constant efforts toward its subjection makes self as central to the cultural identity of a human subject as does an identity based on

---

tion over time and from culture to culture, still sometimes write as if emotions themselves were basic and always present, although unevenly expressed (for example, 820–821, 824). At other times, they write as if emotions themselves change and as if emotions have a "cognitive element" and are not merely "glandular or hormonal reactions" (829, 834). This last statement would seem to indicate that emotions are not just culturally expressed but are social and cultural in their very makeup.

9. Michelle Rosaldo, "Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling," in Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine, eds., *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion* (New York, 1984), 141–143. See also John Toews, "Cultural History, the Construction of Subjectivity, and Freudian Theory: A Critique of Carol and Peter Stearns' Proposal for a New History of the Emotions," *Psychohistory Review*, XVIII (1990), 303–318.

10. Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins of the American Self*, 15–25; Breitwieser, *Mather and Franklin*, 7, 24.

11. This formulation, made by Breitwieser for Cotton Mather, would apply as readily to Father Pierron; see Breitwieser, *Mather and Franklin*, 8.

12. Protestant submission was more direct. It was an annihilation of self by God; see Breitwieser, *Mather and Franklin*, 28–31. But, as Breitwieser also points out, the authority of the father imitates that of God (35–43). Fathers play the role of Jesuit superiors or, rather, vice versa.

self-fulfillment or self-indulgence.[13] The European colonial self proved protean. The Jesuit and Puritan attacks on the self only revealed how manifold were its forms and extensive its domains. Self-abnegation existed easily enough alongside vigorous attempts to promote and defend the reputation of the very same selves that ideally deserved suppression.[14] *The Jesuit Relations*—which publicized Father Pierron's self-denial—were, after all, a vehicle for the Jesuits' promotion of their own adventures, heroism, and success in order to raise funds for the missions.[15]

Father Pierron suffered real anguish at the incompatibility of his feelings and his action, and that is what makes the assurance of the Iroquois captain, who should be far more conflicted, so startling. It is, indeed, incidents like this that made Indian adoptions so mysterious to colonial whites. Europeans either marveled that Indian captives could take on a new identity and forget their former selves or they doubted that an individual could, in fact, do so. Yet here was a man claiming a Huron heart, soul, and blood in an Iroquois body. And though the Iroquois and Hurons were at war, he was supposedly not at war with himself.

This claim to coherence *is* suspect as long as it remains on the level of self. But to try to understand porous and contested selves involves entering a terminological tangle in which the person/self distinction is unavoidably embedded. I have, for better or worse, selected as a guide through this tangle an old essay by Marcel Mauss, and I have used anthropological terminology rather than current postcolonial categories of subject and subject positions.[16]

The basic issue that forces me into this terminological morass is that self as a

13. I would like to thank John Toews, whose reading of an early draft of this essay suggested this formulation to me. Also see Zuckerman, "Fabrication of Identity," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXXIV (1977), 196–200; Breitwieser, *Mather and Franklin*, 27.

14. A. Lynn Martin, *The Jesuit Mind: The Mentality of an Elite in Early Modern France* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1988), 30, 74, 79. Martin points out the parallels between Puritans and Jesuits (140). They shared the seeming Puritan paradox of self-abnegation and an emphasis on self-help and activity in the world (139). For praise of Father Leonard Garreau for his "total self-abandonment to God's will," see Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations*, XLII, 241–243.

15. Similarly, colonial New Englanders, although a people devoted to self-abnegation, so valued their public reputation that, as John Demos has pointed out, they made suits for slander one of the most popular forms of legal action; see Demos, "Shame and Guilt in Early New England," in Carol Z. Stearns and Peter N. Stearns, eds., *Emotion and Social Change: Toward a New Psychohistory* (New York, 1988), 71–75.

16. Marcel Mauss, "A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person; the Notion of Self" (1938), and J. S. La Fontaine, "Person and Individual: Some Anthropological Reflections," in Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes, eds., *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History* (Cambridge, 1985), 4–11, 124; Grace Gredys Harris, "Concepts of Individual, Self, and Person in Description and Analysis," *American Anthropologist*, XCI (1989), 599–612.

concept cannot stand alone. In terms of our current academic categories, it is connected with the categories of individual and person. These three terms are distinct but linked; they resemble a holy trinity of subjectivity. There is a move in anthropology to be more rigorous in drawing distinctions between human beings as biological entities (bodies, individuals), as self-conscious subjects (selves), and as socially constructed identities (persons, subject positions).[17]

The distinctions between individual, self, and person are important, but the significant issue for me is the relationship between concepts of self and concepts of person in the encounter of Indian peoples and Europeans. Person and self can never be free of each other. Persons are those individuals recognized by a society as possessing agency and juridical and moral standing. Person and self can conceivably be identical, but this was not the case with either colonial Europeans or Indians. European Christians came the closest. They regarded a moral person as a single entity, a "rational substance, indivisible and individual," that united soul and body.[18] Such persons were responsible for their own actions.

But in this Western formulation, selves and persons were not totally congruent. Not all human selves are fully persons (children before the age of reason, slaves, and, in many instances, women). Nor are all persons human. Religious institutions, universities, and corporations could and can be legal persons. The "category of 'self' " built around "self-knowledge and the psychological consciousness" thus remained distinct from that of a person.[19]

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Algonquian and Iroquoian societies drew similar distinctions. Not all human selves were persons, and not all persons—for example, manitous who were other-than-human persons—were human selves. Indeed, Indian peoples probably tended to keep lines between these concepts clearer than did Europeans. It was this distinction between persons and selves among Indians that struck Marcel Mauss, who began his classic essay on notions of person and self with a discussion of North America. Mauss's own discussion is complicated and marred by a now outdated evolutionism, but his connection of Indian persons with a *personnage*—

17. Harris, "Concepts of Individual, Self, and Person," *American Anthropologist,* XCI (1989), 599–612 (quotation on 601). Like self, individual and person are our own categories, but we cannot escape using them in analyzing the past. Certainly they are necessary for talking coherently among ourselves.

18. Mauss, "Category of the Human Mind," in Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes, eds., *Category of the Person,* 20. Michelle Rosaldo was correct in arguing that, in other cultures, at other times, self and person "need not be conceptually opposed"; see Rosaldo, "Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling," in Shweder and LeVine, eds., *Culture Theory,* 147.

19. Mauss, "Category of the Human Mind," and see La Fontaine, "Person and Individual," in Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes, eds., *Category of the Person,* 4–22 (quotation on 20), 124.

a mask or role that an Indian subject might literally assume—remains useful. This role was named, and the temporary occupant of the position took the name as his or her own.[20] That is what the Iroquois with the soul of a Huron had done.

Both Indians and whites posited distinctive relations between persons and selves and created distinctive domains for each.[21] Contact demanded complicated cross-cultural understandings, or misunderstandings, of such relations.

Certainly on the level of formal political relations, the French and the Indians, and to a lesser degree the Dutch and English, agreed to act as if particular transitory selves were subordinate to enduring persons. Europeans pragmatically agreed to an Indian formulation of politics as a kinship relationship between a limited number of named persons. The name Onontio, by which Iroquois and Algonquians addressed the governor of Canada, or the name Corlaer, by which they addressed the Dutch and English, were not titles; they were not Iroquois equivalents of the word "governor."[22] Onontio was the name of a particular human self—Governor Montmagny—who had become the archetype for a character, a *personnage,* who was father to both the French and the Algonquians. It was a role with personal characteristics into which individual governors stepped. All the governors after Montmagny were Onon-

20. Mauss, "Category of the Human Mind," in Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes, eds., *Category of the Person,* 4–12. Mauss discussed the Pueblos and the Kwakiutl of the Northwest coast. He relied on anthropological sources created after the Pueblos had been in close contact with Europeans for more than three centuries and the Kwakiutl for more than a century. Mauss recognized the history these peoples shared with Europeans, but he argued that this history of contact had not affected their "aboriginal state."

Mauss's historical approach was evolutionary, and so Indians remained the ever popular primal peoples. Mauss used them to establish a baseline from which he could derive progress toward modern Western ideas about the self. For evolutionary aspects of Mauss's thought, see N. J. Allen, "The Category of the Person: A Reading of Mauss's Last Essay," in Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes, eds., *Category of the Person,* 26–27. For a discussion of names, identities, offices, and social roles among the 19th-century Iroquois, see William N. Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the Process of Iroquois Treaty Making," in Francis Jennings et al., eds., *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1985), 12. The creation of the *personnage* is a practice that has confused numerous historians (including myself) into thinking a single-named person was a single human self with a sometimes extraordinary lifespan.

21. In terms of colonial America, Michael Zuckerman noted this distinction between social role and inner identity some time ago; see Zuckerman, "Fabrication of Identity," *WMQ,* 3d Ser., XXXIV (1977), 184.

22. Daniel K. Richter refers to these as council titles, but since they carried so many duties as a personality and a way of acting, they are much closer to Mauss's *personnages;* see Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse,* 93, 141.

tio. There was one Onontio. Individual actors lived and died, the character lived on.[23]

Onontio existed in kinship relation to equivalent Indian persons. In 1740, the Ottawa Nagach8o "spoke" in council through an unnamed Ottawa speaker who addressed his French father.

> My father has always had pity on me during my life, and although I am dead, I am not entirely dead. I have left a second of myself at Michilmackinac before departing; he holds my place. This is my brother, Cabina. I hope that my father will have the same care of my younger brother that he had for me. I think that my brother will listen to the word of my father as I have always done.[24]

To be Onontio, to be Nagach8o, was to assume a very real and powerful identity; but particular human selves persisted. Cabina became Nagach8o, but he could still fashion himself. He did not, in fact, listen to his father. In 1750, "Nouk8ato," a Michilmackinac Ottawa, became a British chief.[25]

Colonial Europeans were able to accommodate this distinction between persons and selves, but Europeans, both Catholic and Protestant, had a particular understanding of the consequences of the distinction. Individuals as selves—as self-aware, individualized unions of souls and bodies—were all equal in the sense that they all possessed equivalent immortal souls. Individuals as persons, however, were radically unequal. They were ranked. Among Europeans, to stress selves was to stress equality; to stress persons was to stress inequality.

Europeans expected that a world organized on the basis of ranked persons would be a world of order, including emotional order. The French certainly accepted the universality and explosive consequences of emotion. But appropriate displays of emotions such as anger or pride varied according to rank. French pardon tales, designed to secure forgiveness from the king for crimes, were mimetic: they tried to re-create in listeners the anger or fear that prompted a killing. Anger could be understood by all, but rank legitimated

23. "Onontio" was an Iroquois word meaning "big mountain." It was the Mohawk rendering of the name of Charles Jacques de Huault de Montmagny, an early French governor. See W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534–1760* (New York, 1969), 201 n. 15; Mauss, "Category of the Human Mind," in Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes, eds., *Category of the Person*, 4–11.

24. Paroles des Outa8acs de Missilmakinac de la Bande de la fourche . . . , 6 juillet 1740, C11A, LXXIV, fol. 16, Arichives Nationales.

25. La Jonquière to Minister, Sept. 17, 1751, La Jonquière to Minister, Sept. 20, 1750, in State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections*, 20 vols. (Madison, 1855–1931), XVIII, 67–68, 80–81; Parolles de Pemant8euns [Pennahouel], 5 juillet 1751, C11A, XCVII, NA.

displays of anger for some people and not for others. A gentleman rightfully reacted more forcefully to being called a knave by an inferior than a peasant might react to an identical insult. Feelings occurred among people of all social ranks, but their display was hierarchical.[26]

What alarmed the French in Canada was that the general equality of the Algonquians and Iroquois seemingly yielded emotional disorder.[27] Lacking a proper social arrangement of persons, they could not have a proper arrangement of feeling. According to Father Pierre de Charlevoix, the maxim of the northern Indians was that "one man owes nothing to another." Such independence yielded a characteristic set of feelings: "They are easily offended, jealous and suspicious, especially of us Frenchmen; treacherous when it is for their interest; great dissemblers, and exceeding vindictive."[28]

What was missing among Indians was a set of feelings—deference, respect, obligation, trust, subordination—appropriate to ranked persons. Hierarchy supposedly produced and properly routed these feelings. Indian societies were, so to speak, improperly wired. They were, in a reversal of the usual identification of Indians with nature, unnatural. In a metaphorical world of French fathers and Indian children, Father Charlevoix claimed that actual Indian children were unnatural, showing "no return of natural love for their parents."[29]

With the distinction between self and person in mind, the intricacies of the colonial conversation of feelings and selves become clearer. When Europeans and Indians sought to understand self, they both inevitably brought into play the distinct but allied conception of person. Similarly, when they talked about feelings and emotion, they brought into play the allied concept of reason. The meanings they attached to these concepts differed just as the appropriate domains of each differed. But both sides could use similar sets of paired concepts in their discussions of self.

26. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, Calif., 1987), 37, 39, 43, 53, 67.

27. The English and French both perceived an Indian world lacking in subordination and therefore in order, civilization, and, at the most extreme, humanity. Father Membre's palpable relief at reaching the Muskogean Natchez—"all different from our Canada Indians"—came from the authority of their chiefs. "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"; see Chretien Le Clercq, *The First Establishment of the Faith in New France,* 2 vols. (1881; reprint, New York, 1992).

28. Pierre de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North-America,* 2 vols. (London, 1761), II, 88.

29. Ibid., II, 88–89. Similar behavior could be defined as natural but inhuman; see Sagard, *The Long Journey,* 131. For an illuminating discussion of nature and what is natural in human nature in the 17th and 18th centuries, see Breitwieser, *Mather and Franklin,* 7–8, 101–116, 171–201.

A fundamental aspect of what I have elsewhere called the middle ground between Indians and Europeans was an agreement that the basis of formal relations would be a ranked hierarchy of persons. Europeans believed such ranked positions involved a set of appropriate feelings—honor, subordination, resignation—and saw as part of the colonial task the creation of such feelings among Indian peoples. For the French, the punishment of murderers provided an occasion for cultivating these feelings. Governor Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil demanded of the Ottawa emissary Miscouaky, who had come to resolve a killing, "a great trust in my kindness . . . 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." He wanted Indian murderers begging pardon of the governor to mimic the abasement of murderers of all ranks who, blaming their crimes on passion, sought pardon before the French king. In a ranked society, as Father Pierron knew, the shaping of self depended on subjecting one's will to that of a superior. In the case of murder among the French, when one's own will had been overwhelmed by passions, to seek pardon was to recognize that one's very life depended on the will of the king. Securing such a pardon depended on the rational cultivation and expression of proper feelings.[30]

Murder for the French and other colonial Europeans was largely about the murderer; it was primarily a crime of human selves. When Europeans explained the logic of murder, responsibility, and punishment to Indians, they did so largely in terms of self. A unique human self had died and would not return; specific human selves bore responsibility. The guilty self should vanish into death just as the victim had vanished. In fact, things were a bit more complicated. For if the human self who died at the hands of a murderer did not have the status of a person, punishment was far less likely. Murdering a slave was not the same as murdering a white freeman.

For Algonquians and other Indians, murder was about the victim; it was largely a crime of human persons. They understood both the victim and the murderer as persons. Without the loss of a person, a murder had not occurred. Thus when in 1655 an Onondaga warrior brutally killed a young captive girl of the Cat nation (Eries) at the behest of her mistress, the act was not regarded as murder because the victim was an unadopted war captive and a slave and thus not a person. The victim did, however, possess a soul, which had to be ritually driven from the town.[31]

30. Reply of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil to Miscouaky, Nov. 4, 1706, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Historical Collections* (Lansing, Mich., 1877–), XXXIII, 295 (hereafter, MPHC). For the French tradition of subordination and seeking pardon, see Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 53.

31. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations*, XLII, 137–139.

Similarly, punishing the actual killer—the human self who had performed the act—would not necessarily be the object of revenge. When those seeking to retaliate sought a victim, they demanded not so much the actual murderer as a person equivalent to the one they had lost. They would gladly kill a kinsperson or clan member of the murderer whose status equaled that of the deceased. But a retaliatory killing was not essential. Because persons existed within a clan, lineage, or other kin group, any individual accepted as occupying the proper social place of the deceased replaced the victim as a person. Sometimes the person was replaced with a slave—an individual who had already literally lost social identity. Sometimes the person's worth, value, or importance could be compensated for with payments—the victim was "covered" and no longer a source of grief. Because persons were not of equal importance, payments varied. Only in extreme circumstances would another life be taken. It was then that a person from the same lineage, clan, or village of the murderer could potentially pay the price. The group as a whole thus had an incentive to settle the murder by covering or raising the victim.[32] Dead persons, unlike dead selves, were not unique. They could be replaced.

French and Algonquian concepts of murder did, however, partially overlap in their understanding of the murderer. The French saw certain kinds of murders—the kind open to pardon—as outbursts of passion. In terms of retribution, Algonquians treated the murderer solely as a person, but in explaining murder and in dealing with the actual murderer Algonquians saw the murderer as a distinct and passionate self. Among Algonquians, murders—the acts of human selves overcome by their feelings—were also not the acts of rational people. Murderers were, as the Kaskaskia chief Kiraoueria told the French, madmen.[33] They had, so to speak, lost themselves. But they were only temporarily deranged. They could be redeemed. By the same logic, however, murder had the likelihood, indeed the virtual certainty, of deranging relatives of the victim who, mad with grief at the loss of a beloved son, daughter, father, or mother, could kill in turn. The emphasis on replacing persons had not erased the self from the equation, but the feelings of the murderer were not (as in the French ritual of pardon) of primary concern. The key to settling the murder was the victim's kinspeople, deranged by grief, who had to have their true selves restored.

The restoration of the true self among Algonquians or Iroquoians, although

32. The ancient peoples known to the Europeans had followed a similar system. For comparison of Indian and ancient treatment of murders and killings, see Joseph François Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages ameriquains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps,* 2 vols. (Paris, 1724), II, 185–187.

33. Chefs du villages . . . , 17 juin 1793, F3, XXIV, fol. 157, Moreau St. Mery, NA.

it concerned feelings, was phrased as a transcending of strong feelings or passions altogether, rather than an attempt to find appropriate ones. People under the sway of passion, like people under the sway of alcohol or people who were bewitched, had lost themselves. The public culture of Iroquois was dominated by ceremonies for removing the emotion that "stupefies and blinds those who yield to it" and restoring reason.[34] The famed Iroquois condolence ceremony served both to reconcile individuals to the loss of loved ones and as the touchstone for Iroquois diplomacy. It aimed to remove the grief and anger that deranged people. The cultural ideal of Iroquois chiefs was to put themselves beyond "angry passions." "The thickness of their skin shall be . . . seven spans of the hand." Reason, calmness, and peace were the ideal states of the Iroquois self, but these were personal ideals that could only be realized with the aid of ceremonies performed by others. Algonquians shared this conception of a rational self beyond the parameters of passion.[35]

When Europeans killed Indians or when Indians killed Europeans, the axes of self/person and feeling/reason both governed possible solutions. Conceptions of murder as a domain of personal responsibility (self) and of social position and social responsibility (person) were in partial conflict. Europeans emphasized the action of the killer and put the responsibility on and demanded the punishment of a particular human self; they did not insist on compensation for or replacement of a deceased person. The "blood of Frenchmen [was] not to be paid for by beaverskins."[36]

Indians put the emphasis on the victim, the loss of a particular human person, and demanded that the person be replaced or compensation offered for his or her loss. Compensation was to be equal to the act. As a last resort, Indians would accept a life for a life, but they were often shocked by European excess, even when Europeans tried to demonstrate an impartial justice. The Iroquois, for example, objected vehemently when the French executed five Frenchmen for the murder of a single Indian.

The Algonquians and the French, and to a lesser extent the English, by the eighteenth century resolved these differences through what amounted to mu-

34. "These people believe that sadness, anger and all violent passions expel the rational soul from the body, which, meanwhile, is animated only by the sensitive soul which we have in common with animals. That is why, on such occasions, they usually make a present to restore the rational soul to the seat of reason"; see Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations,* XLII, 51.

35. Dennis, *Landscape,* 96–97; Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations,* I, 277. For a description of the ceremony, see William N. Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the Process of Iroquois Treaty Making," in Jennings et al., eds., *History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy,* 18–21.

36. Reply of Vaudreuil to Miscouaky, Nov. 4, 1706, MPHC, XXXIII, 295.

tually acceptable ritual acts.[37] The French demanded surrender of the killer so that the murderer and his people might demonstrate proper feelings of remorse, deference, and trust. Then they almost always pardoned the murderer. Indians, for their part, sought to replace or cover the dead and to soothe the feelings of the Europeans and to restore them to reason.

They learned to do these things in tandem. In 1748, the wife of Agouachimagand, an Ottawa who had killed some French voyageurs, asked Gros Serpent, an Ottawa married to and living among Iroquois, to obtain pardon for her husband from the French. The ensuing dialogue was about feelings and reason, selves and persons. Gros Serpent conducted a condolence ceremony to restore the French to reason. He sought to remove the bile from the French heart. He sought also to offer proof of the Indians' own proper feelings as the French required. Speaking for the Ottawas, Gros Serpent told the French that the Ottawas asked for mercy and repented of their faults. This discourse of feelings was accompanied by the rituals necessary to replace lost persons: gifts to cover the bones of the dead and a slave to replace them. The French emissary replied with a parallel discourse on feelings and reason. He urged the Ottawas to visit their father. He was sure Onontio would take pity on his Ottawa children who had lost their sense *(esprit)*, and his speech would restore them to their senses.[38] Each side acted, in part, within categories defined by the other.

Contact put feelings and emotions on exaggerated display, and, in doing so, it promoted an increased awareness of self. Both the variety of selves on display in the colonial world and the possibilities of transformation embodied in these selves opened up self and person to reflection and possible revision. A universalism, whether Christian or of the Iroquois League of Peace, depended on a recognition of a common humanity and the ability of selves to fashion and transform themselves. This was a universalism that would not persist. A European construction of race on one side and an Indian construction of a separate Indian way on the other truncated and limited the ways the fashioning of selves might occur.

The possibilities for colonial fashioning of persons and selves along cultural borders would not, however, cease in the last half of the eighteenth century. In

37. The treatment of murders varied over time and according to context, but at no time did either Indian or French customs hold full sway. Nor, in the Great Lakes region, did British law hold sway. See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York, 1991), 75–93, 343–351. For treatment of murders within the Canadian mission settlements of Sault-St.-Louis and Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes, see, Jan Grabowski, "Crime and Punishment: Sault-St.-Louis, Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes, and French Justice, 1662–1735," *Native American Studies,* VII (1993), 15–20.

38. Parolles du gros serpend, 8ta8ois . . . 1751, CllA, XCVII, fols. 401–403, NA.

ways I cannot examine in a short essay, Christian conversion, captivities, and captivity narratives, what might be called the cultural cross-dressing of the Sons of Liberty (who dressed as Indians) or Indian delegations (whose members dressed as whites), all continued the complicated tradition of discovering selves in relation to others. Contact opened new possibilities for hybrid cultural identities that probably did not seem hybrid to those who occupied them. There was continuity across what seemingly were most impervious boundaries. As Nagach8o said, "Although I am dead, I am not entirely dead."