The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America

Michael Witgen, *University of Michigan*

Abstract. This article examines the social construction of space and identity in the Great Lakes and the western interior of North America. Through analysis of documentary evidence it contrasts the discursive practices of the French empire, which established claims of discovery and possession, with the lived experience of the French fur trade and alliance system. It suggests that the practices of empire, such as renaming people and places and then mapping the newly imagined entities both cartographically and through diplomatic protocol, represented native peoples from an exclusively imperial vantage point. This overly determined perspective obscures the extent to which native social formations in the Great Lakes and western interior operated and evolved independent of their relationships to the empires of the Atlantic world. It concludes that, from an alternative indigenous framework, European claims of discovery and possession in this region represented the rhetoric of empire rather than a genuine expansion of political sovereignty.

On 14 June 1671 Simon François Daumont Le Sieur de Saint Lusson claimed the interior of North America for the king of France. He voyaged west from Quebec to Sault Sainte Marie under orders from the intendant of New France and "summoned the surrounding peoples" to witness the possession of their country by the king of France. According to the Jesuit Claude Dablon, who wrote an account of this event, fourteen nations responded to Saint Lusson's call. The French emissary then convened a public council, gathering together the native residents of Sault Sainte Marie, as well as visiting Indians, French traders, and Jesuit missionaries. While the council watched, Saint Lusson climbed a height of land that overlooked the village, planted a cross and a cedar pole bearing the king's coat of arms, and took possession, "in his place and in his Majesty's name,

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of the territories lying between the East and West, from Montreal as far as the South Sea."[1]

The contrived pageantry of this event underscored French ignorance about the interior of the continent. Saint Lusson claimed possession of North America from Montreal to the Pacific Ocean on behalf of the king of France, although neither he nor the Jesuits who helped convene the council at Sault Sainte Marie knew where the Pacific was. Nevertheless, the French and countless other Europeans believed that an inland waterway linked the continent to Asia. Both France and England recognized the potential importance of a Northwest Passage, which would guarantee the global dominance of the empire that controlled it. France and England also knew that whether or not the Northwest Passage existed, beaver and the fur trade thrived in the northern interior of the continent. Officials from both empires also understood that finding the passage and controlling the fur trade depended on their relationship with the Indian peoples who lived in this unknown space, and with the Indians who traveled there to trade and hunt.[2]

When Saint Lusson staked the king's coat of arms into the earth at Sault Sainte Marie, he claimed a formal, and physical, possession of western North America for France. His gesture was interpreted and ceremonially enacted, however, by the Jesuit missionary Claude Allouez. The superior general for the Jesuit missions in New France, Claude Dablon, produced a written record of this event. His account of the ceremony performed by Saint Lusson and Allouez, published in the *Jesuit Relations*, represented France's claim to possess the American West. The documents produced by these missionaries also served as an alternative spatial history.[3] That is, they made it possible to imagine the physical and cultural geography of the country north and west of the Great Lakes as a part of New France, as opposed to seeing this region as a native space, or as part of the English empire in North America, a claim advanced after the establishment of trading posts at Hudson Bay in 1670.[4]

In order to create this alternative landscape, Saint Lusson and the French first had to constitute their native allies as nations, claim sovereignty over them as subjects, and incorporate their territory into the French empire. The French referred to the Great Lakes and the adjoining Mississippi Valley as the *pays d'en haut*, or upper country, and they applied a number of different names to the Upper or Northern Algonquian peoples that lived in this region.[5] Many Northern Algonquians migrated seasonally between village communities in the pays d'en haut, and the prairie, parkland, and forest regions that lay farther north and west. This mobility complicated French attempts to understand and assign collective identities to

their allies, but it also allowed them to imagine an extensive, if ill-defined, western borderland for New France.

The French used ritual and ceremony to extend their claim of possession over western North America. This claim was directed toward a European audience. But they also relied on ritual, on a practical level, to hold their empire together. Increasingly, colonial officials recognized that the territory of New France was not a physical space so much as a set of relationships that bound the French to their various Indian allies. Through ritual and ceremony the French in North America and their native allies reinvented themselves as flesh and blood of the same father. They became kin. In the colony of New France, governors struggled to build and maintain the power of their office by allowing their social position, and their person, to evolve. The French governor accepted the role of father and the largely Algonquian Indian allies of New France became his children. Each successive governor assumed this identity and became known as Onontio.[6] At once fictive and literal in its association with Algonquian fatherhood, this ceremonial title enabled the governor to exercise a genuine power over his allies. Onontio's power, however, was based on a mutual obligation between the father and his children to preserve and protect each other's welfare.

Algonquian bands that hunted in the western interior and traded at the French posts in the Lake Superior region were central to a new and evolving set of situational identities at the heart of this relationship between the French and their native allies. By the late seventeenth century these bands, when in the pays d'en haut, increasingly assumed identities as Ottawas and Sauteurs. Even as these "national" identities took shape, however, they remained flexible and even interchangeable. These bands of mobile and highly adaptive Algonquian hunters were children of Onontio at Sault Sainte Marie and La Pointe, village communities with Jesuit missions that were frequented by French traders. Their identity was, however, more ambiguous farther west. They did not stop being children of Onontio, so much as they became more than just the children of Onontio. The same people, in other words, took on different identities in different spaces. In the West they might become Cree or Gens des Terres, and whether or not they identified as Sauteur, Ottawa, or by band designations such as Awassé, Muskogee, and Monsoni, they were part of a vast, shifting, multiethnic exchange network that existed outside of the French alliance system.

Additional narratives describing the discovery and ceremonial possession of the peoples and spaces of the interior West by Saint Lusson were produced by licensed traders and French colonial officials. The intendant

of New France, Jean Talon, produced descriptions of this ritual and of the policies and events that prompted it. Colonial official and historian Claude Charles Le Roy, Bacqueville de La Potherie, and the licensed trader Nicolas Perrot all wrote accounts of Saint Lusson's ceremony as part of larger narratives about the relationship between New France and its native allies. These documents, in spite of their intent, actually subverted the simple logic of the French claims of possession and sovereignty over the interior West. With this ceremony, and the documents used to record its meaning, the French produced a picture of identity, space, and cultural contact in North America that imposed the perspective of empire onto places that empire did not reach. These records, in fact, provide different situated accounts of a complex native social organization that defied easy categorization and suggest a world where power and identity constantly changed form and function. They suggest a world dominated by an expansive, multiethnic, and distinctly native social formation, rather than by empires.

The Logic of Empire and the Limitations of Possession

With Saint Lusson's ceremony the French attempted to impose a singular social identity onto these mobile Algonquian groups, most of whom spoke closely related Ojibwe or mixed Cree-Ojibwe dialects. They became the Ottawa nations. Even as they imposed this identity, however, it became apparent to the government of New France that such a designation was artificial. The name *Ottawa* obviously failed to contain or adequately describe the native peoples that missionaries and traders continued to designate as Sauteurs, Mississaugas, Amikwas, Cree, Gens des Terres, and people of the North, as well as a number of other smaller native bands associated with *doodemag*, or clans, and place names. Saint Lusson's ceremony, however, attempted to expand the power and boundaries of New France by inventing an empire made up of subordinate Indian nations.

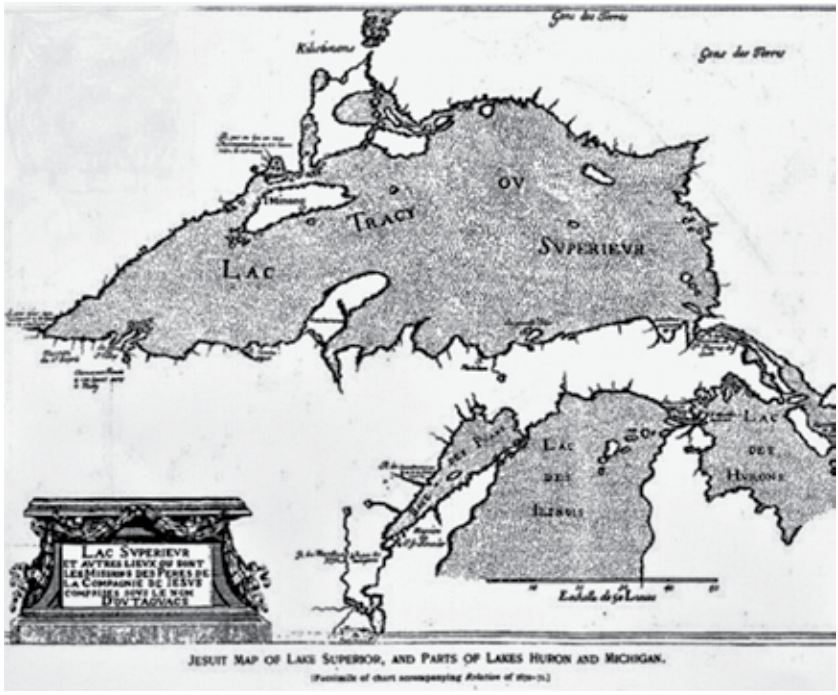
Saint Lusson's ceremony, in this sense, represented a conversation about the language of empire. This conversation occurred on multiple levels—between the royal courts and the empires of France and England and between Onontio and his children. When Claude Dablon wrote about this ceremony he addressed a European audience. His narrative, however, betrayed how formal ceremony gave way to the face-to-face interactions of daily life in the pays d'en haut. Saint Lusson needed someone to translate not only his words but also his actions and intent. The resident Jesuit at Sault Sainte Marie, Claude Allouez, delivered a sermon that interpreted Saint Lusson's ceremony in a way that made sense to Algonquians. The

Algonquians listened as the children of Onontio, not as royal subjects. And the Jesuits knew how to speak to the children of Onontio. The ceremony, in its retelling, changed meaning. It became less about the transfer of land and sovereignty and more about the power of the French father and the mutual obligations of family.

Allouez translated Saint Lusson's abstract ritual into something tangible to the peoples of the pays d'en haut—a claim of kinship. He told his Algonquian audience that the cross planted by Saint Lusson represented the "master of our lives." Allouez then informed the children of Onontio that their father was himself the child of the French king. He described the French king as the master of life. "When he attacks," Allouez proclaimed, "he is more terrible than the thunder."[7] He had slain so many of his enemies "that he does not count their scalps, but the rivers of blood which he sets flowing." The king took endless numbers of prisoners and possessed a countless supply of trade goods—"warehouses containing enough hatchets to cut down all your forests, kettles to cook all your moose, and glass beads to fill all your cabins."[8]

For the Algonquians an alliance with the French represented the possibility of gaining some control over the new peoples and things circulating through the pays d'en haut. And although the Jesuits portrayed the Algonquians as *les Sauvages*—wild men, Other to the civilized and Christian Europe—both Algonquians and Europeans spoke to one another in the ritualized language of spiritual power. Algonquians used the term *master of life* to designate spirit beings that controlled access to a particular game species, or to a particular source of power or *manidoo*. Algonquians, in fact, characterized such spirit beings as grandfathers. The Jesuits knew this. And so, when Allouez made the French king the "master of life" and father of Onontio, he translated Saint Lusson's claim of possession into a claim of kinship. Accepting their role as the children of Onontio placed the Algonquians in an extended French family and gave them access to a very powerful grandfather.[9]

If the Jesuits knew how to speak to an Algonquian audience they also knew how to write for a European one. Narrating the story of Saint Lusson's ceremony, Dablon, in a sense, took possession of the space he called the "Outaouac territories" more completely than had the king's agent. His account of this event, published in the *Relation of 1670–71*, was preceded by what can only be described as a textual voyage of discovery. The *Relation of 1670–71* included a map of Lake Superior and the northern parts of Lakes Michigan and Huron that the Jesuits labeled the "Outaouac territories," and that Dablon used as a pictorial legend for this narrative journey (see fig. 1).[10] He began at the site of Saint Lusson's ceremony, advising "the



JESUIT MAP OF LAKE SUPERIOR, AND PARTS OF LAKES HURON AND MICHIGAN.

Figure 1. A section of the Jesuit map of Lake Superior and parts of Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. From the *Relation of 1670–71*, 55:95, this map was presented along with Père Dablon's narrative description of the "Outaouac Territories."

reader May first turn his eyes to the mission of Sainte Marie du Sault," which he then described as "the great resort of most of the savages of these regions, and lies in the almost universal route of all who go down to the French settlements."[11] Leaving the Sault, Dablon then traced the rivers and routes that connected native peoples to each mission in the "Outaouac territories." He represented this space as framed and even defined by Jesuit missions, which served as a nexus of faith, the fur trade, and the colonial government of New France.

In order to make the symbolic meaning of Saint Lusson's ceremony comprehensible to a European audience, Dablon invented the "Outaouac territories" as a coherent national space. The king, he wrote, by taking possession of this territory, "put all of those peoples under the protection of the Cross before receiving them under his own."[12] Dablon, in effect, represented the children of Onontio as nations whose people and terri-

tory had become a part of the French empire in North America. He fused Indian social identity with the European idea of nation and national territory. Saint Lusson's ceremony assumed an Ottawa nation with national territory, and then inscribed this territory as French space.

Dablon's narrative description of the "Outaouac territories," however, suggested the artificial nature of this national space. At the western edge of Lake Superior, he wrote, opposite from the mission at Sault Sainte Marie, was the mission of Saint Esprit. He located Saint Esprit at the multiethnic village that the French called La Pointe, and he situated the Ottawa and Huron in this community as refugees who came to the village seasonally to harvest fish and corn. Dablon also wrote that "it will be easy to recognize the rivers and routes leading to various nations, either stationary or nomadic, located in the vicinity of this same lake, who are somewhat dependent on this mission of Saint Esprit in the matter of trade."[13] He then connected the Illinois, Dakota, Assiniboine, Cree, and Gens des Terres to Saint Esprit. These two missions framed the east-west borders, and northern limits, of the "Outaouac territories" on the Jesuit map. Clearly, however, a multitude of peoples that the Jesuits saw as distinct Indian nations permeated this space.

Dablon next framed the southern boundary of the "Outaouac territories." He identified the mission of Saint Simon on Manitoulin Island in northern Lake Huron as the true country of the Ottawa, and marked this as a region ravaged by the Iroquois and newly restored to peace by the governor of New France. Dablon wrote that some of the Ottawas along with "the peoples of the Missisaugué, the Amicouës, and other surrounding neighbors" had since returned to this country. He located mission Saint Ignace farther to the south at Michilimackinac Island, in the straits dividing Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. Dablon described this territory as a famous fishery occupied by the Ottawa, Huron, and "various peoples."[14] Still farther south and on the western shore of Lake Michigan he located the mission Saint François Xavier in Green Bay. Situated in a cluster of refugee villages, this mission served the Potawatomi, Sauk, Mascouten, Miami, Menominee, Fox, "and other peoples" driven south by the Iroquois.[15] These multiethnic communities included people speaking a variety of Algonquian dialects, or *anishinaabemowinan*; that is, dialects or languages spoken by linguistically and culturally connected peoples who referred to themselves collectively as "Anishinaabeg," or human beings.[16] People that the French identified as Ottawa, Sauteur, Missisaugua, Amikois, or Gens des Terres, for example, also referred to themselves as Anishinaabeg. In addition, these communities included Iroquoian- and Siouan-speaking peoples. The multitude of languages

and ethnicities described by Dablon hardly suggested a coherent national space.

Dablon designed his cartographic description of the "Outaouac territories" to make Native America legible from an imperial vantage point. His text and map represented a scripted space—a physical and social space clearly visible to colonial powers, and ready-made for absorption into the French empire. The essence of these texts was to place the colonial agent, as observer, at the center of a picture which purported to be the real world, but that was in fact a representation of what the colonial powers expected to find. In this case, Dablon imposed a framework of national space onto Native America, dividing people and territory into national entities that existed as either inside or outside of the French empire.[17]

Dablon not only invented the "Outaouac territories" as a national space, his narrative enacted the discovery of this territory for New France. He wrote his cartographic description as a journey. By mimicking a voyage of discovery, Dablon suggested the link between exploration and empire that both France and England used to rationalize their possession of native land in North America. Recreating the discovery process and ceremonial possession in writing, he placed the "Outaouac territories" inside of the French empire.

Dablon's writing also exposed the internal contradiction of claiming the western interior as a part of New France. On their map the Jesuits erased any indication of the presence of actual Ottawa peoples—blank space surrounded each mission. Similarly, the Illinois, Dakota, and Assiniboine existed only as destinations—the faint sketch of a trade route that pointed the way to villages located somewhere beyond the mission of Saint Esprit. In reality, discovery and possession did not erase Indian people from the physical and social landscape. It did not even reconfigure native people and territory according to the logic of empire. More accurately, the French negotiated their place in an extended kinship and trade network that connected the lakeshore village communities in the pays d'en haut to the western interior. The rituals of discovery and possession became a part of this negotiation.

Algonquian bands allied to New France fit poorly into European national categories, even though the named groups associated with summer village communities, like the Sauter or Cree, became increasingly important to the fur trade and colonial diplomacy. The flexibility of social identities that connected these people to one another made the Algonquian country literally like a web. Real and fictive kinship, established through trade, language, and intermarriage, intersected and crisscrossed over a vast space.[18] These ties made it possible to hunt, fish, and harvest rice, corn,

and sugar, but access to these resources shifted across time with trade and kinship. The connections between winter bands and village communities, in effect, connected the physical spaces of the pays d'en haut with the prairie, parkland, and boreal forest of the western interior. With their ceremony the French wanted to unite a land they imagined as fragmented, but that was, in fact, connected like a web along lines of kinship.

Ties of real and fictive kinship opened and closed the spaces of the western interior. The Jesuits tried to adapt the French ceremony to this reality. Dablon's map and narrative reproduced the experience of discovery, and ultimately of possession, in a way that connected the Algonquians and their territory to one another and to New France. Both the ceremony and the Jesuit texts provided an appearance of order that was a textual and cartographic invention. While Dablon invented the Ottawa territories as a national space, he, Saint Lusson, and other French colonial officials, missionaries, and traders could not agree on what it meant to be Gens des Terres, Ottawa, Sauteur, or any of the other Algonquian nations allied to New France. This was not because the people whom the French thought of as Gens des Terres, Ottawa or Sauteur had no sense of themselves. Rather, it was that their sense of self and their sense of corporate identity encompassed flexibility—a capacity for transformation or shape-shifting—that the French found confusing.[19] What the French wanted and needed was to freeze these shape-shifters into a form they could assimilate into their empire.

Shape-Shifters: Negotiating Empire and Identity in the Western Interior

In order to be a father to his children, Onontio needed to be able to name the family of nations who made up the French alliance. More specifically, the French needed their Indian allies to inhabit a collective social identity. Designating village communities as nations, and later as tribes, allowed colonial officials to insert Indian peoples into the hierarchy of empire. The seemingly transitory nature of Indian social identity and village communities, however, confounded European colonial officials and made it difficult to encode native communities as nations.

Mobility often made Algonquian migrants invisible to the French. Dablon's map and narrative represented the peoples and spaces of the Ottawa territories that Saint Lusson possessed on behalf of New France. The static nature of these texts, however, failed to account for the flexibility of social units, and also failed to represent the dynamic relationship between life in the bush and at lakeshore village locations such as Sault

Sainte Marie or La Pointe. Winter bands of Algonquian speakers consisting of one or two extended families detached themselves from the village community to hunt for a season, or even to sojourn in the interior for one to two years. Later these bands could rejoin larger communities, forming temporary alliances to trade with and find security in another village. Indians identified by the French as residents of Sault Sainte Marie during the summer trading season might pass the next winter hunting in the region north of Lake Superior with people the French thought of as Gens des Terres. These same people might trade the following summer at La Pointe, winter in the west with mixed bands of Cree and Assiniboine, and trade with the English at Hudson Bay for the next two years before returning again to Sault Sainte Marie.

An individual was not a Sauteur, for example, because of a symbolic association with a particular village community. Rather a Sauteur was an Algonquian residing at Sault Sainte Marie connected by real and fictional ties of kinship to a diverse, but mostly Algonquian and Ojibwe-speaking community. This association could not be abstracted from the daily face-to-face interactions and social practices that made it possible to sustain the life of the community at the Sault. This same individual residing in the bush north of Lake Superior with a winter band, however, might inhabit the collective identity and social space of the Gens des Terres or even the Cree.[20]

Mobility and social flexibility ultimately confused the French, who imagined that all Algonquians were nominally Ottawa. They also imagined the Sauteur as a division or nation of the Ottawa, many of whom retreated into the west around 1660 and settled at La Pointe in order to take refuge from the Iroquois.[21] The French were both right and wrong in making these assumptions. Algonquian identity combined social relations with social practices. You were what your kinship or allegiances made you. An individual did not owe allegiance to a composite social unit such as the Sauteur or Ottawa, but rather to an extended network of kin, who made it possible to move, hunt, fish, trade, and so on. The social map of a place like La Pointe or Sault Sainte Marie more accurately represented a web of overlapping and temporary allegiances that connected diverse social units to a common physical environment.

Strands of real and fictive kinship bound together the Sauteur, Gens des Terres, Cree, and the multitude of anonymous peoples from the North and connected these groups to one another. These groups existed not as distinct nations with distinct territories but as the enactment of a set of social connections or relationships at a particular place. A person who was a node or a point of contact in a relationship at Sault Sainte Marie could

also be the focal point of a set of relationships among the Gens des Terres at Lake Nipigon. In the social context of the French empire that person was at times Sauteur and at other times Gens des Terres, but this shifting identity depended on the local space and the relationships that were active at a given moment.

Algonquians lived in an elaborate clan and kinship structure where a person was literally the embodied representation of the social relationships that constituted his or her identity. In this world, the dead might be restored to life if one gave a slave or captive to the family of the deceased. The family and the community then socialized this person to become a restored version of their lost relative. The captive, in turn, assumed and was subsumed by this new socially constructed identity. This practice, called raising the dead, suggested the very contingent boundaries that defined human bodies and social identity. It also suggested how Sauteurs at Sault Sainte Marie or La Pointe could be the same and yet different when they came together each summer as separate but easily integrated village communities.

Ceremonies like Saint Lusson's assumed the connection between identity and place. The government of New France wanted its allies to behave like royal subjects identified by their residence in places claimed by the empire; or at the very least they wanted the Algonquians to behave as the children of Onontio and respect their obligations to their French father and family. They wanted to bring the undiscovered nations of the Northwest into this social arrangement. Algonquian migrants, the Anishinaabeg who moved between the Northwest and lakeshore villages, complicated such ambitions. These undiscovered nations raised the possibility that they were not undiscovered at all, but rather the children of Onontio who had slipped the bonds of paternal obligation by becoming someone else, by assuming a different national or collective identity.

For the French, the murkiness of Sauteur identity and the unknown nations to the north muddied the imperial map; with Saint Lusson's ceremony, the colonial government intended to fix identity in space and thus create coherence. The Jesuits published Dablon's map, cartographic narrative, and description of the ceremony in the *Relation of 1670–71* to establish the "Outaouac territories" as a national space, and to validate their possession by New France through the French connection to the Ottawa (see fig. 2). This was, however, something beyond the ability of texts to achieve. Like the ceremony itself, Dablon's texts represented a European version of empire that would have to be negotiated between Indians and Europeans.

Saint Lusson's ceremony, therefore, hinged on the ability of the French to attach a coherent national identity onto the peoples gathered at Sault

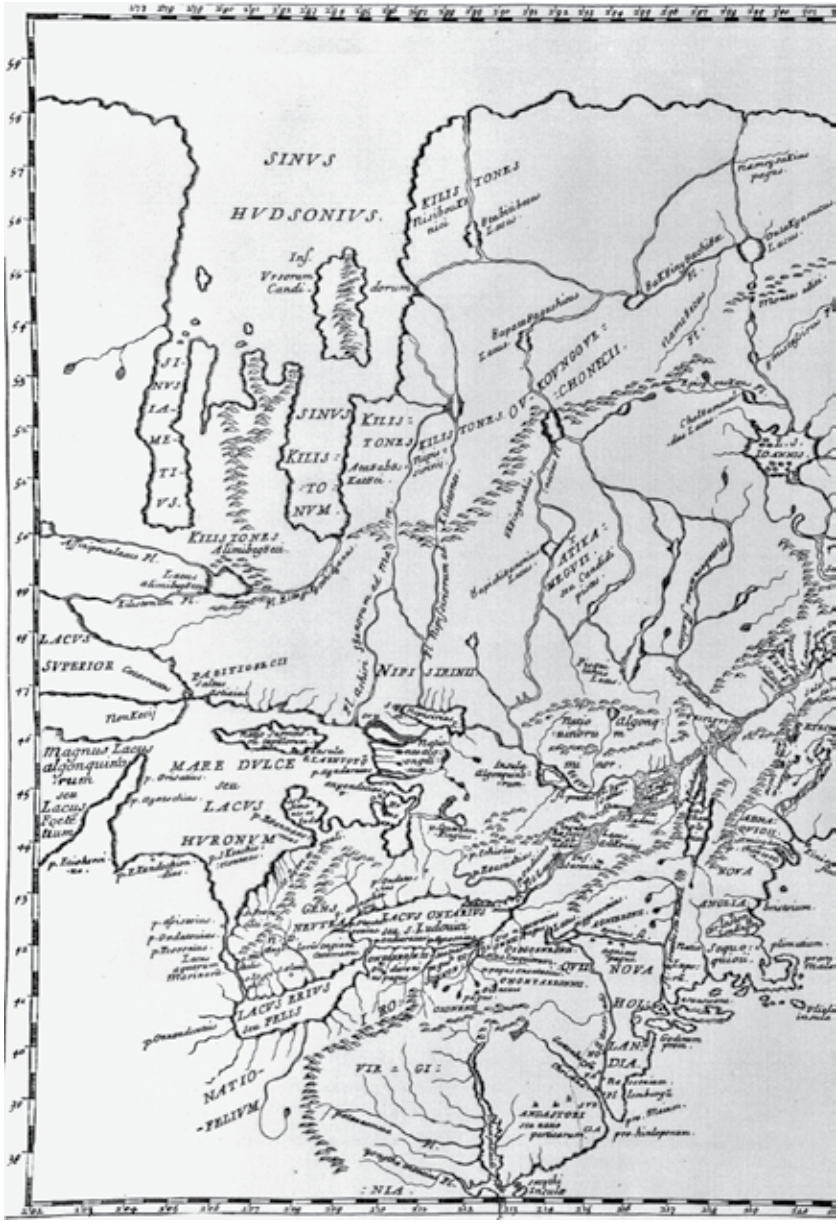


Figure 2. A section of the map *Tabula Novae Franciae* by Père Creuxius, 1660. Drawn over a decade before Saint Lusson's ceremony, this detailed map was created from information obtained from native informants and French voyageurs. It presents the *pays d'en haut* and northern interior as a complex social space and suggests the extent to which Dablon's map attempted to create a homogenous national territory. Source: Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, G.5/24 Plate 16 (N15248).

Sainte Marie. The French called the residents of this community Sauteurs, a name they understood to represent the corporate identity of several distinct nations that had recently united. In 1670 Dablon identified people who called themselves Pahouitingwach Irini as the "first and original inhabitants" of Sault Sainte Marie. The designation Sauteur was a French translation of this term, which meant "Dwellers of the falls" in Ojibwe. According to Dablon, the Sauteur "untied with three other nations . . . to whom they have, as it were, made a cession of the rights of their native country."[22] These nations, the Noquet, the Marameg, and the Outchibou, lived at the Sault permanently, but "only as borrowers," except when they hunted in their original territories during the winter months. The Noquet, Dablon wrote, hunted along the south shore of Lake Superior. The Marameg and Outchibou traveled and hunted to the north.

In addition to the "first and original" Sauteur and their newly incorporated kin, Dablon described a multitude of nations who resided for at least part of the year at Sault Sainte Marie. He listed the Achiligoune, Amikwas, and Missisaugua, two unnamed and migratory nations from the northern interior, and six nations, all of whom "wander throughout the interior" in the vicinity of Hudson Bay, as part-time residents at Sault Sainte Marie. The various peoples from the North, elsewhere identified by Dablon and others as the Cree and Gens des Terres, shared—along with the Sauteur—this pattern of movement between the Sault and their winter hunting grounds, at least since their first contact with Europeans.

The people whom the French thought of as Sauteur understood their identity as rooted both in the village community at Sault Sainte Marie and in a pattern of western migration. Early in the nineteenth century, the descendants of the Sauteurs resident at La Pointe described the origin of their village communities at La Pointe and Sault Sainte Marie to the Ojibwe historian William Warren. They spoke of the Ojibweg as interconnected family groups, identified by doodemag. These family groups first came together at the place that they called Boweting and that the French called Sault Sainte Marie, in response to the call of the Crane family. A man named Tug-waug-aun-ay, leader of this totem, told Warren an allegory about the founding of this village community by the Cranes: "Here [at Boweting] it chose its first resting place. . . . Satisfied with its chosen seat, again the bird sent forth its solitary cry; and the *No-kaig* (Bear clan), *A-waus-e-waug* (Catfish), *Ah-auh-wauh-ug* (Loon) and *Mous-o-neeg* (Mouse and Marten clan), gathered at his call. A large town soon congregated, and the bird whom the Great Spirit sent presided over all."[23] The Crane family repeated this pattern in the west. This doodem, Warren wrote, claimed to have been "the first discoverers and pioneer settlers" at La Pointe.

This connection between Sault Sainte Marie and La Pointe represented a migration of the Sauteur identity. It entailed not necessarily the movement of an entire people but rather the extension of existing kinship connections to include new peoples and new spaces. The Cranes, resident at Sault Sainte Marie, incorporated named bands from the west into their village community. The allegory given to Warren matched Dablon's explanation of Sauteur identity. Western bands, the Noquet (or Bear totem), the Marameg (also called the Awasse or Catfish totem), the Outchibou (Loon totem), and the Mous-o-neeg or Monsoni became Dwellers of the Falls of Saint Mary, or Sauteurs to the French.[24] The link between these named winter bands and the Sauteur village community expanded the web of social relations that made it possible for the peoples affiliated with this large summer group to travel, hunt, fish, and trade. This identity connected the lakeshore communities of the pays d'en haut to the northwestern interior. It allowed a significant fragment of the Ojibwe-speaking Anishinaabeg to re-create their social identity as a family, or as an extended kinship group known to the French as the Sauteur.

The French trader Nicolas Perrot also placed the Sauteur in the West. He wrote that they fled into the region north of the Algonquian village at La Pointe to escape the Iroquois around 1662. According to Perrot the Sauteur "reported that they had seen many nations," and informed the him that the Amikwas and Nippising were at Lake Nipigon, north of Lake Superior in the country shared by the peoples that the Jesuits called the Nipigon Cree and the Gens des Terres.[25] Perrot noted that while some of the Sauteurs returned to their village at Keweenaw on the south shore of Lake Superior, others chose to remain in the north to hunt beaver. The Sauteur, he wrote, "did not all return together because they had left their people at the north; that the latter intended to dwell here, but without a fixed residence, purposing to wander in all directions."[26] Perrot mistakenly considered all of the Algonquians that he found in the West to be recent refugees. Like Dablon, however, he clearly saw how patterns of migration linked to the harvest of seasonal resources, hunting, and fur-trade exchange connected Great Lakes village communities to smaller band communities in the northwestern interior.

These sources placed bands that the French thought of as Sauteur in the northwestern interior. They also associated the Sauteur with unknown or poorly identified people from the North who spoke Ojibwe or a mixed Cree-Ojibwe dialect. The summer trading season bound these peoples to one another. The fur trade bound them increasingly to Onontio and to the French mission and trading post at Sault Sainte Marie, and to a lesser extent to the post and mission at La Pointe. The presence of the English in

the north at Hudson Bay, however, made this connection appear increasingly tenuous. The wanderers from the North, the Cree, and the Gens des Terres remained only half-known to the traders and colonial officials of New France. These undiscovered nations and their territory and allegiance might be claimed by the English. In effect, the French possessed enough knowledge about the patterns of trade, migration, and kinship that tied bush and village communities together to fear the English posts in the North.

The French witnessed the Sauteur, or at least Sauteur identity, migrate into the West, and they feared that these people and other northern Algonquians might become attached to English posts at the bay. Such a defection would unravel the fiction of an extensive, multivillage Ottawa nation subordinated to New France. It would also destroy any French claim to a vast Ottawa national territory that extended into the West. The French would lose their access to the fur-rich interior and forfeit discovery of the Northwest Passage to the English (see fig. 3).

Navigating a Landscape of Allies and Enemies

Saint Lusson traveled to Sault Sainte Marie to place the Ottawa, Sauteur, and the northern Algonquians firmly within the French empire. The actual possession of Indians and their territory, however, required a practical knowledge that he did not possess. The various texts that recorded this ceremony might satisfy Europeans, but to gain any credibility among the Algonquians Saint Lusson needed a guide, someone capable of reading the complex map of relationships and social identities that linked Algonquians to one another and to New France. Colonial officials assigned the task to the veteran voyageur Nicolas Perrot. In order to organize Indians into nations that could be possessed, incorporated, monitored, and disciplined by the government of New France, Saint Lusson needed to find them and to speak to them. Perrot not only understood Algonquian languages; he also understood the social significance of fur-trade exchange and the coded meanings of kinship and identity that marked the boundaries between allies and enemies in the Algonquian country.

Perrot, in effect, served as an embodied reminder of the presence and power of Onontio. While Jesuit missionaries mastered the intricacies of ritual and ceremony that structured the social world created by New France and its native allies, the voyageurs brought this world to life. They delivered trade goods into the interior and facilitated an exchange process that connected bands in the western interior to village communities in the Great Lakes, and bound these village communities to the French empire.

Figure 3. A section from *Amérique septentrionale, par Nicholas Sanson. Revue et changée en plusieurs endroits par G. Sanson* (Paris, 1669). The western shore of Hudson Bay on this map suggests the existence of the Northwest Passage, while the interior West remains blank space. Source: Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, G.5/24 Plate 5 (N15246).

Perrot was one of the most astute voyageurs to enter the trade, and over the course of a career that spanned nearly four decades, he learned that diplomacy and trade functioned as an extension of kinship. That is, he recognized that the diplomacy and trade of New France would succeed or fail to the extent that the colony and its allies and trading partners recognized their obligation toward one another.

Perrot knew how to read the landscape of the western interior. He wrote a sparse account of his voyage west with Saint Lusson that made the journey seem at least as significant as the ceremony itself. The two Frenchmen departed Montreal in October 1670 and made their way into the interior as far as Manitoulin Island in Georgian Bay. They wintered with a band of Amikwas. A band of Sauteurs also wintered on the island. Perrot called these peoples to council at Sault Sainte Marie in the springtime to hear Saint Lusson deliver the words of the French king. The voyageur wrote that he "sent some Saulteur savages to tell those in the north they must not fail to proceed to their country."[27] Perrot then traveled west to persuade the peoples living at Green Bay to attend the council. The voyageur knew how peoples in the pays d'en haut were connected to one another.

This knowledge enabled Perrot to move through the Algonquian country. He knew how to navigate this landscape of allies and enemies. He knew how to use the power of Onontio, and the power of French merchandise, to connect village communities to one another and to Montreal. This network required constant maintenance. Ceremonies like Saint Lusson's made sense to Algonquians less as an imperial discourse than as part of a larger conversation about the mutual obligations of family. Perrot understood the connection between the Sauteur and "those in the north," the various unknown peoples that the French wanted to discover and possess in name if not in fact. Perrot also understood that refugees in Green Bay connected tenuously to one another, and to New France. Saint Lusson's ceremony offered the colony's Indian allies the possibility of reaffirming this kinship and connection.

Perrot recognized that kinship was the key that opened and closed the spaces of the physical world to both the Algonquians and the French. Kinship placed people either inside or outside of a shared social identity. Unlike empire, however, these relationships could not be mapped as an abstract space. Mutual obligation defined the sense of belonging that made people Sauteur, Ottawa, or the children of Onontio. The failure to meet obligations resulted in social exclusion, often practiced or expressed as violence. Exclusion from any of the shared social identities that bound people together in the western interior literally closed physical space by defining the outsider as a stranger and potential enemy.

Perrot set out for Green Bay to keep that country open to the French. In his narrative the voyageur offered no real explanation of the problems that compelled him to make this trip. La Potherie, however, in his *Histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale* offered a more complete account of this expedition to Green Bay based on information he obtained directly from Perrot, and from various traders and missionaries. He suggested that tension with the Jesuits and French traders prompted the peoples of the bay to decline the invitation to attend Saint Lusson's ceremony. La Potherie claimed that the dispute arose over the price of French goods. He implied that the Indians behaved arrogantly toward the French. La Potherie also noted that the Dakota had recently attacked the villages at Green Bay. Neither Perrot nor La Potherie linked the quarrel with the French to the Dakota raid. The Dakota, however, traded with the French at La Pointe. For the people of the bay, this trade with their enemies placed Onontio in violation of his obligation to protect his children at Green Bay—the Potawatomi, Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, Mascouten, and Miami—who opened up the Mississippi watershed to the French.[28]

Saint Lusson's ceremony offered the French and their Indian allies the opportunity to reestablish their collective identity as kin. Perrot returned to Sault Sainte Marie in the spring with representatives from the various peoples living at Green Bay. He wrote that the "principle chiefs" of the Potawatomi, Sauk, Puan, and Menominee accompanied him. He implied vaguely that the Fox, Mascouten, and Miami refused to leave the Bay, but had appointed the Potawatomi to represent their interests. Perrot meticulously included the peoples of Green Bay in his narrative and described their respective responses to his summons, and ultimately their consent to attend the ceremonial possession of their territory.

Perrot wrote with less specificity about the Sauteur and Algonquians from the North. When he arrived at the Sault for the ceremony, Perrot noted: "I found not only the chiefs from the North, but also the Kiristinons, Monsonis, and whole villages of their neighbors. The chiefs of the Nippising were also there, with those of the Amikouets, and all the Saulteurs who were settled in the same quarter."[29] La Potherie simply stated that "all the chiefs of the bay, those of Lakes Huron and Lake Superior, and the people from the north, not to mention several other tribes, came to the Sault."[30] In both of these accounts, the peoples of the North included unnamed neighbors, or nations, that Perrot, at least, connected to the northern Sauteur and Cree. Perrot's narrative even suggested that bands of Algonquians, understood by the French to be Sauteurs, wintered in such different locations as Manitoulin Island and the country north and west of Lake Superior. For these peoples as well as the French, Saint Lusson's

ceremony was a negotiation about the meaning of empire, not as a physical space, but as a set of social relationships that connected the French, in Europe and Canada, to the Indian peoples who lived in the interior of North America. The French wanted their ceremony to make the meaning of that connection clear. They wanted the peoples of the interior to take shape as nations allied to New France, and they wanted these nations to take on the personas and obligations of the children of Onontio.

"Tis Our Interest to Keep These People United"

The French recognized the power of ritual to initiate relationships with Indian peoples. They also recognized the power of trade, or fur-trade exchange, to shape kinship and identity. The English posts could, potentially, rework the trade and alliance network that connected the pays d'en haut to the interior west in a way that excluded French influence and trade goods. The intendant of New France, Jean Talon, sent Saint Lusson into the interior to prevent this from happening.[31] He wanted to exclude the English from the social relationships that made trade and travel possible between Hudson Bay, the interior west, and the Great Lakes.[32] With their ceremony the French wanted to confirm the Algonquians of the Northwest as children of Onontio, and ritually mark the English as outsiders.

Talon also wanted to create an alternative narrative of discovery that marked western North America as French space. In fact, the intendant later wrote that his envoys had been sent west merely "to repeat" the possession of territory first discovered by New France. French discovery and possession "of the unknown lands to the west," he claimed, had been established through inland exploration, trade, and through a series of ritual encounters between the French and the Algonquian residents of the Great Lakes and interior west.[33] Algonquians, including the peoples that the French thought of as Cree, Ottawa, and Sauteur, understood ceremonial repetition as a necessary component of any social relationship. The ceremony enacted by Saint Lusson made sense to them in this context. It did not, however, make sense as a negotiation about the permanent disposition of their land and loyalty.

Problems arose between the French and Indians of the northern and northwestern interior when the French failed to recognize this fact. Ritual worked like a marriage ceremony. That is, ritual initiated and sustained relationships, but it was not in and of itself the relationship any more than a marriage consisted of the marriage ceremony and anniversaries. While the French skillfully used ritual to create an alliance with the Ottawa and Sauteur, they more slowly came to realize that these peoples were them-

selves constituted as a set of relationships derived from social practices whose meaning was reinforced by ritual and ceremony. Making the Sauteur and Ottawa into French allies proved relatively easy. Preventing individuals, families, and clan groups from detaching themselves from these named communities and migrating into the bush, or to trading villages associated with the English, proved practically impossible. The French wanted their allies at trading communities like Sault Sainte Marie or La Pointe to function as coherent and fixed social bodies. They found themselves instead confronted with the Anishinaabeg—a people able to connect and disconnect from what seemed to the French to be a dizzying number of amorphous and mobile social bodies.

The fur trade embedded ritual in the social practices of everyday life. The exchange of animal pelts for trade goods, like the giving and receiving of gifts, created social conditions that facilitated interaction between different social groups. The nature of the relationship created by this interaction, however, depended on the type of goods that changed hands, how and why the exchange took place, and what sort of outcome was expected by the parties involved.

Giving presents or gifts made a long-term relationship possible between different social groups like the French and the Ottawa, Sauteur, Cree, and Gens des Terres, or between different bands of Anishinaabeg. Gifts worked as a form of unbalanced exchange. The recipient was obligated to respond to this act of generosity at some point in the future. The giver and recipient thus became bound to one another.[34]

While ritual gift giving made a long-term relationship possible, trading furs for European merchandise gave life to the connection, the fictive kinship, between the French and their Indian allies. The direct exchange of animal pelts for trade goods was based on a mutual responsibility, or a balanced reciprocity, whereby each party expected some form of compensation for items offered to the other.[35] A balanced exchange created a relationship that ended with the completion of a transaction. Goods and people, however, usually moved along lines of kinship and such exchanges were purposely unbalanced, thus creating an obligation that necessitated future exchange. For a sustained or recurring pattern of trade, different social groups had to activate some form of kinship, whether real or fictional, in order to facilitate the movement or transfer of people and things.[36] In other words, not only the social practices that sustained the fur trade—the ability to travel, hunt, take advantage of usufructury harvests, and join multiethnic summer trading communities—but the persistence of exchange itself required the maintenance of kinship ties that bound Indian bands to one another, and which bound the French to their Indian allies.

The circulation of furs and trade goods, in effect, depended on the creation of an extensive kinship network that linked the people and territory inland from Hudson Bay to lakeshore village communities in the pays d'en haut, and to colonial port cities on the eastern seaboard.

As Saint Lusson's ceremony suggested, ritual became the means by which the French and their Indian allies negotiated the terms and meaning of their position in this network of social relationships. Colonial officials in New France understood this well enough to recognize that they could use groups like the Sauteur to forge connections with Indians in the northwestern interior. To keep these connections active or alive they needed to maintain the social conditions created by direct exchange. When the flow of trade goods into the interior faltered, ritual became divorced from social practice, and the peoples of the interior forged other social connections to sustain the life of their communities. They traded with unlicensed French traders, the *courreurs de bois*, or with the English. They moved away from the influence of their French father, and the rituals used so skillfully by Allouez and Dablon lost their meaning.

The commingling of ritual with the material practices of the fur trade made the already complex and shifting social relations between bands from the western interior and lake shore village communities even more fluid. When Allouez enacted Saint Lusson's ceremony, he offered an exchange relationship in the form of ritual transformation. The Anishinaabeg agreed to inhabit the persona of children of Onontio, they became Sauteurs, or peoples of the Ottawa nation. In return they received the *manidoo* of Onontio—trade goods and the power of the French to mediate conflict between Indian peoples. Too few trade goods and the absence of any significant French presence in the country northwest of the Great Lakes, however, meant that the peoples of this region moved in and out of the space and collective identity of the French alliance system. In other words, the ritual enacted by Saint Lusson to attach the Gens des Terres and other inland Anishinaabeg to the Sauteur and to the French at Sault Sainte Marie in 1671 failed to hold in any meaningful way. Many of these bands continued to trade with the English at Hudson Bay. They continued to shape-shift.[37]

Even more threatening to French interests, these northern bands periodically aligned with factions from the larger Sauteur and Ottawa communities and pulled their trade north as well. In 1679 Intendant Talon's replacement, Jacques Du Chesneau, complained that the English trade at Hudson Bay "will eventually ruin our trade with the Outawacs, which is the most considerable, and constitutes the subsistence and wealth of the colony."[38] A year later Du Chesneau informed the Crown, "Tis our interest to keep these people united . . . and to constitute ourselves, in all

things, their arbiters and protectors."[39] The English at the bay, he warned, continued to "draw off the Outawa nations."[40]

In the French empire, the power of word and ritual took on manidoo when intertwined with the circulation of people and the material objects of the fur trade. Ceremonies like the one conducted by Allouez and Saint Lusson made a long term relationship possible between Onontio and the peoples of the North, but the French needed to get trade goods into the interior in order to keep this relationship alive. A ceremony was a point in a relationship—a beginning or a reiteration of the connection, and not the relationship itself. A relationship needed to be manifest in social practice. The traders and government of New France needed to create an environment where direct exchange was possible. They needed their western posts to provide peoples from the North with the goods necessary to sustain a community engaged in fur trade, rather than subsistence hunting. The French needed to meet their obligation as kin, as fathers, and provide for the needs that direct exchange, or the balanced reciprocity of the fur-trade exchange imposed on their children.

The French, however, found it difficult to bring an adequate supply of trade goods overland from the Saint Lawrence River valley into the interior, and ritual alone proved too weak to compel the peoples of the North to trade exclusively at French posts in the pays d'en haut. The governor, the marquis de Denonville, feared the effects of English posts at Hudson Bay. In 1685 he wrote to the minister of the marine: "If not expelled thence, they will get all the fat beaver from an infinite number of nations at the north which are being discovered everyday; they will attract the greatest portion of the peltries that reach us at Montreal through the Outaouacs and Assinibois, and other neighboring tribes, for these will derive a double advantage from going in search of the English at Port Nelson."[41] Denonville complained that "some pretend it is feasible to go there overland," but he insisted that this was next to impossible.[42] The country, he argued, remained largely unknown and the difficult terrain allowed traders to carry only limited amounts of merchandise. An infinity of nations transformed into the children of Onontio opened the western interior of the North America continent to the French. Undiscovered, these peoples remained outside of French control, and potentially open to English discovery and domination.

Mobility and the capacity to adapt multiple identities left Anishinaabe peoples, Denonville's "infinity of nations," free to activate or deactivate the social relationships that, in turn, affected French and the English claims of territorial possession and political sovereignty in the interior West. They were able to manipulate local identity, and in the process they altered the

boundaries and practical influence of colonial empires. By either including or excluding the French or English, the Anishinaabe bands from the northwestern interior shaped the national identity of their village communities. Or they eluded national categories altogether and became an infinity of nations—undiscovered and unpossessed.

The Anishinaabeg manipulated local space—using watersheds, prairie parkland, and trading villages to connect themselves to port cities and imperial power in North America and Europe. For the Anishinaabeg the movement of people and goods through these spaces required the activation of the social relationships that made it possible to become a Sauteur, an Ottawa, or some other child of Onontio. This circulation of people and things, however, also made it possible to shape-shift and to assume an identity and inhabit a space beyond the pale of imperial power.

The French tried to contain this fluidity and create a spatial history that recorded fixity rather than movement. They attempted time and again to discover the infinity of nations in the northwestern interior and make them children of Onontio. Saint Lusson and Allouez used ceremony—word and ritual—to tie the peoples of the northwest to the Algonquian allies of New France. The English at Hudson Bay, however, added new strands to the web of social relationships that made fur-trade hunting and exchange possible. Seeking direct exchange alternately with the French and English allowed native groups to shape-shift and distance themselves from the obligations of kinship. The people and things that circulated as part of the fur trade, therefore, continued to make native identity and national territory unpredictable and unstable, at least to imperial eyes.

Notes

1 For Dablon, see *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols., ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, 1896–1901) (hereafter *JR*), 55:107. In the original French version of this text it is said of Saint Lusson, "Il fit d'abord convoquer les peuples d'alentour," which I have translated as "he summoned the surrounding peoples." Thwaites's English translation of the *Jesuit Relations* has this same sentence as "he summoned the surrounding tribes." The difference is significant in that the word *tribe* as used here imposes a nineteenth-century racialized spatial category onto seventeenth-century native peoples.

2 For the significance of the region northwest of Lake Superior to New France, see "Extrait d'une lettre de Jean Talon au Roy," 10 October 1670, in Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et établissements des Français de l'Amérique septentrionale*, 6 vols. (New York, 1974 [1879]), 1:82–83. For the northwestern interior and search for the Northwest Passage, see "Second extrait de l'addition au Mémoire de Jean Talon au Roy," 10 November 1670, in Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:87–89. For Intendant Jean Talon's belief in the significance of discovering the Northwest Passage, see Bacqueville de La Potherie, "History of the Savage

Peoples Who Are Allies of New France," in Emma H. Blair, *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes* (Lincoln, NE, 1996), 1:348. For Talon on the French dependence on Indian allies for access and control of region northwest of Lake Superior, see "Premier extrait d'une lettre de Jean Talon à Colbert," 10 November 1670, in Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:83–84; and "Extrait d'une lettre de Jean Talon au Roy," 2 November 1671, in Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:92–93.

3 The geographer David Harvey has argued that "the discursive practice of 'mapping space' is a fundamental prerequisite to the structuring of any kind of knowledge." In other words, mapping as a discursive practice actually creates power. "The power to map the world in one way rather than another," he writes, "is a crucial tool in political struggles." What I am trying to suggest here is that mapping, ceremonies, and other rhetorical strategies employed by the French fashioned simultaneously a cartographic text and a context for their empire in North America. This context, in turn, invented and legitimated the extension of their empire in the West. For quote, see Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Malden, MA, 1996), 111–12. For a more extensive discussion of mapping and colonization, see also J. Brian Harley, "Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98 (1992): 522–44; William Boelhower, "Inventing America: A Model of Cartographic Semiosis," *Word and Image* 4 (1988): 475–97; and José Rabasa, "Allegories of the Atlas," in *Europe and Its Others*, vol. 2, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margret Iverson, and Diana Loxely (Colchester, UK, 1985).

4 Charles II granted the newly formed Hudson's Bay Company title to "the lands and territoryes" of all the "streights, bayes, lakes, creeks and soundes" that drained into the bay. The company's charter, in effect, claimed possession of the interior of North America from Hudson Bay to the Rocky Mountains; *The Royal Charter for Incorporating The Hudson's Bay Company* (London, 1670). The French disputed this claim. They called Hudson Bay simply the Bay du Nord because of its location north of the French settlements in the Saint Lawrence River valley. The French argued that this bay was, irrefutably, a part of New France because "the English have always stopped at the Seaside making their commerce with the savages who came to find them there." In contrast, they argued, "the French have not ceased to travel through all the land and the rivers that lead to the Bay, taking possession of all these places." For the French, discovery and possession in North America could not be separated from social relationships. To claim a particular landscape meant, in some way, to claim the people who inhabited it. The above quote is excerpted from a memoir submitted by the French to a claims commission established jointly by England and France to determine possession of the interior West. See Archives Nationales (hereafter AN) C 11E 2, Mémoire général sur les limites de la Baye d'Hudson. The French pursued a similar strategy in South America, linking possession to the idea of a consensual alliance; see Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge, UK, 1995); quote on 65.

5 The term *Algonquian* describes an extensive language family. Algonquian languages were spoken throughout North America, from the eastern seaboard to the Great Plains. This term has also been widely used, historically and by schol-

ars, as a name or social designation for the speakers of Algonquian dialects. The French generally applied this name to the native residents of the pays d'en haut, even though not all peoples of this region were Algonquian speakers. The French commonly identified Algonquians from the upper country engaged in the fur trade as Ottawas, and they often used the two terms interchangeably. A Jesuit missionary, for example, wrote that "all who go to trade with the French, although of widely different nations, bear the name of Outaouacs [Ottawas], under whose auspices they make the journey." For Jesuit description of the Ottawa, see *JR*, 51:21. For a description of Algonquian identity in the context of the French alliance system, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, UK, 1991), xi.

6 Onontio was the name given to the first titular governor of New France, Charles Huault de Montmagny, by his Huron allies. Because the governor's name signified a mountain the Huron called him "Onontio," which meant mountain in their language. For description of the evolution of this identity, see ibid., 40. The alliance created a hybrid social world described by White as the Middle Ground. This was a "mutually comprehensible world" constructed by the French father and his children, that is, by the governor of New France and the Indian nations allied to the colony. The linguistic and ceremonial adaptation of an Iroquois word by Algonquian peoples illustrates how the alliance worked. Anthony Pagden argues that Europeans, similarly, understood executive power in their societies according to Roman law concepts which constructed the royal persona as a distinct political identity, a category separate from personhood. Political authority derived from this persona and rights in the empire were determined by the royal subject's relation to the king. This system, Pagden argues, was embedded in a model of the Roman family that gave parents absolute power over their children and created a language of personalized dependency. Although the governor never exercised absolute power over his allies, this model would have easily fit in the father-child relationship imagined by Onontio and his children. See Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France, c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven, CT, 1995), 140–46.

7 *JR*, 55:111.

8 Ibid., 112–13.

9 For Dablon, see ibid., 110–11. For *manidoo* and the appeal to spirit beings as grandfathers, see A. Irving Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View," in *Teachings from the American Earth*, ed. Dennis Tedlock and Barbara Tedlock (Toronto, 1975), 22; and Bruce M. White, "Encounters with Spirits: Ojibwa and Dakota Theories about the French and Their Merchandise," *Ethnohistory* 41 (1994): 380.

10 By the eighteenth century this marriage of map and travel narrative became a convention of European exploration. Most analysis of this practice has focused on maritime exploration, notably by Cook and Vancouver. See, e.g., Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver, 2000). Clayton argued that by fashioning Vancouver Island as a "cartographic shell" represented as a space emptied of any social meaning outside of its discovery by Europe, "Vancouver contributed to an imaginative geography that recontextualized the Northwest Coast [of North America] from imperial

vantage points." The Jesuits in North America, in a sense, operated as inland explorers. Their intimate association with native peoples, however, resulted in maps and cartographic texts with a unique emphasis on the outcome of colonial discovery and encounter—savage communities opened to proselytism, land opened to travel and trade, etc.—that provided a contextual understanding of the North American interior as a colonial possession of Europe. For quote, see Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, 203. See also Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London, 1987); Marshall Sahlins, "Captain Cook at Hawaii," *Journal of Polynesian History* 98 (1989): 371–425; Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think—About Captain Cook, for Example* (Chicago, 1995); and Gananath Obeyesekere, "'British Cannibals': Contemplation of an Event in the Death and Reconstruction of James Cook, Explorer," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 630–54.

11 *JR*, 55:95, 97.

12 Ibid., 95.

13 Ibid., 97.

14 Ibid., 100, 101.

15 Ibid., 103.

16 *Anishinaabeg* can be translated as "human beings" or "original people"; *Anishinaabe* is the singular form of this word. This term is significant as a self-referent used by multiple groups of Algonquian peoples that were identified by Europeans in the seventeenth century as distinct Indian nations. As my focus here is on Ojibwe-speaking peoples inhabiting the western Great Lakes and northwestern interior I am using a western Ojibwe orthography. "*Anishinaabemowin*," the linguists John Nichols and Earl Nyholm argue, "is not spoken in a single standard form but varies from place to place in sounds, vocabulary, and grammar"; Nichols and Nyholm, *A Concise Dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwe* (Minneapolis, 1995), vii. See also Richard A. Rhodes, *Eastern Ojibwa-Chippewa-Ottawa Dictionary* (New York, 1985); and William Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul, MN, 1984), 56–57.

17 Timothy Mitchell has described this European desire to inscribe social meaning onto the interior life of a subject population as an attempt to impose structure onto people and space that would otherwise appear as unreadable, or unknowable, to a European audience. See Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley, CA, 1988), 56–59.

18 Here I am conceptualizing kinship following Eric Wolf, who argued that kinship "is a particular way of establishing rights in people and thus laying claim to shares of social labor." Wolf argued that kinship "can then be understood as a way of committing social labor to the transformation of nature through appeals to filiation and marriage, and to consanguinity and affinity." This labor, he concludes, "can be mobilized only through access to people, such access being defined symbolically." See Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA, 1997), 91. For the significance of Anishinaabe kinship networks to the development of the western Great Lakes as a colonial region, see Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, "To Live among Us: Accommodation, Gender, and Conflict in the Western Great Lakes Region, 1760–1832," in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830*, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in*

the Western Great Lakes (Amherst, MA, 2001); and Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis," *Ethnohistory* 25 (1978): 41–67.

19 For the Sauteur, metamorphosis and social transformation was a fact of life. For spiritually animate persons such as human beings, and for other-than-human persons such as spirit beings or animals, the body represented only shape and form. The ability to change form was not a physical impossibility but a question of control-power, or manidoo. This type of metamorphosis or shape-shifting exemplified the capacity to alter the natural world by changing identity to one or more of the other types of being that inhabited the universe. Sauteur shape-shifting suggested the continuity between the natural and supernatural, and between the natural and the social. For the Sauteur, shape-shifting was more than a metaphor; it was a fact of life that was as much a social reality as it was a spiritual reality. If some individuals had the power or manidoo to take the shape of animals, for example, it made sense that a Sauteur could also be an Ottawa, or an Amikwas, or any other social being. For the metaphysics of shape-shifting and analysis of the relationship between the natural and supernatural in the Ojibwe worldview, see Christopher Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion and Its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia, 1983), 59–63; see also A. Irving Hallowell's statement that for the Ojibwe and their Sauteur antecedents "a natural-supernatural dichotomy has no place"; Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology," 30.

20 Adolph Greenberg and James Morrison have demonstrated quite effectively that the northern Ojibweg, descendents of the people that the French called the Sauteur, have at various times been known as Cree, Monsoni, Muskego, Gens des Terres, and several other ethnic designations; see Greenberg and Morrison, "Group Identities in the Boreal Forest: The Origin of the Northern Ojibwa," *Ethnohistory* 29 (1982): 75–102.

21 See, e.g., M. Du Chesneau's "Memoir on the Western Indians," in John R. Brodhead, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York: Procured in Holland, England, and France*, ed. E. B. O'Callaghan (Albany, NY, 1853–87) (hereafter *NYCD*), 9:160–61.

22 For Dablon, see *JR*, 54:133. For discussion of the totemic organization of the Sauteur, see Harold Hickerson, "The Feast of the Dead among the Seventeenth-Century Algonkians of the Upper Great Lakes," *American Anthropologist* 62 (1960): 84; and Hickerson, *The Chippewa and Their Neighbors* (New York, 1970), 42–50; and Charles A. Bishop, "The Emergence of the Northern Ojibwa: Social and Economic Consequences," *American Ethnologist* 3 (1976): 39–54.

23 Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, 87.

24 Greenberg and Morrison note that *awasse* was a synonym of *marameg*, both meaning catfish. They place the Awasse and Outchibou in the Chequamegnon area and detail references to these people from French and English sources that describe them interchangeably as Sauteur. This identity distinguished them from other Ojibwe-speaking people who lived, hunted, and traded in the western interior, and also connected both groups to Warren's western Sauteur bands the Catfish and Loon; see Greenberg and Morrison, "Group Identities," 87–90. See also Edward S. Rogers and Mary Black Rogers, "Who Were the Cranes? Groups and Group Identity Names in Northern Ontario," in

Approaches to Archaeology, ed. Margaret Hanna and Brian Kooyman (Calgary, 1982); Rogers, "Cultural Adaptations: The Northern Ojibwa of the Boreal Forest, 1670–1980," in *Boreal Forest Adaptations: The Northern Algonkins*, ed. A. Theodore Steegmann Jr. (New York, 1983); and A. Irving Hallowell, "Notes on the Material Culture of the Island Lake Saulteaux," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 30 (1938): 129–40.

25 Nicolas Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes, et religion des sauvages de l'Amérique septentrionale* (Paris, 1864), 92.

26 Ibid.

27 Nicolas Perrot, "Memoir on the Manners, Customs, and Religion of the Savages of North America," in *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, ed. Emma Helen Blair (Lincoln, NE, 1996), 221.

28 For La Potherie's discussion of the Dakota raid against the Mascouten at Green Bay, and for the tensions between the refugees at Green Bay and the French, see La Potherie, "History of the Savage People," 343–45. For Dakota trading at La Pointe, see *JR*, 51:56; and ibid., 54:167, 191–93.

29 Perrot, "Memoir on the Manners," 222–24.

30 La Potherie, "History of the Savage People," 346.

31 The anthropologist Patricia Albers has described the social nexus of exchange relations in native North America as "a chain of social connections through which an interdependence was realized in the production and exchange of specialized goods." Albers argues that each of the categories of exchange described by the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins—generalized, balanced, and negative reciprocity—"emerged under relationships based on war (competition), merger (cooperation), and symbiosis (complementarity)." Warfare, she argues, could take place even between interdependent native peoples, or between native peoples and European traders. The diplomacy of exchange relationships therefore became deeply intertwined with the creation and negotiation of kinship boundaries and obligations. Talon recognized that the English provided interior bands with an alternate source of trade goods, and that this access would allow these peoples to keep their social distance from the French. This would, in turn, fragment the alliance and make the French fur trade more prone to violence. See Albers, "Symbiosis, Merger, and War: Contrasting Forms of Intertribal Relationship among Historic Plains Indians," in *The Political Economy of North American Indians*, ed. John Moore (Lincoln, NE, 1993), 99.

32 For the history of the rivalry between the French and English and their attempts to control trade relations in this region, see W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534–1760*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque, NM, 1999); Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto, 1999 [1970]); E. E. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857* (Toronto, 1967).

33 For quote and French claims of prior discovery, see AN C11 E 1 F 186, Mémoire sur la domination des François en Canada, July 1687.

34 For a cogent analysis of the relationship between different types of exchange and kinship, see Bruce M. White, "The Fur Trade Assortment: The Meanings of Merchandise in the Ojibwa Fur Trade," in *Habitants et Marchands, Twenty Years Later: Reading the History of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Canada*, ed. Sylvie Dépatie (Montreal, 1988), 115–37. White argues that the exchange of particular categories of merchandise, like food and alcohol, created and were

a necessary condition of generalized exchange. That is, kinship demanded that these types of goods be given as gifts. Such gift giving, in turn, made possible the sort of complex direct exchanges—such as those that approximated credit—that were required in order for the fur trade to work.

35 The alliance that created Onontio and his children was a multiethnic exchange network. It provided a concrete means for different social groups to reinvent themselves as kin. Sahlins described "generalized reciprocity" as the social condition whereby people and goods flowed between groups out of a sense of obligation or social debt. Gift giving, like the ritual exchange of people or goods, created a connection or kinship between parties to the exchange. This kinship, whether literal or fictive, made long-term relationships possible between different social and ethnic groups. Kinship connections, in turn, created a social climate characterized by what Sahlins described as "balanced reciprocity"—the direct exchange of goods between partners of equivalent social status. The fur trade hinged on direct exchange between European traders and native hunters; that is, arrangements to hunt and trap specific furs in exchange for specified trade goods, often provided in advance by the trader. This interdependence, however, could also function as part of a symbiotic relationship where theft and raiding occurred in addition to intermittent periods of peaceful exchange. Such negative reciprocity could, in effect, create the same conditions of unbalance created by gift giving. In order to keep their alliance from continually fragmenting, the French struggled to maintain conditions of generalized reciprocity among their allies. The French fur trade, therefore, became completely intertwined with diplomacy and the rituals of alliance. For exchange and reciprocity, see Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago, 1972), esp. 168 and 193–95. For symbiosis and exchange relations, see Albers, "Symbiosis, Merger, and War," 100–112. For the significance of negative reciprocity in the construction of multiethnic exchange networks, see James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002).

36 For the activation of kinship ties as a means of mobilizing natural resources, see Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, 91–92.

37 The military officer and fur trader Daniel Du Lhut, for example, conducted ceremonies intended to create a ritual kinship among the Sauteur, Dakota, Assiniboine, and western Anishinaabeg in 1679; see "Mémoire du Sieur Greysolon Du Lhut adressé à M. le Maquis de Seignelay," in Margry, *Découvertes*, 6:22. Perhaps more significant, he met with the "Cree, Assiniboine, Gens de la Sapinière, the Opemens d'Acheliny, the Outoulbys, and the Tabitis," at Lake Nipigon north of Lake Superior. He informed the governor that these bands promised to abandon the English at Hudson Bay and trade with the French. Many of these bands had participated in Saint Lusson's ceremony. "Opemens d'Acheliny" is a phonetic approximation of the Ojibwe phrase *Nopiming daje inini*, which meant "inland people" and which the French generally translated as Gens des Terres. The Outoulby and Tabiti were also bands that the French usually identified as Gens des Terres, and the Gens de la Sapinière, who later became known as the Bois Forts, had been identified as Cree who traded with the English during the 1670s. See "Extrait d'une lettre de Greysolon Du Lhut à M. de la Barre, Escrite au-dessus du Portage de Teiagon, le 10 Septembre 1684," in Margry, *Découvertes*, 6:51. Du Lhut's brother traded with over 1,500

native people above Lake Nipigon in 1685 and reported that "they did not have sufficient goods to satisfy them." He reported that these people, the same who had promised to trade with the French in 1684, were accustomed to trading at Hudson Bay and would return to the English unless New France brought more goods and traders into the interior, see "Extrait d'une lettre du marquis de Denonville au marquis de Seignelay," 25 August 1687, in Margry, *Découvertes*, 6:52.

38 M. Du Chesneau to M. de Seignelay, 14 November 1679, in *NYCD*, 9:138.

39 M. Du Chesneau's Memoir on the Western Indians, and, 13 September 1681, in *NYCD*, 9: 162.

40 Ibid., 166.

41 Memoir of M. de Denonville on the State of Canada, 12 November 1685, in *NYCD*, 9: 286.

42 Ibid.