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Negotiating Peace, Negotiating Literacies: A French-Iroquois Encounter and the Making of Early American Literature

A large canoe with three Iroquois men and a French captive approaches the small settlement of Trois Rivières, on the banks of the St. Lawrence River. It is 5 July 1645. Suddenly, those gathered along the shore recognize the Frenchman. Guillaume Cousture, a young man taken captive by the Iroquois and presumed dead, has been brought back alive. As French settlers rush to welcome Cousture, a tall and stately man stands up in the front of the boat and addresses them. He is Kiotseaeton, a well-known Iroquois orator, diplomat, and ambassador of great prestige. He has come to negotiate for peace. His body is covered with beaded strings and belts, known as wampum.[1] Exchanged during peace-treaty negotiations, wampum serves, according to a Jesuit missionary in the area, "the same function as writing and contracts among us" (*JR*, 40:164).[2]

The wampum that Kiotseaeton brings to this encounter represents the thoughts and indeed the words authorized by the tribal body on whose behalf he speaks and negotiates. This wampum is part of a narrative and documentary tradition that the Iroquois have used in diplomacy for generations.[3] To this treaty encounter, the French bring their own mystic media for materializing words: pen, ink, and paper.

Just as wampum is more than a cultural artifact, alphabetic script is not simply a record of facts. Both are documentary media and forms of literacy—one printed, one beaded and strung.[4] Each emerges out of distinct cultural and textual contexts, but at the moment of this peace negotiation in North America, wampum and alphabetic script intersect in a space where neither is hegemonic. Indeed, this 1645 treaty council represents a mutual attempt by French and Iroquois delegates

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to enroll and inscribe each other in their respective textual systems. This process challenged participants to modify their existing modes of communication and recording. It also resulted in experiments with new kinds of writing adequate for, and rooted in, the encounter of radically different textual traditions. Therefore, this council represents an opportunity for a dialogic literary study of the early textual encounter between indigenous and settler communities.

This recorded encounter of 1645 is a small passage in an enormous archive of Jesuit activity in "New France." The documents in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (1896–1901) have been a key resource for historical studies of North American colonial encounters. As carefully composed and edited writing, this archive deserves greater critical attention from American literary scholars, as does the complex textuality of Iroquois wampum. As a result of conquest, the cultural and textual traditions of many indigenous peoples have become nearly invisible in many literary and historical studies of the early colonial period. Yet a number of Latin American scholars have demonstrated that the arrival of Europeans in the Americas brought into contact not literate and illiterate cultures but distinct and at times competing literary traditions.[5] As writing came to signify reason and illiteracy to imply savagery, Europeans and their descendants in the Americas identified themselves as literate in distinction to those they colonized. This distinction was established in part by equating writing exclusively with alphabetic script.[6] That equation, however, makes a dialogic study of the encounter impossible, and it leaves uncontested the monologues of colonial agents. It also maintains the persistent notion of a colonial encounter between civilized and savage peoples, marked respectively by literacy and illiteracy.

My purpose here is not to present an exhaustive study of one particular peace council but to demonstrate how this encounter between Iroquois and French negotiators makes possible the literary study of intercultural textual reciprocity. Recovering such moments of negotiation and reciprocity does not negate or diminish the enormity of the violence that attended conquest. Rather, it recognizes the tremendous loss sustained by indigenous people as diplomatic negotiation and mutual adaptation gave way to military might and permanent occupation, without relegating the agency and records of indigenous peoples to obscurity.

Although a number of Latin American scholars have studied Amer-

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indian scripts and the interaction between alphabetic and indigenous nonalphabetic scripts instantiated by the encounter, the presence and great diversity of indigenous systems of recording information remain largely outside the scope of North American studies of the colonial period.[7] For example, James Axtell argues that the success of the Jesuits, compared to protestant missionaries, lay in their adept use of writing among native people "dazzled by the power of print."[8] Numerous European observers, however, seem to have been equally dazzled by the ability of native people to repeat not just words but lengthy speeches from their own material records, such as pictographs and wampum belts. For example, Cadwallader Colden, who later attended and recorded similar councils, noted that Iroquois leaders were able to recite, verbatim, long speeches: "[T]hey commonly repeat over all that has been said to them, before they return any Answer, and one may be surprised at the Exactness of these Repetitions."[9]

The misperception that European colonists and settlers encountered in the Americas a continent without writing remains firmly established. In the opening essay in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Myra Jehlen reiterates this perspective when she notes regretfully: "The people who already inhabited the North American continent had an old and richly developed oral literature; *they did not write*. . . . It has not been possible, at least not yet, to reconstruct the reciprocity of the first meetings of Europeans and Native Americans. At the time of this writing, the study of the colonial encounter remains essentially a Euro-American self-study."[10]

My essay responds to Jehlen's call for a reciprocal study of the encounter by rejecting the notion that such a study is impossible because "they did not write" and suggesting instead that the failure lies with our inability to recognize and understand their writing. Moving beyond this impasse, I propose a comparative textual study of wampum and "Pen-and-Ink Work," as one Iroquois speaker called alphabetic writing.[11] I use this Iroquois phrase to displace the hegemonic power of the word *writing* (too easily equated solely with alphabetism) and also to defamiliarize alphabetic script, marking it as one of many kinds of writing at play in the encounter between Europe and the Americas. The term "Pen-and-Ink Work" reveals the presence of distinct literacies that were always perceived as strange and illegible outside their own cultural contexts. Simultaneously, the term points to the often forgotten materiality of script and sets it alongside wampum

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to argue that while French alphabetic script and Iroquois wampum are radically different media, in the context of this and other early encounters, they served similar purposes. They recorded the events and made the words of agreement material and binding.[12]

After Kiotseaeton's greeting at Trois Rivières, the French respond with a celebratory cannon discharge, a sign of welcome. The Iroquois envoys spend the next few days feasting with the French, the Algonquins, the Hurons, the Montagnais, and the Attikamegues gathered there to build bridges across the linguistic and cultural chasms between them. The stakes in this encounter are high.[13] In the years after the French were joined by the Dutch and British in northeastern America, they have engaged with the Iroquois intermittently, both in war and peace. Hostilities over the fur trade have alternated with brief cease-fires. Now both parties need peace. In the days that follow, they join each other in a lengthy peace council. These negotiations represent one of many instances that weave together these peoples, their textual traditions, and their understanding of cross-cultural encounters.

On the arrival of the French governor, called *Onontio* by the Iroquois, the parties join each other in a council that follows not European but Iroquois forms of diplomacy. As Robert Williams argues, encounters such as these attempted to create "a multicultural nomos—a normative universe of different peoples 'held together by the force of interpretive commitments.'"[14] Thus Kiotseaeton has come not only to "enter into the designs of the French, the Huron and the Algonquin" but also to bring them into the political and narrative designs of the Iroquois (*JR*, 27:248). Organized by situationally specific adaptations of Native narrative and political traditions, particularly the Iroquois Condolence Council and the Epic of the Peacemaker, this and other French-Iroquois peace councils revolve around the exchange of wampum as well as the construction of mutually intelligible signs for communication.

This 1645 council meeting represents one of the earliest and most detailed alphabetic script records of Iroquois diplomatic rites and the literacy that supported them. French records of this encounter remain indelibly linked with the Iroquois textual and narrative traditions that organized it, including wampum. A close reading of these texts and contexts suggests that European and indigenous records must be conceived together as a conjoined archive of the colonial encounter and as

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mutually informed texts that joined diverse peoples and their literary traditions.

Such a project brings to the fore issues of cultural and textual incommensurability. Given their radical difference, should wampum and script both be considered writing? While I use the term "Pen-and-Ink Work" to defamiliarize alphabetic script, I will also use the term *writing* for both alphabetic script and wampum, in order to claim the authority of that term for both forms of inscription. At stake is a larger project of questioning the alphabetic monopoly on the term *writing*, which has functioned as one of the pillars in the binary distinction between civilization and savagery, casting Europe and colonized people in terms of literacy and illiteracy, respectively.

Anyone familiar with *Jesuit Relations* or with French-Iroquois history will recognize that the encounter on which my reading concentrates is not a representative moment in Jesuit texts or Franco-Iroquois relations. In fact, relations between the two communities were more often hostile, and the peace accord that was achieved during this council did not last. However, the council and its records belong to a historical moment in which neither party held enough power to solely dictate the terms of engagement. Thus, this account in *Jesuit Relations* is a unique and important literary document. For literary scholars, it represents an opportunity to analyze an early example of cross-cultural textual encounter and to trace how the alphabetic script is marked and deformed by its encounter with the alternative literacy of wampum—and vice versa.[15]

What follows is a brief discussion of how the encounter with wampum marks and deforms the text in *Jesuit Relations*; subsequently, I will look at wampum and its cultural context and consider Iroquois notions of wampum textuality. My aim is to be neither definitive nor comprehensive but suggestive. I offer a model for a reciprocal, cross-cultural, and literary study of the colonial encounter in order to move from monologues of conquest to dialogues of encounter.

Jesuit Relations and Colonial Dialogization

Once the French governor has arrived and peace negotiations have begun, the Jesuit missionary Barthelemy Vimont sets out to record the proceedings. As Vimont attempts to capture Kiotseaeton's discourse, he struggles to invent new ways of representing this foreign

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communication. If colonialism is organized by the effort to abstract resources from the colony and deliver them to the metropolis, then a similar logic guided literary production in early colonial America, where the writing of Europeans was often intended for European audiences. However, in this passage from *Jesuit Relations*, the desire to take words from one context and send them into another engenders a crisis of representation, as the textual logic of wampum collides with that of French script. Consequently, the French colonial text is marked throughout by the terms and textual logic of wampum.

An important desire in Vimont's text, similar to many other early colonial and ethnographic writings, is to capture and comprehend indigenous presence and discourse. Vimont repeatedly claims to represent "what happened" and asserts the ability of the record to represent and reproduce the proceedings with phrases such as "this is what he said" and "this is what happened." As David Murray, among others, has argued, colonial texts became, for Europeans, a site of imaginary possession and containment.[16] This dynamic of textual assimilation becomes evident in two ways. First, the record omits the speech of the French governor, Kiotseaeton's interlocutor and negotiating partner. While the actual encounter entailed a dialogue between Kiotseaeton and the French governor, Vimont's narrative stages a one-sided monologue by Kiotseaeton. Such omission suggests that what is at stake in the text is not recording "everything that happened" but, rather, capturing, converting, and assimilating Kiotseaeton's discourse into the Jesuit record. Second, Vimont repeatedly expresses frustration at his inability to adequately record, translate, and transmit the complex treaty council proceedings—a frustration that simultaneously expresses thwarted colonial desires.

The space between that desire and that frustration creates a process of interanimation between Iroquois and European modes of communication and representation. As the European colonial presence becomes entrenched, this underdetermined state of linguistic and semiotic dialogue is increasingly difficult to trace. In later treaties, for example, weakened Native peoples negotiated with increasingly powerful British and then American governments. However, this peace council represents an earlier moment in colonial relations when neither party (nor their documentary systems) had established hegemony.

In *Jesuit Relations*, this balance of power manifests itself as fractures

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and tensions in the narrative, as discrepancies between the proceedings themselves and the material record. In fact, Vimont repeatedly marks the inability of the text to adequately represent and assimilate indigenous voices into its own narrative. Markers of omission are left to indicate the absence of Kiotseaeton's discourse. For example, Vimont writes at one point, "He named all those Nations," but Vimont does not record the names themselves (*JR*, 27:256). Moments of such indirect speech can be seen as markers of a discourse that is in the process of being assimilated even as it resists. Likewise, Vimont at times paraphrases Kiotseaeton rather than quoting him directly. Such moments represent Kiotseaeton's voice and words as absent in the text in a different way. While the narrative can be paraphrased, the words themselves are located in the wampum rather than in the Jesuit record. They remain beyond capture, beyond translation and transcription. In the move toward English translation, supplied by Thwaithes's *Jesuit Relations*, quotation marks seemingly indicate transcription, the presence of speech; however, such quotes are not part of Vimont's original text and thus represent not Kiotseaeton's speech but, rather, a continuing process of textualization as native discourse goes through yet another stage of translation and assimilation.

Additionally, there are multiple unreconciled voices inside the text marking the absence of an authoritative and coherent colonial narrative. At one point, the famous Isaac le Joques, who endured several rounds of Iroquois captivity before being martyred in 1646, contradicts Kiotseaeton's version of events:

> The fifteenth [wampum string] was to testify that they had always desired to bring back Father le Ioques and Father Bressani, that they thought Father le Ioques had been abducted or escaped, that they had given Father Bressani to the Dutch, because he wanted it, that if he had had patience I would have brought him back, how do I know now where he is? maybe he died, maybe he drowned, it was not our intention to kill him. . . . Father le Ioques, having listened to this discourse, said with a smile, the stake was ready if God had not saved me, they would have taken my life a hundred times, this good man says anything he pleases, Father Bressani told us the same when he returned. (*JR*, 27:262)

Vimont's record juxtaposes two unreconciled statements without narratively resolving the contradiction. Competing claims by Kiots-

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eaeton and le Joques are represented in the text as an argument, a dialogue, a discrepancy in versions of "what happened," which the text leaves apparent even as it obviously must side with le Joques. However, the narrative voice with its unstable points of view undermines this textual allegiance. In this passage, Vimont flips back and forth from the third person plural "they" to first person singular "I," seeming to slip into direct transcription. On one hand, this slippage might indicate the emerging identification of Vimont, the writer, with Kiotseaeton, the speaker. More likely, however, this textual confusion results from Vimont's inability to understand Mohawk. He comments on this linguistic barrier with frustration, exposing the presence of a translator and revealing the gaps between Kiotseaeton's discourse and his own record: "Here is what happened at the meeting, everyone admitted that this man was moving & eloquent, I gathered but a few bits like disjointed heaps in the mouth of the interpreter, who spoke only in broken fragments, and not in the order maintained by the Barbarian" (*JR*, 27:264).

In fact, far from representing a seamless colonial narrative of translation and transcription, Vimont repeatedly draws attention to the disjunctions between the speaker (Kiotseaeton), the writer (Vimont himself), and the anonymous interpreter between them. There are numerous references in the text to Kiotseaeton's eloquence and wit, but Vimont rarely records such eloquence. Instead, he paraphrases, describes, and even criticizes the interpreter, thus highlighting the discontinuity between speaker, interpreter, and writer.

"Here is what happened" can then be read in two different ways. First, as a claim to representation, these words follow a detailed description of Kiotseaeton's speeches as he elaborates the meaning of each wampum belt. On closer inspection, however, "here is what happened" marks a crisis of representation if it is read in reference not to the description of Kiotseaeton's speech but to the passage that follows where Vimont explains his inability to understand and represent that speech act. In this case, "what happened" was a failure of translation and transcription. As Vimont relates it, he gathers bits here and there, which he describes as disjointed heaps, fragments that are not adequately translated. Vimont understands enough (from those around him?) to realize that Kiotseaeton's oratory is moving, eloquent, and carefully organized. It is the verbal equivalent of the wampum belts themselves: well-organized, beautiful, a coherent whole. However, as

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these words travel from Kiotseaeton's mouth to the translator's ears, from the translator's mouth to Vimont's ears, and then onto the page, they become broken and disconnected. Vimont's phrasing, itself a proliferating (indeed repetitive) heap of disjointed and repetitive adjectives, describes a process of meaning and coherence breaking down as it encounters the limits of translatability.

The words that have come apart in the process of translation will be reassembled again in the process of transcription. However, the passage quoted above constitutes a marker in the text of that process and the violence it entails. In describing that process as one of Kiotseaeton's words becoming "unstitched," Vimont inadvertently seems to conceptualize the words in terms of the wampum. For while I have translated "decousues" in the original text as "disjointed" ("a few bits like disjointed heaps in the mouth of the interpreter"), another meaning of the word is *unstitched.* This term suggests Vimont's sense that Kiotseaeton's speech is parallel to the wampum belts: the process of translation and transcription breaks up this speech act as if the belts themselves had been torn apart, unstitched, so that the beads, detached from their proper context, become a formless heap without meaning.

Interestingly, throughout Vimont's record of the 1645 treaty negotiations, he reproduces what turn out to be Iroquois conceptions of textuality: "The Iroquois had two poles planted, & a cord tied from one to the other in order to tie & hang the words that they were to bring us, that is to say, the presents that they wanted to give us, which consisted of seventeen porcelain collars, some of which were on their bodies" (*JR*, 27:252).[17]

Not only does Vimont use the term "words" to refer to the wampum, rather than beads or belts or strings of wampum, but he also naturalizes the act of hanging words, in the material form of wampum, from a pole. Surely such a concept would be rather foreign to his interlocutor(s), the Reverend back in France and the large reading public among which *Jesuit Relations* circulated. This statement is accompanied in the text by minimal explanation of the relationship between words and presents in Iroquois culture.

Indeed, French and other colonial negotiators had to attain some level of Iroquois literacy in order to function in these contexts. In other early records of treaty negotiations, European negotiators accept this conception of contract writing, as Vimont does in his prose: "The

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governor replied to the presents of the Iroquois, with fourteen gifts each of which had their own meaning and carried their own words" (*JR*, 27:266). Here, and throughout this passage, Vimont's writing is marked by the presence of Iroquois modes of communication and representation: wampum can carry words to which one replies. Vimont's attempt to capture the proceedings thus gives rise to experiments in translation and transcription, to new kinds of writing rooted in the encounter.

Perhaps attempting to circumvent the linguistic barrier that has so frustrated Vimont, Kiotseaeton soon adds gestures to his spoken words. Most likely, the Iroquois diplomat is using some form of sign language, a lingua franca commonly used in intertribal diplomacy to circumvent linguistic barriers. Such gesture-language occurs, for example, when he hands over the second collar of wampum. Kiotseaeton scolds the French for sending back an Iroquois prisoner without a protective escort, whereas he has personally escorted Cousture back to the French settlement. Vimont in turn pays careful narrative attention to those gestures and at times dispenses momentarily with the translator. In fact, when Kiotseaeton "began to express" (with gestures in addition to words) the difficulties that the Iroquois captive had overcome on his journey back to Iroquoia (*JR*: 27:255), Vimont switches from transcription of words to description of the gestures used to "express" that narrative.

This is a key moment in the text that points to the limited capacity of alphabetic writing to represent foreign spoken language. What follows in Vimont's text is a careful description of those gestures, which at times transitions into an attempt to transcribe directly the meaning of the gestures (*JR*, 27:252–64). Indeed, there are moments when Vimont attempts to transcribe meaning directly without recourse to spoken language, relying on Kiotseaeton's gestures rather than the words of the translator: "he lost courage, and then recovered his strength" (*JR*, 27:254).

Alphabetic script here records gestures and then concepts rather than spoken words. Discrete segments of the sentence represented by French words actually attempt a simultaneous transcription-translation of indigenous gesture language. Thus, the written words that follow refer not to sounds at all but to gestures and, beyond that, to ideas such as courage and strength. The sliding movement in this segment of *Jesuit Relations* between description, transcription, and translation

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progresses as Vimont experiments with novel ways of writing adequate for, and rooted in, this encounter. The text reveals a dizzying narrative progression from Iroquois community words, recorded in wampum, to Kiotseaeton's gesture words to Vimont's pictographic transcription into French written words, recorded in *Jesuit Relations*. These slippages arise from the impossibility of transcribing the spoken word given the linguistic barriers between himself and Kiotseaeton. Vimont responds by attempting to transcribe, first, gesture-words and finally concepts, using graphic signs (French alphabetic script) that simultaneously translate. This progression is dependent on experimental, fluid, and creative adaptations of known and foreign ways of recording and transmitting meaning on the part of both the French and the Iroquois.

Although it looks like any other kind of alphabetic writing, the printed words on this page function pictographically: the graphic sign transcribes an idea, not a sound. This passage in *Jesuit Relations* is simultaneously alphabetic and ideographic writing, because the printed graphic signs on these pages attempt to record Iroquois concepts, not French words. According to classic theories of writing, which have claimed the term exclusively for alphabetic script and defined it narrowly as the transcription of sound, this passage is not "real writing" despite its familiar appearance. It is something much more complicated: a kind of hybrid cross-cultural pictographic writing, a slippery chain of transcription and translation where the graphic sign we think of as a printed French word performs two functions simultaneously. The word on the page is both a pictographic transcription of Iroquois concepts communicated without recourse to verbal language and a phonographic translation into French. This passage in *Jesuit Relations* represents a moment in which the conventional meaning and use of the French written word is modified in such a way as to destabilize classic Western notions of what writing is and does.

If "translation is the Achilles' heel of the colonizing culture," as Jehlen claims, where potentially "the monologue of imperial authority—the empire's sole right to authorize—breaks down into dialogue," then this moment of translation, or rather its crisis of representation, exemplifies what we might call colonial dialogization.[18] As Mikhail Bakhtin argues, "[A] word, discourse, language or culture undergoes 'dialogization' when it becomes relativized, de-privileged, aware of competing definitions for the same things. Undialogized language is authoritative

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or absolute."[19] As a consequence of this interaction between radically different discourses about, and conceptions of, the materiality of the word and the process of communication, each becomes dialogized. In *Jesuit Relations*, Vimont's attempt to produce an authoritative, coherent colonial record that captures and translates a foreign discourse is subverted by the dialogization within his text. Thus, this segment of *Jesuit Relations* marks itself as an imperfect record of a collective narrative act that is in excess of what can be assimilated and translated. In this conjuncture between Iroquois and French conceptions of writing, we see a novel linking of wampum and words, in alphabetic writing that represents not only the structure of this conjuncture but also ideas about the relationships between speaker, spoken and material word, body, and text that reflect the conventions of wampum rather than script.

The Bead Embodied the Word: Iroquois Literacy in Practice

While wampum is mostly known as a form of currency—"Indian money"—this function emerged mainly as a consequence of colonial exchange and was never primary for the Iroquois.[20] In this section, I analyze how wampum functioned among the Iroquois prior to and in the early centuries of European contact, focusing particularly on how it was used as a form of literacy, that is, as a communicative and archival medium that facilitated, organized, and recorded social relations. At the time of this 1645 encounter, wampum was central to Iroquois diplomacy (particularly peace making) and archival production; its use was deeply embedded in and extended throughout Iroquois culture.

On a material level, early-contact wampum belts and strings consisted of sinew that held together deep purple and white shells called quahog, with holes drilled at each end, in graphic patterns or specific sequences. The earliest use of wampum has not been determined, but archaeologists have found forms of it throughout the eastern parts of North America that date as far back as the Archaic period.[21] At the time of contact, the Iroquois conceptualized wampum as a medium of communication that materialized and embodied words. As such, it was capable of carrying the words of a speaker to an interlocutor, just as Europeans understood ink and paper as capable of carrying words from one location to another. With wampum, the word was spoken

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into and then back out of the beaded string or belt, which functioned as a kind of literary tape recorder. As Michael Foster explains, "[A] speaker performs a speech act which roughly translates as 'reading the message into the wampum.'"[22] The words were spoken into the wampum in the presence of a messenger who memorized them and repeated them at his destination. But the Iroquois considered the wampum, not the messenger, to be carrying the words: "words spoken over wampum became *embodied* in the beads."[23] Like paper and ink, then, wampum beads, strings, or belts embodied words and made them material.

In a diplomatic context, exchange of wampum represented acceptance of a message or proposal, and refusal of wampum represented a rejection. As it was used in indigenous Woodlands diplomacy, wampum functioned as that which gave the oral word binding materiality, in the manner of a signature on a legal contract. For the Iroquois, however, the agreement rested beyond the written, or beaded, document in the reciprocal and active relationship between parties continually enacting its terms. The record of events had no relevance or power in and of itself but only as it was embedded in a matrix of social relations and communication.

Throughout French treaty records, Iroquois diplomats conducted negotiations according to specific ritual structures, particularly those adapted from the interrelated Iroquois Condolence Council and the Epic of the Peacemaker. In my own attempt to understand the significance of wampum in Iroquois society, I found it most useful and indeed necessary to turn to these cultural and literary forms, particularly the Epic of the Peacemaker that some have called the "chartering myth of the Five Nations."[24] Wampum strings were (and still are) symbolically exchanged at set periods throughout the Condolence Council; such exchanges form one of the founding rituals of the Iroquois Confederacy. According to Iroquois mythology and history, this sacred, founding ritual was introduced to the Iroquois by a prophet known reverentially as "the Peacemaker." The Epic of the Peacemaker and the Condolence Council provide the absent text, or master narrative, that structured encounters between the Iroquois and the French, between wampum and "Pen-and-Ink Work."[25] Because these cultural master narratives are largely unfamiliar to scholars of American literature, the following sections outline them in some detail.

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The Epic of the Deganawidah: The Story and Vision of a Peacemaker

The legendary Deganawidah, or Peacemaker, helped to end a period of violent intertribal turmoil by establishing the Great Peace and the Iroquois League, a Confederacy of Five Nations, consisting of the linguistically and culturally related Onandaga, Oneida, Seneca, Cayuga, and Mohawk peoples.[26] Before the formation of the league, these groups had been locked in internal warfare and blood feuds. In the generations prior to European contact, Iroquois groups came together to heal these intertribal divisions and to lay the ritual and political foundations upon which their confederacy rested.

This process began when Deganawidah healed Hiawatha (or Ayonwatha), a man who had lost his family and was wandering the woods in grief.[27] The Peacemaker strung shells together and then, as he consoled Hiawatha, handed him strings of shells while repeating a series of ceremonial teachings that eventually became the foundation for the rituals of the ceremonial Condolence Council.

Hiawatha became the Peacemaker's collaborator in the difficult task of organizing the Iroquois into a unified political league, and together they accomplished a peaceful social revolution. The Condolence Council became the core of a new social order that mitigated retaliation and war. "When men accept it," the Peacemaker said of his message, "they will stop killing, and bloodshed will cease from the land."[28] In this process, wampum helped to heal grief and restore reason in the aftermath of war and loss. It was, in fact, foundational to establishing and maintaining the social fabric of Iroquois society.

The Peacemaker and Hiawatha eventually carried the "Great Law" to the various chiefs of the surrounding settlements and brokered peace over the course of a number of years. The Iroquois imagined this peace in organic terms as the planting of a great tree of peace with the expansive potential for its four white roots of peace to extend in the cardinal directions and potentially reach all peoples. They thus conceptualized the basis on which their confederacy was founded as a growing, multicultural community linked together in solidarity under the sheltering branches of the great tree of peace, as a new social order organized by a commitment to peace, communication, solidarity, and reciprocity. This social order was maintained, in part, through continuous ritual reenactment of the Condolence Council.

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As many scholars have noted, the protocol and the metaphoric language of the condolence ritual permeate the colonial records of Iroquois diplomatic encounters with the French, the Dutch, and finally the English. Organizing peace and trade councils with Europeans according to these principles affirmed the authority of Iroquois society while simultaneously attempting to enroll Europeans in that social order.

The Condolence Council Ceremony

The Peacemaker's ritual healing of Hiawatha evolved over time into the ritualized Condolence Council that is still in use. According to J. N. B. Hewitt, the rituals "comprised an institution of vital importance for maintaining the integrity and efficient functioning of the Iroquois state."[29] This foundational and sacred ritual extended outside of the Confederacy and prescribed the forms of Iroquois diplomacy with neighboring Nations as well as European powers. It was a way of attempting to enroll, both ceremonially and literally, European and other Native groups into their social and political order. The Condolence Council consists of five rituals, two of which reoccur in recognizable forms in the 1645 peace negotiations. It is "an elaborate interweaving of . . . five prescribed texts, administered in this period of a 'mutual embrace.'"[30] Peace and later treaty councils, in turn, can be conceived as an increasingly complex interweaving of intercultural texts and ways of making the word material.

Reading the "text" of this encounter, then, means reading the account in *Jesuit Relations* together with the epic of the Peacemaker and the Condolence Council as interwoven narratives that make up a collective and intercultural text greater than any of its parts. In this section, I trace several situationally specific adaptations that shaped the 1645 encounter and reveal how the Iroquois master narrative derived from the Condolence Council also changed as a consequence of that encounter to become the template for later peace and treaty negotiations.[31]

The Condolence Ceremony traditionally begins with what is known as "Welcome at Wood's Edge." Visitors from "clear-minded" villages—those who have not sustained personal loss and have come to console and comfort the bereaved—declare their presence and peaceful intentions at the "Wood's Edge," the point where cleared land around the

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settlement of the mourning village meets the forest. This part of the ceremony derives from the custom that strangers make their presence and peaceful intentions known before entering a village. At this temporal and geographic point, a speaker for the visiting village clears the mourning villagers' eyes, then their ears, and finally the obstructions from their throats—the organs of speech and perception—with corresponding wampum strings. Kiotseaeton does the same with the first three wampum strings that he gives to the French at the 1645 treaty council. The function of these three strings is to restore the faculties of seeing, hearing, and speaking that have been impaired by the shock of death. Grief is thus conceptualized as an obstruction to communication, which must be alleviated prior to negotiation.

However, these three wampum strings are not the first strings used in the ceremony. The proceedings are initiated with an invitational string, sent even before the parties meet. The name of this string literally means "that which stretches a person's arm." This invitational string leads the recipients "by the arm" to the Wood's Edge, where the hosts welcome them, take them by the arm, and lead them to the Council.[32] Wampum, then, functions as an agent of diplomacy as well as a medium of communication that negotiates space, grief, and obstructions in communication. It does not simply record information but organizes and enables communication, which in the case of the Iroquois-French negotiations also entailed the construction of an interethnic community of shared signs. Iroquois diplomats may have chosen to adapt the form of the Condolence Ceremony for treaty encounters not only because of the need to negotiate peace between formerly warring parties but also because of the necessity of facilitating communication itself. Given the cross-cultural and multilinguistic context, mutual understanding was a central problem that the Condolence Ceremony and wampum specifically addressed and attempted to negotiate.

In the episode I retold at the beginning of this essay, we can recognize Kiotseaeton's modification of Condolence Ceremony conventions in his cautious call to the settlers at "Water's Edge." In Vimont's account, another modification of the ceremony becomes apparent. When Kiotseaeton has finished his speech, a shot is fired from the boat, "and the Fort responded with a cannon shot to mark the occasion," according to Vimont (*JR*, 27:248). In a subsequent council, "three cannon shots were fired to chase away the bad atmosphere of

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war and to preserve the happiness of peace" (*JR*, 27:268). This suggests that new, shared rituals were being invented that were specifically rooted in the encounter between Iroquois and French people, as cannon shots both figuratively and metaphorically became new, recognizable forms of initiating diplomatic proceedings.

Following the welcome, the next part of the Condolence Council is the "Requickening," by which the deceased is mourned and a new member of the Chief's Council is selected, ensuring continuity of the social fabric. The Iroquois enrolled both the French and British in this social structure. All French governors were given the title *Onontio*, as "the Frenchman who was responsible for maintaining the French colonies treaty obligations towards the Indians."[33] Later, governors of Pennsylvania were given the hereditary title *Onas*, which means "Pen" in reference to the important 1682 treaty negotiated between the Iroquois and Pennsylvania's first governor, William Penn.

That the Iroquois organized peace negotiations around the rituals of the Condolence Ceremony indicates that they viewed these negotiations as matters of life and death, crucial to the survival of their community. Clearly, this ceremony was seen by the Iroquois as a powerful text that the League could use to counteract the destruction and death that attended the arrival of the Europeans. The emotional effect on the colonists of Cousture's reappearance may have been calculated in part to relate this significance and sense of mystic, even sacred power to the French.

The return of Cousture played not only on the powerful symbolism of resurrection, or requickening, but the return of a captive hostage also constituted an opening gift in efforts to build trust despite a history of war. In fact, gifts of condolence were central to the healing ceremony and to the establishment of social bonds in general. The Iroquois consider solidarity and reciprocity, shared suffering and shared resources, as necessary for the establishment and maintenance of diplomatic and social ties.[34] Indigenous diplomats absolutely insisted on the ritual exchange of gifts before negotiations could commence, while Europeans often expressed impatience with this requirement and either failed or refused to understand this element of diplomatic protocol. The gift economy into which the Iroquois attempted to enroll the Europeans conflicted with the money economy that the newcomers brought with them. The simultaneous uses of wampum as a diplomatic and narrative device for the Iroquois, and as mone-

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tary currency for Europeans, testify to these conflicting economies of meaning.

The wampum belts used in treaty negotiations were produced by the tribal community and proved that the words of the envoy were backed up by the community, that the envoy was carrying the words of the tribal council. Iroquois leaders often noted that "you may know our words are of no weight unless accompanied with wampum."[35] This early encounter between the French and the Iroquois, then, throws light on the ways the Iroquois theorized wampum within human negotiations as instantiating a powerful, healing, and sacred linkage between words and human beings. While there is no invitational string initiating the 1645 Council, the captive Cousture, who has been figuratively brought back to life, functions as the gift or wampum string that initiates the healing process and makes the meeting possible. And perhaps a preceding French release of an Iroquois captive, whose return Kiotseaeton describes, could have functioned similarly so that the bodies of captives functioned as the mutual invitational wampum strings, as the gift that led Kiotseaeton by the arm to the peace negotiations.

A follow-up meeting ten days later offers additional insight into Iroquois notions of textuality. When five Iroquois envoys arrive for this council, they once again deliver "a harangue on the bank of the river, according to their custom"—what we might call the Water's Edge segment of the adapted Condolence or Peace Council. This time, however, the envoy speaking at the Water's Edge does not carry wampum. "I have no voice," he says. "Do not listen to me I speak not, all I have in my hand is an oar with which to bring you a French, who has in his mouth the word of all our country." The wampum-words are carried this time by a Frenchman, Father le Joques, in whom, as Vimont phrases it, "the Iroquois had confided their presents, that is to say, their words" (*JR*, 27:280). This terminology suggests an internalization of the logic of wampum literacy where wampum strings and belts are words that can be confided.

As the Frenchman proceeds to relate the messages stored in and carried by the wampum in a textual matrix that now includes his own body, he and Vimont both conceptualize the speech as coming from the wampum: "The first [wampum string] *said* that. . . . The second *said* that . . ." (*JR*, 27:280, my emphasis). This scene represents an apparently successful attempt by the Iroquois to invest the Frenchman

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with their words and enroll him in their textual community by linking his body to their wampum. This effort is represented, in turn, by the French on the wampum's own terms: it is the wampum that speaks. For with the tenth wampum string, something remarkable happens: "The tenth was given to link us all together very closely, he hugged a Frenchman with one arm & an Algonquin with the other, & being thus linked himself with them, [he said] here is the knot that binds us inseparably, nothing can dis-unite us. This collar being extraordinarily beautiful, even if lightning should strike us it would not be able to separate us" (*JR*, 27:260).

While I have translated *enlaça* (*enlacer*) as "hugged," the word has another important connotation. Indeed, a more literal translation is interlace, intertwine, or thread. In fact, Kiotseaeton is lacing the three men together into a kind of bodily equivalent of the wampum. They are themselves becoming part of the text. In this encounter, wampum is a textual medium that weaves together peoples in political covenants of reciprocity, as parts of a shared design of reciprocity and peaceful coexistence. It is worth remembering in this context the etymology of *text* and *textuality*: it is rooted in the Latin word *textere*, which means that which is woven.

Like Vimont, Kiotseaeton points out the extraordinary beauty of the wampum to suggest to the French that this beauty indicates a special strength to overcome any assault on the alliance represented and authenticated by the wampum (even, metaphorically, a force as strong as lightning). The wampum is itself an actor with agency and power to secure the alliance, in part because its beauty is a result of the efforts and resolve of the community that produced it, the community Kiotseaeton represents, and perhaps also the metaphors or semiotic logic that organizes it. Just as beautiful alphabetic writing carries a particular persuasive power, so the beauty of this wampum is linked to its power. Vimont's choice of words suggests an understanding of Iroquois conceptions of the contract and wampum textuality while foregrounding the reciprocity and exchange inherent in Iroquois theories of the textual.

Iroquois and European Conceptions of Textuality

At this point, we can glean the outlines of an Iroquois theory of textuality that perhaps Vimont himself sensed ever so vaguely, one that

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becomes clearer when wampum is understood within its cultural context. First, we have learned from the story of the Peacemaker, from the Condolence Ceremony, and from the treaty encounter that wampum is theorized as a form of textuality that facilitates the process of communication—particularly between aggrieved parties such as former enemies. In the contact situation, the Iroquois possibly also used wampum to counteract what we might call cultural interference in communication between two very different groups of people who shared neither language nor culture.

Thus wampum serves as a narrative, and here as an instructional, medium that facilitates the creation of a shared symbolic and interpretive community. With each wampum string, Kiotseaeton told a different installment of a story inspired by and adapted from one of the great metatexts of Iroquois culture. According to Robert Williams, only the best storytellers were sent to negotiate multicultural alliances and Kiotseaeton was well known as a great diplomat. Descriptions of treaty encounters show that indigenous diplomats frequently used wampum as an organizing medium of storytelling. These stories, Williams explains, provided a space in which to imagine a shared world: to educate Europeans about the norms of behavior expected by alliance and treaty partners and to establish a shared communicative ground from which to proceed with negotiations.[36]

If and when an agreement was reached, wampum served as the archival record. Different wampum belts, some of them very famous, recorded various agreements. Generally, the more important the agreement, the larger the belt.[37] Information was recorded in a matrix of the body of wampum and the bodies (that is, the memory) of the agreeing parties. Even into the present century, the Iroquois have preserved wampum belts documenting, for example, the founding of the League as well as treaty agreements; tribal leaders have traveled to both North American and European capitals to argue claims for sovereignty and other matters by reading old belts.[38]

To the Iroquois, wampum functioned as a medium that made the oral word material—just as a signature on a contract materializes oral consent. However, for the Iroquois, a contract or other formal agreement was meaningless in and of itself. Exchange of wampum initiated an ongoing relationship based on reciprocity and a shared world. Thus wampum did not seal an agreement so much as mark its beginning.

Important agreements with a large amount of information were col-

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lectively stored and maintained by and in the tribal body. The link between wampum and the tribal body is crucial to understanding how wampum functioned as a record and how the Iroquois understood the interrelation of text, memory, society, and the body. Designated people served as the keepers of wampum records, but a much larger number of people might be responsible for remembering the exact wording of a particular smaller segment of the agreement linked to a given belt.[39]

Because of the linkage between message and body, and because it is not representational, wampum has often been considered a mnemonic aid, distinguished from real writing by philologists and other scholars of writing. For example, Jack Goody distinguishes wampum from writing because wampum belts are "not transcriptions of language, but rather a figurative shorthand, a mnemonic, which attempts to recall or prompt linguistic statements rather than to reproduce them."[40] David Murray agrees: "Clearly there is an important difference between the ability to repeat based on mnemonic structures grounded in common knowledge, memory and a shared context, and what Derrida describes as iterability, the way in which the statement can be separated from the context which apparently guaranteed it its meaning."[41]

This "iterability" (the fact that alphabetic writing can be separated from its original context and still be understood apart from that context) is usually cited as evidence of the unique nature of alphabetic writing. Such separation between writers and documents took on increasing importance during the colonial age as documents circulated between the metropolis and distant colonies. In classic scholarship, "real writing" can be detached from its context and circulate independently of the writer, whereas mnemonic devices can function only as aides to a remembering body. However, as Mary Carruthers has shown, alphabetic writing in medieval Europe functioned mnemonically until the invention of print, the age of discovery, and other historical developments brought about dramatic changes in the use and function of writing, including greater circulation of texts detached from writers and authors.[42] Yet these classic European writings are not now considered mnemonic because we still understand the code and context that make them "iterable."

In fact, the context that gives alphabetic writing, or "Pen-and-Ink Work," its iterability remains in place and naturalized by scholars so familiar with this code that it becomes invisible to them. As we see

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in the French record of this encounter, such arguments have limitations that the cross-cultural encounter brings into focus. Linguistic transcription becomes difficult and notions such as iterability increasingly problematic when the context is an intercultural and interlinguistic encounter. Textual analysis of intercultural encounters not only confronts us with the difficulty of studying texts that are part of nonalphabetic semiotic systems but also draws into question the assumed "iterability" of alphabetic writing. In 1645 on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, wampum and "Pen-and-Ink Work" were alternative literacies confronting each other in a space of cross-cultural encounter. Hence, this encounter offers a new perspective not only on early colonial America but on how we understand textuality itself.

Cross-cultural encounters organized around distinct kinds of writing provide windows into the reciprocity between different textual systems and literary traditions that came into contact in early colonial America. The Iroquois observed and evaluated European forms of literacy as carefully as their transatlantic counterparts. At a 1765 treaty council, for example, an Onondaga man praised the durability of messages put down on paper. However, he and others expressed concern that written articles of agreement could be used to deceive when, for example, indigenous people signed falsely translated documents. Likewise, a British missionary reported that the Seneca had told him that "some of the Indians were afraid of writing any letters because those letters would speak for great many years afterwards."[43] They were, in short, critical of the separation between written words, speaker, and context. Throughout the colonial era, the Iroquois criticized what they perceived to be a practice of placing undue weight on written words. For example, protesting what the Iroquois perceived to be an unlawful land transfer authorized by illegitimate documents, the great Canassatego in 1744 noted that native people had been "liable to many other inconveniences since the English came among us, and *particularly from that Pen-and-Ink Work that is going on at the table*."[44]

By then, however, the balance of power had moved decisively in favor of European settlers, and Mary Louise Pratt's notion of a contact zone marked by asymmetric relations of power becomes more appropriate in analyses of later treaty negotiations. What makes the 1645 French-Iroquois council so important, then, is that it took place before the colonial order became established, when the outcome of events remained contingent—a moment when two radically different

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textual systems confronted each other in a space of encounter where neither was hegemonic. It is an important moment not only for historians but also for literary scholars because it permits us to study how alphabetic script was marked and deformed by its encounter with wampum, and vice versa—to study, in other words, what Jehlen calls the reciprocity potentially present in the "literature of the underdetermined encounter."[45]

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Notes

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1 For this account, see *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791; The Original French, Latin, and Italian Texts, with English Translations and Notes; Illustrated by Portraits, Maps, and Facsimiles*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896–1901), 27:246–304. Further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *JR*. Documents in *Jesuit Relations* were first launched by Paul le Jeune, who was the Superior of the Jesuit missions in "New France" in 1632. In the early twentieth century, Thwaites compiled *Jesuit Relations* and numerous related documents and published them alongside English translations in a seventy-three-volume set. I use Thwaites's edition because it remains the most readily available; however, I have worked from the original French and offer my own English translations. I have retained the spelling of Cousture's name and the use of the article *le* in reference to Isaac le Joques as it appears in this section of *Jesuit Relations*. A new edition of the Jesuit documents is currently being completed under the editorship of Lucien Campeau. See also Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1992); Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993); *Word from New France: The Selected Letters of Marie de L'Incarnation*, trans. and ed. Joyce Marshall (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), 135–55; Germaine Warkentin, "In Search of 'The Word of the Other': Aboriginal Sign Systems and the History of the Book in Canada," in *Book History* 2, no. 1 (1999): 1–27.

2 Contradictory statements appear throughout *Jesuit Relations* regarding

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whether indigenous peoples in the Northeast had writing. Many Jesuits noted the habit of native students to use pictography and hieroglyphics to "take notes" on missionary teachings. Father Sébastien Râle compares Northeastern pictographs to "our letters" (*JR*, 67:226), noting that a message written by one Abenaki member was later read and understood by another, separate group. Other Jesuits, however, such as Father Francesco Giuseppe Bressani, claimed that "they have neither books, nor any writing" (*JR*, 39:148).

3 On treaty protocol for peace and trade in the Northeastern Woodlands, see Robert A. Williams Jr., *Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace, 1600–1800* (New York: Routledge, 1999). On treaty protocol in Pennsylvania in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: Norton, 1999). On the formation of the Iroquois League, see Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*; Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*; and William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1998), particularly 224–39.

4 As New Literacy scholars have noted, literacy must be understood in culturally relative ways, particularly in cross-cultural contexts. For a small sampling of such work, see Karen Schousboe and Mogens Trolle Larsen, eds., *Literacy and Society* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1989); Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1994); Stephen Houston, "Literacy among the Pre-Columbian Maya: A Comparative Perspective," in *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo; Anthony Aveni, "Non-Western Notational Frameworks and the Role of Anthropology in Our Understandings of Literacy," in *Toward a New Understanding of Literacy*, ed. Merald E. Wrolstad and Dennis F. Fisher (New York: Praeger, 1986). See also Birgit Brander Rasmussen, "Re-Imagining Literary America: Writing and Colonial Encounters in American Literature" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 23–72.

5 See, for example, Mignolo, *The Darker Side*.

6 Philologists and linguists have traditionally conceptualized the writing systems of the world in a hierarchical, chronological progression from "picture-writing" toward alphabetism. Writing systems were generally organized into four categories: pictographic, hieroglyphic, syllabic, and alphabetic. These categories simultaneously represented stages of progress from primitivism (pictography) toward civilization (alphabet). While syllabic writing systems were often considered advanced, alphabetic writing was considered superior to all other kinds of writing and the only example of "real writing." See, for instance, Ignace J. Gelb's land-

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mark *A Study of Writing*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963), in which he defines real writing as the transcription of sound.

7 Key works on Latin American systems include James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992); Gordon Brotherston, *Image of the New World: The American Continent Portrayed in Native Texts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979); Boone and Mignolo, eds., *Writing without Words*; and Mignolo, *The Darker Side*. A few studies of North American cross-cultural literary encounters exist; see, for example, Hertha Dawn Wong, *Sending My Heart Back across the Years: Tradition and Innovation in Native American Autobiography* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); and Garrick Mallery, *Picture-Writing of the American Indians*, 2 vols. (1888; reprint, New York: Dover, 1972). See also Edward G. Gray and Norman Fiering, eds., *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492–1800: A Collection of Essays* (New York: Berghahn, 2000); Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, *Reading beyond Words: Contexts for Native History* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1996); and William M. Clements, *Native American Verbal Art: Texts and Contexts* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1996). The only anthology of American literature to include pictographic writing is *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature: A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations*, ed. Marc Shell and Werner Sollors (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2000).

8 James Axtell, "The Power of Print in the Eastern Woodlands," *William and Mary Quarterly* 44 (April 1987): 300–309. See also Peter Wogan, "Perceptions of European Literacy," *Ethnohistory* 41 (summer 1994): 407–29.

9 Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada: Which Are Dependent on the Providence of New York, and Are a Barrier between the English and the French in That Part of the World*, 2 vols. (1727–47; reprint, New York: Barnes, 1904), 1:120.

10 Myra Jehlen, "Papers of Empire," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Volume 1: 1590–1820*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 37, my emphasis.

11 Canassatego, 26 June 1744, Town of Lancaster, quoted in Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, 1:141. The occasion for Canassatego's speech was a treaty negotiation between the Six Nations and British colonial administrators.

12 Wampum also had other functions, such as bodily ornaments, diplomatic gifts, media of exchange, and ritual forms of expression as exemplified in the Iroquois Condolence Ritual.

13 For a history of these complicated interactions, alliances, and wars, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in*

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the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815 (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991). For a concise overview of the desperate situation of the French in general, the Jesuits in particular, and, for that matter, the Huron, who had been devastated by the Iroquois and by disease, see James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter* (Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1982), 1–39.

14 Williams, *Linking Arms Together*, 51. Williams is citing Robert Cover, "Nomos and Narrative," *Harvard Law Review* 97 (November 1983): 9. Mary Louise Pratt coined the term "contact zone" to refer to "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (*Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* [New York: Routledge, 1992], 6–7). While this is a textual zone of contact where disparate cultures "grapple with each other," it is not (yet) one of "highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination." The French are not militarily, demographically, or semiotically dominant in this encounter. Here I find more appropriate Jehlen's term "underdetermined encounter," which refers to those periods of contingency before one party establishes hegemony, in distinction to the overdetermined narrative of conquest ("Papers of Empire," 57).

15 Daniel K. Richter analyzes a slightly later record of negotiations between the Mohawk and the English at the famous council at Albany in 1679 in *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), 129–50. Richter's reading, like my own, takes into account the bicultural nature of diplomatic negotiations; however, Richter, like many other scholars, considers wampum a mnemonic device, not a textual system (137). See also my "Re-Imagining Literary America," 23–72.

16 David Murray, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing, and Representation in North American Indian Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991), 34–48.

17 I am aware of Ferdinand de Saussure's work on "paroles" (words), which he defines as "utterances" and distinguishes from "langue," or language; see *Cours de linguistique générale* (*Course in General Linguistics*), ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, with the collaboration of Albert Reidlinger (Paris: Payot, 1922). However, I have consistently translated "paroles" as *words* in this context in accordance with colloquial usage and various dictionaries I consulted; see also *JR*, 27:314 n. 24.

18 Jehlen, "Papers of Empire," 44.

19 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), 427.

20 While wampum did at times operate as a medium of exchange among

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Woodland Indians and European traders, its main function among native people was never monetary. For a discussion of gift economies (the context in which wampum operated, in distinction to a money economy), see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: Norton, 1990).

21 See Barbara A. Mann, "The Fire at Onandaga: Wampum as Proto-writing," *Akwesasne Notes* 1 (spring 1995): 44.

22 Michael K. Foster, "Another Look at the Function of Wampum in Iroquois-White Councils," in *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League*, ed. Francis Jennings et al. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1985), 104.

23 U. Vincent Wilcox, "The Manufacture and Use of Wampum in the Northeast," in *The Second Coastal Archaeology Reader: 1900 to the Present*, ed. James E. Truex (Lexington, Mass.: Ginn Custom, 1982), 297, my emphasis.

24 See, for example, Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, 77.

25 The few literary scholars who have engaged treaties as literature note consistently that the protocol of Iroquois-European councils was an indigenous form with modifications rooted in intercultural interactions. In 1928, Lawrence Wroth argued that treaties represented a "neglected literary type" worthy of attention by literary scholars ("The Indian Treaty as Literature," *Yale Review*, n.s., 18 [July 1928]: 766). Ten years later, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania reissued the treaties printed by Benjamin Franklin; see "Introduction," in *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin 1736 to 1762, with an Introduction by Carl Van Doren* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1938). A. M. Drummond and Richard Moody later argued that Indian treaties represent "the first indigenous American dramatic expression" ("Indian Treaties: The First American Dramas," *Quarterly Journal of Speech 39* [February 1953]: 15–24). More recently, Chadwick Allen has traced the significance of treaty discourse in the United States for Native American writers and in New Zealand for Maori writers ("Postcolonial Theory and the Discourse of Treaties," *American Quarterly* 52 [March 2000]: 59–89).

26 In 1722, the Tuscarora joined the Confederacy, now known as the Six Nations. Scholars date the founding of the league to sometime between 1100 and 1600. For a range of approaches to dating the founding of the League, see Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*; Mann, "The Fire at Onandaga"; and Paul A. W. Wallace, *White Roots of Peace* (Saranac Lake, N.Y.: Chauncy, 1986). For the Condolence Ceremony and the story of the Peacemaker, see *The Iroquois Book of Rites*, ed. Horacio Hale (1883; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1969); Arthur C. Parker, *The Constitution of the Five Nations*, volume 3 of *Parker on the Iroquois*, ed. William N. Fenton (Syra-

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cuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1968); J. N. B. Hewitt, "The Requickening Address of the Iroquois Condolence Council," ed. William N. Fenton, *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences* 34 (March 1944): 65–85. For the full text and a discussion of the complicated ways the story has circulated and been codified, see *Literature of the American Indian*, comp. by Thomas E. Sanders and Walter W. Peek (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Glencoe, 1973).

27 This figure is not Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Hiawatha, a fictional character that conflated a number of sources and narratives, native and European, and bears no relationship to the historical figure I discuss.

28 Wallace, *White Roots of Peace*, 47.

29 Hewitt, "The Requickening Address," 66.

30 John Bierhorst, introduction to "Ritual of Condolence," in *Four Masterworks of American Indian Literature*, ed. John Bierhorst (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1974), 112.

31 My description of the ceremony is indebted to the collaboration in 1944 between Chief John Arthur Gibson, a principal speaker for the Onandaga at their ceremonies, and J. N. B. Hewitt, a Tuscarora educated as a historian who served as an ethnologist with the Bureau of American Ethnology. Gibson dictated in Onandaga to Hewitt, who recorded it alphabetically and translated it into English early in the century; see Hewitt, "The Requickening Address."

32 See Foster, "Another Look," 104–6.

33 Williams, *Linking Arms Together*, 74.

34 See Williams, *Linking Arms Together*, 53.

35 Mary Druke, "Iroquois Treaties: Common Forms, Varying Interpretations," in *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*, ed. Jennings et al., 89.

36 See Williams, *Linking Arms Together*, 53, 83.

37 Because of the large number of beads required, the larger belts became more common with the mass production of beads during the postcontact era.

38 Foster recounts a number of similar instances. For example, Iroquois representatives protested military conscription in Ottowa during World War I and later appeared in Geneva in 1923 to 1924 to argue before the League of Nations. In 1981, a ballot was read before the Canadian governor, and as late as 1988, according to Williams, an Iroquois diplomat presented a wampum belt at the United Nations (*Linking Arms Together*, 4). See also Foster, "Another Look," 112; and Howard McLellan, "Indian Magna Carta Writ in Wampum Belts," in *Akwesasne Notes, New Series* (fall 1995): 64–65.

39 See William M. Beauchamp, "Wampum and Shell Articles Used by the New York Indians," *Bulletin of the New York State Museum* 8 (February 1901): 388–89.

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40 Jack Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 17; cited in Murray, *Forked Tongues*, 25.
41 Murray, *Forked Tongues*, 25.
42 See Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990). Carruthers argues that medieval texts make no distinction between mnemonics and writing; rather, medieval writers thought of writing on paper as equivalent to writing on the mind.
43 "Journal of the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, November 1764–June 1765," unpublished manuscript, 38; in Kirkland Papers, Burke Library, Hamilton College; Clinton, New York; quoted in Druke, "Iroquois Treaties," 91.
44 Canassatego, 26 June 1744, Town of Lancaster, quoted in Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations*, 1:141, my emphasis.
45 Jehlen, "Papers of Empire," 44.

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