
History and Hermeneutics

"Do not send me back to those beasts who do not know God": The Religious and Cultural Transformation of an Innu Child in Seventeenth-Century France

Emma Anderson
Harvard University

experiences as an eleven-year-old taken to France by the Recollet fathers, where he underwent five years of theological indoctrination, which radically transformed his sense of personal identity and cultural affiliation. Returned against his will to act as a missionary to his people, Pastedechouan was caught between the religious agenda of the Recollets and the economic aspirations of the Innu. The second part of the series, appearing in 2005, will explore Pastedechouan's failed attempts at cultural reintegration, his apostasy, and his early death of starvation and exposure, precipitated by his double rejection by the Innu, and the European missionaries who had so effectively engineered his religious and cultural alienation.

It was a scene of barely contained chaos. Hundreds of people thronged the church, some even climbing up to the altar. Outside, the crowd was so tightly packed, straining to see, that it was impossible to move. On this April evening in 1621, at the cathedral church of St. Maurice, in Angers, France, this unruly crowd had gathered to witness a baptism. Most hoped at least to catch a glimpse of the young "*cathécumène margajat*," (Uzureau, 1922, p. 392) an eleven-year-old aboriginal boy from the icy wastes of

distant Canada. Ecclesiastics, nobles, and laypeople alike jammed the pews, aisles, and choir galleries, and, jostling, stared as the child, accompanied by a coterie of clerical officials, his noble godparents, and an entourage of servants, preceded through the cloisters and down the central aisle of the nave. Flowers and incense scented the dim, sweltering interior of the church, and candlelight from the many white tapers winked on the rich, ornately inlaid cross held aloft in advance of the grand procession, and on the numerous silver vessels of holy oil borne by the score of pages. The entourage emerged from the stifling building into the chilly late-spring evening, where the Prince and Princess of Guémenée, on the steps of the cathedral, effected their godson's civic rebirth by bestowing upon him their own names: "Pierre-Anthoyne, because the Prince was called Pierre and madam the Princess, Anthoynette..." (ibid, my translation). After the party reentered the crowded church, the young boy was stripped, anointed with holy oil, and baptized. Redressed all in white, and given a lit white taper to hold, Pierre-Anthoyne Pastedechouan was adorned with a small, richly bejeweled diadem, and taken "ceremoniously to the choir and the nave to show him to the people who wanted to see him." Finally, to appease those who still had not had their curiosity sufficiently satiated, "they lifted him up into the pulpit, where he was for a long time with the crown on his head and a lit candle in his hand, where he appeared completely relaxed" (ibid, p. 392-293, my translation).

St. Maurice's cathedral that late April evening was the site of contested meanings: the many players in the unfolding drama had sharply contrasting, often conflicting perceptions of the purpose and significance of the event and of the status and mission of its principal actor, the young Innu boy, Pastedechouan. For his hosts, the missionary Recollets and their noble benefactors, Pastedechouan's civic and religious transformation represented in miniature, so to speak, their ambitious aspirations for the 'civilization' and conversion of an entire continent. For the craning, spectacle-seeking crowd, the ritual was merely a religious variation upon a familiar secular genre, the exhibition of a foreign 'savage.' For the absent Innu, whom Pastedechouan represented, the young boy's presence in France was in the service of economic and political, rather than religious

objectives. For Pastedechouan himself, the ceremony both epitomized and initiated an inexorable process which would radically transform his own sense of his cultural and religious identity and affiliation. Caught between the conflicting agendas of the Pygmalion Recollets, who endeavored to remake him into their own post-Tridentine image, and the Innu, who sought a means of better understanding the economic and social realities of his host culture, Pastedechouan's experiences of religious indoctrination and cultural alienation provide a unique perspective on the nature of initial French-aboriginal religious contact in early modern Canada.

For over a hundred years before Pastedechouan's baptism, European explorers had brought aboriginal peoples from both North and South America to serve as living proof of their successful voyages; to sell as slaves; to give as human gifts to their patrons; or to display as animate artifacts to a public who indiscriminately devoured tales of real and imagined voyages to distant and exotic lands. Whether they were spectacular, large-scale displays of entire aboriginal groups, such as the elaborate Brazilian scene evoked to celebrate the entry of Henry II into Rouen in 1550, or the amateurish exhibition of a smaller numbers of captives, such as that of kidnapped Inuit woman and her child in the Netherlands in 1566, the sixteenth-century presentation of these living "curiosities" invariably emphasized their strangeness, their spectacular 'otherness' (Dickason, 1997, p. 205-229, Feest, 1999, p. 61-64, 130-131).

Most sixteenth-century aboriginal captives taken to Europe died there: some of wounds inflicted during their capture, some of European diseases, to which they had no immunity, some from rough treatment, or the unfamiliar diet, some simply from the trauma of being violently plucked from their own society and thrust into one in which their freedom of movement and ability to communicate were severely impaired. Though repatriation of living aboriginals did occur, it was relatively rare (Dickason, 1997, p. 206-209, Feest, 1999, p. 61-140).

At the beginning of the seventeenth-century, however, means and

motives for bringing aboriginal peoples to Europe began to change, as the volitional exchange of ambassadors gradually came to rival the chaos and fracture of forced kidnappings. Particularly for French traders in Northeastern North America, a lack of permanent European settlements and a fiercely competitive intra-European trade situation necessitated the establishment of mutually acceptable relationships with their aboriginal trading partners, as they could ill-afford to alienate their powerful hosts with the kidnappings that had been a favorite technique of their countryman, Jacques Cartier, some seventy years earlier (Trigger, 1976, Vol. I, p. 182-188, Dickason, 1997, p. 165-171, 210-211, Trigger and Washburn, 1996, p. 382-387). Typical of this changing climate of increasing mutuality was the visit to France, some eighteen years before Pastedechouan's journey, of a contingent of his own people: the Innu. In 1602 two young Innu from Tadoussac, sponsored by the St. Malo-based fur merchant François Gragé Du Pont, journeyed to France and were presented at the court of Henri IV. Once repatriated, they were able to report the king's personal promise to help them in their ongoing military campaign against their foremost aboriginal enemy, the Mohawk (Trigger and Washburn, 1996, p. 337-338, Trigger, 1976, Vol. I, p. 232, Dickason, 1997, p. 212). By bringing the young trade ambassadors to France, Du Pont sought an advantage over his trading rivals by forging personal ties with his aboriginal guests. The Innu, for their part, appear to have welcomed their access to the pinnacle of French power in order to personally verify French intentions and capabilities, and to investigate for themselves the social, political, and economic lives of their trading partners on their home soil.

While a number of aboriginal people were baptized in Europe prior to the 1620's, neither the sixteenth-century coerced capture and display of New World peoples, nor early seventeenth-century voluntary exchanges were in the service of religious objectives, as the former focused on display and spectacle, and the latter, on trade. While religious officials frequently accompanied the whalers, explorers, or fisherman who haunted the coasts of Northeastern North America in the summer months, they saw their religious duties as being confined to the spiritual care of their European shipmates, rather than extending to the edification of New

World "savages." Sixteenth-century broadsheets advertising the exhibition of captured aboriginals contrasted the God-fearing piety of the European audience and the appalling, benighted savagery of the barbarian captives: "Let us thank God the Almighty for his blessings, that he has enlightened us with his word, so that we are not such completely wild people and man-eaters as are in this district, that this woman was captured and brought out, since she knows nothing at all of the true God, but lives almost more wickedly than the beasts..." (Feest, 1999, p. 131). Religion, then, was simply another marker of fascinating, but inexorable difference.

The eyewitness description of Pastedechouan's baptismal ceremony just reviewed reveals both continuity and change in the way in which Amerindians were perceived in France, and the European motivations for affecting their presence. There is a discernible tension between the baptism's official purpose: to render the exotic, dangerous 'other' familiar and comprehensible, and the obvious interest of the crowd in just these suppressed elements: thus, Pastedechouan's baptismal ceremony was a striking blend of publicity stunt, religious rite, and freak show. For the Recollets who had brought the young boy to France, and their noble benefactors who underwrote his education, this ceremony remade Pastedechouan into their own European image, both civically and religiously, and celebrated their power in being able to effect these momentous changes. For them, Pastedechouan's sacramental transformation was the prototype of a much more ambitious project: the systematic religious reconfiguration of aboriginal culture and the establishment of an ethnically diverse, but religiously uniform colonial society in distant Canada. For the spectators, however, conditioned to expect exotic display, Pastedechouan was intriguing because of, rather than in spite of, his differences from them. Jean Louvet, the French layman who so carefully describes the event, appears to have seen Pastedechouan's 'otherness' as essentially unaltered by the ceremony, given his repeated description of him as a "*cathécumène margajat*," a "second class" or "marginal" catechumen, and his fascination with his exotic appearance: "he was very black, his nose was wide, and he had a big mouth" (Uzureau, 1922, p. 393, my translation). While retaining elements of spectacular

exhibitionism, and, consequently, its wide popular appeal, Pastedechouan's public display represented an essentially new focus, in early seventeenth-century France, on the extraction, isolation, and radical religious transformation of young aboriginal children. While earlier displays of captured Amerindians had indulged their audiences' craving for the fantastic by, often artificially, emphasizing aboriginal "otherness," this religious ceremony proposed something quite novel: that "one of them" could be transformed into "one of us."

The Innu (called by their French allies "Montagnais," or people of the mountains), a migratory hunting people who controlled the trading port of Tadoussac, at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Saguenay rivers, were at the zenith of their economic and political power in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Tadoussac, where Pastedechouan was likely born in 1607 or 1608, had long been the arena of intense intra-aboriginal trade, and as early as the 1550s it became the preeminent site of Amerindian-European exchange. Europeans who had originally made the long Atlantic passage to cull whales, or to reap the teeming fishing grounds off the east coast of Newfoundland had gradually developed a rudimentary, but profitable fur trade with the aboriginal peoples in coastal areas, and along the great artery leading into the heart of the continent. The Innu, by virtue of their excellent port and easy access to the northern expanses along the Saguenay River, quickly established themselves as middlemen between interior aboriginal groups and the motley crew of European traders with whom they had increasingly frequent commerce (Trigger, 1976, Vol. I, p. 209-214, Trudel, 1973, p. 140-141, Trigger and Washburn, 1996, p. 342, 352-355, Beaulieu, 1990, p. 40, Dickason, 1997, p. 178).

Despite the fact that Pastedechouan's people had been engaged in trade with European groups for over sixty years at the time of his birth, their exposure to Christianity had been limited to the occasional and contrary urgings of the merchants and fisherman, Protestant and Catholic,

with whom they were in intermittent contact. They likely listened with polite incomprehension to Champlain's diatribes on Catholic theology, and doubtless overheard the melodies of Huguenot psalms as the more pious Protestant traders gathered for informal worship on Sundays. However, the Innu's position as middlemen who traded in furs which they themselves did not trap; the intermittent and seasonal nature of their commerce with Europeans, and the fact that this contact was devoid of aggressive religious prosthylizing meant that Innu cosmological orientation and social practices continued largely unchallenged and unchanged well into the seventeenth century.

The Innu of early modern Canada lived in a "personalistic" universe in which social and religious imperatives were mutually reinforcing. Like many other aboriginal groups, the Innu tended to draw distinctions between "us" and "them" in ways which sharply contrasted with those of the Europeans they encountered. For the Innu, "us" included both human and non-human actors. Inanimate objects and animals were conceived of as sharing in what Europeans would deem the exclusively human attributes of consciousness, agency, and will: their needs and desires must be discerned and respected, so that, in turn, they would dispose themselves favorably to human beings (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 216, Thwaites, 1898, Vol. VI, p. 175-177, Beaulieu, 1990, p. 32-33, Morrison, 1990, p. 418-419, Morrison, 2002, p. 1-39). The chief aim of Innu social interactions and religious rituals was the establishment and maintenance of harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships among co-dependent human and non-human entities. Personal, social, and environmental ills were seen, most fundamentally, as indicating a disturbance in primordial relationships that needed immediate ritual remediation. Misfortunes such as illness, seen as resulting from the invalid's experience of the socially fracturing emotions of anger, jealousy, or sadness required communal cooperation to diagnose and ameliorate. Murder, as a wound in the social body, also required collective ritual remediation through the assuagement of grief with gifts. A dearth of game was seen as indicating the displeasure of other-than-human entities with relational failures: chiefly the disrespectful treatment of animal remains (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 220,

Thwaites, 1898, Vol. VI, p. 211). Much of Innu religious practice, then, involved the constant ritual maintenance of community cohesion and the discernment and amelioration of relational problems which could manifest themselves in a variety of different ways.

The arrival of the first professional missionaries at Tadoussac in 1615 did not undermine the continuing authority of these interconnected social and religious assumptions and behaviors. Though the Franciscan Recollet order, hoping to emulate the success of their brethren in Mexico and South America, cherished grand dreams of the conversion of northeastern North America, a number of factors prevented their fulfillment. The tiny size of the Recollet contingent, their lack of understanding of aboriginal religious and social realities, chronic underfunding, and, most importantly, their fundamental opposition to what had come to be shared Euro-aboriginal assumptions about how interactions between the two cultures should be conducted would greatly impede their effectiveness.

Upon their arrival, the tiny cadre of four Recollets quickly dispersed themselves along the St. Lawrence River valley, seeking first-hand experience of aboriginal life that would help them to determine the best means of effecting the salvation of its diverse inhabitants. They quickly noticed a disturbing pattern: despite their careful religious instruction, many aboriginal adults upon whom they conferred the sacrament of baptism: "immediately relapsed into their ordinary indifference for the things of salvation...profaning the sacrament" (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 142). The Recollets saw such "apostasy" as a horrifying sin which threatened not simply the salvation of its perpetrators, but also that of the priest who had so unwisely administered baptism to its subsequent profaner.

The Recollets' perception that baptized converts' "regression" to "barbaric" ways had "exposed" the sacrament demonstrates the contrasting religious orientation of these early modern missionaries and their aboriginal targets. The Recollets conceived of conversion to Christianity as one-way, exclusivistic decision which, by its very definition, implied a radical reordering of converts' interior sensibilities and their utter repudiation of traditional religious and social norms. The conversion of

influential individuals, it was felt, would eventually lead to a wholesale cultural shift in which Catholic Christianity would become the singular touchstone of aboriginal life, triumphing over its rivals: traditional beliefs, and the "heretical" errors of Protestants to which some Amerindians had intermittently been exposed.

The exclusivism of Recollet expectations accorded ill both with established Innu-European relational patterns, which had been characterized by mutual accommodation, and with their essentially relativistic stance towards unfamiliar religious claims. It is likely that the Innu initially apprehended these new French interlopers, with their unusual tonsured hair, gray gowns, and sandals as economic agents with whom mutually beneficial relations should be established. Where the specifically religious nature of Recollet claims was discerned, its demands were blunted by Innu relativism, which had both incorporative and defensive capabilities. Many Innu appear to have seen Christianity as offering a new repertoire of rituals, images, and ideas that, like the European trade goods with which they were more familiar, might provide novel means of addressing traditional goals. In its defensive mode, Innu relativism overtly challenged Recollet exclusivism by suggesting that missionary descriptions of religious reality reflected only French experience, and hence, its didactic prescriptions were, by definition, merely societal, rather than universal in their scope.

Having identified aboriginal tendencies toward "apostasy" as their chief obstacle, the Recollets devised a three-pronged missionization strategy to combat it. This new policy, which called for the "sedentification" and "Francization" (Jaenen, 1986, p. 45-47) of aboriginal groups and the religious homogenization of the European population, and crafted an evangelization strategy targeting children, rather than adults, would greatly influence many aspects of European-aboriginal interactions for centuries to come.

The Recollets' first experiences among the various aboriginal groups of the St. Lawrence only confirmed their already extant suspicions that "civilization" of aboriginal peoples must precede their Christianization. Like Champlain, at whose request they came, the

Recollets sought to reinvent Canada: transforming it from a contentious site of ill-controlled European trade and religious rivalries, to an economically diverse, agriculture settlement of Catholic Frenchmen and assimilated, sedentary aboriginals (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 110-112, Trigger, 1976, Vol. I, p. 377, 380-381). Migratory, hunting-gathering groups such as the Innu, they felt, must be "made into men" before they could be "made into Christians:" they must be persuaded to settle and emulate the agricultural techniques of what was then a theoretical agrarian French population (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. 1, p. 110).

As the conversion process was seen by the Recollets as a form of socio-religious mentoring, they wanted to bolster the presence of those whose influence they felt to be benign, while excising those whose example could only be pernicious. Recollets claimed that Huguenot merchants continuously undermined missionary attempts to catechize the Innu population, simply by their presence, which gave lie to the missionaries' presentation of a universal religion, and an indivisible Christendom, as well as by their active interference (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 111, 134-135, Sagard, 1866, Vol. 2, p. 503). By arguing for the exclusion of Huguenots from New France, the Recollets were fighting the softening of royal policy in France, exemplified in the 1598 Edict of Nantes, on the shores of the New World.

It is immediately apparent that this Recollet vision of an exclusively Catholic trade monopoly dedicated to the advancement of French-Amerindian colonial settlement ran contrary to both the religiously grounded and environmentally adaptive Innu way of life, and their desire to enhance, rather than undermine European competition for their goods.

Along with what was then a vain plea to promote Catholic settlement, sedentify aboriginal groups, and exclude Protestants from trade, Recollets in 1616 advocated the aggressive targeting of children, rather than their parents, for religious re-education. Disturbed by their encounters with aboriginal adults who embraced and transformed Christianity to meet their needs, while retaining their own cultural and religious framework, the Recollets decided to limit baptism only to those they saw as being within their absolute control. In concert with

theologians at the University of Paris and the Sorbonne, whom they consulted "on the difficulty they felt in administering the Sacrament of Baptism to the Indians." (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 141), the Recollets decided to restrict it to adults on the brink of death, and "those who, by long practice and experience, seemed touched, instructed, and detached from their savage ways, or to those habituated among our Frenchmen, brought up in our way of living, and humanized after being well instructed..." (ibid, p. 143). Though in theory these "habituated" aboriginals could be adults, in practice missionary efforts quickly came to focus upon the isolation and instruction of young boys, whom, it was hoped, having absorbed the French language, culture, and religion, would then act as influential missionaries to their own people.

The new Recollet program of limiting baptism to moribund adults and culturally alienated children, while stemming aboriginal "apostasy," did so at a heavy cost, as such a policy swelled the ranks of the Church triumphant at the expense of the Church militant. Converts who died shortly after the administration of the sacrament were of no help in persuading their fellows to embrace the church: indeed, the practice of death-bed baptism only strengthened aboriginal suspicions of a causal link between the sacrament and the individual's demise, which invariably followed. Moreover, in selecting children as the preferred recipients of missionary attention, the Recollets were investing all their spiritual capital upon the least influential members of aboriginal society. Despite its serious disadvantages, however, these early Recollet policies would prove to be an influential model for successive missionaries in the seventeenth century and beyond. In particular, the new Recollet strategy of excising children from their native milieu, and indoctrinating them into a novel set of religious and social practices far from home was the seventeenth-century progenitor of the modern aboriginal residential school (Miller, 1996, p. 39-40).

Pastedechouan probably came to the attention of Recollet authorities as a possible candidate for their new program of child-focused

evangelization several years before he actually departed from France. In keeping with their new focus on the younger generation, Recollet father Joseph Le Caron established, in late 1617, a modest day-school at Tadoussac, which focused on the provision of religious instruction and the inculcation of French literacy in young aboriginal children, in order to “attract the Indians and render them sociable with us, to accustom them to our ways of living.” (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 135). Pastedechouan, then aged nine or ten, was likely one of his students, learning, with laborious care, to read and to copy out the French alphabet. Examples of aboriginal penmanship, like the young children who produced them, were triumphantly sent to possible donors in France to serve as evidence of Recollet progress in impressing their young charges with something of the Gallic stamp.

Such rudimentary, under-funded day-schools were already, in 1618, felt to be inadequate to the task of forming young “shock troops” bent on the religious reformation of aboriginal society along Catholic lines. Thus, the Recollets sought to found a fully endowed aboriginal seminary at Quebec, which would introduce its young boarders to the mysteries of Christianity, and serve as the seedbed for a native clergy (*ibid*, p. 176). A Canadian boarding seminary would effectively shelter young boys from the insalubrious influences of their unconverted families, and of Protestant traders, thus facilitating their complete cultural and religious transformation.

Pastedechouan’s recruitment and eventual journey to France was intimately linked with the foundation of the seminary, as the timing of his 1620 trip came at the height of an intense Recollet fund-raising initiative for the new project. Indeed, young Pastedechouan appears to have been viewed as something of an economic agent both by the Recollets who procured him, and by the Innu who surrendered him. In writing to the seminary’s premiere donor, Archbishop Charles Des Boves in 1620, Recollet Denis Jamet states that he is sending him Pastedechouan as something of a human progress report, a prototype of the product which his investment capital is making possible (Sagard, 1866, Vol. I, p. 72, Jouve, 1915, p. 92). The Recollets likely hoped that Pastedechouan’s

presence in France, by attracting both the curious and the devout, would attract financial support for the seminary, and political support for the wider vision of Canada which informed it.

Despite initial donations which probably allowed Pastedechouan, before his departure, to witness the laying of the future seminary's cornerstone, the scarcity of funds which had dogged the Recollet mission since its inception would eventually kill this young initiative in its infancy. Originally envisioned as a separate building, the Quebec "seminary" became after the 1623 death of Des Boves merely a "half-way house, an antechamber, so to speak" (Trudel, 1973, p. 135) for young aboriginal boys, the majority of whom, like Pastedechouan, were destined for France. Given the chronic lack of funding, and the small number of aboriginal children offered for education, the option of sending students to France, which was originally a means to an end, gradually came to be an acceptable end in itself. Like the seminary which it effectively replaced, expatriation of children performed the same functions of isolating the child from alternative religious influences, and engendering in him a profound identification with Catholic Christianity.

Pastedechouan was also seen as something of an economic agent by the Innu. It is a virtual certainty, given the economic, political, and military inter-dependence of the Innu and French in 1620 Canada, that his departure was volitional rather than forced. Though Pastedechouan himself may not have been consulted about his fate, he doubtless boarded the French ship only with the express permission of his family and larger society. Moreover, his journey would have "made sense," in Innu terms, to those who had authorized it.

The Innu decision to allow Pastedechouan to be taken to France would have been informed by several precedents in their previous experiences with both aboriginal and European allies. The intra-aboriginal exchange of young children had long been customary in cementing economic and military alliances. Adapting this custom in their commerce with Europeans, several aboriginal groups had welcomed young "*coureur-des-bois*" for linguistic and cultural instruction, sometimes while sending their own young representatives to France (Trigger, 1976, Vol. I, p. 183,

233, 261-264). The presentation of a child could also help to smooth over severely strained relations. In 1618, two years before Pastedechouan's journey to France, the Recollets were given two young Innu boys, to serve as human reparations for the murder of French traders by disgruntled Innu (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 127, Sagard, 1886, p. 56-57). While all of these precedents would likely have influenced how the Innu perceived Pastedechouan's presentation to the French, and his journey overseas, the evidence suggests that they saw him primarily as a economic agent, much like the 1602 Innu contingent. During Pastedechouan's childhood, Innu trading supremacy was gradually being eroded by French movement westward along the St. Lawrence, and their trading with other aboriginal groups (Trigger, 1976, Vol. I, p. 337, 342, Trudel, 1973, p. 99, Beaulieu, 1990, p. 55-56). By placing "one of us" in the heartland of their sometimes inscrutable French ally, the Innu may have hoped to learn firsthand information about French economic and military capabilities with the aim of regaining something of their former power.

The Innu decision to release Pastedechouan should not be taken as indicating their ratification of the Recollet religious program, or of the profound spiritual transformation that they hoped to affect in their young charge. The Recollets themselves realized that Innu provision of young children for instruction was motivated by an interest in maintaining good relations, rather than indicating their attraction to, or acceptance of the Recollets' religious message: "they offer us their children and wish them baptized, but all this without the least sentiment of religion." (Le Clercq, 1881, p. 142). Thus, though both the Recollets and the Innu sought to utilize Pastedechouan's presence in France to their own economic advantage, Recollet success in their primary purpose, the transformation of Pastedechouan's religious mentality and sense of cultural identity, would prove to be a shocking, unprecedented, and unwelcome surprise to the Innu who had sent him as an economic agent. Upon Pastedechouan's return they immediately recognized that the Recollets had been successful in undermining the very sense of Innu identity and agency which would have made his mission a success in their terms. After five years abroad, Pastedechouan was no longer recognizable as "one of us."

The Recollets, in their five-year retraining of Pastedechouan, from 1620-1625, sought to facilitate the complete cultural, religious, and linguistic transformation of their student. As dramatically expressed in the baptismal service of which he was, perhaps, the reluctant star, the Recollets sought to effect a dramatic transfigurement from "savage" to Frenchman, and pagan to Christian, from "one of them" to "one of us." His new civic identity was marked by his effective re-birth into a noble French family, that of the pious Prince of Guémenée, who enthusiastically taught his godson to "know and love God and to say his paternoster in French and in Latin" (Uzureau, 1922, p. 391) and his reception of a new name fashioned from those of his godparents.

The assiduousness with which the Recollets pursued Pastedechouan's transformation into a Frenchman was representative of developing French policy toward the tiny, but emerging colony on the other side of the Atlantic. One of the chief contemporary objections to the establishment of a large French presence in North America was that such an enterprise would deplete the mother country of its population, fatally weakening its economic and military strength. Those who, like Champlain and the Recollets, favored settlement, argued that the European contingent need not be large, provided that the aboriginal peoples with whom the French had established strong military, economic, and political ties could be taught their civic, as well as religious responsibilities. From the late 1620s on, baptism automatically conferred upon Amerindians the same rights of French citizenship as those enjoyed by French settlers (Trigger, 1976, Vol. II, p. 456). The success of Pastedechouan's transformation, then, would have been evaluated in more than simply religious terms by the society in which he was embedded, as he represented, in microcosm, a vision of the civic, as well as religious future of New France.

Recollet aspirations for the transformation of Pastedechouan's religious life are also well illustrated by the elaborate baptismal ceremony in which he participated, with its intensely visual language of stripping and

reclotting, and the emergence from darkness into light. By 1620, when Pastedechouan departed for France, the Recollets, having accrued five years of mission experience, had reconsidered their initial impression that, as the Innu lacked the familiar accoutrements of religion, they were "godless." Rather, as their grand plans to effect a total cultural and religious reorganization of native society stalled, Recollets were forced to acknowledge the extent to which everyday Innu life was permeated with the sacred. The act of symbolically divesting Pastedechouan of his garments signaled Recollet determination to entirely divest him of his native religious conceptualizations, and undermine the devastatingly effective Innu strategy of religious relativism. Perhaps chief among the goals of the Recollets who trained Pastedechouan and his fellow aboriginal children in France was the desire to convey to them that conversion, and that baptism which ratified it, and publicly accepted them into the body of the Church was an exclusivistic, unalterable, and one-way choice which necessarily entailed the renunciation of most aspects of their previous way of life. To that end, the Recollets isolated their young neophytes not only from their families on the other side of the Atlantic, but also from their young countrymen in France (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 235). The Recollet policy of widely dispersing visiting aboriginal children, while maximizing the fundraising opportunities that the presence of such children would afford, also ensured that newly arrived boys could not "re-infect" their Christianized brethren with the "contagion" of traditional beliefs. On one level, the white candle given to Pastedechouan to hold during his exhibition in the St. Maurice pulpit was a pragmatic response to the vocal desire of the jostling crowd for a better look. But it also signaled his emergence from the darkness of "superstition" and "ignorance" into the Gospel light of Christ. The Recollets did their assiduous best, for the remainder of Pastedechouan's tenure in France, to make this ritual shorthand a living reality.

Only in the linguistic arena was Pastedechouan's transformation deliberately left incomplete. To facilitate his ability to convert his fellow Innu following the completion of his studies, Pastedechouan's thorough instruction in French and Latin (Le Clercq, 1881, p. 235) alternated with opportunities for him to speak his native Innu. While Recollet

missionization policy called for the gradual Francization of the aboriginal population, the Recollets realized that, in the intervening years, their own ability to communicate the Gospel in aboriginal languages would be critical. Accordingly, Pastedechouan, while yet a student of European languages, became the aboriginal language teacher of lay brother Gabriel Sagard. When Sagard departed for Canada in the spring of 1623, two years before Pastedechouan's own return journey, he took with him a "small dictionary, composed and written in the clear hand of Pierre-Anthoine, our Canadian" (Sagard, 1866, p. 334, my translation).

The Recollet decision to allow Pastedechouan to hold onto a modicum of his former cultural identity, in the form of his mother tongue, did not endanger their larger project of effecting his total religious transformation. So complete was Pastedechouan's identification with the French Catholic identity modeled for him by the Recollets that, in the latter years of his sojourn, he apparently claimed to have forgotten the Innu language (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 235, Sagard, 1866, Vol. 3, p. 785, 936, Thwaites, 1898, Vol. V, p. 109, Du Creux, 1951, p. 140). It is unlikely that such a claim was factually accurate, given both that Innu was Pastedechouan's first language, and that, until Sagard's 1623 departure, he had ample opportunities to speak it. The fact that Pastedechouan repeatedly made such statements seems to indicate, not the true loss of linguistic competency, but his repudiation, even denial of his former linguistic, cultural, and religious identity.

Pastedechouan's effective boasting of the degree of his interior transformation, however, had unexpected results, precipitating events which he seems to have experienced as a devastating crisis in his young life. His individual religious transformation, while on one level an end in itself, had always been envisioned by his Recollet mentors as the necessary means to a greater end: the conversion of his native society. His claim of disintegrating linguistic abilities appears to have prompted the Recollets to reconsider his continued presence in France. By triggering Recollet concerns that by lingering, he might become unfitted for the remainder of his religious task; Pastedechouan had unwittingly provoked the Recollets to demand his repatriation.

Pastedechouan appears to have experienced the Recollet request that he return to Canada as deeply traumatic. His response was one of profound and enduring reluctance: he did everything he could to challenge, evade, and delay his repatriation. In spite of his resistance, Pastedechouan, in the spring of 1625, almost exactly four years after his magnificent baptismal ceremony, was shepherded aboard a ship bound for Canada. The harrowing three month journey apparently did not quicken his interest in seeing his family, or re-entering his native milieu. Rather than rejoining his family at Tadoussac, the initial port of entry, Pastedechouan apparently requested that he be permitted to winter with the Recollets in their Quebec convent. Described during this period as “a naturalized Frenchman, and very devout,” Pastedechouan studiously “avoided intercourse with the few Indians who came” (Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 273).

Pressed once again in the spring by Joseph Le Caron, the Recollet Superior, to return to Tadoussac to begin his missionary endeavors, Pastedechouan apparently begged him, tears in his eyes, to dispense him from this, saying: ‘My Father, how could your Reverence want to send me back to the beasts who do not know God?’ But the Fathers said to him that it was so they would know God and so that he would relearn his mother tongue to help in saving his family and all his nation, after which he obeyed and prepared himself to go... (Sagard, 1866, Vol. p. 785-786, my translation, see also Le Clercq, 1881, Vol. I, p. 273).

Pastedechouan’s reported fear of return, first to Canada and then to his family at Tadoussac, can be seen as a response to the Recollets’ totalistic missionary model, which postulated that children’s removal from their ‘contaminated’ culture was the best way they could become and remain Christians. Though chilling in their profound cultural alienation, Pastedechouan’s reported words and the fears they so eloquently express were eminently logical given the central premise of this model: that one’s individual identity is largely predicated on the nature of one’s surrounding environment. Having labored for five years to transform himself culturally, linguistically, and religiously from an Innu to a Frenchman, Pastedechouan may have been concerned that this fragile new identity would be lost once its enabling environment was removed. His characterization of his own

family as "beasts who know not God" illustrates the way in which he had been taught to think of French and Innu identity in deeply antithetical terms. In their insistence that true Christianity could best be nurtured in a totalistic environment, the Recollets appear to have infected Pastedechouan with their own fears regarding purity, pollution, and contamination. This sense of danger would only have been intensified by the elaborate rules of conduct given him by the Recollets to ensure his salvation was not threatened by contact with the unconverted in what they saw as a hostile, religiously heterogeneous environment (Le Clercq, 1881, p. 274). The exclusivist model of conversion and cultural conformation Pastedechouan learned in France demonstrably influenced how he thought about religion, culture, and identity throughout his life, and decisively lessened his ability to flexibly combine European and native elements in any religiously meaningful or psychologically helpful way, as was eventually done by other members his family.

Pastedechouan's nascent career as a missionary to his own people appears to have been a total failure. Though Recollet writers somewhat vaguely claim that Pastedechouan, having returned to Tadoussac, "rendered great service to the mission under the guidance and direction of our Fathers" (ibid), he appears to have taken only a modest and informal leadership role among the young Innu boys whom the Recollets already had under instruction, and with whom he may have lived. While his relationship with the Recollets and other French remained both close and cordial, outside that charmed circle, where he was regarded as something of a celebrity, his reception was markedly cooler. The discernible changes in his appearance, behavior, and identity; his apparent unwillingness or inability to resume a traditional Innu lifestyle; and his involvement in the controversial preparation of young neophytes for baptism caused considerable confusion and disquiet among the Innu. Pastedechouan's inability to provide his people with the economic and military information they were seeking, coupled with his difficulty retaining an independent

Innu perspective during his French sojourn provoked in sectors of his community intense feelings of disappointment, suspicion, and anger.

The negative Innu response to this transformed Pastedechouan is exemplified in the words of an Innu leader named Mahigan Aticq Ouche during a feast following the controversial baptism of another young Innu boy, Naneogauachit, more than a year after Pastedechouan's return to Tadoussac: "Pastedechouan," he said, "it is true that you are not very smart because you haven't told us what you learned in France. We sent you there in order for you to observe things for us and report them, but you have been here for more than a winter and you haven't told us anything. I don't know if it is because you are not smart enough, or because you are too shy, or because you don't care about what's in France, but when you talking with us about France you are too childish. You must be a man and speak with confidence and wisdom, telling us the things you have seen and learned, in order that we should know them too." (Sagard, Vol. II, p. 151, my translation)

Mahigan Aticq Ouche's words clearly reveal the depth of Innu dissatisfaction with the Recollet high-jacking of a more familiar pattern of Innu-European interaction: the trade delegation. He reiterates Innu motivations for consenting to Pastedechouan's journey, and expresses their desire to learn inside information about the capabilities and aspirations of their enigmatic French allies. While the most obvious accusation he forwards is that Pastedechouan has failed in his mission by his inability or unwillingness to disclose useful knowledge, under this surface critique lurks the yet more serious charge: that Pastedechouan's agency and development have been seriously undermined by his long tutelage by the Recollets. By describing Pastedechouan's behavior as "childish" and urging him to "be a man" Mahigan Aticq Ouche seems to be suggesting that his Recollet education has impeded him from assuming his rightful place as a mature man in Innu society. His speech to Pastedechouan challenges him to acknowledge the serious nature of his obligations to his own people, and deliver on them, but also to recognize and reverse the detrimental effects which his French sojourn has had upon his personal development and social acceptance. By thus appealing to Pastedechouan, Mahigan Aticq

Ouche was expressing the still extant hope of Innu leaders that this young man could then provide them with an independent, mature Innu evaluation of the French, based upon his own unprecedented exposure to their society, which would allow them to better evaluate the intentions and capabilities their sometime ally, upon whom they were increasingly economically and militarily dependent (Trigger, 1976, Vol. I, p. 562).

The reception accorded Pastedechouan illustrates the growing awareness of Innu in the 1620s that the Recollets' agenda differed in its fundamental goals from that of other Europeans they had encountered, and that the religious re-education of children offered few of the advantages of the earlier trading exchanges. It is important to note that Pastedechouan's challenger, Mahigan Aticq Ouche, and other community leaders, such as Choumin, who vociferously objected to the baptism of Naneogauachit, his son, were not "traditionalists" adamantly opposed to the presence or program of the French. Rather, these men were among the most "French-identified" Innu of the Tadoussac band. Both were deeply implicated in French efforts to control Innu politics from the outside, by influencing the fortunes of their favorites. Mahigan Aticq Ouche had only five years before had received Champlain's help in achieving a position of considerable power within the Innu community (Brown, 1966, p. 508-509, Trudel, 1973, p. 143). Choumin had also assiduously courted French connections, even naming one of his children "Pere Joseph" after Joseph Le Caron, the very missionary who performed the baptismal ritual to which he was so opposed (Sagard, 1866, Vol. I, p. 64, Jouve, 1915, p. 371, Brown, 1966, p. 222). Neither man, then, can be characterized as merely anti-French. Their objection to the Recollet conversion of young Innu boys appears to have been motivated by two main concerns: a dawning awareness that the mode of interaction being developed by the Recollets did nothing to advance Innu economic interests, and their perception that the missionaries' influence had pernicious effects upon the independence, agency, and maturity of those whom it touched.

Like the laypeople in the crowded cathedral of St. Maurice on the late spring evening of Pastedechouan's baptism, these pillars of Innu society appear to have been taken aback by the recasting, in religious terms, of

patterns of engagement and identification between Europeans and aboriginals which had become more familiar with the passage of each successive decade. Just as the French crowd at Pastedechouan's baptism, conditioned by their earlier experiences of encounter with aboriginal peoples, brought to the new religious setting a readiness to shamelessly gawk at one of "them," rather than to solemnly witness the incorporation of one of "us," so the Innu at Naneogauachit's baptismal feast expected Pastedechouan, as "one of us" to disclose critical information needed to deal with an increasingly intrusive and ambitious "them." Mahigan Aticq Ouche's expressions of frustration with what he perceived as Pastedechouan's secrecy regarding his experiences in France clearly demonstrate that the young boy's repeated protestations regarding the religious nature of his experiences were deeply disappointing to the Innu. Equally alarming was the apparent slippage in his sense of ethnic and religious identity. Far from gaining the insights of a trusted Innu agent, "one of us," their repeated interrogations gained them only the reiteration of French perspectives from a boy who now considered himself "one of them."

Works Cited

- Beaulieu, Alain. *Convertir le Fils de Cain: Jesuits et Amerindiens Nomades en Nouvelle France, 1632-1642*. Saint-Jean, PQ: Nuit Blanche, 1990.
- Brown, G. W., Trudel, M., and Vachon, A. *Canadian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. I. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1966.
- Dickason, Olive P. *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1997.
- Du Creux, Francois. *The History of Canada or New France*. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1951.

Feest, Christian F. *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*. Lincoln, N.B.: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Jaenen, Cornelius. "Education for Francization: The Case of New France in the Seventeenth Century," in *Indian Education in Canada: The Legacy*. University of British Columbia Press, 1986, p. 45-63.

Jouve, Odoric. *Les Franciscains et Le Canada, Vol. 1: L'Etablissement de la Foi*. Quebec: Couvent des SS. Stigmates, 1915.

Le Clercq, Christian. *First Establishment of the Faith in New France*. New York: John G. Shea, 1881.

Miller, J. R. *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.

Morrison, Kenneth. *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonkian-French Religious Encounter*. Albany: State University of New York, 2002.

_____. "Baptism and Alliance: the Symbolic Mediations of Religious Syncretism," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 37, 1990, p. 416-437.

Sagard, Gabriel. *Histoire du Canada* (4 vols.). Paris: Librairie Tross, 1866.

Trigger, Bruce G. *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (2 vols.) Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976.

Trigger, Bruce G. and Washburn, Wilcomb E., eds. *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*. Volume I. North America, Part I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Trudel, Marcel. *The Beginnings of New France, 1524-1663*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973.

Uzureau, F. "Baptême d'un Montagnais a la Cathédrale d'Angers, le 27 Avril 1621," *Le Canada Francais*, Vol. 4, 1922, p. 390-393.