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# Dę'ni:s nisa'sgao'dę?: Haudenosaunee Clans and the Reconstruction of Traditional Haudenosaunee Identity, Citizenship, and Nationhood

**THERESA MCCARTHY**

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Among the Haudenosaunee the clan system is an ancient tradition of matrilineal descent that has maintained the social, political, economic, and spiritual cohesion of the people for centuries. Following the American Revolution and the relocation of large numbers of Haudenosaunee people from our traditional homelands in what is now New York State, this system became disrupted. Much of the damage was enacted through nineteenth-century federal policies supporting the dispossession of our territories, which imposed definitions of *citizenship* and *leadership* on the nations or tribes. As a result, many Haudenosaunee gradually lost a sense of who they are as a distinct people with relationships and responsibilities to each other that transcend the Canadian/American border, as well as their currently bounded reserve/reservation communities. Although it is important to enumerate these consequences, it is also critical to recognize that disruptive colonial frameworks continue to reside in a context in which the Haudenosaunee paradigms that anchor cultural, political, and land-based relationships have never been successfully effaced. Illuminating this continuity through the lens of a community-based clan research and education initiative at Six Nations of Grand River in Ontario, this article presents a fuller expression of the meaning of clans evidenced by attention to Haudenosaunee languages and translation and the cultural narratives comprising historic Haudenosaunee traditionalism. The following examination of grassroots and scholarly interventions, alongside contexts of displacement and relevance, corresponds with

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the concomitant pedagogical processes of reflection, action, and transformation encouraged by the clan research educational initiative. Emphasizing the viability of clan-based knowledge in transforming and transcending conceptual boundaries and more tangible borders that continue to affect the Haudenosaunee today, this article explores the ongoing practical relevance of this ancient system to current challenges involving assertions of citizenship, leadership, territorial mobility, and land rights.

#### HAUDENOSAUNEE CLAN RESEARCH AT SIX NATIONS: GRASSROOTS AND SCHOLARLY INTERVENTIONS

There are a number of different ways to look at how Haudenosaunee clan knowledge has been sustained at Grand River. Maintenance of this knowledge is most commonly associated with Haudenosaunee traditionalist institutions, such as Longhouses and the Confederacy Council, and the generations of extended families that have upheld their responsibilities to Haudenosaunee traditionalism spiritually and ceremonially in relation to these contexts as a regular part of their daily lives. There have also been other ongoing community-based educational and research initiatives situated somewhat beyond these spaces that are also aimed to support access to this knowledge. These grassroots efforts are especially important for those who may not have been exposed to this knowledge as a normative part of socialization by taking more direct, explicit approaches to teaching and learning about Haudenosaunee traditionalism. Although not officially associated with traditionalist institutions, such initiatives are often guided by lifelong Longhouse and Confederacy adherents and require extensive commitments of time and energy on the part of these educators and initiative proponents. Intended to compliment and reinforce the broader collective and institutional maintenance of Haudenosaunee knowledge, such efforts also encourage more personal processes of decolonization. As examples of what Taiaiake Alfred calls “self conscious traditionalism,” they help to promote “shifts in thinking and action that emanate from recommitments and reorientations [to original teachings and values] at the level of the self that, over time and through proper organization, manifest as broad social and political movements to challenge state agendas and authorities.”<sup>1</sup>

At Six Nations of Grand River, ongoing Haudenosaunee clan research initiatives are among numerous other grassroots educational efforts that advance the contemporary practical relevance of Haudenosaunee traditionalism. The research and educational initiative undertaken by my clan, the Onondaga Beaver clan, initially got underway in the early 1990s. At that time, although a few individual clan members were already engaged in genealogical research into the extended family’s matrilineal relations, concerns had been mounting among other members of the Beaver clan about the increasing lack of representation of clan members in the Confederacy Council, especially when important issues like education reform at Six Nations were under deliberation. As Sago:ye:satah, leading proponent of the initiative recalls, “some of us knew that a big part of the problem came from the conflict between

our traditional identity as Haudenosaunee people and that other identity that's been forced upon us, but we decided we needed to do more than just talk about it, it was time to take action. It was time to make an investment in bringing our people back.”<sup>2</sup>

My involvement in the clan research initiative began in 1998 when I received an invitation by phone to a meeting from an Onondaga Beaver clan relative who was largely unknown to me. The earliest Beaver clan meetings I attended seemed like extended family reunions, but these were based more on us “getting to know each other” rather than celebrating lifelong, familiar family connections. Efforts involved drawing clan members together to determine “who’s who,” “who’s related to who,” and “who’s associated with which family” because there are two Onondaga Beaver clan titles at Six Nations. Identifying clan members prompted further outreach to relatives residing within as well as outside the reserve community. As interest and participation in this initiative grew, these meetings began to take on a more concentrated research-based and educational focus. We became involved in taking a more systematic approach to “getting our house in order” through complementary efforts that include:

- Identifying clan members and developing a clan registry.
- Assembling inventories of clan names, sorting out Confederacy-related titles, and working toward filling vacancies.
- Devising a mediation framework for conflict resolution.
- Ensuring the voice of clan members in decision making about lands, reparations, and future development, a main objective being our eventual (re)representation as fully functioning clans in the Confederacy Council.
- Assembling resources to enhance competence in our official Onondaga language.
- Becoming more aware of and active in protecting the Grand River watershed ecosystem.
- Promoting environmental and economic sustainability through attention to traditional foods and resource-based technologies.
- Illuminating roles and responsibilities through attention to relevant teachings about traditional governance, social and economic systems, and ceremonial and spiritual worldviews with their associated values and principles.

All of these efforts recognize how the need to reclaim this knowledge corresponds with the need to help foster further accessibility to it, so that associated Haudenosaunee clan-based systems and practices can be again understood and exercised more extensively.

A related component of clan research-based education evolved more or less naturally in the learning process. Inevitably, the more people learn about clan-based knowledge, the more we usually move further into understanding why and how this knowledge has been disrupted. This sentiment echoes Patricia Monture-Angus’s recommendations for enhancing indigenous governance structures, “knowledge of the imposed systems of power and control are also important, as it is through this knowledge that the people can make informed choices about how to continue to move away from these impositions

in the future.”<sup>3</sup> Promoting awareness of the fact that disruptive colonial frameworks continue to reside in a context in which the Haudenosaunee paradigms anchoring cultural, political, and land-based relationships have never been successfully eliminated is an equally critical dimension of this educational process.

As my involvement in the clan research initiative continued, fellow clan-relative participants began to assign me tasks that made use of the time and resources accessible to me as a graduate student. Under their direction I assembled a fellowship application focused on promoting Haudenosaunee cross-border relationships. This afforded me the opportunity to go to the University at Buffalo to work with John Mohawk from 2000 to 2001.<sup>4</sup> From this point on, my contributions to the clan research project consisted of using the time of my fellowship to gather information by looking at relevant scholarship, doing archival research, conducting personal interviews, and working with John and other Six Nations peoples and scholars in the United States. Basically I was to do anything on the “academic” side of things that might support the project’s overall objectives to help advance reassertions of Haudenosaunee citizenship and leadership, or, as Sago:ye:satah more succinctly put it, “repatriating our people to their traditions.”<sup>5</sup>

Guided by my work with Mohawk, and with the invaluable help of many members of the Onondaga Beaver clan and several Six Nations elders and community members every step of the way, my research continues to focus on how indices of continuity and viability reinforce the ongoing, practical relevance of ancient Haudenosaunee clan knowledge and the clan system. Specifically, it addresses how the clan system reaffirms and advances a capacity to transform and transcend conceptual boundaries and more tangible borders that continue to affect the Haudenosaunee today—especially the nation-state borders that bisect our territories and the infinite boundaries on either side that crosscut it. These lines, limits, parameters, and perimeters, reified experientially through colonial laws and policies, tend to get stuck in our heads. Over time, many of us have come to accept these lines designed to promote our physical and conceptual separation from our lands, each other, and ourselves as a peoples. There are still many Haudenosaunee on all sides of these borders and boundaries for whom these connections have endured despite colonial impositions. But for those of us who are relative newcomers to these understandings, a more conscious effort is needed in engaging elemental questions of meaning and purpose that inform the structure, function, and responsibilities associated with the clan system. For some, this means going back to square one by engaging the primary question, “What does it mean to belong to a clan?” And from this point, moving further into recognizing that having a clan isn’t just about something you are, it’s about things that you do and how these understandings and actions are situated in Haudenosaunee teachings and cosmology. Building from this basis, one can then proceed to explore how the continuity of these meanings and actions pertain to the simultaneous processes of nation being and nation building. Approaching these intersecting processes in this way helps us to reshape and recast current challenges that we as Haudenosaunee peoples continue to confront today.

## BACKGROUND ON HAUDENOSAUNEE CLANS: CONSIDERING HAUDENOSAUNEE LANGUAGES AND PARADIGMS

When you combine a fuller expression of the meaning of clans—evidenced through attention to Haudenosaunee languages and translation—with the elaboration of the structure and function of this system as related through historic Haudenosaunee traditional cultural narratives, you can see how continuity in connections enables the people to deal with separation. This brings sharper clarity to an understanding of clans as being about relationships to lands and Creation and the active expression of these relationships by and among the people as families. The telling and foretelling of cumulative Haudenosaunee narratives reiterate circumstances of some form of separation as a prevalent theme. Each time this happens, the structure and function of the clan system further develops and is refined with the emphasis on maintaining the continuity of the land-Creation-peoples familial relationships and responsibilities that clans embody.

Attention to Haudenosaunee languages and traditionalism helps to initiate an illustration of these linkages. In her dissertation “What Happened to the Iroquois Clans?: A Study of Clans in Three Nineteenth-Century Rotinonhsyonni Communities,” Mohawk historian Deborah Doxtator argued that the English term *clan* is misleading and provides an elaboration of land, space, and place as the conceptual basis for Haudenosaunee clans. “The word *otara* in Mohawk,” she explains, “means land, clay or earth as well as clan and in asking an individual what clan they belong to (*oh nisen’taroten*), one is literally asking ‘what is the outline or contour of your clay?’ referring to the land you can access and the territory to which you belong. . . . Land relationships are the basis of understanding clans and political structures.”<sup>6</sup>

This rootedness in land is also reflected in the Creation story. According to the late Cayuga Nation, Snipe Clan Confederacy Chief Jake Thomas, “if you go back to the time of Creation, when the Creator made mankind, he made them by molding them from the earth—that’s why we call it *Q:gwehó:weh*. *Q:gweh* is what we are from . . . *Qg:weh* means the real thing from mother earth—that’s what we are.”<sup>7</sup> This extends further into “*Q:gwe:hó:neha*, meaning our way of life.”<sup>8</sup> Like *otara* in Mohawk, *o’shya:de:nyq*, or clan, in Cayuga is not simply a fixed noun. It also incorporates a verb base, signifying an additional dimension of connection to the ecological landscape. Fluent speaker and longtime teacher of the Cayuga language Lottie Keye explains that by asking people to identify their clan in Cayuga, or *De’ni:s nisa’sgao’dę*, you are asking “what family of animal grouping do you belong to?”<sup>9</sup> Haudenosaunee clans are constituted in “patterns of activity” rooted in place, territory, and ecology.<sup>10</sup> Belonging to a clan is processual and actualized in everyday life through living relationships and responsibilities. These relationships and responsibilities are reciprocally connected to the land and emanate outward to incorporate the reciprocal relationships and responsibilities of the Haudenosaunee to each other.

The teaching of the origin of clans provides another way to show these processes at work in the context of Haudenosaunee paradigms. The condensed illustration of the origin of clans highlighted here is from a version

of the teaching Chief Thomas shared with me shortly before he passed away in 1998. Thomas's multilingual proficiency and the extent of his experience translating Haudenosaunee traditionalism into English provide substantial assurance that Haudenosaunee language-based understandings and interpretations are attended to in his rendition of this teaching.

Drawing out some of the key themes, what follows is Thomas's rendition of Haudenosaunee clan origins:<sup>11</sup>

Following the time of Creation, when the people had continued to multiply and had been given ceremonies to show their gratitude for all that the Creator had provided for them, there eventually started to be problems. The Creator had ordained that the women would be the ones to give birth and that the people would only have a certain number of days to live in this world. But eventually the people that were created and had multiplied grew so they couldn't understand when people died, what caused people to die and their bodies to grow cold. They didn't know what happened and could not comfort one and other. They didn't know how to comfort each other when death came in the family, and some times the same family would have a death and it would just overlap the births with grief and because they felt so bad about it, it also caused sicknesses and depression. By then, the Creator had also given them ceremonies, but they seemed to forget about these ceremonies, and they also could not attend them because they had such problems with grief.

As the story continues, the elders at that time assemble to try to solve these problems. A young man at this meeting seems to have the answer. He takes the people on a journey in which they all come to a river and try to cross it on a grapevine. The vine breaks but only after some of the people do manage to get across the river to its other bank; an equal number are left behind on the shore. According to the teaching, this is precisely what was intended to happen. The young man tells them, to quote Thomas, "Now this is what I mean, this river is what divides us and that will be ongoing from here on, that will be ongoing for tradition. That's the way it's going to be for generations to come, we're going to be all separated. It doesn't mean that we're really going to be *separate*, but this is the only way." The next morning the people are told to go out from their camps, and when they return they are to report the first things they see. This reporting establishes what the people's clans will be. They tell the man, "I saw a hawk," "I saw a beaver," an eel, a wolf, a turtle, and so on. In response the young man says,

Now you know what all you saw, and that'll be your clan. Each one of you are to follow the generation, all the one's you saw, it will follow the mother's blood line. And that is what the reason we now have clans, so that the clan, the wolf will comfort the bear, or the bear will also comfort the wolf at any time there's anything stressful or any discomfort, it'll be up to each one wherever.

And now the death part. It's up to you if you have a problem in the bear or with the deer then the wolf will come to comfort you and you will also support one another on this side, the bears, the deer, you will all support one another. But that's where it'll divide the clan system, all your clans you will all support one and other. And that will be your identity that will be always on the women, it will always follow the women. And this is the way it will be that you can comfort one and other because you can't comfort yourself if you have a problem and that's why somebody else has got to come and comfort you and bring your spirit back up and so that's where it started with the clan system.

The teaching about the origins of the Haudenosaunee clan system reminds us of what clans are, how this system came to be, and its purpose. Clans provide a means of how extended families work in providing consolation, comfort, support, and mediation to each other and are derived from what the women initially see (or what is revealed to them)—the hawk, the deer, the bear—as they look to the ecosystem. Clan responsibilities establish a connectedness among the people that can repair their personal and interpersonal detachment by the anguish of loss and grief as well as transcend their experiences of physical separation by the river. Rooted in Creation and (re)affirmed in ceremonies, these principles are extended in subsequent Haudenosaunee teachings, including the Great Law of Peace. As Thomas states, “as the people continued to multiply and branch out into various settlements across the land, they once again began to forget about their ceremonies, their instructions, how they were related to one another, and gradually they began to start fighting and warring with one and other.” The theme of clans abridging separation, while maintaining continuity in principles, is brought forward in time and reflected in the teaching of the Great Law of Peace. Again the people begin to forget their ceremonies and how they are related to one another and gradually start fighting and warring with one another. According to the Great Law, clans become the basic building blocks of the system of Confederacy government, reestablishing relatives, responsibilities, political voice, economic activities, and linkages between families in the past as well as among future generations. As the clan system is extended to structure unity and governance within the Great Law by breaking down hostility and discouraging war, it also reaffirms clan-based understandings in order to provide consolation, support, and mediation, as in the teaching of clan origins. Through the Great Law, clan responsibilities are also considerably magnified in their capacity to establish a connectedness among the people that can transcend their separation across the vast geographical space of the homeland territories.

#### HAUDENOSAUNEE CLANS: REINTERPRETING CONTEXTS OF DISPLACEMENT AND RELEVANCE

Released just before his sudden passing in 2006, Mohawk's *The Iroquois Creation Story* became a final contribution to his incredible legacy. Mohawk's



reworking of ethnologist J. N. B. Hewitt's translation of the "Creation Story," told to him by Onondaga Chief John Arthur Gibson of Grand River in 1890, also includes Gibson's version of the Haudenosaunee clan origins teaching.<sup>12</sup> Noteworthy interpretive and translational intersections arise when considering Mohawk's and the late Chief Thomas's respective representations of historic Haudenosaunee traditionalism. Thomas was always thinking first in one of the five Haudenosaunee languages in which he was fluent and endeavoring to translate these *back to us* in English in his efforts to share these teachings with broader audiences. Although Mohawk did not have to contend with a language barrier as directly as Thomas, he did have to reconcile and navigate through Hewitt's interpretive filter. Mohawk sought to reinscribe Hewitt's translation of Gibson's renditions with Haudenosaunee sensibilities in order to project these *out to us* in English more effectively. Both Mohawk and Thomas invested a lifetime emphasizing the generative capacity of Haudenosaunee knowledge. Understanding the complexities of contemporary circumstances, and how easy it is to become disheartened by them, comprised a significant part of Mohawk's and Thomas's efforts. These efforts involved reminding us that in forgetting there has always been remembering.

Speaking characteristically of historic Haudenosaunee narratives, as Mohawk explained in the foreword to *The Iroquois Creation Story*, "Such stories urge upon us the expectation that things have been known to happen in a certain way, and are likely to happen that way again."<sup>13</sup> This is certainly true when we look at the recurring themes in historic traditionalism and their relevance to how prolonged interactions with settler nation-states have long been our main sources of separation—disrupting the social, political, economic, and spiritual cohesion of Haudenosaunee people as maintained through the clan system. But there is also recurrence in an overarching theme that renders the continuity of connections despite separation as something that is always possible and always happens. For this, Mohawk reminds us, we are extremely fortunate. Continuity is maintained, as core values and principles are brought forward as the basis of dealing with and reconciling new challenges. The stories that are told don't just describe this capacity for continuity; they also come to constitute it. Or as Mohawk eloquently puts it, "for as long as the Haudenosaunee exist . . . [we] will continue to tell this story."<sup>14</sup>

The experiential, historic, and ongoing stories of our separation, as advanced within Six Nations communities and, more recently, by indigenous and allied scholars, increasingly undermine the very legitimacy of colonial frameworks that have attempted to justify the disaggregation of peoples and lands. Such analyses often effectively reinforce the contemporary and practical relevance of Haudenosaunee traditionalism and, in doing so, incite movement away from what Rick Ponting and Cora Voyageur identify as a "deficit paradigm" approach to the interpretative representation of First Nations knowledge and experience.<sup>15</sup> Most significantly, Haudenosaunee citizens' ongoing assertions of the continuity and validity of their distinct nationhood have been increasingly successful in reconfiguring nation-state interactions with Haudenosaunee peoples. What becomes increasingly clear as consideration of disruption and displacement unfolds is how is the

traditional theme of separation conveyed in historic narratives takes on a new and different relevance. Even so, with reinvigorated attention to clan knowledge and structures there resides an enormous potential through which the separation wrought by these complex contexts may be challenged, subverted, and overcome.

Although the Canadian-US “border” is a construct that is foreign and without meaning in Haudenosaunee cosmology, it has had very real, substantive implications for the social and political cohesion of Haudenosaunee people over time. Following the American Revolution and the movement of a large portion of the Six Nations population to the Grand River in Ontario in 1784, the Haudenosaunee were divided geographically but not necessarily culturally or socially. In the early decades of the 1800s the Confederacy Council rekindled its fires at Grand River and remained the form of governance committed to all Six Nations people, including those who came to Grand River and those who remained in the homeland territories within the emergent borders of New York State and the province of Quebec. Derivations of this larger council, in the form of either smaller clan councils or national clan councils, administered the specific needs of the specific settlements in their various locations throughout the Grand River tract.<sup>16</sup> Despite the relocation of a large portion of the population, with the reestablishment of Confederacy government to preside over the Haudenosaunee in both territories, clan relationships and the intrinsic connections among the people were initially preserved and maintained.<sup>17</sup>

Disruption to this unity and the severing of these relationships intensified, however, through the consolidation of Canada, alongside the United States, as a separate colonial nation-state. The imposition of a distinct political structure and colonial regime contributed to a legacy of increasing fragmentation within traditional Haudenosaunee sociopolitical culture. Although there is not space in this article for an extensive analysis of the multi-dimensional effects of colonial processes on Six Nations peoples, numerous Haudenosaunee scholars continue to enrich multiple facets of this discourse through their contributions.<sup>18</sup>

A particularly predatory cluster of Canadian federal policies have had the greatest impact on clan-based relationships among the Six Nations people at Grand River, as well as other Haudenosaunee communities on the Canadian side of the border. These have further entrenched disconnection from Haudenosaunee who remained on the other side of either the Niagara or St. Lawrence rivers in the United States.

After the British North America Act of 1867 transferred jurisdiction of Canadian affairs from the British Crown to the new Canadian government, attempts to transform recognition of the Six Nations legally from sovereign allies into mere wards intensified. On the heels of precursory legislation including the Enfranchisement Act of 1869, with its direct provisions to alter traditional social and political structures, it was through the unilateral decision of the new Canadian government that the Indian Act of 1876 was implemented. Influenced by European notions of descent, pedigree, property rights, and the access of lands and resources through their privatization, this act continues to

prescribe a system of patrilineal registration in order to delineate all “Indians” who were of federal concern. In Canada, it becomes the most prominent legal basis for recognition of the federal government’s trust relationship and fiduciary ties to First Nations. Métis scholar Bonita Lawrence argues that although the Indian Act set out a framework for defining *Indians*, band affiliation, and access to contingent rights, it was “in fact Canada’s way to preempt the rights of Indigenous nations to govern themselves, signify[ing] that colonial [powers], not Native people, controlled Native destinies.”<sup>19</sup> Though the Indian Act is often assumed to be a means for dispensing compensation for historic treaty agreements and other Crown negotiations, Lawrence rightly contends that “there can be no greater violation of the nation-to-nation relationship specified in the treaties, when Indigenous citizenship in every sense of the word is defined by a body of colonial administration.”<sup>20</sup>

For the Haudenosaunee at Grand River, the Indian Act requirements for “Indian” recognition are obviously antithetical to how clans and nations are matrilineally reconciled. The act’s potential to jeopardize the future of the Confederacy Council’s decision-making capacity and its ability to preside over the people as a form of governance were immediately apparent. Six Nations historian Susan Hill has written extensively about how the nineteenth-century reestablishment of Confederacy governance met with increasing federal government pressure to administer the Grand River settlement in ways that went against clan lines and broader Haudenosaunee spiritual and sociopolitical philosophies and structures. Although the Indian Act further compelled the alienation of lands and resources on the Grand River tract, Hill’s research carefully delineates the various ways in which the Confederacy Council of this era diligently attempted to protect and guide this new settlement according to traditional principles and to reconcile these in the development of land policies involving allotment, inheritance, territorial boundaries, natural resources, and communal lands.<sup>21</sup>

Under the duress of government interference and the rapid diminishment of the Grand River tract land base, the fluidity of movement and migrations of clan relatives between the homeland territories and Grand River are increasingly cut off, and the focus of Confederacy chiefs becomes more localized.<sup>22</sup> Some ethnohistorians and anthropologists have oversimplified interpretations of the inward or more internal focus of the Confederacy’s attention to Grand River concerns, rather than broader Haudenosaunee concerns, during the era of resettlement.<sup>23</sup> It is important to counter assumptions that a localized orientation simply characterized the Confederacy’s outlook from the point of its reestablishment at Grand River. Analyses of this time period must attend to realities involving the reduction of the Grand River tract to one-sixteenth or 4.8 percent of its original size in sixty-three years (1784–1847), as well as to how this history of land reduction served to consume rather than fortify Six Nations’ financial resources.<sup>24</sup> Although the urgency of these circumstances clearly legitimated attention to more localized priorities, these generalizations also miss how Haudenosaunee knowledge was actually sustained through the councils’ apparently inward ceremonial focus under the extreme pressures of this era.

Notably, the nineteenth-century era also coincides with the acceleration of the federally mandated residential school system. The system was in full swing in Canada and the United States by the late 1800s. What it did, among other things, was to target, through children, the elimination of traditional spirituality and Native languages, two aspects of Haudenosaunee culture that animated, supported, and reinforced the continuity of clan relationships.

By the turn of the twentieth century the Indian Act had been amended so that it included stringent provisions for the implementation of federally regulated elective band council governments on reserves. In 1924, this system was forcibly installed at Six Nations when armed Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers deposed the Confederacy Council and remained in the community to ensure the transition to the elective system. This contributes to intensifying displacement from understanding clan relationships, both within and outside the boundaries of Six Nations, as the clan-based Confederacy system is decentralized, forced to operate “underground,” and is, therefore, no longer overtly accessible as an immediate aspect of political life in the community.

#### ADDRESSING THESE CONSEQUENCES THROUGH THE HAUDENOSAUNEE CLAN SYSTEM

Important academic work that elaborated on the intellectual and political integrity of North American indigenous nations increasingly accelerated by the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> Numerous indigenous and allied scholars continue to advance distinct understandings of Haudenosaunee sovereignty and nationhood within the realm of academic literature.<sup>26</sup> Coinciding with philosophical and practical articulations of nation-based autonomy that have been maintained in Six Nations communities, these scholarly efforts reiterate the imperative of relational responsibilities, spiritual reciprocity, and connectedness among human beings, the land, and other elements of Creation as consistent with Haudenosaunee principles.<sup>27</sup> A number of these efforts further clarify sharp distinctions or contrasts between Haudenosaunee- and Western European-derived concepts of sovereignty, emphasizing tendencies for the latter to be framed by notions of individualism, hierarchy, unidirectional power, absolute authority, materialism, coercion, and domination.<sup>28</sup> These valuable analyses of indigenous nationalism may be complemented and enhanced by consideration of how knowledge of Haudenosaunee clans might encourage a constructive force among future generations, and thus how active and knowledgeable clans remain integral to contemporary assertions of Haudenosaunee nationhood and citizenship.

Within Six Nations community contexts, whether expressed routinely in the course of everyday life or defiantly in direct clashes with the state, the inherent sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee has been continually articulated as the right to determine citizenship, leadership, and freedom of movement within territorial homelands, and the guaranteed respect for distinct spirituality, traditions, and values; none of these were to be viewed as constrained by the imposition of Canada and the United States as nation-states.<sup>29</sup> This sovereign status, the Haudenosaunee have historically claimed, was never relinquished. It

was acknowledged in the earliest treaties, such as the *Guswentah*, or *Two Row Wampum*, which established the parameters of coexistence with Dutch, French, and English colonists in the 1600s. In the case of the Six Nations people who came to Grand River, Ontario, specifically, this sovereignty was affirmed, once again, through their alliance with the British and through Grand River tract land negotiations with the Crown following the American Revolution.<sup>30</sup>

By no means is the intent of this article to diminish or downplay the overall consequences of colonial intrusion on the recognition and expression of Haudenosaunee nationhood, nor is it to suggest that in light of continuity such understandings have been seamlessly and uncontentiously preserved. Contemporary community-based education initiatives promoting Haudenosaunee traditionalism among a broader base of the Six Nations population at Grand River and beyond continue to encounter crucial questions regarding the meanings, functioning, and protocol associated with clan-based paradigms of citizenship and leadership. For example, there continues to be disparity in views related to the practical roles of women and clan mothers in leadership, the assignment of clan names to individuals, the adoption of “clanless” citizens, the valid expression of consensus, the status of adopted nations, and the reattribution of “borrowed” Confederacy titles to their appropriate extended-family lineages.<sup>31</sup> Although matters such as these have incurred varying levels of debate and discord, their eventual reconciliation will come from none other than Haudenosaunee citizens.<sup>32</sup> When understood in these terms, our vantage point shifts from a focus on these concerns solely as by-products of colonial processes that compromise Haudenosaunee sociopolitical integrity, to an acknowledgment of these matters, and citizens’ ongoing engagement with them, as internal “domestic issues,” constituted in inherent, emergent, and practical expressions of Haudenosaunee nationhood.<sup>33</sup>

The vantage point that specifically situates our consideration of yet-to-be resolved questions and concerns also enhances our appreciation of the ongoing efforts of citizens to promote continuity in Haudenosaunee cultural and political distinctiveness. Despite some rather pessimistic portraits of colonial frameworks as ingrained almost to the point of “naturalization” in indigenous consciousness, there is mounting indication of outright rejection and increasing subversion of the influence and power of nation-state regimes.<sup>34</sup> The maintenance of the Haudenosaunee clan-based system of Confederacy governance throughout almost four centuries of colonial oppression is one of the most decisive examples; however, there are other, potentially less obvious ways in which to consider indices of cultural continuity and colonial subversion.

Haudenosaunee clan-based knowledge has withstood efforts to reduce our nationhood to the racial constructs perpetuated by settler nation-states. Undoubtedly it will be the further undoing of these ideas despite varying levels of their internalization by many people. Considerable progress has been made in the area of reconciling identity and citizenship according to clan-based paradigms. For example, during the four years (1996–2000) I spent researching grassroots educational initiatives that promoted Haudenosaunee

languages and traditionalism at Grand River, I witnessed the broadening of community awareness of the illegitimacy of the Indian Act as a direct result of educators' efforts in disseminating information about Haudenosaunee clans. This is not to imply that it was possible to convey understandings of the full scope of knowledge involving clans to initiative participants within the limitations of a workshop or a succession of educational sessions; traditionalist educators were often quick to impress upon participants that learning is an ongoing process, continually elaborated throughout the course of one's lifetime. Even so, once participants gained further access and exposure to the continuity of a culturally distinct constitution of identity and belonging, it was remarkable how quickly the ideological authority of the 130-year-old Indian Act was stripped away. As this ideological shift continues to spread among a broader base of the Six Nations population, a marked increase in its practical expression, and its application to the resolution of outstanding concerns and grievances (both internally and with the state), can only be expected.

In the area of the continuity of clan-based leadership, despite its deposition at Six Nations in 1924, the Confederacy Council has continued to maintain its responsibility to, and recognition by, Haudenosaunee people in Canada and the United States. At Grand River specifically, it has played a crucial, though largely unpublicized, role in the ongoing protection of Six Nations' distinct rights, which the Indian Act–mandated elective band council system was specifically designed to eliminate. The Confederacy Council remains connected to, rather than separate from, Haudenosaunee cosmology.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the Great Law continues to be asserted through the Confederacy Council's maintenance, despite settler governments' refusal to recognize Haudenosaunee sovereignty. In reality this council continues to practice nation-to-nation diplomacy with the new governments that have arisen in Haudenosaunee territories.<sup>36</sup> Upholding a central commitment to the people, it continues to exert its power in the present, notwithstanding historic attempts at interference and disruption.

Grappling with the ongoing history of colonial coercion and interference has meant confronting the legacy encouraged by these processes. Part of this legacy is reflected by vacancies in chief titles and associated Confederacy offices; it is also reflected in a few remaining instances of duplicated titles on the Canadian and American sides of the border. Efforts to address these circumstances reaffirm the fundamental significance of clan mothers charged with these responsibilities. These efforts relatedly promote cohesion by reaffirming the significance of clan relatives working together across Haudenosaunee communities in order to enhance the coherence of the Confederacy system.

By extension, emphasis must also be placed on the way clans reflect and validate a continuity that is also strategic, particularly in association with much politicized processes of contesting and resisting colonial constructs. They provide a means for reconciling Haudenosaunee citizenship that has remained consistent in comparison to the enormous inconsistencies of our treatment by nation-state citizenship regimes. In Canada, these approaches have moved through eras of total exclusion, provisional enfranchisement, and

unilateral imposition, which incrementally established contingencies based upon what Six Nations peoples, as well indigenous peoples more broadly, were required to give up. These terms of “Canadian citizenship” resided not in the reinforcement or reconciliation of ongoing relationships but rather as a regulatory regime conditional upon the relinquishing of lands, socio-economic and political structures, rights, languages, traditions, children, dignity, and so forth.

Along with his renowned proficiency in illuminating the cultural history of Haudenosaunee traditionalism, Chief Thomas was also adept at promoting its relevance to contemporary circumstances. According to Thomas, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau publicly stated to Aboriginal attendees of a First Ministers conference in 1983, “that if you no longer speak your language and no longer practice your culture, then you have no right to demand aboriginal rights or claim land from the Canadian government, because you are assimilated with the ruling power.”<sup>37</sup> Recognition of such strategies continually reinforced Thomas’s convictions about the crucial significance of maintaining Haudenosaunee languages and traditionalism. Sago:ye:satah similarly felt that these sentiments were another reason to spur people into action, “We must be aware that this is one of the main ways the government has justified stealing our land and denying us our rights is by trying to change us. It’s just like destroying evidence, so that they can continue to maintain that we have no claim to sovereignty.”<sup>38</sup> Notably, arguments almost identical to Trudeau’s enabled a US federal court ruling that denied cultural damage reparations to Alaskan Native communities directly affected by the enormous oil spill caused by the *Exxon Valdez*.<sup>39</sup> Such conjecture also presented a formidable obstacle in Gitxan and Wet’suwet’en’s battle with the Supreme Court of Canada to confirm legal recognition of their title to their unceded territory in *Delgamuukw v. the Queen*.<sup>40</sup>

In an interview on a local radio-show broadcast publicizing the Onondaga Beaver clan research initiative at Six Nations in 1998, Sago:ye:satah related the significance of Haudenosaunee clan-based continuity to community residents:

Because we believe that your identity is where your rights flow from. Myself as my traditional identity I have rights from that. As my Canadian identity, my name Kenny Hill as they call me, I don’t have many rights in that sense because we’re all under the Indian Act and in the words of the government with that English name, so we really don’t have the rights that flow from our treaties; the only way we can access those rights is through that traditional identity and the respect for the things that flow from those treaties and all those concepts that inform them, that’s where really our rights flow from.<sup>41</sup>

Referring to the significance of his “Indian name,” indicative of his clan affiliation, Hill establishes the crucial connection of clan identity and citizenship to Haudenosaunee autonomy affirmed through treaties and the exercising of treaty rights. Such assertions are a vital means to question and counter the Indian Act’s legitimacy in maintaining the power to limit, through its imposed

terms and criteria, the Canadian government's fiduciary responsibility by legislatively delineating all "Indians" who are of federal concern. Evidenced by arguments outlined previously in this article, alongside the observations of Chief Thomas presented in the preceding text, it is well-known that the rigidity and assimilative orientation of this legislation has always been intended to extinguish these very fiduciary obligations by promoting domestication and extinguishment of indigenous nationhood. On a broader scale, recognition of these strategies has become prominent in indigenous assessments of federal "healing" and "justice" initiatives. Responses to these initiatives have continued to advance arguments that as long as classifications of indigenous nationhood and identities are defined and legally/politically recognized in terms set by colonial regimes, opportunities for reconciliation will continue to be "compromised if not fully limited."<sup>42</sup> Regarding Six Nations specifically, Hill and Thomas agree that what the government is trying to say when it comes to rights or land claims is that the Six Nations people of today are not the same as those who migrated from their homelands. Thus Haudenosaunee clan knowledge promoted through education and research becomes an important means of verifying this continuity.

Haudenosaunee clans continue to verify the continuity of peoples' citizenship in nations that have long predated the consolidation of Canada and the United States as nation-states and the formation of legal, political, and economic institutions in either country. It is imperative that not only Six Nations peoples but also Canadian and American citizens recognize this reality more widely. Within broader legal and political arenas, such acknowledgment helps to clarify why it is so important that negotiations involving lands and land rights occur with delegates of the Confederacy governance structure with whom treaties were made historically. In these matters, state-sanctioned band councils, whether installed forcibly or welcomed favorably in Six Nations reserve/reservation communities, simply did not exist during this era and reasonably have no jurisdiction. In legitimating claims based on nation-states' unfulfilled responsibilities and inconsistencies, the significance of appeals to the continuity of Haudenosaunee traditionalism is substantive and cannot be dismissed as recent exercise in "cultural invention, nationalist fabrication or symbolic abstraction."<sup>43</sup> Presently at Six Nations there can be no better example of this than the ongoing negotiations between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Canadian government over Grand River tract land rights. After refusing to recognize the Confederacy's jurisdiction for eighty-four years, government representatives now contend that their willingness to enter into negotiations was a direct result of the Confederacy's support of recent Six Nations community efforts to press for the clarification of title to disputed Grand River tract lands. This moment potentially represents an important turning point in Haudenosaunee history; it is an opportunity to continue to interrupt and dislodge the unidirectional flow of power that has historically characterized interactions with nation-states that is a direct result of Haudenosaunee continuity.

The point is that the meanings, connections, structures, functions, and practices associated with Haudenosaunee clan knowledge and the clan system



are still living—and solidly remain in and of the present—even while work is being done to enable this system to be understood further and exercised more extensively. In our Onondaga Beaver clan research initiative, and in other such initiatives that are ongoing within and across Haudenosaunee communities, efforts to reclaim and reassert those land-based connections and that connectedness among peoples as relatives and families hinge upon how clans comprise the value of relationships and the responsibilities to console, comfort, support, and mediate as conveyed in the teaching about their origins and according to the Great Law. We can engage these principles and frameworks in promoting broader education and awareness only because they continue to be asserted in the ceremonials of thanksgiving and condolence that have been carefully protected and maintained for centuries by our people.

Although understandings of Haudenosaunee identity and leadership through clan relationships have been diminished by the complex and ongoing colonial processes in Canada and the United States, they have not been destroyed. In constituting our political and cultural distinctiveness, clans anchor the historical rootedness of our nationhood on this land base; validating a continuity will be integral to our future. This in turn can help demonstrate that Six Nations people are not yet assimilated and have maintained a viable means to contest and resist colonial constructs. There have always been Haudenosaunee citizens on both sides of the border—clan mothers, chiefs, faith keepers, traditional orators and historians, educators, language speakers, elders, adults, youth, and children—who have maintained the continuity of this cultural knowledge and are among the Haudenosaunee's most invaluable resources. Actively promoting Haudenosaunee clan research and education in Canada and the United States will assist in accessing information, facilitating dialogue, and sharing histories with the ultimate objective to learn about and link clan relatives to each other in order to advance the cohesion of Haudenosaunee people. This will enhance our ability to reach across whatever legislation, border, or boundary that would try to divide us.

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This article, and the larger project of which it is part, would not exist without the cooperation I've received from those who work so tirelessly to preserve and promote Haudenosaunee traditionalism at Six Nations. Nyá:wəh to all the members of the Onondaga Beaver clan, especially Sago:ye:satah and his family and Tatgahdohs, who taught me much about belonging and its requisite responsibilities. I will always cherish the memories and the mentorship I received from John Mohawk and Chief Thomas. I am indebted to my good friends, who also happen to be my fellow colleagues from Six Nations, Sue Hill, Rick Monture, and Dawn Martin-Hill, for their constant support. Thank you very much to Rob Innes for the invitation to be included in this volume and for the ensuing patience this required. Thank you also to the editors of *AICRJ*, whose editorial suggestions helped to improve the quality of this article.

## NOTES

1. Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), quoted in Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism," *Government and Opposition* 40 (2005): 611, [http://web.uvic.ca/~gta/pdfs/goop\\_166.pdf](http://web.uvic.ca/~gta/pdfs/goop_166.pdf) (accessed 25 August 2006).

2. Sago:ye:satah, telephone conversation with author, 5 December 2009.

3. Patricia Monture-Angus, "Community Governance and Nation Re-Building: Centering Indigenous Learning and Research," 2004, 7, <http://www.fngovernance.org/pdf/MontureNationReBuilding.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2007).

4. Despite my prior involvement in the Onondaga Beaver clan research initiative upon arriving at the University at Buffalo, I was still far from grasping the broader significance of these efforts. This was one area where John Mohawk really helped me. One of the skills he was notorious for among his students was that you could give him your most rudimentary, unformulated ideas, and he would listen to them, take them, and craft them into the most eloquent research questions or arguments. Then he'd subtly spin them back to you, in such a way that would leave you impressed with yourself for having come up with them in the first place. It was hard not to get excited over John's passion for ideas, and, for those of us who were his students, these ideas remain imprinted on so much of our work. He affected so many people's abilities to "see" the important connection between local and global indigenous action, something that remains very difficult for many to conceive and convey.

He maintained an unshakable faith in our ability to reason; the pragmatism of Haudenosaunee teachings and spiritualism; the transformative capacity of consciousness; and the power of words, oration, and persuasion, not only to reiterate experiences but also as our most important tools to mould new realities and propel action in order to enhance our continuity. Much of the knowledge John promoted wasn't his alone; and he was always clear about this. This is reflected in just how much apparently "authorless" or unattributed John Mohawk writing is currently in circulation. John always emphasized that Haudenosaunee knowledge has been collectively and dynamically produced across infinite generations of peoples, while remaining consistently rooted in this land base. He has nevertheless made crucial contributions to this knowledge. I continue to be inspired by his ability to get it across.

5. Sago:ye:satah, conversation with author, Six Nations of Grand River Territory, 1 August 2008.

6. Deborah Doxtator, "What Happened to the Iroquois Clans?: A Study of Clans in Three Nineteenth-Century Rotinohsyonni Communities" (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 1996), 6. In her dissertation, Doxtator further articulates the historical significance of land to the Haudenosaunee clan system, as well as to Haudenosaunee nationhood:

Before the nineteenth century the Rotinohsyonni [Haudenosaunee] people had great ethnic diversity among their clans. The biological lineage of individuals in the centuries prior to the 1800s was not as important as the physical presence of the person sharing the common land of the community. . . . In Rotinohsyonni thought, an individual without a community and a land base to which to belong was "socially dead." For a nation not to have people organized

into communities with which to maintain control over territories was to be “no longer a people” . . . . Without people in clans to use and connect with the land, the nation would cease to exist. In many ways the land, its nature and the kinds of relationships that the people had with it, influenced the social organization of the Rotinohsyonni people (54–55).

7. Confederacy Chief Jake Thomas was a highly respected historian and orator of Haudenosaunee traditionalism, in his own community and in other Six Nations and Aboriginal communities across North America. He was fluent in five of the Six Nations languages. Thomas dedicated a large part of his life to promoting Haudenosaunee traditionalism and languages through education and educational resource development. Part of his commitment to facilitating Native and non-Native access to Haudenosaunee knowledge involved translating and reciting a number of central Haudenosaunee teachings into English. In the 1990s Thomas gave three public recitations of the Great Law of Peace in English at Six Nations. These recitations, from nine to twelve days in duration, provided opportunities for those not fluent in a Haudenosaunee language to access this foundational teaching about the historic foundation of the Haudenosaunee confederacy. I am very grateful for the chance I had to work with Thomas when conducting my dissertation research. He passed away in 1998 at the age of 76.

8. Chief Thomas, interview by author, Six Nations of Grand River, 13 August 1997.

9. Lottie Keye, conversation with author, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Hamilton, ON, 16 January 2001.

10. Doxtator, “What Happened to the Iroquois Clans?” 58.

11. The following 4 quotations are from the Thomas interview; the emphasis is his.

12. See John C. Mohawk, *Iroquois Creation Story: John Arthur Gibson and J. N. B. Hewitt’s Myth of the Earth Grasper* (Buffalo, NY: Mohawk Publications, 2005), 85–96. In the Gibson version, the young man who initiates the system takes his leave of the people with this parting message of reassurance:

“That which we have arranged,” the young man said, “is so durable that it will last as long as our families will continue to exist. It will last as long as the grasses grow and the trees grow. It will last as long as the rivers flow. Now I have finished arranging your affairs.”

Similar to the Thomas rendition, as the people begin to disperse they are reminded that “it shall continue to be in the future, that there will always be clans on both sides of the river” (96).

13. *Ibid.*, xi.

14. *Ibid.*, viii, v.

15. See Rick J. Ponting and Cora J. Voyageur, “Multiple Points of Light: Grounds for Optimism among First Nations in Canada,” in *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture*, ed. David R. Newhouse, Cora J. Voyageur, and Dan Brown (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 425–54. Here Ponting and Voyageur note the prominence of a “deficit paradigm” in social science treatment of First Nations, emphasizing suffering, conflict, problems, and First Nations’ overall status as victims. They argue that such tendencies often preclude consideration of evidence of success, positive developments, and grounds for optimism in First Nations’ struggles to “loosen the grip of colonialism.”

16. Doxtator, "What Happened to the Iroquois Clans?" 217–75.

17. *Ibid.*, 232.

18. See Alfred, *Peace, Power and Righteousness*; Taiaiake Alfred, "Sovereignty," in *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination*, ed. Joanne Barker (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 33–50; and Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2005); Susan Hill, "SKANATA YOYONNIH—One Village Has Been Made: The Nineteenth Century Consolidation of the Six Nations Grand River Territory." Paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association—85th Annual Meeting, York University, Toronto, 26 May 2006; Kahente Horn-Miller, "Otiyaner: The 'Women's Path' through Colonialism," *Atlantis* 29, no. 2 (2005): 57–68; Kathleen Jamieson, *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus* (Ottawa, ON: Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1978); Dawn Martin-Hill, "She No Speaks and Other Colonial Constructs of 'The Traditional Woman,'" in *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival*, ed. Kim Anderson and Bonita Lawrence (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2003), 106–20; Rick Monture, "'In the Free and Independent Manner Natural to Indians': Joseph Brant and the Translation(s) of Iroquois Sovereignty." Paper presented at American Studies Association Meetings, Washington, DC, November 2005; Rick Monture, "'Sovereigns of the Soil': Joseph Brant, Deskaheh and the Haldimand Deed of 1784." Paper presented at the Annual Conference on Iroquois Research, Rensselaerville, NY, October 2006; Patricia Monture-Angus, "Women and Risk: Aboriginal Women, Colonialism and Correctional Practice," *Canadian Women's Studies* 19, no. 1–2 (1999): 24–29; Audra Simpson, "Paths Toward a Mohawk Nation: Narratives of Citizenship and Nationhood in Kahnawake," in *Political Theory and The Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, ed. Duncan Ivison, Paul Patton, and Will Sanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 113–36; Audra Simpson, *To the Reserve and Back Again: Kahnawake Mohawk Narratives of Self, Home and Nation* (Duke University Press, forthcoming).

19. Bonita Lawrence, "Indian Status and Entitlement," in *Mixed Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood*, ed. Bonita Lawrence (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), 209–26.

20. *Ibid.*, 223.

21. Hill, "SKANATA YOYONNIH"; Susan Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of: An Examination of Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River Territory* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010).

22. Doxtator, "What Happened to the Iroquois Clans?" 217–75; Sally M. Weaver, "The Iroquois: The Consolidation of Grand River Reserve in the Mid-Nineteenth Aboriginal Ontario in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 1847–1875," in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nation*, ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald M. Smith (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 189–96; Sally M. Weaver, "The Iroquois: The Grand River Reserve in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, 1875–1945," in Rogers and Smith, eds., *Aboriginal Ontario*, 233–41.

23. Thomas S. Ablor, "Seneca Moieties and Hereditary Chieftainships: The Early Nineteenth-Century Political Organization of an Iroquois Nation," *Ethnohistory* 51, no. 3 (2004): 459–88; William N. Fenton, *Locality as a Basic Factor in the Development of Iroquois Social Structure*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 149, no. 3 (Symposium on Local Diversity in Iroquois Culture), ed. William N. Fenton (Washington, DC:

Government Printing Office, 1951): 39–54; Annemarie Anrod Shimony, *Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

24. Theresa McCarthy, “‘It Isn’t Easy’: The Politics of Representation, ‘Factionalism’ and Anthropology in Promoting Haudenosaunee Traditionalism at Six Nations” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2006), 134.

25. Howard Adams, *A Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View* (Toronto: New Press, 1975); Akwesasne Notes, ed., *Basic Call to Consciousness* (Summertown, TN: Native Voices, 1978); Russel L. Barsh and James Y. Youngblood, *The Road: Indian Tribes and Political Liberty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada’s Indians* (Edmonton, AB: Mel Hurtig Publishers, 1969); Harold Cardinal, *The Rebirth of Canada’s Indians* (Edmonton, AB: Mel Hurtig Publishers, 1977); Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984); George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (New York: Collier Macmillan Canada, 1974).

26. Alfred, *Peace, Power and Righteousness*; “Sovereignty”; and *Wasase*; Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of*; Horn-Miller, “Otiyaner: The ‘Women’s Path’ through Colonialism”; Simpson, *To the Reserve and Back Again*; James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

27. Alfred, “Sovereignty.”

28. Alfred, “Sovereignty”; and *Wasase*; Monture, “In the Free and Independent Manner Natural to Indians”; “Sovereigns of the Soil”; and “‘Much Might Be Written’: A Literary and Intellectual History of Six Nations of the Grand River, 1784–2005” (draft of PhD diss., McMaster University, 2007); Simpson, “Paths Toward a Mohawk Nation”; Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005); Tully, *Strange Multiplicity*.

29. Monture, “In the Free and Independent Manner Natural to Indians.”

30. Monture, “Sovereigns of the Soil.”

31. McCarthy, “It Isn’t Easy,” 279–348.

32. For an excellent discussion of adoption practices according to Haudenosaunee principles see Aaron L. VanEvery, “Let Us Put Our Minds Together as One: To Be a Citizen of the Haudenosaunee” (master’s thesis, University at Buffalo, 2009).

33. Kahnawake Mohawk anthropologist Audra Simpson has contributed significantly to scholarly recognition of distinctly cultural, experiential, and practical expressions of indigenous nationhood evidenced by Kahnawake residents’ efforts to revise their membership code, based on a quantified delineation of blood quantum, to a system that is more aligned with Haudenosaunee values and philosophies. Problematizing colonialism and Euro-Western notions of nationhood as “analytic norms” that have dominated inquiry into these circumstances, Simpson argues that the internal conversations, dialogue, and even the discord constituting this revision process continues to shape Kahnawake’s collective sense of self. These interactions, and the meanings and experiences they engage and produce, establish the basis of how indigenous, and specifically Mohawk, nationhood is advanced and effectively reframed in Simpson’s work. See Simpson, “Paths Toward a Mohawk Nation”; and *To the Reserve and Back Again*.

34. Bonita Lawrence, "Gender, Race and Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview," *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (2003): 3–4; Joe Sawchuk, "Negotiating an Identity: Métis Political Organizations, the Canadian Government and Competing Concepts of Aboriginality," *American Indian Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2001): 73–92.

35. Mohawk, *Iroquois Creation Story*, v.

36. Richard Hill Sr., conversation with author, 12 January 2006.

37. Chief Jacob Thomas with Terry Boyle, *Teachings from the Longhouse* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Company, 1994), 141–42; Thomas interview.

38. Sago:ye:satah, conversation with author, Six Nations of Grand River Territory, 1 August 2008.

39. Joseph Jorgenson, "Ethnicity, Not Culture? Obfuscating Social Science in the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Case," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 19, no. 4 (1995): 5–13.

40. Terry Glavin, "The Fall of Dimlahamid: The Gitksan Wet'su'weten and the Fallout of the Delgamuukw Decision," in *Nation to Nation: Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada*, ed. John Bird, Lorraine Land, and Murry Macadam (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 2002), 175–85.

41. Sago:ye:satah, *The Monday Night Phone-In Radio Show*, CKRZ 100.3 FM Radio: Voice of the Grand, 21 January 1998.

42. Monture-Angus, "Women and Risk," 25; See Alfred, *Peace, Power and Righteousness*; and Wasase.

43. Simpson, "Paths Toward a Mohawk Nation," 115.

