

REVIEW ESSAY

## Old Stories, New Networks

*Ethnology and Empire: Languages, Literature, and the Making of the North American Borderlands*

ROBERT LAWRENCE GUNN

New York: New York University Press, 2015

241 pp.

*Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America*

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402 pp.

In a book about his 1829 mission to negotiate a treaty for the land of the Winnebago people, Caleb Atwater paused to describe the oratory of Chief Hoowaneka (Little Elk), a leader of the Winnebago delegation and one of Atwater's main opponents in the negotiations. "His gestures were very graceful," Atwater wrote, "but, in those parts of his speech, where he felt deeply, what he said, his gesticulation was violent, and his whole soul appeared to be agitated in the highest degree" (qtd. in Gunn 74). Details about the gestures and facial expressions of famous leaders were common in political memoirs of Atwater's era. Just a few years earlier, Thomas Jefferson had described Andrew Jackson in similar terms, saying Jackson "could never speak on account of the rashness of his feelings" and would "choke with rage" when he took the floor of the Senate (Webster 1: 371). But Atwater saw more in Hoowaneka's outbursts than a dramatic detail for his narrative. The violent gesticulations and full-body agitation held a deeper significance, revealing something crucial about Indians as a race of people, and even about their ultimate fate in world history. An Indian who carries on like Hoowaneka "will rise no higher than he now is," Atwater thought. "[H]is speeches will be vehement, his gesticulation violent, and repetitions, and darkness and obscurity, mixed with some beautiful allusions to nature, and vague traditions, handed down, from ages gone by, will be found in

all his harangues” (qtd. in Gunn 74). Seeing racial destiny in Hoowaneka’s every word, Atwater arrives at a circular conclusion: the Indians are destined to lose their land because they get angry when someone is trying to take it.

Atwater’s book, entitled *Remarks Made on a Tour to Prairie du Chien; Thence to Washington City, in 1829* (1831), quickly became a staple of scholarship on western history. His leading role in the negotiations, his eye for detail, and his sense of the importance of the occasion made it a constantly referenced source, especially for scholars working in the field of “Indian bibliography” (as it was called in the nineteenth century). Today Atwater, like many other western officials of the time, is cited by literary scholars, anthropologists, and linguists for the insight he provides into Great Lakes history. But Atwater also poses a dilemma for scholars of our era, most of whom do not share his faith in the inevitability of Hoowaneka’s disappearance. Despite the richness of his text, to the smallest detail his book foretells the disappearance of the people he tries to describe. Is it possible to use a source like Atwater’s *Remarks* to tell a new story about early America, with a different ending than the one inscribed on his every page? For starters, we might note that there were many tribes present during the negotiations for Winnebago land, and Hoowaneka hardly spoke for the tribe as a group. American newspapers and later American historians often personified tribes by identifying them with one great male leader, such as Sitting Bull or Tecumseh, but in reality even those native leaders authorized to speak at treaty negotiations did not have the same executive power as presidents or other Western leaders. We might also note that there was probably something more than “darkness and obscurity” in Hoowaneka’s words and gestures, however he might have appeared to Atwater. Sign language was central to Indian politics, especially in intertribal relations, and the other Indians present might have understood Hoowaneka’s movements as an intertribal communication that Atwater himself could not comprehend. When we step back and place Atwater’s book in the context of intertribal political and communication networks, another set of possible meanings emerges, and with them, new ways of telling the story of the 1829 treaty negotiations.

Two new books, from different disciplinary angles, are trying to tell their own stories about imperial North America during the centuries often viewed as a prelude to Indian removal. Both show how European and US

institutions of frontier diplomacy have powerfully conditioned our access to early American archives, making it difficult to see Indians with the same clarity as Europeans. Both find new vantage points on frontier histories, suggesting that there are new ways of reading the archive and many stories left to tell. Finally, both embrace intertribal political networks as a significant force in colonial history, showing that broader contexts can give old stories new endings. Robert Lawrence Gunn's *Ethnology and Empire: Language, Literature, and the Making of the North American Borderlands* charts the rise of ethnology in North America and describes its fatal involvement in the removal of North American Indians. Either as part of their official mandate or as a form of amateur research, governmental officials involved in Indian removal often carried out extensive investigations into Indian languages and cultures, leaving behind a vast historical record that contains much of what we now know about the native nations of the American West. In previous scholarly accounts, this archive has seemed to show empire and the Enlightenment moving in lockstep, as government-sponsored ethnologists documented, catalogued, and categorized Indians at the same moment they removed them. But in Gunn's account, ethnology and empire are considerably less coordinated than that, the former meeting with failure, obstacles, and even doubts about the ultimate reach of European knowledge in the North American borderlands. Gunn reads texts of early US ethnology for hidden signs of the many kinds of communication networks that connected native groups to one another and often went unacknowledged (at least explicitly) by government chroniclers. Michael A. McDonnell's *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America* calls for an equally dramatic reorientation of our approach to North American archives, focusing in powerful detail on the Anishinaabe Odawa of Michilimackinac (near present-day Mackinaw City, Michigan). Working with European as well as Anishinaabe sources, McDonnell unfolds a masterful retelling of the political and trading history of the Odawa that finds them at the center of a vast network of families, tribes, and kinship relations. If Gunn offers a critique of how the archive was made, McDonnell shows how it might be remade to tell a new kind of history with a new cast of actors. When we consider the colonial archive in relation to intertribal networks, we find that well-known events had different causes and meanings than the ones we supposed.

It has long been recognized that knowledge was as instrumental to em-

pire as land or trade. Imperial administrators in New France and New England charted the alliances that connected the continent's native powers and mapped the many languages heard along its trade routes and war-paths. Gunn's *Ethnology and Empire* focuses on various moments when Western intruders sought to establish knowledge of Indian languages using the techniques of ethnological linguistics, which Gunn argues was "both a professional research discipline and popular imaginative concern of American literary culture" (4). Ethnology, or the attempt to understand people and their histories by comparing their languages and cultures, inspired some of Europe's greatest minds during the early modern period. America, as a place of allegedly unknown and undocumented languages, was of obsessive interest to Enlightenment thinkers, who sought to trace the migratory patterns of the world's peoples by comparing their languages. Ethnology occupied some of the most powerful and influential figures of early American history. As president, Thomas Jefferson instructed Lewis and Clark to record examples of Indian words during their famous survey of the Louisiana Purchase, and many subsequent western expeditions had similar aims, producing an extensive archive of word lists, grammars, and diagrams of gestures and hand signs. In the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth, the results of these investigations were viewed as a record of the prehistory of North America, documenting the time before the arrival and inevitable triumph of Anglo-Americans. Since then, powerfully revisionist works of scholarship such as Anthony Pagden's *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (1982) and Edward G. Gray's *New World Babel: Languages and Nations in Early America* (1999) have shown that projects of language collection, and even Enlightenment science itself, assisted in the theft of Indian land. Data gathered by ethnologists was often used to draw out racial differences between Westerners and Indians and justify removal.

Gunn's recent book extends this critique of science as an imperial project while offering less certainty about the irresistible triumph of either empire or the Enlightenment. Gunn tells an institutional history of ethnology and empire, showing how various government and scholarly constituencies worked in concert (and sometimes at cross-purposes) to realize the dream of mapping the world's languages. The first chapter tells the story of ethnology's origins in the comparative linguistics of Sir William Jones and Friedrich Schlegel, which guided Peter Stephen Du Ponceau, Henry Rowe

Schoolcraft, and other American ethnologists as they sought to make sense of the vast linguistic archive being generated by Indian removal. The second chapter considers the Long Expedition of the US War Department along the Red and Arkansas Rivers from 1819 to 1821, which confirmed the widespread use of sign language among Plains Groups. Along similar lines, chapters 3 and 4 consider John Dunn Hunter, author of a famous captivity narrative and chronicler of Tecumseh. Though believed by some to be a fraud, Hunter's writings open a window onto sign language and intertribal alliances. Chapter 5 considers US boundary commissioner John Russell Bartlett's frustrated attempts to establish a US-Mexico border, and the mixed literary effort that resulted. Throughout his discussion of each of these moments, Gunn finds a profound complicity of scientific and literary institutions in the war against Indians waged by the US government in the nineteenth century.

Yet despite this focus on collaboration between scholarly and military endeavors, Gunn comes to some surprising conclusions about the results of official efforts to collect Indian languages. Rather than emphasizing Western mastery over Indian materials, Gunn highlights instances of ethnologists' failure to document the world of communication that confronted them in the nation's western borderlands. Thus, chapter 1 considers how the lack of a standardized orthography for representing the spoken word made it impossible for ethnologists to produce a coherent account of the continent's languages, confronting them with a "widespread linguistic promiscuity" that called into question the very comparative premises of ethnology (12). The discussion of PISL (Plains Indian Sign Language) and AISL (American Indian Sign Language) across a sequence of chapters considers signing as "a largely unacknowledged linguistic system that enabled Native political organization and insurgent military action in a range of historical settings from Canada to Mexico" (14). And the chapter on Bartlett's *Personal Narrative* (1854) shows how Bartlett falls back on romantic portrayals of Indians when he is frustrated in his quest to collect meaningful scientific evidence from the Apaches. The "failure of ideological coordination between the overlapping projects of ethnological research and national inscription" (147) that Gunn finds in Bartlett's case might serve as the book's thesis about the entirety of the ethnological project in the North American borderlands. Conceived as an ambition to know all the world's languages and peoples, ethnological linguistics ultimately "scatters and

distorts the objects of cultural history it purports to represent,” as efforts to consolidate knowledge only confuse ethnology’s picture of the world (20).

The fate of Indian languages as scattered and distorted objects demands from Gunn a different kind of methodological approach than is usually adopted in histories of ethnography or the early anthropological sciences. Many scholars have placed figures such as Schlegel or Du Ponceau in a history of ideas about human language and racial development. Gunn goes in a different direction, following instead what he calls the “circuitous” paths that indigenous materials made through Anglo-American and European literature and science (79). Here the appropriate spatial metaphor is not the frontier but what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call a “rhizome,” a nonbinary figure that emphasizes the possibility of connection between seemingly disparate objects and worlds. Gunn’s chapters themselves might be said to have a rhizomatic structure. For example, instead of offering an overview of ethnology and its treatment of AISL, chapter 2 starts with an account of the Long Expedition and its military aims, moves to a discussion of sign language (which the expedition encountered), and then pivots to consider Samuel Akerly’s medical lectures on AISL and their implications for the scientific study of disability. Other passages in the book consider survey forms, lithographs, passports, even the paintings on the side of the steamboat *Western Engineer*, which carried the Long expeditioners west on the Ohio River. Such “assemblages” of different materials, as Gunn terms them (here following Bruno Latour), suggest that what we call “frontiers” are not really lines in the ground but rather a production of multiple institutional actors working at a range of sites and with little of the overarching coordination implied by the concept of “empire.” Empire, if it exists in anything like the old sense of the term, is a messy reality in Gunn’s account, but one that is paradoxically all the farther reaching for its lack of coordination. The book could have been called *Ethnology in Unexpected Places*, as Gunn tracks down attempts to account for Indian sign systems across a range of scenes and texts. Indeed, he is just as interested in looking at the “circuitous” transmission of ethnological materials as he is in accounting for the major figures who spearheaded ethnological research.

As Gunn shows, ethnology was limited in its understanding of actual Indian languages, but also widely diffused in its movement across the Euro-American world. Gunn’s sense of native and European networks becoming intertwined during the colonial encounter owes something to Matt

Cohen's *The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England* (2010), which takes a similar approach to an earlier time period. One advantage to emphasizing the circulation of ethnological texts in broader networks and institutions is that it then becomes possible to see ethnological efforts as part of a larger world of native communication that is only partly glimpsed in the writings of Bartlett and others. Gunn's book might be said to reverse the polarities of existing scholarship on colonial encounter. Rather than showing how Europeans' unshakable belief in their own explanations demoralized native people (a dynamic that has been brilliantly analyzed in Tzvetan Todorov's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* [1984] among other works), Gunn shows that Indians were a good deal more coordinated in their communication than any ethnologist seemed to realize. Here Gunn draws on Robert Warrior's idea of "intellectual trade routes," the many pathways that connected the families, kin groups, tribes, and confederations that ethnologists tried to study (qtd. in Gunn 5). The limits of ethnological texts are not simply gaps in the archive, Gunn argues, but opportunities for today's scholars to reconstruct the many shifting contexts behind frontier encounters, supplying details that ethnologists missed or could not see. One example of Gunn's approach in this regard can be seen in his reading of Tecumseh's confrontation with William Henry Harrison at Vincennes. Tecumseh supposedly interrupted the translation of one of Harrison's speeches with an angry outburst that brought negotiations to a halt. Based on later accounts by white observers (including one by Harrison himself), white artists portrayed Tecumseh's interruption as a set of "violent gestures," failing to see Tecumseh's response as, in fact, "a powerful counterargument to Harrison's claim" that Indians possessed no common language that might unite the tribes (Gunn 106). "[I]n the common use of sign language, members of Tecumseh's Confederacy did indeed have at their disposal a richly developed common repertoire of linguistic and communicative practices," Gunn writes, one "that challenged the Jeffersonian view that asserted Native political disunity as a function of continental linguistic diversity" (Gunn 106–07). Gunn's scholarship thus fills in what ethnology did not, and perhaps could not, document—extensive networks of communication across lines of family, kinship, and tribe that were hardly containable by the racial or national categories of ethnology.

The story about language, race, and history found in ethnological texts

such as Atwater's or in ethnologically informed statements like Harrison's speech is ultimately only one more version of Manifest Destiny. Trapped in their bewildering languages, Indians seem a race apart, doomed to disunity and left behind by history. In his focus on moments that point beyond this familiar narrative, Gunn tries to tell a different kind of story, one that does not end with Indian speech disintegrating into violent gestures or quieting into the silence of defeat. Yet here Gunn confronts a problem facing all scholars of the colonial period who want to resist narratives that always end with Indian removal or US triumph: despite taking "circuitous" routes, empire did indeed extend itself across the continent, transforming tribal sovereignty in the process and subsuming borderlands into defined and defended borders. How then to reconcile the two competing imperatives of Native American history—the need to tell stories in which the Indians are not always defeated and the brute fact of Anglo-Americans' world-changing appropriation of the continent called North America? Michael A. McDonnell's *Masters of Empire* offers a new model of North American history that exhaustively pursues the continentally significant networks that formed around one native group—the Anishinaabe Odawa of Michilimackinac. Though it focuses on a tribe and place that may be unfamiliar to some readers, McDonnell's book offers an utterly new way of looking at the most familiar events of imperial history, suggesting just how little European agents, explorers, and ethnographers really did know about the world they wanted to control.

When Caleb Atwater made a sweeping generalization about all Indians based on the "gesticulation" of Chief Hoowaneka, he was failing to see not only the many different tribes and groups that had gathered for negotiating the treaty but also the deep history that defined them in relation to each other. Many different kinds of political affiliation were in play in the treaty negotiations for Winnebago land, ranging from family relationships to kinship groups to tribal allegiances and even pan-Indian commitments. Focusing on an area just a few hundred miles away, McDonnell's *Masters of Empire* tells how one group not only survived but expanded and flourished during the period of French, British, and US empire. Again networks are the key to the story.

In the past decades, the Great Lakes have been the subject of some of the most influential scholarship on Native American history. Richard White's paradigm-creating *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Re-*



*publics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (1991) offered a model of how to tell tribal history over several centuries, one that has been much emulated by other scholars. White's concept of "the middle ground" offered a way of thinking about settler and indigenous interactions that has been used to explain colonization history throughout North America and even in studies of indigenous history in other parts of the world. Returning to White's area of geographic expertise, Michael Witgen and Heidi Bohaker have more recently developed White's cross-cultural approach in compelling new directions, suggesting that Great Lakes scholarship will continue to be a source of new concepts in indigenous studies more broadly.

McDonnell's new book undoubtedly benefits greatly from White's scholarship, but his starting point is a critique of White's middle ground. White, McDonnell argues, always told a story about imperial order. The middle ground was a space of meeting, but also transformation. Newcomers provided an "imperial glue" that pieced together Great Lakes people "shattered" by intertribal warfare and disease (qtd. in McDonnell 333n6). McDonnell notes that such descriptions do not apply to the Odawa of Michilimackinac. That region, at the straits where Lake Huron meets Lake Michigan, "was never invaded or settled during the colonial period" (6). Moreover, the Odawa themselves always controlled the straits, which were a critical commercial and diplomatic channel for both the French and then the English. Thus, their story is one of "mastering empires and keeping them at bay" (7). This unique history demands a different approach than White's middle ground allows, one that places the Odawa at the center but also considers their connections with western groups, Great Lakes Indians from other tribes, imperial outposts to the east, and Iroquois adversaries to the southeast beyond the lakes.

To get at the Odawa at Michilimackinac, McDonnell has to contend with mostly European sources, which, he shows, considerably misunderstood the group, its motives, and the nature of its connections to Europeans and other Indians. The Odawa at Michilimackinac were part of the Anishinaabeg, who controlled much of the area around Lake Michigan and Lake Huron during the colonial era. In the Anishinaabe world, multiethnic communities were common, as was seasonal mobility, with groups traveling for trade or to seek protection. Surveying mobile and multiethnic settlements, Europeans assumed that Anishinaabe peoples had been destroyed or dispersed by war with other Indians. But this was far from the

case. The Anishinaabeg, and especially the Odawa at Michilimackinac, exerted great influence on trade and territorial boundaries throughout the era of French and British imperialism, even manipulating imperial actors to Anishinaabe ends. Understanding their power and influence, McDonnell argues, demands looking beyond tribal identities to consider the kinship networks that connected individuals, families, and tribes down through the centuries and across the thousands of miles of paths and waterways that linked Great Lakes Indians to their neighbors. Here McDonnell draws on the work of Bohaker and James M. McClurken to consider the political power of *doodem*, the “larger kinship unit that cut across band and village lines” (McDonnell 9). Doodemag ties, extended and created by marriage, meant that the Anishinaabeg recognized a wide array of obligations to neighboring peoples in matters of trade, war, and survival. Thus “[t]he Odawa at the straits of Michilimackinac saw themselves simultaneously as members of particular lineages, doodemag, towns, and a greater Anishinaabe world” (12). For the most part these connections eluded Europeans, whose notions of political and trading alliances rested upon top-down decision making, rare among the Anishinaabeg, whose leaders had “little coercive power” (11). But McDonnell argues that the flexible nature of Anishinaabe politics was actually its greatest strength. “[B]y the time Europeans arrived on the scene,” he notes, “Anishinaabemowin speakers could be found from the gulf of the St. Lawrence River as far west as the Mississippi River” (12). McDonnell’s story is about how the Odawa at Michilimackinac leveraged this vast network to triumph and flourish during the imperial era.

The key to the Odawas’ long-range influence, McDonnell argues, was their shrewd control of the straits, which during the colonial period was one of the key points of passage to the west of the continent. Anishinaabe, French, British, or Iroquois—anyone wanting to do business beyond Lake Michigan had to contend with the Odawa at Michilimackinac. In a sense, McDonnell’s book is about what the political scientist Joseph Nye has called “soft power,” or the ability to command through trade and politics rather than conquest or coercion. In McDonnell’s book, we see the Odawa directing furs to European markets, enlisting Europeans in their conflicts with other native groups, and successfully “play[ing] off the English and French against each other” in an attempt to manipulate both sides to Anishinaabe purposes (158). These slow and careful maneuvers have not commanded

the same attention from historians as Pontiac's War (1763–66) or Washington's attack on the French at the Battle of Jumonville Glen (1754). But McDonnell argues that they were just as important in shaping the destiny of the continent. Indeed, it is impossible to understand the major turning points of North American history without first understanding Odawa strategies. For example, the attack on the Miami village of Pickawillany, believed by many to have started the Seven Years' War in America, was led by Charles-Michel Mouet de Langlade, a French-Anishinaabe man married to an Odawa woman and baptized at Michilimackinac in 1729. Langlade's attack against the pro-English Indians at Pickawillany not only helped his French allies but also drove English traders from the Ohio River Valley and preserved the importance of Michilimackinac as a trading center. Thus, what looked like a victory for the French was actually orchestrated by the Odawas. Later, in Pontiac's War, Odawas again played a crucial role, this time saving the British from an all-out conflict with the Indians and demanding generous presents in return, ultimately leading the British Crown to introduce new and unpopular taxes on its American subjects in part to subsidize its obligations to Indians. These taxes sparked an internal colonial revolution against British rule—one in which Langlade would again enlist on the British side. Indeed, Langlade's travels by themselves might be said to trace the influence of the Odawas throughout the Anishinaabe and imperial world; where he appears, we find Odawa interests being advanced. But in McDonnell's account, Langlade is not a singular figure passing back and forth between cultures, as he is sometimes described in other histories. He is instead one icon of an Odawa network that exerted great and sometimes unrecorded influence on events thousands of miles away.

On this point, McDonnell's book is somewhat surprising in its lack of focus on different Odawa leaders over the years. Relatively few of them are named in his pages. The book is more like a network analysis of Great Lakes politics, as McDonnell charts in often painstaking detail the many shifting treaties and trade alliances that connected the region's peoples. Reading the book will thus encourage scholars to develop a different set of mental habits for thinking about the colonial period than ones that have been useful so far. Scholars are trained to read and write stories that focus on either individuals or nations as the protagonists of history. McDonnell instead follows kinship relations, which extended across tribal and national lines and demanded for their creation and maintenance the kind

of tireless traveling and diplomacy for which Langlade was famous. This network-based approach, with its constant focus on negotiation, lacks some of the old romance of history as a drama of representative men. However, it makes up for it by revealing stunning connections between an understudied place like Michilimackinac and frequently described events like the Seven Years' War.

Academic histories of native North America often have some kind of tragic ending. One-sided treaties, removal, and genocide serve as the concluding scenes of scholarly works on the subject—and with good reason. McDonnell, however, consistently writes against or around this kind of conclusion. Because the Odawa at Michilimackinac so powerfully controlled trade and diplomatic relations by leveraging their kinship networks, they did not participate in the landmark defeats of Great Lakes history. The events of the late eighteenth century again illustrate their unique status. For example, while historians often describe Pontiac's War as a failed rebellion, McDonnell argues that many Indians, the Odawa among them, received highly favorable terms for keeping the peace in the wake of the initial attacks of the conflict. And while the American Revolution is often viewed as a catastrophic defeat for Britain's native allies, who were left alone to face a wrathful nation-state, McDonnell shows that in the wake of the war "the Anishinaabe Odawa drew on longer-term strategies to secure a place for themselves in the new American republic" (19). The long game of Anishinaabe politics carried them into the present. McDonnell's book concludes with a brief account of Odawa political and religious strategies in the early nineteenth century, which describes how the Anishinaabeg in northern Michigan used delays, voluntary religious conversions, and shrewd manipulation of US government procedures to "manag[e] to stay where they were" (312). They remain there today in Charlevoix and Emmet Counties, surviving even the collapse of the straits themselves as a node of world trade.

The tone of McDonnell's book is different than what one usually finds in studies of Native American history. Often scholarly narratives in this field have a sense of foreboding, as the story of colonial encounter moves toward a conclusion that is known in advance, even if the details of a particular case are unfamiliar. McDonnell's writing, by contrast, is affirmative, and even somewhat celebratory, of the Odawa's achievements. The narrative recounts a string of successes that build to the present day, a triumphalist

history of a Native American community. This tone and narrative are appropriate for McDonnell's material. Buffered from invasion by surrounding native groups and calculating in their control of the straits, the Odawa of Michilimackinac enjoyed commercial and political success unusual for a native polity. But even though a story of successes cannot be told about most North American native groups during the colonial era, McDonnell's narrative arc might hold lessons for scholars working in different areas of Native American studies. The trajectory of history did not move inexorably toward removal for any Indian group. Some experienced removal as a string of defeats dating back to their first encounter with invaders. Others experienced it as a sudden reversal after centuries of success in fighting off and even exploiting newcomers. Still others were never removed. As scholars try to reconstruct the key events of the colonial period from the perspective of Native Americans, and learn more about kinship networks and the widespread nature of their alliances and political investments, moments that look like native defeats in European sources may turn out to have been victories for the Indians after all, and not just temporary ones.

Caleb Atwater's remarks about Hoowaneka's oratory are not just a historical source, however often they have been cited in works of scholarship. They are also a story in miniature, a story about why Indians do not fit into modern politics, a story about the Indians' lack of a story. Despite their continued reliance on sources like Atwater, scholars today are determined to tell new stories with Native Americans like Hoowaneka as the central characters. For a long time, native leaders of the nineteenth century were viewed as great men of history, powerful figures whose fates were intertwined with that of their nation, like George Washington but on the losing side. Gunn's and McDonnell's books are remarkable for the way they set aside this frame of reference and consider the imperial archive as part of a much broader network of indigenous political communication that could not be personified by one man. Gunn's archive is a scattered set of data points, brought into being by Europeans but nonetheless offering glimpses of another world, as when Tecumseh manually signals his solidarity with other native groups in the face of Harrison's dismissal of pan-Indian unity. McDonnell's archive is centered in one remarkable place, the straits of Michilimackinac, making it possible for him to reconstruct a key part of Odawa history by following the people, goods, and ideas that passed through there. The great national protagonists of colonial history

dissolve into networks of relations that extend in every direction and exert a fateful influence over imperial events. In some ways, both Gunn's and McDonnell's work are participating in a broader trend in scholarship that emphasizes commercial, political, and cultural connections between disparate places brought about during earlier eras of globalization. But both books have their focus squarely on the landmark events that made North America what it is today. Both, finally, show the emergence of a new way of thinking about the colonial encounter—not as a confrontation between peoples, but as a network that extended in many directions, not just those running east to west.

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Indian, European, and African men and women interacted from the sixteenth through early nineteenth centuries.

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