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Christian Indians at War: Evangelism and Military Communication in the Anglo-French-Native Borderlands

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Colonial Mediascapes

SENSORY WORLDS OF THE EARLY AMERICAS

*Edited and with an introduction by
Matt Cohen and Jeffrey Glover*

Foreword by Paul Chaat Smith

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Christian Indians at War

EVANGELISM AND MILITARY
COMMUNICATION IN THE
ANGLO-FRENCH-NATIVE BORDERLANDS

Jeffrey Glover

In the fall of 1710, the French Jesuit Louis d'Avaugour wrote to his superior Joseph Louis-Germain to report on the town of Lorette, located on the bank of the Saint-Charles River just northwest of Quebec. After briefly describing his evangelical endeavors among the "holy savages" (Christian Indians) living in the town, d'Avaugour quickly turned to the topic of France's precarious relationship with neighboring Huron military allies.¹ In the face of growing English control over trading routes, he worried that the Hurons might "flock to the neighboring [English] heretics, from whom they make a much greater profit." Yet d'Avaugour also had a solution to the colony's uncertainty about the hearts and minds of its Huron allies. Though the trade had faltered, d'Avaugour suggested that missionary outreach might secure the political allegiance of the Hurons. "Nothing else than religion retains the savages in their fidelity to the French," he insisted (66:173).

The problem of monitoring and tracking political loyalties had a long history in the French, English, and Native borderlands. New France and New England had made many friends and enemies among Native groups since the appearance of permanent settlements on the North Atlantic coast in the early seventeenth century. Wars and skirmishes among tribes and colonies involved constantly shifting alliances, and d'Avaugour's anxieties about "retain[ing] the savages in their fidelity" paralleled those of many European, Algonquian, and Iroquois leaders, who had conflicting systems for recording alliances. Within the chaotic world of borderland diplomacy, Christian Indians were a particular source of anxiety. As multilingual individuals who could switch sides rather easily, Native converts were often involved in controversies over alliances and allegiances.² In this essay, I examine missionary accounts of political loyalties during King Philip's War and the first decades of the French and Indian Wars. In the past few decades, many scholars have done important work on the complexity of missionary identity in North American settlements.³ This work has dispelled the notion that Native converts were merely passive recipients of religious instruction from doctrinaire evangelists. European evangelism combined concepts from tribal and European religions, and Natives played an active role in seeking out Christianity and merging it with Native religious concepts. Yet with a few important exceptions, scholarship on colonial evangelism has focused on particular national and religious cultures, looking at John Eliot's mission to praying Indians in New England, for example, or at French Jesuit missions in Canada or Louisiana.⁴ As I will try to show here, missionaries were also involved in the systems of military and diplomatic correspondence that connected tribes, colonies, and imperial crowns. While most missionary publications were religious in nature, these political networks involved many other kinds of genres and media, including the petitions and treaty papers of colonial states as well as the rituals and non-alphabetic writings of Native peoples. In what follows, I compare two texts by colonial missionaries, Daniel Gookin's *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indi-*

ans in New England (1677), a report on the role of praying Indians in King Philip's War, and d'Avaugour's letter on the mission of Lorette in New France (1710), an account of the role of Huron converts in the raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1704. Although Gookin and d'Avaugour were separated by national and religious differences, they faced many similar challenges as European guardians of Indian converts. Their chief adversaries in the New World were not hostile Indians or imperial rivals but rather military leaders in their own settlements, who viewed Christian Indians as allies of questionable loyalty and often sought to banish or marginalize them.

I examine how missionaries and converts negotiated political and diplomatic communications in order to defend their communities and churches during times of inter-imperial and intertribal conflict. Both Gookin and d'Avaugour tried to persuade other colonists of the military usefulness of converts by publicizing accounts of Christian Indians' battlefield exploits. Such publications were a way of defending missions from opponents who believed that Indian converts were unreliable allies or traitors. And while these defenses were imperialistic in their designs, placing converts in a subordinate role as servants of European military interests, as I will show here, both Gookin and d'Avaugour pay remarkable attention to indigenous practices of war and diplomacy. Rather than attempting to replace Native modes of communication with Christian ones (as missionaries are often thought to do), Gookin and d'Avaugour suggest instead that colonial writing must accommodate Native American practices of political and military communication, even as missionaries eradicate Native religion. Gookin and d'Avaugour articulate administrative procedures for maintaining converts' religious commitments while encouraging their retention of indigenous military and diplomatic practices useful to imperial crowns. These efforts at reconciling religion and war led to radically different outcomes; most of the converts under Gookin's authority were resettled, while many Hurons live near Quebec to this day. Yet read alongside each other, these texts call into question the assumption that Native American politics was confined to the realm

of an oral culture that operated outside the domain of writing, print, and other settler technologies.

Tracking Loyalty in Gookin's *Historical Account*

An Historical Account has received little scholarly attention when compared to printed narratives by Mary Rowlandson, Increase Mather, and others. One reason is that Gookin's book expressed profound sympathy for praying Indians at a time when many English colonists viewed them as traitors. Gookin often appears in the historical record as a lonely advocate for praying Indians in a world hostile to their existence. I will suggest here that discussions of Gookin and his book should not be limited to a consideration of colonial missions and their fate on the English frontier. While King Philip's War largely involved the English United colonies and the Wampanoags and their Native allies, French-allied Native groups also joined raids, and the English were constantly suspicious of French-Native alliances. One reason Gookin wrote *An Historical Account* was to argue that evangelism could produce powerful Indian allies that would bolster colonial forces in conflicts with hostile Indians or European rivals. Even as Gookin advertises the Indians' civil comportment and religious devotion, he suggests that the English should learn to understand indigenous military practices and knowledge.

Unlike most Massachusetts Bay Colony leaders, Daniel Gookin traveled widely before immigrating to New England. He was born in 1612 in Kent to a family with connections to a wide variety of overseas enterprises.⁵ Gookin's father was involved in numerous colonizing efforts, purchasing lands in Ireland as part of Robert Boyle's Munster settlements as well as shares in the Virginia Company, in which he was active throughout the 1620s. Daniel Gookin first appeared in public records after the 1641 Irish Rebellion, when the members of his family fled Munster after the uprising against Cromwellian rule. After immigrating to Virginia, Gookin pursued many of the opportunities available to him as a member of a well-placed colonial family, joining the General Court as a judge and organizing a militia to pro-

tect outlying Chesapeake settlements from incursions by Powhatan Indians. Soon after arriving, however, he apparently became troubled by the colony's lack of interest in evangelizing Indians. In 1642 Gookin joined with Puritans in Virginia and began corresponding with ministers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. After a ban on nonconformist religion in Virginia, he moved to Boston, where he was quickly admitted to the church.

After several years in Boston, Gookin accepted a position as superintendent of Eliot's praying towns, a decision that may have been influenced by his recent experience with Ireland. Gookin's duties placed him in the middle of the political networks that connected New England Indians, the Eliot mission, the Bay Colony magistracy, and London administrators. As Richard W. Cogley has detailed in his account of the mission, the position of superintendent involved many kinds of administrative work, including documenting commercial exchanges, arbitrating disputes about land deals between settlers and Natives, and hearing criminal cases involving praying Indians.⁶ Gookin also worked as an advocate on behalf of praying Indians seeking to make claims before the New England magistracy, serving as a liaison between converts and government leaders in the colonies. His work in this position included transcribing testimony from Native plaintiffs and drafting petitions on behalf of aggrieved Native parties.

While many praying Indians enjoyed legal standing in English courts as covenanted members of churches, the outbreak of King Philip's War left them in a vulnerable position. The war pitted the English colonies against a Wampanoag-led alliance of Native groups, and both sides were hostile to the praying Indians. Over the course of the war they faced a number of legal restrictions and civil penalties, including forced resettlement.⁷ Despite these sanctions, Gookin and those working in his office made many attempts throughout the war to shelter or rescue praying Indians. Many of his efforts involved helping praying Indians negotiate the colonial legal system. Over the course of the war, Gookin's office published and circulated a number of documentary genres, including affidavits, confessions, and requests for lenien-

cy. Gookin also transcribed and drafted petitions aimed at protecting converts whose allegiances had been questioned in the war. After the war, he petitioned to have praying Indians freed from enslavement and other sentences meted out on the suspicion of their disloyalty to the English.⁸

After the defeat of King Philip's forces in 1676, the United Colonies passed measures that provided for the resettlement of praying Indians to islands and land reserves, and Gookin lost much of his jurisdiction over converts. Gookin likely began work on *Historical Account* around this time. In an important account of Gookin's publication efforts, J. Patrick Cesarini has argued that the book is an attempt to reconcile a providential narrative of war as a godly test with an empirically verifiable and documented account of praying Indians' "demonstrations of . . . fidelity."⁹ And indeed, the book is something of a multimedia document, including certificates, testimonials, eye-witness reports, and other European genres, which show empirical evidence of praying Indian loyalty, and refute reports of their treachery. However, Gookin's engagement with the mediation of political allegiance is not strictly limited to European documents, even though they provide the bulk of his evidence. Gookin's many papers and certificates reference speeches, networks of intelligence and stories, acts of camouflage, and other forms of communication, suggesting that the praying Indians' loyalty can be glimpsed not only in English records but also in indigenous techniques of war and diplomacy that colonial administrators have failed to understand or document.¹⁰

Many English believed that Native people were unreliable military allies. Algonquian fighters relied heavily on retreat and camouflage, a practice that one colonial leader derisively referred to as a "secret, sculking manner" of war.¹¹ According to Gookin, such misconceptions have led English leaders to ignore information that might have prevented the worst of the war, including the surprise attacks that initiated the conflict. Describing why the English were taken unawares by the outbreak of hostilities, Gookin claims that English leaders ignored key reports from praying Indian allies:

In April, 1675, before the war broke forth above two months . . . Waban, the principal Ruler of the praying Indians living at Natick, came to one of the magistrates on purpose, and informed him that he had ground to fear that Sachem Philip and other Indians, his confederates, intended some mischief shortly to the English and Christian Indians. Again, in May, about six weeks before the war began, he came again and renewed the same. Others also of the Christian Indians did speak the same thing, and that when the woods were grown thick with green trees then it was likely to appear, earnestly desiring that care might be had and means used for prevention, at least for preparation for such a thing; and a month after the war began. (440-41)

The English refuse to take Waban seriously and disregard his knowledge of military timing and seasonal cover. After fighting commences, however, they quickly reverse course, embracing Waban and his way of war. In their initial approach to King Philip's groups, Gookin writes, "The English at first thought easily to chastise the insolent doings and murderous practices of the heathen," assuming that racial and cultural superiority translated easily into military dominance. However, "it was found another manner of thing than was expected; for our men could see no enemy to shoot at, but yet felt their bullets out of the thick bushes where they lay in ambushments." In response to these unexpected frustrations, "The Council . . . judged it very necessary to arm and send forth some of the praying Indians to assist our forces, hereby not only to try their fidelity, but to deal better with the enemy in their own ways and methods, according to the Indian manner of fighting" (441). Faced with imminent defeat, colonial leaders resort to combining English military strategies with indigenous military knowledge and practice.

Gookin ultimately claims that the military contributions of praying Indians have played a decisive role in the English victory. This fact, proved by documentary certificates from English captains, weighs heavily against English stereotypes of Native allies as ineffective or treacherous. Gookin writes:

I contend that the small company of our Indian friends have taken and slain of the enemy, in the summer of 1676, not less than four hundred; and their fidelity and courage is testified by the certificates of their captains, that are inserted in the close of this discourse. It may be said in truth, that God made use of these poor, despised and hated Christians, to do great service for the churches of Christ in New England, in this day of their trial; and I think it was observed by impartial men, that, after our Indians went out, the balance turned of the English side. (513)

English practices have finally caught up to Indian ones. The documentary record of certificates from English captains dispels superstitions about Native military tactics, showing that praying Indians are brave and loyal soldiers despite the fact that they employ a different manner of fighting. By paying attention to indigenous sources, Gookin's mission makes English documents accountable to Native ways of war, with enormous consequences for the outcome of the fighting.

At the close of the manuscript, Gookin broadens his focus to some of the geopolitical stakes involved in heeding indigenous tactics. One of the most frequent accusations against praying Indians was that they would revert to tribal ways at moments of conflict.¹² Many English leaders and ministers circulated stories about praying Indians abandoning English towns for tribal settlements. Gookin seeks to correct these stories by citing indigenous sources, which reveal that the vanished praying Indians have in reality been taken captive by French-allied tribes. Gookin thus presents evangelism as a way to open international channels of communication that will enable the English to monitor European rivals and their Native alliances.

Gookin is well aware that praying Indians have begun to disappear mysteriously into Indian country. These disappearances, he writes, have been a matter of "scandal and offence, (to such as are ready to take up any thing to reproach the profession of religion among the Indians)" (521). While many colonists have seen the disappearances as a backsliding from religion, or a betrayal of the English, Gookin suggests

that captivity, rather than the abandonment of Christianity, is the main reason for the vanishing of the Indians. Indeed, in their exposure to attacks from hostile tribes, praying Indians share a common lot with English settlers in the countryside:

In this month of September, about the 19th day, a party of Indians fell on a village called Hatfield; near Hadley; they burnt some dwelling-houses and barns, that stood without the line, and wounded and killed about twelve persons, and carried away captive twenty English persons, most of them women and children. It was conceived, at first, that this mischief was done by a party of Mahawkes. . . . But it appeared afterward, by an English prisoner that escaped from the enemy, that this party of Indians . . . had fled to the French about Quebec . . . for, on the very same day, another pty of Indians, that came from the French, came to Naamkeke, near Chelmsford; and there, either by force or persuasion, carried away with them Wannalancet, the sachem, and all his company, excepting two men, whereof one was the minister, and their wives and children, and one widow that escaped to the English. (520)

This passage adopts many of the conventions of the English captivity narrative, describing the helplessness of innocents in the face of an Indian onslaught. However, it also dramatically reverses other narratives' assumptions about the religious and cultural commitments of praying Indians. Far from representing a reversion to tribalism, the disappearances of converts can be traced back to the involvement of the French, who direct Mohawks or hostile Iroquois to attack both English settlements and Indian converts. While the English have conceived of King Philip's War in racial terms, as a struggle between white colonials and barbarous Indians, Gookin shows that the conflict is actually part of a broader geopolitical rivalry among European empires in which the captivity and conversion of Indians plays a central part.

For Gookin, the pursuit of indigenous knowledge of warfare is thus

inextricably bound up with geopolitical calculation and imperial strategy. The networks of captive bodies, rumors, and stories that link tribes are an important source of information for understanding the threats to English empire in the region. Gookin brings his narrative to a close with a speech by the Christian sachem Waban. In it, Waban delivers an extended oration in which he forgives the English for their many sins against praying Indian communities. However, Waban also calls attention to the importance of information from praying Indians in tracing and interpreting the complicated acts of proxy warfare that are part of imperial rivalry in America. The ability of Gookin and the other evangelists to communicate with praying Indians suggests that organized evangelical efforts are central both to religious redemption and regional security. Asked about the true cause of apparent praying Indian defections, Waban responds:

That God knew, that they had done their utmost endeavours to carry themselves so that they might approve their fidelity and love to the English. But yet, some English were still ready to speak the contrary of them, as in this matter instanced; and in that business at Coheco, lately, when the Indians were carried away by the Maquas [Iroquois]; yet the English say, they ran away to the Maquas and were not carried away; yet . . . I know the governor and magistrates and many good men had other thoughts of them and more charity toward them. (522–23)

At this moment, evangelism is given a geopolitical importance, serving as a crucial means of acquiring information about the place of English colonial endeavors in a larger international and intertribal world. Gookin and fellow administrators of praying towns are the only English capable of divining the hand of the French in what appears to be a conflict between the English and the Indians.

While Gookin is eager to show that praying Indians have abandoned tribal traditions that are inimical to English civility and religion, he urges New England colonists to learn to understand and track Na-

tive military and diplomatic communications. If the English want to win frontier wars, they must follow the Indians' lead, embracing camouflage, guerrilla warfare, and surreptitious networks of intelligence. By the same token, they must learn to cultivate sources among the praying Indians, who alone are able to expose the involvement of New France in raids against English towns. Rather than transforming Indians into English subjects, Gookin wants to preserve their existing military and diplomatic networks. Gookin's book is undoubtedly a reflection of the interests of English evangelists; while Indians are often quoted, their speech is heavily stylized, and is almost certainly edited. But broadening our focus beyond Gookin's book to the military and political networks of which it was a part enables us to see the pressure that indigenous modes of communication exerted upon English writing. According to Gookin, any account of the war and its consequences must draw upon indigenous sources.

Gookin's *Historical Account* would remain at the margins for many decades. It circulated in copies until 1836, when it was published in the American Antiquarian Society's *Transactions and Collections* series.¹³ The book's failure to find a printer suggests the waning of transatlantic financial support for evangelical ventures after the war. Yet Gookin's book was also part of a much broader network of military and diplomatic communication that was not confined to English-speaking readers. Indeed, Gookin's invocation of a shadowy French presence lurking behind the Maqua Indians suggests that similar questions about alliances and loyalty were being raised elsewhere.

D'Avaugour's Holy Savages and the Deerfield Raid

Like their English counterparts, the French were concerned about the loyalty and effectiveness of Native allies, but for different reasons. While French involvement in King Philip's War amounted only to the encouragement of occasional raids, the outbreak of the Nine Years' War (1688–97) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13) forced New France to mobilize against New England and forge formal military alliances with Native groups.¹⁴ While some Native groups, such

as the Abenakis and Pennacooks (who had participated in King Philip's War), joined the French in attacks against the English, others were often reluctant to engage in yet another conflict and hesitated to fully commit to the French side. Still others, such as the Hurons, fought alongside the French, but for their own reasons, such as collecting captives, symbolic goods such as scalps, or spoils that could serve as currency in the regional trade.¹⁵ Thus, while the French depended upon Native allies, they were uneasy about the Natives' commitment to their cause and their differing understanding of the ends of war.

As the priest of the Jesuit mission at the Huron town of Lorette, Louis d'Avaugour was at the center of the conflicts over Native alliances and wartime rituals that surfaced after the intensification of war with New England. Lorette was originally established in 1673 by Huron refugees from the Iroquois-Huron War. French Jesuits built a chapel in the town in 1674 modeled after the one at Loreto in Italy, and many Hurons converted to Catholicism, becoming known for their intense piety and regular acts of devotion.¹⁶ While the Loretans (as converts were called) inspired nothing like the virulent racism directed at praying Indians in New England, they were still a source of anxiety. A French military commander saw them as "the most loyal Indians that we have," but other French leaders were suspicious of such praise and "complain[ed]" of the "excessive scrupulosity" of the converts, especially their unwillingness to drink wine at political summits (66:157).¹⁷ More troubling still from the French point of view was their move in 1697 to a new site (Jeune Lorette) and the persistence of Huron domestic and agricultural customs amid Catholic rituals. These developments raised the suspicion that Hurons were using Christianity to maintain political autonomy. The French were also concerned that the weakness of their own position in the regional trade might drive Indians to seek out alliances with the English.¹⁸

D'Avaugour joined the mission at Lorette shortly after the conclusion of the Deerfield raid.¹⁹ His work there included many administrative tasks, such as preaching and organizing Huron devotions. Like many Jesuits, he described his activities in written correspondence os-

tensibly addressed to his French Jesuit superiors but also intended for copying and dissemination among broader audiences of priests, government officials, and colonial investors. While addressed as a private communication to Joseph Louis-Germain, d'Avaugour's letter about the Hurons was composed in Latin, a language of international correspondence, indicating his ambitions for the document's publication.²⁰ In the letter, d'Avaugour presents Lorette as a model mission, describing the Hurons' faultless dedication to Catholic observances. However, he also argues for the geopolitical importance of Jesuit missions and tries to show how the government at Lorette has retained the loyalty of tribes who might otherwise have deserted New France. D'Avaugour argues that the introduction of Catholic rituals, combined with a respect for existing Huron ways of war, will produce "holy savages" who cling to Catholic faith while fighting France's enemies.

D'Avaugour opens the letter by presenting the Hurons as devoted converts. Lorette, he claims, is a triumph of evangelism. The Indians there "practice piety openly and in security." Their devotion rivals that of any European. "Every day at early morn, as soon as they awake, they repair to the church," he writes, and "neither rigorous December nor the burning Dog-days can deter any from this pious duty" (66:149). "The very children vie in outstripping their seniors," and "[t]heir modesty is so remarkable that the French passing through the village admire it—to their own confusion, when they compare themselves and their behavior with these barbarians" (66:149, 149–51). While many French view Indians as profligate drinkers, d'Avaugour informs his superior that "[d]runkness" has been "thoroughly abolished and destroyed in the village" (66:149).

According to d'Avaugour's letter, Catholic rituals have entirely replaced those of Huron religion. The Indians show "extreme docility in obeying the priest who presides over the Mission," he reports (66:155–57). However, the abolition of Indian traditions extends only so far. The centerpiece of the letter is a narrative of Huron heroics in the chaos of the Deerfield raid (which d'Avaugour had heard about secondhand). "[T]his piety of the Loretans does not at all diminish the warlike

Spirit which these savages commonly possess,” he reports. “[I]t merely imposes moderation and certain limits upon their Martial ardor” (66:159). Distinguishing between those military practices that should be preserved and those that should be extinguished is one of d’Avaugour’s chief concerns in the letter. He wants to show readers that Christian Indians have not only retained their ferocity but are also better fighters than pagans and more willing to follow widely accepted norms of engagement when it comes to taking captives. Huron conduct in the Deerfield raid is the most important evidence of d’Avaugour’s claims to this effect. “The French captains enlist no soldiers more willingly than those from the village of Lorette,” he writes (66:161). Part of the Hurons’ reliability as fighters derives from their devotion to Catholic rituals. After the call to arms is raised, the Hurons insist on performing last rites, “although it was in the dead of night” (66:163). Their trustworthiness as allies also derives from their love of French leaders. “[T]hey revere above all King Louis of France,” for his “noble deeds” and for his “zeal for the extension and protection of religion” (66:161). D’Avaugour is aware that to many of his readers the Hurons might appear to be an exception to the norm. The French viewed Natives as unsteady allies, and in the course of the Deerfield raid a number of Indians from different groups had allegedly abandoned French positions at key moments. Acknowledging that some “savages” were “shamefully put to flight,” d’Avaugour concedes the criticisms of skeptics of French-Indian alliances, who in the aftermath of Deerfield blamed Indian cowardice for the weakness of French forces in the face of English counterattacks. Yet the Hurons from Lorette were not among the fleeing Indians, d’Avaugour insists. Indeed, they “[a]lone” retained allegiance to the French alliance, and “[s]ustained and repelled the onset” of the English attack (66:159). The Hurons themselves offer the definitive explanation for their courageous behavior, testifying that the assurance of eternal life embodied in Catholic rites has enabled them to fight bravely: “For who can be strong Knowing that he is the enemy of God; and that, after losing this mortal life, he must enter into everlasting death?” they testify (66:159–61).

The spread of Catholicism and the instruction of Indians in the last rites thus has a practical military value, freeing the Indians from the fear of death and enabling them to fight with abandon. According to d'Avaugour, the suppression of Huron rituals only intensifies the Indians' traditionally warlike spirit. However, in emphasizing the Hurons' stalwart actions on the battlefield, d'Avaugour also touched on another source of anxiety among the French military command. French generals were aware that many groups, such as the Hurons, fought for reasons that had little to do with European politics. Though the Hurons had been at war with the Iroquois for many years, they shared Iroquois battlefield customs, such as captivity, torture, and the ritual execution of prisoners as a way to avenge fallen kinsmen. The taking of captives was a key motivation for Indian participation in the Deerfield raid. France's Indian allies seized many Deerfield settlers, most famously John Williams, whose printed captivity narrative later enjoyed wide readership and many reprintings.²¹

In the immediate aftermath of Deerfield, the intentions of the Indians to torture and even burn some captives left French generals in a bind. While they needed Native military support, they had reservations about leaving other Europeans as Indian captives or abandoning them to torture.²² D'Avaugour argues that Catholicism, and in particular the rituals of devotion his mission has taught the Hurons, will provide a resolution to this dilemma. His letter closes with the story of the great Huron warrior Thaovenhosen, a Christian who is one of the most imposing fighters in the French camp. "Wherever he fought, the enemy was routed, defeated, and slaughtered," d'Avaugour reports. Yet Thaovenhosen, as a Christian, rejects the traditional practice of torturing captives, and the events of the Deerfield raid soon bring about a conflict between him and the other Indians. In the course of the battle the Huron chief dies, and his relatives clamor for an English captive to burn as revenge. At this decisive moment, Thaovenhosen "ris[es] . . . makes a speech in the assembly of the notables, and boldly pleads for the life of the Captive. He prays, he entreats them to remember that they are Christians and citizens of the village of

Lorette; that dire cruelty is unbecoming to the Christian name; that this injury cannot be branded upon the reputation of the Loretans without the greatest disgrace" (66:169). After Thaovenhosen concludes the speech, "no one dared to decide upon any greater severity toward the captive" (66:171). Thaovenhosen is fully a warrior. "He is all covered with honorable wounds received in battle," d'Avaugour reports (66:167). But his commitment to Catholic faith has led him to reject indigenous rituals of torture that offend European sensibilities. Thaovenhosen's religious scruples bring the Hurons within the orbit of European laws of war. Jesuit missions, and the rituals and devotion they teach, are the key to waging a successful and lawful campaign against France's rivals.

It is striking that d'Avaugour's letter culminates in a speech by an Indian rather than a sermon from a priest. Thaovenhosen does the work of the Jesuits for them. Importantly, though, it is not just his religious authority that enables him to dissuade his tribesmen from traditional practices of torture—it is also his prowess as a warrior, written on his body in scars sustained in battle. The power of priestly homily thus combines with an indigenous form of corporal textuality to provoke a renegotiation of the place of torture in Huron war-making practices. Thaovenhosen's speech undoubtedly reflects d'Avaugour's particular sense of just Christian warfare. The rejection of torture is presented as a triumph of civility and Catholic morality and a reformation of savage Indian ways. But if one considers d'Avaugour's letter as part of a broader network of political and military communication—one that includes practices such as the taking of captives, the delivery of orations at war councils, and the telling of stories through markings on the body—it becomes clear that d'Avaugour's missionary project was part of a broader struggle over the meaning of Native ways of war. D'Avaugour, like Gookin, informs his superiors that they must learn to work through Native channels, listen to Huron councils, and read Huron bodies. Thus, while his text everywhere erases Huron religion, it also points to the power and influence of Native people in political venues beyond French control.

Both Gookin and d’Avaugour use claims about frontier political media to advance their missionary endeavors, not to make a plea for multicultural inclusion. However, their texts offer new ways of thinking about indigenous communication and the history of colonial writing. The scholar Bernard J. Hibbitts has called attention to the ways that Western traditions have favored written expressions of conscience over gestural, visual, and aural modes of laying open the heart and mind. Hibbitts argues that Western legal systems should revise standards of admissible evidence to include forms of media that may have aural and visual reaches radically different from documentary systems.²³ For early modern scholars, cases like those of Gookin and d’Avaugour suggest that scholars look beyond paper archives to consider the significance of alternative modes of expression such as speech, gesture, and even bodily writings in constructing conscience, allegiance, and loyalty. Focusing on media from the borderlands will offer new ways of comparing colonial texts from different national and religious traditions. Moreover, these texts’ engagement with multiple systems of communication suggests ways scholars can move beyond reductive accounts of Native politics as merely an oral culture. For both Gookin and d’Avaugour, the most credible accounts of border wars are from indigenous sources, and colonists must learn to read them.

Notes

1. Louis d’Avaugour to Joseph Louis-Germain, 1710, in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1891–1901), 66:163; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
2. For involvement of praying Indians in King Philip’s War, see Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 21–47. For a wide-ranging account of the place of Jesuit missions in building indigenous alliances with New France, see Tracy Neal Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

3. For the English context, see Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); and David J. Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard, 1600–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For the writings of English missions, see Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Laura M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000). For the French context, see Leavelle, *Catholic Calumet*, and John H. Pollack, "Native Performances of Diplomacy and Religion in Early New France," in *Native Acts: Indian Performance, 1603–1832*, ed. Joshua David Bellin and Laura L. Mielke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 81–116.
4. For comparisons of English and French colonial writing, see Gordon M. Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). See also Susan Castillo, *Colonial Encounters in New World Writing, 1500–1786: Performing America* (London: Routledge, 2005).
5. I draw my account of Gookin's career from Louise Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises among the Puritan Elite in Massachusetts, 1630–1692* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 145–96.
6. Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 224–29.
7. See James D. Drake, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675–1676* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 140–67.
8. See Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds*, 170–71.
9. J. Patrick Cesarini, "What Has Become of Your Praying to God?: Daniel Gookin's Troubled History of King Philip's War," *Early American Literature* 44.3 (2009), 489–515. Daniel Gookin, *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, In the years 1675, 1676, 1677*, in *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* 2 (1836): 423–524, quote on 465; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
10. Instructive on this point is Nan Goodman, "The Deer Island Indians and Common Law Performance," in Bellin and Mielke, *Native Acts*, 53–79,

- which considers the relationship between praying Indians' wartime actions and English common-law concepts.
11. Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, ser. 1, 1 (1792): 164. For more on this idea see Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (Lanham MD: Madison Books, 1991). For more on the broader history of the English and Indian military encounter, see Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Wayne E. Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500–1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
 12. Lepore, *Name of War*, 21–47.
 13. For Gookin's luckless fortunes in the print market, see David D. Hall, *Ways of Writing: The Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 18.
 14. See Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 78–92.
 15. Peter MacLeod describes this as a "parallel war" in *The Canadian Iroquois and the Seven Years' War* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996), 36.
 16. Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 59–63.
 17. Le Roy Bacqueville de la Potherie, *Historie de l'Amérique Septentrionale: Relation d'un séjour en Nouvelle-France* (1722; reprint, Monaco: Rocher, 1997), 2:486; quoted in Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 59.
 18. Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 59–63.
 19. Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captive Histories: English, French, and Native Narratives of the 1704 Deerfield Raid* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 191–92.
 20. Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captive Histories*, 192.
 21. See Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, "Revisiting the Redeemed Captive: New Perspectives on the 1704 Attack on Deerfield," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 52.1 (1995): 3–46.
 22. Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 132–36.
 23. Bernard J. Hibbitts, "Coming to Our Senses: Communication and Legal Expression in Performance Cultures," *Emory Law Journal* 41.4 (1992): 873–960.