

MORITO, Bruce — *An Ethic of Mutual Respect: The Covenant Chain and Aboriginal-Crown Relations*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012. Pp. 240.

The Covenant Chain relationship between the Iroquois confederacy and their neighboring English colonial governments proved an integral part of both American and Canadian colonial developments. Without a constitution, legal codification, or any defined infrastructure, the Chain relationship flourished for the better part of two centuries as an intercultural diplomatic device, but scholars have not fully defined the phenomenon, due in part to the Chain's ever-evolving nature. Bruce Morito's fresh approach attempts to get at the heart of the meanings of the Covenant Chain and how it functioned.

The late Francis Jennings, in his several geo-political studies of the Covenant Chain, circa 1960s-1980s, regarded the institution as historically and politically ambiguous, but Jennings also viewed it as a means of exploitation on the part of the colonizers who used the Iroquois to bring about certain diplomatic results by dominating lesser tributary tribes. No doubt there is some truth in Jennings's conclusions, but in re-examining the Covenant Chain, Professor Morito offers a kinder, gentler version of its history. With a philosopher's approach, Morito focuses on the ethics of the relationship, and by doing so has illuminated much of the inner-workings and finer points of the Chain. Many will be surprised to learn that it was replete with mutual dignity and guided by a deep respect that often escapes today's historians and students. A key point here is that not only Euro-Americans, but Iroquois as well, benefitted significantly from their membership in the Chain. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine so many modern-day Haudenosaunee (i.e., Iroquois) peoples dwelling in their ancestral homelands as they do now, had it not been for this unique relationship. The special position that the Iroquois enjoyed with the British in the Covenant Chain gave them an edge over other Native peoples in terms of trade, warfare, and diplomacy; it can even be argued that this leverage and entrenched positioning in colonial times carried a ripple-effect that ultimately helped to prevent the eventual forced removal of the U.S.-dwelling Iroquois to the trans-Mississippi West, a fate that befell most eastern indigenous peoples in the United States.

According to Morito, this mutual Covenant Chain agreement emerged between the Iroquois and British, "as two peoples found each other useful and then learned that they needed to develop an institutional identity to order and protect their common interests and values [...] in turn [...] an intercultural identity was formed" (p. 35). In so doing, the participants evolved together into "a shared lifeworld," thereafter interacting on a "common ground" or a foundational "set of beliefs, values, [and] ways of knowing," through which they communicated (p. 94). While Morito's readers may not be convinced of his statement that this unique Anglo-Iroquois relationship truly transcended that of the Franco-Algonquin one illuminated in Richard White's paradigm-changing *Middle Ground*, he is, however, quite right in demonstrating that the Covenant Chain was so much more nuanced and complex than previous scholars have revealed. In borrowing a famous expression from the late British New Left historian, E. P. Thompson, Morito argues that it was the unwritten "moral economy" of this relationship that guided and governed all interactions that transpired between the peoples engaging on this common ground. In holding both sides in check, the moral economy compelled them to seek a common interest, a mutual, moral-good that Morito, in citing philosopher Charles Taylor, dubs a "hypergood" (p. 164). Time and again, the Covenant Chain relationship succeeded in producing such hypergoods for its constituent nations.

In the first chapter, the author treats the reader to the history, meanings, and significance of the Chain, before examining its inner-workings in the second. Here, Morito skillfully

elaborates on the several functions and usages of wampum, including its power to create an awareness of obligations, invoke actions, and to sometimes even attempt to trigger spiritual forces, as seen in the wampum employed in the condolence ceremonies. From this, we see that wampum was central to the discourse, and the use of wampum itself became the means of communicating, by what Morito refers to as the “language of wampum.” The author then builds on this in the third chapter by examining the careers of the best of the so-called “interlocutors,” or the Dutch and British officials who were most adept at engaging with the Iroquois on the common ground, guided by the moral economy. Only those leaders who understood the significance of moral agency and reputation could fully succeed in these dealings. Perhaps not unlike the ancient scholar Thucydides, who staked so much on individual actions and human psychology in determining the fate of the polis, Morito insightfully relates how a handful of Dutch and British leaders gained the deep respect, admiration, and trust of the Iroquois. These included Arendt van Curler, Sir Edmund Andros, Peter Schuyler, and William Penn, followed by the two most important and effective, Conrad Weiser and Sir William Johnson. These second and third chapters are where Morito shines the brightest, insightfully illuminating the depth and richness of Euro-Iroquois relations.

That said, one curiosity here is that an important contemporary, Cadwallader Colden, is not only left out of this discussion, but the author not once cites any of Colden’s nine volumes of published papers, including his two-volume contemporary study on the Iroquois. After all, the late anthropologist William Fenton has shown that it was Colden who personally renewed the Covenant Chain at the Albany Council in 1746, and that his (Colden’s) multi-volume work was the best available monograph in the English-speaking world on eighteenth-century Iroquoia (See Fenton’s *The Great Law and the Longhouse*, pp. 444 and 448, respectively). The significance of Colden’s work rests, in part, on the fact that it was based on French sources. For Morito, this omission, whether intentional or an oversight, needs to be addressed in future editions and/or other related research.

The absence of Colden is doubly important because it hints at why Morito’s study falters in the fourth and final chapter, in which the author attempts to argue that the Covenant Chain relationship, in transcending history and culture, can conceivably be resurrected to once again define Canadian-First Peoples’ relations. Such a notion presumes mutually equal diplomatic leverage on the part of the Iroquois throughout the duration of the Covenant Chain’s historical existence, and it never takes into consideration the loss of Iroquois sovereignty. The mere title of Colden’s study, *Five Indian Nations Depending on the Province of New-York in America (1727-1748)*, pointed out the reality of Iroquois dependence, and the phrase’s lack of conformity to Morito’s thesis may explain its omission by the author. Regarding Colden’s early assertion of Iroquois dependence, Francis Jennings remarked that “[b]y 1720....the Iroquois had become clients of a generalized English protectorate....Their dependence was not formal and legal as he [Colden] implied, but it was substantial nevertheless” (*Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, p. 290). Therefore, none of the Crown officials of whom Morito writes would have acknowledged a fee-simple Native ownership of the land; basically they recognized nothing less than the ultimate sovereignty of the Crown. Other quality scholars, including Gregory Dowd, Dorothy Jones, and J. Leitch Wright have made similar arguments regarding the issue of British sovereignty with respect to the Iroquois. Thus, while the Iroquois certainly benefitted for a time from the Covenant Chain, the relationship did nothing to prevent the League’s slide into dependency, a process that had begun no later than 1701, probably earlier.

Morito has done well in demonstrating the ethic of respect that characterized Anglo-Iroquois relations in colonial America, but this is only one dynamic in determining geo-

political strength. Other aspects and circumstances, such as the Iroquois defeat by the French (1696-1701), the decline of the fur trade, the population decline of the Iroquois simultaneous to the swell of the colonists' numbers, and finally, the fissioning of the Confederacy after 1777, all led to the decline of sovereignty and loss of diplomatic leverage. It was after all the seventeenth-century sovereignty of the Iroquois that initially bred the respect in this relationship, not vice-versa. Perhaps not unlike Thucydides then, Morito has overemphasized individual actions at the expense of greater historical forces. Even so, his middle two chapters have earned him a place in the forum of these discussions.

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MOTSCH, Andreas, and Grégoire HOLTZ — *Éditer la Nouvelle-France*. Quebec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2011. Pp. 256.

Historians of pre-1760 Canada quote excerpts from such writers as Samuel de Champlain, Gabriel Sagard, Pierre-Esprit Radisson, or Joseph-François Lafitau as evidence to support a particular interpretation of the past. These writers were witnesses to some of the events they describe and that fact gives them authority. Historians are aware that partisanship, such as that created by the Franciscan-Jesuit rivalry, or the self-promotion of Jean-Louis Hennepin and Louis-Armand de Lahontan led to distortions and invented discoveries. Plagiarism, hearsay information, and invented dialogues with Amerindians – such as those in Chrestien Le Clercq's book *Nouvelle Relation de la Gaspésie* – are common features of these early accounts. Human History and Natural History had not yet been separated from one another and so all that was curious and strange in North America's plants and animals was reported along with observations on the customs and costumes of the native peoples. Even the father of critical, scholarly history in Canada, Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, did not fully escape these currents. Awareness of these shared traits and of individual peculiarities is the extent of the caution exercised by historians. There is one more area about which we historians know little.

That subject is the effect of contemporary literary fashions. *Éditer la Nouvelle-France* is a collection of essays about the problems of understanding, evaluating, editing, and presenting early narratives about New France. The collection grew out of a 2008 conference on the problems of editing. This book advances our appreciation of the contextual influences, especially the literary fashions of seventeenth-century France, which shaped published and unpublished accounts of the North American colony. Stylistic conventions determined the form of travel narratives which, sometimes, were presented as a series of private letters (the epistolary format).

In the first essay, Normand Doiron explores Sieur de Dièreville's *Relation du Voyage du Port Royal* (1708), which alternates between poetry and prose. The poetic form allowed Dièreville to exaggerate and to dramatize his observations. Doiron also considers the claim that there was an entirely-poetic and lost version of the *Relation*. Robert Melançon asks if first-hand accounts of Canada's aboriginal peoples, like those of Father Paul Le Jeune and Joseph-François Lafitau, can be treated as a branch of literature. The answer is "yes" because the presentation of details in Lafitau's *Moeurs des Sauvages* (1724) was determined by literary conventions and even Le Jeune's 1634 account, which was not as extensively revised, employs rhetoric and drama to enliven the report.