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Author

Sioui, Georges Emery

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An Ethnography of the Huron Indians, 1615–1649. By Elisabeth Tooker. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991. 183 pages. \$24.95 cloth; \$14.95 paper.

As stated by Bruce G. Trigger on the jacket of this new edition, and in the opinions of countless students of the Huron (Wendat), including myself, Elisabeth Tooker's *Ethnography of the Huron Indians, 1615–1649* is the ultimate ethnographic index for any study of the Huron in this final span of their existence in their Ontario homeland. In a new preface, the author explains how, three decades ago (as "ethnohistory was just emerging as a sub-discipline"), she became aware that "basic culture patterns are slow to change" and that the "changes that do occur are likely to do so within a basic cultural framework involving matters of detail." In my opinion, another important "new" idea contained in Tooker's book is the great similarity in the basic cultures of peoples who speak closely related languages, such as the Huron and the Iroquois—a similarity which, she believes, "may well involve something more than the simple diffusion of ideas." I further interpret this cultural similarity as springing from deep acknowledgment of a shared worldview, a characteristic that allowed such peoples to perceive themselves as extensions of one another, rather than as mere conquerors and vanquished.

A word of caution, however, is in order concerning this landmark book. In the absence of any well-developed conceptual study of the seventeenth century Wendat (Huron) at the time she was writing (Trigger's revolutionary *Children of Aataentsic* was still twelve years away from appearing), Tooker, who recalls having then but little interest in the discipline of history, relied on the writings of the early French missionaries for the life and spirit she meant to infuse in her text. As time goes on, this increasingly will have the marked effect of revealing her ignorance of the overpowering grip of the sources she was using. Indian people generally resent the *Jesuit Relations*. They feel that non-Indian scholars have too readily accepted such reports, which are conceived as depreciating the existence of native peoples and creating indifference as to the devastating effect of the European invasion.

Therefore, the true usefulness of the *Ethnography* is to be found, first, in its quality as a guide to many aspects of Huron life and, second, in the wealth of footnotes, which represent a uniquely perceptive study of the persistence of basic Iroquoian cultural patterns. For general conceptual and interpretative purposes, the

reader will be well-advised to refer to a list, given by Tooker, of the more recent studies on the Huron and the Iroquois. The most prominent are by Bruce G. Trigger, Conrad Heidenreich, William N. Fenton, and Elisabeth Tooker. (An English translation of my own work, *La civilisation wendate* [Presses de l'Université Laval, Quebec, Canada, 1992] is forthcoming from McGill-Queen's University Press.) Incidentally, the Huron orthography in the book is often faulty.

One final remark, from an American Indian point of view, is needed. One sensitive and difficult aspect of northeast Native American history has always been Huron-Iroquois relations, before and after contact with the Europeans. In spite of the astounding progress of scholars in this area over the last three decades, some essential misunderstandings still are obvious. One example is Elisabeth Tooker's point-by-point repetition of the "how-the-Iroquois-destroyed-the-Huron" leitmotif.

This idea was originally fabricated artfully by the Jesuits of the period and thereafter was so conveniently integrated by official Euro-American social thinkers that it still circulates unquestioned in some of the most advanced ethnohistoric literature. Typically, the treatment given here by Tooker disregards entirely such now well-established facts as (1) the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Five Wendat (Huron) Nations and their virtually countless allies in comparison with the Five Hodenosaunee (Iroquois) Nations, who stood alone; (2) the original and prehistoric central position of the Wendat in the regional geopolitics, which the French have very openly acknowledged and built upon; (3) the suspicious policy of the French, who provided almost no military aid to their Indian league of allies, thereby causing the league's quick demise and forfeiting their own surest chance of imperial hegemony in North America; (4) the great cultural and ideological similarity between the Wendat and the Hodenosaunee (as suggested by Tooker), which does not allow them to be treated historiographically as distinct entities in the style of European nation-states; and (5) finally, but so importantly, the rapid and drastic depopulation, by European diseases, of all American Indians, but especially of the priest-ridden Wendat.

Obviously, the conventional approach of ethnohistory is no longer sufficient; historians and ethnologists must integrate into their thinking the fact that American Indians have not been conquered at the deep levels of ideology and spirituality. Native peoples have too much to contribute to the world to think of

themselves as mere victims. If American Indians continue to resist the Euro-American thought world, it is not merely for the sake of resisting and denouncing; it is, above all, because they have had and continue to have a very precise and serious counter-agenda in relation to that foreign, mostly destructive thought world. This approach to history is what I have termed elsewhere *American Indian autohistory* (another book also forthcoming from McGill-Queen's University Press in 1992). Ethnohistory ought to lead eventually to a conceptual locus, where it will encounter *autohistory* and thus proceed to reevaluate its whole *heterohistorical* view of the past and of native cultures. One of the results should be the establishment of a true Native American (or American Indian) history.

Georges Emery Sioui
D'Arcy McNickle Center
Newberry Library

The First Americans, Facts on File series:
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These four books for children are half of a series of eight published by Facts on File. Each has ninety-six 8" x 11" pages with color photo sections, as well as black-and-white photos in text, and an index; each has four chapters, "Roots," "Living," "Religion" (except for the Northeast volume), and "Change" (the Northeast has "Change" and "Modern Life"). The language is at the upper grades/middle school reading level. No bibliography, list of references, or recommended reading list is given in any of the books.

Cover blurbs claim, "The series emphasizes the contributions of Native Americans to American culture and illustrates their legacy." This is exactly what the books do *not* do. None presents the Columbian exchange, none actually tells the reader that corn, squash, lacrosse, tobacco, etc. are contributions of American Indians to American culture. Each is typical of the standard approach to books on Indians for a general public; that is to say, each is Eurocentric. Indian nations are described as Euro-Americans found