ANGLICAN MISSIONARIES AND GOVERNING THE SELF: AN ENCOUNTER WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN WESTERN CANADA, 1820-1865

BY

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A Thesis
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ABSTRACT

Despite a growing interest in the investigation of various forms of non-state governance, few studies have considered the informal governmental processes that have been brought to bear on Aboriginal peoples. This study explores missionary work as a form of colonial governance. The sensitizing concepts provided by Foucault's work on governmentality are used to examine missionary governmentalities that were deployed amongst relatively autonomous and resistant Aboriginal populations. In particular, attention is directed to technologies of self-formation that were used in attempts to transform traditional self-identities to those of 'civilized' Protestants.

Based on an analysis of texts found within the Church Missionary Society archives in Manitoba, this study examines the encounter between the Aboriginal peoples of Red River and the Anglican missionaries between 1820 and 1865. The findings show that the sustained attack on Aboriginal spirituality and kinship systems, and particularly the strategies used to transform traditional self-identities, were deeply invasive technologies of governance. The findings also show that Aboriginal resistance played a key role in both the governmental technologies of the missionaries and the eventual outcome of this encounter.

It is argued that the nature of colonial governance was such that, due to the vast differences in ontologies between the two groups, Aboriginal peoples could not be successfully transformed into the mould of the nineteenth-century British Protestant unless most elements of their traditional culture and self-identity were first destroyed. Regardless of the fact that many Aboriginal people resisted conversion to Christianity at this time, the

data indicate that the governmental technologies of the missionaries had disruptive effects on Aboriginal self-identity and forms of social organization.

On the other hand, the outcome of this interaction was clearly a hybridization of forms of governance and resistance. The continued survival of traditional cultural institutions and forms of knowledge has created spaces for resistance in the present as well as ways of repairing some of the damage that has been done as a result of such forms of colonial governance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Typically, colonialism in Canada is thought of in terms of the fur trade, the Indian Act, or land treaties. As a result, we tend to think of the colonial governance of Aboriginal people only in terms of the kinds of formal governance that are evident in these events. Despite a growing interest in the investigation of various forms of non-state governance, few studies have considered the informal, more subtle governmental processes that were brought to bear on Aboriginal people. Therefore, an important aspect of Canadian history has not been investigated.

While a number of studies have inquired into various interactions between missionaries and Aboriginal peoples, missionaries have not been conceptualized as governmental agents. This is not surprising, given our propensity to concentrate on formally sanctioned political technologies. Yet of all colonial groups, only the missionaries sought the transformation of Aboriginal peoples at both material and spiritual levels.

This thesis examines missionary work as a form of governance of Aboriginal people. Specifically, it explores the encounter between the Aboriginal peoples of Red River[1] and the Anglican missionaries between 1820 and 1865. I chose to examine this

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1 Red River was the entry point for all missionaries into Western Canada. In the case of the Anglican missionaries, this was their point of entry to the northeast as well.

particular encounter for several reasons. First, despite over a century of prior contact between Aboriginal people and fur traders in this area, the arrival of the Anglican missionaries [2] marked the first deliberate attempt to colonize Aboriginal peoples. Prior to the arrival of the Anglican missionaries, the interaction of Aboriginal and European people in Manitoba was oriented to trade, and the two cultures coexisted as separate entities. Second, this study provides a clear example of extra-state governance. During the period considered in this study, and for 150 years prior to the arrival of the Anglican missionaries, the Hudson's Bay Company had sole jurisdiction over Rupert's Land. The Hudson's Bay Company, however, used the powers that were delegated to them by the state to pursue their own economic interests, and therefore cannot be equated with the state. The missionaries had a dual allegiance: to the Hudson's Bay Company and to the Church Missionary Society of England. Because of their allegiance to the Church Missionary Society, their goals differed from, and often conflicted with, those of the Hudson's Bay Company.

This encounter presents an excellent opportunity for examining the forms of governance that were invoked by the Anglican missionaries in that the governmental strategies that they had originally planned to use did not work. Contrary to their expectations, the missionaries found themselves up against Aboriginal populations who

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[2] The encounter with Anglican missionaries was distinct from encounters with the Oblate and Wesleyan missionaries that occurred in the same time period, in that only the Anglican missionaries actively attempted to change Aboriginal cultures. Although the Oblate and Wesleyan missionaries often used the same rhetoric of Christianity and civilization, they were more appreciative of indigenous traditions, and acculturation was clearly secondary to conversion (Choquette, 1995; Devens 1992).

were not only relatively autonomous, but most of whom believed their own ways to be superior. As one missionary observed,

> They think they are much wiser than us already, and they think they pay us the highest compliment when they tell us that we are almost as good as an Indian (Cockran to Rev. Woodroofe, Red River Aug.3, 1831, A77, p.435).

The missionaries were ill-prepared for the resistance that they were to encounter. Based on their preconceived notions of the superiority of Western civilization, they assumed that all they would have to do in order to Christianize and 'civilize' Aboriginal people would be to point out to them the inferiority of their traditional practices, and then to provide the required instruction for their transformation. In the face of continued resistance, however, the missionaries were forced to improvise, to invent, and to continually revise their tactics. Many of their journal entries attest to the fact that they could not rely on familiar tactics to achieve their goals. For example: 'I preached and preached, but produced no effect' (Rev. Cockran, 1834). 'We have not found, among the people generally, that avidity to avail themselves of the means of instruction for their children which we could have wished' (Revs. Jones and Cockran,1835). Over the forty-year period in which they interacted with the Aboriginal people of Red River, the Anglican missionaries persisted in trying to persuade individuals to relinquish their traditional culture and spirituality and to adopt the premises of a new cultural and spiritual order. Although in the end the missionaries were not successful in attaining their goals, I argue that it is important to explore the kinds of governmental tactics that they devised in their effort to convert these primarily resistant populations.

To explore the colonial governance of the missionaries, I use the sensitizing

concepts provided by Foucault's work on governmentality. The advantage of this framework is that it moves the focus away from the success or failure of the mission to exploring what the missionaries were *trying* to do and the possible ramifications of the process itself. It provides the conceptual language for exploring their governmental practices at the micro level, and also for relating these to broader political ideas. A further advantage of this framework is Foucault's notion that governmental power relations involve subjections which encompass not only relations of state authority, but also attempts to shape the self identities of governed subjects.

Based on an analysis of texts found within the Church Missionary Society archives in Manitoba, I examine three dimensions of the interaction between the Anglican missionaries and the Aboriginal people of Red River. The first is concerned with the thought processes, or mentalities, behind the Anglican missionaries' practices. I show that their governmental frames of reference drew on the ideas and forms of knowledge of the Church Missionary Society, Protestantism, and nineteenth century Britain, each of which had its own history. This examination provides for a better understanding of: i) the rationale behind the missionaries' vision for the future of Aboriginal people, ii) why certain aspects of Aboriginal peoples' conduct and 'character' were problematized in a particular way, and iii) their political philosophy for how governance was to be carried out.

The second dimension that is explored is the concrete means by which these ways of thinking were put into practice as governmental mechanisms. To explore these mechanisms of governance, I focus on two specific sites of interaction. The first is traditional Aboriginal spirituality, which is conceptualized as not only a system of belief,

but also as a system for ordering social relations. The second is one with which virtually all missionaries during this era appeared to be obsessed: the form and relations of the traditional Aboriginal family. Particular attention is paid to the missionaries' attempts to convert Aboriginal people to Christian and 'civilized' self-identities. Attention is also paid to Aboriginal resistance and the ways in which it came to be incorporated into the missionaries' governmental techniques.

The third dimension considers the possible ramifications of this form of governance for Aboriginal people. Despite the missionaries' altruistic intentions, their governmental mechanisms were highly intrusive. In light of the differences in world view and understandings of moral behaviour between the two groups, Aboriginal people could not be successfully transformed into the prescribed mould of the nineteenth century British Protestant unless most elements of their traditional Native self- identity were destroyed or at least discredited.

This thesis puts forth the argument that, despite the fact that the outcome of the missionaries' governance did not meet their goals of Christianizing and civilizing Aboriginal peoples, their form of governance was deeply invasive and destructive of Aboriginal forms of social organization and self-identity. Insofar as the missionaries' intentions were altruistic, the likely ramifications of this encounter ran contrary to their goals. As such, this study brings out that dimension of our history that is composed of governmental technologies that may not have been successful in achieving their intended goals.

This study is organized in three broad sections. The first is a primarily descriptive account which provides background information concerning the material situation at Red River before the missionaries arrived, as well as a broad description of both Aboriginal

people and the Anglican missionaries. In the second section, I explore the missionaries' mentalities in order to better understand their motives and goals. The difference in world views between Aboriginal peoples and the Anglican missionaries is also described so that the potential effects of the missionaries' attempts to transform Aboriginal institutions and beliefs can be brought out. The third section, which is based primarily on archival data, describes the encounters themselves, including the strategies of the missionaries and the reactions of Aboriginal people.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In recent years there has been a growing interest in exploring both Aboriginal-missionary encounters and informal kinds of governance. Yet, to date, missionary work has not been conceptualized as governmental. As such, there is no single body of literature to discuss. Therefore, I have organized this review of the literature as follows: first, I present an overview of the Canadian research on missionary-Aboriginal encounters, so that the reader will be aware of the progression in our way of understanding these encounters. This is followed by a discussion of some of the recent studies in the broader colonial literature which can further our understanding of encounters between Aboriginal people and missionaries in Canada and the kinds of governance embedded within them.

Canadian Research

The earliest accounts of the Anglican missionaries in Canada focussed primarily on religious matters.[3] These accounts extolled the altruism of the missionaries and described the benefits of Christianity to Aboriginal people. More recently, a handful of historical studies (Thompson 1970; Usher 1971; Pettipas, 1972; Goosen 1975; Fast, 1984; and Grant 1984), have described various aspects of particular Native-missionary interactions. These studies brought to light the fact that missionaries could not be subsumed in the category of 'colonizers', as Native peoples' experiences with the Anglican missionaries

[3]See, for example, Boon 1962; Garrioch 1923; Tucker 1858.

were very different in form and substance from their interactions with other Europeans. They found that, as the fur traders' primary concern was with profits, they had no vested interest in altering Native institutions and values. By contrast, the Anglican missionaries had the goal of completely transforming Aboriginal peoples. The difference between the interaction of Aboriginal peoples with missionaries and with fur traders is aptly described by Usher (1971) who differentiates between 'directed' and 'non-directed' cultural change, with the former describing a deliberate attempt to stamp out traditional customs and reconstruct Aboriginal culture.

These primarily descriptive studies have enhanced our knowledge of the details of this encounter. They have also brought out the necessity of reconsidering the nature of the historical role of the missionaries in Canada. Their purpose, however, has been a clarification of past events as an end in and of itself.

A later body of work examined the missionaries from a more critical perspective. Using a primarily political economy orientation, the lens within which they are viewed here has been that of state expansion, class conflict, and domination. As the missionaries are seen as members of a dominant class, they are lumped together with other colonialists. Bourgeault (1983), for example, describes the missionaries as an 'arm of colonialism'--an integral part of a powerful colonial machine that facilitated the peaceful expansion of the British state by creating a docile peasantry through the ideology that they promoted:

> ...The prime function was to collaborate with British rule and assist in maintaining their economic and political interests within Rupert's Land and Assiniboia.....It was with Christianity that the ideological conquering of the Indian finally took place . . . Christianity served British interests by allowing them to exploit the Indian peasantry and to deal with any overt reaction to the exploitation (1983:66).

Similar views of the destructive effects of the missionaries are held by Pannekoek

(1991a, 1991b), who argues that the missionaries were racist, overzealous, and socially ambitious imperialists of 'enormous influence', whose colonial mentality dehumanized Aboriginal people and contributed significantly to their decline. Similarly, Ladd (1986) states that they were accessories to a 'British North American form of genocide' who used 'poisonous pedagogy', to 'tame' the Natives. For Coutts (1991), the Church was an agency of social control that helped to sustain both a cultural and an economic dominance over the indigenous people.

While these studies have added a more critical dimension to our understanding of missionary-Aboriginal encounters, many of these works have produced a one-sided vision. The missionaries' role is reduced to that of agents of social control, or as facilitating the emergence of classes.[4] The missionaries' goal of saving Aboriginal goals is often downplayed in favour or their role in paving the way for the peaceful expansion of the state. Because the missionaries are subsumed within the abstract colonial machine, these studies don't look any further into the intricacies of this encounter. The offshoot of these studies has been debates around questions such as, 'Were the missionaries successful?' 'Whose side were they on? or 'How much damage did they actually do?'.[5]

Contrasting the victimization and passivity that some of these studies imply, a number of studies have brought Aboriginal agency into their analysis (Peers 1996; MacKenzie1993; Fast 1984; Long 1986; Grant 1984; Vescey 1983; Ronda and Axtell, 1978). These studies have shown that Aboriginal people responded to the missionaries in a variety of ways, ranging from rejection of all of their propositions to acceptance of

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[4] For a more complete analysis of the analytic themes within which missionaries have been studied, see Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) p.7-8.

[5] For a detailed description of this debate, see Beaumont (1997).

Christianity. Several studies have studied the impact of missionaries on Aboriginal women as well as their various responses to the missionaries. While Anderson (1991) and Devens (1992) found that not only were women affected differently than men, but that most were not receptive to the missionaries. On the other hand, a number of the authors [6] argue that there is clear evidence that many Aboriginal women adapted to the missionary message to further their own interests, such as new opportunities for commercial activities (Harkin and Kan, 1996:567). Some authors have argued that many Aboriginal people manipulated the missionaries to obtain goods and status (Ronda and Axtell1978; MacKenzie1993). Grant (1984) notes that, in many cases, a 'yes' on the part of Aboriginal people meant 'no', which corresponded with the tendency, often noted in Aboriginal society, to refrain from humiliating others by contradicting them directly. Prevalent in these accounts are references to syncretism, or the process by which selected aspects of Christianity were incorporated without making a radical break with traditional understandings (Mackenzie, 1993; Long, 1986, 1987; Grant, 1984). While these studies have advanced our knowledge by including Aboriginal people as actors in Canadian history, many have a tendency to overcompensate for earlier accounts of Aboriginal passivity by replacing them with accounts of resistance. In some accounts, Aboriginal people are portrayed as having the infinite capacity to outwit the missionaries, by accommodating them in order to receive food and clothing in times of need, but later returning to their traditional ways with little effect on the integrity of their own culture. In all of these studies, Aboriginal agency is seen as a response *to* the missionaries' but never as influencing the ways in which the missionaries tried to change them.

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See the special issue of Ethnohistory: Native Women's Response to Christianity, Vol 43, no. 4.

New Directions in Colonial Studies

In the past few years, influenced primarily by the works of Foucault and Said, studies in the broader area of colonialism have identified new issues and problems. Although there is no one theoretical approach, these studies share a philosophical orientation in that they emphasize contingency, diversity, and a re-conceptualization of power as subtler and more pervasive than merely the forced imposition of culture.

Subsequent to Said's Orientalism, a large body of literature examined archival documents in order to expose the devices through which the colonized were denied a voice, autonomy, and agency. The primary focus of this work is on how the colonized have been represented in colonial discourse as the 'Other', a category that indicated that they were both different and inferior to Europeans. As opposed to Marx's focus on class, power is seen here as operating through the construction of difference and exclusion. In most cases, race marks the primary attribute of colonial power.

Moving on from this primarily literary focus, with its emphasis on the power of the colonialists, scholars began to reexamine encounters as sites of struggle involving shifting balances of domination and resistance (Stoler and Cooper 1997; Dirks 1992; Thomas 1994). These studies emphasize tactical dimensions such as struggles over changes to clothing, architecture, agricultural practices, medical and religious practices, domesticity and kinship, physical discipline, and the construction of landscape (Pels 1997). Several authors (Stoler and Cooper 1997; Thomas 1994; Dirks 1992) have argued the need to pay more attention to diversity and conflict among the colonialists. They argue that because colonialists consisted of settlers, explorers, missionaries, traders and official administrators, all of whom had different agendas, we must think of a plurality of colonial discourses which interacted, sometimes in conjunction with one another, and at other

times with hostility. Dirks, for example, states that,

> It is tempting but wrong to ascribe intentionality to a congeries of activities and outcomes that related and at times coordinated, were usually diffuse, disorganized, and even contradictory. It could be argued that the power of colonialism is a system of rule that was predicated at least in part on the ill co-ordinated nature of power, that colonial power was never so secure to imagine itself as totalizing, while colonial rulers were unaware of all the ways in which knowledge was, in any direct or strategic sense, power (1992:7).

Some of the most recent work in the broader area of colonialism draws on Foucault's notion of governmentality. [7] Here the focus shifts away from issues of exclusion to analysing forms of governance. Thomas (1994) and Scott (1995) appeal for a mode of analysis that does not characterize colonialism in essentialist terms and argue the need for a more historicized, ethnographic approach. Both find, for example, that differently configured modes of power and different political rationalities were evident over the long historical period of colonial dominance. They also argue that, because colonial encounters were marked by struggle, it is important to explicate the *efforts* to govern while at the same time recognizing that these efforts were not always successful.

Scott (1995) explores the different ways in which colonial power operated as well as what its targets were. He concludes that colonial governmentality, which was based on modern forms of power, did not rely on coercion, but rather was 'a form of power which was concerned above all with disabling old forms of life by systematically breaking down their conditions, and with constructing in their place new conditions so as to enable–indeed, so as to *oblige–new forms of life to come into being'* (1995:197). In a

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Foucault's work on governmentality is discussed in a later chapter on theoretical orientation.

study of the criminalization of sexuality and gender violence in Hawaii, Merry (1999) uses a governmentality framework to show how efforts to reshape the family in Hawaii were crucial to the development of particular forms of governance in two different eras. Based on Foucault's notion that 'resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relations to power', O'Malley (1996) examines the ways in which resistance played a constitutive role in the formation of indigenous governance. O'Malley is concerned with the ways in which official discourses are privileged, with the result that it 'becomes difficult to recognize the imbrication of resistance and rule, the contradictions and tensions that this melding generates and the subterranean practices of government consequently required to stabilize rule' (1996: 311). Both O'Malley (1996) and Thomas (1994) suggest that governance is never complete, but is rather a hybridized form that has embedded within it elements of resistance. As Thomas notes, most accounts exaggerate colonial power, 'diminishing the extent to which colonial histories were shaped by indigenous resistance and accommodation' (1994:15). Hogaveen's (1999) study of the governance of Aboriginal peoples in western Canada from 1870 to 1890 shows that, while the nineteenth century discourse of liberalism stressed freedom and non-intrusion into individuals' lives, this same rationality provided a way to make them into a governable population by spatially isolating them.

Despite some of the new directions that have been taken in the broader colonial literature, relatively few authors have used these new approaches to study missionary-Aboriginal encounters. The most comprehensive study to date is that of Comaroff and Comaroff (1997, 1992, 1989), who brought a new dimension to the study of missions by attending to the ways in which indigenous peoples of South Africa's *'consciousness'* was 'colonized'. Rejecting the postmodern approach, but rather drawing on Gramsci's notion

of hegemony, they suggest that, even though indigenous people generally rejected conversion, their 'consciousness' was colonized by means of their participation in the forms of the capitalist system. To date, however, few historical studies have examined the governance of Aboriginal people in the colonial era.

Summary and Discussion

The studies discussed in this chapter have contributed to our present understanding of encounters between Aboriginal people and missionaries in various ways. The descriptive studies have provided us with data that have made us aware that such interactions were more complex than was previously assumed. Critical studies have brought out some of the adverse effects of missionization on Aboriginal people as well as the importance of maintaining an awareness of the prevailing political economy. We are now aware of diversity between the missionaries and other colonialists. We are also aware that Aboriginal people responded to the missionaries in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons.

Recent studies in the general area of colonialism have taken a variety of new directions, delving into issues of diversity, power, subjectivity, and process. While the study of missions is gaining in popularity, however, still only a small number of studies have addressed the role of missionaries within colonialism. Therefore, there are a number of other issues still to be addressed:

(1) Despite the recent attention to process, most studies of missionary-Aboriginal encounters have focussed on the end result of the encounters that they describe: the effects on traditional institutions, the missionaries' successes or failures in terms of conversions. Yet it seems to me to be crucial to explore the dimensions of the encounter itself. The

Anglican missionaries interacted with Aboriginal people of Red River on an intense level for forty years. Yet we have little knowledge of the mechanisms by which they tried to persuade Aboriginal people to change, or the ways in which Aboriginal people's reactions affected the missionaries' strategies. To say that this encounter had little effect on Aboriginal people due to the small number of conversions is to not recognize the intensity of this encounter or the probable ramifications of this interaction that are not visible or quantifiable. In order to get a better sense of this process, we need to explore the kinds of tactics that the missionaries used–their mechanisms, failures, and subsequent inventions–as well as Aboriginal people's responses. It is a well-known fact that the missionaries were unprepared for the cultures they were trying to convert. Yet there is no accounting for their failed attempts, misunderstandings, mistakes, frustrations, or the ways in which Aboriginal resistance would have influenced their tactics.

I also question the allegations that Aboriginal people were able to successfully incorporate elements of Christianity into their traditional framework with little or no effect on their sense of self and cultural identity. In later chapters, I will argue that while this may have held true for material artifacts obtained in the fur trade, their cultural identity was too bound up in spirituality and in their traditional cultural institutions to not have been affected in some way.

(2) A second, related problem is the tendency to think of Aboriginal peoples' resistance only in terms of a response to a top-down imposition of power rather than as included in the process of governing. Particularly in this encounter, where the missionaries met with considerable resistance, it would be more expedient to think in terms of Aboriginal resistance as playing a role in the kinds of tactics that the missionaries continually tried in order to attain their goals. In other words, we have addressed the

various ways in which Aboriginal people responded, but not how resistance was incorporated into the interaction itself. Therefore, in later chapters, I show how Aboriginal resistance played a role in the missionaries' governance.

(3) There is a tendency to view the missionaries as vehicles of a capitalist ideology. This downplays the multitude of factors that influenced their ways of thinking. The question of the missionaries' (unitary) intent, or the tendency to view them as 'harbingers of capitalism', or an 'arm of colonialism' denies all of the other knowledges and rhetorics that made up their conceptual framework. I argue that there was no hidden agenda in the missionaries' work and that a more useful direction would be to explore the multiple elements that made up the missionaries' world view and taken-for-granted ways of thinking. Rather than view them as 'racist', or 'imperialist', a more profitable direction would be to examine why they problematized Aboriginal populations in particular ways. In other words, it would be more helpful to explore the knowledges and rhetorics that led to these problematizations. Then we would better understand how these were put into practice. One of the merits of this approach would be in distancing ourselves from reductionist ways of thinking about the missionaries. We need to replace the negative language of missionary work as instrument of social control with broader understandings of what they were trying to do and why.

We have little understanding of the ways in which the missionaries were themselves regulated and in turn regulated their own conduct, based on specific understandings of what constitutes moral, appropriate, and responsible conduct of self and others. This is in line with Thomas's argument that:

> If the effect of colonial missionary work is to be better understood, the techniques of salvation and reform, the grand narrative of conversion, the place of industry and other features of the evangelical imagination, must all

> be grasped as well as the perceptions that missionaries had of their work and its worth (1994:61).

(4) While the missionaries' goals may have meshed with those of other colonialists and the state in the long run, we need to be aware that a) the missionaries' goals differed from those of other colonialists at this time and b) the long term result of their actions ran contrary to their overall intentions.

(5) Finally, most studies have focused on conversion itself to the exclusion of other, more subtle changes that the missionaries attempted to make in order to attain their goals. I am referring here to the many references made in the missionaries' journals concerning Aboriginal peoples' 'nature' and 'character'. This begs further analysis of why this was so as well as the ways in which the missionaries went about trying to change Aboriginal people's very sense of themselves.

The notion of a struggle in which the individual's subjectivity was the target of missionary activity is particularly useful for this study. To date, most studies have considered the structural changes that the missionaries tried to implement -- to family, work, or political organization-- as though these were the missionaries' goals in and of themselves, rather than inquiring into whether these may have also been a means of changing Aboriginal personhood. If we reconsider the missionaries' goals, it becomes clear that changes in Aboriginal peoples' nature, beliefs, and ways of conducting themselves were at least as important as were structural changes. Indeed, it appears that institutional changes were often the means to this end. I argue that the tactics of persuasion that the missionaries used to transform Aboriginal people at this level were extremely powerful, and even if Aboriginal people did not accept the missionaries' arguments, they would have been affected by the interaction itself.

By exploring these issues, it becomes possible to study the encounter between the Aboriginal people of Red River and the Anglican missionaries in a new light: not as a 'failure' in terms of lack of conversions, but rather as a process with many dimensions that must be examined if we are to better understand the present. Clearly we need an approach that can not only address these issues but also can bridge the gap between the macro political studies and studies that are concerned with subjectivity. It is to such an approach that I now turn.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The specific questions that I address in this study can be formulated most effectively using the conceptual tools provided by Foucault's work on governmentality[8]. This framework provides a valuable way to approach the topic of this thesis for several reasons. First, it downplays the importance of the state. This is salient here as the encounter that is explored not only took place prior to the consolidation of the Canadian state, but the missionaries' goals often conflicted with those of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had jurisdiction over Rupert's Land at this time. Second, it shifts the concern away from repressive forms of social control and focuses on those means of control that are indirect, less obvious and more intrusive. Third, and of particular import to this study, is Foucault's notion that government encompasses not only relations of power and authority, but also issues of self and identity (Foucault 1988). Indeed, one of the most important aspects of this approach is the way it provides a framework for linking questions of authority and politics to questions of identity and the self.

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[8] Foucault worked on governmentality from the late 1970's until his death in 1984. Although Foucault's own work remained in a relatively underdeveloped state, it has been carried on by a host of social analysts who have applied his ideas to a broad range of topics. See, for example, Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991; Rose 1987 1990, 1996; Rose and Miller 1992; O'Malley 1996, 1997, 1999; Hunt 1996; Hunter 1996; Garland 1997,1999, Pavlich, 1996a, 1996b, 1999, Smandych and Linden 1996; Merry 1999; Stenson1999.

Governmentality: Some Key Concepts and Arguments

The following discussion is a brief interpretive description of some of the major features of Foucault's work on governmentality. It is not meant to provide a synopsis of Foucault's work. Rather, I have selected only those elements that are useful to this study.

For Foucault, government is not to be equated with the state. Rather, government is understood as a way of acting to affect the ways in which individuals conduct themselves (Foucault 1988). It refers to an array of techniques and procedures that are directed at people's conduct according to particular sets of norms, and with relatively unpredictable consequences. This represents a shift away from the study of institutions to the *tactics* that are used by ruling authorities: ' . . . with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even using laws themselves as tactics-- to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved . . .' (Foucault 1991:95). The shift in focus away from formal institutions allows us to explore the diverse ways in which the early missionaries tried to transform Aboriginal people in encounters which took place primarily in the context of everyday life events.

'Conducting conduct' by means of structuring individual subjectivities

For Foucault, government in liberal societies differs from the more repressive form of government that is evident in sovereignty in that it seeks to organize the *conditions* within which subjects act. In this form of governmental control the subject is not outwardly or visibly constrained. Control is directed at the individual's self-identity and

subjective aspirations such that they choose to act in a specific manner on their own.

Particularly important in this conceptual scheme is that individuals play an active role in making up their own subjectivity. Foucault (1988, 1985) conceptualized an interrelationship between the external mechanisms by which various authorities govern populations, and technologies of the self, through which individuals work on themselves to shape their own subjectivity. He argued that all individuals, regardless of historical era, perform active work on themselves to shape their own self-identities. This occurs under pressure from, and within the confines of, particular historical structures and events:

> The subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by practices of the self. These practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group (Foucault 1988:11).

Thus, government of the self has two dimensions. The first entails the strategies by which authorities seek to shape the conduct and selves of others. The second is the ways in which individuals work on themselves. It is important to note, however, that governmental practices do not necessarily *determine* forms of subjectivity. They are successful only to the extent that individuals come to experience themselves through the capacities and statuses that they promote (Dean 1999:32).

This study shows that the missionaries tried to change not only the behaviour of Aboriginal people, but that many of their efforts were aimed directly at Aboriginal peoples's selves. The data show a *conscious effort* on the part of the missionaries to change the supposed 'nature' of Aboriginal people. They show that, while transforming

traditional institutions was a key part of their mission, one goal of civilizing Aboriginal people was to instill in them the morality of 19th century Protestantism which, the missionaries believed, would ensure their survival in their present world and their salvation in the next. In other words, their ultimate goal was not the construction of a new social structure; it was to instill particular habits and values in Aboriginal people. As one missionary noted,

> The Indians' character is ill adapted to get through this world honourably, and comfortably; so it is unfit to enter the next . . . (Cockran's journal, Aug.10/38 to July 10/39. Aug.10, 1838 A78).

The second dimension of government of the self involves the techniques or technologies by which individuals act on themselves. Although there are several technologies of the self discussed in this thesis, one of the most powerful was that of confession, in which the individual was required both to explore and then to denounce all aspects of the traditional self. To confess meant to confront oneself; as both subject and object. This technology was most prevalent in the education of children and in the practices of conversion.

Foucault discusses two practices that are characteristic of early Christianity. The first is *exomologêsis*, which he defines as 'a dramatic expression of the situation of the penitent as a sinner which makes manifest his status as sinner'. Like the martyr whose confession means the death of the self, there is at the heart of this confessional practice, 'a rupture with self and world,' a 'break with one's past identity' (Foucault 1988.43). The second is *exagoreusis*, or 'an analytical and continual verbalization of thoughts carried on

in the relation of complete obedience to someone else. This relation is modelled on the renunciation of ones' own will and of one's own self'. (1988:48). In the practice of *exomologêsis*, then, the sinner had to "kill" the self. For Aboriginal people, this meant destroying all aspects of their traditional selves. The practice of *exagoreusis* involved renouncing one's will. This helps to explain why it was that 'obedience' was of such importance to the missionaries.

Confessional practices entailed technologies of both self-knowledge and verbal confession. They were at the same time self-destruction as they involved a break from the former self-identity:

> Penitence of sin doesn't have as its target the establishing of an identity but serves instead to mark the refusal of the self, the breaking away from self. It represents a break with one's past identity (Foucault 1982:43).

It was particularly important to the missionaries for Aboriginal people to transform their self-identities such that they would govern themselves. The goal of the Church Missionary Society was to create an Aboriginal clergy, and a self-governing body of individuals. Once Aboriginal people were made accountable for their own actions, the missionaries' plan was to extract themselves and move on to another population. Therefore, in addition to attempts by the missionaries to create particular subjectivities in Aboriginal people, this study also addresses issues of self-regulation by exploring the mechanisms used by the missionaries aimed to induce individuals to control themselves, to become responsible for themselves, and to make particular choices. Ultimately, they would take over the missionaries' work. As William Cockran stated,

> If we should succeed in teaching the present inhabitants industry and economy, may we not call upon them at some future period to assist in bringing in the surrounding heathen to serve God in spirit and truth (Rev. Cockran to Rev. Woodroofe, Red River, Aug. 3, 1831:435).

The notion of government of the self provides for several avenues of exploration in this study. The first is the ways in which the missionaries tried to transform the self-identities of Aboriginal people. The second is the technologies that they used in order to induce Aboriginal people to govern themselves. The third, which is particularly salient to the colonial situation, is the ways in which Aboriginal people governed themselves in traditional societies.

The free and active subject

As opposed to the discipline of docile bodies that he describes in earlier work (1977, 1980), Foucault's conceptualization of government stresses the importance of active subjects. Indeed, government presupposes the freedom of the subject to act: Power is exercised only over free subjects, who are faced with a number of possibilities for behaving (Foucault 1982:221). It is important to note, however, that where freedom typically refers to a capacity to choose one's actions without external constraint, for Foucault freedom is a matter of degree. As Garland explains, freedom is the configured range of unconstrained choice in which agency can operate (1997:23).

The exercise of governmental power within liberalism relies on reconfiguring the constraints in which freedom of choice is exercised. Although individuals appear to be free to make choices, their actions are not freely chosen. Rather, their choices are

conditioned by both external and internal constraints. Liberal societies are marked by a kind of power that takes as its object the self of ethically free citizens.

The notion of resistance is always present in this framework, and is seen as embodied within government rather than external to it. For Foucault, the exercise of power is differentiated from violence or force in that it is addressed to individuals who are free to act in some way (1982:221). Because of the potential of several courses of action, there is always a possibility that some actions may subvert the existing forms of government. Therefore, even though forms of governmental power may appear to be stable, they are not fixed and can be upset by actions that subvert their control (Gordon 1991:5). One of the merits of this approach is that governing is not necessarily a successful action, but always involves attempts that are more or less successful and more or less failures. The advantage of this approach for this study is that it is then possible to dispel with the problem of assessing whether or not the missionaries were successful and focus on the interaction itself.

Governmental Rationalities

Governmentality [9] encompasses two interrelated aspects. The first is concerned with the *philosophy* of governing. Here Foucault highlights the role of rationalities or ideas about how governing authorities understand the problems they address. The second

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[9] Dean (1999:19) notes that governmentality has a second meaning in Foucault's work. It marks the emergence of a new way of thinking about governing in the 16th century that is concerned with the population and relies less on coercive forms of power than on forms of power that are exercised through freedom.

aspect of governmentality is the *concrete practices* that are the outcome of a particular philosophy, or rationality of government. By attending to these two aspects of government, we get a sense of both how authorities tried to govern and why they governed in a particular way.

The exploration of government starts with questions concerning how authorities think about their own conduct and that of others. Foucault was interested in government as an activity and as ways of knowing what forms that activity should take. A rationality, or mentality of government refers to a relatively systematic way of thinking about government. To explore governmental rationalities is to ask the question, 'What was the reasoning behind particular forms of governance?' The concern here is with thought as it is embedded within programmes[10] for the direction and reform of conduct. This does not entail an exploration of the governing individuals' consciousness, but rather of bodies of knowledge, moral rhetorics and beliefs and opinions in which governing authorities are immersed. The idea of mentalities of government emphasizes that the reasoning behind practices of government is collective, taken for granted, and not usually open to questioning by its practitioners.

Governmental rationalities or mentalities have several components. The first component is the authorities' conceptions of what ought to be, or understandings of what should be accomplished. In the case of the missionaries, the question that would be asked

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[10]Dean (1999:211) defines programmes as explicit, planned attempts to reform or transform regimes of practices by reorienting them to specific ends or investing them with particular purposes.

is, 'What did they envision for Aboriginal people'? 'How did they think Aboriginal people should behave, and according to what definitions of morality'?

The second component of a governmental rationality is how the population is problematised. The kinds of questions that are asked here are, 'How are certain aspects of conduct problematised, and how are they to be reformed?' 'What forms of individual and collective identity are specific practices and programmes of government trying to form?' 'What forms of conduct are expected of the governed?' This is particularly relevant here in that many of the missionaries' proposed institutional changes were not an end in and of themselves but rather as a *means* to transform Aboriginal sense of self. The question of how Aboriginal people were problematised addresses the missionaries' prevalent concern with the Aboriginal peoples' 'nature' and supposedly immoral kinds of behaviour. Indeed, such problematizations are described in graphic terms in the missionaries' journals. Rather than view them as racist, however, it is more useful to ask what forms of self they believed would prevent Aboriginal people from salvation, or from their eventual inclusion in European society, and set these against their conceptions of the attributes of the ideal Protestant self.

The third component of a governmental rationality is the perception of how the act of governing should be carried out. Foucault studied a genealogy of forms of government that emerged at different times and in different European societies: Christian-pastoral, reason of state, police, and finally liberalism. These in turn are organised around particular philosophies, each of which has its own objectives and ways of understanding governing. Foucault's analysis focuses primarily on the shift of mechanisms of governance away from

repressive forms of control to more indirect and persuasive controls. He argues that from the 16th century onwards, western states have become increasingly governmentalized. By this he means that, rather than relying on its control apparatus, the actions of authorities are directed toward managing the problems of the individuals within the population and organizing them in the most efficacious manner and in such a way as to increase well-being. The political rationality here is one of linking the freedom of the individual with the good of the state. It is based on the premise that if government is to promote prosperity and happiness, it must do so indirectly. This form of government is very different from pre-modern forms of rule in which it is incumbent upon individuals to obey the sovereign.

The governmental rationality of the Anglican missionaries was based on two forms of governance that existed simultaneously. The first was liberalism, which was the general political ethos of this specific era. The second was pastoral power.

For Foucault, the emergence of liberalism[11] in the early nineteenth century was of critical historical significance. With the advent of civil society, individuals were conceived as ethically and legally free. The distinctive feature of a liberal mode of government is that it invokes the capacity and power of the self-governing individual, while at the same time undertaking to shape those capacities. The rulers must rule in ways that appear to delimit freedoms in minimal fashion (O'Malley 1996; Barry 1996; Miller & Rose 1990; Burchell 1993, 1991, 1996; Rose 1992, 1990). This entails exercising power as discreetly as

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[11] In Foucault's approach, liberalism is not an ideology or a particular set of policies adopted by a government. It is rather a particular way in which the activity of governing is both thought of and practised (Burchell 1993).

possible in order to minimise direct resistance. Therefore, rather than using coercive measures, liberal strategies of government depend upon such means as schooling, or the family, to create individuals who do not need to be directly governed by others, but will govern themselves in a particular manner. Because government within liberalism relies on persuasion and the use of rational choice, it is experienced as free will and autonomous agency. As this study will show, the missionaries relied on education and the family in their attempts to change Aboriginal peoples' behaviour. All of their arguments took the form of persuasion and choice.

Also evident in the ways in which the missionaries governed is pastoral power, which, for Foucault, is a form of governance that first appeared in early Judaism. The logic of a pastoral rationality of government is conveyed by the image of a shepherd herding a flock, where a concern for the well-being of each entity is seen to affect the welfare of all. Here government is understood as an ensemble of political technologies directed at forming and regulating the comportment of the individuals situated in the totality of a community (McNay 1996; Gordon1991; Burchell 1991; Pavlich 1996b). Several themes run through the Hebrew notion of pastorship. First, the relation of the pastor is to the flock rather than to the land. Second, the shepherd unifies his flock. Third, the shepherd's role is to ensure the well-being of his flock, through constant individualised attention and kindness (McNay1996).

This model was later adapted by the Church as the care of souls (McNay 1996:120-121). There are four characteristic components of a Christian pastoral rationality. First, its ultimate aim is to ensure individual salvation in the next world. This is

the ultimate reward that is held out by the pastor. Second, the pastor accepts personal responsibility for the well-being of a congregation and as such may be required to make personal sacrifices. Third, it requires an intimate knowledge of each person's soul. As Foucault stated, this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of peoples minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it (1982:14). Therefore, pastoral power requires absolute obedience. As this study will show, the lack of obedience in Aboriginal people's nature was deplored by the missionaries and was targeted as an attribute that needed to be changed.

Foucault noted that pastoral power came to be incorporated into the modern state in a new form. In this context, salvation takes on the meaning of health, well-being, and security of citizens. In other words, it is 'no longer a question of leading people to their salvation in the next world, but rather ensuring it in this world (1982:215). Both forms of pastoral power are evident in the missionaries' governance.

Dean (1999:82) suggests that pastoral rule is also based on a conception of the potential inclusion of humankind within the community, which stands in opposition to liberalism where the appropriate attitude of the rulers are to citizens rather than all of God's creatures. This tension between inclusion and exclusion was one of the primary sources of conflict between the missionaries and other colonialists.

Technologies of Government

Where rationalities of government are concerned with ideas about governing,

technologies of government are the concrete means by which these ideas are carried out. The questions that are asked here concern the procedures and tactics by which these ideas are put into practice. Examples of technologies include practices of child rearing, devices for organizing space and time, surveillance, practices of education, and spiritual exercises such as procedures of examination and confession. All of these were used by the Anglican missionaries in their encounter with the Aboriginal peoples of Red River.

An analysis of technologies of government is central to this study. The mechanisms that were typically used by missionaries in a European setting, such as sermons from the pulpit, were problematic in the colonial setting, given the different understandings of the universe, problems in language translation and interpretation, and Aboriginal resistance. In light of this, it is important to delineate the kinds of inventions that the missionaries devised and continually modified.

In sum, the sensitizing concepts provided by Foucault's work on governmentality redirect our attention to the process of government itself: the reasoning behind it; the elements that this reasoning depended upon; the technologies that made it practical, and the kinds of subjectivities it required. In focussing on techniques of governance themselves rather than on questions of 'in whose interest' they were deployed, this framework allows us to ask new kinds of questions. One of the most relevant is an exploration of government through the self by means of techniques that emphasize individual choice.

Colonial Governmentality

Foucault's analysis did not include the ways in which government was deployed in the colonial situation, which involved the governance of another culture informed with a radically different understanding of reality. This needs to be addressed here in order to understand not only the difficulties that were faced by the missionaries, but the extent of the change that the missionaries proposed. Secondly, colonial power did not involve a gradual transformation, but rather required an abrupt change from one form of social organization to another. Third, where Foucault's notion of both liberal and pastoral regimes presupposes a somewhat malleable population, in colonial situations, the subjects were often resistant. These differences must be addressed in formulating an understanding of government in the colonial situation.

The study of government in the colonial setting has already been begun by Scott (1995) who distinguishes a 'colonial governmentality'. Scott argues that colonial power within liberalism was aimed not so much at the bodies of the governed, but rather at the conditions within which they acted. He notes, however, that colonial governance involved more than *modifying* the conditions within which individuals acted. Colonialism involved the complete replacement of one system with another.

> Colonial power came to depend, not merely upon inserting English ideas here and there, but upon the *systematic redefinition and transformation of the terrain on which the life of the colonized was lived.* What was needed was to produce the conditions of self interest in which wants would tend to be of certain kinds and not others (Scott 1995: 205).

I argue that in order to successfully change the conditions within which Aboriginal

people acted, it was necessary to first destroy and then reconstruct the traditional Aboriginal self identities. As this study shows, Aboriginal people were governed and governed themselves by rationalities that were based on very different ontologies and understandings of morality. The behavioural changes that the missionaries promoted went against these traditional understandings. To follow the missionaries' path meant that Aboriginal people would have to override their understandings of proper behaviour. Therefore, for the missionaries' governance to be successful, it was necessary to bo beyond changing the material conditions within which Aboriginal people acted. It was also necessary to break down their subjectivities and the ties to the traditions of their culture.

The Aboriginal self-identity was targeted by the missionaries both indirectly, via material changes and directly, through technologies of the self in conversion rituals and in formal educational programs. Therefore, I argue that the colonial governmentality of the missionaries was potentially harmful to Aboriginal peoples. Its capacity to inflict harm did not have to do with exploitation, or domination, or exclusion, or even in changes to traditional structures. Rather it was in governmental mechanisms that attacked Aboriginal peoples' sense of self-identity.

In the process of becoming civilized and Christianized, Aboriginal people were expected to change their sense of who they were, what they believed in, and the ways in which they conducted themselves. However, the missionaries could not simply point out to Aboriginal people that their beliefs were false, or suggest that they make minor changes to their behaviour. Rather they had to first destroy all the conditions that were understood to produce their existing beliefs and behaviours. In other words, the missionaries had to break

down the traditional forms of life before new forms could come into being. Before this could be done, the Aboriginal self had to be destroyed and rebuilt.

Research Questions

Based on this analytical framework, this study is centred around three questions, which explore three dimensions of the encounter:

1. What rationalities of government were directed at Aboriginal people by Anglican missionaries in the Red River region between 1850-1865?
2. What technologies of government were deployed in context?
3. In what ways may this encounter have contributed to ongoing patterns of Aboriginal governance?

The first question explores how the missionaries thought: their frame of reference, their goals, and their philosophy of how to govern. The second question explores how they made thought practical by means of strategies and tactics. The third question explores the ramifications of their forms of government for Aboriginal people. It raises the question of whether the Anglican missionaries, who encountered primarily resistant populations, may have still had an effect on Aboriginal peoples' lives through the governmental tactics that they used in order to achieve their (primarily altruistic) goals.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research strategy that I have used is defined by Skocpol (1982) as 'using concepts to interpret history', which favours the use of concepts rather than grand theory for the organization and interpretation of data. In this study, concepts are drawn from Foucault's work on governmentality. The focus is on the complexity, uniqueness and contingency of historical events, rather than on causality. The specific method that I used was content analysis.

Sources of Data

The main source of data for this study was the archives of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), housed at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. These archives contain a detailed historical record of missionary activity including official and private correspondence. The data are drawn from reels A75 to A86. For background information concerning Cree and Ojibwa societies, conditions at Red River, and the missionaries' background, I relied on secondary sources.

The CMS collection is particularly advantageous for this study for several reasons. Because the purpose of their mission was to deal with people rather than to show a profit

through trade, the missionaries' accounts provide descriptions of everyday, mundane kinds of encounters with Aboriginal people that are not included in much of the fur trade archival material. The CMS collection provides a rich account of daily events that would be deemed inconsequential in other kinds of correspondence, but that were important from the perspective of members of the CMS. The missionaries of the Church Missionary Society were required by their superiors in London to communicate both their observations and their personal opinions to their superiors in the form of both letters and daily journals. The journals, in particular, provide some continuity as they are presented in diary form on a daily basis. The fact that the missionaries were required to write their opinions brings a human element into the data, as they write of frustrations and failures and hardships as well as successes. These letters and diaries are also a valuable source of insight into their perceptions of Aboriginal people and of the mission in general. Because the missionaries became involved in all aspects of the lives of Aboriginal people, they acquired a fuller (albeit biased) insight into their lives than did most other observers.

Like all historical data, this data set is incomplete, biased, scattered, and fragmentary [12]. Descriptions are often imprecise in that there are descriptions of encounters with 'an Indian', or 'a chief' that give no indications as to whether the individual was Cree or Ojibwa. There is no way of knowing how precise their accounts were, or what was intentionally left out. Moreover, although they often describe in detail what Aboriginal people have said to them in conversation, it is necessary to be aware that many of these

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For a more detailed account of the limitations of historical data, see Erickson 1976; Platt 1981; Goldthorpe 1991, Rock, 1976).

conversations took place with an interpreter. Some of the snippets of conversation appear to have a 'tongue in cheek' quality. This, however, must remain as conjecture.

It is not possible, from these accounts to document numbers of conversions. There are a number of reasons for this. First, there is no way of knowing if the missionaries embellished the numbers in an effort to show some measure of success. Much of the missionaries' correspondence was addressed to their superiors, which raises the possibility of biased accounts to justify their work After all, the possibility always existed that they would be removed from their post and perhaps from their 'job' altogether. This was a considerable threat, given the fact that it was through the Church that most had risen from working class backgrounds. On the other hand, however, there are numerous accounts of frustrations, failures, depression, self-doubt, and questioning of the efficacy of their mission, which may attest to their sincerity. Second, accounts by the missionaries attest to the fact that some individuals reverted back to their traditional spirituality after a crisis was over. Third, as Grant (1984) notes, some individuals may have agreed to convert so as not to offend the missionaries, which corresponded with the tendency to refrain from humiliating others by contradicting them directly. Finally, widespread evidence of syncretism raises the question of what a 'conversion' may have meant to those who did convert.

The greatest limitation of these particular data is that they provide a non-Aboriginal account. Aboriginal people preserved and passed on their history as oral history. Therefore, these data are the reflections of only one of the parties involved in the process of Indian missionary contact. On the other hand, however, there is ample indirect

evidence of Aboriginal people's actions, despite the lack of a direct Aboriginal 'voice'. The data are replete with accounts of the missionaries' frustrations and struggles–many of which referred to 'irrational' behaviour and the stubborn nature of Aboriginal people in addition to outright resistance. There is rich evidence of Aboriginal people's reactions to the missionaries both in the form of repeated conversations as well as explicit descriptions of their resistance. Although we cannot know what they really thought and felt, we can know something of what they said and did. As Brown and Vibert (1996:xiv) note, given the intensity of the engagement, even the most Eurocentric of texts cannot help but provide glimpses of Aboriginal actions, and traces of Aboriginal voices.

For the most part, the questions that are asked of these data are not affected to any great extent by these limitations. Indeed, what would be categorized as limitations in historical studies are turned around and used as a source of valuable information in this study. For example, one problem that has been cited in similar studies is that the missionaries were not objective observers because they were deeply dedicated to changing Aboriginal culture. Because they were obviously ethnocentric and proscriptive, their accounts are treated with suspicion. Despite their normative bias, however, these accounts provide snapshots of traditional Cree and Ojibwa customs and values, of more traditional men's and women's roles; and of means to status. They also provide a clear picture of what the missionaries wanted to accomplish and why they attempted to make particular changes.

It is very evident that the missionaries understood Aboriginal people through their own culture's categories and perceptions. As such, scholars have lamented the fact that

these accounts often tell us more about the prejudices of their authors than about the lives of Aboriginal peoples. In this study, however, it is precisely these prejudices that are of interest. Indeed, for this study, the 'correct' version of these stories is less important than the rich information that these accounts reveal about their authors. The ethnocentric bias of the missionaries provides a rich source of data for a deeper understanding of their attitudes and goals, both of which are important to this study. By further analysing the ethnocentric bias of the missionaries, it is possible to answer questions concerning the perceptions that the missionaries had of Aboriginal institutions, beliefs, and 'nature'. These data can also provide answers to the other questions that are asked in this study, such as, 'How did the missionaries understand their role?', 'What were their goals?', or 'What specific mechanisms did they design to accomplish their goals?' The missionaries' basic assumptions of how society functions, the nature of humanity, and notions of morality, are inscribed in these documents. Thus, while it is not possible to obtain the objective truth from these data, this is not as relevant to this study as is the rich information that these accounts reveal about the missionaries' ideologies, perceptions of traditional cultures and beliefs, goals, and strategies. Despite the fact that the missionaries' observations were normative and proscriptive, the pictures that they paint provide rich information and glimpses of actions that reveal a great deal about the people involved. Furthermore, the goal of this study is to explore what the missionaries *tried* to do. This is spelled out in detailed accounts.

Although most of the missionaries that were present at Red River during this era are represented in this study, much of the data is drawn from the journals and letters of one

particular missionary: Reverend William Cockran. There are two reasons for this. First, Cockran stayed at Red River over the longest period of time, remaining in the general area for forty years. This brings some continuity to the study as developments can be traced from one person's point of view over time. Second, Cockran was not only the most prolific writer, but was also more prone than other missionaries to describing daily events in great detail and expressing his thoughts and feelings in his journals. However, the bias that is inherent here must be noted.

Several studies have pointed to the necessity of being sensitive to the social context of events and meanings. For example, while missionary accounts of Aboriginal 'begging' have been accepted at face value, this behaviour had a different meaning to Aboriginal people for whom it was a culturally appropriate means of establishing a relationship, or an appropriate behaviour in times of shortage. To compensate for Eurocentric (and often androcentric) accounts, scholars such as Dickason (1992), and Smandych and Lee (1995) have advocated the use of an autohistorical approach, or attempting to understand events within their cultural context. A sensitivity to cultural context is particularly important in a colonial situation, given the wide variance of meanings between the two broad cultures and the likelihood of misunderstanding and misinterpretation on both sides. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that it is not possible to represent , to identify with, or to have a full appreciating of what it means to be a colonized individual.

Sampling

The way in which these data are organized on the microfilms precludes any form of random sampling. Although the reels are organized roughly by year, there is little coherence to the way in which they are ordered. A descriptive letter or journal written by a missionary may be followed by a fiscal account, or a letter from a member of the Church Missionary Society in London, or a journal entry from a missionary in another area. Often, a group of entries is repeated several times on different reels, or even on the same reel. Finally, some pages were not legible at all. Therefore, I read all of the contents of the microfilms and picked out only what was relevant to this study. My criterion for judging when to stop sampling was when no new kinds of data were being found.

Time Frame

The time frame of this study is 1820 to 1865. The reason that I have chosen this time frame is that 1820 marked the date of the arrival of the first Anglican missionary, and on December1, 1869, the Dominion of Canada paid the Hudson's Bay Company for their land. At this point, Rupert's Land was to be governed by the Canadian state, whose rationality of government was based on different objectives. By the 1860's, however, the missionaries had begun to lose their influence. Until the Hind and Palliser expeditions, that took place between 1857 and 1860, Rupert's Land had been relatively isolated from the rest of the world, which provides a unique situation for analysing this encounter freed from outside influence. The Hind and Palliser expeditions marked the beginning of the end of this era. The following decades saw the organized exploration of the West, the end of

Hudson's Bay Company rule, and the intensification of contacts with the outside world, and the virtual extinction of the bison. This signalled the demise of the Church of England in Red River. The day when the missionary set the moral standards had ended. After 1865, the Church Missionary Society expanded its field eastward to Moose factory and northwest to Fort Yukon (Boon, 1962:28). There are few CMS reports about the Indian Settlement and/or the Aboriginal people of Red River during this era. This presented a problem for data collection after 1860.

CHAPTER FIVE

BACKGROUND

In order to understand the choices that the Aboriginal people of Red River made in the face of pressure to radically change their lives, it is necessary to be aware of the context within which their encounter with the missionaries was situated. Prior contact with Europeans would affect the way in which they perceived the missionaries, and material conditions would eventually dictate their scope for choice.

To put this study in context, the reader requires a general picture of traditional Aboriginal society at the time of their first contact with the missionaries. Before proceeding, however, it is important to note that Aboriginal people, like Europeans, cannot be subsumed under one category. The various bands that inhabited the area now known as Manitoba differed from one another in terms of their origins and various cultural elements. It is also important to note that, in the encounter being studied here, Aboriginal people were divided by gender, age, and status, and they met the missionaries at different times and under different personal circumstances. However, there were broad cultural similarities among the Aboriginal peoples in question and it is these similarities that are focussed on here rather than the differences. This chapter stresses those features of Aboriginal cultures that bear directly on issues raised in subsequent chapters. Similarly, it is important to note that the missionaries that are discussed in this study differed from each other in various ways. Yet they had broad similarities in terms of their ultimate goals

and once again it is these similarities that are focussed upon here.

By the time of the arrival of the first missionary, acculturative forces had already been in operation to a certain extent as a result of prior contact with Europeans. John West, the first Anglican missionary to Red River, was quick to notice and disapprove of the influence of the Europeans:

> They have been greatly corrupted in their simple and barbarous customs by conduct more barbarous on the part of those, who have borne no other mark of the Christian character than the name (John West, Journal. The British Northwest American Indians with Free Thoughts on the Red River Settlement, 1820-23).

This chapter provides a general description of the Aboriginal peoples with whom the missionaries came into contact, and a brief description of the missionaries who came to Red River during this era.

The Aboriginal People of Red River

The Saulteaux and Woodlands Cree Indians were the main missionary contacts. These people shared a nomadic way of life, being primarily either hunting or hunting and gathering societies, supplemented by some harvesting. Although the nations considered here were formed of roughly homogeneous groups, every band was different from every other in some respects and similar in others [13].

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13 For a more comprehensive accounts Ojibwa and Cree cultures, see Peers (1994), Hallowell (1991), Goosen (1974), Milloy (1988) and Mandelbaum (1979).

The Ojibwa/Saulteaux

Also known as the western Ojibwa, Bungi, and Plains Chippewa, the Saulteaux[14] were related to the Ojibwa or Chippewa of the great Lakes. They were one of a number of people who chose to come west with the expanding fur trade. The Ojibwa originated in the great Lakes region where, in the 16th and early 17th centuries, they participated in the early French fur trade. It was not until the late 1700's that many began to move into Manitoba and Saskatchewan.[15] Similar to other Aboriginal groups, the Saulteaux were subdivided into numerous bands and family groups.

After the merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company in 1821, the Ojibwa received poor treatment from the Hudson Bay Company. This did not alter their way of life, however, as they continued to practice their diversified economy. They fished, planted[16], and hunted small game, which enabled them to survive a growing scarcity of bison, crop failures, and epidemics of disease. The Ojibwa with whom the missionaries had the most contact in this area were members of the Peguis band.[17] With the

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14 The terms Saulteaux was used primarily in the Prairie provinces, Ojibwa in Ontario and Chippewa in the U.S. The term Bungi, which is evident in some early Manitoba writings refers to the same people.

15 Ojibwa families began concentrating along the Red and Assiniboine rivers, at the forks on the Red and the Assiniboine, at Pembina, along the shores of the Manitoba lakes and in the Interlake area, and immediately west of the Interlake at Swan River, Shell River, and Dauphin River (Peers1996:53).

16 Agriculture was a far more ancient and indigenous tradition on the Plains than the horse culture. There is evidence of an agricultural village on the banks of Red River near Lockport, Manitoba, that dates from between 1300 and 1500 A.D.

17 By 1805 the area around the Red River was becoming depleted in game and many

arrival of the missionaries, the Peguis band, in particular, chose to establish relations with the missionaries. However, they remained politically and economically autonomous from the missionaries during this early period.

The Cree

Like the Ojibwa, the Cree also originated in the eastern Woodlands. With the establishment of fur trade posts on the Hudson Bay after 1670, they were middlemen to the trade. Their expertise in the use of the canoe allowed them to use the network of waterways to transport furs to the posts (Mandelbaum1979). The fur trade was the most important economic factor in their lives, which was not true of other peoples. The Cree had a history of adjusting to economic and ecological circumstances, modifying the way in which they obtained their livelihood, which showed itself to be true in their accommodation to the missionaries' plans (Milloy, 1972).

The Cree were divided not only into bands but into several separate branches with the Swampy Cree[18] and Plains Cree forming the two main divisions. The Cree with whom the missionaries had the most contact in Rupert's Land were the Swampy Cree. Where the Plains Cree adopted the plains culture of the horse and bison, the Swampy Cree maintained their Eastern Woodlands culture. They preferred hunting large caribou, moose, and beaver but relied chiefly on small game because of the scarcity of the other animals (Mandelbaum, 1979:181-185, Friesen, 1987:54).

Ojibwa moved on in search of richer areas. The Peguis band, however, decided to remain and diversify their subsistence patterns by planting corn and potatoes (Podruchny1992:10).

[18] The Swampy Cree were also called the Woodland Cree or Muskegon.

There were considerable differences in lifestyle and disposition between the Plains Cree[19], who hunted buffalo, and the Swampy Cree. The Swampy Cree were in constant contact with the traders through their participation as crewmen for the Company's brigades and were more receptive to the missionaries than the Plains Cree who came into contact with them only two or three times throughout a year.

Data have shown that the Swampy Cree were considerably more amenable to the missionaries' attempts to change their way of life than were the Saulteaux. The following is an example of many such accounts:

> What a contrast does the conduct of the Muscaigo exhibit to that of the Saulteaux among whom I labour. Among the former, the word of God seems to have free course, while the latter tenaciously adhere to their heathen habits; and yield not yet one instance of a change of heart! (Rev. Cowley's Journal, Nov.29th, 1845. A78)

This difference was also recorded by Ross, the recorder at Red River Settlement:

> It was invariably observed, that of all the different tribes that visited the settlement, the members of one only looked favourably on civilization, or showed any attachment to the whites. This was a tribe of the great Cree nation, called Swampies, from the low country or sea-coast (1856:276).

Several plausible explanations have been offered for this. Ladd (1986:92) notes that the Swampy Cree who had drifted out of the north into Red River in the 1830's had little experience of traditional communal life. Though they spoke the Cree language and

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19 The availability of horses moved many Cree to abandon the prime role of fur trapping and trading and to take up buffalo hunting. With the expansion of fur trade posts inland in the late eighteenth century, they found an economic opportunity in providing buffalo meat to the trading companies.

performed many traditional practices, they had grown up under the paternalism of the Hudson Bay Company. Many were Country-Born (the offspring of HBC families), who had lived around the Hudson Bay Company's northern posts as hunters, trappers, and tripmen until the possibility of a better life drew them south to Red River. Peers (1994) suggests that the Swampy Cree were attracted by the economic opportunities offered by the colony. Many adopted Christianity, taking advantage of the missionaries' offers of material assistance. References to the Ojibwa, on the other hand, consistently cited their resistance:

> ...as God has opened the hearts of the Muscaigoes to receive the gospel, we doubt not but that he will work for his glory among the Saulteaux (Rev. Smithurst to the secretaries, Indian Settlement, Red River Nov. 2, 1840. A78, p.525).

Or, similarly,

> We have much encouragement from the Muscaigoes but it requires a strong faith and great patience to bear with the selfishness and indifference of the Saulteux tribe (Smithurst Journal, Oct. 13, 1841. A78).

> In speaking of our Indian population, it must be observed that a distinction is to be made between the Swampy Crees and the Saulteux; the former conform to civilized habits, cultivate the ground, and locate themselves in particular spots; and avail themselves gratefully to the means of religious instruction and improvement; whereas the latter, with a few exceptions retain the old habits and wandering mode of life (Report of the state of Religions, Morality and Education at the Red River Settlement and Grand Rapids, by the Revs. Jones and Cockran. 1835. A77).

The most plausible explanation for this is that the Ojibwa were primarily self-sufficient. They were highly skilled at diversifying their economy. They harvested corn, potatoes and wild rice, fished, gathered berries and hunted small game. Although these

were difficult times, they were still able to choose from a number of options and they did not become dependent on the posts (Peers 1994).

Social and political organization

In both Ojibwa/Saulteaux and Cree society, the migratory family hunting band, which consisted of two or three related families, travelled together as a separate unit for most of the year. Only during the summer fishing season did several hunting bands assemble to celebrate religious feasts (Goosen, 1974:84). There were no formal political institutions or hierarchical structures. A community was composed of a small group of extended families. Although an Aboriginal community possessed a culture and social structure similar to other communities composing the band, the community acted as an independent unit. Within the family hunting band the oldest male was usually recognized as head, but his authority was minimal. In the larger band gatherings, leadership was often predicated on circumstance or necessity. Those skilled in specific activities led when their expertise was needed (Vescey,1983:10). For example, the medicine man might take leadership over a religious ceremony. In times of war, leadership would fall to an outstanding warrior, and in hunting season, it would be assumed by a respected hunter. In each case, authority was temporary.

Traditional leadership was an example of the Aboriginal preference for avoiding hierarchies. The authority of the chiefs was non-coercive and was predicated upon persuasion. Leadership was exercised in such a way as to not involve chains of hierarchical command and obedience. Without the support of the group, the chief had no power.

Members of the group were always free to withdraw if they so desired (Ross, 1992:57-58). The lack of coercive power became very obvious to the missionaries when Peguis tried to convince his people to convert to Christianity. Rev. Smithurst submitted the following description:

> He begged them to attend to the advice I had been giving them, to give up their children to be taught in the school and come to church themselves. He also told them that in addition to the prospect of happiness in the life to come he lived far more comfortably than ever he did when a heathen his worldly circumstances being much improved. Such alas is the indifference I may say prejudice of the Saulteaux tribe against Christianity that though the assembly consisted nearly of the whole tribe, not one expressed a desire for instruction, nor have we at present the prospect of obtaining more than two or three additional children for the Saulteaux School (Rev. Smithurst to the Secretaries, Indian Settlement, Red River Nov. 2, 1840. A78 p.525).

Although there is little written material describing the traditional roles and status of Aboriginal women in Canada, some aspects of the division of labour and women's position within Aboriginal societies have been reconstructed. Dickason (1992), for example, notes a sexual division of labour in all aspects of the Aboriginal world: in ritual, exercise of authority, productive and reproductive activities, and food distribution. Gender roles were clearly defined. Aboriginal women had important roles within these subsistence economies as small game hunters and gatherers as well as in finishing furs for trade. Peers (1994:56) suggests that survival often depended on foods harvested by women. Despite this, she notes that the foods harvested by women were often assigned a lower social value than big game brought in by men. Therefore, although the contribution of women was essential, it is not possible to reconstruct the extent to which this translated into status for women. What can be reconstructed, however, is women's power in the family. The family was the

central and most important part of many nonindustrial societies, and it was the place where many decisions about daily and long term activities were made.

Effect of prior contact with Europeans

By the time of the arrival of the first Anglican missionary in 1820, the Aboriginal people in the area of Red River had already experienced two hundred years of relatively constant contact with Europeans. Although it has been widely assumed that traditional Aboriginal cultures were severely eroded by this early contact with Europeans,[20] recent studies show that despite the fact that Aboriginal cultures showed some negative effects of contact with Europeans (such as disease), little damage to cultural institutions and beliefs had taken place. Most newly adopted elements of Western technology were given Aboriginal meanings and integrated into the existing structures of society. For example, revisionist authors (Francis and Marantz 1983; Peers 1994; Thistle 1986; Friesen1987) now argue that the fur trade did not induct Aboriginal people into the capitalist system. Where trade in western society was based on profit, trade in traditional Aboriginal society was based on an ethic of sharing and reciprocity and was a means of maintaining social and political alliances. From the Aboriginal frame of reference, trade with the Europeans was an extension of their previous trading relationships rather than the adoption of market

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Termed the 'destruction of Aboriginal society' argument (Thistle 1986), prior studies have concluded that European trade items replaced many traditional weapons and implements in the Indian material culture, rendering Aboriginals dependent on the white trader (Rich, 1960:35; Vescey, 1983:16). Further, Aboriginal people are said to have been inducted into the capitalist trading system and its values (Grant 1984).

values. For example, individuals derived status by redistributing trade wealth through the band (Milloy and Robinson 1990).

Recent studies also show that, contrary to conventional belief, Aboriginal people did not become dependent on Europeans in this early period as a result of the starvation that is said to have resulted from the decline in large game. While starvation did occur, studies now show that Aboriginal people used a wide range of subsistence resources. In fact, the Red River Ojibwa and Cree have been credited with keeping the settlers alive through the first year of the settlement's existence.[21] The reason for this discrepancy in interpretation is that prior studies overlooked the fact that while the Aboriginal people often declared themselves to be starving, humbling oneself and asking for pity was the culturally appropriate way of initiating or affirming a social relationship (Peers 1994; Brown and Vibert 1996).

The picture that emerges from these more recent studies is one in which most Aboriginal people were not destitute, nor were they an easy target for the missionaries. Indeed, in an era when European settlers and traders were often unable to adjust to prevailing circumstances, the European culture appeared inadequate. From West's reports of his conversations with Peguis, an Ojibwa chief, it appears as though the Aboriginal people felt somewhat smug in the efficacy of their own culture. Accounts of Aboriginal

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[21] The colonists' crops failed regularly, and the Europeans were often dependent on Aboriginal people for food. Ojibwa gardens were first reported at Netley Creek in 1805. The potatoes and corn that they harvested were better suited to the harsh prairie environment than the crops of wheat and barley that were planted by the settlers (Thistle 1986; Peers 1994).

self-assuredness abound in the missionaries' accounts. The missionaries, who thought of the 'savages' as inferior, were taken aback: "The Savage...sits down at your feet...but it is not that he may hear your instructions, but that you may hear him" (Rev. Cockran to the Secretaries, Cockran's Journal, 1832-33. A85 p.20).

However, European contact was to bring problems with which the Aboriginals were largely unprepared to cope--problems such as the depletion of resources, alcohol, and disease. The introduction of alcohol as a trade article, even when given a new meaning in redistribution ceremonies, was particularly destructive--a fact that was attested to by numerous accounts by traders and missionaries. For example, John West wrote the following:

> What wanton cruelty, and long train of evils has the induction of spirituous liquor inflicted upon the Aboriginals of this country (*The British Northwest American Indians with Free Thoughts on the Red River Settlement, 1820-23).*

Just prior to the arrival of the missionaries, Aboriginal populations faced a series of crises such as a decline in fur-bearing animals as well as large game. Added to these adversities were epidemics of diseases such as whooping cough and measles in 1819 (Peers, 1994:63). With the coalition of the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company, and particularly as a result of the arrival of George Simpson as Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, relations with the Hudson's Bay Company and the colonists changed. Simpson had clear ideas about the place of Aboriginal people in the reorganized fur trade, stating that, " I am convinced they must be ruled with a rod of iron to bring and keep them in a proper state of sub-ordination, and the most certain way to

effect this is by letting them feel their dependence upon us" (cited in Peers, 1994:100). In the face of these challenges, both the Cree and the Ojibwa struggled to maintain their autonomy. In their attempts to cope, however, some looked to the Anglican missionaries as a potential resource. At the initial stage in the relationship, however, there was no significant advantage for Aboriginal people to alter their central organizational structures, beliefs or values. As previously noted, they saw their own culture and values as at least equal to if not superior to that of the Europeans. Reverend John West wrote that,

> It is surprising how these wretched creatures pride themselves upon their independence. With all the wretched appearance of Chimney Sweeps in the streets of London they are full of boasting and triumph in their self-dependent state and superior skill (John West's Journal, Sept 23 to June 24, 1823. A77).

At the time of the missionaries' arrival, Aboriginal people were confident in their own abilities. Governor of the HBC, George Simpson, complained, "The Plains Tribes...continue as insolent and independent if not more so than ever; they conceive that we are dependent on them for the means of subsistence and consequently assume a high tone..." (cited in Friesen,1987:41). Although by the middle of the nineteenth century food shortages had led to some loss of the autonomy that they had known in prior eras, the Ojibwa in particular clung to their traditional lives as hunters, fishermen and wild rice gatherers (Peers, 1994:43).

In sum, at the time of their first contact with Anglican missionaries, Aboriginal people had remained relatively autonomous despite their prolonged contact with Europeans. While the fur trade brought significant change to their lives, they remained

confident of their power and autonomy. However, they had experienced a series of adversities that played into the hands of the missionaries by forcing Aboriginal people to look for new strategies for coping with unfamiliar situations. Their material situation was to worsen with time, however, as the continuing depletion of resources and disease took their toll.

The Missionaries

As stated earlier, while Aboriginal people had been in contact with European traders for over a century, there had been little effort to change traditional Aboriginal culture. For the most part, changes in Aboriginal culture ran contrary to the fur traders' motives. There was little advantage in diverting the Aboriginal people from their nomadic life of trapping or giving them the tools for better bargaining. This is illustrated in the following passage written by William Cockran:

> You must not expect that they will importune or press you to send missionaries, for, after making some honourable exceptions, we may safely affirm that 3/4 of all concerned in the fur trade are enemies to Christianity and civilization. The fur trade can only be a lucrative concern while the inhabitants are in a state of barbarism, the more the Indian approximates the wolf in his character, the better hunter he will make (Rev. Cockran to the Secretary, Grand Rapids, Aug.1, 1840. A78, p.442).

Furthermore, education could potentially destroy the effectiveness of the charge system employed by the traders, for a literate individual could check the ledgers' figures (Beidelman,1965:97). For these reasons, the Hudson's Bay Company had until this time prohibited its employees from instructing Aboriginal people in religion, under pain of

dismissal (Devens, 1992:54). George Simpson, Governor of Red River, made this view very clear when he stated several years later that, "They are already too much enlightened by the late opposition and more of it would in my opinion do harm instead of good to the fur trade. I have always remarked that an enlightened Indian is good for nothing" (George Simpson quoted in correspondence to A. Colville, Fort Garry, May 20, 1822, cited in F. Merk 1968:179). Now, however, the Hudson's Bay Company was forced to support the evangelical effort. There were several reasons for this. One was the evangelical outlook of several members of the Hudson's Bay Company governing committee, including Benjamin Harrison, Nicholas Garry and Alexander Colville. Benjamin Harrison, in particular, had begun urging the Company to allow missions to be established among the Aboriginal people of Rupert's Land. Another reason for the Company's change in attitude was their belief that the introduction of clergy would improve their public image. The Company's monopoly had come under review in the British Parliament for pursuing only private economic goals. One neglected obligation that was cited was their mandate to promote the 'moral and religious improvement of the Aboriginal people ' (Stevenson, 1988:131).

In accordance with the decision of the London Committee to send missionaries to Red River, John West, the first Anglican missionary in Western Canada, was appointed in 1820 to serve both the Hudson Bay Company employees and Selkirk settlers, and to bring the Gospel to the Aboriginal people of Rupert's Land. The Anglican clergy was financed principally by the evangelical Church Missionary Society,[22] but was also supported by the

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[22] Until 1851, the Church Missionary Society represented the only protestant denomination in Red River.

Hudson Bay Company. Thus the missionaries served two masters who had very different goals. This was problematic for the missionaries as they were often placed in the position of having to choose between them, which led to considerable conflict. Although the Hudson Bay Company formally supported the missionary effort, George Simpson was opposed to the intrusion of the missionaries, and was hostile to many of their ideas.

What follows is a brief overview of the missionaries who were most prominently involved in this encounter. It gives the reader some sense of who they were and the class backgrounds from which they came. It also brings to light some of the conflicts that they had with the elite of the Hudson's Bay Company, and provides a concrete illustration of the disunity that existed among the colonial groups.

John West (1820-23)

John West, the first Anglican missionary to Red River, arrived in 1820. West was forty two-years old at the time of his arrival. He was highly educated, having received his education at Oxford. Prior to joining the Church Missionary Society, West had worked for sixteen years in various curacies. Most later missionaries to Red River were young, and had little or no education or experience. In coming to Red River, West left behind a wife and infant child in England. West was hired as both Company chaplain and missionary to the Aboriginal people in the vicinity of Red River. He was paid 150 pounds per annum by the Hudson Bay Company to provide 'religious instruction and consolation to servants of the Company' and to establish schools in the Red River Colony for the Country-Born children

of Company officers. West also carried with him a mandate as well as 100 pounds from the CMS to establish schools for Aboriginal children (Fast, 1984:65), with the primary goal being the evangelization and civilization of Aboriginal people. Like the missionaries who followed him, West was placed in the difficult position of placating both the CMS and the HBC. It is obvious from West's earliest journal entries that his priorities lay with the Aboriginal people. Upon his arrival at Red River, he appeared to be genuinely concerned by what he perceived to be the 'sad' condition of the Aboriginal people that he encountered and wrote that,

> During my stay at this post, I visited several Indian families, and no sooner saw them crowded together in their miserable looking tents, than I felt a lively interest (as I anticipated) in their behalf. The duty devolved upon me, to seek to meliorate their sad condition, as degraded and emaciated, wandering in ignorance, and wearing away a short existence in one continued succession of hardships in procuring food (*Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony* p.13).

West put most of his energy into educating Aboriginal children, which set him apart from later missionaries. He began to recruit children for the school he planned to establish at Red River almost immediately. The day following his arrival at York Factory, he approached Chief Withaweecapo and proposed to take two of his sons to Red River where he promised they would be educated in "White man's knowledge and religion" (*Substance of a Journal*, p.12). "He yielded to my request; and I shall never forget the affectionate manner in which he brought his eldest boy in his arms, and placed him in the canoe in the morning of my departure from York factory." West's plan was to set up an organized school system where Aboriginal children would be educated in a similar fashion to British children. After he arrived in the settlement, West was followed by a few more Aboriginal

children whose presence he had arranged shortly after his arrival. There West and the lay teacher, George Harbidge, started the first Indian residential school, which was to be the prototype of Aboriginal children's education in Western Canada. Although West established three different schools at Red River (a residential school for Aboriginal children, a day school for the children of the settlers, and a Sunday School for the benefit of the Indian wives and older children), he devoted most of his energy to the Indian school. In a way that was to be typical of all relations between Anglican missionaries and Aboriginal people during this era, no coercion was involved in procuring Aboriginal children. Rather, it was with the principal of 'mild persuasion' in mind that West attempted to convince parents to send their children to his school. Indeed, most parents declined West's offer. Although a few did agree to send their children, it appears as though many of these had other motives. Of the initial group of ten students recruited, at least five were surrendered for economic reasons, as they were either orphans or the children of poverty-stricken parents (Miller1989:67-68; Fast1984:192). West's residential school was not very successful. Enrollment remained small and children were constantly being withdrawn by their parents. In some cases West suspected that they had been sent to obtain clothing and blankets. West visited local bands and tried to procure children for his mission school. By the fall of 1823 he had ten Aboriginal students from various regions: eight boys and two girls, from the Swampy Cree, Plains Cree, Assiniboine, and Chipewyans (Miller1989; Stevenson 1988).

The Saulteaux in the immediate region of the Settlement were led by Peguis. While later years saw the destruction of hunting and trapping resources, the Saulteaux at this time

were prosperous. West's encounter with Peguis was to be the beginning of a long relationship between Peguis and the Anglican missionaries. The first meeting between members of the Peguis band and West took place in October1820, when West expressed his desire to teach the Indian children. In response to Peguis' concern about what would happen to the children once they were taught, West assured him that they could return home:

> We smoked the calumet, and after pausing a short time, he shrewdly asked me what I would do with the children after they were taught what I wished them to know. I told him they might return to their parents if they wished it, but my hope was that they would see the advantage of making gardens, and cultivation of the soil... The little girls,...would be taught to knit, and make articles of clothing to wear like those which white people wore; and all would be led to read the Book that the Great Spirit had given to them, which the Indians had not yet known, and which would teach them how to live well and die happy (*Substance of a Journal*, p.102).

The initial cordiality between West and the Company Officers quickly disappeared as West denounced their lack of morality, pointing to the drunkenness and sexual license that were part of the traders' lives and, in fact, provided an incentive to partake in the fur trade. George Simpson, who was illegitimate himself, and lived with an Aboriginal woman, openly opposed West's programs for educating Indian children. Simpson wrote to Colville that in his opinion the education of Indian children would serve 'little other good than filling the pockets and bellies of some hungry missionaries and schoolmasters and rearing the Indians in habits of indolence..." In the summer of 1823, John West left Red River with the intent of returning to England to bring his wife and child back to Red River, but he was dismissed from his position as Company chaplain by the London Committee for his

criticism of Governor George Simpson and other Company officers.

David Jones (1825-38)

Clearly, John West's agenda conflicted with that of the HBC. Therefore, his replacement, David Jones, was almost West's antithesis. Jones was younger, less experienced, and more malleable than West. Unlike West, who was highly educated, David Jones was a Welsh farm boy. He was accepted by the CMS and sent to study under a tutor in 1821, was ordained into the priesthood in 1823, and left that same year for Red River at the age of 26. Where West had sixteen years of previous missionary experience, Red River was Jones' first appointment. The London Committee warned him not to publicly criticize or hamper the Company in its fur trading operations and strongly recommended that he "cultivate a friendly relationship with the Gentlemen in charge of the Red River Settlement", and to "treat them with respect and attention"(cited in Fast1984:258). Jones was ordered to concentrate his efforts on the educational and spiritual needs of the colony rather than on Aboriginal families. As expected, where West had pursued the CMS's objectives of evangelizing Aboriginal people, Jones bowed to the wishes of the HBC and the education of Indian children became subordinate to the education of Company and settler children. In 1827, Jones stated that none of the Aboriginal students was 'suited' for the ministry, and that progress could only be made among the Country-Born Company children. In 1833, Jones opened the new Red River Academy to the children of the fur trade gentry. At the same time, West's mission school was permanently closed. The remaining Aboriginal boys at the mission school were sent to a boarding school at Grand Rapids where they remained until another Indian boarding school was established at St.

Peter's (the Indian Settlement). Jones left Red River in 1838.

William Cockran (1825-65)

William Cockran arrived in Red River on October 4, 1825 at the age of 27 and was to remain until his death forty years later on October 7, 1865. He was sent to meet the needs of the steady influx of retired Company men and their families, and the growing number of Metis and Country-Born families in the colony. The intentions and actions of William Cockran have been subject to more controversy than any other single missionary in Red River. What cannot be contested is that, given the length of his stay at Red River, William Cockran was the most influential of any Anglican missionary during this era.

Like David Jones, William Cockran was of working class background, being the son of an under bailiff. Cockran was more outspoken than Jones. As a result, Simpson considered him troublesome and disruptive to the Hudson's Bay Company. Unlike Jones, Cockran's priorities were with the Aboriginal people as is evidenced by the following appeal:

> As a nation, we owe this debt to the Indian; we have been buying cheap, and selling dear in this land for above a century & a half. Till the whole land is poverty stricken. And a race of men meanly rooted out, by hunger, and cold (William Cockran to Secretaries, Indian Settlement, July 25, 1856, A84).

Where Jones had focussed primarily on education as a tool for evangelizing Aboriginal people, Cockran concentrated on agriculture. A key part of Cockran's evangelizing efforts in the lower settlement was the mission farm, first established at St. Andrew's in 1830. In his educational program, Cockran emphasized 'practical' skills such

as carpentry, animal husbandry, spinning and weaving. It is evident that, for Cockran, civilization would necessarily precede evangelization. "There is no other way of conveying the knowledge of the Gospel to the Indians of Hudson's Bay but through the medium of civilization" (Cockran to Bickersteth, 7 August, 1828 A77, p.304. A77). This meant Aboriginal families settling in one place, building houses, cultivating crops, sending their children to school, and attending church.

Upon his arrival at Red River, Cockran worked as assistant to David Jones at the Upper and Middle Churches, and as such his initial attention was given to the colony. In 1829, he moved to The Grand Rapids, (now St. Andrews's). Cockran established the first Indian mission agricultural settlement in 1833 with a population that was primarily Cree (Podruchny,1992:47). The majority of the Saulteaux encamped near the lower end of the Indian settlement and continued to resist Cockran's pressure to settle and farm. In comparing them to the Cree and Saulteaux at the upper part of the Indian settlement, Cockran described them as the 'vilest of the vile'(Cockran to Secretaries, A77, Aug. 8, 1836, p.213-214). This band remained independent and continued to harass Cockran and anyone who converted or took up farming. Cockran became "Archdeacon of Assiniboia" in 1853. He continued at St. Peters' from 1850 to 1857, when he left to establish his Indian mission at Portage La Prairie.

It is in Cockran's journals that we get a sense of the missionaries as people. Cockran provides numerous accounts of personal hardships, such as loneliness, feelings of desolation, and a sense of personal failure. At one point, Cockran requested to leave Rupert's Land forever, stating that, ...it is exceedingly uncertain at my advanced age that I

shall feel any desire to return to this country (Aug.5, 1854; A85). However, in March of 1863, he wrote that,

> After I had spent 20 years in the service of my lord I found that I was perfectly emaciated and felt that any zeal was so far cooled that I thought I could never face again the difficulties of Rupert's Land However, after 12 months... my strength and spirits so perfectly recovered that I felt...the zeal... (La Prairie, March 1, 1863. A85).

Later, despite the illness of his son, who became 'a perfect cripple,' Cockran wrote that ,

> I have recovered my original self, my zeal again burns. And all my former sympathies for the human family are acquiring new life. I again weep, with those who weep and laugh with those who laugh. I am sent back to ..enter on a further course of usefulness. So I have resolved to return to R. R. and cast in my lot with my adopted people...I intend to return immediately in hopes that I may lighten the burden of some who are weak and to encourage the strong to bear their own burdens (Aug. 3, 1865, London Hotel, 126 York St. Toronto. A85).

William Cockran died at Red River shortly thereafter.

John Smithurst (1839-51)

John Smithurst stayed in Rupert's Land from 1839 to 1851. He took charge of the Indian settlement while Cockran looked after Upper, Lower and Middle churches for the next five years. Born in 1807 of apparently good family (Fast 1984:73), John Smithurst spent his early years working at 'mercantile pursuits' (Czuboka 1960:60). He attended the CMS's Islington College, where the reports of his referees stated that he was "ambitionless, and without sincere Xian motivation", "not a man of shining talent" although of "decided piety". Smithurst was ordained as a deacon in 1838 and priested in 1839, just prior to his arrival at Red River. Soon after his arrival at Red River, Smithurst moved to the Indian

Village. Smithurst returned to England in 1851 where, broken in health, he lived there until his death in 1868 (Fast 1984:73). Upon Smithurst's departure, Cockran moved back to the Indian Settlement were he stayed until he moved to Portage la Prairie in 1857.

Abraham Cowley (1841-?)

Rev. Abraham Cowley arrived at Red River in 1841 at the age of 25. Cowley was also of working class background, the son of a mason. He was at first rejected by the CMS. On re-application, he was accepted, despite the fact that he was found to be "much behind in knowledge, rough in manners, afflicted by conceit, and infirm of temper". Indeed, both Smithurst and Cowley were accepted on the condition that they commit themselves to the frozen wastes that were thought to be Rupert's Land (Pannekoek:1991:99). Cowley spent most of his time at Partridge Crop, which was on the Dauphin River. He took over at St. Peter's from Cockran in 1857.

CHAPTER SIX

RATIONALITIES OF GOVERNMENT

This chapter outlines the differences in world view and understandings of reality between Aboriginal people and the Anglican missionaries. This provides for an understanding of traditional cultural practices and the various forms of knowledge that informed them. More importantly, it also brings out the extent to which the missionaries' proposed changes challenged Aboriginal people's subjectivity. Without an awareness of these differences, it is difficult to appreciate the extent to which the missionaries' proposed changes conflicted with Aboriginal peoples' understandings of reality. It is also difficult to appreciate the extent to which the missionaries would have misunderstood the actions and motives of Aboriginal people.

Following this discussion, I outline the mentalities behind the missionaries' governance of Aboriginal people. The purpose is to better understand the making of their frames of reference concerning the governance of Aboriginal people: how they came to problematize Aboriginal people as they did, how they arrived at their vision for the future of Aboriginal people, and their philosophies of how to govern them.

Differing Ontologies

As stated earlier, government in the colonial situation involved an encounter between two radically different cultural ontologies. From these flowed two highly developed, but often diametric, sets of cultural imperatives. As one missionary noted,

> ...they have their own standard, by which they estimate the good, and too often it is quite a different one from that which the missionary has been accustomed to value things. Here they differ in their opinions, and if the missionary will not allow any weight to their notions, they obstinately oppose his . . . (Rev. Cockran to the Secretaries, 1844. A78, p.285).

For Aboriginal peoples to change their every day cultural practices required not only that they change their understandings of proper behaviour; it required that they change the very understandings of reality that underpinned their cultural institutions. It is argued here that the missionaries' attack on traditional forms of social organization and moral codes, and the challenges that these attacks posed to Aboriginal subjectivity, would necessarily have resulted in some erosion of self-concept, whether or not the individuals ultimately converted to Christianity.

Traditional Aboriginal ontology [23] was based on an interrelationship with the supernatural. As it was the spirit world rather than people who influenced natural events, it was not possible to know nature, much less to control it. It was more appropriate to

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While the beliefs of the different Aboriginal groups were not homogenous, I have subsumed the world views of several Aboriginal groups into one 'Aboriginal' world view. My reason for doing this is to concentrate on their broad similarities and to contrast them to those of Western society.

acknowledge powerlessness against forces that could not be understood. If the universe was controlled by the spirit world, then interference risked offending the spirits (Vescey, 1983). This resulted in an ethic of non-interference and a general belief that it was necessary to fit oneself into the broader world of interrelationships with nature and the spirit world. The emphasis on fitting in rather than domination was the foundation of the Aboriginal approach to life. Individuals fit into the universal order; they did not rule over it (Vescey 1983).

The missionaries' world view, on the other hand, was informed by the discourses of science, rational behaviour, and evolutionism (Beidelman1982; Usher 1971; Berkhofer 1965). Belief in the power of science led to the assumption that nature could be understood and controlled (Cairns1965). It followed that humanity travelled along a linear path towards greater progress, which eventually led to an imperative of interference. Humans were not only capable of bettering themselves through mastery over nature, they were obliged to do so.[24] For the missionaries, this mode of thought translated into a rationality that aimed to improve Aboriginal peoples' lives by bringing them to the point already reached by Western society.

As a result of these different philosophical stances, Aboriginal peoples were governed by radically different understandings of moral and responsible behaviour than

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[24] Hallowell (1991) notes that the European notion of a moral obligation and hence a right to dispossess savage peoples of their lands in order to civilize them had, as its Amerindian counterpart, the idea that Aboriginal people had an obligation to share their land with the Europeans.

were the missionaries. The core value of traditional Aboriginal societies was interconnectedness, from which stemmed an ethos of mutual help, sharing and reciprocity. People saw their own importance only in terms of the group. There were no incentives for individuals to surpass others in accumulating private property. Indeed, the accumulation of goods was considered to be evidence of personal greediness (Hallowell 1991; Ross 1992). This ethic was misunderstood by the missionaries, as is evident in the following account:

> If they possessed the virtue of economy to the same degree as the Europeans, many of them might make their stock last the whole winter. But the Indian character is destitute of such as quality . . . as long as he has anything remaining he must make a feast for all his friends, & send gifts to all his cousins. His profuse hospitality & liberal donations reduce his stock, & he in turn becomes a beggar dependant on public bounty (Rev. Cockran to Rev. H. Venn, Indian Settlement, Dec. 12, 1851. A79, p.141).

Because individual success counted for very little, the general ethos of traditional Aboriginal society was one of egalitarianism, not only in terms of possessions but in all other respects as well (Ross, 1996:39).

In direct contrast, Western European societies were organized around the core value of individualism and the discourse of the 'self-made man', which stressed the achievement of status through individual efforts. The individualistic forms of behaviour that the missionaries promoted not only ran contrary to Aboriginal understandings of proper behaviour, but were seen as an offence to the spirits. Indeed, the individualism of Protestant Christianity that was embodied in the notion of personal salvation was in opposition to the close identification of Aboriginal individuals with the group.

The missionaries' idea of 'healthy competition' was at odds with the Aboriginal discourse of mutual help and cooperation, in which excessive rivalry was seen as an offence

to the ancestors. Indeed, oral traditions recounted how youths became so preoccupied with power that they lost their sense of obligation to humans and ended up as social outcasts (Vescey 1983:123). The contractual basis of Western relations differed from the traditional moral rhetoric of an obligation to provide for those who had less (Peers1996; Brown and Brightman,1988; Thistle,1986). Aboriginal people took for granted that if the missionaries had access to more food that they would share it. From the Aboriginals' perspective, this was not an indication of dependence, but rather it was an appropriate behaviour, particularly in more difficult times. In other instances, humbling oneself and asking for pity was the culturally appropriate way of forging an ongoing relationship with a powerful being (Brown and Vibert 1996: xii). This was interpreted by the missionaries as 'begging', and is a characteristic of the Aboriginal 'nature' that is deplored in the missionaries' journals. It is truly ironic that the value of sharing and/or what could have easily been seen as 'Christian charity' was cited by Cockran as an example of heathenism:

> Our servant girl told Mrs. Cowley that yesterday evening an Indian asked her to give him flour unknown to us, but she refused to do so: my servant man has been tempted to dispose of milk in the same way by Indians more than once, a practice which if adopted, would be of serious consequence as we depend greatly on those two resources, viz mils and flour, for our support . . . I offer these incidents as affording a contrast of Heathenism and Christianity . . . (Rev. Cowley's Journal, Mar. 2, 1843. A78).

For the missionaries, private property was one of the main underpinnings of civilization:

> What we value in property, and all those customs which separate us from them in a state of nature, they think lightly of . . . (John West, *Substance of a Journal* p.151).

The lack of desire to accumulate material goods was identified by the missionaries as having to do with the perceived lack of cultural progress in Aboriginal societies:

> They have no settled place of abode, or property, or acquired wants and appetites, like those which rouse men to activity in civilized life, and stimulate them to persevering industry, while they keep the mind in perpetual exercise and ingenious invention. Their simple wants are few, and when satisfied they waste their time in listless indolence . . . (John West, *Substance of a Journal*, p.117).

Indeed, Cockran believed that they had no notion of 'justice' since they could not distinguish between private and communal property.

> ...our Indians and Half-breed Brethren have always lived in common, have very loose notions of justice, and often make no difference between their neighbour's property and their own (Reverend Cockran's Journal, Dec. 30, 1828. A77).

Puzzled by their lack of desire for the accumulation of material things, Cockran observed the difference between Aboriginal and European peoples, noting that European notions of morality would not allow for such behaviour:

> The people are by no means troubled with a worldly grasping spirit; their infirmity is the opposite extreme: they profess an easy indifference respecting all temporal things peculiar to themselves, and which no European can acquire while he professes his natural principles . . . (Cockran's journal, 1833-34, Grand Rapids, Sept.10, 1833. A77).

The means of achieving status and identity also differed considerably between the two groups. Where the dominant discourse of Western civilization stressed individual accumulation of property, status was obtained in Aboriginal society by sharing. Aboriginal

pride of accomplishment and identity stemmed directly from hunting, and providing for the group. Work done with a plough, with the ultimate end of private accumulation, was seen as degrading:

> They think the Master of life intended them to live by hunting and fishing, but the white man to live by the plough being a more degrading occupation (Smithurst's Journal, Feb. 25, 1840. A78, p.540).

> ...to make a good hunter, and traverse the woods with geographical accuracy . . . These are exploits which, in their estimation, form the hero . . . (John West, *Substance of a Journal*, p.151).

Another source of misunderstanding was differing conceptions of time. The missionaries had a keen awareness of time and its scheduling according to precise hours and minutes.[25] One of the results of this conception of time was an orientation that looked to the future. According to the Aboriginal conception of time, the past and present were inseparable. There was little need for the quantification of time into hours and minutes when tasks were oriented to changing seasons and the rhythms of the sun. Moreover, because sacred events which took place in the mythical past were re-created simultaneously in the present, time could not be measured in chronological terms (Brown and Brightman (1988: 68-113).

For the missionaries, time was to be spent efficiently in industrious labour:

> ... Besides they are extravagant and indolent: their waste of time and property is grievous to all who have imbibed Christian principles. I think by introducing industry among them it will gradually counteract all those other evils (Rev. Cockran to Secretaries, Grand Rapids, July 24, 1834, A77 p.7).

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As E.P. Thompson (1967) has noted,' clock time', or the division of time into precise units, was the consequence of the rise of wage labour.

Framed in the Western understandings of the use of time, Aboriginal people appeared to be not only lazy, but generally irrational in their use of time:

> The miserable heathen of Rupert's Land have not only to learn to serve God in spirit and in truth; but they have every other habit to learn which is conducive to the welfare of man. Having lived in a barbarous state from age to age, they have acquired a habit of early negligence which sets at defiance any example and precept of industry and economy . . . Consequently, to avoid the evils which must follow such conduct of childish thoughtlessness, you have constantly to be suggesting hints concerning the proper use of their time & property (Rev. Cockran to Secretaries, Aug. 4, 1838. A78).

Because the Aboriginal conception of time was seen as indicative of laziness, it was problematised as a character trait that needed to be changed:

> When they have abundance they are never troubled with any of the forebodings of want and misery, but will feast on and devour the last morsel: when destitute they can make merry with the gnawings of an empty stomach and satisfy its craving by tightening the belt which they wear round their loins. If this easy indifference concerning temporal affairs proceeded from a firm reliance on the promises and faithfulness of God after having conscientiously discharged their duty, it would merit our praise and admiration: but as it comes from a principle of sluggishness and real aversion to that active and industrious life for which man was created, it is to be deplored as *one of the worst traits of character which can be developed* [emphasis mine] (William Cockran, Sept. 10, 1833).

The missionaries mistakenly assumed that the Aboriginal perception of time was linear rather than recurring. Their apparent lack of concern for the future, misinterpreted and problematised as 'carnal':

> They are entirely indifferent respecting the fate of their future state. All their conjurations are employed, and all their sacrifices offered, for the benefit of the body, for the enjoyment of the present life. In their religious exercises they ask for food, for health, for long life, for abundance of pleasure, and the life of their enemies. But no enquiry is made after the favour of the Deity, or after a future state. No sacrifice is made to make the

> Master of Life propitious to them in a future state. This extraordinary carnality and selfishness must be viewed with abhorrence by the Deity (Cockran to the Secretaries, Grand Rapids; Oct. 5, 1835. A77).

The missionaries expected Aboriginal people to immediately accept the idea that work was to be steady, regular, disciplined, and oriented to the future; that the Sabbath occurred on a weekly basis; that education was to be given in standard blocks of time, that the reward for conversion to Christianity was 'salvation', which would occur in the future. All of these concepts of time were foreign to Aboriginal people. This was interpreted by the missionaries as a flaw in the Aboriginal 'character'.

> As he is not hardly pressed at this season for want of food, he sits still and enjoys the present hour; and is incapable, by any stretch of imagination, of anticipating the demands of the approaching winter. *It is the peculiarity of the Indian character* [emphasis mine] which renders it exceedingly difficult to present the promises and threatenings of the word of God in such a light as to induce him to reform his life. The reward for well doing must appear distant, and so must the punishment for vice, to the mind that is not capable, in the summer season, of reaching forth as far as winter (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 19,1835. A77).

By means of the curricula of church and school they tried to force Aboriginal people to adhere to Western conceptions of time. Indeed, one measure of success in governing Aboriginal school children was the inculcation of 'regularity':

> Who, ten years ago would have expected to see four Indian youths managing a farm with all the regularity practised in the best agricultural districts of England? (Smithurst's Journal, Feb.1 to Aug.1843, May 12, 1843. A78, p.191).

In the new order that was promoted by the missionaries, principles of conduct were defined by discourses of the market and of self interest. For Aboriginal people to make

what appeared to be simple behavioural changes required that they override, or at least question, the knowledges and values upon which their traditional culture was based.

The Governmental Rationalities of the Missionaries

It has been traditionally assumed that the missionaries were merely a product of ways of thinking that were distinctive to Britain in this historical period. The problem here is that while this may explain some of their actions, it does not account for others. I argue instead that the missionaries' governmental mentalities were informed by several regimes of truth, each of which had its own history and drew on different knowledges, discourses, and moral rhetorics. My objective is to explore the elements that led to the collective and relatively taken-for-granted forms of thought embedded in the missionaries' governance.

The following discussion shows that the governmental rationality of the Anglican missionaries was informed by a diversity of discourses, some of which were specific to the Church Missionary Society and Protestantism, some of which reflected the general ethos of Britain during this era, and still others of which reflected their position in the changing class structure of industrial capitalism.

The Rationality of Colonial Evangelism

The theology of the religious revival of the Victorian age had its roots in the discourses of Enlightenment (Usher 1971; Beidelman 1982; Fast 1984). This is evident in the missionaries' emphasis on the centrality of human rationality and reason, their stress on education, and particularly in their goal of humanitarian reform. Conversion itself was

based on the ability to reason. It was assumed that, as rational beings, indigenous peoples would recognize the superiority of Christianity and of Western civilization. Since they merely lacked knowledge of the ways of a higher civilization, it followed that instruction would be the optimal tactic for their transformation.

Protestant missions did not become common until the end of the eighteenth century. The Church of England's interest in evangelism was a response to the widespread poverty and exploitation of workers that accompanied industrial capitalism. For the first time, the Church became concerned with proselytization of the Gospel beyond the immediate congregation to include all of the poor and exploited people of England (Fast 1984; Peake 1989). Eventually, this concern spread to all of the indigenous peoples under the Empire's jurisdiction. Organizations such as the Church of England Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts or the nondenominational Aborigines Protection Society took an intense interest in both the material and the spiritual well-being of indigenous societies (Grant 1984:63).

Missionary work was widely supported in England. One reason for this was the belief, propagated by the Church, that England's eminent position was dictated by Divine providence and entailed a moral duty toward less developed people. England's economic success was seen as conditional upon adherence to the diffusion of the gospel (Cairns 1965; Usher 1971).

'Civilization' and Protestant Christianity became parts of an integrated whole. To say that people were not Christian implied that they were uncivilized; to say that they were uncivilized implied that they were not Christian (Cairns 1965:199). Not only was the idea

that civilization and Christianity were inseparable widely accepted, but it was also broadly assumed that the moral influence of Protestant Christianity, which celebrated industry, self-construction and reason, contributed to Britain's success.[26] Christianity came to be correlated with progressive countries, while other forms of religion were correlated with backwardness. Indeed, William Cockran provides some insight into the extent to which Christianity and the values of 19th century Britain were intertwined for the missionaries:

> I thought of making the red men Christians, & then Christians & Englishmen were so closely united in my imagination, they appeared as one. Consequently I expected that when the red man became a Christian, I should see all the active virtues of English Christians immediately developed in his character. Here I endeavoured to make the red man not only a Christian but an Englishman, pressed the necessity of industry, economy, cleanliness, taste, good order & all the other moral virtues, which make the Christian shine among a perverse generation (Cockran to the Secretaries, Grand Rapids Aug. 8, 1836. A77).

The Rationality of the Church Missionary Society [27]

The Church Missionary Society (the CMS) was one of a number of societies that were born as a result of the evangelical revival. It was the main agent of Protestant missions in the Northwest. Where its sister missionary societies tended to focus on European settlements, the CMS handled missions to Aboriginal people (Choquette 1995).

The CMS maintained that the introduction of basic Christian theology would

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26 For a detailed study of the interrelationship between Protestant Christianity and capitalism, see Weber's Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

27 Although in the discussion that follows there is some reference to the tenets of Protestantism and the teleology of Church Missionary Society, it is not meant to lay out the theologies of either. Rather I have isolated only those elements of their doctrines that are relevant to this study.

inevitably produce not only respect for the moral virtues of the religious life, but would inculcate moral (Victorian) values. In practice, however, the society's missionaries tended to preach the values of civilization concomitantly with those of religion. They found that, in order to maintain contact with the predominately itinerant Aboriginal populations, a more settled, 'civilized' lifestyle was required.

For the CMS, true conversion required changes to everyday life patterns. This was characteristic of CMS evangelicals everywhere, and it set the CMS apart from other missionaries. Aboriginal people were expected to abandon all reprehensible behaviour, which included all customs that were foreign to the missionaries. As later chapters will show, most of the values stressed by the missionaries were in direct conflict with those of Aboriginal peoples.

It is worth noting that the Catholic missionaries started from a fundamentally different theology. Their means of conversion was to nurture Aboriginal people by means of sermons, the catechism, and the sacraments. After teaching only the rudimentary tenets of Catholic doctrine, the missionary could perform a baptism. The theological differences between the Anglican and the Catholic missionaries resulted in notable differences in their approach to conversion. In an Anglican mission there was greater pressure to conform to European norms. Although Roman Catholics often used the same rhetoric of Christianity and civilization, acculturation was clearly secondary to catechism (Choquette, 1995).

The broad goal of the Anglican missionaries during this era was to raise all races of the human family to the perceived greatness of Christian civilization as it existed in Britain.

As such, their motives were primarily benevolent. In addition to the 'salvation' of Aboriginal souls through conversion to Christianity, they tried to prepare them for what they believed was the imminent invasion of the Europeans. It appeared to them that a lower culture coming into contact with a higher one was doomed to extinction unless the lower culture could become more like Europeans, even though it was taken for granted that they would never reach equal status. The belief that Aboriginal peoples could survive contact with the European colonizers only by adopting their civilization formed the basis of much of their work:

> They cannot be formed into a distinct nation, if they were they would be swallowed up by the great increase of the white population in North America; consequently it is the surest way of doing good to this despised race, to teach all the young the English language, it being the language in which business is done and which according to the design of providence is to prevail in this continent (Rev. Cockran to Secretaries, Aug. 4, 1838. A78).

During most of this era the CMS was under the leadership of Henry Venn, whose philosophy and policies greatly influenced the nature of the Red River mission. Venn was particularly interested in establishing congregations of independent Aboriginal Christians, forming indigenous churches that were presided over by an Aboriginal clergy. Therefore it was incumbent upon the missionaries of the CMS to build up a local Aboriginal clergy that was supported by self-governing individuals. Because the CMS planned to transfer all responsibilities to the Aboriginal church, it was important to encourage self-government and independence among Aboriginal people.

Protestant Theology

Another facet of the missionaries' rationality of government was the theology of Protestantism. In general, despite differences over such issues such as predestination and salvation, Protestant theology conceived of an individual's moral life as a cumulative voyage. Self-improvement was stressed as a moral duty, even in Calvinism, with its stress on predestination. The Protestants aimed to add to the glory of God on earth through the fulfilment of everyday obligations. Indeed, Weber argued that the fulfilment of duty in worldly affairs as the 'highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume' was one of the most important results of the Reformation (Weber 1958:80). This brought religion down to a more personal level, as religiosity was embodied within everyday acts. Communicating with God no longer required a formal ritual or the mediation of a priest. Rather, the idea was that all worldly activities had religious significance.

The effects of attributing a religious/moral connotation to everyday acts were manifested in a number of ways, all of which were evident in the missionaries' governance. The first was that control by the Church became much more invasive into the individual's private life. Indeed, even the smallest elements of culture were seen as too small to be the objects of moral regulation:

> The Reformation meant not the elimination of the Church's control over everyday life, but rather the substitution of a new form of control for the previous one. It meant the repudiation of a control which was very lax, at that time scarcely perceptible in practice, and hardly more than formal, in favour of a regulation of the whole of conduct, which, penetrating to all departments of private and public life, was infinitely burdensome and earnestly enforced (Weber 1958:36).

One result of transfer of ethical discipline from the priesthood to the lay population was the elevation of the family. Since the family was the locus of both economic and private life, it was in the family that most activities took place. Thus family life came to be seen as the prime site for a godly life (Hamilton 1978: 53-54). What this meant in practice, however, was that the Church could now widen its net of control.

Also of importance to this study is the fact that religion assumed a more individual nature. To attain eternal salvation, the individual was forced to follow a path alone. Despite the necessity of membership in the Church for salvation, the relationship with God was carried on at an individual level.

The Class Position of the CMS Missionaries

Nearly all of the missionaries recruited by the CMS were members of the 'low' stratum of the Church (Beidelman1982:62). Although the CMS would have preferred to recruit members of the English clergy, the majority of whom were graduates of English universities, the clergy did not respond to the appeal of the missionary societies. Therefore, the CMS was forced to recruit their missionaries from the lower and lower-middle classes.[28] The majority had come from labouring, peasant, and artisan backgrounds. Few had a university education, and some had no schooling at all. Regardless of their prior education, nearly all CMS missionaries arrived at their

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For example, Rev. David Jones, who stayed at Red River from 1823 to 1839 was the son of a farmer, and Rev. William Cockran who stayed from 1825 to1865 was the son of an under-bailiff. Mrs. Cockran, his wife, was formerly a scullery maid. Abraham Cowley, who came to Red River in 1844, was the son of a Gloucestershire mason .

destinations almost totally ignorant of the cultures they would encounter, as formal missionary training consisted of courses in Latin and theology. Those with college degrees were not required to take formal training at all. The lack of knowledge of Aboriginal cultures was sufficiently problematic to have been noted by Ross, the recorder at Red River during this era:

> As to the missionary himself, we would remark, that no man, however learned, pious and zealous he might be, ought to be placed as spiritual pastor over a colony of new converts, without a knowledge of their language–and we many add, a knowledge of Indian life, acquired by at least some five or six years' residence among different tribes, to learn something of the Indian character. Nothing would be more assured than to send a man direct from home to superintend such a mission, with only his learning to recommend him as is too often the case, and has been the case here too . . . We repeat the fact: any man with simply a knowledge of books and utterly destitute of experience in Indian life, is, of all men, the most unfit to be entrusted with the civilizing and evangelizing of Indians (1856:316).

Most of the missionaries came from the rural areas that were disrupted by the changing structure of Britain, and they brought back the Romantic idealization of the countryside. Many had themselves been pushed out of rural areas. For the missionaries, the countryside came to stand for innocence; a harmonious past compared to a disjunctive present (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Beidelman 1982). It also stood for the disappearing yeomanry which became the embodiment of a traditional lifestyle in which the family, as the unit of production and consumption, was strong and independent. The missionaries promoted this nostalgic version of British society in which agriculture would be the primary mechanism for 'settling' Aboriginal people down, and Aboriginal people

would be made into an independent peasantry, much like the late British yeomanry.[29] The ideal society which they strove to introduce was based on the mould of the small self-sufficient agricultural community, modified to include fishing and hunting.

The Ethos of 19th Century Britain

The reader of missionary journals is immediately struck by an apparent overestimation of the virtues of British society as well as numerous allegations of its superiority. A closer examination of the ethos of Britain during this era provides some explanation for what appears to be blatant racism and ethnocentrism on the part of the missionaries.

The impetus for colonial evangelism was based on a number of discourses that were prevalent in Britain at this time. The primary discourse was that of the superiority of the British, based on Britain's material progress. Much of this notion was based on the popular idea that "civilization consisted of material goods diffused by commercial transactions" (Cairns1965:22). The general attitude of the British toward indigenous people, and their justification of their invasive role in indigenous cultures followed from this basic assumption. They viewed the universe as a hierarchy in which Western civilization, (and specifically White Anglo Saxon Protestants), was at the apex. Subsistence economies, which were least advanced technologically, were at the bottom (Cairns1965:74).

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In the popular imagery of the 19th century, the yeomen were romanticized as the country came to stand for a harmonious past in contrast to the disruptive conditions of industrial capitalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989:71-73).

Another discourse, and one that was central to the missionaries' project, was that of cultural evolutionism (Cairns 1965; Usher 1971) [30], or the belief that all cultures progressed through the same developmental stages. British society, presumed to be the highest stage of civilization, defined the stages through which less advanced cultures would pass to become 'civilized'. Aboriginal people represented a very early stage of human development. Their lack of the material wealth confirmed this status. As William Cockran communicated to the CMS in London,

> You are fully acquainted with the barbarous state of the inhabitants of his country. They obtain their livelihood by hunting and fishing . . . Their property consists of hooks, lines, guns, kettles knives, little axes, etc. and rarely more than one suit of apparel. They are destitute of all artificial wealth, such as civilized nations have acquired from labour and art. Being all equally poor, they have not the means of [illegible] . . . All are much alike in the mire of poverty, ignorance and vice . . . They must be civilized. They must be taught those arts and the value of time, by which the social man feeds, clothes, educates and surrounds himself with comforts (William Cockran, La Prairie, Aug. 5, 1861. A85).

Similarly, John Smithurst wrote:

> The barbarous Indian is not susceptible of those tender emotions nor does he possess those delicate feelings which characterize men in a high state of civilization (Rev. Smithurst to the Secretaries, Aug. 3, 1840. A85).

The missionaries' observations of Aboriginal institutions were always normative in that they were held up to the British ideal and judged for what they should be rather than for their intrinsic qualities. Assumptions of British superiority are evident throughout their

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Cairns (1965:89) notes that the idea of a progressive development from savagery to civilization was much older than Darwin. However, evolutionary theory gave this notion a 'scientific' basis.

writings. For example, despite the humanitarianism that is evident in his goal to prepare Aboriginal people for civilization, Cockran's states:

> It is obvious that the dominant race of the continent is the English, and speak the English language. They have all the wealth, knowledge, power and authority which destine them to be the future Lords and rulers of all North America. The few 100 thousands of poor ignorant aborigines can never preserve their nationality. *They are destined to perish, or be swallowed up by this mighty tide of superior men* [emphasis mine]. The philanthropist immediately answers, there is no necessity in the nature of things that the *superior race should cause the inferior to perish* [emphasis mine]. Among the former there is an immense difference, in the mental capacities and physical abilities of various individuals. If the inferior races are properly trained, they will find their level amongst this ever increasing stock of the human family. It is therefor self-evident to do any permanent good to the aborigines of this country you must teach them the English language, you must give them an English education. You must teach them the manners, laws and customs of those who are *destined by the God of Nature to rule over them* [emphasis mine] . . . the only hope, by which he can have of a man to stand upon earth, is by learning the language, laws and customs of the white man and embracing his religion (Archdeacon Cockran, La Prairie Aug. 5, 1861. A85).

The missionaries seriously underestimated the degree to which Aboriginal people were committed to their culture, particularly since it did not appear to be a culture in the true sense of the word. When they met with resistance, they attributed it to irrationality, a problem in the Aboriginal 'character'. As Cockran noted,

> The missionary in entering his work has too high notions of the human character: he supposes them to be misled by ignorance. To his utter astonishment he finds them wedded to their old customs, and ready to oppose those who propose innovation. This is his daily experience (Rev. W. Cockran to the Secretary, Aug. 7, 1839, Grand Rapids.A78).

The missionaries took for granted that the supposed superiority of Western civilization was equally obvious to Aboriginal people. Based on the belief that all human

beings were inherently rational, it followed that Aboriginal people would want to 'better' themselves. Initially, at least, the way that the missionaries attempted to persuade Aboriginal people to convert was to hold up a mirror by which Aboriginals could compare their own institutions and beliefs to those of Christianity and a 'civilized' lifestyle. Many accounts attest to the missionaries' frustration when Aboriginals did not acknowledge European superiority. The first such account was made by John West soon after his arrival at Red River:

> It is very natural for a person when coming from the Lecture Room of a College or the Study of a Private Tutor, to a country inhabited by a barbarous and ignorant race of beings to expect to be looked up to, with admiration and applause on account of his superior qualifications of mind; but a short residence in the land of Pagans will convince him of the contrary, for he will there find himself looked down upon by ignorant Aboriginals with much more pity and contempt than he does upon them (John West Journal, Sept 23 to June 24, 1823. A77).

Based on the presumed inferiority of Aboriginal cultures, the missionaries believed that they could not survive the impending onslaught of European settlers in their traditional form. Therefore, their goal was to ensure that Aboriginals would assimilate as soon as possible:

> There is no alternative, if we will not submit to the toil and drudgery of making them husband men, they will melt away from the face of the earth (Cockran's Journal, 1833-1834, Grand Rapids, A77).

> Thirty years experience has deeply convinced me that civilization is the only anchorage for moral and religious liberty in this country, as long as men are in a state of barbarism and poverty you may crush them by thousands (Cockran, Nov.1, 1855, Indian Settlement. A85).

Undeniably, the missionaries' goals were primarily altruistic. In one of his earliest journal entries, John West noted that,

> The duty devolved upon me, to seek to meliorate their sad condition, as degraded and emaciated, wandering in ignorance and wearing away a short existence in one continued succession of hardships in procuring food *(Substance of a Journal*, p.19).

Indeed, the last journal entry that West made, anticipating his return to Red River, was:

> I have no higher wish in life, than to spend and be spent in the service of Christ, for the salvation of the North American Indians (*Substance of a Journal*, p.209).

Similarly, William Cockran wrote,

> Suppose . . . you witness them all making a wrong choice . . . and you think you are in possession of some knowledge, which would be conducive to their happiness. Your heart melts with compassion for their misery and burns with love to communicate to them that which you know they can never be happy without(Archdeacon Cockran to the secretaries, La Prairie, Nov. 25, 1858. A85).

> I will teach them to build their houses, cultivate the ground, to sow wheat and barley, and to raise potatoes: I will teach their children to read and write and make them so wise that the cunning shall not be able to take the advantage of them. And if they will hear, I shall be exceedingly happy to inform them of the path that leads to heaven (Cockran's Journal, Feb. 13, 1832:371; A77).

It is useful to contrast these motives with the following statement, made by George Simpson, Governor of Red River Settlement:

> I have made it my study to examine the nature and character of the Indians and however repugnant it may be to our feelings, I am convinced they must be ruled with a rod of iron, to bring, and keep them in a proper state of subordination, and the most certain way to effect this is by letting them feel their dependence upon us (Governor Simpson to A. Colville, Ft. Garry, 20 May 1822, cited in Merk, 1968:179).

While it appears as though the missionaries were committed to helping Aboriginal people, there did not appear to be any doubt in their minds as to the position that Aboriginal people would take in society. In one of his last journal entries, Cockran wrote,

> On the side of the oppressor their [sic] is power. I have espoused the cause of the widow, the fatherless, the poor, the despised and the neglected, and in taking a retrospect of the past, I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have always fought on the weak side . . . I have advocated civilization because it is the origin of knowledge, social virtues and domestic, and national happiness. Barbarism is the parent of ignorance, vice and misery. I have advocated religion, for godliness is profitable for all things . . . I have advocated the necessity of giving the Indian an English education. To teach them to think and express their thoughts in English. That they might amalgamate with the English, and cultivate their social feelings, which enable man to understand the Christian Religion. The English are destined to spread over all North America. If the Indian is taught English habits, customs, laws, arts and religion he will be absorbed in their nationality. Everything that requires quickness of ear, quickness of sight, and dexterity of hand the Indian will exceed the white man. All subjects which require depth of thought, the white man will leave the Indian far behind. *The white man is destined to exercise dominion; but the Red man will make an excellent servant* [emphasis mine]. Every man has his proper fit from God. To exercise this boon legitimately is to answer the noble end of our existence (Aug. 3, 1865, London Hotel, 126 York St. Toronto. A85).

From this, we can see how problematizations were made on the basis of particular forms of knowledge and expertise. For example, so convinced were the missionaries of the inferiority of Aboriginal cultures that all of their cultural values were seen in a negative light:

> As for the savage I have not yet discovered any thing in them that deserves the name of virtue: we see tenderness for the young; courage to face danger when there is no way of avoiding it; cunning to steal imperceptibly from an enemy or their prey, these are the qualities found in man when he lives as a brute (Rev. Cockran's Journal, Sept. 30, 1833. A77).

Summary

The Anglican missionaries were influenced by the moral rhetorics of Protestantism, by the evangelical rationality of the CMS, by the discourses of 19th century Britain, by their class position, and by the governmental rationalities of liberalism and pastoralism. They came to North America with a particular frame of reference for understanding Aboriginal cultures and formulated their strategies based on these perceptions.

Aboriginal cultures were informed by different regimes of truth than were those of Western cultures. From their perspective, their cultures and beliefs were at least equal, if not superior, to those of the Europeans. Perhaps it is fitting to conclude this chapter with the words of John West, who noted:

> In their fancied superior knowledge they are often heard to remark, when conversing with the European, "You are almost as clever as an Indian" (*Substance of a Journal*, p.151).

In the chapters that follow, I discuss the concrete ways by which the missionaries attempted to carry out their goals in the face of unexpected reactions by Aboriginal peoples.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GOVERNING THROUGH THE (ATTEMPTED) DESTRUCTION OF ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY

> 'My gods have chucked me away; they will not hear me now . . . '
> (Cockran's Journal 11 August 1836 to 2 August 1837, Aug. 2, 1837:A77, p.279).

This chapter explores the techniques that the missionaries used in their attempt to convert Aboriginal people to Christianity. Of all the ways in which the missionaries attempted to change the conditions of Aboriginal life, however, their attempt to destroy traditional spirituality was easily the most destructive. Its capacity to inflict damage came not so much from actual conversions as it did from the ways in which the missionaries tried to persuade Aboriginal people to abandon their spirituality, which was the foundation of their culture and identity. Although this study cannot offer concrete proof in terms of cause and effect, it can underline the corrosiveness in the missionaries' attempts to Christianize Aboriginal people. As one missionary has more recently pointed out in a CMS journal, the missionaries failed to realize that,

> In destroying the religion, or rather in destroying or undermining its rituals and beliefs, [they were] at the same time, and unwittingly, destroying all that gave coherence and meaning to the social fabric (cited in Beidelman, 1982:133).

When Aboriginal spirituality is discussed here, the purpose is not to examine it in minute detail or to describe the variety of forms which Aboriginal spirituality and

mythologies took among the different Aboriginal nations and bands. Rather, very broad generalizations are made in order to illustrate the centrality of spirituality to Aboriginal culture. The purpose is to underline the negative consequences of undermining its integrity.

An Overview of Aboriginal Spirituality [31]

According to traditional spiritual belief, the universe was populated by supernatural beings, or Manitos, who interacted with humans, and who had the capacity to affect material circumstances. It was important to maintain proper relations with these supernatural beings. They were important to the survival of the community in two ways: they provided food and they upheld health. Worldly success, symbolized by successful hunting, good heath and long life, was a gift from the Manitos. Success was not a reward for pleasing the spirits, but was something that inevitably followed when one lived in harmony with them and thereby maintained the equilibrium of nature (Vescey1983; Grant 1984). The idea that the universe was a 'shared circle' permeated the Aboriginal view of life (Sioui 1992). Hallowell describes the vital importance of the spirit world to the Ojibwa when he states that,

> We must think of these Indians not only as members of a human society but as participants, with other than human persons, in a larger cosmic society (1965:68).

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These overviews are based on descriptions of Ojibwa and Cree religious beliefs made by Hallowell 1991; Long 1986, 1987; Vescey 1983; Ross 1992; Brown and Brightman1988.

This understanding of the universe resulted in relations that were based on reciprocity:

> The very core of indigenous community is the sense of sharing a view of the world, so strong that it need never be spelled out. This cognitive solidarity is precisely the condition of moral and social communion that is the foundation of customary federations, their laws, and their indigenous freedoms (Henderson 1991:19).

Spirituality functioned as a mechanism of social control. In contrast to the Anglican view of humans as inherently sinful, the concept of a sinful human nature was absent in Aboriginal thought. Rather, 'sins' were specific actions which broke the rules of the universe by upsetting the natural balance and offending the spirits. It is of interest to note that the anti-communal behaviour that was considered to be harmful in Aboriginal society was precisely the behaviour that was promoted by the missionaries as necessary for salvation. Fear of spiritual sanctions acted to regulate behaviour. If individuals did not act appropriately, they could be punished by illness. The notion of maintaining proper relationships with both human and nonhuman others shaped the etiology of disease and the means for its cure. In order to protect themselves from disease, Aboriginal people were obliged to lead ethical lives. No external structures existed for the exercise of social control.

At puberty, all individuals went out into the forest to meet supernatural beings and beg for the assistance of a personal guardian who would be a source of guidance and comfort. Some individuals were particularly favoured, and were given the power to engage in healing, a highly valued power among the Plains societies (Brown and Vibert, 1996:169; Tucker 1858:11). These individuals, known as conjurors, had considerable status due to their extraordinary powers. Indeed, Rev. Hunter, a missionary at The Pas, had originally

believed a conjuror to be the chief due to his apparent status in the community:

> The person we have been accustomed to call the chief here, who in fact . . . is not chief, inasmuch as he has no control whatever over the Indians--he is simply one of the medicine men of whom there are several here . . . (Rev. J. Hunter; Cumberland Stn. Riviere du Pas Sept. 9 1845; A78 p.37).

Because of their special ability to ask for help, conjurors were sought out in times of special need. As Cockran noted,

> The Indian conjurer, who has by a long fast dedicated himself to the Gods of his ancestors, has had his nocturnal visits form invisible beings, and been taught by dreams and visions what roots to cull from the swamps and plains, and how to decoct and pound them for medicinal purposes--how to protect and defend his friends, and how to assail with advantage his enemies. In times of danger, diseases and famine, he calls up these invisible messengers to give counsel, to direct them how to obtain deliverance from the evils felt and feared. Thus the men whom we seek to convert, are in spiritual communication with some invisible powers (Cockran to the Secretaries, Oct. 24, 185; A85).

Given that this was a time of considerable stress and uncertainty for many Aboriginal people, many individuals turned to the conjurors for assistance.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss Aboriginal people's reactions to missionaries, followed by the mechanisms that the missionaries used in their attempts to persuade Aboriginal people to convert to Christianity.

Aboriginal Resistance

Contrary to the missionaries' expectations, most Aboriginal people rejected conversion. In keeping with their custom of accommodation, they acknowledged that while

Christianity may have been suitable for European cultures, it was not well-suited to theirs.

> They said God had made both the Red Man & the White Man [*sic*], & he had given them both religions suitable to their nations (Rev. Cockran to the Lay Secretary, Indian Settlement, Aug. 4, 1853. A79 p.266).

Many journal entries attest to the missionaries' frustration, particularly with the Saulteaux:

> I have not been privileged to baptize a single heathen this year, though I have had many close conversations with them as opportunity offered. I saw none but Saulteaux & they agreed in the sentiment of one to whom I lately spoke, "We like our way as much as you like yours" . . . I told him that on my knees I should pray on that & every day to the powerful spirit of God to convert all these from darkness to light. He angrily & obstinately replied, "We shall be what we are" (Rev. A Cowley to the Secretaries, Partridge Crop, Dec. 6, 1849. A79, p. 613).

It appears as though many individuals sought conversion as a form of protection after death:

> How frequently do the people act like foolish virgins; they defer seeking our oil till their lamps are gone out. They seek not an interest in our prayers till they see the hope of holding the world in departure, then as if heaven was the least of two evils, they seem to give it the preference (Cockran's Journal, 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 August 1835, March 22, 1835. A77).

A number of individuals tried to incorporate elements of Christianity into their traditional framework. The missionaries were aware of this:

> . . . it appears strange indeed that they profess to believe all that is written in the Bible, & yet practice their own superstitions (Rev. A. Cowley to Major Straith; Partridge Crop, July 21/49. A79 p.530).

Some saw the missionaries as conjurors, and interpreted baptism as a form of conjuring:

> He is moreover sick & they have tried all their own nostrums & conjurations without success. Looking upon me as an English conjuror they wished to try the effect of my putting water upon him in the performance of what they regard as one of our conjuring operations. (July 7, 1847. A79, p.260).

The missionaries were suspicious of various other motives. In one instance, Smithurst suspected that a conjuror had requested baptism in order to obtain material provisions and to act as a 'charm':

> After the service went to visit a sick Indian conjuror. I strongly suspected the man had sent for me from some worldly motive and without any desire of embracing the Gospel. After a short conversation I detected this. His object was a double one, partly worldly and partly superstitious. In the first place he wants provisions. To this part of his request I acceded without hesitation. In the next place he wanted to be baptized. This I unhesitatingly refused. I saw into his motives sufficiently to perceive why he applied for baptism. The Indians have a superstitious idea that baptism will act as a charm and cause a sick person to recover (Rev. Smithurst Journal, Feb. 12, 1845. A78, p.563).

It appears as though most individuals chose the option of conversion only when inflicted with a disease, or when preparing to die.[32] It is interesting that this, for Cockran, is when they became 'rational' enough to accept his arguments. From Cockran's point of view, their resistance to Christianity and the accompanying benefits should have been self-evident:

> I find many of the Indians are unwilling to give themselves up to be servants of the Lord. As long as they possibly can hold fast their old customs, they cleave to them.

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32 Many accounts attest to the fact that these individuals bought into the promise of the future happiness of their souls.

> In the days of health and prosperity, their minds are so haughty, stupid and insensible that they will never give their ear to listen to any serious instruction. It is only when poverty disease and death become their portion that they come to themselves assume the character of rational creatures, and are ready to follow the instruction of the word of God. (Rev. Cockran's Journal Aug. 9/37 to July 1/38; Sept. 16, 1837. A78, p.312).

The missionaries were also frustrated by the fact that many people returned to their traditional ways once their illnesses were cured.

> I hope this long illness will be blest to his spiritual good, but alas! how often do we see the good resolutions formed during sickness, quite forgotten when health returns (Rev. J. Smithurst's Journal, from Aug.1,1845 to March 31, 1846; Dec.1. A78, p.88).

Often, Aboriginal peoples' interest was stimulated by the goods that the missionaries provided. Suspecting a material motive for a baptism, Smithurst noted that,

> He in common with all the other Indians, is suffering much from want of provisions & thought if he could only get me to baptize him, that he would then have a claim upon me for a supply of provisions (Smithurst's Journal, July 7, 1847. p.260 A79).

Smithurst used this to his advantage by providing a condition on which he would supply the provisions: the individual in question must not only go to church, but also send his children for instruction.

One problem, for the missionaries, was that the examples set by most Europeans provided no reason to believe that Christianity was superior to Aboriginal tradition. This was obvious to Aboriginal people who observed that many Europeans did not live up to the

Christian ideal. Indeed, they used these observations to challenge the missionaries' arguments:

> About a week ago I assembled a few apostate Christians & heathen Indians, & endeavoured to show them the benefits, temporal & spiritual, which accrue to man from the Christian religion. After we had conversed about two hours on the subject, . . . one raised himself upon his elbow & asked, what does that word mean, which the Christians have among them, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself! I wished to fence a piece of land last spring . . . I went to the Christian & asked the loan of an ox to haul my fencing. None of them would lend a one. I had all my fencing to carry on my shoulders those who refused to help men, who are worse men than I am, for they do not live according to what they profess (Rev. Cockran to Henry Venn; Indian Settlement, Aug. 1, 1851. A79).

One of the most common techniques that the missionaries used was to continually point out to Aboriginal people the inferiority of their traditional practices as compared to those of Christianity and 'civilization'. This was not always well-received by Aboriginal people. The fact that not all individuals were willing to accept the repeated condemnation of their culture and traditions was a source of frustration for the missionaries, who believed that their belief in the 'superiority' of Western culture should have been equally obvious to Aboriginals. For example, Rev. Hunter stated that he was,

> . . . very dejected by the appearance of a prejudice on the part of the Indians. We have perhaps spoken too plainly, they do not like to have their wickedness exposed or to be told candidly of the awful prospects that Gods' words holds out to men in such circumstances (Rev. Hunter; Norway House, Nov. 20, 1844. A78).

The way in which they were perceived by the missionaries did not escape them. One individual sarcastically pointed out that,

> ...He said in reply that all I told him was good, but God was so great and holy and pure a Being that He would never allow Indians to live with him,

The way in which they were perceived by the missionaries did not escape them. One individual sarcastically pointed out that,

> ...He said in reply that all I told him was good, but God was so great and holy and pure a Being that He would never allow Indians to live with him, for when they went to the houses of European chiefs who had fine rooms, they were never allowed to go further than the kitchen because they were not clean enough. If they were not fit to live with men how could they be fit to live with God? (Rev. Smithurst's Journal; Aug. 2, 1840. A78, p.579.)

Mechanisms of Government

The way in which power worked in the colonial situation, which was to destroy and then replace, is evident in the mechanisms that the missionaries devised to overcome Aboriginal resistance. For Aboriginal people to become Christians in the ways that the missionaries would have liked, it was necessary to first destroy, or at least weaken, their belief in traditional spirituality. As Cockran noted,

> . . . we have a spiritual influence to conquer, before we can bring the Indian over to the belief of Christianity (Cockran to the Secretaries, Oct. 24, 1857. A85).

One way in which they attempted to break down their attachment to traditional spirituality was to weaken the credibility of the conjurors, the chosen of the spirits. The conjurors had considerable influence due to the belief that they not only had the power to summon extra help from the Manitos, they could also cause illness by casting a spell (Vescey, 1986). As Smithurst wrote,

> The Indians are believers in witchcraft and when any one falls sick they fancy the sickness arises from the persons being bewitched. The usual resource in such cases is an application to the conjuror who goes through a number of incantations in order if possible to break the spell . . . (Rev. J. Smithurst's Journal, Jan 18, 1841, A78 p.604).

Therefore, one mechanism that the missionaries devised was to compete with the conjurors whenever possible in an attempt to divest them of their power by discrediting them. The arena in which the missionaries were able to confront the conjurors was in the cure of European diseases, where they often demonstrated an ability to heal was more effective than that of the conjurors. The following journal entry, made by Rev. Hunter of the Pas, is typical:

> After the heathen medicine men had done what they could for her restoration, but without success, I was sent for. I administered a powerful stimulant, and after waiting a short time had the pleasure of seeing the poor woman begin to breathe and soon after to speak. The principal Medicine men were present and could not but acknowledge the superiority of English Medicines over that of Indians, and as Medicine forms such an essential part of their heathen rites, such instances as this cannot but make some impression on their minds (Rev. J. Hunter, June 15; Rev. J. Hunter's Journal from July 29, 1845 to June 1846; The Pas, Norway House; A78 p. 175).

When the missionaries competed with conjurors in the ability to heal, the ramifications were much broader than the immediate contest over the ability to make a medical diagnosis and/or cure a disease. The etiology of disease itself was understood as either a punishment by the Manitos for wrongdoing, or as a spell that was cast by another conjuror. The ability of the Manitos, or the conjurors as their chosen representatives, to cure disease reflected an ontology that was based on the power of the spirit world. As such, the curing of disease became a contest over ontologies as well as over power.

The missionaries had no compunctions about attributing their knowledge of Western medicine it to the superiority of their God. This was an unfair playing field in which the conjurors often lost:

> The father was much afraid of losing his son and sought earnestly to preserve his life. But while they applied to me for medicine they had recourse to one of their conjurors to try his arts of magic and conjuration. In this case the conjuror appears to have lost ground for the father would allow none to give medicine to the child but myself (Rev. Cowley's journal July 1847 to July 1848; July 16, 1848; Red River Settlement. A85).

The conjurors reacted in various ways to having their power challenged. One was to threaten retribution from the Manitos to those who in participated in Cockran's agricultural project:

> Went below to the Indian farm where they were reaping and digging potatoes. Here the conjurer had been employing all his eloquence and spells to dissuade the few people who had cultivated last Spring, from troubling themselves any more with the crops . . . This fellow pretended that . . . the Master of Life would inflict some punishment upon them, for deserting the ways of their ancestors (Cockran's Journal 1833-4; Sept. 25, 1833).

Cockran reversed the conjuror's threat of punishment from the Manitos. Reverting to a traditional spiritual framework, he argued that his own 'Master of Life' was being provoked and would inflict punishment if they did not convert:

> Mr. C. then began to show him not only his own but the condition of all the Indians to remind them how they were actually perishing every winter by starvation, the animals on which they were dependent during the winter for a living being nearly all destroyed for their furs and skins, a fact well known and confessed by them and that their way was offensive to the Great Master of life who if they continued to provoke him would destroy them all both body and soul (Rev. Cowley's Journal, April 2, 1843. A86).

Other encounters involved more implicit demonstrations of hostility by the conjurors:

> The chief conjuror approached very majestically, with his face painted in a fantastic manner, and his conjuring robe thrown over his shoulder, and accosting me in English, said, "good morning, master Cockran" then with a jargon of English and

> Indian said he was happy that I had come to his feast and hoped that I had brought the two bushels of flour which I had promised him. I said, "the flour is ready; you shall have it according to promise when you have finished your house . . . " He went off laughing. He has not yet commenced his house, and is at present the greatest enemy to civilization and Christianity that I meet with. This individual looks upon the progressive steps of Christianity with a malignant eye (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 19/32 to Aug. 7/33 Nov. 10, 1832. A77).

The missionaries tried to win the conjurors over by framing their arguments in a traditional framework According to traditional Aboriginal belief, it was the spirits who provided subsistence. Cockran attributed the results of Western techniques of farming to the power of his deity, setting up a contest that the conjuror's deities were likely to lose. By so doing, Cockran called into question the traditional dependence on the Manitos for subsistence.

> Why weary me with your solicitations; call upon your gods for assistance; let them support you who have your services. You pretend to do great things through their aid; call upon them to fill your kettle with fishes, and your bag with wheat, and then you will benefit by your allegiance to them. We cultivate the ground in the proper season, according to the command of the Master of life, and trust to his blessing. He sends us rain, favours us with seed time and harvest, therefore, we have enough; yea more, we are growing rich, and fat in the land, while your gods cannot preserve you in life (Cockran's journal, 1833-1834. A77, p.24.)

Perhaps the greatest victories for the missionaries occurred when the conjurors themselves asked for help. This usually involved attempts to cure their own children. In the following, a conjuror, who had cured one son by traditional means, admitted that he and his Manitos could not cure the other, and gave his son over to Cockran:

> Rode out to visit a tent of Indians where two of our school boys are sick. The father stands high in his own estimation as a doctor . . . One he pronounced convalescent, but the other he declared had baffled all his skill; therefor he was handed over to me (Rev. Cockran's Journal; March 31, 1836. A77, p.185).

The boy's fate was no longer in the hands of the familiar Manitos; now the missionaries were inserted into prior understandings of power and interrelationships among all beings. Similarly,

> After the meeting visited the sick, and baptized two children, who were both indisposed. The father of the two children, had been a conjurer of considerable pretensions, and has two wives. This being two insurmountable objections against his character, I was under the necessity of examining him very narrowly concerning his present views and intentions; and from whom I received the following information-*that he has now lost all confidence in his Indian religion* [emphasis mine], and for the future intended to conform to ours, that he would put away one of the women, whom he kept, and marry the other, and send his children to school to be instructed in the Christian religion (Cockran's Journal, 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 August 1835; July 8, 1835. A77).

The various forms of resistance that the missionaries encountered led to innovative tactics. Many resorted to a form of syncretism themselves, framing their arguments in the language of traditional Aboriginal spirituality, using the concept of the Master of Life, yet retaining the Christian notion of salvation:

> Will you solemnly promise the Master of Life that you will endeavour to forsake all your heathen practices that you are trusting to the merits of his son for pardon . . . He said, that was his sincere desire. I then added, remember if you break this promise you will be punished by the Master of Life more severely than if you had died a heathen (Smithurst, Journal, Jan 18, 1841. A78 p.606).

Configuring the Choices

Choices usually involved pointing out the 'superiority' of Western material culture, the inferiority of Aboriginal spirituality, and the description of the afterlife offered by

traditional deities as compared to that offered by Christianity. For example, Cockran provided additional incentives by casting doubt on the Manitos' ability to provide adequately for needs in either the present life or in the afterlife:

> I told him I think my countrymen are wiser than yours, & asked him, Who made the blanket which covers you? Who made your gun which brings down the ducks & geese with thunder & lightening? Who made the kettles you cook your victuals in? My countrymen. Do you not think that we are much wiser than you in making provisions for the body, that it is likely we may have a better religion? . . . Your gods have taught you nothing, you are more ignorant than the beasts you hunt . . . you, . . . pretend to have had authentic intelligence from the invisible world, respecting the souls of the Red men, believe they are immediately on leaving the body converted into blue bottle flies. What a degrading religion is yours; it takes away all the superiority of man at death, & places him in the Society of insects! What a noble religion is Christianity . . . It is profitable to direct man in all things for the present life & the good of the body, & at death raises him to the dignity of angels, & give him a habitation in the kingdom of God!! (Rev. Cockran to the Secretaries, July 2, 1852; Indian Village. A79 p.125).

The choices that the missionaries held out to Aboriginal people were circumscribed by the prevalence of disease and the continuing depletion of natural resources. On one side, the missionaries offered the security of salvation of the soul [33], cure from disease, provision of material needs, and protection of children. The 'wrong choice' was weighted with responsibility for one's own illness as well as that of children, and punishment of the soul in the afterlife. For example, John Smithurst wrote that,

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It is likely that the notion of 'salvation' of the soul was given a somewhat different interpretation by Aboriginal people. Yet the missionaries' promise of happiness for the soul after death was often a primary motive for conversion. For example, David Jones writes that,

> ...she said she wanted me to do something for her which white people do to each other to send them to a good place when they die (Jones journal, Sept/23 to 22 June/1824; June 22, 1824. A77).

> I concluded shewing what was our hope at the glorious appearing of our Divine Redeemer, namely that he would take all his faithful servants to dwell with him, where they would be happy forever, and no more be sick neither hungry nor thirsty, but the heathen and all those who will not give up their sins will have theirs with the devil in everlasting fire (J. Smithurst's Journal, Dec.25, 1939 to March 1840; July 26, 1840; A78, p.480).

The missionaries' threats were graphic. Individuals were told that,

> ...dying in their present state [they would] go to hell and be forever tormented in the lake of fire prepared for their master and all who serve him (Rev. Cowley's Journal, Partridge Crop, Manitoba Lake; Jan 1, 1846. A86, p.132):

This was to be weighed against 'benefits' that were stacked up in this world and the next. Smithurst presented this choice within a traditional Aboriginal framework: a powerful Christian God would provide health and provisions:

> I also reminded him that had he been a Christian I should never have found him in such misery and wretchedness, for godliness has not only the promise of the life to come, but is also profitable as far as this life, is concerned, God always gives his blessing to His own children and feeds and clothes those who put their trust in him and who use the means which He has appointed. My arguments were strongly supported by some Christian Indians present but I could get no decisive answer from the man (Smithurst Journal; Nov. 18, 1841. A78).

The illness and possible death of their children was a recurring situation that presented a difficult choice for many individuals. The choice often involved accepting as truth the missionaries' superior power (and adjusting their frame of reference concerning the power of their conjurors) or risking the loss of their child. For some parents, relinquishing their faith in the Manitos was too much to ask:

> His Indian prejudice was too strong to submit to this simple treatment for scarcely had I left the house when the drum and rattle were at work to drive away the evil spirit, which the conjurer thought was tormenting the girl (Cockran's Journal 26 December, 1834, March 12, 1834, A77. P.23).

Although Cockran returned some time later to find the girl had not improved, the conjurer argued that this was due to the 'bad medicine' of another conjurer. The father remained steadfast in his faith despite Cockran's efforts to convince him otherwise. Cockran referred to this as 'Indian prejudice'.

The missionaries took full advantage of the love that parents had for their children. For example, in the following, Cockran has played on the fact that a child had just died. He implicitly blamed the parents for this and indicated that more deaths could result in the future from making the 'wrong' choice:

> Trifle not with the Master of Life, or He will touch you again. You have more children; you have an only son; perhaps he shall be next, who shall be taken if your reformation is not effected by the present warning (Cockran's Journal, 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 Aug. 1835, July 28, 1835. A77 p. 120-121).

Similarly, in another instance, Cockran blamed a father for his child's death. Here Cockran had scolded an individual for returning to 'heathenism' and blamed his daughter's death on the fact that he had offended God. He then strengthened his argument by threatening the individual with punishment at the time of his own death:

> To the old man I said, "You have offended God by your late proceedings in returning to your drum in the time of affliction instead of praying to Him, resigning yourself to His will, and trusting in His mercy. If you continue in the service of the gods you will assuredly perish . . . If you die as a heathen, you will meet Him as your enemy; . . . Will the sound of your drum terrify Him who rules the world . .. ?" (Cockran's Journal, Aug.10/38 to July 10/39, Dec. 12, 1838. A78).

When a conjuror brought his own child to be cured by Cockran because his own methods had failed, Cockran placed the blame for the child's continuing illness squarely on his shoulders. In this way, the conjuror was made responsible for his own behaviour:

> Our protection and defence under the Master of Life is safer and stronger than that which he receives from his gods. And had you chosen this defence, your child would never have sunk under the baneful effects of their medicine (Cockran's Journal, September 1833: A77).

Thus, on one side, evil, death, sin, hunger, and 'everlasting punishment' were weighted against happiness, plenitude, and salvation on the other.

Conversion Rituals: Technologies of the Self

Foucault has noted that Christianity requires considerable work of the self on the self:

> It's one of those religions which is supposed to lead the individual from one reality to another, from death to life, from time to eternity. In order to achieve that, Christianity imposed a set of conditions and rules of behavior for certain transformations of the self (1982:40).

While Protestantism, in general, required work on the self to ensure self-control and self-improvement, conversion from 'heathenism' required considerably more work on the self. This was particularly so in the case of Aboriginal people, whose selves appeared to the missionaries to be the antithesis of the type of selves that were required for Christianity.

In order to qualify for conversion, individuals were required to perform various spiritual techniques in which they were urged to define and to regulate themselves according to a new moral code, to establish new principles for conducting their lives, and to

reject those to which they had been accustomed. Prospective converts were required to explore, recognize, and then denounce their former selves. Only when all of the undesirable aspects of the former selves were purged, would they be able to reconstruct themselves as Christians.

Self-examination and reflection on the Aboriginal self

As stated earlier, government of the self has two dimensions. The first entails strategies by which authorities seek to shape the conduct and selves of others. The second is the ways in which individuals then work on themselves. This was done in several stages by the missionaries. Before prospective converts began to reflect on themselves as subjects of their own conduct, they were required to undergo what Hunter (1996) refers to as 'self-problematization'. In this process, the missionaries pointed out to them, in graphic terminology, the undesirable elements of their existing selves and the consequences of retaining them. Cultural traditions were translated into undesirable characteristics of traditional self-identities.

> I tell them plainly that their manner of life is condemned and declared to be the result of a wicked heart that they are serving the devil . . . (Rev. Cowley's journal Partridge Crop, Manitoba Lake; Jan 1, 1846. A86 p.132).

Individuals were then encouraged to reflect on their former selves and to consider the necessary changes. Foucault has noted that, '[penitence] represents a break with one's past identity' (1982:43). For Aboriginal people to adopt a Christian self-identity required that they detach themselves from their past, and from understandings of interconnectedness with other members of the community. It required that they change their prior

understanding of their interrelationship with the spirit world and embrace the missionaries' deity as more efficacious in bringing about health, prosperity and salvation. Conversion required that individuals understand the antithesis between the new self characterized by goodness and morality and a former self characterized by immoral behaviours:

> One of the men desired me to explain to him the meaning of sin; for, he said, he had been walking in the dark all his days, and now he wishes to harken to the word of the Master of Life and avoid the things that were offensive to Him. *I directed his attention to the intemperate, licentious, indolent, and impious habits of savages*, [emphasis mine] and proved them to be contrary to the word of God (Rev. Cockran's Journal Oct. 18, 1835. A77).

Individuals were required to denounce their traditional beliefs as not only immoral, but also as inaccurate:

> . . . he had now fully determined without delay to abandon the *refuge of lies which his ancestors had trusted*, [emphasis mine] and to cast himself wholly in the resource of Christianity . . . (Cockran's Journal, Aug.14, 1834 to August 1835; Nov.17, 1834. A77).

Confession

Foucault states that 'Christianity is a confessional religion,' in which 'each person has the duty to know . . . what is happening inside him, to acknowledge faults, to recognize temptations, to locate desires; and everyone is obliged to disclose these things either to God or to others in the community and hence to bear public or private witness against oneself' (Foucault 1988.40). The way the martyr faces death is the model for the penitent. There is at the heart of confession an exomologêsis, or 'rupture with self and world', a 'break with one's past identity' (1988:43).

For Foucault, the technology of verbal expression was an extremely powerful

technique: 'verbal expression is the crucial moment' (1988:48). Here the individual was required to verbally express, in the presence of the missionary, the repudiation of their former self and desire to form a new self. Confession required that individuals express their recognition of the following: 1) that their existing selves were sinful, 2) that their religion was false, inadequate, and evil, and 3) that they regretted their past and desired to change.

> ... He confessed himself an unworthy, helpless sinner and says he is fully convinced his Indian religion can afford him neither security nor comfort (Rev. Smithurst Journal, Mar.6, 1845. A78).

> All profess to be deeply sensible of their *lost and ruined condition by nature*, [emphasis mine] and to be fully satisfied that their former course was wrong, and could only lead to everlasting ruin. Many in speaking of their past lives and of the *miserable delusions under which they have laboured*, [emphasis mine] evidently appeared much affected and expressed themselves in strong terms of regret professing to be deeply grieved on account of their sins (Rev. Smithurst Journal, Feb.1/42 to Aug. 1/42; June 26, 1842. A78 p.90).

> The man however appears to have been very carefully taught the elementary truths of the Gospel and professes his firm belief in them, and *states it is to be his firm conviction that his own system of religion is a false one* [emphasis mine](Rev. Smithurst Journal, May 31, 1845. A78).

Foucault notes that, 'Even if the master, in his role as a discriminating power, doesn't say anything, the fact that the thought has been expressed will have an effect of discrimination' (1988:47). If successful, the technique of speaking this out loud to and thus affirming it to oneself in the presence of the missionary acted as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Indeed, Rose (1991:240) further argues that ,

> . . . in confessing, one also constitutes oneself. In the act of speaking through the obligation to produce words that are true to an inner reality, through the self-examination that precedes and accompanies speech, one becomes a subject for oneself.

Confession involved denouncing and negating everything that was held to be true in traditional culture. Confession was the ultimate technology of the self: 'Only when he confesses does the devil go out of him'(Foucault 1988:48). It involved an affirmation of personal worthlessness and a rejection of the traditional Manitos. As Berkhoff (1965:15), has noted, to become truly Christian was to become 'anti-Indian'.

Discussion

The missionaries were not successful in attaining their goals. Most Aboriginal people did not convert. Many of those who did were either sick or dying. Others went back to their traditional spirituality as soon as their particular crisis was over. Some individuals incorporated elements of Christianity into their traditional spiritual framework. Despite this, however, the mechanisms that the missionaries used had other effects.

While it has been argued that Aboriginal people had the ability to incorporate selected elements of Christianity into their existing framework without seriously affecting their traditional beliefs, I argue that to do so was a strong acknowledgement of the superior power of the missionaries' deity. The belief that baptism could protect them from other conjurors, the most feared of traditional society, would have, at the very least, caused some uncertainty as to the effectiveness of their spiritual leaders.

> The Indians never scruple to have their children baptized, because they then think no one can injure them by conjuring. The notion arises from the Indian conjourers [*sic*] giving out that they have the power to injure the white men because they have been baptized by their priests. Now there is nothing that Indians so much dread as the power of their conjourers; and they are therefore glad to seize any thing that they imagine will afford them protection. They very naturally say, if the Priest putting water upon a white

> man will keep him from being injured by the conjourer, why should not it do the same for the Red Man, let us try the experiment (Rev. Smithurst to the Secretaries, Red River N.W. America, Aug. 2, 1841. A78 p.558).

The existence of elements of Christianity within Aboriginal spirituality implies some degree of questioning of the efficacy of their traditional framework. Therefore, while the missionaries may not have realized their goals, they inevitably instilled some degree of doubt in the minds of Aboriginal people as to the validity of their traditional spirituality. Given the power and status of conjurors in Aboriginal society, a request baptism was a strong admission to the conjuror himself, and a powerful signal to others. For the conjurors to admit that theirs was a lesser power was a considerable victory for the missionaries.

> . . . The Indians not only believe in one supreme God but also in a number of inferior deities; and that conjurer who can call to his aid the most powerful of these is considered the greatest adept in his profession . . . *They believe no Indian Conjurer has power to do any injury to a Christian*, [emphasis mine] and they further believe that in a case where the combined efforts of all their conjurers have failed to break an enchantment that if the person who is the victim of the enchantment be baptized the spell will be broken (Rev. J. Smithurst's Journal, Jan 1841 to Jan 18, 1841; Jan 18, 1841. A78 p.604).

Another ramification of the missionaries' governance was the divisions that it created in previously tightly integrated groups. The missionaries' tactics divided entire communities into Christian and traditional factions, causing bitterness and confusion. Fragmentation occurred on several levels: of children from parents, of siblings from one other, of husbands from wives, and of members of the community at large from each other. Given the prevalence of disease after the arrival of the Europeans, it was inevitable that disagreements over the treatment of sick individuals would arise. For example, in the

following instance, the sick individual chose to be baptized, despite his relatives' faith in a conjuror:

> Was sent for to baptize the above individual . . . The night previous to this, his relatives contrary to his inclinations, had the conjuror at work . . . (Cockran's Journal: 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 August 1835; Nov. 17, 1834. A77).

Conflicts also arose between those families who chose to convert and those who did not:

> After the days of Conjuration terminated some branches of different families threw off the yoke of the Conjurer, and assisted us in clearing the ground, planting potatoes and Indian corn and sowing wheat and barley. The ill disposed harassed us terribly; they stole our seed before we could plant it, and rooted it up after we had planted it (Cockran's Journal Feb.13, 1832. A77, p.473).

The uneasiness that began to manifest itself between Christians and non-Christians was evident to Cockran, who stated that,

> I have two lads of the same family frequently working on the establishment, one of them has been with me about eighteen months, but the father and mother *were so kept in check by other Indians* that they would never allow them to be instructed. [emphasis mine] (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 9/37 to July 1/38 Sept. 16, 1837. A78 p.312).

Similarly, Rev. Cowley remarked that,

> I have baptized one adult during the year, & there are three others who desire that rite . . . Their great difficulty seems to be to break through the influence of long established customs, *& their fear of each other* [emphasis mine] (Rev. A. Cowley to Major Straith, Partridge Crop, July 21/49. A79, p.530).

Some converts supported the missionaries:

> My arguments were strongly supported by some Christian Indians present but I could get no decisive answer from the man (Smithurst Journal; Nov. 18, 1841. A78).

The missionaries secured a major victory when one of Peguis' sons became ill. Peguis had called in a number of conjurors–as Cockran described it, 'All the quacks of the tribe were present ready to display their skill'. When the boy did not improve, Peguis requested that Cockran administer his medicine. Meeting with opposition from the conjurors and other clan members, Peguis addressed the conjurors as follows:

> 'Brethren, you are too late, I have given up my heart to this new religion, and I intend to prove it; I leave my son in the house of God, he shall do with him as he pleases, therefore it is useless to propose anything of the kind for his recovery (Cockran's Journal 9 August 1837 to 1 July 1838; Nov. 8, 1837. A78, p. 323).

In 1838, Peguis himself was baptised. The reason for this is not entirely clear, although it may have been a political move to reinforce his relationship with the missionaries. This event was to cause considerable division among his people. Perhaps the most serious kind of division, however, was the alienation of children from their parents:

> I walked down to the tent of a noted conjuror . . . This person has been violent in his opposition to Christianity. As long as he had any influence, he dissuaded all his relatives from embracing it. When his children came to school, it was with the heavy imprecations of his gods upon their heads. His eldest daughter at last got so far as to read the New Testament. Now the warfare commenced. He would sneer, and scold, and affirm that she was going to ruin, and she with equal confidence would insist that he was wrong, and must either change or perish . . . In the middle of the winter, she and two of her brothers fell sick and wished to be baptized.

The father eventually decided to be baptized himself, stating that,

> '. . . every time my children were baptized, they have left me' (Cockran's Journal 11 August 1836 to 2 August 1837, Aug. 2, 1837. A77, p.279).

The internal fragmentation of communities and families is exemplified in the case of Peguis's oldest son, who turned against his father on the basis of conversion. Peguis, on the other hand, was supported by the Christian Aboriginals. Referring to Peguis's son, Smithurst wrote that,

> He has exerted all his influence with the Saulteaux Indians to prevent them from embracing Christianity, and from the time his father and three younger brothers were baptized he has been unceasing in his attempts to deprive his father of the Chieftainship. All his attempts have however in the good providence of God been defeated, for the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company, together with the Christian population have always supported the old Chief (J. Smithurst's Journal, Dec.25, 1939 to March 1840; January 1840. A78 p.480).

The extent of the chasm separating some individuals from their heritage is evident in the following writings of Henry Budd, one of the first Aboriginal converts who later became the first Aboriginal clergyman:

> The more I meditate on the mercy and love of our Heavenly Father *in singling me from my race of pagan countrymen*, [emphasis mine] and in honouring me with the message of love and mercy to the heathen, the more I feel I cannot do enough for Him (cited in Fast, 1984:240).

Both the attempts to convert Aboriginal people and the actual process of conversion involved a two-step process of destruction and reconstruction. Illustrated here are attempts to destroy the power of the conjurors, to destroy the unity and harmony of a tight-knit community, and to destroy the traditional Aboriginal self. Although well-intended, the

missionaries found this to be necessary if they were to successfully substitute the conditions of Christianity. While the mechanisms involved in persuading Aboriginal people to convert worked indirectly on the self, the ritual of conversion targeted the self directly. It is in the process of conversion that technologies of the self are most evident, as individuals were required to target and destroy their traditional selves before reconstructing them as Protestants.

The missionaries had considerable difficultly in securing conversions by such means as sermons from the pulpit, or simply holding out to Aboriginal people the option of conversion to a 'superior' religion. They soon found that if they were to succeed at all in their attempt to persuade Aboriginal people to reject their spirituality, it was vital that they devise alternate mechanisms of governance. One such mechanism was to incorporate Aboriginal peoples' resistance into their governance. This is evident in the ways in which they presented their arguments using the language of traditional spirituality. The Christian God was portrayed as performing the same functions as the Manitos in traditional society. Where the Manitos traditionally healed via the conjurors, the missionaries' God would heal more efficiently. Where the Manitos provided for food and success in hunting, the missionaries' God, not science, would provide more. Where the Manitos protected, the missionaries' God was shown as having superior power to protect via the ceremony of baptism, even though the missionaries realized that baptism was seen by Aboriginal people as a form of conjuring.

The missionaries' primary technology to persuade individuals to convert and/or change their behaviours was to use their knowledge of Western medicine. This was

presented to Aboriginal people as evidence of the superior healing power of their God at a time when epidemics of disease caused considerable anxiety and uncertainty. They used several mechanisms of persuasion. One was to instill fear for the afterlife, particularly in those who were terminally ill. Another was to place responsibility for the well-being of children in the hands of the parents. Although the missionaries' attempts to convince Aboriginal people to convert to Christianity were couched in the language of free choice, Aboriginal people's 'freedom' to choose was circumscribed by the general uncertainty and malaise that resulted from depletion of natural resources and epidemics of disease. In order for individuals to make the appropriate' choice, it was necessary that the power and influence of the conjurors be discredited. It was also necessary to show that the Manitos, on which all elements of spirituality were based, were less powerful than the missionaries' God. Thus one of the key methods of persuasion took the form of discrediting the conjurors as well as a deprecation of spirituality as sinful, irrational, and unable to provide adequately for the spiritual and material needs of the people.

Even though some individuals rejected the missionaries' options, and others were able to tap into the missionaries' resources without completely destroying their traditional notions of spirituality, it is likely that the missionaries' tactics alone would have left their mark on Aboriginal peoples' culture and identity. Accepting the missionaries' power as a reality, and choosing to use this power in stressful situations entailed more than the substitution of one conjuror for another. If the missionaries' had access to a greater power, then it follows that what they stood for must also be recognized as valid. Even the recognition of the *possibility* that conjurors and the Manitos that they represented were

less powerful would necessarily have sown some seeds of doubt as to the validity or efficacy of their own system of belief.

Because the maintenance of proper relations with the spirit world was the basis of all social behaviour in Aboriginal societies, and because health and good fortune depended on establishing a harmonious relationship with the inhabitants of the spiritual plane, an erosion of faith in the Manitos' power prompted a sense of alienation from their spirituality. Furthermore, denouncing the conjurors' rituals as superstition was to denigrate the very mechanisms that permitted Aboriginal people to cope with the stresses that they were now undergoing.

The challenge that the missionaries posed to Aboriginal spirituality eroded the powerful sense of community that was pervasive in traditional Aboriginal culture. These tightly-knit and highly interdependent communities became fragmented as believers and nonbelievers lined up against one another. Also, the individualism of Protestant Christianity was at odds with the close identification of the individual with group life that was characteristic of Aboriginal forms of organization. The individual who was connected to all other aspects of the universe and to the spirit world had to disconnect him/herself in order to adopt this individualized form of religion. The goal now became personal salvation, or saving of the self by the self.

The spiritual techniques of conversion were powerful technologies of the self, as they were directed at the individual's self-identity and aspirations. The technologies of self-examination and confession were two means by which individuals were persuaded to assume responsibility for their own salvation and in so doing to discipline themselves. Here,

however, individuals were expected to accept not only a new 'religion' but to denigrate and declare as false the spirituality that had given meaning and direction to their lives. It is argued here that the effects of such confession, which required a verbal repudiation of all that was the source of their identity, would have been as destructive as any other element in this interaction.

> I afterwards proceeded to the tent where the Chief lay sick & despairing of life & entered into conversation with him. He told me that all that he used to trust in, that which had guided & supported him through life, meaning his religion, his gods, had now left him, consequently he did not know what to do or say or expect (Rev. Cowley's Journal; Partridge Crop; Aug. 18, 1847, p.281. A79).

On the other hand, despite the missionaries' efforts to eradicate traditional Aboriginal spirituality, their observations have revealed the tenacity of traditional beliefs and ceremonies, as the missionaries lamented the continued occurrences of traditional religious practices, such as healing and divination ceremonies. Indeed, Peguis's band continued to hold traditional ceremonies long after Peguis promised to go along with the missionaries' proposals. As one missionary lamented,

> They conjure in every way as before. They observe their feasts, idolatrous rites, dances, singing and drumming with apparently as much devotion as ever. When spoken to they argue so absurdly and stubbornly almost as though no one had ever shown them a more excellent way (Rev. Cowley to the Rev. R. Davies, Partridge Crop, July 17, 1845. A78).

CHAPTER EIGHT

GOVERNING THROUGH RESTRUCTURING ABORIGINAL KINSHIP

> If a colony is to be organized and established in the wilderness, the moral obligation of marriage must be felt. 'It is the parent' said Sir William Scott, 'not the child of civil society' (John West, *Substance of a Journal Colony*, p.25).

The Relevance of the Family

A number of researchers (Cooper and Stoler1997; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991,1992, 1997; Thomas 1994; Merry1999) have noted that virtually all missionaries in the colonial era attempted to restructure the form and relations of indigenous families. Indeed, for most missionaries, adherence to a specific family form was a strict requirement of conversion.

Contrary to popular belief, the family form that the missionaries sought to implement was not the nuclear family of the bourgeoisie, but rather it was the feudal family form--a self-sufficient economic unit in which both men and women cooperated in producing food for their families. This was the family form of the yeomen and craftsmen, who came to be romanticized as embodying the 'old English tradition' (Hamilton 1978:29). The husband was the patriarch of this industrious and self-sufficient household, the kind of family from which many of the Protestant preachers had come. This family form appeared to have had embodied within it the values of industry and self-sufficiency that provided the

setting for a 'godly' life. From the missionaries' perspective, this form of family also had a practical value: it would provide for the transformation from hunting and gathering to a homesteading.

It was in the family that morality and religiosity would be fostered. For the family to be conducive to godliness, however, marriage had to be a stable, lifelong commitment. Only in this atmosphere would individuals be able to devote themselves to godly behaviour. To ensure this, all possible sources of conflict and instability were to be eliminated. First, the marriage was to be non-adulterous. Second, and central to stability, was a relationship between husband and wife which involved mutual support. The ideal relationship in the feudal family was comprised of a husband and a 'helpmeet' wife. The forms that this mutual support took, however, were not arbitrary. Mandatory duties and obligations were set out for married couples. Third, relations were to be sombre, so that order and rationality would be brought into the conduct of individuals. Such stability and order presupposed a patriarchal relationship. The husband was expected to have authority of his wife, and the wife was expected to obey.

In addition to being the locus of godly behaviour, the family functioned as an agent of socialization. The C.M.S. was convinced that the development of Christianity would best occur within the atmosphere of a Christian home. There was little doubt in that if Christian values were instilled in children from early childhood, they would be stronger Christians

than adult converts. This was explained by Henry Venn:

> God may give you a few illustrious instances of mature Christianity in your adult converts; but the mass will be far below that standard until you have a generation nursed in the lap of Christian mothers and taught to list the name of Christ (H. Venn, Dismissal of Missionaries to Sierra Leone an Abeokuta, CMI, 1852, p.21, (cited in Usher1971:49).

Given the above. it is not surprising that the structure and relations of the family were of considerable importance to the missionaries. The enshrinement of the family within Protestantism, as well as the perceived importance of the nuclear family[34] in 19th century British society, assured that it would be a vital part of both the civilizing and the Christianizing mission. For the missionaries, the ideal family consisted of a self-enclosed unit composed of a husband, a wife, and children, all engaged in farming a plot of land. This family form clashed at numerous points with Aboriginal values.

Aboriginal Kinship

The family was the primary organizing structure of the Aboriginal social order. The biological family, which often included near kin, was the base unit of social organization. The band, which was the basic political group, was composed of the extended family. It was in this group that the individual's life experiences were centred. All members of the family had important roles to play in order to ensure the survival of the group.

The complex rights and obligations that were embodied within the family were

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34 Historians and sociologists have observed that the nuclear family was a key factor in the progress of industrial capitalism.

grounded in a very different ontology than that of the nuclear family. The main assumption was that kin should provide for one another. This notion provided the basis for relations not only with immediate family, but also for other close relationships. Such relationships were treated as extended kinship relations and therefore were infused with corresponding obligations, one of which was the expectation that the fortunate were obligated to share with the less fortunate. All individuals who comprised the generation older than parents were called grandparents. This term connoted respect that was associated with advanced age, experience, and wisdom.

Marriage was not usually accompanied by a special ritual but rather was made formal by public proclamation. Divorce was not difficult to obtain by either party, particularly when there were no children. Polygamy was acceptable, and was often a pragmatic solution to particular needs. In some cases, it helped to ease the economic burden of one wife (Fast, 1984:112). In other cases, polygamy was the solution to caring for the wife of a deceased relative or friend. [35] In his narrative on the 'Cree Indians' (1784-1812), David Thompson, a Northwest Company employee, observed that:

> Polygamy is allowed, and each may have as many wives as he can maintain, but few indulge themselves in this liberty, yet some have even three; this is seldom a matter of choice, it is frequently from the death of a friend who has left his wife, sister, or daughter to him, for every woman must have a husband (cited in Glover,1962:82).

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On the other hand, Fast (1984) notes that wives lower than third or fourth commonly performed the meanest tasks, were most often beaten and most often accused of adultery.

There was considerable disparity between the cultural practices of family life of Aboriginal people and those of the ideal Christian nuclear family. These were seen by the missionaries through the lens of the assumed immoral nature of Aboriginal people. 'Connexions' were seen as licentious and immoral since they were not formally sanctioned by marriage. Polygamy was not seen as a pragmatic means for dealing with economic burdens or widowhood; rather it was equated with adultery and therefore could not be condoned by the Church. Even monogamous marriages did not fit the proper mould as relations between husbands and wives had little semblance to the ideal of the male patriarch and submissive wife. Numerous accounts by the missionaries recount their perceptions of the boisterousness and apparent disorder of Aboriginal marriages, and of strong and disobedient wives who were not fulfilling their duties as 'keepers of the home', or making good use of their time performing 'godly' labour. The children appeared to be disobedient, autonomous and lacking in proper discipline. Worse still, they were not being socialized in such a way as to be receptive to the missionaries' teachings.

The missionaries concluded that, in its traditional state, the family actually prevented either civilization or conversion from occurring. Not only was its structure often polygamous and without the benefit of an official marriage ceremony, (and thus immoral), but the relations that were embodied within it appeared to preclude the order and stability that the missionaries saw as necessary to a godly household. Therefore, a vital part of the civilizing mission was the 'need' to change the structure and social relations of the traditional 'heathen' kinship into the proper, moral family form.

When they set out to restructure the family, however, the missionaries were, in fact,

attacking a core institution on which the traditional social order was based and from which its members derived their identities. As such, the effects of changes to the family reverberated throughout the entire society.

The missionaries were faced with the task of persuading Aboriginal people to change their kinship structure to one that had embodied within it values and social relations that were foreign to them. This task would involve: 1) bringing marriage under the auspices of the church, 2) recasting the structure of the family, 3) realigning gender relations, and 4) restructuring the socialization of children.

Restructuring Aboriginal Families

One of the missionaries' first targets was what appeared to them to be the absence of formal marriages. For John West, the first Anglican missionary to Red River, marriage was one of the 'fundamental laws of society' (*Substance of a Journal*, p.26). A proper marriage entailed a formal ceremony under the auspices of the Church. So important was adherence to the morality of marriage that, when faced with the opportunity of converting several Aboriginal women who were not formally married to their husbands, William Cockran would not do so. This was a strong illustration of his belief in formal marriage, given the problems that he had in securing converts.

> This woman has been anxious for some time past to become a Christian of full standing, but through an unfortunate connexion, I have been under the necessity of objecting to her being admitted. There are several pious women who have been kept back for the same cause. The husbands will not marry them . . . I have even viewed the females as innocent in this connexion, for this was the custom of their ancestors, and if they did not form a connexion of this kind, they could form no other; consequently I find it hard to exclude

> them from the privileges of the Christian Church. But for the general good I am obliged to it (Cockran's Journal: Feb. 21, 1839. A78, p.393).

Cockran went so far as to withhold baptism of an individual who condoned an 'adulterous' relationship:

> Most of the day spent in conversation with those who intend to partake of the sacrament for the first time . . . One of the old members was accused of countenancing vice by allowing two persons who are living in a state of adultery to reside in his house (Cockran's Journal, 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 August 1835. A77).

Marriage under the auspices of the Church opened up an avenue whereby the missionaries could regulate the family. In order to be formally blessed by the Church, the prospective bride and groom had to meet particular criteria, which entailed promises to fulfil a wide array of duties:

> As matrimony for life is a new thing in this country, I generally enter into a long discourse with the parties, on the duties they have to perform to each other (Cockran's Journal, Jan. 2, 1838. A78).

These duties ensured that the required components of a stable and godly marriage were met. So important was the fulfilment of these duties that the missionaries refused to perform a marriage if either partner did not promise to do them. The missionaries insisted on the right to intrude into all aspects of married life. In order to fulfill their duties, Aboriginal people were asked to change their perceptions of the proper marital relations and to accept those of the missionaries.

For the missionaries, the ideal marriage was monogamous and devoid of extramarital sexual relations. In order for members of a family to convert to Christianity, it was necessary that 'extra' wives of polygamous marriages be cast out from the family. To

perform this act, however, required that the husband override all aspects of the ideology of mutual dependence and care for the less fortunate–a core feature of traditional kinship relations.

Although Cockran appears to have recognized the difficulties involved for these women, he does not appear to have realized the extent of the emotional devastation that this might cause, or the destructive impact that carrying out such an act might have on all of the actors involved. Cockran's main concern was with providing for the women's material needs.

> He will have to divorce one; the one whom he may choose to divorce may be unwilling to accept of it . . . Should she accept of the divorce, she will be destitute, and to use the common phrase, no one will come and cast a piece of cloth round her shoulders. A considerable time may elapse before she is so fortunate as to form another connexion. Will it be humane to let the repudiated woman pine away under the pressure of her misfortunes? Has she not lost enough by losing the protector of her person, and the supplier of her wants? (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 19/32 to Aug. 7/33, Dec. 30, 1832. A77).

The solution, for Cockran, was for the CMS to provide funding for an annual supply of clothing for the new 'widows'. The primary reason, however, was not compassion for the women. Rather the solution that he suggested was designed to prevent the husbands from feeling responsible for their former wives and returning to their prior 'immoral'

relationships. It is truly ironic that Cockran is, in effect, asking the husbands to turn their backs on needy persons (their wives) in order to lead a 'Christian' life:

> ...their repudiated wives may become the thorns in their flesh, not to keep them from sin, but to draw them into it. It would be well if you would allow me the means of providing for such unfortunate women that they might have no excuse for troubling their husbands, if their husbands should wish to lead Christian lives (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 19/32 to Aug. 7/33, Dec. 30, 1832. A77).

Where in traditional society food was shared amongst the wider kinship network, and status was derived from providing for others, now individual families were to work in private and enclosed plots of land, saving excess produce for future, private consumption. From the following, however, it appears as though the ideology of sharing was difficult to eradicate. This was seen as a general lack of virtue in the 'nature' of Aboriginal people:

> Their corn was all reaped & gathered into barns or built in stacks in yards well fenced . . . If they possessed the virtue of economy to the same degree as the Europeans, many of them might make their stock last the whole winter. But the Indian character is destitute of such as quality . . . as long as he has anything remaining he must make a feast for all his friends, & send gifts to all his cousins (Rev. Cockran to Rev. H. Venn; Indian Settlement, Dec.12, 1851. A79, p.141).

In sum, for Aboriginal people to restructure their traditional kinship required that they conform to moral standards that were foreign to them (and thus risk offending the spirits), and act in ways that went against their traditional world view. The challenge, for the missionaries, was to devise the means to persuade Aboriginal people to recast their well-integrated family structure and its values.

Mechanisms of Government

The missionaries not only portrayed the Aboriginal traditional family as immoral and sinful, they also denounced the individuals within them as adulterous and incestuous *persons*–sinners who risked condemning their souls to 'eternal misery'. In the following account, Cockran described an occasion in which, having been told of this, the women themselves chose, on their own, to avoid the consequences that would befall such 'sinners':

> They explained the doctrines of Christianity to the woman as far as they were able, and showed them from the scriptures that their present mode of life was very sinful in the sight of God, *because they were not only adulterous but incestuous persons*; [emphasis mine] and should they die in this state, they would forever be excluded from the favour of God, and the happiness of heaven, and condemned to hell, the place of eternal misery. The two women being frequently reminded of their sinful state, and repeatedly hearing other things connected with the way of salvation and the happiness of those souls after death who are saved in this life from their sins . . . agree that one of them should continue with the husband, and the other should pitch another tent and lie by herself (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 19/32 to Aug. 7/33; Jan. 10, 1833. A77).

Another tactic that the missionaries used often was to play on the intense love that parents had for their children. They held out the cure of sick children as an incentive for inducing parents to change their family structures. For example, in the following, the wife in a polygamous family had asked Cockran to baptize her sick children in the hopes that this would ward off any evil spell that may have been cast on the children. This gave Cockran the opportunity to present his choice. He would baptize the children if his conditions were met-- the husband would have to separate from one of the wives and could not practice his

conjuring. In this case, the husband chose to meet Cockran's conditions. He separated from one of his wives and formally married the other. He gave up his conjuring and was eventually baptized by Cockran:

> I found that I could not accede to her request unless great changes take place in the whole family. The father at this time practised his conjurations, had two wives, & no confidence in the Christian religion. However I went to the tent, gave a full explanation of all the conditions in which I would baptize the sick children-that proper medicine would be administered to them, but no incantations used; that prayer should be made to the Master of Life only . . . (Cockran's Journal 11 August 1836 to 2 August 1837; March 22, 1837. A77, p.263).

Summary and Discussion

There were a number of ways in which the family was used as a means of governmental control. Bringing marriage under the auspices of the Church provided an avenue for surveillance as well as intrusion in all areas of married life. The change in structure from that of the extended family to that of the nuclear family had embedded within it lessons in individualism and private property. Practices of surveillance and supervision were used alongside technologies of the self.

The proposed changes to Aboriginal kinship structures, however, also entailed restructuring the social relations that were embedded within them, specifically the relations between husbands and wives as well as between parents and children. We now turn to this aspect of the attempted transformation of the family.

CHAPTER NINE

GOVERNING THROUGH RESTRUCTURING GENDER RELATIONS

> He pleaded for excuse the ungovernable spirit of his wife, which often led him for the sake of peace to sit down quietly under what he disapproved. *He was advised to assume the authority of master of his household* [emphasis mine] (Rev. Cockran's Journal: March 29, 1836, A77).

Introduction

An increasing number of studies have noted that missionaries everywhere [36] appeared to be obsessed with recasting gender relations. Yet few studies have recognized the far-reaching social implications of redefined gender identities and gender relationships. The reason for this is that 'gender' has been equated conceptually with 'what women did' or 'how women were affected'. Therefore, gender has been studied peripherally, as a category incidental to the main events. In this study, however, gender is seen as a core element of the societal transformation of Aboriginal people. The way in which gender is conceptualized here is consistent with the conceptualization of gender that has been developed recently by gender historians.[37] Here, gender is not synonymous with women, but rather refers to a complex set of relations and processes. This understanding of gender

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[36] This was replicated throughout North America, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

[37] For an overview of this conceptualization of gender and gender history, see Parr (1996).

is based on the notion that the identities of all individuals, both male and female, are made up of a number of different components, one of which is gender. It is based on the premise that manliness and womanliness are socially constructed and continually reconstructed in specific historical conjunctures (Parr, 1996:9). Embodied within gender identities are culturally-specific notions of masculinity and femininity, the means to acquiring them, and ways to relate to the opposite sex. Because gender identities acquire their meaning in relation to one another, it follows that gender relations affect all social relations in any given society.[38] Seen in this way, the missionaries' attempts to change the gender identities of Aboriginal people take on central importance. Their attack on traditional Aboriginal conceptions of gender affected both women and men in terms of their identities, their culturally specific roles, their relations to one another, and inevitably the overall configuration of social relations.

The Perceived Importance of Women's Nature/Gender Relations

Although the missionaries forged an attack on gender relations in general, much of this attack was directed at women. To date, the missionaries' apparent obsession with women has been theorized in different ways (all of which equate 'gender' with women and women's roles). For Thomas (1994) the treatment of women was a way of ordering indigenous societies; for Stoler (1997, 1989), gender was used as a category for maintaining

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The move towards the study of gender, rather than women, began from the poststructural premise that identities are made in relationships. Gender history assumes that masculinity and femininity do not exist in isolation from each other.

difference between colonizing and colonized societies; for Comaroff and Comaroff (1991), gender was as a necessary element in the civilizing mission based on 19th century values and capitalist criteria.

The position that I take in this research is that there is yet another reason for the missionaries' obsession with gender: the perceived need to maintain the proper relations of the 'godly' Protestant family. As stated earlier, the family was key to fulfilling the ultimate goal of Protestantism, which was for all men and women to make a total commitment to a godly life. This particular kind of family centred around a particular kind of woman and was based on specific gender relations. The ideal wife was unselfish, modest, and industrious. She was even tempered, particularly toward her husband. Even if she were matched with a 'crooked, perverse, prophane,' and 'wicked' husband, it was her duty to be 'mild, meeke, gentle, and obedient' (Haller, 1942:251, cited in Hamilton1978:72). Her greatest virtue, other than godliness, was her obedience to her husband.[39] In the ideal patriarchal family, the husband had complete authority over his wife. Even if she had a 'wicked' husband, it was the wife's duty to be obedient (Hamilton 1978:70, 101). Indeed, the data show that it was not so much the division of labour or gender roles per se that concerned the missionaries; rather it was women's nature and the nature of the relations between husband and wife.

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The Anglican missionaries' focus contrasts with that of the Jesuit missionaries, whose concern was primarily with the sexuality /'lewdness' of Aboriginal women. Although sexuality was important to the Anglicans, it was chastity within marriage that was their primary concern. In other words, the Anglican missionaries were concerned primarily with women's roles and behaviour insofar as it pertained to the maintenance of the family.

The ideal wife of Victorian Britain showed many of these characteristics. As products of this era, it is also likely that the missionaries would have been influenced by the prevailing notion of the ideal Victorian wife, which is aptly depicted here as Donald Mackenzie, governor of Red River, describes his new wife:

> I therefore possess a piece of very valuable live furniture upon my premises . . . She is strict and exemplary in her conduct, the acknowledged model of the Sex in this quarter, industrious, studious, devout, never missing a sacrament by any chance . . . She has gained upon the estimation of everyone and for my own part I esteem her also in consideration of her habit taciturnity for you may rely upon it that nothing can give greater comfort to a husband than the satisfaction of having a wife who is nearly mute (McKenzie, 25 June 1827, to Wilson Price Hunt, Hunt papers; cited in Brown, 1976, p.102).

Similarly, William Cockran quotes a Roman Catholic settler as observing that, "this must have been a good woman, her voice has never been heard" (Cockran to Secretaries Oct.25, 1836).

The women of Aboriginal societies appeared to have none of these qualities. They did not appear to be industrious. Certainly they did not appear to have the malleable qualities that were so valued in European wives. Indeed, it appeared to the missionaries as though it was they who were controlling the husbands. Cockran was taken aback by this and mentioned it often.

Consider the contrast provided by Cockran's description of an Aboriginal woman:

> Was visited by an Indian woman who had got her kettle stole [*sic*] . . . By her pitiful tale she so far enlisted my sympathies as to engage to recover it. Went to the encampment of the party. On arrival, found that only a part of the story was true. The woman who had taken the kettle had claimed it as her reward, the owner having seduced her husband, and she refused to deliver it up unless an attempt was made to take it by force, intending in the struggle to cut or bite off a part of her nose to deform her beauty that she

> might have no more cause for jealously on her account . . . The present possessor of the kettle had her knife ready and a strong oak willow at hand to avenge herself should any attempt be made to take it from her. I reasoned with her a considerable time to give it up, and exact any of her satisfaction that was customary for such an offence. To this she agreed, providing I would become responsible for the payment. As soon as the matter was arranged, and the kettle was delivered up, she grasped hold of the willow and plied it over her husband's back with all the force which rage imparted to a naturally strong arm, and with a thundering voice commanded the 'old dog' to leave her presence. I was astonished to see the coolness with which 30 persons witnessed the scene: no one interfered: no one would interpose. It struck me that this must be familiar to them (Cockran to the Secretaries, March 12, 1839. A78).

It is of interest to note that, in referring to this encounter, no mention was made by Cockran of the husband's infidelity. He was focussed on the wife's behaviour and wrote that he ,'Remonstrated with her on the impropriety of her conduct and the necessity of change'.

Although the exact nature of gender relations that existed in pre-contact societies has not been clearly established, it is clear that the gender relations embodied within Aboriginal families were a far cry from, and almost diametrically opposed to, those of the Victorian family.

Gender Relations in Traditional Aboriginal Societies

Despite differences of opinion on pre-contact gender relations, most researchers agree that women did not achieve the same prestige as men nor were the same means to do so open to them. Having said that, it is instructive to note that Bonvillain (1989) found that even in Plains societies, which have been characterized as the most male dominant,

patriarchy was tempered by an ethic of personal autonomy and by ideologies which included positive female images. Most salient to this study, however, is the fact that women had considerable power in the realm of the family (Peers 1994; Sioui 1992; Armstrong 1996). The power that women had has been remarked upon by a number of traders. For example, in1804 Peter Grant wrote that Ojibwa women were a force to be reckoned with. John McDonnell, a North West Company trader at Red River concluded in 1797 that "women, in general, have a great ascendency over their husbands" (cited in Peers 1994:35-36). Thus it appears as though women had their own forms of power, often of a more informal kind, under the surface of formal relations of power between the sexes. This is borne out in the missionaries' accounts.

Restructuring Aboriginal Women's 'Nature'

The key problem, as the missionaries saw it, was Aboriginal women's 'nature'. The fact that the missionaries assumed an essential nature for Aboriginal women is not surprising, given the rise in the 19th century of the notion of an inherent nature in all women. Women, it was held, were biologically weak and passive, which suited them to the private sphere. Aboriginal women's nature appeared to be the antithesis of that of Victorian women. What was of concern to the missionaries, however, was less that Aboriginal women's 'nature' deviated from that of European women as that it differed from that of the ideal wife. Where Victorian women's nature was ideally suited to a patriarchal family, Aboriginal women's nature was not conducive to the type of relations that would maintain

the godly family. Aboriginal women appeared to be strong, obstinate, stubborn, and immoral. They are never portrayed by the missionaries as obedient to their husbands. Rather, the missionaries paint a picture of a balance of power in which the husbands resorted to the use of physical force to try to bring their wives into line. Moreover, it does not appear as though they were entirely successful. Women, it appears, had their own sources of power, particularly within the family. There is little evidence of patriarchal relations. In keeping with the ethic of personal autonomy that was prevalent in most Aboriginal societies, the available evidence points to the relative autonomy of all members in the family.

As the missionaries saw it, there were a number of issues to be dealt with in the Aboriginal family. First, family life did not turn on the husband's uncontested will. Rather, women played an active role in family affairs. Second, wives did not appear to be fulfilling their domestic duties at all, let alone in a cheerful and supportive manner. Third, women did not appear to be industrious. They appeared to be 'wasting time' by wandering about, keeping ties with other women. Most important, it appeared as though the wives had the upper hand in the family. This was not the stuff of which the proper Christian marital relationship was made, or the type of family in which Christianity would be fostered. If the traditional Aboriginal family was to be transformed into the ideal family, considerable change was required in the conduct and gender identities of both women and men. It was necessary for both women and men to reconstruct their subjectivities to think and act in a more appropriate manner. Women would need to embody within their gender identities the characteristics of meekness and subservience in relation to their husbands. Husbands would

need to incorporate into their notion of masculinity their 'rightful' position as authoritative patriarchs.

It is of interest to note that whatever conceptions Aboriginal people held about differences in the natures of men and women, they did not subscribe to the dichotomous view of men's and women's nature that was evident in Europe--dichotomies such as weak/strong, assertive/meek, rational/irrational. Rather it appears as though the same attributes were valued in the nature of both men and women. The characteristics of women's nature that were deplored by the missionaries were assertiveness and autonomy. Yet it appears as though these were desirable attributes not only for men, but also for women and children.

The missionaries' descriptions of their encounters with Aboriginal men and women provide a glimpse of the types of marital relationships that existed at this time. They also provide a very clear picture of the characteristics of women's 'nature' that the missionaries would have *liked* to have seen. For example, in his description of two female students, there is no question as to the kinds of qualities that George Harbidge, the schoolmaster, considered to be most desirable for young girls. He contrasts the 'obedient and tractable' nature of one student to the 'forward and bold and impudent' characteristics of the other:

> Harriet West . . . is of such spirit and tender feelings and of good disposition; obedient and tractable . . . Sarah Budd . . . is inferior to Harriet West in many respects, both in habits and disposition; she is forward and rather bold and impudent (Mr. George Harbidge to Secretaries, July 1,/24, Red River. A77).

Proper moral conduct for both men and women entailed a sombre sense of duty, industriousness, sobriety and obedience to divine laws. Individuals were not to waste time,

since work contributed to the glorifying of God (Freund, 1968:207). As Weber notes, Protestantism required work on the self in order to ensure the required self-control. The most urgent task was the destruction of spontaneous, impulsive enjoyment, in order to bring order into the conduct of its adherents. In the following, Cockran describes a scene at the mill– which was intended to be a place of serious industry. Cockran interpreted their behaviour as irrational, and equated it with idleness and neglect of duties:

> Every time I visit the mill when grinding, there sits a free & easy group smoking & talking & waiting till the girls come for the flour, & then there is a goodly romp, the more civil part help with the flour, but there is always some longing for a little mischief. The bag is pushed off, & the unfortunate bearer falls headlong in the snow. This is Indian courtship.

Then, referring specifically to the young women, Cockran further stated that:

> ...they are extravagant and indolent: their waste of time and property is grievous to all who have imbibed Christian principles. I think by introducing industry among them it will gradually counteract all those other evils (Rev. Cockran to Rev. H. Venn, Indian Settlement, Dec. 12, 1851. A79 p.141).

The specific characteristics of women's 'nature' that were singled out most often were those of 'indolence' and 'obstinacy'. One solution was to place tight controls on women by occupying all of their time performing gender appropriate kinds of work: knitting, sewing, and spinning. This would not only promote rational behaviour, but it would also make them more virtuous.

> ...the Indian girls . . . should be employed, that they might hereafter do their duty . . . Stern formation amongst the females is absolutely necessary; they must be made to bear a part of the burden of life, for the increase of their virtue and the safety of their souls. They are dreadfully given to gossiping, whoring, and lieing [*sic*]. Industry alone can recover them from their evil ways and establish their minds in virtue (William Cockran, cited in Ferguson 1991:68).

As noted earlier, because it was assumed that a stable marriage required strict moral standards, one of the qualities of the 'ideal' wife was morality. In the following, John Smithurst' argument is framed using the traditional Aboriginal conception of illness as a punishment by the spirits for improper behaviour:

> I was under the necessity of going out to visit a sick woman who is considered to be in some danger . . . She has always been a loose bad character & gives her husband a great deal of trouble. I endeavoured to show her the sinfulness of her past course, & told her I hoped that this affliction had been sent to be the means of leading her to repentance & amendment of life . . . (Smithurst's Journal, April 20, 1847. A79, p.254).

Little mention is made of men's moral behaviour. Most references to changes that were required for men in their relations with women concerned their lack of power and authority in the family.

Restructuring Gender Relations in the Family

There is considerable evidence that women had their own sources of power in marital relationships. What this meant to the missionaries was that men did not have sufficient authority. Cockran in particular was taken aback by this and remarked on it often. For example,

> Once this spring when two of their characters were drunk and fought, and abused each other in the most brutal manner, after the excitement I went to them and preached Jesus as the only Saviour; they silenced me; I preached hell and damnation to them. One replied, "I am no more afraid of God than I am afraid of an old wife" (Rev. Cockran to the Secretary, Grand Rapids, Aug.1, 1840. A78, p.442).

While certainly there is an element of 'tongue in cheek' here, this remark affords some insight into the type of gender relations that the missionaries encountered. From the stories and descriptions of encounters that follow, it appears as though these were very lively relationships. Despite the missionaries' proscriptive bias, it is possible to get a sense of these relationships and their stark contrast to those of the ideal bourgeois family.

It is obvious that Cockran himself was having trouble with the women, who often resisted his demands. Moreover, the women appeared to think that they had the *right* to resist. There are many accounts of Aboriginal women's 'obstinacy' in the missionaries' journals. For Cockran, this was evidence of their inferior 'nature':

> Married a couple who gave me a great deal of trouble. After a long lecture the obstinate Indian woman condescended to promise to do her duty. The Indian women are decidedly inferior to the men and behind them are 100 years in principle and practice (Cockran's Journal, June 25, 1840. A78).

It appears as though Aboriginal women often used informal tactics to maintain their power in the family. Clearly, it was often they who were in control:

> At present the women conquer all by their obstinacy. If their husbands from necessity thwart them in their wishes, they will sit down and remain in a sulky mood for a month or six weeks. Their husbands may beat and kick them, but all will be ineffectual, they will sulk on, *till they have brought them to their own terms* [emphasis mine] (Cockran to Secretaries, Grand Rapids, July 24, 1834. A77, p.7).

Although incidents of physical abuse [40] are mentioned in Cockran's accounts, he also noted that this was not an effective means for subduing the women. Rather, it appears

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40 At present, there is no way of knowing whether wife-beating was practised in pre-contact times or if it arose as a result of contact with Europeans.

as though marital disagreements entailed a power struggle that the husbands frequently lost. From the missionaries' perspective, these were not the type of relations that exemplified the kind of family in which the Protestant ethic would be nurtured. There was no evidence of the prescribed fulfilment of duties of one spouse to another. Rather there often seemed to be a struggle for control, which was unheard of in the ideal patriarchal family.

> Married a couple. When exhorting the women to make good wives, and not take advantage of their husbands, now they had laid aside the practice of beating them for their faults (Cockran to the Secretaries, Jan 3. 1838. A78).

The issue of physical abuse was a conundrum for Cockran. On one hand, the right to beat one's wife, though still enshrined in the law, was forbidden by the missionaries (Hamilton, 1978:68). It was incumbent upon Protestant missionaries to counsel husbands to be kind and considerate to their wives. For example, in one instance, Cockran was asked to baptize a child, but found that the wife had been beaten by her husband. It is of interest to note, however, that even though Cockran admonished the husband, he still appeared to hold the wife responsible for the incident. It was the wife's behaviour that was singled out to alleviate the problem:

> Found her in bed, with her body bruised and battered, but with every particle of the natural obstinacy remaining, which brought this awful retribution upon her. I conversed with her a considerable time, advising her to strive to please her husband; she remained inexorable, and as surly as a grizzled bear. Reasoned with him on the impropriety of his conduct, providing to him that it was not only unchristian, but brutish to treat his wife so. He said "I have endured her obstinacy to the uttermost, I humoured, advised, entreated, and coaxed till she wearied me; at last I took the willow and used it with a vengeance . . . I reminded him of the vows he took upon him when baptized . . . and of the further promises made to his wife when he married her . . . He persisted in having acted as every other man would have acted under the same circumstances (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 19/32 to Aug. 7/33, Feb.6, 1833. A77).

It is clear where Cockran's sympathies lay. The internal conflict between his prescribed behaviour as a missionary and his own feelings are implicit in a number of accounts. He, too, had difficulty controlling Aboriginal women. This is evidenced by numerous accounts of dealings with 'obstinate', noncompliant women. Although one of the prescribed duties that a husband was obliged to fulfill was to not beat his wife, it appears as though Cockran often regretted having to enforce this. Because of the difficulty in controlling Aboriginal women, Cockran believed that physical abuse was often justified:

> It is a great drawback to a poor fellow in a new country when his hoke-fellow does not carry her end of the burden. This subjects me to the most serious inconvenience at the Indian Settlement. The men strive to do their part, but as Christianity does not allow us to use the rod to the back of the obstinate squaw, they have time to indulge all their spleen. They gossip, they scold, they trifle, and leave the burdens of life to gall the shoulders of their husbands (Cockran's Journal, 1833-34; 26 December, 1834. A77, p.6).

Similarly, in the following, Cockran sympathised with the husband. After his perfunctory discourse on 'duties', he could not help but remark on the problems with controlling Aboriginal women:

> I generally enter into a long discourse with the parties, on the duties they have to perform to each other. While exhorting them this morning to follow the word of God, and be kind to each other, and cleave together till death . . *The women here are extremely obstinate and the husband has frequently to use coercion before she will either cook for him or mend his shoes* [emphasis mine] (Cockran's Journal, Jan.2, 1838. A78).

Aboriginal women were an enigma for Cockran. He could not condone the use of physical violence yet he felt that they were out of control:

> This nearly unfits her for the privileges of Christianity, when she finds her husband has deprived himself of the liberty of beating her, by embracing Christianity, she rivets the chains of slavery about his neck (Cockran to the Secretaries, Aug. 3, 1838 A78. p.304).

The authority that wives had in family decisions was shocking to Cockran. One way that he tried to reduce their authority was to insist on 'proper' marital relations prior to performing a conversion. So important were patriarchal marital relations that Cockran would not convert one couple in which the husband did not appear to have sufficient authority:

> Most of the day spent in conversation with those who intend to partake of the sacrament for the first time . . . Nothing was alleged, *except against a woman who had assumed too much authority over her husband* [emphasis mine] (Rev. Cockran's Journal March 29, 1836. A77).

There is evidence that husbands deferred to their wives' opinions on important matters. For example, in the following, Cockran wrote that he had just baptized the child of a conjuror. This in itself was no small feat, as the conjurors were extremely resistant to conversion. What makes this account particularly relevant is that it was to please his wife that the conjuror agreed to the baptism:

> The child whom I baptized today was an infant of one who formerly stood high as a doctor & a conjurer. However, he has laid aside all his former practices, & now follows the word of God. Today he related a circumstance connected with the baptism of his first child, which was rendered instrumental in fixing his mind on the Christian religion. Last summer one of his boys fell sick, & his life was despaired of. One of his wives was in the

> habit of attending the meeting, & had lost her confidence in the magical arts of the Indians. It was her boy who was sick; she was anxious to have him baptized; & the father, *not willing to thwart her views*, [emphasis mine] permitted it (Rev. Cockran's Journal Feb.10, 1836. A77).

The boy was eventually cured. Subsequently, the conjuror divorced one of his wives, formally married the other, and converted.

Numerous accounts attest to women's resistance to conversion. For the missionaries, this was a problem in light of their influence. Cockran locked horns with women on a number of occasions and in a number of ways. In one account of a 'sick bed' conversion, Cockran related the problems that he had in dealing with an irate wife and her mother, both of whom opposed a conversion:

> Visited an Indian who was dangerously ill at the Indian settlement. He has for eighteen months been an orderly and gradually improving character. He has got his cottage and his farm, and has been a regular attendant at our weekly meetings, thus his approach to civilization and Christianity is obvious. Today he felt strongly inclined to cast off the last shackles of heathenism and openly avow his faith in Christ. *But his wife and mother so furiously oppose the renouncing the customs of his ancestors, and I had too little time at hand to silence them, it was obliged to be deferred to a later period* [emphasis mine] (Cockran's Journal, 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 August 1835; Nov. 17, 1834. A77).

In this particular instance, Cockran was forced to withdraw. Later, however, he returned to the house and asked the man if he still wished to be baptized:

> On the return of the answer in the affirmative, his wife and mother assailed us with such a volley of abuse as made the dying man tremble. I reasoned with them long but could not prevail upon them to desist. I was (?) necessity of having recourse to their own weapons, before they would allow me to proceed with the baptismal service. Having cleared the house of those clamoring women, by preaching everlasting perdition to them, I then baptized the father and his two children (Cockran's Journal: 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 August 1835; Nov. 19, 1834. A77).

Clearly a way had to be found for the husbands to assume their 'rightful' authority in the family. This would mean that authority within the family was no longer open to contest. The challenge, for the missionaries, was to find a way to restructure the traditional authority structure of the family when physical coercion was not an option, and the women had little to gain by giving up their authority.

The missionaries' task was to devise a way for both the husband and the wife to assume a new gender identity in which the husband was seen as the rightful authority and the wife was, by virtue of the natural order of things, submissive.

This understanding of gender relations was very different from the understanding that Aboriginal people had of themselves and their relationships with their spouses. Aboriginal men did not derive their sense of masculinity from patriarchal relations, particularly in the family. Rather status and sense of accomplishment were derived from other sources. Most European observers found that Ojibwa male pride of identity stemmed directly from hunting and their ability to provide for the community. Indeed, Peter Grant, a fur trader for the North West Company in the late eighteenth century, noted that the Ojibwas considered Whites inferior to themselves on this basis.[41] Their hunting skills were source of personal pride. A great hunter was a great person. As John West noted,

> To be a *man* or what is synonymous with them, to be a great and distinguished character, is to be expert in surprising, torturing, and scalping an enemy; to be capable of enduring severe privations; to make a good hunter, and traverse the woods with geographical accuracy . . . These are exploits which, in their estimation form the hero (*Substance of a Journal* p.151).

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[41] For a broader account of masculinity and Aboriginal people, see Vibert (1996).

For men to assume the position of patriarch in the family, it was also necessary for men to change their conception of what constituted masculinity. The cultural and personal definition of masculinity would no longer be derived from hunting or the ability to provide for the community, but rather from authority within the family. This required a readjustment in thinking for both women and men:

> Parents and teachers concur in recommending the duty of being obedient to their husbands, but the lesson is never effectively inculcated till it is learned by the husbands too (Cockran's Journal, Aug.10/38 to July 10/39; Feb. 22, 1838. A78).

Mechanisms of Government

From the missionaries' accounts, it appears as though most of the governmental mechanisms were aimed at women. Much like the strategies that were used for persuading individuals to change the structure of the family, these tactics often involved threats to their souls in the afterlife. For women, disobedience toward their husbands was portrayed as sinful behaviour, transforming the subject into a sinner:

> Walked down to the Settlement to call upon a woman and expostulate with her, on the unruly conduct towards her husband, after a long discourse on the punishment that bad wives would have to endure in the other world (Rev Cockran's Journal from Aug.1839 to Aug. 1940. July 6, 1840, A78, p.476).

Another governmental tactic was to use children as a pawn. Indeed, 'unruly' women who had children faced the fear of punishment of their own souls in the afterworld, as well as punishment by the missionaries' refusal to baptize their children. In the following,

Cockran not only threatened personal damnation, but has also refused to baptize the child of a woman if she did not conform to his standard of behaviour:

> Walked down the Settlement to baptize an infant. Gave the mother a severe lecture for her indolence and disobedience to her husband. For twelve months I have been perpetually teazed [*sic*] with the conduct of this woman, sometimes running away from her husband at other times refusing to do any thing for him. Preached hell and damnation to her till she promised to reform (Rev. Wm. Cockran's Journal, Aug. 40 - Aug. 41; May 28, 1841. A78 p.573).

Or similarly,

> ...baptized an infant: the mother a vile being, has annoyed me with her immoral conduct for two years past, sat down for half an hour, and endeavoured to show her the great anger of God against such sinners as she was . . . ; by this time her tears began to flow copiously, and she now and then interrupted me with professions of amendment . . . proceeded to baptize the child (Rev. Wm. Cockran's Journal, Aug. 1840 to Aug. 1841, July 11, 1841. A78, p.576).

The intense love that parents showed for their children was a powerful vehicle for presenting particular 'choices'. As previously stated, parents often wanted their children to be baptized as protection against evil spirits or disease. The missionaries seized the opportunity of holding out the baptism of children as an incentive to making the 'correct' choice:

> On my way from Middle Church, was sent for to baptize an infant newly born, but rather sickly, the mother of which was formerly a very loose woman . . . gave her to understand, that unless she was obedient to him [her new husband], I would nevermore interpose on her behalf. She made the most solemn promise . . . (Cockran's Journal,1833-1834; Mar. 2, 1834, A77).

Women were thus made responsible for their own behaviour. By the above means, the missionaries attempted to lock women into a specific way of thinking and acting.

Aboriginal Women's Resistance

Although it is not possible to determine how many women converted or resisted conversion from the available data, there are many accounts of women's explicit and implicit resistance to the missionaries. In one account, Cockran told of an incident in which he suspected that the wife poisoned her husband. The husband, who planned to convert, had also insisted that his daughter be married under the auspices of the Church:

> "My daughter" he said, "has the offer of a husband , but I shall not let him have her unless he marries her according to our religion. I intend to embrace your religion, so I should not like to give my daughter to any one that would be against it. After she is married I shall ask my wife to marry me, and go to church to learn to serve the Master of Life in His own way." It being late and his wife present, whom I perceived was averse to the course her husband was taking, I requested him to send the young couple to me that I might hear their opinions, and as for him and his wife, they could settle the matter between themselves. We parted: he went home to his house, and drank some soup which was prepared for him; was seized with nausea and vomiting, which continued till death--I strongly suspect that his wife has poisoned him, as she has been dissatisfied with him ever since he began to change his life (Cockran's Journal, Aug.10/38 to July 10/39. Aug. 24, 1838; A78, p.376).

It was important for the missionaries to have the women on side for a number of reasons, one of which was their influence on men:

> If I get the females broke off from their erratic habits, and accustomed to sober industry, *they will greatly assist in reforming the male part of the Community* (Cockran to the Secretaries, Grand Rapids, July 24, 1834. A77).

Similarly, Rev. Cowley states that,

> While walking out I was vastly pleased to see such a number of women and children as were about their tents--Oh that I could obtain all these to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the lord, what may they not do for their country (Rev. Cowley's Journal, May 20, 1842. A78, p.106).

Rev. Cowley, however, learned to his dismay that women were not very receptive to sermons that derided women:

> I rehearsed to them the account of the creation man's first estate, the fall its consequences, and God's gracious interference. When describing the fall and how it was brought about all the females left the room, may God bring it home to their heads (Rev. Cowley's Journal Aug.1, 182 to Aug.1, 1843; Sept 25, 1842. A78 p.212).

Summary

Women's nature and the nature of gender relations in general were of particular concern to the missionaries. The relationship between Aboriginal spouses had none of the preconceived elements of a proper marital relationship. By the missionaries' standards, relations between spouses were not sombre, moral, industrious, or patriarchal. Because too much power was in the hands of the women, marital relations were open to contest and rowdy behaviour between the spouses. In Aboriginal families, it appeared as though it was difficult for the men to control their wives. The challenge for the missionaries was to devise ways to transform Aboriginal women into submissive and obedient wives. Certainly there was no advantage to the wives to give up their sources of power. Therefore, a transformation of gender relations would have to be brought about by other means. For the

required gender relations to be put in place, it would be necessary to for both men and women to perform work on themselves so that they would both think and act along more patriarchal lines. Then, attempts to control women through physical strength would no longer be necessary. Husbands would assume their 'rightful' place as head of the household. Women would control themselves in the appropriate submissive fashion.

The choices and incentives that were held out to Aboriginal people required not only changes in outward behaviour, but also considerable work of the self on the self. They required that traditionally acceptable behaviours be seen as sinful. They also required the assumption of new gender identities such that men would assume the identity of the patriarch and women would assume the identity of the submissive wife.

CHAPTER TEN

GOVERNING THROUGH THE RE-SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

> . . . If little hope could be cherished of the adult Indian in his wandering and unsettled habits of life, it appeared to me that a *wide and most extensive field*, presented itself for cultivation in the instruction of the Aboriginal children (John West, *Substance of a Journal* p. 13).

The Perceived Importance of Children

As it became increasingly obvious that little success was to be had among the adult population, children came to be seen as the primary hope for the success of the mission. The way that children would be taught the values of civilization and Christianity, the missionaries believed, was through formal education.[42] The missionaries' role in the formal education of Aboriginal children has been well documented.[43] The way that the missionaries' encounter with children is conceived here, however, differs in that the focus is

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[42] The concept of educating indigenous children was not 'invented' by the missionaries but rather was generally promoted by the C.M.S. In keeping with the Anglican's belief in literacy, it was generally believed by the C.M.S. that evangelism and civilization would be best attained by means of formal education. Therefore, every new mission was to have its own school house, second only in importance to the church.

[43] See, for example, Miller, 1996; Stevenson,1988; Sealey, 1980.

not so much on the formal curriculum as it is on exploring the missionaries' form of education a mechanism for changing Aboriginal children's subjectivities.

John West's original plan was simple. The children would receive instruction in both the Gospel and in agriculture. This would transform the character of the wider population by the next generation. This seemingly straightforward plan was not as easy to implement as it appeared, however. Numerous accounts by the missionaries attest to the fact that most adults were reluctant to give over their children to the missionaries. The missionaries responded to this by offering food and clothing as incentives. They also pointed out the ways in which Aboriginals could benefit from a European education, one of which was to prevent the traders from cheating them:

> I reminded him of the many complaints he had made to me concerning the Whites circumventing the Indians; and as he knew it was owing to their knowledge in the art of computation that they gained so many advantages over them.. I thought he ought to endeavour to make his children familiar with the art as to render it impossible for the Whites to defraud him (Cockran's Journal Feb.11,1832; A77. p.468).

In one instance, when Peguis asked Cockran for an accountant, Cockran pointed out that Aboriginal children could be taught to keep accounts:

> If you were to get a man he might be a rogue and cheat you, as you have been often cheated before. Your best plan is to get your children educated; then they will know how to make a bargain, and keep accounts (Rev. Cockran's Journal: Feb. 13, 1832. A77, p.371).

Despite these tactics of persuasion, however, most parents were reluctant:

> We have not found, among the people generally, that avidity to avail themselves of the means of instruction for their children which we could have wished (Report of the state of Religion, Morality and Education at the Red River Settlement and Grand Rapids, 1835, by the Revs. Jones and Cockran. A77).

Once they were sent, they were often removed by their parents. The data indicate that it was primarily the mothers who wanted to have the children back.

> The Saulteaux woman took her two boys away clandestinely, saying, as I was afterwards informed, that "they would be all the same as dead to her, if what she had heard was true" and though I had not an opportunity of seeing her afterwards, she had the honesty to return the children's clothes which I had given to them (John West, p.143).

> The boy was comfortably clothed, and he appeared to be well satisfied with the rest at the school, and had begun to learn the English alphabet, when, to my surprise, I found the mother, with the Indian, in my room, in about a week after they had left the Settlement with Pigewis, saying that they had parted from him in consequence of their not being able to obtain any provision; and that "they thought it long" since they had seen the boy. He was permitted to go from the school-house to their tent, which they had pitched near me in the woods, almost daily without restraint, till at length he refused to return. I repeated my request for him without effect (John West, *Substance of a Journal*, p.118).

Equally problematic, however, was the unexpected resistance and/or ambivalence that they met from such children as they were able to secure:

> In the afternoon I went to School, and attended to the Boys. I was very anxious to impress their minds with the love of Christ, but I laboured in vain. They had no heart for this (Cockran to Secretaries, Nov. 12, 1826. A77).

The missionaries' model for educating children was based on corporal punishment, order, regularity, and discipline. These were foreign to the Aboriginal children, which made

them exceedingly difficult to control. From the missionaries' perspective, these school children were not like their European counterparts who were (ideally) disciplined, orderly, and respectful of authority. Aboriginal children had no internal incentive to compete with one another. They had no sense of order and regimentation–wandering in and out of the classroom whenever they pleased. They would not submit to the authority of the schoolmasters. The missionaries put the blame for this on the 'characteristics' of Aboriginal children's 'natures'.

The problem, which was noted by West, Cockran, and Smithurst, appeared to be that children were not being socialized properly. As Cockran stated,

> Indian customs and habits are all at variance with the injunction 'bring up a child in the way he should go'. In the midst of these we find our patience daily exercised, and our ardour cooled and made willing to hail with delight any slight improvement (Cockran's Journal March 16, 1838. A78).

It was inevitable that Aboriginal children would have experienced considerable shock in a classroom setting, however. In order to better understand why this was so, it is necessary to briefly describe the way in which Aboriginal children were socialized and educated in their traditional families.

Traditional Aboriginal Socialization

The various educational practices of all North American Aboriginal populations shared a common approach.[44] Education did not take place in a formal setting in specific blocks of time but rather occurred within the extended family on a continual basis. Children

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[44] See, for example, Friesen1987; Ross 1992, 1996; Sealey 1980, Miller 1996.

were taught by means of games, imitation, stories, and later by participation in adult activities. What appeared to be play and recreation was often a means of learning particular skills. The games that the children played were modelled after the life, customs, and values of the community. Stories told by elders, for whom children were taught to have the utmost respect, were an integral part of the educational process. Myths and stories of ancestors, both human and nonhuman, taught moral behaviour. These were passed on from generation to generation as an oral history.

The ways in which children were socialized encouraged them to be intimately connected to both the physical and metaphysical universe. The most desirable characteristics in children were those which aided in the survival of the group, such as bravery and courage, responsibility for one's actions, and a sense of community.

The Aboriginal approach to education reflected the values of the community. Coercive discipline, corporal punishment and hierarchical relations were all at odds with Aboriginal values of non-coerciveness, non-interference, and egalitarian relations (Miller1996). The ethic of respect for personal autonomy and avoiding imposing one's will on another was extended to young children. Rather than using corporal punishment, children were shamed into the proper behaviour. It was considered important not to break a child's spirit in the process. This prompted John West to note that,

> At one moment he satisfies the cravings of nature from the breast of his mother, and instantly rewards the boon with a violent blow perhaps on the very breast on which he has been hanging. Nor does the mother dare resent the injury by an appeal to the father. He would at once say that punishment would daunt the spirit of the boy. Hence the Indian never suffers his child to be corrected (*Substance of a Journal*, p. 154).

The following description of 'Nathaway', or Cree families was provided by David Thompson, a well-known trader of the Northwest Company in his 'Narratives':

> The children are brought up with great care and tenderness. They are very seldom corrected, the constant company and admonition of the people is their only education whom they soon learn to imitate on gravity as far as youth will permit; they very early and readily betake themselves to fishing and hunting, from both men and women impressing on their minds, that truly miserable is he, who is dependent on another for his subsistence (cited in Glover 1962:82).

> The Aboriginals of all these countries are fond of their children. They have faults like other children but are not corrected by being beaten. Contempt and ridicule are the correctives employed. They shame them, without breaking their spirit [45] (cited in Glover, 1962:259).

Children were taught the values of autonomy, self-reliance and belief in personal competence, alongside those of cooperation and interdependence. They learned to see themselves as parts of a complex of interdependencies. Contrary to the missionaries' perception, they did not grow up without restraint, but rather were given the freedom to make choices that were conditioned in various ways.

The identities that this type of education fostered were at odds with those desired by the missionaries. First, the values that had been instilled in them ran contrary to the required 'selves' of Christianity, which had qualities of obedience, order, deference,

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[45] It is difficult to determine, from these data, whether the same principles concerning physical punishment applied to female children.

discipline, and individualism. In particular, the acceptance of authority was essential. As Foucault observed,

> . . . to accept authoritarian decisions in matters of truth, not only to believe certain things but to show that one believes, and to accept institutional authority are all characteristic of Christianity (1982:40).

Secondly, because the children had been taught to be personally autonomous, the missionaries could not control them sufficiently to instruct them. The data show that the children were disobedient and averse to the type of restraint and order that was expected in a European educational setting.

The problem, as the missionaries saw it, lay in the apparent lack of proper discipline on the part of the parents. Not understanding the principles and philosophies behind Aboriginal socialization, it appeared as though the children were growing up in a 'natural' state, as 'children of rude nature,' devoid of any form of socialization at all, 'following the bent of their own inclinations without ever being thwarted in their desire or corrected for their faults' (John West, 5 Aug. 1820; *The British North West American Indians with Free Thoughts on the Red River Settlement* p.315). The unconditional love that Aboriginal parents had for their children was seen by the missionaries as problematic, and connoting of a more primitive form of child-rearing:

> The children run about almost naked, and were treated by their parents with all the instinctive fondness of animals (John West, *Substance of a Journal* p.24).

Similarly, Cockran commented that,

> The Indian and Half-breed Mothers are passionately fond of their Children; this shields their eyes against all their feelings and makes them foster all the vices of their children (5 Aug. 1829. A77, p:315).

The fact that restraint was provided in ways other than physical coercion was not perceived of by the missionaries as a viable form of discipline. Rather, it appeared as though,

> They know of no restraint, and as they grow up into life, they are left at full liberty to be absolute masters of their own actions (John West, *Substance of a Journal*, p.24).

It soon became apparent that in order to educate the children into the values of Christianity and civilization, it would be necessary to first dismantle the values that had been carefully fostered in Aboriginal children and to sever all of the ties that promoted such 'undesirable' characteristics. In other words, before the children could be instructed, it was necessary to make them governable. If these children were going to form the foundation of a new 'civilized' Christian society, it would take more than instruction in the Gospel and in agriculture. It would be necessary to first make changes to their ways of understanding both themselves, and their position in relation to the missionaries. This required, first, that their sense of personal autonomy be changed to one of obedience. In order for this to occur in the face of the resistance that they encountered from both the parents and children, the missionaries eventually mounted a campaign to reduce the influence of their extended families.

Problems with the 'Natures' of Aboriginal Children

The ways in which Aboriginal children understood themselves and their relations to others were problematic. Because the children had never known the kinds of restrictions that were characteristic of the missionaries' schools, confinement in classrooms was difficult for them. David Jones attributed this to their 'natural' temperament:

> Their apathy is astonishing . . . their Indian habits *and dispositions* [emphasis mine] pervade all their actions; and I must add, with pain, that their present situation is not a privilege but a confinement: they look with envy at the free and ideal conditions of their wretched and erratic countrymen (David Jones to the Secretaries, 31 January, 1827, Red River. A77, p.231).

The missionaries were shocked by the amount of autonomy and responsibility that the children were given by their parents, particularly when their freedom of choice extended to school attendance:

> We do not find that the generality of Children in any county choose school rather than play, and as they are left principally to the freedom of their own wills in Red River to choose school or play, you need not wonder that the day schools are sometimes almost empty (Aug./28: Cockran, Red River, General survey of conditions at the Red River Colony. A78).

As late as 1862, Cockran wrote that,

> They permit their children to make their own choice, whether they will attend school or play. Now suppose all the English children throughout The Kingdom knew when they first awoke in the morning that it depended up their own option whether they attended school, or occupied their time in play (La Prairie, Sept.1, 1862).

It appears as though children were given the freedom to decide, on their own, whether or not to convert to Christianity:

> Very good replied the old Chief . . . My children will be taught to read and write but not be baptized, when they have learned to read and understand this new religion they will know how to act for themselves (Rev. Cockran to the secretaries, Grand Rapids, January 3, 1843. A78, p.128).

One of the greatest difficulties that schoolmaster George Harbidge faced was his inability to discipline the children. From his perspective, these 'reprehensible inclinations' were a direct result of child-rearing practices 'where no restraint is laid either upon habits or appetites'. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that if the parents detected what they believed to be inappropriate behaviour on the part of the missionaries, they removed their children from the school. This was a serious problem in light of the missionaries' difficulty in recruiting children.

The strict discipline that was the hallmark of European schools was foreign to Aboriginal children. Interestingly, while the missionaries could not condone physical coercion for women, it was expected in the discipline of children. Aboriginal children, on the other hand, had no experience with physical punishment. This was yet another challenge for the missionaries who were faced with the problem of somehow making the children governable. It is obvious in the following passages that the missionaries were forced to change their tactics. Their original plan for governing children through regimented

disciplinary methods was actually hindering their progress. Certainly they did not have the balance of power here. Rather, it appears as though it was they who were forced to 'submit' to the children:

> If we had 34 of the wildest of the feathered tribe out of the Forest in a large room we could not find it more difficult to move among them. They are entirely averse to everything like restraint, and will not submit to the most of . . . [illegible] school discipline. They therefore read and play according to their own measure. To assume the tone of authority and enforce order by either correction or remonstrance would be the same as taking a whip and driving them away (Wm. Cockran to the Secretary, Grand Rapids, Dec. 16, 1833. A77. p.577).

> They are exceedingly rude, but the Master is obliged to submit to this inconvenience. The Indian children are all allowed to do as they please with their parents. Were the Master to enforce proper school discipline, the boys would immediately fly from him (Cockran's Journal, 14 Aug. 1834 to 2 August 1835 Dec.17, 1834. A77 p.93).

Five years later, Cockran was still having trouble, as he lamented that the children were 'of a roving disposition, have an aversion to close application, either in study or work', and were 'impatient of restraint' (Cockran's Journal March 16, 1838. A78).

All of the early accounts indicate that the missionaries used less coercive measures than in later periods. Cockran wrote that the children could not endure the disciplinary

measures of a European style of education. Clearly, the children were not accustomed to them:

> It is certain from the erratic habits of the people, and the delicacy of their constitution, they cannot endure the same confinement, and close application as Europeans. They are frequently seized with a peculiar malady which they call 'thinking long'. When under this if you cannot amuse them, and make them take exercise, they soon sicken and die. At the Indian Settlement our discipline is very loose, we allow the children to hunt or fish whenever they are disposed: and I think we have greatly diminished the fatal cases by it (Cockran's Journal, 26 Nov.1837. A78).

Accounts of frustration with the children are mentioned often in the missionaries' journals. As Cockran lamented,

> To attend to some of our classes and instruct them is the most tedious and discouraging work that a man or woman can undertake (11 Aug./28: Cockran, Red River, General Survey of Conditions at the Red River Colony).

Still, it appears as though Cockran, at least, did become attached to the children. Certainly he put more stock in them than he did in the adults:

> Rode to the Indian settlement. The plump, smiling children which I meet in school, in church and on the farm, have been the principal stimulus of my perseverance . . . With the old, intemperate, licentious, and selfish Indian you cannot associate any such pleasing reflections (Cockran's Journal, Aug.10/38 to July 10/39, Jan 23, 1839. A78).

In addition to problems with discipline and keeping children in the schools, the missionaries had yet another problem with the children's 'nature'. They could not be induced to compete with one another–a primary motivator in European education.

Competition, however, was foreign to Aboriginal children, who had been socialized in ways that fostered cooperation and a sense of community:

> There is scarcely a possibility of raising a spirit of emulation amongst them to make one strive to excel the other in reading well or answering questions . . . (Wm. Cockran, 5 Aug. 1829. A77).

Therefore, the missionaries were forced to abandon their original plan and to devise alternate methods for governing Aboriginal children.

Mechanisms for Changing Aboriginal Children's Subjectivities

It soon became evident to the missionaries that Aboriginal children were not governable in their present state. If the missionaries were to realize their long term goals of civilizing and Christianizing Aboriginal people by means of instructing the children, they would have to make considerable changes to the children's 'nature'. It would be necessary to break down their autonomy, self-confidence, interdependence, and sense of community remould them into individuals who would conduct themselves in ways that were obedient, individualistic, and competitive. This would also involve not the removal of the influence of their extended families, but also an attempt to break down the pride in their traditional culture and their faith in the myths and beliefs that had been instilled in them from birth.

Intrusion into the family

The optimal situation would be for Aboriginal children to be raised by Christianized Aboriginal parents-- to learn the proper values and morality from earliest infancy. Even in

this situation, however, (as was exemplified in the Upper Settlement where many of the families had converted), intervention was required. Therefore, it was decided that John Smithurst would reside at the Indian settlement. Smithurst would, from this close distance, maintain surveillance over the families and provide advice for raising children:

> M. Smithurst, by residing upon the spot, will be able to throw out hints to the parents concerning the management of their families; such as, teaching them to be obedient, sober, honest, industrious, economical, and cleanly (Cockran to the Secretaries, Grand Rapids, August 2, 1839. A78).

It appeared to the missionaries that the perceived lack of discipline was the element of child-rearing that most needed to be addressed:

> My object was to show parents the duty of restraining their children, and keeping them in due subjection by chastising them when they do wrong. This the Indian in his natural state never does. His children from the moment of their birth till they arrive at manhood do exactly as they please (Rev. J. Smithurst Journal from July 1 to 31 1840; July 5, 1840. Grand Rapids p.514).

With proper training and discipline, however, the missionaries believed that children would overcome the 'innate' characteristics of their 'Aboriginal natures'. It would be best for children to learn the proper values from infancy. As Cockran stated,

> While his *natural habits of cruelty, indolence, wastefulness*, [emphasis mine] and licentiousness cling to him, he must continue to be a poor, miserable, dependent wretch. A child trained from infancy by fixed standards or morals, and by customs and manners favourable to the growth of piety and virtue, and awed by public opinion and influence to conform internally to these, he scarcely knows what a polluted nature is capable of doing (Cockran to the Secretaries, Grand Rapids, Aug. 2. 1839. A78, p.362).

Governing through separation

A second and more powerful tactic was to isolate the children from their parents in order to break generational continuity and to remove the 'adverse' influence of parents on their children. This was done by means of boarding schools, which were designed to sever the ties with their families for longer periods of time. In these 'total institutions[46]', traditional culturally-constructed Aboriginal identities could be broken down and rebuilt.

At first, John West was sensitive to the bonds between parents and children and permitted the parents to visit children who were in school 'with little or no restraint' (*Substance of a Journal*, p.81). After a year of constant visits, however, he decided that the influence of parents was impeding the children's 'progress'. [47] Often the children ran away from the school and returned to their parents. As West noted,

> The last two Indian Salteaux boys have given us a little trouble in disciplining them at the school, from the mother living constantly about the settlement, and occasionally visiting them, when they have run off with their sisters to the wigwam, sometimes they return to the school house at their own accord but frequently we are obliged to fetch them.

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The term 'total institution' was coined by Goffman to refer to a place 'of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life' (Goffman, Erving, *Asylums* (New York: Doubleday, 1961).

47

The residential school program that John West implemented was the cornerstone of later Indian educational programs in Western Canada.

The solution, for West, was to completely remove the children from their parents. Once the children were away from the influence of the parents, and too far removed to run home, the missionaries were able to tighten their control:

> These circumstances with others that had occurred, convinced me that it is far better to obtain the children from a distance, as those who are in the school and at a distance from their parents soon become reconciled to the restraint, and happy upon the Establishment (John West: *The British North West American Indians with Free Thoughts on the Red River Settlement.* April 20, 1823, p.28).

The Formal School Curriculum

In their formal curriculum, the children were taught the Gospel as well as the skills which would benefit them in a 'civilized society', with emphasis on agriculture for boys and domestic skills for girls. Indirectly, however, the children were also taught the values that would promote a governable subjectivity.

One governmental mechanism that the missionaries relied on was agriculture. Where the adults found the missionaries' form of agriculture to be demeaning--suitable for Europeans, but not for them–the children could be taught otherwise:

> ...a child brought up in the love of cultivating a garden will be naturally led to the culture of the field as a means of subsistence: and educated in the principles of Christianity . . . It is through these means of instruction that a change will be gradually effected in the character of the North American Indian, who in his present savage state thinks it beneath the dignity of his independence to till the ground (John West, *Substance of a Journal*, June 2, 1823, p.151).

Agriculture was not only a lesson in 'industry' and the work ethic, it was also a lesson in European gender roles, the value of private property, western conceptions of time,

and individualism. Agriculture would transform children into 'rational' beings, and was linked to salvation itself.

> . . . their salvation depends humanly speaking, upon their taste for agriculture. If they become agriculturists they will be rational beings, whom we can reason with; who by proper attention, will in the end be brought to steady habits, and will raise up respectable families (Rev. W. Cockran to the Secretaries Grand Rapids, July 25, 1833. A77).

Agriculture would make children more obedient and tractable:

> Should the children remain as disobedient and unwilling to help their parents as they are at present the individual who instructs them should take them into the fields of their relatives and parents and endeavour to keep them at work (Cockran's Journal Feb. 13, 1832. A77 p.371)

The mission farm had embodied within it the principles of material individualism: the privatization of property; and the accumulation of surplus. It was also meant to be a lesson in industriousness. So important was agriculture to the missionaries that when Henry Venn suggested that Smithurst be relieved of his labour on the farm, Smithurst refused, arguing that it was by means of working on the farm that the children would learn proper work habits:

> This of course cannot be accomplished for various reasons. In the first place, the farm is a School of Agriculture in which the young people of the mission are drilled into habits of industry, & taught to provide for themselves. The farm is of more importance as an instrument of civilization than the school itself is (Aug. 6, 1850, Indian Settlement. A79).

The formal school curriculum had embedded within it moral lessons concerning proper gender roles. Girls were directed away from autonomy and toward the responsibilities of the Christian wife with emphasis on domesticity, submissiveness and the patriarchal nuclear family (Devens 1992:110). The influential figure of their mothers was

replaced by European women, the first being Mrs. Cockran (a former scullery maid). The goal in educating young women was to teach them to 'make a family comfortable' through formal instruction in the intertwined values of 'religion, morality and industry':

> The Day School, which Mrs. Cockran is about to commence is to be conducted in such a manner as to promote religion, morality and industry . . . the females, being Aboriginals and half-breeds are consequently entirely ignorant of the economy and industry necessary to make a family comfortable in civilized life. As they are naturally so, indolent, thoughtless, and licentious, that, it requires a great deal, both of instruction and grace, to make them honest and virtuous Christians (Cockran to Rev. Woodroofe, Red River, Aug. 3, 1831. A77 p.435).

It was important that the boys and girls be taught the gender appropriate forms of industry. The boys were assigned individual garden plots to plant, while girls were taught to spin, knit, sew, milk, and make butter.

> Now we think of assembling daily the young women and girls who have a desire for improvement, and teaching them to read, write, knit, sew, and spin. This will in the first place keep them out of the way of evil. They will also acquire sober, industrious, and economical habits, which customs will be forgotten by the young and laid aside by the old. This will also prevent them returning again to the wild (Rev. Cockran to Rev. Woodroofe, Red River, Aug. 3, 1831. A77 p.435).

For the missionaries, the reconstruction of children's subjectivities required that all elements of their traditional culture be repudiated and erased. The following was written by

Henry Budd, who was one of the first Aboriginal children in the missionaries' school. It provides an idea of the kinds of lessons that the children were taught concerning their Aboriginal selves:

> Teach us Lord to know thy word
> And better learn thy will;
> Our minds, with sin and folly stor'd,
> Do thee with wisdom fill,
>
> Our hearts to every evil prone,
> I mercy Lord Subdue;
> Each foe to thee and us dethrone
> *And form us all anew* [emphasis mine]
>
> *Oh let a vain and thoughtless race,* [emphasis mine]
> Thy pardoning mercy prove;
> Begin betimes to seek thy face
> And thy commandments love. (Henry Budd's Letter to the Church Mission Society in London; Harbidge to Pratt, 26 June,1823, A88; cited in Stevenson, 1988:144).

The Informal Curriculum

Outside of the formal curriculum, the missionaries stressed capitalist values whenever possible. For example, Smithurst tells of a young boy who tried to give him a gift of two birds, "sufficiently acquainted with the 'Indian character'," he asked what the boy wanted in return. In keeping with the traditional ideology of gift exchange, the boy replied that he wanted a Prayer Book. Smithurst gave him the book on credit on the condition that he would work a certain number of hours for it (Rev. Smithurst's Journal, Jan 11, 1841. A78, p.616).

Cockran was proud that he was able to induce some of the students to work for wages. To Cockran, this signified that they were becoming civilized. Here again, he has referred to their 'natural' state:

> Had for reapers some of the children of the Indian settlement. Some of the boys and girls are now so far civilized as to hire themselves to reap by the day or by the week. This I consider as a proof of their improvement. The Indian children in their rude state cannot be induced to labour (Cockran's Journal, Aug. 20, 1835. A77).

In one account, Cockran described his method for inducing the children to develop a liking for agriculture. At first the schoolmaster gave out flour every night while he 'delivered an oration on the advantages of cultivating the ground and making it produce such excellent food.' After a few years, 'the children began to distinguish themselves in the different occupations of the agricultural line and the parents ceased to censure us for calling upon them to labour.' The notion of private property was also gradually instilled:

> When the children began to be attached to farming to the boys that were most industrious. I distributed my calves, which became their own property on taking the trouble of mowing hay for them, and feeding them in the winter. Thus the pupils served an apprenticeship to the rearing of cattle as well as to saying their prayers. If there were calves the women and children were soon drawn by interest to them for milk when other resources failed (Cockran to Secretaries, Grand Rapids, Aug. 2. 1839. A78 p.358).

Cockran used a variety of tactics for encouraging wage labour:

> You take him to our store and display your articles of clothing. He of course wants everything he sees, and as he has always been accustomed to command a share of what was going, he becomes very obsequious, watches your wishes, and follow you and your shadow. By and by he will give you to understand that the wants a blanket, or a shirt, or some other article of clothing . . . You acknowledge that he needs the very thing he requires, but as the article is worth so much, it cannot be disposed of unless he furnishes effective labour or provisions to the amount . . . At the Indian Upper Indian Settlement we have got the children so well trained to labour that all those

> sufficiently strong to work give as many regular days work as are given by the settlers' children for similar articles. They also hire themselves during the corn and hay harvest to settlers who have the means of paying them (Cockran to Secretaries, Grand Rapids, Aug. 2. 1839. A78 p.358).

Once again, he noted that progress was slower amongst the Saulteux:

> At the Lower establishment[48] we have not been so successful. The boys are improving; but the parents are retaining their vagrant habits (Cockran to Secretaries, Grand Rapids, Aug.2.1839. A78, p.358).

Successes were measured in terms of specific changes to behaviour, specifically orderliness, docility, and regularity:

> When in school this morning I counted 62 present. The children begin to be docile and orderly in school. When they desire to go out, they ask the teachers' permission, and they continue to sit on the seats appointed (Rev. Cockran's Journal, Oct. 14, 1835. A77).

> The children here are very regular in their attendance, today we had 65 in school. Though we may be able to effect very little reformation among the old and adults of the present day, owing to their confirmed vicious habits, yet it is a matter that calls for our constant gratitude . . . When the children who are now receiving instruction have acquired sober, industrious, economical & pious habits, they will gain a certain ascendancy over their countrymen, & rapidly facilitate the increase of piety & the spread of Christianity & civilization (Rev. Cockran's Journal, Nov.9, 1835. A77).

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[48] The Lower Settlement was inhabited primarily by the Ojibwa, who were considerably more resistant.

Breaking Generational Ties

One of the first things that John West observed when he came into contact with Aboriginal peoples was their close and affectionate generational ties.

> He also loves his parent that begat him, and his child, whom he has begotten, with intense affection (John West, *Substance of a Journal*, p.152).

Traditionally, the elders were the most revered members of society. As stated earlier, the elders played a large role in socializing children and passing on oral histories. As the elders provided a link to traditional 'conditions' for behaviour, it would be necessary for the missionaries to weaken these strong ties. The following passage shows the beginning of a break in the previous close generational ties as Smithurst notes, with satisfaction, that the younger people were beginning to find the habits of the older generation to be distasteful. The elders were becoming a 'sad annoyance':

> By my last report you will see that I have admitted 10 new communicants this year. Nearly all of them are young who have been brought up under my own guidance . . . Upon them indeed depends my chief hope as to something permanent & good in this settlement. All have been trained in habits of industry, have been taught agriculture & gardening & have had no experience of the Indian vagrant habits. *The older people are however a sad burden upon them, & I have reason to know are also a sad annoyance to them* [emphasis mine] not that the young grudge at all the assistance required by those really unable to work. It is the lazy extravagant & dirty habits of such as have spent the greater part of their life in heathenism which the young people feel not only disagreeable but also detrimental to their interests both temporal & spiritual . . . (Rev. J. Smithurst to Rev. H. Venn, Red River, Aug. 6, 1850. A79, p.672).

Summary

For the missionaries, the children were key to the success of their mission. Their original plan was to educate the children in much the same way as children were educated in Britain. However, they met with resistance from both parents and children. Despite the incentives offered by the missionaries, most parents were averse to sending their children to the missionaries' schools. When they did send them, they often removed them after a short period of time. Due to the attributes that had been fostered in traditional forms of socialization, the children appeared to be disobedient and disrespectful. Moreover, they were given the autonomy by their parents to decide on their own whether or not to attend school. Harsh forms of discipline, which were taken for granted by the missionaries in the education of children, were not tolerated by either Aboriginal children or their parents.

Therefore, the missionaries were forced to devise new tactics. Their primary tactic was to remove the children from all subversive influence of their families and educate them in a removed setting. For children to be successfully resocialized into the values of Christianity and civilization it was necessary to erase the cultural identities that had been fostered in their traditional families. This meant cutting them off from the influence of their extended families.

The kinds of subjectivities that the missionaries sought were obedient, orderly, docile, industrious, individualistic, and patriarchal. When the children displayed these qualities, their education was considered a success. It was also successful when they showed distaste for the core values of their society and for the elders of their community.

The missionaries attempted to remove all of the conditions that produced a traditional subjectivity in Aboriginal children: traditional socialization by parents, ties to elders who passed on cultural myths and oral history. Once the children were removed from these conditions, the missionaries worked directly on their sense of self, attempting to destroy their traditional selves by pointing out to them the immoral and distasteful properties of their traditional culture and selves. A range of mechanisms were deployed in both their formal and informal education. These were intended to reconstruct the children's self-identities in ways that were congruous with the missionaries' goals.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In this study I explored the early encounter between the early Anglican missionaries and the Aboriginal people of Red River. Specifically, I investigated the governmental mechanisms that the missionaries used in their attempt to transform Aboriginal people, both materially and spiritually, into a preconceived mould.

I showed that the governmental rationalities of the missionaries differed from those of other colonialists in terms of their goals and their primary target of government. Although the missionaries were concerned with Aboriginal behaviour, their primary target was the Aboriginal self: to change Aboriginal people's aspirations and conceptions of themselves in such a way that they would become accountable for their own actions.

The missionaries arrived at Red River with specific ideas about Aboriginal people and the ways in which they were to be governed. The primary mechanism that the missionaries *expected* to use was education–for both adults and children. In the face of continued resistance, however, they were forced to revise their strategies. They blamed their difficulties on what they assumed was an Aboriginal 'nature', which they then attempted to change.

This study is organized around answering three questions, each of which addresses a different dimension of this encounter:

1) What rationalities of government were directed at Aboriginal people by Anglican missionaries?

The first question addressed the missionaries' mentalities of government, or the reasoning that was embodied in their specific governmental practices. It investigated the taken-for-granted understandings and the knowledges that these understandings drew on. This exploration brought to light: 1) the missionaries' preconceptions of Aboriginal people 2) the basis for their goals and visions for the future, and 3) their philosophy of government.

The missionaries came with preconceived notions of all Aboriginal peoples, and of the specific mould into which they would be transformed. Their ideas were based on the moral rhetorics of Protestantism, the tenets of the CMS, and the discourses of 19th century Britain. All of the missionaries' observations were proscriptive in that they were held up against a utopian ideal and vision for the future of Aboriginal people.

Their understanding of the best way to govern Aboriginal people was based on a combination of liberalism and pastoralism. Typical of a pastoral rationality, they intruded into all aspects of people's lives with the ultimate objective of protecting and ensuring the well-being of the entire 'flock'. They used techniques that are specific to pastoralism, such as examination, guidance and confession. Typical of a rationality of liberalism, however, they relied on the use of choice, and on education as governmental mechanisms.

2) What technologies of government were deployed in context?

The second question addressed the concrete ways in which the missionaries' rationalities were carried out. Although they came with specific ideas of how they would govern, they were forced to revise their tactics in the face of the unforeseen resistance that they encountered. Indeed, Aboriginal resistance played a large part in the shape that their forms of government took.

One mechanism that the missionaries devised was to frame their arguments in a traditional Aboriginal framework. For example, dispensing Western medicine was re-framed as contests over conjuring abilities. Indeed, in several journal entries the missionaries admitted that they were thought of as conjurors. In many instances, they refer to the Christian God as the Master of Life. In other cases, the Christian God is portrayed to Aboriginal people as performing the functions of the Manitos, such as providing health and provisions, only more effectively. The missionaries also recognized that baptism was often seen as protection from a spell by other conjurors; yet they used this to their advantage by offering baptism as an incentive for securing particular changes in behaviour. The missionaries also found that they could use the love that parents had for their children to their advantage. In some cases they blamed the parents for the death of their children and threatened more deaths in the future. Thus, the 'choices' that were offered often had, as an added incentive, the health/well-being of children. They also made use of the anxiety that was caused by increasing depletion of resources and epidemics of disease to promise health and well-being as an incentive for conversion. Despite all of the missionaries' tactics, however, most Aboriginal people continued to resist their efforts. For the most part, it

appears as though, after some consideration, they preferred their own spirituality to Christianity; they did not see the advantages in western forms of agriculture or 'civilisation'; and they were averse to parting with their children for the purpose of being educated by the missionaries.

The missionaries' governmentality involved a two-part process of destruction followed by reconstruction. Because of the vast difference in ontologies and understandings of morality that underpinned the two cultures, it was not possible to introduce Western practices without first destroying the conditions of traditional Aboriginal practices and behaviours. In other words, before Aboriginal people could think and act in the prescribed manner, it was necessary to first destroy those 'conditions' that prevented them from doing so. For Aboriginal people to be governed successfully, it was necessary to destroy the conditions of traditional behaviour on two levels. It required the destruction and replacement of material institutions, and the destruction and replacement of Aboriginal peoples' subjectivity. For individuals to think and act in appropriate ways (by the missionaries' standards), it was necessary to first destroy both the structures and the beliefs that conditioned their behaviour.

The process of destruction followed by reconstruction is evident in the missionaries' attempts to destroy and then to replace traditional spirituality with Christianity; to destroy the individual's commitment to the structure and ideology of traditional kinship and replace it with that of the nuclear family; to destroy egalitarian gender relations and replace them with relations that were more patriarchal; to destroy the values and behaviours in children that had been fostered in their early socialization and replace them with behaviours that

would make them more amenable to the missionaries' teachings; and to destroy and rebuild all aspects of the traditional Aboriginal self through confession.

A prominent theme of Foucault's work on 'governmentality' is the idea that people are governed by means of their freedom to act (within constraints). The choices that were offered by the missionaries were structured such that individuals were presented with the harmful consequences of continuing their traditional ways on one hand, and the way to prevent these consequences on the other. The latter was often framed as conversion but also applied to superficial changes in behaviour. Individuals were given a limited range of alternatives by the missionaries, who had the advantage of medical expertise at a time when Aboriginal people's lives were threatened by epidemics of European diseases. Aboriginal people were given the choice of saving their souls or risking 'perdition'; of protecting their children or leaving them without the safety net that baptism could potentially provide; of being cured by means of the missionaries' demonstrated powers or risking the uncertain ability of the conjurors to cure disease; and of changing their behaviour or risking the wrath of the missionaries' deity. The choices were often presented in such a way that individuals became morally responsible for the welfare of their children. In these cases, the push for conversion and/or changes in behaviour had an added element of guilt.

These choices were more complex for Aboriginal people than they appeared to the missionaries. Aboriginal people were governed and governed themselves by their traditional values and by the strength of their belief in the spirit world. To accept the missionaries' choices meant behaving in ways that flew in the face of the spirit world from which they derived both moral direction and comfort. Yet to reject the missionaries' offers meant

dealing with the uncertainty of the continuing depletion of natural resources, epidemics of disease, and a growing onslaught of European settlers. If they chose the middle path, as many did, they faced the problem of integrating two conflicting realities.

The family provided a locus for changing the conditions of behaviour, and was one of the key sites of governance by the missionaries. The changes that the missionaries attempted to make to the Aboriginal family structure and relations ran contrary to the values of community, personal autonomy, and interrelatedness on which Aboriginal kinship was based. For the Church, marriage was a contract in which specific moral duties were to be carried out. For Aboriginal people to accept this conception of marriage meant that the work that women did would be redefined from contributions to the family's subsistence to duties to be performed for the benefit of her husband. Now conceptualised as private, the family was to be separated from the broader group. Production and consumption were to take place within the family unit, in enclosed plots and in separate houses. The act of casting off 'extra' wives who would have to fend for themselves required that the husband divorce himself from the moral obligation of caring for others in the community. Indeed, it required a reversal in the notion of what constituted moral conduct. Actions that were traditionally seen as moral, such as caring for the wife of deceased kin, became immoral, while acts like failing to provide for a family member, traditionally seen as an offence against the spirits, were to be re-conceptualized as moral.

The family was also the locus for implementing patriarchal gender relations. Prior to the missionaries' arrival, wives had considerable authority in the realm of the family. In a Christian marriage, power was to be solely in the hands of the husband. While the

missionaries disallowed wife-beating, they also disallowed the wife's right to contest her husband's power.

The missionaries also attempted to remove the socialization process from the family. As they saw it, a key problem with traditional socialization was the children's autonomous and undisciplined 'nature'–characteristics that were fostered in traditional methods of socialization. By refusing to bend to the missionaries' authority, the children subverted their efforts to create a new model generation. For Aboriginal children to adopt values that were almost the antitheses of those of their culture required that they be not only more malleable, but also that they be totally removed from all conditions that fostered them--the undermining influence of their families. Once in the missionaries' schools, the children were governed by both informal and formal means. The structure of their daily lives was regimented as time and space were blocked into specific units, a practice with which they were unfamiliar. The values of wage labour, individualism, and competition, which contradicted the values that had been instilled in the children by their families, were stressed in various ways. In the formal curriculum, the children were taught literacy, agriculture/domestic tasks, and the Gospel. They were also taught to have contempt for traditional Aboriginal culture and all of the traits of the older generation. In the hands of the missionaries, the children were taught to distance themselves from their extended families: from the values, behaviours, work habits, traditions, and myths that were part of their early socialization.

Many of the missionaries' attempts to change the behaviour of Aboriginal people were aimed directly at Aboriginal people's subjectivities. One of the most significant

involved the attempt to inculcate individualism. For Aboriginal people to think and act in way that were congruous with 'civilization' required that they adopt the bourgeois conception of a hierarchical, competitive society that was based on individual achievement, and where status was gained by individual accumulation rather than by providing for other members of the community. The values of community and interdependence were attacked by the missionaries when they promoted the form and ideology of the nuclear family, when they encouraged individualism and competition in the schools, and when they encouraged divisiveness among and between families. All of these ways of acting required that individuals behave in ways that went against the core value of community and the moral obligation to act accordingly.

While the change from communal to individual mentalities may not have been an explicit goal for the missionaries, other aspects of the traditional 'nature' were stated targets for change. One of the most significant was the perceived need to inculcate obedience. Indeed, obedience is fundamental to Christianity and to the techniques of Christian pastoral forms of rule, where individuals are encouraged to value obedience in order to allow the continuous exercise of the power of the pastor in their personal lives. The data indicate that most individuals with whom the missionaries interacted were not malleable. Frustrated with the resistance that they encountered from the adults, the missionaries turned to the children. In the missionaries' schools, an all-out effort was made to change the children's subjectivities to ensure not only a new generation who would be pliant and obedient, but also to ensure that the children could be controlled in the schools.

The 'stubborn nature' of Aboriginal people that is referred to often in the journals was seen as particularly problematic in women, as they were difficult to control by either their husbands or the missionaries. Furthermore, their strength and independence did not conform to the submissive 'nature' that was so highly valued in Victorian women. The problem of transforming women into docile and obedient individuals required different kinds of tactics, particularly since the missionaries did not consider physical punishment to be an option for women as they did for children. The primary tactic that the missionaries used was to re-conceptualize women's willful behaviour and their right to assert themselves as immoral. Mothers who were disobedient were threatened with the possibility of two forms of punishment–fear of punishment of their own souls in the afterworld, and punishment in the historical present by the missionaries' refusal to baptize their children. Thus, the threatened consequences of actions that showed strength, autonomy, or disobedience were extended to their children. Given the intense love that Aboriginal parents demonstrated for their children, the choice of assuming 'proper' gendered behaviour was often not a choice at all.

For the missionaries, it was imperative that Aboriginal men assume their 'rightful' place as patriarchs whose authority in the family was not open to contest. Recasting the authority structure of the family required considerable changes in gender identities. To ensure that both husbands and wives would govern themselves in the appropriate manner, it was necessary for both men and women to assume new definitions of masculinity and femininity. Therefore, men's as well as women's gender identities were targeted. In traditional Aboriginal society, women had the right to assert themselves. If they accepted

the missionaries' teachings, however, they would govern themselves such that they would be submissive and obedient to their husbands. Those women who accepted the missionaries' preachings were to lose their primary source of power: their influence and authority within the family. In traditional Aboriginal families, husbands did not appear to be overly concerned with women's power in the family. Now such behaviour was to be internalized as inappropriate. In traditional Aboriginal societies, masculinity was derived from the autonomy and skill of the hunter, but now it was to be derived from the authority of the patriarch. These transformations required considerable work of the self on the self.

The conversion process also required considerable work of the self on the self. Not only were specific changes in behaviour required to be eligible for conversion, but specific spiritual technologies had to be performed as part of the conversion ritual. Here 'truths' about the negative characteristics of prospective convert's personalities, behaviours, and cultural beliefs were held up for scrutiny. Aided by the prompting of the missionaries, individuals were required to confront their traditional 'natures' as sinful, repugnant, and immoral. In the next stage, confession, individuals were required to *verbally denounce* their former selves and all aspects of the culture to which those selves had belonged and replace them with new concepts of self. The new self would think and act in ways that were congruent with the values and beliefs of 19th century British Protestantism. All of these mechanisms required that Aboriginal people distance themselves from the conditions from which they had derived their understanding of their personhood.

3) In what ways may this encounter have contributed to ongoing patterns of Aboriginal governance?

This study has shown that by its nature this was a very powerful and invasive form of governance for a number of reasons: First, the target of governance was not only the conduct of Aboriginal people; it was also their sense of who they were and what they believed in. This entailed the destruction/discrediting of all elements of the traditional Aboriginal self and cultural identity. All of the missionaries' proposed changes challenged Aboriginal people's understandings of self and of the values of the culture that had, until that point, provided a particular self-identity and understanding of the universe.

Second, the degree of change in world view that was necessary to make what appeared to be the simple replacement of one institutional form with another was massive. Given the distance between the ontologies on which the two sets of cultural institutions were based, the changes required at least some degree of questioning of cultural foundations and/or understanding of the universe. The ontological base around which traditional cultures were organized stressed circular rather than linear ways of thinking, interdependence rather than individualism, egalitarian rather than hierarchical relations and an ethic of noninterference. The missionaries challenged this ontological base on two levels. By promoting institutional changes, particularly to the family, they promoted behaviours and interrelationships that went against the moral forms of behaviour that stemmed from this ontology. Second, by attacking traditional spirituality, they challenged an understanding of the universe that was based on a strong integration of the spiritual and material worlds. When they demonstrated the inability of the spirits to cure European diseases, the

missionaries undermined the spirit world, which traditionally provided a powerful mechanism for regulating all aspects of everyday life. Now individuals were left to decide, on an individual basis, what was true, how to act, and what constituted morality. To accept the missionaries' proposals meant separating from the group or behaving in ways that were not considered moral or acceptable.

The findings of this study are consistent with Scott's allegation that the task of colonial governmentality is 'to break down conditions of old forms of life and construct in their place new conditions so that new forms of life would come into being' (Scott, 1995:193). Although Scott is referring here to conditions that promote particular *behaviours*, this study has shown that in the case of the missionaries, this also applied to destroying and rebuilding the *self*.

Two aspects of this encounter could have undermined Aboriginal people's sense of identity. The first was the inevitable questioning by individuals of the foundations of the culture from which their identity was derived. The second was the direct attack on the Aboriginal self in both the conversion process and in the 'instruction' that children received in the schools. The technologies of the self involved in conversion required an intentional purging of the traditional self, as individuals were forced to recognize, and then verbalize, the supposed immorality and worthlessness of their Aboriginal selves and traditional beliefs. In the schools, the children were taught to distance themselves from and reject their Aboriginal selves and the values and traditions of their culture.

This study has shown that the missionaries' form of governance was potentially destructive of Aboriginal peoples in a number of ways whether or not they ultimately

converted to Christianity or adopted the tenets of European civilization. First, it was potentially damaging to Aboriginal peoples self-identities. While some individuals chose to convert, and others rejected the missionaries' offers, it is likely that most remained somewhere between both worlds: questioning the validity of their traditional beliefs, but not accepting, or only superficially accepting those of the missionaries. We need to be aware of the relevance of the state of mind, and of the anomie that may have been created by this kind of governance and its possible link to later problems of self-concept. It would be useful to explore the ramifications of attempts to re-define the subjective reality that is instilled in individuals in their primary socialization.[49]

It is important to note, however, that while governmental technologies foster and promote various qualities and statues, they do not *determine* forms of subjectivity. They are successful only to the extent that individuals come to experience themselves through these capacities and statuses. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the ways in which the missionaries may have set in motion processes which, over the long run, contributed to weakening their sense of self and the foundation of a well-integrated culture.

One of the most damaging effects of this encounter was the divisiveness that it caused in a tightly integrated, communally oriented culture. As some accepted the missionaries' teachings and others resisted, some communities were to splinter. This fragmentation laid the basis for suspicion and dissent and the erosion of the ethos of

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[49] Questions around identity formation would benefit from the insights of such sociologists as Mead (1934) Cooley (1920) and specifically those of Berger and Luckman (1967) who address theoretically the problematic of competing realities. Another source for understanding. Another excellent source is Abramson's (1985) paper on collective memory and adoption.

community that traditionally pervaded in Aboriginal cultures. This is evidenced by the dissent that occurred within Peguis' band as well as the fragmentation that was evident between Christians and non-Christians in and around the Indian Settlement. In pre-contact societies, the interests of the community could not be distinguished from those of all of its members. Cut loose from their communities, individuals were more vulnerable to the efforts of the colonists to bring them further under control. The loss of group cohesion impaired their capacity to act collectively for their collective survival.

Gender relations were targeted for substantive reconstruction as the missionaries redefined men's and women's access to power, as well as the ways in which individuals defined their worth. For those who incorporated the missionaries' preachings, women lost their primary source of power: their influence and authority within the family. It appears as though in traditional societies women were assumed to be strong, and that their right to assert themselves, particularly in the family, was a cultural given. As women lost this right to power as well as their previous access to the support of kin (through relegation to the private sphere), they became more vulnerable to devaluation.

The removal of children from their families marked the beginning of the fragmentation of the traditional family, traditionally the centre of Aboriginal culture. With the loss of generational ties, those children who remained in the missionaries' schools lost their ties to the myths and traditions of Aboriginal culture. The children were also subjected to attempts to purge them of their traditional 'natures'. From a present-day perspective, it is important to inquire into whether relations of domination were unwittingly made possible as a result of this encounter, particularly given the kind of subjectivity that

they tried to instill, which included values of obedience, individualism and patriarchy; and their constant denigration of all elements of Aboriginal culture.

This research has shown that, for the missionaries, the primary 'condition' that required reconstruction was the Aboriginal self-identity. Due to the vast difference in ontologies and understandings of morality that underpinned the two cultures, it was not possible to introduce Western practices without first destroying the conditions of traditional Aboriginal practices and behaviours. Because their traditional values and understandings of the universe prevented Aboriginal people from acting in ways that were congruous with the missionaries' goals, 'government of the self' entailed destroying key elements of the traditional Aboriginal self-identity.

Aboriginal Resistance

As previously noted, Aboriginal resistance played a major role in the missionaries' governance and was incorporated into their governmental technologies. Despite the missionaries' efforts, accounts of outright resistance and syncretism show that the outcome of their governmental mechanisms did not meet their goals. Almost every missionary journal has some reference to either their failure to convince Aboriginal people to partake in agriculture, to give up their children for education, or to convert to Christianity. References are made to individuals who reverted back to their traditional ways once a crisis was over,

and to mothers who removed their children from the schools, or subverted the missionaries' education in the home. The missionaries often questioned their work. For example,

> The little that has been done appears scarcely worth doing; & unbelief asks, to what purpose is this waste?... Every attempt, every invention I have had recourse to, has failed (Cockran to the Secretaries, Grand Rapids Aug. 8, 1836; A77).

This exemplifies a point that is regularly made within the governmentality literature[50] which is that governmental programs are never perfectly realised in practice. It appears as though, while some individuals appeared to embrace both Christianity and civilisation, the vast majority tried to incorporate only those elements that they believed to be useful. Widespread evidence of syncretism indicates that, in general, the outcome of Aboriginal people's interaction with the missionaries was a hybridization of forms of governance and resistance. The existence of traditional forms within the dominant regime has provided for the survival of subordinate forms of knowledge, and has created spaces for resistance in the present. Much of the pride in cultural traditions and traditional understandings of the universe appears to have been preserved and is now being reclaimed.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has explored the extra-state governance of the early Anglican missionaries. By focussing on the government of the self, it has added another dimension to our understanding of the governance of Aboriginal people. It has also shown that it did not

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[50] See, for example, Rose (1996); Gordon (1991).

take the presence of the state to create fertile conditions for their later subjugation.

This research has provided a springboard for future studies. One limitation of this study is the absence of an Aboriginal point of view. Further research would be strengthened by oral histories. The Aboriginal point of view would not only round out this analysis by adding their understanding of the events described here, it would then be possible to go beyond this analysis of governmental rationalities and technologies and explore their consequences from the point of view of the subjects themselves.

If we accept Foucault's notion that power is relational, and that the possibility always exists that pockets of resistance can subvert an apparently successful 'government', then another direction for future studies is to explore these pockets of resistance. A better understanding of these forms of resistance could lead to ways for repairing some of the damage that has been done as a result of colonial forms of governance.

Another important direction for future research is comparative studies. For example, It would be instructive to use this framework to further explore the colonial governmentality of other groups in the same era. It would also be instructive to compare the rationalities of government that were evident in this era with those of later eras.[51] We know that later forms of government were harsher and more coercive as is demonstrated by the Indian Act, the removal of political autonomy, the confiscation of religious objects and the banning of religions ceremonies the removal of means of subsistence, and the forced removal of children to residential schools. This begs further analysis of <u>why</u> this was so as

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Hogaveen (1999) has already begun an exploration of the subsequent government of Aboriginal people.

well as an analysis of the rationalities that were embedded in both state and non-state forms of governance in the later era. In terms of a history of the present it would be useful to explore what other paths might have been taken, and to reflect on whether Aboriginal culture would have remained intact if these more extreme measures had not been undertaken. Yet another direction for comparative research study would be to compare the kinds of government that were embodied in this study with those of other areas. Although the situation at Red River was unique in a number of ways, there are remarkable similarities between this encounter and studies of missionary encounters with indigenous people in Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand Fiji, and Africa. It would be instructive to compare and to contrast the kinds of government that were embodied in these encounters. There is much to be learned from comparisons of these colonial situations.

There are a number of other directions for future research. We have seen how the Anglican missionaries created fertile conditions for anomie. Aboriginal people were repeatedly told that their traditional culture was inadequate. Even if they did not accept the missionaries' statements, it was inevitable that questions would have been raised in their minds, particularly when the missionaries' ability to cure diseases provided concrete 'proof' of their powers. In order to receive particular benefits, it was often necessary for individuals to act in ways that contradicted their traditional understandings of moral behaviour. It would be useful to explore the implications of this, particularly given current rates of criminality and other social ills such as suicide and addictions.

One implication of this study is that it draws our attention to the problems inherent in assuming that it is possible to know what is best for others. As Rose has stated,

> To the extent that others claim to identify needs, we can ask by what right, and according to whose truths do they think that they know us so well; to the extent that others seek to govern us in our own interests, we have the right, as governed subjects, to interrogate and even protest those strategies in the name of our own claims to know those interests (1997:9).

It is important to be aware of this in our past and current dealings with Aboriginal peoples.

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