

Handsome Lake's Teachings: The Shift From Female to Male Agriculture in Iroquois Culture.

An Essay in Ethnophilosophy

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ABSTRACT The shift from a traditional indigenous female agriculture to a new male agriculture in Iroquois culture was facilitated by the teachings of the early 19th century Seneca prophet and chief, Handsome Lake. This shift resulted in the disempowerment of women and occurred during a period of crises for the Iroquois; it was heavily influenced by exogenous pressures that, mediated by Handsome Lake's Code, led not only to a change of sex roles in agriculture but also to a shift in family structure toward the patriarchal family and to a change of ideology toward a patriarchal monotheism. Previously, Iroquois life and ideology had stressed a complementarity or balance of powers between the sexes. Handsome Lake's Code also retained certain aspects of the older Iroquois lifestyle and ideology. The crises undergone by the Iroquois might have been met differently, without the disempowerment of women, had it not been for exogenous influences.

Introduction

This is an essay in Native American studies from a feminist social/political perspective as applied to changes in belief and to the disempowerment of women at a critical period in Iroquois history when there was a transition from female to male agriculture. I have been inspired in a general way by the later Wittgenstein's recommendation to see ideas as embedded in a form of life, *i.e.*, as embedded in specific patterns of activities, traditions, goals, beliefs, and institutions. One must draw upon history, anthropology, ethnology, and psychology, as adjuncts to social/political philosophy, feminist philosophy, and philosophy of religion, in undertaking an ethnophilosophical study such as this. I give the name "ethnophilosophy" to the study of the belief system and changes in the belief system of an indigenous people.

I avoid large general theories about cultural transformation and change. Such theories have marred Native American studies from the time of the 16th century Jesuit missions to Native Americans until the 1930's when contested by Franz Boas's insistence on the idea of cultural pluralism and the uniqueness of each culture. (Axtell, 1981a) There have been many theories about predictable, necessary stages of cultural transformation and change: Christian theories, French Enlightenment theories as filtered through the Freemasonry of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, *et.al.*, cultural evolution theories (with a concomitant "scientific" racism), Marxist theories, Piagetan theories, and others. These large general theories are full of exogenous¹ Eurocentric assumptions about fixed, necessary, and predictable stages of cultural development and the value or lack of value of the various

putative stages, and such theories have gotten in the way of seeing Native American cultures as valuable. I also hold that the acculturative changes of each Indian people should be studied in terms of that culture's uniqueness and with a continued policy of avoiding any large general theories of necessary stages of cultural transformation and change. Such a policy is strongly endorsed by such eminent ethnohistorians as Berkhofer (1978) and Axtell (1981a). An analogous policy is also recommended by the critical schools of thought of other disciplines, such as by the legal theorists who follow Critical historiography (Gordon, in Hutchinson, 1989), and by the Critical Marxists of the Habermas school.

I make limited heuristic use of a modified theory of economic determinism that holds that the social/political and ideational superstructure of a culture is fed by and supports the economic structure of that culture, but that there is no ironclad progression of necessary, predictable stages of economic development and hence no ironclad, predictable, necessary stages of specific ideology. Some students of Iroquois culture (Brown, 1970; Rothenberg, 1978, 1980; Stites, 1904) have made use of a modified theory of economic determinism in their work and I have used it also along with Gordon Allport's theory of identification with the dominant group or oppressor (Allport, 1958), as heuristic guides in studying changes in Iroquois belief. Allport's theory of identification with the dominant group or oppressor indicates that we can often find some change in the belief systems of oppressed persons in the direction of the assimilation of at least part of the ideological viewpoint of the oppressor group. This is frequently the way that an oppressed person wards off the inner bafflement and ideational disintegration brought about by what is to him or her the inexplicable destruction of traditional cultural values, institutions, and patterns of life. Axtell (1981a) discusses the early and continuous impact of English settlement on the inner life of Northeastern Indians, describing the effect as a "crisis of intellect." This inner crisis often took a religious/metaphysical direction, for new questions and problems were raised for which only the Christian God was conceived able to provide answers; this God began to be perceived as more powerful than the indigenous deities who seemed unable any longer to protect their adherents.

While avoiding large general theories about necessary stages of cultural evolution and change, one can discern similar patterns that show up in a number of cultures, from which one can derive some limited predictability and from which one can learn some important lessons. Such a pattern is the familial, social, political, and religious disempower-

ment of women in those agriculture-based primal cultures in which there is a transition from female to male agriculture.² My essay shows such a transition in Iroquois culture in the early 19th century, and traces the consequent across-the-board disempowerment of women with an analysis in particular of the changes in the traditional religious/metaphysical/value belief system of traditional Iroquois culture in the direction of some aspects of the exogenous Christian patriarchal belief system of the white settlers as mediated by the teachings of the Iroquois prophet Handsome Lake. The white settlers can clearly be seen as the oppressor group in this transitional period of Iroquois culture. It was a period of great economic stress for the Iroquois, in which their customary female-agriculture economic basis, involving customary Iroquois farming methods as well as customary Iroquois values, was replaced by white-style male agriculture and white farming methods and white values, under insistent and prolonged pressures from members of the dominant white society. The accompanying specific religious/metaphysical/value changes in Iroquois thought in the direction of the white oppressor's religious/metaphysical/value belief structure, as exemplified by what Axtell (1981b) calls Handsome Lake's "syncretism" of traditional Iroquois belief with Christianity, have not been studied before, nor have the detrimental effects on Iroquois women's lives of these changes yet been sufficiently studied from a feminist perspective, despite some existing essays on Iroquois women.

This paper has seven sections: Section 1 is the *Introduction*; Section 2, *Women's and Men's Roles In Iroquois Culture Before the American Revolution*, discusses the complementarity or balance of powers between the sexes in traditional Iroquois culture along with the centrality of agriculture in women's traditional activities; Section 3, *Historical Setting Of Handsome Lake's Teachings*, relates the specific historical events that led to a crisis in Iroquois life to the ways in which the prophet Handsome Lake's teachings responded to this crisis by leading the Iroquois to change from women's traditional agriculture to a new male agriculture, based on white pressures, a change in which women were disempowered; Section 4, *The Family Becomes Patriarchal*, discusses the concomitant change to a patriarchal family structure facilitated by Handsome Lake's teachings and by exogenous pressures, in which women were further disempowered; Section 5, *The Traditional Iroquois Creation Myth*, argues that the traditional Iroquois world view had emphasized both female and male principles or powers as sources of creativity/generativity in the cosmos and the biotic world; Section 6, *Handsome*

Lake's Visions Compared With the Creation Myth, shows how Handsome Lake's religious/metaphysical/value belief system changed this traditional world view about the complementarity of female and male creativity/generativity powers at work in the cosmos and in the biotic world, to a new patriarchal montheistic view in which one supreme male creator has created and now rules cosmos, earth, and nature. This change in ideology can be seen as fed by the economic shift from female indigenous-style agriculture to male white-style agriculture, as well as by the oppressor's belief system, and the change in ideology can also be seen as supporting the economic change; and Section 7, *Summary*, briefly recapitulates the central points of the paper. In the course of the paper I shall show how Handsome Lake's teachings retained at least some important traditional Iroquois beliefs and values.

Scholars have not up to now agreed on whether Handsome Lake changed traditional Iroquois belief and culture. Some prominent non-Indian scholars such as Tooker, Wallace, and Vecsey maintain that he didn't, though without going into specific beliefs, but other prominent scholars of Native American descent, such as Parker and Allen, maintain that he did.³ Feminist issues centering around the Iroquois change from female to male agriculture and its effects on women have received scant attention; the change in sex roles has often been dismissed as unimportant.⁴

Section 2. Women's and Men's Roles In Iroquois Culture Before the American Revolution

Prior to the disruption of Iroquois life brought about by the American Revolution, both men and women among the Iroquois had agreed that agriculture was women's work, to be carried on alongside women's child rearing and household tasks. Men's work traditionally centered around hunting, war, diplomacy, and trading. (Axtell, 1981a; Brandon, 1974; Jennings, 1984 and 1985; Washburn, 1975.) Before the time of Handsome Lake, Iroquois culture was matrilineal and probably mixed matrilineal and patrilineal. (Fenton, in Tooker vol. 1, 1986; Richards, in Tooker, 1967.) Iroquois culture centered around a profound complementarity of or balance between male and female roles as co-important and co-fundamental economically, politically, spiritually, and biologically. (Hewitt, in Tooker vol. 1, 1986; Stites, 1904; Underhill, 1965.) Descriptions of male and female roles in traditional Iroquois culture are presented by a number of writers. (Brown, 1970; Hewitt and Fenton, in Tooker vol. 1, 1986; Stites, 1904; Underhill, 1953 and 1965; Wallace, 1970.)

The Constitution of the Iroquois League (the League may have been established around 1450 A.D.) says that women own the soil and the land. (Parker, in Fenton Book III, 1968c.) It also states that the Iroquois are to be matrilineal. Women councillors partitioned the clan land among the women householders, but the clan or tribe retained title to the land and an individual woman had only usufruct right to her fields. Men's hunting contributed some meat to the family diet, but women's agriculture provided most of the calories as well as providing protein from corn and beans used together. Women's agriculture was from perhaps 1000 A.D. the backbone of the Iroquois economy. (Brown, 1970; Stites, 1904; Tuck, in Trigger, 1978; Washburn, 1975.) Women worked their family fields in communal groups, helped by children and at times by captives taken in war. The individual women field owners formed mutual aid societies and elected a matron to inspect the individual fields and to direct the rest of the band to work the fields on a rotating schedule. Sick or injured members of the mutual aid society were assisted by the company as a right, not a charity. (Parker, in Fenton Book I, 1968a.) Families traditionally lived in multiple-family bark-covered longhouses in stable, stockaded villages. Families were organized into clans along matrilineal descent lines, and the clan matrons had the right under the League Constitution to nominate tribal chiefs. Chiefs served both on the tribal council and the federal council. (There were originally five tribes in the League: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. Later a sixth, the Tuscarora, was added.) There was a total of 49 equal-rank chieftainships, divided among the first five tribes. The chieftainship positions were inherited by certain specific clans, but the clan matron selected the actual clan candidate from among the male eligibles in that clan. Only men were eligible to be chiefs, and a candidate after being nominated by the clan matron had then to be ratified by the incumbents of the tribal council. The clan matrons could also depose chiefs who disregarded the League Constitution or who neglected the welfare of the people, after such a chief had been given previous warnings by either men or women, conveyed by the War Chief. The League Constitution specified that women were to have separate councils of their own, and they could frame propositions that could be presented to the male chiefs of the tribal council or of the federal council by a spokesman for discussion by the assembled male chiefs. Women did not ordinarily vote in tribal councils, and not at all in federal councils. However, Stites (1904) presents evidence that in actual practice reg-

ular Iroquois tribal council meetings were composed both of male chiefs and women councillors, and that women councillors could and did speak directly in these combined meetings, and occasionally voted in some of them. A third council of male Elders (open to all older men) generally made the final tribal decision after hearing the views of the male chiefs, women councillors, and warriors. In the federal councils, however, the 49 male chiefs made the final decision after listening to spokesmen present the views of warriors, male Elders, and women councillors. Iroquois chiefs were reluctant to pass measures that the people opposed, for government was by the consent of the governed. The chiefs had to vote unanimously for a proposition in order for it to be accepted. (Hewitt, in Tooker vol. 1, 1986; Parker, in Fenton Book III, 1968c.)

J.N.B. Hewitt, who was the Smithsonian ethnologist to the Iroquois around the turn of the century and who was himself half-Iroquois, wrote that in the traditional Iroquois clans it was seen that the earth produces things that are fixed in her breast, and just as everything that grows is nourished directly by the earth, so:

“In like manner it appeared that woman, the mother, was a producer, and nourished what she produced in her breast; hence the woman and the earth are sisters. So the cultivation of the things that grow out of the earth is especially the duty and pleasure of women. While the pursuit of game and fish, and birds, and men [*i.e.*, the pursuit of enemy men in war] who are not fixed in the earth was strictly within the prerogative of men.” (Hewitt, in Tooker vol. 1, 1986, p. 533.)

Women shared with men an active role in religious celebrations that paid homage to both female and male spiritual principles, and both sexes could be members of sacred medicine (healing) societies. There were medicine men and women, and men and women shamans, and both men and women were members of the Faith Keepers, a group that supervised the correct performance of the important six annual religious ceremonies. The family matron (grandmother), as well as medicine men and women, had knowledge of herbal medicines; the family matron's pharmacopeia included abortifacient herbs.

The Iroquois believed that some men and women were witches whose activities centered around their alleged use of special, evil powers in harmful activities such as bringing injury, illness or death to a victim or the victim's family; if a witch could be brought to confess or repent, it was thought that his or her evil powers could be broken. As a last resort, but only as a last resort, a witch could

be killed. In other words, a sort of “due process” operated even in this sphere. (Wallace, 1970, pp. 201-302 *passim*.) Handsome Lake's enemies accused him of controlling dissent by means of killing alleged witches.

Section 3. Historical Setting of Handsome Lake's Teachings

Traditional Iroquois society was sorely disrupted by the events of the American Revolution. With long-time satisfactory trading ties to the British, who had on the whole behaved more respectfully and honorably toward Indians than had the early American Colonials (Salisbury, 1982), many though not all the Iroquois had sided with the British during the Revolution. The American side therefore sent a punitive expedition, headed by Generals Sullivan and Clinton, against the Iroquois in 1778. The expedition devastated the Iroquois; houses and crops in almost every major Iroquois town were burned and destroyed. The Iroquois population was cut in half by the end of the Revolution and the victorious American side also deprived the Iroquois survivors of their land and of their military and political power, confining the survivors to a few small reservations in the United States and Canada. The group of Senecas to which Handsome Lake belonged got only a tiny strip of land, totalling 42 square miles, along both sides of the Allegheny River up from the Pennsylvania-New York border.

Iroquois men were now politically powerless, deprived of grand scale hunting and trading, debarred from war except as soldiers in the U.S. Army, virtually unemployed, and unendurably herded together on cramped reservation lands. Poverty, hunger, cold, and smallpox and other diseases further reduced the population. Fear of witches increased, and there were killings of alleged witches. Drunkenness and brawling became prevalent among the men, and husbands now often abandoned wives for other women or engaged in wife abuse while under the influence of whiskey. Suicide was increasingly prevalent. (Fenton, 1986.) Women still farmed, but floods destroyed crops, and the yield from the men's territorially restricted hunting was undependable and sometimes very scant. People were humiliated, confused, frightened, and wretchedly poor. (Deardorff, in Tooker vol. 3, 1986; Wallace, 1970; also Wallace, in Trigger, 1978.)

Into this situation came some Quaker missionaries in 1798. Three of them finally settled on the reservation along the Allegheny River and, with the intention of assisting the Senecas materially and technologically as well as modelling and teaching Christian values, attempted to teach male

farming and non-Indian, intensive-farming methods using iron plows and horses driven by men rather than the hand-operated wooden hoes used by women. The Quakers also introduced the raising of cattle and the enclosure of farm lands, as well as promoting temperance. For some time the missionaries were met with great resistance from a number of women (Rothenberg, 1978, 1980), for farming had been considered by both sexes to be women's work and it had been done with wooden hoes; the use of iron plows pulled by draft horses driven by men was unknown. Women's farming was not land-intensive. Cattle raising had not been practiced, the drinking of cow's milk was considered disgusting, and enclosure of farm land was unknown. Life in a small one-family home on a private farmstead, as advocated by the Quakers, was undesired. Iroquois women had not been full time housewives or economically dependent on their husbands as were non-Indian women, but the agrarian and social changes the Quakers urged involved a change to full-time housewifery and economic dependency for Iroquois women, the abdication of their traditional role as the agriculturalists who provided the economic backbone of the culture, and acceptance of the new headship of the family by the husband. The Quakers also tried to introduce a monetary profit motive into male farming, a motive quite foreign to the Iroquois who were accustomed to barter rather than to selling for profit. They also taught reading from the Bible in the school they introduced, and Handsome Lake after some initial resistance eventually came to endorse such schooling.

In 1799, Handsome Lake, a Seneca chief who was a heavy drinker (Washburn, 1975), lay grievously sick, probably from over-indulgence in drink. He then apparently died, but turned out actually to have been in a trance state in which he had the first of three visions that healed him and that brought him what he believed to be a series of divine messages that he was to teach his people. These messages promoted the Quaker-proposed male farming and white farming and housing methods. He began to assume religious leadership of his community, as well as the political leadership to which he was already entitled as a chief; his enemies began to feel he was instituting a dictatorship. In the winter of 1801-1802 he went to Washington D.C. to call on President Jefferson and to ask the President's endorsement of his religious mission and his religious leadership. He also expressed to Jefferson his anxiety about Iroquois territorial security, and asked that this should be protected from further erosion. Jefferson received Handsome Lake graciously, and later had his Secretary of War, Dearborn (whose department at that time administered

Indian affairs) send him a letter endorsing his mission, and this was followed by a longer personal letter from Jefferson even more enthusiastically endorsing Handsome Lake's agrarian reforms and promising that Seneca and Onondaga reservation lands were Indian property, to be protected by U.S. law forever—promises Jefferson later proved unable to enforce. Handsome Lake considered these letters of 1802 his sanction to preach, from the highest U.S. authorities. Handsome Lake's agrarian reforms quite neatly fitted into Jefferson's own dearest ideals for a country based on small family-owned farms. (Koch, 1957; Peterson, 1970.) Furthermore, Jefferson's views on women were unliberated (Smits, 1982) and hence Jefferson would have been unlikely to support agrarian reforms that were other than those that fitted in with European patriarchal values.

Before his death in 1815, Handsome Lake's teachings, based on his first three visions, found a number of followers. He continued to get further visions and revelations, and after his death his teachings were codified between 1820 and 1850 by his followers,⁵ who sprang up also in other Iroquois tribes, though there were some other Iroquois who converted to Christianity and some Iroquois who resisted both Christianity and Handsome Lake's religion. During his lifetime he had political rivals and other enemies who dissented from his teachings.

Handsome Lake blamed devil-inspired witches, mainly women and especially older women, for the social disorganization of his people, for the political opposition against him, and for plots to destroy the world. (Wallace, 1970.) For some years he focussed on witch hunting and witch killing; the killings were not always in accord with the traditional due process practiced in the past (warnings, with the possibility of repentance). Additional persons suspect of practicing witchcraft were threatened but let off.

Previously the categories of family matron (grandmother) and witch had not been confused with each other, but Wallace suggests that Handsome Lake's teachings brought about a fusion of these two hitherto separate, distinct categories into one. (Wallace, 1970.) However, a few of the "witches" Handsome Lake went after were men.

Section 4. The Family Becomes Patriarchal

Various writers agree that during and after Handsome Lake's time there was a change among his followers in the power relations between the sexes, although the way in which this change is worded varies from one writer to another. Hewitt (1933) writes of an across-the-board decline in the power of Iroquois women as a result of white contact. Allen (1986) puts it that the changes intro-

duced by Handsome Lake were toward a male-dominant, patriarchal society. Morgan (mentioned by Tooker, 1984, and by Parker in Fenton Book III, 1968c, as a keen, accurate observer of Seneca life as it was in the mid-1800's) describes his extensive observations of mid-19th century Seneca Iroquois life in an important 1851 book (Morgan, 1954). He asserts that according to his observations Iroquois women are regarded as inferior and are held in contempt by Iroquois men. For this reason, he says, love between the sexes (*i.e.*, in mid-19th century Iroquois life) is not possible and marriage for love is not known among them. Morgan also elsewhere refers to the subordination of the mid-19th century Iroquois wife (in Morgan, 1954). Wallace, however, remarks that love and romance between the sexes flourished in pre-Handsome Lake traditional Iroquois society, and that marriages were traditionally based on mutual preference. (Wallace, 1970.) Morgan points out that he has observed that the Iroquois wife has to be on tap at all hours to serve food at a moment's notice to all comers, not just to family and clan members. Handsome Lake's Code insists on exactly this in sections 20 and 21. This is a far cry from the woman's earlier freedom to be away from home for hours at a time to pursue the economically vital agricultural activities that also gave her economic independence. It is true that longstanding Iroquois hospitality customs had always involved an obligation to provide food and hospitality to visitors from other villages who belonged to one's clan (Tooker, 1984), but Handsome Lake's Code makes demands on women that far exceed the old hospitality customs.

A comment added in 1918 by the reviser to Seaver's account of Mary Jemison's life (Seaver, 1918) (Mary was a white woman who was taken captive by the Seneca at 15 and who lived among them both before, during and after Handsome Lake's mission) says that despite their political power, Iroquois women were in obedient subordination to their husbands in Mary's time. Seaver himself, who took down Mary's story when she was an old woman, remarks on the subordination of the wife. Mary remembered with pleasure the communal work of the women in the fields in which she had taken part as a young woman, remarking that the work had felt physically light. She herself in time became suspect of being a witch, she said. Ricciardelli (1963) states that among the 19th century Oneida, the clan matrons' continued political power to select tribal chiefs became only *pro forma*, and that men came to control the actual selection of tribal chiefs. The Oneida were extensively Christianized until 1900, at which time Handsome Lake's religion gained some foothold, but Ricciardelli's point is that in the

19th century women's putative political power as well as their economic and familial power was in actuality eroded among the Oneida due to exogenous Christian patriarchal pressures. Rothenberg (1980) also states that the Seneca clan matrons' selection and surveillance of male chiefs was abrogated from 1848 to 1964, under Quaker pressure. That the subordination of the wife had not been the case before Handsome Lake's time can be surmised not only from descriptions of women's earlier roles but also from section 8 of Handsome Lake's Code, in which the Creator's Messengers tell him that old women have a tendency to breed mischief, as in the case where the older woman, the mother, says to her married daughter, "My daughter, your spirits are dull, you are not bright. When I was young I was not so agreeable. I was harsh with my husband." The Messengers tell Handsome Lake to tell his people that this sort of advice (*i.e.*, the mother's advice) must stop. It is improbable that Handsome Lake's vision would have discussed this specific point if Iroquois wives had previously been submissive. Stites says (Stites, 1904, pp. 90-91) that in traditional Iroquois culture, "In their intercourse with each other, husband wife were on equal footing." And, "as a general thing, neither pretended to exercise any real authority over the other, each doing as he pleased in his own particular sphere." She cites early Jesuit observations as evidence.

According to Wallace, the leading authority on Handsome Lake and his period, "Handsome Lake's reforms . . . were a sentence of doom upon the traditional quasi-matriarchal system of the Iroquois." (Wallace, 1970, pp. 28-29.) He comments that although Iroquois society has been called matriarchal because of women's important political role,⁶ men's activities were also traditionally central to the Iroquois economic and political welfare. He adds that Handsome Lake targeted the traditionally close mother-daughter relation that had been facilitated by the traditional multi-family longhouse lifestyle, as a central problem in Iroquois life; Handsome Lake implied that older women, a traditional strong force in the family and community, were particularly prone to the evil, harmful practice of witchcraft and to influence their daughters to do the same. (Handsome Lake's Code mentions evil female witches in Sections 46, 72, 103, 104.) Let us recall, also, that these older women possessed knowledge of abortifacient herbs, whereas Handsome Lake prohibited abortion. Wallace points out that according to Handsome Lake's admonitions, men were now supposed to become the heads of families. The new nuclear families became patrilineal with respect to name and inheritance of farms, in the white style, and the older customary

matrilocal with occasional patrilocal in the multi-family longhouse gave way to patrilocal in a one-family house. (Fenton, in Tooker vol. 1, 1986; also see Wallace, 1970, pp. 311-315.) These changes were a response to Handsome Lake's "social gospel," although the League Constitution had specified that the soil and the land belong to the women and that descent is to be matrilineal. Fenton (1968) is in accord with Wallace in referring to the decline of the Iroquois "matriarchate" in Handsome Lake's time, as well as the decline of the importance of the [matriarchal] clan and lineage.

In view of Wallace's remarks cited in the paragraph above to the effect that women's important political role has led to Iroquois society being called matriarchal although in fact men's activities were also traditionally central to the Iroquois economic and political welfare, one must read Wallace's and Fenton's remarks on the *decline* of the "matriarchate" or the "quasi-matriarchal system" of the Iroquois as pointing to the decline of the complementarity or balance of power of the sexes in the direction of what Paula Gunn Allen calls patriarchy—namely, male-dominant society and family. I shall call this a change to the patriarchal family.

That there were women proselytes to Handsome Lake's teachings raises the question as to whether fear was their main motive, or whether there was any positive gain for them in his teachings. His Code prohibited drunkenness as a source of family disruption, spouse abuse, marital infidelity on the part of men as well as women, and the abandonment of their wives and children by husbands. All of these had become major problems for Seneca families during Handsome Lake's time, creating an increasingly heavy burden on wives. In addition the Quakers had been telling the Senecas for some time that it was unfair for the women to have to do all the work in the fields while their men were now idle much of the time. The latter message took effect, in time, although it quite likely would not have resulted in action had not Handsome Lake's putative divine message contained the explicit directive that the Creator wanted Iroquois men to take up white-style farming.

I have, however, seen no evidence that Handsome Lake's women followers were immediately aware that they were engaging in a "tradeoff" in which they were giving up economic independence and co-equal status in their family and their society, in return for some relief from abandonment, relief from abuse by drunken spouses, relief from overwork, safety from an afterlife in hell (for disobeying Handsome Lake's "divine" directives), and safety from possible summary execution for alleged witchcraft. On the contrary, as Wallace reports, even

during Handsome Lake's time the women "still claimed" that they owned the land. Were those women who did come to realize that their rights were being taken from them—perhaps most particularly the older women who remembered earlier times—among the executed "witches" or among the many more who were suspected of witchcraft but let off with a warning? Other women, accustomed to a balance of power between the sexes, may have believed that the new teachings meant that men would now cooperate with the women in farming and in providing for families. Rothenberg (1980) argues that the women hoped to retain economic power by selling the products of Quaker-taught spinning and weaving, but these activities died out by 1820 due to lack of supplies. It was when Handsome Lake with the aid of the Christian missionaries began to put his visions into effect that the pattern emerged in Iroquois agrarian life of the male as the sole farmer, and the only head of the family, with the farm wife relegated solely to housekeeping, child raising, and some small-scale gardening and chores around the farm.

Iroquois economic survival did not logically preclude cooperative large-scale male-and-female farming and a co-headed family. Although farming had traditionally been women's work, there had been some male assistance in clearing the land for cultivation and in hoeing and husking "bees," and occasionally a few rugged individualists among the Iroquois men had bucked convention and had helped their wives in the fields. This did not quite amount to what has been called male-assisted farming, but it does suggest that the limited male participation in farming in the past could have provided a basis for a turn to cooperative large-scale male-and-female farming. This turn was not taken because of the exogenous patriarchal pressures of Handsome Lake's period. (Freilich, 1958, writes that even after the Revolution the majority of Mohawk men kept their traditional male role of courage, risk, and adventure in rafting, circus work, fur trading in the West, and eventually high steel construction work, rather than going into male agriculture. My essay does not apply to this group.)

We can see what happened to the Iroquois in terms of a broader historical perspective. From the late 1780's to the 1860's there were frequent high-pressure attempts on the part of missionaries of a number of Protestant sects to bring male agriculture, the idea of private property, and white institutions and lifestyles to a great many Indian peoples on the North American continent. These efforts were approved and often financially supported by the U.S. federal government in a concerted effort to break Indian tribal autonomy. This can be seen

in the context of a whole network of white, ethnocentric, self-serving attitudes toward Indians stemming from earlier European mercantile motives; the latter were conveniently (for the settlers) intertwined with the notion that Indians ought to pay for the alleged benefits of Christian salvation brought by whites, with native goods, land, and labor, under the supervision of whites. The settlers also wanted to introduce Indian males to agriculture to induce them to settle down rather than roving in the hunt, in order to make the males less unpredictable in their roving and hence more controllable by the settlers. Also, it was thought that Indian males would no longer need so much land if they gave up hunting, and the land-hungry settlers could grab the excess. Christian missionaries, in addition, often wanted to smash all Indian culture as being proud, rather than humble . . . an affront to white (racist) pride as well as to proper Christian humbleness. Many missionaries believed that the entire Indian lifestyle, belief system, mode of agriculture, and customary male and female roles must be eradicated and replaced with what the missionaries thought were more highly evolved white practices as the necessary support for the Christianity they preached. (Axtell, 1981a; Berkhofer, 1965; also see Merchant, 1989, for a specific discussion of such tendencies in New England.)

Iroquois women's communal working of the fields had been a major source of female bonding (Stites, 1904) and the mutual aid societies formed by the women farmers had instilled in them a sense of additional closeness. But the new housebound housewife had to shift her major bonding now to the more confined world of the nuclear family—her husband and her children. Her children were now more numerous, because Handsome Lake prohibited abortion. Regardless of what position one might nowadays take on abortion, the fact is that in traditional Iroquois society women had been in control of their reproduction and were now no longer in this position. Women's old independent agricultural and economic identity was gone, and the physical range of activities formerly possible for women in their comings and goings to and from the fields and in the fields became shrunken, although they continued to work in small family gardens. Their profoundly spiritual and emotional relationship to tribal land as based on actual agricultural activity and actual economic power changed to a merely ceremonial guardianship of the earth in the absence of actual economic power. Much has been written about the loss of Indian men's sense of identity in the new reservation life, but the impact of the new role of women in Handsome Lake communities on their sense of identity and their

sense of self esteem at that time needs further study, including some study of possible long-range after-effects, although both Indian and non-Indian women's roles are now nowhere what they were in Handsome Lake's time. For the new male farmer in Handsome Lake's time, his changed sense of identity was sweetened by his important new role and status as head of the family and by a new turn to Handsome Lake's patriarchal monotheist religion in which a sole male Creator is seen as the only source of creativity and generativity in the world, in contrast to the earlier Iroquois belief in a mix of female and male divine creative/generative principles.

For both men and women it was now necessary to learn to value a greater privatization and greater seclusion of lifestyle, although some village communalism remained.⁷ Industriousness and the work ethic of the missionaries had to become new values for the male farmers and their housewife wives.

One might wonder whether Handsome Lake's endorsement of male farming in the white [sic] manner would bring about in Iroquois men the whites' exploitative, mercantile values toward nature. But his Code taught that farm animals must be treated kindly, that medicinal plants must be treated with the greatest respect, and that farming must not be done for commercial profit. Gratitude and reverence for Diohe'ko, the "Three Sisters" (corn, squash, and beans) (Lewandowski, 1987), is inculcated, though this gratitude is now to be part of our gratitude to the one, male creator for all of the creation; the thanksgiving prayers that are to continue in the religious ceremonials show a continued gratitude and reverence and appreciation for all nature—attitudes prevalent in older traditional culture—but there is a major change to nature as being valued as the dutiful servant of the one, male Creator's will rather than as being an assemblage of cooperative independent powers. From the perspective of modified economic determinism, this ideological change reflected and supported the new male economic headship of the family.

The enclosure of land that came with the adoption of the white man's farming methods seems likely to have brought about a new attitude on the part of the new male farmer toward what was now his real estate (although title continued to belong ultimately to the tribe). I cannot help but wonder whether a new atomic, more self-centered individualism and a new, more self-centered possessiveness gradually entered into the male farmer's valuation of and relationship to his enclosed farmstead, farmed privately by himself rather than communally as women's farming in non-enclosed fields had been done. Such a possessive individualism, as I shall term it, would be a considerable shift toward

non-Indian values and toward the profit motive in farming. (For traditional Indian attitudes toward land and toward nature, see Callicott, 1982; and Hurt, 1987.) Indeed, despite Handsome Lake's prohibition of the profit motive in farming (he thought that the new male farmers should exchange their surplus with other Indian families), farming for profit did in fact set in very soon, little by little. Voget (1969) shows profit considerations as entering into the life of an Iroquois male farmer in the late 19th century, as recorded in this farmer's diary; the diary also documents the use of white farming methods in this farmer's everyday farm practice. It is clear that this Iroquois male farmer is running the farm and that it is *his* farm.

One can also raise some ecofeminist questions as to whether Iroquois attitudes toward land from this time on degenerated from a nurturing mindset into an exploitative mindset (Berry, 1983); the fact however that the Iroquois still today consider women to be the ceremonial guardians of the land, even though women are no longer actual agriculturalists (though they sometimes do some gardening) is an indication that the traditional Iroquois nurturing mindset toward land still persists despite acculturation.

The dominant culture in the United States in Handsome Lake's time was both capitalistic and patriarchal. It is doubtful that non-capitalistic Iroquois farming could have survived in the primarily capitalistic dominant culture, and also doubtful that Jefferson would have endorsed it otherwise.⁸ Jefferson, as well as 52 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, was a member of the Freemasons, an order that was heavily male oriented and patriarchal and excluded women. There is no doubt that early U.S. policies were greatly influenced by the androcentric attitudes and practices of Freemasonry (Albanese, 1976); a non-patriarchal Iroquois agriculture would likely have fared badly in the dominant culture regardless of missionary pressures on the Iroquois. Berkhofer (1965) and Smits (1982) emphasize that white writers from the 17th through the 19th century endorsed a rigid division of labor in farm work, with field husbandry being seen as men's work. Indian female farm labor was seen as an index of "savagery."

Section 5. The Traditional Iroquois Creation Myth

The Iroquois Creation myth has come down from pre-Columbian times, and has over 330 years of recorded history. (Fenton, 1962.) Versions of the myth differ some. What I present below represents the version that Handsome Lake probably knew. (Wallace, 1970, pp. 86-91.) The material in parenth-

eses is from other Seneca versions collected by Hewitt, a half Iroquois, and Chief John Gibson, a full-blood Iroquois. (Fenton, 1962.)

Before the earth existed there was a sky world that contained land, water, animals, and fish and plants, but no sun, moon, or stars, but there was a tree of light. Manlike beings lived there. A sky man falls in love with a sky woman who consents to be his wife. He dreams that the tree must be done away with for the sake of the new creation of the world. His brothers uproot the tree, which plunges through a hole made by the uprooting. The sky husband calls his wife to sit with him at the edge of the hole, and she conceives by the south wind, the air of life, that comes up through the hole. Sky husband now tells her that her new home shall be on a newly created earth below, and that she shall be the mother of the earth beings, and he pushes her through the hole. (In some versions Sky Woman brings with her corn, many seeds, meat, and wood, and in some versions brings her own earth.) Water birds break her fall and help her down onto a great turtle's back. Diver birds then bring up mud from beneath the primeval waters and place it on the turtle's back, creating the earth. (In some versions vegetation sprouts from Sky Woman's tracks when she lands on earth.)

Soon Sky Woman gives birth to a daughter, Earth Woman. Later on, Earth Woman becomes pregnant (by Turtle in some versions, or by the water, or by the west wind or the north wind) and gives birth to twin sons; the elder twin is the Good Twin (Tarachiawagon) and the younger is the Evil Twin (Tawiskaron). Earth Woman, now dying, calls to her side her mother, Sky Woman, and tells Sky Woman to bury her under the ground, predicting that corn will grow from her breasts, whose seeds must be kept and planted for the generations of her children that will live here. (In some versions, squash, beans, and tobacco also sprout from Earth Woman's body. And in some versions Sky Woman now creates the stars.) The Good Twin now creates the sun and moon. (In some versions the Good Twin makes the sun from his mother's head and the moon from her face. In another version Sky Woman's head becomes the moon after her death.) He also creates man and woman, some helpful animals and plants, unimpeded waterways, and the Thunders (rains) to help with the crops. He improves the corn already growing from his mother's, Earth Woman's, grave. The Evil Twin, in jealousy, creates ugly or dangerous animals, the waterfalls and whirlpools that render waterways useless to humans, frost, death, and disease. He also blights the corn to make it harder to raise and less good tasting.

Finally the Good Twin goes on an inspection tour, walking around the earth, and he meets the Evil Twin who is now in the form of a giant. The Good Twin asks the Evil Twin what he is doing, and the latter says he is looking over his creation. But the Good Twin says, "It is *my* creation." They agree to settle the dispute by a mountain moving contest. The contest erupts into violence and the Evil Twin crashes against a mountainside so hard that his face is rendered permanently lopsided. The Evil Twin submits, as the loser, and says that the Good Twin is the Creator. (In the Hewitt/Gibson version of the myth [Fenton, 1962] although a struggle is depicted between the twins, it is not over the question of whose the creation is. Instead, the dispute is in this version provoked by the fact that the Evil Twin menaces everything the Good Twin creates, by means of a counter-creation.) The Evil Twin now also agrees to drive away disease. At the end of the Creation myth both Twins, now reconciled, finally retire to eternal life in the sky world.

* * *

In the above Creation myth the figures of Sky Woman, Earth Woman, Good Twin and Evil Twin, are each what anthropologists call a Culture Hero, *i.e.*, the bringer of gifts to mankind, rather than a cosmic Creator. (Fenton, 1962; Underhill, 1965.) There is a great deal already in existence before the Good Twin contributes his share, and the Evil Twin also contributes his share. The quarrel at the end is not actually a quarrel about which one created (*i.e.*, made) everything, for neither of them created everything; it is a quarrel about who is predominant, for the winning of the title "Creator" is achieved by means of a power struggle rather than by virtue of a recounting by either of the contenders of what he has created. It is a title denoting predominance of good over evil, or the ultimate triumph of the principle of good. When the Good Twin says, "It is *my* creation," we are compelled by the internal structure of the myth itself to see this utterance as a victory claim on the part of the Good Twin, rather than a claim of his having been the sole fabricator of everything, for there is a very great deal that he has not actually, in terms of the myth, created. Every version of the Creation myth I have seen shows the Good Twin not as sole fabricator of the creation but as co-contributor to the creation. Let us keep in mind also that another important version of the myth represents the dispute between the Twins as provoked by the Evil Twin's counter-creations, not as due to controversy about who fabricated the whole creation.

In Parker's version of the Seneca Creation myth, recounted again by Tooker (Parker, 1923;

Tooker, 1979), the struggle between the Good Twin and the Evil Twin is likewise provoked by the latter's trying to get power over the former. The Good Twin prevails by using his good power to overcome the Evil Twin's evil power, and the latter is finally banished forever to a cave full of evil creatures. The Good Twin then creates further men and women out of dust and gives them all the world, and teaches them to say they are descended from him and to say they are the flesh of the Sky Woman.

The various versions of the Creation myth all point to co-creatorship or co-contribution to the creation on the part of four beings: Sky Woman, Earth Woman, the Good Twin, and the Evil Twin. There was a fundamental polytheism of equal, non-hierarchical male and female divinities in traditional Iroquois religion, reflecting the equal, non-hierarchical economic status of the major constituent groups in Iroquois culture (*e.g.*, women, hunters, warriors). (Stites, 1904. Stites does not discuss the Handsome Lake period or the Handsome Lake religion; her focus is on the pre-Handsome Lake tradition.)

Section 6. Handsome Lake's Visions Compared With the Creation Myth

When we turn to the Code of Handsome Lake, we find only one Creator, who is referred to consistently as "he" and "him." In section 49 of the Code, three Messengers (later there are four) who have come in a vision to give Handsome Lake a divine message report to him that there is a dispute in the heaven-world between the Creator and the evil-minded spirit. The Creator says, "The earth is mine *for I have created it* and you have helped me in no part." (Italics mine.) But the evil one replies, "I do not acknowledge that you have created the earth and I helped in no part . . ." But the Creator insists that mankind are to call him "our Creator." In the preamble to the Code the Creator is said to have made the stars, and is also thanked for everything Handsome Lake sees. The three Messengers come and say they were sent by "He who created the world at the beginning" to Handsome Lake who "is grateful for my [*i.e.*, the Creator's] creations . . ." In section 28 the Creator is said to be sad because of the sins of the beings he created (*i.e.*, mankind). In section 28 the Creator is said to have given Diohe'ko (corn, squash, and beans). In section 50 the Messengers say the Creator made the waters of the earth, and also fire. In section 74 the Messengers say that the Creator has imprisoned in the underworld all the poisonous creatures that the evil one created (the first and only acknowledgment that anyone else created anything). In section 76 the Creator is said to be able to stop the earth and heavens and all the powers of nature.

It is clear that Handsome Lake is establishing a monotheism, with the Creator the one sole fabricator of everything that exists with the sole exception of the poisonous creatures whom the evil one has created. (The evil one is named in one place the Tormenter, and he is depicted as being in charge of a place of eternal punishment to which those persons go after death who have in life disobeyed the Creator's will as disclosed in Handsome Lake's visions—thus indicating that even the evil one is a part of the Creator's plan and mankind will find this out in due time.) Sky Woman's and Earth Woman's contributions to the creation, as related in the Creation myth, have no place in this new monotheism; their roles have been assimilated by the Creator who is now said to have created everything Handsome Lake can see . . . even the corn, squash, and beans traditionally so closely connected with the feminine creative principle represented by Earth Woman.

Wallace says the Creator is the same personage as the old Tarachiawagon (the Good Twin) (Wallace, 1970, p. 251) and Tooker says there is evidence that the Creator and the Good Twin are the same personage (Tooker, 1970). Whether or not this is so—and I suspect that it is—the important thing here is that the female creative principles have been assimilated by the one male creative principle now called the Creator in Handsome Lake's Code. From the perspective of economic determinism, it is likely that this ideological change occurred as an effect of economic changes brought about by the shift from female to male agriculture that the Code sanctions. The female creative principles in the original Creation myth (as represented by Sky Woman and Earth Woman) are important for their contribution of corn, squash, beans and tobacco to mankind, and these were traditionally the staples of Iroquois agriculture. (In one version, Sky Woman also brings corn, seeds, earth, wood, meat, and vegetation, and she also creates the stars. Also in one version sun and moon are made from parts of Earth Woman's body.) Furthermore, earth itself, and the sky, water, birds, winds, Turtle, and the primeval waters, all pre-exist the Good Twin of the Creation myth in all the versions I have seen. And in the original Creation myth Sky Woman is told that she is to be the mother of all the earth beings, and in one version this is to be taught to mankind.

Handsome Lake's Code is a move toward a patriarchal, monotheistic concept of creation, with a heavenly or hellish afterlife, replacing the earlier view of the creation as generated by male and female generative/creative forces in conjunction. This is a metaphysical paradigm shift of major importance. It represents the assimilation of key for-

mal aspects of the oppressor's belief system, a partial identification with the dominant group, in Allport's terms. Handsome Lake introduces a supremely powerful male deity, together with a heaven and hell as reward or punishment for virtue or sin, as well as some new white-style approved values, to replace the traditional Iroquois polytheism of non-hierarchical male and female deities, the traditional afterlife, and some other older values. Traditional Iroquois belief had the souls of good and bad Iroquois alike going to the same spirit land after death, rather than separated out for bliss and torment respectively.

The Christian religious tradition is that of a patriarchal monotheism lacking a cosmic feminine creative principle or power and teaching an afterlife in Heaven or Hell as reward or punishment for virtue or sin: we can clearly see these Christian influences on Handsome Lake's shift to a patriarchal monotheism. But although some Iroquois did in fact convert to Christian denominations, both Catholic and Protestant, Handsome Lake's followers have always been a distinct group outside of Christianity and his followers have prided themselves on retaining their Indianness in a way that they feel their Christian-convert brethren have not. Although Christian doctrines played a role in the form taken by the shift to Handsome Lake's patriarchal monotheism, some non-Christian content is retained.

The Iroquois had not traditionally had any supreme sacerdotal office, but Handsome Lake's vision states in section 40 that the Creator's Messengers require that the other Iroquois chiefs and religious leaders must enforce the teachings that Handsome Lake reveals. He is said in section 73 of the Code to be the only one who will receive a message from the Creator through the Messengers. Furthermore, the Code states in section 29 that the traditional medicine societies, the most ancient basis of Iroquois religion, are to disband. In an appearance of obedience to Handsome Lake's teachings, the medicine societies pretended to disband but actually went underground. They had to; the members of at least one such society that was discovered to be still meeting were killed as sorcerers.⁹ Members of the medicine societies had traditionally been something like priests/priestesses and physicians, but Handsome Lake's visions singled him out as now the sole spokesman of the Creator's will and as the sole diagnostician of illness. The medicine societies, whose members had traditionally included both men and women, publicly re-emerged by the 20th century and became assimilated into Handsome Lake's monotheistic patriarchal religion.

Important features of the traditional Iroquois religion are retained in Handsome Lake's Code in its explicit teaching that four of the six annual thanksgiving ceremonials are to be kept; in these ceremonials the old Iroquois appreciation of nature is preserved. Also, both men and women are still included among the Faith Keepers (supervisors of religious ritual). But there is, however, an emphasis in the Code in section 31 and in the post-Handsome Lake thanksgiving speeches or prayers on the thanking of the Creator for nature. Nature in these prayers is now celebrated as the creation of the sole Creator, who is male, according to recordings taken by Parker in 1906 and translated at that time.¹⁰ In these prayers the Creator is named as Creator of the World and is thanked as the one who has created the world and everything in it, including foodstuffs, sky, sun, moon, stars, and everything visible to mankind. The sun and moon are thanked for being dutiful to the tasks the Creator assigned them. All the other entities and creatures are thanked, but in each case only after the statement that the Creator has thought them into existence. Women's function is stated thus: "The function of women" and "the design of their creation" as given them by the Creator "should be the rearing of children," and women are thanked for doing their duty "in fulfilling the design of their creation." In the prayers Parker cites, men's function is not described or specified, leaving open the possibility that men's function and the design of their creation can be various. Any mention of the older function of women as agriculturalists is absent in these prayers.

Feminist theology emphasizes the extremely detrimental long-range effects on Western mainstream culture of Christianity's lack of a feminine cosmic principle, a point that is documented by feminist theologians such as, *e.g.*, Mary Daly, a Protestant (Daly, 1973 and 1975), and Sandra Schneiders, a Catholic (1990). Jungian analyst G. Esther Harding (1976) shows the positive effects on women's well being of a religious/metaphysical belief system that incorporates a cosmic feminine principle as well as a cosmic masculine principle. Handsome Lake's religious/metaphysical paradigm shift from a non-hierarchical male-and-female polytheism to a patriarchal monotheism needs to be further examined from these perspectives.

Section 7. Summary

At a time of severe economic, political, and psychological crisis in Iroquois culture, the change from female to male agriculture promoted by the Iroquois prophet/chief Handsome Lake brought about a disempowerment of Iroquois women. This economic change was facilitated by a concomitant

change to the patriarchal family and led to and was supported by a patriarchal monotheism in religion also promoted by Handsome Lake. All of these changes, under pressures from the dominant exogenous culture, departed from Iroquois tradition. Handsome Lake's witch hunt may have played some role in suppressing women's dissent. The crises could have been dealt with in other ways, but the fact that these particular changes were effected represents an intrusion of exogenous ideas and values into the indigenous Iroquois culture that had hitherto been based on a complementarity or balance of powers between the sexes.

Certain continuations of Iroquois tradition were transmitted by Handsome Lake's teachings, such as a nurturing attitude toward the earth, the rejection of the profit motive in farming (a rejection that was, however, temporary among his followers), the retention of traditional Iroquois reverence for nature (although in a new patriarchal monotheistic framework), and the retention of four out of six of the very important old religious ceremonials in which women as well as men continued to play a part.

Some possibilities for further study are: the short- and long-range effects of women's newly disempowered role on their lives and self esteem;¹¹ the effects on men of the possible new possessive individualism brought about by the enclosure of privately farmed fields; the effects of the new privatization and relatively greater seclusion of lifestyle on both men and women; and the effects on both men and women of the religious/metaphysical paradigm shift from male-and-female non-hierarchical polytheism to patriarchal monotheism.

Notes

1. I use the words "exogenous," "non-Indian," "Christian," and "white" in different contexts to express different contrasts with traditional Iroquois culture. "Exogenous" will denote influences coming from outside Iroquois culture, as contrasted with previously existing indigenous tendencies. "Non-Indian" will denote in general that which is not ethnically or genetically Indian. "Christian" will refer to this particular non-Iroquois religious belief, and "white" will suggest people or practices associated by Handsome Lake and others with white birth or white ethnicity. Handsome Lake's Code, section 25, specifically refers to the "white man's" mode of farming; hence in any passages referring to Handsome Lake's views I shall where relevant use the terms "white" and "white man."
2. For a good coverage of some of the major topics in this area of scholarship, see the introductory article by Cornelia Flora in *Agriculture and Human Values*, Vol. II, No. 1, Winter 1985. Another good example of scholarship in this area can be found in the collected papers of the 1986 Wisconsin Conference on women and farming, published under the title *Women and Farming: Changing Roles, Changing Structures*, edited by Wava G. Haney and Jane B. Knowles. See also Brown (1970) for a comparison of the change from female to male agriculture among the Iroquois to a similar change in an African tribe.

3. Parker wrote in 1913 (Fenton, Book II, 1968, p. 11) that Handsome Lake created a new system, creating a revolution in Iroquois life, overturning the older religious system. Tooker wrote in 1968 that Handsome Lake's religious and value system was similar to that of whites, but later in 1970 she said that his reforms did not change basic Iroquois ritual and belief. Wallace in 1970 wrote that Handsome Lake introduced only minor changes into Iroquois traditional belief but that his disciples introduced greater changes. Allen in 1986 saw Handsome Lake as promoting a tribal version of the white man's way. Seneca writer David Bray in 1986 briefly mentioned Handsome Lake's agricultural reforms with approval, without discussing the preliminary influence of Christian missionaries on the Iroquois. He did not document his views. Veesev in 1988 depicted Handsome Lake's changes as simply a more modern phase of traditional Iroquois belief.
4. Allen is a notable exception to other scholars in emphasizing a feminist perspective of Handsome Lake's changes. She does not, however, discuss these changes in a context of a discussion about Iroquois agriculture or Iroquois religious/metaphysical belief. Rothenberg, an economic determinist, draws some connections between Iroquois women's 19th century status and their economic role. (Rothenberg, 1978; 1980.) Rothenberg incorrectly thinks Seneca women's "three sisters" agriculture continued into the 20th century, with men taking over other crops and animal husbandry as well as all plowing; she is wrong in taking Parker's 1912 account of women's old agriculture as "contemporary" when it is clearly historical, but she indicates a slower and less successful Seneca farming shift than Wallace or Fenton describe.
6. However, Tooker (1984) in a brief essay on Iroquois women takes the position that Iroquois women never had much power politically, nor was their economic power, she thinks, ever particularly important. She does not distinguish between the pre- and post-Handsome Lake period (*i.e.*, pre- and post-1800), nor does she discuss the shift from female to male agriculture and the effects of acculturation, in this essay.
7. Fenton, in "Locality as a Basic Factor In the Development Of Iroquois Social Structure," (1986) p. 41, says that by 1800 the bark longhouse with its residence patterns was of the past, replaced by single houses on scattered farmsteads.
8. The issues raised in the paragraph were suggested to me in a personal communication from an Australian writer, Norma Broadribb, who is currently preparing a manuscript on Australian Aborigine belief and culture.
9. Parker (in Fenton Book II, 1978, p. 114) says, "The existence of the [medicine] societies became doubly veiled. The zealous proselytes of the New Religion [Handsome Lake's religion] denied their legality and even their existence, and the adherents of the old system did not care to express themselves too strongly in proclaiming their sacred orders still very much alive." Parker goes on to say that the members of at least one society were executed as sorcerers when their society was found still in operation.
10. Parker, in Fenton Book II, 1968, pp. 85-100. These prayers were delivered at the Midwinter Ceremonials. Tape recordings made in 1959 show the same features. (Chafe, 1961.) Tooker (1970) documents that we have little specific information on pre-1800 Midwinter Ceremonials, which were the major thanksgiving ceremonials of the year and included the major thanksgiving prayers.

Although Handsome Lake's reconstruction of the traditional Iroquois account of the Creation became the "theologically" correct account in the religion he founded, the older account did not disappear but continued as a myth.

11. *American Indian Women* (Bataille and Sands, 1988) summarizes books by American Indian women about their lives and cultures, giving brief biographical information about these women. The works of some 20th century Iroquois women writers are mentioned. Bataille and Sands in a number of contexts raise questions about the effects of acculturation and white influence on a number of Indian cultures, including questions about loss of power by women as a result

of white contact. This is not a new issue. For example, as early as 1911 Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa), a Santee Sioux, wrote in *The Soul Of the Indian* that white contact lowered the status of Sioux women. Keres writer Paula Gunn Allen (1986) indicates that white contact lowered the status of Indian women across the board.

Audrey Shenandoah, a 20th century Onondaga Iroquois Clan Mother, states that "Iroquois women have a significant position politically and socially. . . ." (Shenandoah, 1990.) However, she goes on to state that men's activity "has to be different" from women's. Women's role is to give and nurture life, to be ceremonial guardians of the earth, to teach their nation how to live, and spiritually to support their culture. Although Clan Mothers retain their traditional right to nominate new male chiefs from among the male eligibles, it is men's role, she says, to look after their people, to make their people's judgments and decisions, and to lead their culture. Shenandoah does not raise questions about the effects of 19th century acculturation, nor does she indicate that present-day gardening activities by some Iroquois women, and women's present-day ceremonial guardianship of the earth, are not at all the same thing as the pre-19th century Iroquois women's central role in agriculture together with the unique social, political, economic, and religious status this central agricultural role brought with it.

Shenandoah's conception of sex equality is clearly different from that of 20th century feminists. However, this topic, as well as the whole issue of late 20th century American Indian women's status, lies outside the scope of the present essay.

In a 1974 article, anthropologist Cara Richards characterizes contemporary Onondaga women as "liberated" and as having "some" legal and political power, although some tribal roles such as being a chief are closed to women because "maleness" is essential to such roles. Richards does not elaborate on these statements, makes no mention of Iroquois history or acculturation, and devotes the bulk of her article to narrating the "life" of an admittedly composite Onondaga woman, "Mary Pierce," remarking that "There is no such person as Mary Pierce."

Some accounts of 20th century Longhouse religion (Handsome Lake's religion) can be found in Shimony, 1961; Speck, 1949; Tooker, 1970; Wallace, 1970. These accounts depict only males as authorized preachers or reciters of Handsome Lake's gospel and women as preparers and servers of food for religious ceremonials. Both sexes are participants in religious dances and are members of the Faith Keepers. These accounts sometimes question to what extent the old Iroquois beliefs are retained, but do not resolve this question, and they also show that Longhouse practitioners of the 20th century are working in various occupations, not solely farming.

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