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THE IROQUOIS AND THE WORLD'S RIM: SPECULATIONS ON COLOR, CULTURE, AND CONTACT

George R. Hamell

CONTACT BETWEEN THE PEOPLES of the New World and of the Old World had ideational consequences for both. The event of Contact, and more importantly the process of Contact, initiated the reciprocal redefinition of the mythical realities which for centuries, if not millennia, had structured New World and Old World thoughts and behaviors about the other world. Neither the event nor the process of Contact are over. For the Iroquois, dwelling beneath the Great Tree at the center of Earth-Island, indirect knowledge of Contact at the eastern World's Rim and the indirect receipt of exotic trade goods emanating there, appear to have reified and reinvigorated the traditional ritual meanings and functions of light, bright (reflective), and white things. Not least among these were white marine shell and red, upper Great Lakes native copper, into whose meanings and functions were incorporated and assimilated analogous European trade goods of glazed ceramic, glass, and metal. This seemingly innocuous exchange of European baubles, bangles, and beads along the mid-Atlantic Coast of northeastern North America during the sixteenth century catalyzed profound changes in the ideational, sociopolitical, and economic sub-systems of coastal and interior native populations.

At the turn of the sixteenth century the indigenous populations of northeastern North America were either Algonquian, Northern Iroquoian, or Siouan speakers (c.f. Trigger 1978). The latter were by far in the minority and were found nearer the mid-Atlantic coast, while the majority were speakers of diverse Algonquian languages. With the exception of the Meherrin, Nottaway, and Tuscarora of the coastal Virginia and Carolina regions to the southeast and the so-called St. Lawrence Iroquoians to the northeast, the remaining Northern Iroquoian speakers dwelt in the interior in what is now north central Pennsylvania, western and central New York, and southwestern Ontario, bordering the Great Lakes of Erie and Ontario.

These northern Iroquoian speakers have since been linguistically differentiated into eleven regional populations, which with caution can be identified with as many historically attested geosociopolitical entities, or tribes (nations), bearing the same linguistic identifiers (c.f. Lounsbury 1978; Trigger 1978: 282–289, 357–417, 466–524). Caution

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is required, since the event and process of Contact seems to have been a factor in the tribalization of at least some of these regional populations. Furthermore, many of the so-called historic Northern Iroquoian tribes were initially regional confederations of more or less biologically, linguistically, and ethnically distinct communities.

The seventeenth-century Seneca, or "the people of the great hill," are one such geosociopolitical entity (Hamell 1980; Hamell and Dean 1987; c.f. Abler and Tooker 1978; Abrams 1976). Despite the implication of homogeneity, a Northern Iroquoian "tribal" designation frequently masked considerable linguistic, biological, and even ethnic-cultural diversity among its constituent populations. Countering the centrifugal tendency of this diversity was the stronger centripetal force of community-focused kinship and the reciprocal responsibilities of consequent social relations. Kinship was the paradigm that integrated Northern Iroquoian populations into successively larger geosociopolitical entities: beginning with the longhouse matrilineage, to the clan (and moiety), to the village, to the confederated villages comprising the tribe, and to the tribes comprising interregional confederacies, the Iroquois Confederacy—originally comprised of the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk—being the best-known example.

Glottochronology and comparative linguistic research among the Northern Iroquoians suggest that their historic distribution overlaps that of their probable "homeland": the northern Appalachian Plateau region of north-central Pennsylvania and south-central New York, and astraddle divides between major riverine systems draining toward the southwest, southeast, and northeast (Lounsbury 1978). From their ethnocentric perspective, the Real Men, or the Iroquois proper, indeed occupied the highest land upon Earth-Island.

The Northern Iroquoians, like many of their Algonquian and Siouan neighbors, were relatively recent swidden horticulturalists (c.f. Chafe 1964; Fenton 1978; Tooker 1970). The Three Sisters or Our Life Supporters—that is, maize, beans, and squash, as we so unhumanly refer to them—had been introduced to Northeastern Woodland populations about 1,000 years ago (c.f. Tuck 1978; Wright 1984). For thousands of years earlier, however, Northern Iroquoian speakers, like their Algonquian and Siouan neighbors, had been hunters, fishermen, and gatherers near exclusively (c.f. Ritchie 1980; Ritchie and Funk 1973). Swidden horticulture did not displace these earlier subsistence bases, but was incorporated within them. Its recent incorporation is tellingly revealed linguistically, ritually, and archeologically.

The religion, or, as I prefer, the mythical reality of the Northern Iroquoians generally, and of the Iroquois proper, differed little from that of their swidden-horticulturalist and hunting, fishing, and gathering Algonquian and Siouan neighbors (Hamell 1986). This mythical reality was in structure and process the ancient, shamanistically based

world view of the hunter, the fishermen, and the gatherer. It was a mythical reality also integrated by the reciprocal responsibilities of kinship. Northern Iroquoians, Algonquians, and Siouans did not live in a *natural* world, but in a *social* world inhabited by human kinds of people, real men (man-beings), and by other-than-human kinds of people. The latter comprise the mind-less, will-less, and soul-less biological, geological, meteorological, and astronomical phenomena, which we call *nature* in distinction to *culture*.

Within Northern Iroquoian mythical reality, ritual was a social contract invested among human man-beings to maintain the social order that had been chartered by the Master of Life to obtain among all man-beings. Quite naturally, or I should say, quite culturally, social order was the ideal state-of-being, a state of individual and collective well-being: physically and spiritually, as well as socially. Failure to maintain this ritual or social contract precipitated entropy in relations, and its asocial and anti-social consequences. For the Northern Iroquoian, such literal and figurative dark times, characterized by war, famine, and pestilence, were heralded by the return of the primal, white fire dragon (serpent \approx panther) man-being of discord, the alter ego of the meteor (comet) man-being (Hamell 1991: 49–60).

Northern Iroquoian mythical reality was a generally equalitarian social order, although the reciprocal responsibilities that obtained among and between grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, sisters, brothers, and cousins were not always symmetrical. Social distance—generational distance in particular—was a primary variable in structuring the context and content of social relations.

The World's Rim

At the turn of the sixteenth century the mythical reality of the Northern Iroquoians, like the mythical reality of their Old World contemporaries, was ethnocentric, anthropocentric, and geocentric. According to the traditional mythical reality of the Iroquois proper, they as Real Men dwell at the center, sheltered beneath a great white pine tree (man-being), located at the middle of the back of a great turtle (man-being) afloat in the middle of a great lake, beyond which lies the World's Rim (c.f. Fenton 1962). Daylight is provided by Elder Brother Sun (man-being) as he glides overhead westwardly along the interior surface of the sky dome from his place of emergence in the east, pausing overhead at noon to look down upon the affairs of men. At the World's Rim to the west, Elder Brother Sun begins his nocturnal passage east through the below world, and the traditional home of the souls of the deceased, to emerge once again in the east to the thanksgivings of human man-beings.

Surrounded by its cornfields, slashed-and-burned from the surrounding forest, the typical, late prehistoric Iroquois village was the world in microcosm. The Woods'-edge surrounding the village was analogous to the World's Rim. Both were ritual thresholds, where mythical time and space converged: the setting and context for rites-of-passage, and for social exchanges between real human man-beings and other-than-human man-beings.¹ Among the latter are the grandfathers, keepers of precious substances or medicines of well-being and of the rituals associated with them, who habitually dwell at liminal places: in deep springs, rivers, and lakes, in caves and rocky places, and at the World's Rim, beyond the great waters surrounding Earth-Island.²

Such substances and rituals were the gifts with which those on vision quest, or the long-lost warrior or hunter, returned, having accidentally wandered to such extremes. While all knew of the World's Rim and of what one could expect to find there, few real human man-beings had ever actually journeyed there, and fewer still had ever returned. Nevertheless, the World's Rim was a reality, a mythical reality that underlay the cultural efficacy of substances and goods originating there, and most frequently received through exchange from other real human-man-beings, who likewise knew of the ultimate source of such things, but again only indirectly through others.

At the turn of the sixteenth century, the eastern World's Rim of Iroquois mythical reality and the western World's Rim or edge of the world of European mythical reality were brought into physical and metaphysical, tangential relation, at first, sporadically, and then permanently. Here within a shared geographical and metaphysical frontier, the mythical reality of one world began its redefinition in relation to the mythical reality of the other world, a process that continues through the present.³

Along this shared cultural frontier, exotic substances and objects of the mythical reality of the one culture acquired an elevated cultural efficacy within the other's mythical reality.⁴ We tend to think that this process was one-sided. The seeming naiveté of the Indian response to European baubles, bangles, and beads is the stereotypical example. However, this process of the mundane of one mythical reality becoming the exotic of another mythical reality, assuming a disproportionate ideational efficacy within its recipient culture, was a reciprocal cultural phenomenon. How else do we explain the *Old World* ideational (religious or scientific) interest in *New World* artificialia? Twined fiber bags, quill-decorated moccasins, steatite smoking pipes, wooden ball-headed warclubs, and more, acquired and collected by European traders, travelers, scholars, and kings from the northeastern New World, were placed in proud display in so-called cabinets of curiosi-

ties, the ancestors of today's great, Old World ethnographical collections and museums (c.f. Burch 1990; Hamell 1987).

Light, Bright, and White Things Are Good to Think

The lure of exotic and of literally and figuratively precious substances brought the mythical reality of the *Old World* into tangential relations with the *New World*. What were among these substances, so precious in the Old World, that lured men in small boats to the ends of the world, as known? Gold, silver, diamonds, and pearls, which had long been, and still are, traditional, Western European material metaphors of value, not only of *economic* value but of *ideational* value as well (c.f. Gombrich 1963: 12–29). Before bank books, stocks and bonds, and paper currencies, that is, paper symbols of wealth, these substances comprised tangible and conspicuous metaphors of cultural value, encoded and manifested linguistically and synesthetically within figures of speech, in clothing and adornment, and in works of art and architecture. Invested within these substances and the artifacts made from them was a millenia-old fusion of aesthetic and ideational interest and value.

Like most biological organisms, humans are phototropic: they grow toward the light. As sentient biological organisms, humans tend towards the light, whether it be the Sun or *the Son*. As sentient biological organisms, humans understand that light is life, and that light is the prerequisite to animacy and sentience. This is a fundamental and, I daresay, universal cultural axiom that has generated parallel dependent corollaries manifested cross-culturally in human thought and behavior, linguistic and physical.

Light (sources), bright (reflective), and white things are tangible metaphors for abstractions of greatest cultural value: for life itself, and for positive states of physical, social, and spiritual well-being. We should remind ourselves that the great value that Western culture places upon the Golden Rule, or upon a gem or pearl of wisdom, lies not with their economic worth, but with their reflective virtues.

For millenia in the Old World, such substances and artifacts fashioned from them have represented wealth as weal-, or well-being. The Iroquois and other Northeastern Woodland Indian peoples would agree with this characterization of wealth as well-being. Among them, however, wealth as well-being is more generally appreciated as medicine: the insurance and assurance of physical, social, and spiritual well-being, individually or collectively invoked in ritual. Within ritual contexts, these concepts of well-being have traditionally constellated about white shell, and more recently about another, bright, light-reflective, white substance: a "white metal," silver.

In the interior mid-Atlantic region at Contact, the "diamonds of the country" were the relatively scarce and small cylindrical or barrel-

shaped beads of white marine shell, which were to become recorded in contemporary documents as *sewant* (Dutch), *porcelaine* (French), and *wampumpeague*, shortened to *wampum* (English).⁵ It was Jacques Cartier in 1535, who speaking of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians, established the convention of making the comparison between the Northeastern Woodland Indians' interest and desire for these seemingly inconsequential small white (marine) shell beads, and that of Western Europeans for gold, silver, diamonds, and pearls.⁶

A Semantics of Color, Ritual, and Material Culture

Among the Northern Iroquoians, and the Northeastern Woodland Indians generally, color is a semantically organizing principle of ritual states-of-being and of ritual material culture. Three colors predominate: white, black, and red.⁷ These colors organize ritual states-of-being into three contrastive and complementary sets: social states-of-being, asocial states-of-being, and anti-social states-of-being, respectively.⁸ Ritual is the means to maintain a desired state-of-being, or to transform one state-of-being into an at least temporarily more desirable state-of-being. Within ritual contexts material culture functions to synesthetically manifest through its attribute of color the present state-of-being of its participants, and to synesthetically manifest through color, the desired state-of-being to be ritually effected. This may be the status quo, or one of the other two contrastive states-of-being.

The colors white, black, and red potentially organize ritual states-of-being and ritual material culture into either triadic or dyadic contrastive-complementary sets. White social states-of-being, black asocial states-of-being, and red anti-social states-of-being form the one contrastive-complementary, triadic set; white *and* red social states-of-being in contrast to black asocial states-of-being form one dyadic opposition; and white social states-of-being in contrast to black and red, anti-social states-of-being form the other.

Within these ritual states-of-being, the colors white, black, and red also individually manifest varying valencies (+, 0, or -) of potency, evaluation, and activity (c.f. Adams 1973; Osgood, May, and Miron 1975), depending upon the state-of-being being ritually foregrounded and the state-of-being with which it is being contrasted. For example, white(-ness), the color of (day)light and thus of life itself, is the most potent color, and the most highly evaluated color if that potency is consecrated to socially constructive purposes.⁹ However, white *and* red are both *potent* colors, since they are generally identified with the sentient aspect and the animate aspect (i.e., blood) of life, respectively.¹⁰

White and red are also positively evaluated colors to the extent that their (life) potency is ritually consecrated to socially constructive

functions. However, since red is the most *active* or animate of the three colors, it is also bivalent: if its animacy is consecrated to socially destructive functions, it manifests anti-social states-of-being in contrast to white social states-of-(physical, social, and spiritual) being; if its animacy is consecrated to socially constructive functions, it manifests social states-of-(physical well-) being. When conjoined, white and red manifest the sentient and animate aspects of social states-of-being, respectively, and are most frequently contrasted to black states-of-being, characterized by the absence of sentience and animacy, as in states of mourning.¹¹

Life's Immortal Shell

Concepts of greatest (life) potency, and consequently of greatest positive cultural evaluation—which are semantically identified with whiteness—are the common ideational denominators underlying the ritual functions of white shell throughout the Northeastern Woodlands. Within social states-of-being, white shell, whether freshwater or marine in origin and regardless of its natural or manufactured form, functions as a metaphor for light, and thus for life itself, particularly in its sentient aspect. White shell is a material metaphor for the biological continuity of life in general, and for the biological and social continuity of human life in particular (Hamell 1986).

This function and meaning of white shell underwrote the intense interest in white marine shell “ornaments,” particularly, in those small cylindrical beads, called *sewant*, *porcelaine*, and *wampum*, which became after Contact the medium and the message of social exchanges between native and native, and native and newcomer. Red(-painted) and/or purple (“black”) wampum beads, bead strings, and bead belts were the media of socially contrastive messages.

Light, bright, and white were and still are good to think with among the Iroquois and other Northeastern Woodland Indians. This ritual function and meaning of light, bright, and white material culture, shellwork in particular, may with confidence be projected far back into prehistory, as can the contrastive-complementary functions and meanings of black and red material culture. This proposed semantics of color, ritual, and material culture most probably accounts for the differential and deferential disposal in mortuary contexts during the Terminal Archaic and during the Early and Middle Woodland periods of white (marine) shell, white freshwater pearls, white (≈ transparent) rock crystal, white chalcedony, white (muscovite) mica, white free-state metals (silver, galena); red cedar, red ocher (hematite), red chalcedony, red jasper, red pipestone (catilinite), red native copper; and black charcoal, black obsidian, black chalcedony (and chert), black (biotite) mica, and black meteoric iron. I suggest that in the reporting of archeologically recovered ritual mate-

rial culture, a presentation organized by color may be as meaningful, and perhaps more so, than its reportage by the traditional analytical categories of raw material and function.

Cultural and Contact Continuities

During prehistory, white, black, and red exotic substances moved hundreds of miles across exchange networks from their ascribed places of origin in distant regions where mythic time and space converged, at least from the ideational perspective of the recipient local community. To some extent the cultural efficacy of such luxury and status goods, as they are called by archeologists, was positively correlated with the social distance of their ascribed place of origin. While the exchange of such substances across and within the interior mid-Atlantic region did not stop entirely about 1,000 years ago, it did diminish greatly during the Late Woodland period, that is, during late prehistory.

However, during this period there was a resurgence in the exchange of native copper originating in the Lake Superior region, and of marine shell emanating from the mid-Atlantic coast and most probably from the Chesapeake Bay region (Bradley 1987). In a probable series of indirect exchanges between local communities, marine shell and marine shell "ornaments" passed from the coast, northwest up the Susquehanna River and its tributary drainages into what is now eastern and central New York State. This was one of the primary indigenous trade networks across which were to move the earliest European trade goods during early protohistory.

Within the region of the historic Seneca Iroquois, this resurgence of interest in native copper and marine shell is archeologically evidenced by their increasingly frequent differential and deferential disposal in mortuary contexts. Their inclusion is coincident with the increasing frequency with which the deceased are accompanied by other so-called "grave goods," local or exotic in origin. This appears to have been a general cultural phenomenon throughout the Northeast during the sixteenth century.

A tenuous thread of archeological data can be woven to link the resurgence of this mortuary behavior to that of the Middle Woodland period and earlier. It has been asserted that this resurgence of interest in native copper and marine shell, and in their differential mortuary disposal, was a late prehistoric, cultural phenomenon, as was the increasing practice of dedicating other goods to the deceased, and that neither behavior is directly correlated with Contact (Wray et al. 1987: 251). However, since the criterion dividing regional prehistory from regional protohistory is the presence or absence of European trade goods, such assertions have the potential for tautology. Rather, I would counter-assert that these archeologically manifested behavioral

changes within the historic homeland of the Seneca are Contact-correlated phenomena. I assert, or more properly speculate, that these are behavioral responses to the Seneca's indirect knowledge of something (Contact) happening at the eastern World's Rim.

I speculate that the earliest European trade goods remained among coastal native groups who, in turn, and early in the sixteenth century, revived the interior-directed exchange of traditionally valued marine shell in order to obtain supplies of furs to trade to coasting Europeans. Marine shell was soon followed along these interior exchange networks by a limited repertoire of European trade goods, which by the middle of the sixteenth century were more readily and reliably available among coastal groups. As these European trade goods become increasingly available among the Seneca and other interior groups, these goods too began to be consecrated to burial. Of further interest and related significance, I suggest that a shift in preferred burial orientation begins at the same time, with the majority of the deceased heading west, literally, and perhaps metaphorically, early in the following century (Wray and Schoff 1953: 56).

What is significant is that most of these earliest European trade goods are monochrome and polychrome glass beads, and copper (and brass) pendants, beads, bracelets, and necklaces, non-"utilitarian" in form and function (c.f. Ritchie 1954; Wray 1985; Wray and Schoff 1953; Wray et al. 1987). The cultural interest in and the cultural efficacy of the earliest of these European trade goods were consequent correlates of their perceived exotic source, and of their colors and substance, which were perceived and received as analogous to traditional, indigenous substantial metaphors of cultural value. Although the earliest tools and weapons of iron (steel) had some indigenous precedent, if not in substance, then at least in function and/or form, we may also imagine that they too had a cultural or ideational efficacy, vastly disproportionate to whatever utilitarian function to which they were initially put.

Color as Cultural Sieve

The function of color and correlated affective meaning in articulating culture contact in northeastern North America is no better evidenced than in the exchange of indigenous shell beads and European glass trade beads. The exchange of glass trade beads was consumer driven by Indian interest in and desire for beads of particular colors, forms, and sizes. Consequently, we can infer that the archeological frequency of glass trade bead types and the archeological-numerical frequency of beads of each of these types directly reflect their relative popularity among their Eastern Algonquian and Northern Iroquoian consumers. It should not be surprising that the most popular glass trade bead types and glass beads generally were beads (monochrome

or polychrome) whose ground colors were either white, black, red, green (green-blue), or blue, and whose forms were primarily either tubular, oval, or spherical (c.f. Kidd and Kidd 1983).

The "blue" glossed here includes numerous lighter shades of blue, typologically and descriptively distinguished in the glass trade bead literature, and less numerous, darker shades of blue. I will suggest that these finer distinctions in hue, relative to the color "blue" or to any of the other "colors" distinctions that are critical to the contemporary analysis, description, and communication of glass trade bead types, were nevertheless largely irrelevant to their original consumers.

Distinctions in hue were apparently only of significance in their extreme; distinctions between lighter or darker shades of "colors" were significant in glossing some lighter-colored beads as "white," or in their allowance as "white" substitutes, or in glossing some darker-colored beads as "black," or in their allowance as "black" substitutes. Among Northeastern Woodland Indian consumers the colors distinguished among glass trade beads were more or less congruent with the focal colors of indigenous and "natural" entities of which these same colors were salient physical attributes: "white" things, "black" things, "red" things, "yellow" things, "green" things, and so on.

Small white tubular glass beads and small dark blue tubular glass beads were among the most popular glass bead types and among the most popular glass beads numerically by the turn of the seventeenth century in northeastern North America (c.f. Bradley 1983: 31; Kenyon and Kenyon 1983: 60-62, 68; Wray 1983: 42). While we may infer that the popularity of the white tubular glass beads was at least in part due to their analogy to contemporary and indigenous small white marine tubular shell beads (i.e., "early wampum"), we cannot claim an indigenous marine shell analogy for the dark blue tubular glass beads.

To my knowledge, purple, glossed "black," marine shell beads were not manufactured until after contact (c.f. Ceci 1986; 1989: 71 Table 4). No examples, regardless of marine shell source and bead form and/or size, have been reported from prehistoric archeological contexts in the Northeast. The earliest purple marine shell beads of which I have knowledge are discoidal shell beads, manufactured from the purple ("black") spot of the quahog or hardshell clam (*Mercenaria mercenaria*), that postdate ca. A.D. 1565 (c.f. Ceci 1986: 22; 1989: 72). The earliest purple ("black") tubular beads, made from this same shell and of wampum form, date to the turn of the seventeenth century (c.f. Ceci 1986: 30; 1989: 72). Consequently, on the basis of archeological evidence in the northeastern North American, one might posit the iconoclastic conclusion that the indigenous coastal manufacture of purple ("black") wampum beads was catalyzed by the contemporary popularity of the earlier occurring, dark blue tubular glass trade beads.

From the perspective of Iroquoia, the small white tubular glass beads that were popular in northeastern North America at the end of the late sixteenth century declined in popularity through the early decades of the seventeenth century, while the popularity of dark blue tubular glass beads increased. These trends in white tubular glass and dark blue tubular glass bead color popularity were concurrent with the increasing popularity of small red ("Redwood") tubular glass trade beads. By the 1650s and 1660s, dark blue tubular glass and red tubular glass beads peaked in popularity, as did tubular glass beads generally (c.f. Huey 1983: 99, Figure 4). During the last half of the seventeenth century, tubular glass beads of all colors rapidly declined in popularity, replaced by the increasing popularity of spherically shaped glass beads, primarily red or black in color.

This "red shift" in glass trade bead color preference during the first half of the seventeenth century is archeologically evidenced among the Northern Iroquoians (c.f. Kenyon and Kenyon 1983: 69–70; Kenyon 1986: 58–59, Figure 2).¹² In 1654, among the Iroquois proper, these "little tubes or pipes of red glass . . . constitute[d] the diamonds of the country" (Thwaites 1896–1901, 41: 109–111). In turn, these red tubular glass trade beads had late prehistoric-early protohistoric indigenous analogues in beads of similar size and shape manufactured from catlinite (red pipestone) found in the upper Great Lakes, and in contemporary, locally manufactured, red slate imitations.

From this evidence, one should not conclude that either white beads or "black" (as used here, a gloss for dark blue or purple) beads declined in popularity among the Northern Iroquoians by the middle of the seventeenth century. White tubular *glass* beads did drastically decline during the early seventeenth century, and dark blue tubular *glass* beads were competing in popularity with red tubular *glass* beads by the middle of the seventeenth century. However, it would not be valid to conclude that white tubular beads and "black" tubular beads in general declined in popularity.

Quite the contrary, for these shifts in color preferences in glass tubular beads were contemporaneous with the increasing coastal manufacture and interior-oriented exchange of white wampum and "black" wampum (marine shell) beads (c.f. Ceci 1986; 1989; Sempowski 1989). Interior Northern Iroquoians still preferred small white tubular beads and small dark "blue" tubular beads, but preferred that beads of these colors, forms, and sizes be made of marine shell. Discussions of the dynamics of bead color, form, and size preferences in the Northeast during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries must include beads of all materials: shell, stone, metal, and glass.

If we can infer that the archeological frequency of glass trade bead types and the archeological-numerical frequency of beads of each of these types directly reflect their relative popularity among

their Eastern Algonquian and Northern Iroquoian consumers in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, we can then infer that yellow glass trade bead types and yellow glass trade beads generally were unpopular (c.f. Kidd and Kidd 1983). Just as the popularity and correlated ritual functions of beads of the colors white, black, red, green, green-blue, and blue were delimited by the affective associations of these colors, it is very probable that the unpopularity of yellow beads during this period was also attributable to the affective associations of this color, especially within ritual contexts. The direct and indirect evidence suggest that "yellow" was not a "healthy" color.

The Seneca (Iroquois) term for "yellow" translates "to be the color of bile" (Chafe 1963: 40; 1967: 62 lexical item 873), as probably evidenced in the skin color of victims of jaundice or viral hepatitis. Among the Southern Iroquoian Cherokee, white, black, red, and yellow glass "seed" beads are used in the divinatory treatment of disease. Within this ritual context, white is emblematic of the happiness that comes with recovery from the disease, red represents the powerful spirit that conquers the disease, black represents the great lake in the Night Land into which the disease is cast, and yellow typifies the disease itself (Mooney and Olbrecht 1932: 218; c.f. 118-119, 132, 152, 304; c.f. Hamell 1983: 23).

Documentary evidence also suggests that yellow was not a popular color generally in northeastern North America during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. At Narragansett Bay in A.D. 1524, Giovanni Da Verrazano reported of the Algonquian Indians encountered there, that they did not value gold, because of its color, yellow; of which he further stated that this color was "especially disliked by them; azure and red are those (colors) in highest estimation with them" (Winship 1905: 15-16.) Verrazano continues by noting that among the things most highly prized by the Indians were the "azure crystals" (glass trade beads) given them.

Indirect corroboration of the Mohawk (Iroquois) dislike of the color yellow, or at least their unappreciation of gold as an useful metal, was reported by Johannes Megapolensis in A.D. 1644 (Megapolensis 1909: 176.) Further corroboration is found by the end of the seventeenth century in the Iroquois' selection of silver, or "white metal," and not gold, as the substance of which the symbolic, brightly polished "Covenant Chain" was forged and that linked them and their Indian and white neighbors in peace and trade. In council, the silver Covenant Chain manifested itself in the form of a white-grounded wampum belt, within which were frequently represented, in purple wampum, human figures linked in social relations.

Conclusion

Contact with native peoples along the mid-Atlantic coast and in the interior was not an event, but a series of Contact events, which took place at differing times in differing places. More important than the event or events of Contact, was the process of Contact: a process mediated within the overlapping cultural frontiers of New World and Old World mythical realities, and wherein one culture's "truck" became, for a time, another culture's "treasure." In this cross-cultural exchange, colors and their affective meanings played significant roles, underappreciated then, and now.

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NOTES

1. Both the World's Rim and the Woods-edge were places of requisite transformation, prior to entry. One must be made fit to enter either the Village of the Souls, or the villages of real human man-beings. This was a rite-of-passage requiring the individual's re-making: an act of physical, social, and spiritual purification, and concomitant kinship affirmation or confirmation. Historically, these rites-of-passage for departing or arriving kinsmen at the Woods'-edge included wampum and/or calumnet ceremonies and the departure of war parties, and their return with scalps and captives, to take the place of deceased community members. For further discussion with citations, and appended narratives of such transformations, see George R. Hamell (1981).

2. Principal among these grandfathers are the antlered or horned, great serpent, dragon, and panther man-beings of Northern Iroquoian (and Central Algonquian) mythical realities. The scales of these man-beings are most frequently identified with metallic substances (i.e., brass, copper, and silver), and, with decreasing frequency, muscovite mica plates, quartz crystals, archeological silicious bifaces, and shell (Hamell 1983: 13-17; 1991: 68-74, 98-99).

3. For a very recent discussion of this process, see Bruce G. Trigger (1991a; 1991b). What Trigger seems to contrast in the title of his first paper is an *emic* versus an *etic* interpretation of the archeological residue of Contact behavior. Although the former interpretation is equally rational, as Trigger acknowledges, he unfortunately terms it a "romantic" interpretation. Nor, as the paper's title suggests, is it an "either-or" choice of interpretation. Rather, Trigger argues in his two papers that both interpretations of the archeological data are necessary for a closer approximation of the "truth." While Trigger correctly characterizes my approach to the interpretation of the archeological data of Contact as of the "romantic" school, I too had proposed that the indigenous mythical reality that initially mediated Contact immediately began an ongoing process of redefinition, so that it would rationally reflect the reality of the here and now, as culturally constituted (Hamell 1986/1987: eg.79-88).

4. See Alfred Goldsworthy Bailey: "no treatment of primitive economics could be complete without some consideration of the religious factors, however brief it may be. . . . It will serve our purpose here if we bear in mind the fact that the efficacy of an implement, for example, was determined by factors which operated from beyond the material world" (1937: 47).

5. The term *wampum* is a shortened form of a southern New England Algonquian term, *wampumpeage*, which translates as "a string of white [shell beads]" (Hewitt

1910: 904; c.f. Aubin 1976:108). Although the term specifically refers to white (marine) shell beads, the abbreviated form, wampum, became a gloss for both the white marine shell beads and the purple ("black") marine shell beads of the same shape and size. The French term, *porcelaine*, referred specifically to the white beads only of this shape and size, originally. The term's primary contemporaneous referents were the exotic and precious, white translucent-bodied ceramics (china) originating in the Far East. The French term itself derived from the Italian term for the cowry shell, *porcellana*, whose substance these ceramics resembled. *Porcellana* translates "of a sow," and encodes the resemblance between the ventral opening of the cowry shell and the vulva of a sow (c.f. Morris 1980: 1020).

6. "The most precious article they possess in this world is *esnoguy*, which is as white as snow. They procure it from shells. . . . of which they make a sort of bead, which has the same use among them as gold and silver with us" (Biggar 1924: 158-160). Compare Paul le Jeune, speaking of the "great riches" of the Montagnais Algonquians in 1632: "their gold and silver, their diamonds and pearls, are little white grains of porcelain" (Thwaites 1896-1901, 5: 61).

7. It is noted that neither "white" nor "black" are true colors. Among some Northeastern Woodland Indians, (light) green-blue-ness is semantically equivalent to that of white-ness.

I can only briefly survey here some the pertinent literature on color and color theory that informed the synthesis in this section of the text. For the neurophysiology or psychophysiology underlying cultural universals of light-ness (white-ness) and darkness (black-ness), and color (red, yellow, green, and blue) perception, see Brent Berlin and Paul Kay (1969); Marc H. Borstein (1975); Floyd Ratliff (1976); Andre Wattenwyl and Heinrich Zollinger (1979); and Stanley R. Witkowski and Cecil H. Brown (1978). For early criticism of Berlin and Kay's methodology, but nevertheless, corroboratory ethnographic data, see, Marshall Durbin (1972); Melvin Ember (1978); David G. Hayes et al. (1972); and Raoul Naroll (1970: 1232, Table 1, 1278).

For an argument for the cultural appropriation of and cultural *imposition* of cultural (social) meaning upon these inherent, structural categories of mind, see, Marshall Sahlins (1976.) For a discussion that suggests that the cultural (social) meanings associated with the colors white, black, and red are not as arbitrary as Sahlins suggests, but are based within the affective associations of these colors, see Victor W. Turner (1967: 59-92; 1973).

Simplified, the human eye is neurophysiologically structured and programmed to differentiate the dark-ness to light-ness continuum, as well as the focal wavelengths of the four primary and true colors: red, yellow, green, and blue. The dark-ness (=black-ness) to light-ness (=white-ness) continuum provides the literal and figurative background of perception, against which these four colors are perceived and distinguished. These neurophysiological structures and the opponent-process (theory) of color perception undoubtedly underlie the culturally appropriated and informed, contrastive dyads of darkness-lightness, or blackness-whiteness, which also appear to be the only (near-) universal semantically antonymic dyad, and also undoubtedly underlie the culturally appropriated and informed, and (near-) universal, contrastive and complementary triad of white(ness), black(ness), and red(ness.) Among dark-pigmented-eyed populations, such as the Northeastern Woodland Indians, there is also an universal tendency not to neurophysiologically distinguish and consequently, lexically distinguish among the colors green, and blue. Either and both colors are often referred to by the same color term, which accounts for the "confusion" of these colors among these peoples as recorded in the historical and ethnographical records.

Published synthetic discussions of Northern Iroquoian color terms have not been found, and similar materials for the Northeastern Woodland Indians, generally or specifically, are practically nonexistent. However, for a list of Seneca Iroquois terms for light-colored (white) and dark-colored (black), and for the colors, black, grey, red, yellow, green, blue, purple, and brown, see Wallace L. Chafe (1963.) For a discussion of Narragansett Algonquian color terms, see, George F. Aubin (1975.)

Finally, any color may mean everything, or nothing, as some of the literature on color symbolism demonstrates. Patterning in color symbolism only emerges when cultural (social) context and intended contrast of *significata* are controlled. In this paper I am interested only in the patterning in meaning that emerges from the ritual consecra-

tion of white, black, and red within social, asocial, and antisocial states-of-being. These may be considered *marked* states-of-biosocial being, which stand in contrast to an *unmarked* state-of-biosocial being, in which any and all colors are culturally, socially, and individually appropriate and acceptable. For example, within economic contexts black wampum beads have a greater economic value (twice that) than white wampum beads. In regard to trade textiles and dress, both black (or dark navy blue) and red broadcloth appear to have been preferable to white.

8. The semantics of color, ritual, and material culture proposed here has emerged from my ongoing research of the functions and meanings of wampum among the Northern Iroquoians and other Northeastern Woodland Indians. For a fuller discussion of this proposal and for some of the data upon which it is based, see George R. Hamell (1986; c.f. Miller and Hamell 1986.)

9. White-ness, like red-ness, was a ritually bivalent color. Within the context of ritual, whiteness connotes and denotes greatest potency, which may be ritually consecrated to either socially *constructive* or to socially *destructive* purposes. Depending upon one's perspective upon the operation of this great potency, it may be either positively evaluated or negatively evaluated, respectively; i.e., "white magic" or "black magic." Normatively, in its ritual context and consecration, "white magic" prescribes white things, and proscribes black things; while normatively, in its ritual context and consecration, "black magic" prescribes black things, and proscribes white things.

It is whiteness' connotation and denotation of greatest potency that underlies the cultural efficacy of white entities. And so long as whiteness' great potency is ritually consecrated to socially constructive purposes, it is also positively evaluated. It is the potential bivalency in the operation of whiteness' great potency that underlies the sometimes ambiguous and often paradoxical relations between human man-beings and white entities. This is the paradox of *Moby Dick*, which Herman Melville discusses at length but could not resolve in his chapter "On the whiteness of the whale" (Melville 1851).

10. Seneca (Iroquois) color terms are comprised of the verb root, meaning "to be the color of" and a noun root referencing some physical entity of which that specific color is a salient physical attribute. Consequently, Seneca color terms are not "basic" color terms, as defined by Brent Berlin and Paul Kay (1969). The Seneca term for "red" is comprised of the verb root, meaning "to be the color of" and a noun root, whose origin is reportedly uncertain, but has the meaning "red" (Chafe 1963: 40). However, this noun root for red is undoubtedly cognate with and etymologically derived from the Seneca noun root for "blood" (c.f. Chafe 1967: 83 lexical items 1736 and 1737).

Red ochre and vermillion were frequent offerings in Seneca burials of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The presence of red ochre in similar contexts extends thousands of years back into prehistory within the same region. Red pigments are, alternatively, closely identified with antisocial states-of-being, such as warfare: the face and body paint of warriors, the red-painted warclubs and belt axes left upon the bodies of victims as declarations of war, and the red-painted wampum belts, so-called "hatchet belts" presented as war invitation belts.

11. The specific Seneca Iroquois term for "black" is comprised of the noun root for "charcoal," incorporated within the verb root, meaning "to be the color of" (c.f. Chafe 1963: 40; Chafe 1967: 62 lexical item 844). Traditionally, Seneca mourners extinguished their fires, blackened their faces, and remained in the "darkness" of grief until condoled. Seneca wampum strings and wampum belts denoting and connoting condolence were and are black. The same noun root is found in the Seneca term for "minister" or "priest," as glossed in appellation, "Black Robe."

12. Northern Iroquoian interest in "red" glass beads during this period is further archeologically evidenced by beads whose exterior non-red stripes or non-red layers had been ground off to produce a monochrome brick-red surface (c.f. Kenyon and Kenyon 1983: 69-70; Kenyon 1986: 58-59, Figure 2).

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