Between Conversion and Apostasy: The Religious Journey of Pierre-Anthoine Pastedechouan

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Abstract: This article profiles the life of Pierre-Anthoine Pastedechouan, a 17th-century Innu convert to Catholicism. Taken to France by missionaries in his youth, Pastedechouan underwent five years of linguistic and theological training. Following his repatriation, the young man's failure to conform to his people's social expectations alienated him from his cradle culture even as his tentative attempts at rapprochement aroused the suspicion of his missionary mentors. Rejected by both his people and the church, Pastedechouan died alone of exposure and starvation. This article will chart the events of Pastedechouan's life and examine his dual legacy to scholars of post-contact Aboriginal religious change and to contemporary First Nations.

Keywords: conversion, de-conversion, apostasy, cultural and religious encounter, 17th-century Canada, Innu, Recollets

Résumé : Le présent article retrace la vie de Pierre-Anthoine de Pastedechouan, Innu converti au Catholicisme au 17ième siècle. Amené en France dans sa jeunesse par des missionnaires, Pastedechouan a suivi cinq années de formation linguistique et théologique. Une fois rapatrié, le jeune fut incapable de se conformer aux attentes sociales de son peuple et s'aliéna la culture qu'il l'avait pourtant vu naître. Les efforts qu'il déploya pour tenter de se rapprocher des Innus ne firent qu'éveiller les soupçons de ses mentors missionnaires. Rejeté à la fois par son peuple et par l'Église, Pastedechouan mourut de froid, de faim et dans la solitude. Cet article relate les événements de la vie de Pastedechouan et examine le double héritage qu'il légua tant aux chercheurs qui s'intéressent aux changements religieux chez les autochtones à la suite du contact avec les cultures européennes qu'aux peuples autochtones contemporains.

Mots-Clés : conversion, dé-conversion, apostasie, confrontation culturelle et religieuse, Canada au 17ième siècle, Innu, Récollets

Wet and naked, he stood shivering, conscious of the hundreds of eyes fastened upon him. The holy water with which he had been drenched streamed in rivulets down his limbs to pool in puddles on the cold unevenness of the cathedral's stone floor. Standing with his back to the ornate altar of the miracle-working St. Serene, the young boy self-consciously circled himself with his arms, which, stripped of their traditional, colourful body paint, seemed pitifully denuded. His nostrils assailed by the sweet smoke of the incense, and his ears by the baritone peeling of the cathedral bells, echoing down from the hole in the vaulted ceiling directly overhead, the boy stared at the nightmarish depiction of the momentous struggle of Christ and his angels against the Beast and his demonic cohorts, vividly portrayed upon the elaborate tapestries which adorned the church's dimly lit walls (Bibliothèque Municipal d'Angers, "Journal de Jean Louvet," MS 862:folio 134; Muel 1996; Uzureau 1922:392-393). Unnerved as much by the images' frozen violence as by the crowd's steady gaze, the 11-year-old boy ran his fingers through the unfamiliar sparseness of his once long hair, while he silently repeated to himself the name which had just been bestowed upon him—Pierre-Anthoine. Sumptuously robed clerics then held out for him a white robe, softly glowing in the diffuse light, and crowned his cropped head with a baptismal bonnet. Accompanied down the nave by his noble godparents and missionary mentors, and jostled by the rowdy, gaping crowd, the white-clad aboriginal boy slowly mounted the stairs of the ornate pulpit. Surrounded by a corona of candlelight, he sat alone, silently displaying himself as newly won Christian soul for the edification of all present (Bibliothèque Municipal d'Angers, "Journal de Jean Louvet," MS 862:folio 134; Uzureau 1922:392-393).

It was April, 1621. The imposing cathedral was that of St. Maurice, in the walled French town of Angers. The young boy who was the mute centre of the ceremony's opulent ritual, the newly renamed Pierre-Anthoine Past-

edechouan, was an Innu,[1] an aboriginal youth from the St. Lawrence River Valley of distant Canada. Voluntarily surrendered by his people, who expected him to serve as their trade ambassador, he was brought from thence by grey-robed Franciscan Recollet missionaries eager to intimate the bright future of their newly established mission in New France. Through such young converts, they argued, the Aboriginal societies of the New World could be transformed from mere trading partners into colonial strongholds loyal both to the Gallic king and to the embattled Catholic Church (Biggar 1925, Vol. III; Le Clerq 1881 Vol. I; Sagard 1866 Vol. I).

As intimated by this baptismal episode, this article will relate the story of the momentous meeting of two very different cultural and religious worlds as experienced by this young boy, whose life bridged the fragile yet tenacious traditionalism of his Innu people, long adapted to congress with European traders, and the determined devotion of the early 17th-century French missionaries who sought forever to transform their way of life. A narrative which encompasses cultural negotiation, misunderstanding, and religious coercion on two continents, Pastedechouan's story allows us to explore, through its intimate detail, the struggle between colliding cultures during a period of unprecedented global change. In this article, we will trace the trajectory of Pastedechouan's brief life, from his 1608 birth in the vast, rugged hinterlands of the Canadian Shield to his lonely death 28 years later. We will examine his years abroad in the austere, sun-drenched cloisters of the cliff top convent of La Baumette and explore his agonistic struggle, in the latter years of his life, to discern and assert his identity in the face of contradictory pressures both within and outside himself. Pastedechouan's encounter with French Catholicism, as we will discover, engendered within him a religious ambivalence which, by stranding him in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood, conversion and apostasy, and his natal and adopted cultures, eventually estranged him, with deadly results, from both his native community and his missionary mentors.

Innu Culture in Early 17th-Century Canada

Pastedechouan's people, the Innu of early 17th-century Canada, were a migratory indigenous nation living along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River in what is today Quebec and Labrador. The boy himself was born around 1607 or 1608,[2] probably on the north shore of the St. Lawrence around Tadoussac. As he peered at the surrounding world from the safe confines of the moss-lined bag in which his mother carried him in his first months (Jenness 1932; Pritzker 2000), little Pastedechouan was beginning the long, complex process of becoming Innu: observing, absorbing and mirroring the religious and social practices of his people and imbibing, with his mother's milk, a sense of himself in relationship to the culture which surrounded and defined him. He would have learned, with each successive year of his passing childhood, how to relate to the human and "other-than-human persons"[3] who constituted this Innu "us," as well as the sometimes threatening, sometimes benign, "others" that existed outside of its firmly drawn boundaries; others it was his personal destiny to encounter intimately.

For the Innu, religion was inescapably relational, as the human and non-human community was envisioned as co-extensive and interdependent. What Europeans classified as inanimate objects, animals, atmospheric phenomena or seasonal changes were seen by the Innu as sharing human attributes: their needs and desires must be discerned and respected so that in turn they would favourably dispose themselves to human petitioners. At the core of Innu religion was the ritual persuasion of animals to surrender their lives selflessly to ensure their human relatives' endurance in an unforgiving environment. The Innu sought to facilitate this human–animal relationship by promising their prey rich presents, a quick death and, most critically, the prudent, respectful use of their bodies. Though Innu religion was a collective affair, an individual's physical survival and social prestige was dependent upon his or her ability to establish a vital connection with other-than-human protectors who could deploy their power, wisdom and nurturance to benefit the entire community (Beaulieu 1990; Le Clercq 1881; Morrison 1990, 2002; Thwaites 1898 Vol. V, VI, VII).

By creating standards of behaviour which reflected their core values and by ceremonially extending their social ethic to the human and non-human others that they encountered, the Innu hoped that the respect and benevolence they telegraphed would be mirrored back to them. To create a safe and predictable community in which the behavioural rules were known and observed was to create an island of safety in a 17th-century world fraught with change and hardship. Innu attempts to communicate to other groups, including Europeans, the benefits of adhering to Innu norms reflected their belief that their own cultural dynamic was the best means of ensuring individual and collective happiness and longevity. Though the Innu would themselves become the targets of intense evangelistic activity by European missionaries, their own outlook was not devoid of the desire to impress foreign groups with an Innu stamp.

In the beginning, however, Innu-European congress excluded missionary participation: it was an association forged in trade. For at least 60 years before Pastedechouan's birth, his people had been in intermittent contact with European traders who supplied them with metal utensils, weapons and decorative items in exchange for rich pelts. In their seasonal congress with these traders, the Innu attempted to communicate to them their social and religious expectations, effectively inviting these strangers to become part of their community (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V). Though Europeans were, at best, only dimly aware of the social and religious resonance of their actions in Innu terms, the two groups nevertheless gradually forged mutually acceptable rules of cultural engagement. Traders realized that as their own financial success was dependant upon Aboriginal competency in exploiting natural resources they had a vested interest in maintaining rather than disrupting traditional Aboriginal life-ways. In some cases, this pragmatic recognition was accompanied by a genuine admiration for Aboriginal cultures. Throughout their decades of congress with European merchants then, 16th- and early 17th-century Innu successfully utilized their traditional strategies of social assimilation and economic diplomacy to negotiate a relationship which preserved rather than threatened their key cultural values.

The Advent of the Recollets

Onto this long-established Innu-European "middle ground,"[4] forged in trade, the Franciscan Recollet fathers marched in 1615. A reform group within the Observant branch of the Franciscan order, the Recollets came to Canada in answer to the call of that indomitable exponent of European colonization, Samuel de Champlain, who had long argued that French rights to northeastern North America could be secured through the Christianization and "Francization" (Jaenen 1986) of its Aboriginal residents. Over the next 14 years, Champlain and the "good friars" (Biggar 1925 Vol. III:16) he had chosen to assist him would together refine and advocate their influential, though deeply divisive, agenda for the political and religious future of Canada.

The Recollets' motivations for encountering the Innu could not have been more different from the traders who preceded them. In attempting to change their religious allegiances from a personalistic sense of community with the natural world to an acceptance of post-Tridentine Catholicism, and their material means of production from nomadic hunting and gathering to settled agriculture, the Recollets wished fundamentally to transform Innu traditional culture. As they sought to impose their religious beliefs, rather than to engage in a mutually beneficial socio-economic association, these missionaries would prove far less amenable to cultural brokering than had European traders.

Judging from recorded Innu behaviour toward the newly arrived Franciscans, it appears that they initially perceived these new French interlopers, with their tonsured hair and gray gowns, as economic agents with whom mutually beneficial relations should be established. Many Innu "apostates" who accepted baptism for themselves or their children during the winter of 1615-16 probably did so because they saw this intriguing ceremony as formalizing their political and economic entente with this new European group (Le Clercq 1881 Vol. 1; Trigger 1976 Vol. I).

It was these first encounters with the peoples of the St. Lawrence River valley which quickly led the Recollets to advocate that Aboriginal children, rather than their parents, should be the prime focus of missionary labours. Disturbed by the ability of Native adults to accept Christianity whilst retaining their own cultural and religious framework, the Recollets decided to limit baptism to the terminally ill and to "those who, by long practice and experience, seemed touched, instructed, and detached from their savage ways, or to those habituated among our Frenchmen, brought up in our way of living, and humanized after being well instructed" (Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I:143). Though theoretically these "habituated" converts could be adults, in practice the Recollet targeted principally young boys, who, it was hoped, having absorbed the French language, culture and religion, would then act as influential missionaries to their own people. Without the financing or manpower necessary to attempt the wholesale cultural and religious transformation of Aboriginal societies, the tiny band of four Recollets effectively miniaturized their aspirations in the persons of these young children (Trigger 1976 Vol. I). Their strategy of excising youngsters from their Native milieu and indoctrinating them with a novel set of religious and social practices far from home would influence assimilationist strategies towards Aboriginal peoples for centuries to come (Miller 1996).

Having founded a boarding seminary for Aboriginal youth at Quebec in 1620 (Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I), the Recollets sought to solicit funds from pious French donors by sending Aboriginal children such as Pastedechouan overseas, who left Canada with Father Jean Dolbeau in the same year at the age of 12 or 13 (Bibliothèque Municipal d'Orléans MS 509 fol. 171; Jouve 1996). While the Recollets' primary motivation for transporting Pastedechouan to France was doubtless to transform his religious men-

tality and to equip him to serve as a missionary to his own people, they also hoped that the young boy's presence, by attracting the attention of the curious and devout alike, would marshall new sources of support for their seminary, and inspire further generosity from those already involved. In writing to the school's premiere donor, Charles Des Boves, the Grand Vicar of Pontoise, Father Denis Jamet intimated that he was sending him Pastedechouan as a prototype of the devotional product his investment capital would help to fund (Sagard 1866 Vol. I).

Groomed as a fundraiser by the Recollets, Pastedechouan was also seen as something of an economic agent by his own people. The Innu had long sent delegations to France to investigate first hand the social, military and economic realities of French life on their own soil. A 1602 contingent of Innu youth, sponsored by fur merchants, successfully accessed the very pinnacle of Gallic power. Formally received at the court of Henri IV, they discussed with the king himself their economic concerns and negotiated a French–Innu military alliance against their primary Aboriginal antagonists, the Mohawk, which would endure for some 60 years (Biggar 1925 Vol. I; Dickason 1984; Trigger 1976 Vol. I; Trigger and Washburn 1996). In 1620, as Innu economic supremacy, long unchallenged, was gradually being eroded by French incursions westward, Pastedechouan's people would likely have welcomed the chance to send another representative overseas, thereby hoping to learn firsthand information which might help them to clarify French intentions and capabilities and, potentially, to regain something of their dwindling power (Beaulieu 1990; Trudel 1973).

Thus, though both the Recollets and the Innu sought to utilize Pastedechouan's presence in France to their own economic advantage, Recollet success in their primary goal—the transformation of Pastedechouan's religious and cultural identity—would prove to be an unprecedented and deeply unwelcome surprise to the Innu who had sent him solely as an economic agent.

Pastedechouan's Arrival in France

Following their long Atlantic crossing, Pastedechouan, accompanied by Recollet Father Jean Dolbeau, travelled inland to La Baumette, a 15th-century convent founded by Duke Rene of Anjou on cliffs overlooking the Maine River, well within the sight and sound of the massive bell towers of the Saint-Maurice Cathedral downstream in the larger centre of Angers. The pair probably arrived by boat, and ascended the still extant stone stairs from the river's edge. Named for the Provençal mountain of La Baume, upon which Mary Magdalene was said to have performed her penitential exercises, the convent, excavated from the cliff itself, has been described as being located in "a spot so beautiful that it ravished the eyes of all beholders and cured the sick in soul" (McManners 1960:83; Uzureau 1928:15). Initially bequeathed to the Cordeliers, a male religious order, the complex was ceded to the more rigorous Recollets by Henri IV when its original inhabitants failed to approximate the Magdalene's austerity. The monarch's choice of the Recollets as replacements apparently hinged upon his pivotal conversation with Recollet Provincial Jacques Garnier.[5] Asking the elderly Franciscan what he wished for most in the world, the king was so impressed with Garnier's answer, "poverty and reform," that he deeded the deserted La Baumette to his order, and staunchly backed them in subsequent legal disputes with the Cordeliers (Uzureau 1921, 1932, 1938).

Angers in the 1620s was an ecclesiastical centre less known for trade or government than for its impressive number of religious establishments and the splendour of its annual cycle of religious spectacles, culminating with the *Sacre d'Angers* on Corpus Christi. This was a day-long procession of the town's many religious orders, secular clergy and 12 "torches": splendidly realized, and often highly emotional scenes from the Hebrew Bible and lives of Christ, his mother, and the saints (McManners 1960; Uzureau 1915, 1925). Inaugurated at the Cathedral with a mass and interspersed with preaching, the solemn procession and display of these realistic tableaux, together with the amassed treasure of the religious community, was a pivotal event locally and drew pilgrims from throughout the region and beyond.

La Baumette, Pastedechouan's home for the entirety of his five years in France, was both an integrated part of the Angers community, participating in its lavish ceremonial life, and a celebrated pilgrimage site in its own right. Its chapel's wooden statue of the Magdalene, clothed only in her long hair, was reputed to be miraculous, motivating a constant trickle of devotees who wished to beseech her saintly intervention. On July 22, the feast day of the Magdalene, neighbouring Angers "virtually emptied" as its religious communities and secular populace flocked to the celebrations at Baumette (Uzureau 1939:276-277).

Adjusting to both the rigour and solemnity daily devotional life in the Franciscan enclave and to the exuberance of its festivities was likely a lonely, exhausting and confusing process for Pastedechouan. During his initial winter in France, he sought to conform to the exacting expectations of his Recollet hosts, sandwiching public appearances between long periods of sequestered linguistic and theological preparation for his immanent baptism. Pastedechouan met with key members of the clergy

and nobility from whom the Recollets sought support, including his godfather Pierre de Rohan, a powerful local prince and generous donor to the Recollet cause. Charmed by the young Innu, the prince taught his godson "to know and love God and to say his paternoster in French and in Latin" and would finance his education for the next five years (Sagard 1866 Vol. III:785).

Though Pastedechouan would thus have become accustomed to being the object of intense European scrutiny, nothing could have prepared him for the near mayhem which greeted his public baptism in April of 1621. Even in a region well accustomed to extraordinary religious spectacle, Pastedechouan's ceremonial reception by the Church appears to have excited an unusual outpouring of interest, as the people of Angers and the surrounding area sought, that late spring evening, to catch a glimpse of the exotic youngster. According to Jean Louvet, a local diarist who recorded his impressions of the event, the church was jammed with hundreds of onlookers, and the courtyard around the cathedral was so tightly packed that it was impossible to turn around. Ecclesiastics, nobles and commoners alike thronged the pews, aisles and choir galleries and stared as Pastedechouan, accompanied by a coterie of clerical officials, his noble godparents, and an entourage of servants, preceded through the exterior cloisters and through the nave, past the elaborate, centuries old "Tapestry of the Apocalypse." Flowers and incense scented the dim, stone-vaulted interior of the church and candlelight from the many white tapers winked on the rich, ornately inlaid cross held aloft in advance of the grand procession. The party emerged into the mild evening air, where the Prince and Princess of Guémenée, in the courtyard in front of the cathedral, effected their godson's civic rebirth by bestowing upon him their own names: "Pierre-Anthoyne, because the Prince was called Pierre and madam the Princess, Anthoynette." After re-entering the crowded church, Pastedechouan was stripped, anointed with holy oil and baptized by aspersion near the altar of local Saint Serene. Re-dressed all in white and given a lit white taper to hold, he was crowned with a snowy white baptismal *cresmeau* (bonnet), and "lifted up into the pulpit, where he was for a long time with the bonnet on his head and a lit candle in his hand" (Uzureau 1922:392-393, my translation).

Pastedechouan's baptism was a striking blend of publicity stunt, freak show and religious rite. For the Recollets and their noble benefactors, the ceremony celebrated their power in transforming Pastedechouan from a "savage" into a "naturalized Frenchman" by illuminating the darkness of his animist ignorance with the Gospel light of Christ (Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I:273). Ritually, Pastedechouan's baptism dramatized their most treasured ambition: the systematic religious reconfiguration of Aboriginal cultures in distant Canada. For the spectators, however, conditioned by a century of public displays of captured Aboriginals, Pastedechouan was intriguing because of, rather than in spite of, his physical and cultural "otherness" (Dickason 1987; Feest 1999). The mutation of a secular genre of Aboriginal exhibition into a religious idiom which stressed transformation epitomized the permeation of late 16th-century Catholic revivalism into the disparate enclaves of colonial policy, overseas trade and popular entertainment.

Pastedechouan's Religious Re-education

By symbolically stripping Pastedechouan of his garments, the Recollets signalled their determination to divest him entirely of his Native religious ideations. Their ritual shorthand non-verbally conveyed to their young charge that his conversion was an exclusivistic, one-way choice which necessarily entailed the renunciation of his previous way of life. To facilitate this process, the Recollets, who had put an ocean between Pastedechouan and his family, also sought to shelter him from other young Innu then visiting France (Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I). Dispersing Aboriginal children, while maximizing fundraising opportunities, also ensured that the newly arrived could not reinfect their Christianized brethren with the "contagion" of traditional beliefs.

How Pastedechouan was taught during his five years in France arguably affected his developing religious mentality as much or more than *what* he was taught. The Catholic education which Pastedechouan experienced in France contrasted sharply with Innu educational models. Though both pedagogical systems had as their overall aim the reproduction of cultural and religious knowledge, they differed markedly in their orientation, purpose and methods.

In the oral Innu culture, the mentoring of young children took place in the context of daily life. Innu children learned the skills and behaviours expected of them through observation and imitation, a process which became more intense and demanding as young people approached physical maturity (Dickason 1987; Miller 1996). Discipline of the recalcitrant generally took the form of gentle teasing as physical punishment of the young was not customary (Dickason 1987; Thwaites 1897 Vol VI; Trigger 1976 Vol. I). The fundamental goal of the Innu mentoring process was to bequeath the cultural skills, mental outlook and religious attunement that would foster children's adherence to prescriptive behavioural norms in a culture which prized social co-operation, physical and

emotional stoicism and skilled self-reliance highly (Thwaites 1897 Vol. VI).

French education in the early 17th century was, by contrast, a formal process involving the acquisition of literacy in a specialized setting sequestered from the bustle of the daily round. Fear of physical coercion and deprivation was routinely utilized to facilitate students' mastery of prescribed theological and linguistic information and to impress upon them the awesome authority of their teachers (Dickason 1987:61). While the aim of Innu mentoring was the child's achievement of mature independence, Recollet education of young Aboriginals sought to erode what they perceived as their proud freedom and to curb their willful autonomy by implanting a deeply internalized sense of dependency upon religious authority. Though Pastedechouan became a man during his five years in Recollet custody, he remained, to his religious superiors, a child in the faith whose spiritual progress was contingent upon their watchful guidance.

Though the Recollets' aim in educating Pastedechouan was to equip him for his eventual role as a missionary to his own people, the termination of his Innu education at its most critical juncture, coupled with his continuing deference to Recollet authority following his repatriation, would render him unable to meet Innu expectations regarding adult male gender roles. The roles of warrior and hunter demanded both the mastery of discrete cultural skills and the maturity and judgment essential to their proper deployment. Pastedechouan's French education, however, denied him both.

Only in the linguistic arena was Pastedechouan's transformation deliberately left incomplete. To facilitate his ability to convert his people following repatriation, Pastedechouan's thorough instruction in French and Latin alternated with opportunities for him to instruct in his Native Innu with Canada-bound Recollets such as Gabriel Sagard (Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I; Sagard 1866 Vol. II).

The Recollets' decision to allow Pastedechouan to hold onto a modicum of his former cultural identity, in the form of his mother tongue, did not endanger his identification with French Catholicism, which was so complete that in the latter years of his sojourn he apparently claimed to have forgotten the Innu language (Du Creux 1951; Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I; Sagard, 1866 Vol. III; Thwaites 1898 Vol. V). The young man's boasting as to the degree of his cultural assimilation had the ironic result of precipitating his immediate repatriation, as his comments had awakened missionary fears that his lingering in France might make him unfit for his future mission. Besieged by Recollet demands that he return to Canada, a horrified Pastedechouan apparently responded, "my Father, how could your Reverence want to send me back to the beasts who do not know God?" (Sagard 1866 Vol. III, p. 785-786, my translation; see also Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I).

Though chilling in their profound cultural alienation, Pastedechouan's reported words and the fears they so eloquently express were eminently logical, given the central premise of this missionization model: that one's individual identity is predicated upon the nature of one's surrounding environment. Having laboured for five years to transform himself culturally, linguistically, and religiously, Pastedechouan may have been concerned that his fragile new identity would be lost once its enabling environment was removed. His characterization of his own family as religiously ignorant "beasts" powerfully demonstrates the way in which he had been taught to think of French and Innu religious identity in deeply antithetical terms (Sagard 1866 Vol. III).

Pastedechouan's expressions of repugnance toward Native beliefs and practices and his fearful aversion to contact with other Aboriginals were typical of the response of many 17th-century indigenous children removed from their Native societies by the French. Whether they were young seminarians voluntarily given by their families for education, "good will hostages" surrendered as insurance for the lives of French traders or missionaries venturing into the interior, or orphans taken in as domestic servants by overseas convents, Francized Aboriginal children generally telegraphed some or all of these sentiments, perceiving and presenting themselves as wholly French and entirely Catholic (Thwaites 1897 Vol. VI, VII). Their European mentors encouraged and ratified such self-perceptions, occasionally suggesting that their youthful charges, through their innocent ardour, the tireless efforts of their selfless instructors, and the grace of God, had not merely attained spiritual parity with their European counterparts, but had far exceeded them.

Pastedechouan's Return to Canada

Pastedechouan's 1626 return to Tadoussac took place in an unsettled political, military and religious atmosphere. During his long absence, the Innu stronghold had become the pre-eminent centre for illegal trade and a fulcrum of anti-Catholic propaganda (Biggar 1925, Vol. V; Trigger 1976 Vol. I). Huguenot success in linking what were widely perceived by the Innu as unfairly monopolistic trading practices with a newly fermented suspicion of "Romeish" ritual life meant that Pastedechouan, as a freshly minted Catholic, was probably seen as representing and defending these despised policies. Regarded in French colonial society as something of a celebrity, outside that charmed

circle Pastedechouan's reception was markedly cooler, as seen in his public excoriation by Mathican Atic, a prominent Innu leader:

> Pastedechouan it is true that you are not very smart because you haven't told us what you learned in France. We sent you there in order for you to observe things for us and report them, but you have been here for more than a winter and you haven't told us anything. I don't know if it is because you are not smart enough, or because you are too shy, or because you don't care about what's in France, but when you are talking with us about France you are too childish. You must be a man and speak with confidence and wisdom, telling us the things you have seen and learned, in order that we should know them too.[6] [Sagard 1866 Vol. II:515, my translation]

Mathican Atic's words demonstrate growing Innu awareness that the Recollet-sponsored education of Aboriginal children in France offered few of the advantages of earlier overseas congress with Europeans, and in fact appeared to have a pernicious effect upon the independence, agency and maturity of those it touched.

Judging on the basis of his subsequent behaviour, Pastedechouan appears to have internalized Recollet evaluations of his Catholic identity as fragile and tenuous, and to have seen French colonial society as contrastingly steadfast and enduring. Both perceptions, however, were wildly inaccurate. The young Innu man's commitment to his French mentors was strong enough that he was willing to brave not only the rejection of his people, but also defiantly to refuse alliance with the English, who were soon to shatter the proud illusion of French dominance in the St. Lawrence River valley.

The English Interlude, 1629-32

English eyes had turned late to Canada. Preoccupied with his southerly holdings, King James I regarded the failures of successive explorers to find the long-sought Northwest Passage as confirming English assessments that this benighted territory should be left unchallenged to the shivering French. But the burgeoning profits of the fur trade and an escalating of French–English religious and political tensions in the 1620s combined to prompt his successor's re-evaluation of this tacit policy. In the spring of 1628, English King Charles I, congratulating himself for having allowed his Gallic rivals to fund the foundation of the tiny colonial centres he now planned to usurp, sent the Kirke brothers to the St. Lawrence River valley with the order to force a quick French surrender (Trudel 1973; Wrong 1928).

Walking along the river's broad banks near Tadoussac, Pastedechouan apparently hailed the Kirkes' vessel. Identified by a French deserter on board as an Aboriginal Christian who possessed valuable linguistic skills, he was immediately captured. Procuring reliable translators was critical to the Kirkes' ambitions of securing economic affiliations and political alliances with local Aboriginal nations. Playing upon his captor's deepest wishes, Pastedechouan escaped from English custody by disingenuously volunteering to spearhead a trading initiative to his people. Having absconded with several canoe-loads of valuable supplies, he spent the next four years with a price on his head (Sagard 1866 Vol. IV). In a single, fateful act, the young Innu had signalled his unwillingness to work for the English invaders and affirmed his loyalty to his French allies, still, at the time of this incident, firmly ensconced at Quebec.

When the Kirkes captured the small colonial centre the following summer, forcing the deportation of its civic and religious personnel, Pastedechouan was abruptly deprived of the sacramental affirmation of his Catholic identity and of the economic and psychological support of French colonial society. Having burned his bridges with his new English overlords, Pastedechouan was forced to come to an uneasy reckoning with the Innu community that, as a young convert, he had rejected (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII; Trudel 1973).

Pastedechouan's integration back into the culture of his birth was hampered by several barriers, the first being his weak survival skills. Hunting success in the Innu context was seen as being dependant upon an animal's positive evaluation of their hunters' ritual proficiency and moral uprightness (Jauvin 1993; Le Clercq 1881; Thwaites 1898 Vol. VI, VII). Thus, Pastedechouan's pronounced difficulties in mastering hunting skills would likely have been interpreted by his community as indicating the animals' collective suspicion or disapproval of him, rather than as mere technical ineptitude (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V, VII).

Secondly, there was the issue of Pastedechouan's disturbingly anomalous identity. In Innu culture, young boys were melded into mature men in the forge of intense religious experience and the furnace of war. Adolescent boys' dependency on adult family members was eschewed through fasting, visions, adoption by a powerful animal patron and successful defense of community in battle (Bailey 1969; Beaulieu 1990; Pritzker 2000; Richter 1983).

Pastedechouan's likely failure to pass through these fiery tests of manhood before his departure for France, coupled with his probable attitude of horrified distaste toward them upon his return, leads me to speculate that the young man was perceived by his society as a liminal

being who, though physically adult, was religiously and culturally still a child. Such a perception would have at once sanctioned Pastedechouan's subjection to cutting ridicule and derision and satisfyingly explained his failures as a hunter and husband (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII).

Pastedechouan's desertion by his defeated French mentors and his consequent reliance upon the provision of his own people precipitated lasting changes to his allegiances and, ultimately, to his identity. For the remainder of his life, his attitude towards the French would be characterized by embittered ambivalence.

Pastedechouan and the Jesuits

Given his experiences, it is not surprising that Pastedechouan was wary of Europeans following the negotiated re-assertion of French dominance of the St. Lawrence in 1632. After a brief, failed stint working for French civic officials, Pastedechouan was urged to serve as a translator and language instructor to Paul Le Jeune, the newly arrived Superior of the Jesuit order (Dionne 1907; Du Creux 1951; Thwaites 1898 Vol. V, VI). Just as Pastedechouan had feared in 1626 that his return to Tadoussac would erode his identity as a "naturalized Frenchman," he now worried that entering the Jesuit milieu would thwart his hard won re-identification with the culture of his childhood, painfully and partially affected during the English interlude. Despite these concerns, however, Pastedechouan inaugurated a liaison with Paul Le Jeune and the Society of Jesus in November 1632, which would endure until his untimely death four years later (Le Clercq 1881 Vol. I:273).

Ironically, Le Jeune's reaction to his Canadian assignment was initially equally reluctant. Pressed into service as the Superior of the Jesuit missionization effort, the 43-year-old found himself saddled with the grandiose ambition of winning a continent's worth of "pagan" souls for Christ, a challenge for which he had little preparation and even less personal predisposition: "I thought nothing of coming to Canada when I was sent here; I felt no particular affections for the savages, but the duty of obedience was binding, even if I had been sent a thousand times further away" (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V: 31).

Like his grey-robed Recollet predecessors, the Jesuit Superior envisioned the stationary settlement of migratory Native groups and, as an educator, applauded their contention that the careful molding of Aboriginal children would result, ultimately, in the conversion of entire communities (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V, VII). Le Jeune, during his seven-year tenure as Superior, would re-implement the Recollet program of isolating, converting and re-educating young Aboriginal children both in domestic seminaries and abroad in France, in order that the "fathers will be taught through the children" (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V:33; see also Vol. VII:83-89). Even while the Recollet buildings, damaged during the English interlude, were still under reconstruction, Le Jeune began the reconstitution of the educational system which had so decisively formed Pastedechouan's own distinctive religious mentality. In meeting the newly arrived Jesuit, Pastedechouan would doubtless have perceived his religious ethos and missionary methodology as uncomfortably familiar.

The two shared another bond. Neither the ambivalent young Innu nor the fervent Jesuit Superior had been born Catholic. Both men had, in their teens, had undergone a transformation of his most fundamental religious assumptions and allegiances. While Pastedechouan was an early casualty of a missionary experiment which attempted to sever his ties to his cradle culture, Le Jeune was the product of decades of internecine religious conflict which had divided a country and splintered families along confessional lines. Born in 1591 to wealthy Protestant parents, Le Jeune had converted at the age of 16 over their strident objections (LaFlèche 1973). Unsatisfied with this divisive demonstration of commitment to the Holy Mother Church, he took his initial vows in the Jesuit order, the vanguard of the Catholic Reformation, some six years later, and spent the better part of a decade forging a generation of young French boys into uncompromising defenders of the True Faith. Having converted to Catholicism, both men came to regard their previous beliefs, and the families who still held them, with considerable hostility. Just as the young Pastedechouan apparently characterized his family as "beasts," Le Jeune described the beliefs of his Calvinist childhood as "poison" and Protestants as the "enemies of the truth, of real virtue and their country" (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:239, 43-45).

The fact that both Le Jeune and Pastedechouan were converts lent a subtle intensity to their prolonged encounter. Though they were often antagonists, their shared experiences had inculcated in each similar assumptions regarding religious identity which one would seek to enforce and the other to evade. Throughout their acquaintance, Le Jeune attempted to persuade Pastedechouan to embrace wholeheartedly the devout Catholicism of his youth, wielding the weapons of guilt, intimidation, friendship, praise, mockery and coercion. Pastedechouan sought to assert his agency by controlling the tempo of Le Jeune's linguistic instruction and by erecting clear ritual boundaries between himself and the other inhabitants of Notre Dame des Anges, the Jesuit residence (Du Creux 1951 Vol. I; Thwaites 1898 Vol. V, VII).

The young Innu's deliberate minimalism in the performance of his duties and his consistent refusal to receive the Eucharist made the cleavage between Pastedechouan's trumpeted status as a providential linguistic instrument and the reality of his considerable resistance to his re-Catholicization increasingly clear to his would-be mentors (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V). In the spring of 1633, as the long cold days of a Canadian Lent dwindled, and Holy Week loomed, Jesuit perceptions of Pastedechouan's months-long refusal to take communion hardened. Earlier in the sacred calendar the young man's baulking had been tolerated, however grudgingly, as an unfortunate personal idiosyncrasy. Now, however, it seemed to indicate his growing alienation from and defiance of the Catholic community (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V:173-175).

By threatening to break the uniformity of mandated Catholic ritual observance in the Jesuit enclave, Pastedechouan was becoming as much of a conceptual anomaly there as he had been in his Innu community. In both contexts, his reluctance to participate in key communal rituals deprived those around him of the ability to ascertain clearly his definitive identity. Pastedechouan's probable reluctance to undergo ritual initiation confounded his Innu categorization, stranding him in the liminal space between child and adult. His equally fierce determination to evade his Easter obligation led to his similarly ambiguous standing at Notre Dame des Anges. While his baptism and linguistic facilitation of the work of God made him a real, if errant member of the body of Christ, his outright defiance of a universal Catholic obligation threatened to terminate his continued employment.

Frustrated, Le Jeune resorted to the questionable tactic of virtually coercing the participation of his recalcitrant teacher. With the complicity of one of the young Innu's relatives, Le Jeune made his consent to a much-anticipated hunting trip conditional upon Pastedechouan's performance of his religious obligations:

> On Good Friday, he wanted to go hunting with our Savage, who had returned; but I told him that he should not go until he had rendered to God the devotion that all Christians owed to him at that time. I charged our Savage not to receive him in his company, and he did not. Then he [Pastedechouan] confessed and received his Easter communion...It is true that, in order to please him, we told him that, if he performed his devotions, he might go hunting upon the first opportunity; which he did with the promise to return, but we have not seen him since.[7] [Thwaites 1898 Vol. V:175]

While from Le Jeune's perspective, Pastedechouan's participation in this coerced communion was a satisfactory ending to the episode, it was to be a pyrrhic victory. By overstepping the clear ritual boundaries that the young man had so painstakingly demarcated, Le Jeune left him little choice but to flee. Pastedechouan would darken the Jesuits' door only once more in his lifetime shortly before his death.

From Ambivalence to Apostasy? The Winter Hunt of 1633-34

Pastedechouan's decision to keep his distance from Notre Dame des Anges effectively forced Le Jeune, still eager to continue his linguistic instruction, to leave its relative comfort for the forbidding hunting grounds of the Innu. During the winter of 1633-34 he accompanied his young teacher's familial band on a grueling journey of some hundreds of miles, deep into the woods of southern Quebec and northern Maine.[8]

With the missionary's intrusion into his family unit, what Pastedechouan had been taught to view as the mutually exclusive worlds of French Catholicism and Innu traditional life-ways abruptly collided as Le Jeune's anomalous presence within his band shattered the conceptual, temporal and spatial barriers which Pastedechouan had managed to erect between these worlds. The missionary's exclusivistic Christian message, resoundingly declaimed within the citadel of Pastedechouan's Innu identity, reignited the young man's ambivalence regarding his religious loyalties. Pressed by Le Jeune early in their journey to recommit himself wholly to Catholicism, Pastedechouan apparently replied:

> I see clearly that I am not doing right; but my misfortune is that I have not a mind strong enough to remain firm in my determination; I believe all they tell me. When I was with the English, I allowed myself to be influenced by their talk; when I am with the Savages, I do as they do; when I am with you, it seems to me your belief is the true one. Would to God I had died when I was sick in France, and I would now be saved. As long as I have any relations, I will never do anything of any account; for when I want to stay with you, my brothers tell me I will rot, always staying in one place, and that is the reason I leave you to follow them. [Thwaites 1897 Vol. VII:89-91]

Pastedechouan's candid confession disclosed the overwhelming impact of external forces on his eroded identity and intimated the turmoil he faced now that these competing influences had become simultaneous rather than successive. By expressing the tensions between Le Jeune's religious demands and his family's cultural priorities, Pastedechouan vividly communicated his tenuous

position negotiating these contrasting expectations. The young man's words, moreover, eloquently foreshadowed how his relationship with the Jesuit Superior would be decisively affected by Le Jeune's fateful decision to initiate a fractious struggle for religious dominance with Pastedechouan's eldest brother, the shaman Carigonan.

Though Le Jeune was often to complain of his frequent confrontations with this powerful religious leader, it was he who initiated their relational dynamic with his repeated rejections of the Carigonan's cordial overtures. In inviting Le Jeune to accompany the band, Carigonan expressed his hopes that the missionary would utilize his relational expertise with the powerful beings of the Christian pantheon to cure his ongoing affliction: "he [Carigonan] asked me [Le Jeune] if Jesus had not spoken to me about the disease which tormented him. "Come," said he, "with me, and thou wilt make me live now, for I am in danger of dying"" (Thwaites 1897 Vol. VII:69-71). But, perceiving Carigonan as his moral and spiritual antithesis, the Jesuit Superior bluntly rejected both the shaman's offer of hospitality and his request for healing attention.

Le Jeune's unfavorable response to Carigonan's expressions of interest in Catholic prayer and ritual is initially puzzling, as the selective targeting of a society's religious leaders for intensive catechistic attention was a time-honoured Jesuit conversion technique, used to great success in their Asian missions. Even Le Jeune himself belatedly admitted that had the influential shaman "come to know God...all the Savages, influenced by his example, would like to know him also" (Thwaites 1897 Vol. VII:131). His unwillingness to engage Carigonan suggests that the Superior was influenced by Jesuit apprehensions of North American religious specialists as the darkest manifestations of Aboriginal depravity, demonism, and ignorance.[9]

While Le Jeune clearly perceived his encounter with the shaman as a struggle between two fundamentally opposed religious systems, Carigonan appears initially to have viewed the Jesuit's beliefs and practices as complementing rather than displacing his own. Gradually, however, as the shaman intuited the exclusivistic nature of Le Jeune's claims and discerned that he sought, not a mutually beneficial exchange of religious ideas, but merely to impose his own views, Carigonan's attitude toward the missionary began to sour. Entering into the competitive engagement initiated by the Jesuit, he increasingly sought to demonstrate his influence over the group and particularly his brothers. Le Jeune's repeated challenges had roused an opponent worthy of his mettle, who met his theological onslaught with trenchant intelligence, psychological acuity, and an often biting humour (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII).

Le Jeune's antagonistic contestation of Carigonan's religious authority placed Pastedechouan in an unenviable position. Obedience to the missionary's ongoing demands for linguistic assistance would have forced Pastedechouan to contravene the Innu norms of familial etiquette, as many of the Superior's requests fused deliberate religious provocation with unconscious cultural insensitivity. For example, Le Jeune unsuccessfully petitioned Pastedechouan's help in his repeated, fruitless attempts to effect the death-bed conversion of Carigonan's wife, directly contravening the shaman's demands that he desist and indirectly questioning Carigonan's own ritual prowess and religious authority (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII). Pastedechouan's continuing dependency upon his brothers for his survival and for the modicum of social acceptance he enjoyed likely made him reluctant to risk Carigonan's perception of his involvement with the missionary as signaling his own oblique rebellion. Refusal of Le Jeune's repeated requests, however, sentenced him to constant harassment by the missionary, who played upon his inchoate, residual attachment to Catholicism and his lingering fears of hell to try to force the young man's facilitation of his ambitious missionization agenda (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:103, 113-115).

Throughout the fall and early winter of 1633, Pastedechouan's religious ambivalence remained unresolved as he was subjected to the contrary demands of Carigonan and Le Jeune: commanded by the former to dance, and by the latter, to pray (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VI). In a vain attempt to dramatize his religious and social distance from the missionary, and to deny their shared confessional identity, Pastedechouan repeatedly refused to aid Le Jeune, prompting the frustrated missionary to remark:

> this miserable Renegade, fearing to displease his brother, would not even open his mouth. I begged him, I conjured him with all gentleness; finally I spoke harshly, and threatened him in the name of God...This heart of bronze melted neither at my prayers nor at my threats. [Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:103-105]

Nevertheless, when doing so did not come at too high a price in family peace, Pastedechouan did intermittently instruct the Jesuit in the Innu language and translated his eager explanations of Christian thought and practice (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII). It was Pastedechouan, moreover, who precipitated the missionary's attempts to ritually ameliorate the band's steadily worsening plight in late December 1633, when several weeks of disastrous hunting had brought the small group to the brink of starvation (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII). But the very events which Pastedechouan's urging unleashed, and which his own

expertise facilitated, would have the altogether unforeseen result of transforming the young man's characteristic religious ambivalence. Enraged by the events of the Christmas hunt, the furious young Innu would launch an articulate and devastating campaign against Le Jeune's nascent influence within his familial band.

The Christmas Crisis

It was shortly before Christmas, 1633 that Pastedechouan and his second-eldest brother Mestigoit, a respected leader within the Innu group, appealed to the Jesuit to ritually allay the grim spectre of immanent starvation. Seizing upon the missionary opportunity presented him by the band's desperation, Le Jeune hastily erected a provisional oratory of pine boughs, which he decorated with a crucifix, reliquary and devotional images and "composed two little prayers, which he [Pastedechouan] turned into savage" (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:149). With Pastedechouan interpreting, the Superior made an emotional appeal to the assembled band, arguing that his God could save them from their immediate peril, and from Hell itself, if only they would believe wholeheartedly in him. Kneeling in the snow, 29 men, women and children, including Pastedechouan, Mestigoit, and Carigonan, bowed their heads and repeated in Innu the solemn prayer Le Jeune had composed:

> Great Lord, you who have made heaven and earth, you know all, you can do all. I promise you with all my heart (I could not lie to you) I promise you wholly that, if it pleases you to give us food, I will obey you cheerfully, that I will surely believe in you. I promise you without deceit that I will do all that I shall be told ought to be done for love of you. Help us, for you can do it, I will certainly do what they shall teach me ought to be done for your sake. I promise it without pretence, I am not lying, I could not lie to you, help us to believe in you perfectly, for you have died for us. Amen. [Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:153]

Though initially the dramatic success of the Christmas hunt which immediately followed these prayers seemed to betoken a critical missionary triumph for Le Jeune, his victory would prove fleeting. For the very manner in which the Superior interpreted the hunt's outcome would decisively alienate the member of the band upon whom he was most dependent to achieve his missionary goals.

Following his successful capture of two animals, Pastedechouan's brother Mestigoit excitedly approached the missionary, "joyfully recognizing the help of God, and asked what he should do. I said to him, '*Nicanis*, my well beloved, we must thank God who has helped us.'" Pastedechouan, himself having returned empty-handed, and overhearing this exchange between his brother and the missionary, promptly interjected, "what for indeed? We could not have failed to find them [the animals] without the aid of God." Le Jeune relates, "at these words I cannot tell what emotions surged in my heart; but if this traitor had given me a sword-thrust, he could not have saddened me more; these words alone were needed that all might be lost" (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:159).

These caustic remarks were the opening salvo in Pastedechouan's determined campaign to discredit Le Jeune by positing a deeply troubling association between the Christian God, his human representative and Innu privation. Pastedechouan cleverly utilized Le Jeune's own observable behaviour as a template for the divine nature, convincingly presenting God as punishing and miserly, highly problematic traits in a society predicated upon the generous collective distribution of food. Pastedechouan interpreted Le Jeune's publicly expressed reservations regarding the "gluttony" of Innu "eat-all" feasts as an indication that God was "very angry because we have something to eat" (Thwaites, 1898, Vol. VII:163). When the missionary subsequently committed a shocking breach of the Innu ritual code by knowingly profaning the bones of the slain animals by giving them to dogs (an action which threatened to unleash horrifying punishment on the entire group), Pastedechouan's chilling allegations gained tremendously in plausibility, eroding the Jesuit's modest gains in winning the confidence of the band (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V, VI). Though the young Innu's theological assertions and the Superior's ritual profanation were unrelated, each intimated that the Christian God and his followers were sources of antisocial danger which threatened both the group's cohesion and its larger web of interdependence with other-than-human beings.

But why did the events of the Christmas hunt turn Pastedechouan from longstanding religious ambivalence to embittered outrage? Perhaps it was because the equation which Le Jeune so neatly set up in his original prayers, that the believing Christian will be a successful hunter, so thoroughly and brutally contradicted Pastedechouan's personal experience. The young man's failure to resume a respected place in Innu society was largely due to the fact that he spent five pivotal years away from it, learning to be a Christian. The lost opportunity to learn critical Innu survival skills led directly to his social ostracism, marital failures and humiliating dependency. Le Jeune's well-intentioned formula painted Pastedechouan as doubly inadequate, as his empty-handed return to camp branded him a failure in Christian as well as Innu terms.

Pastedechouan's new sense of estrangement from the missionary, however, was fully reciprocated. While the events of Christmas 1633 and its aftermath triggered the young Innu's overt rebellion, and prompted the entire band's reappraisal of the Jesuit Superior, they also precipitated a new pessimism in Le Jeune's evaluation of his own talents as a missionary and the group's readiness to embrace Christianity. Ruminating upon his prevention from leading the band in prayerful thanksgiving following the hunt's success, Le Jeune compared their joyful feasting to wild swine eating wind-fallen nuts: "then behold my pigs devouring the acorns, regardless of Him who shook them down. They vied with each other in their happiness; they were filled with joy, and I with sadness; we must yield to the will of God, for the hour of this people is not yet come" (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:161). The missionary's waning evangelical fortunes appear to have triggered his long downward spiral into self-doubt, illness and spiritual despair which necessitated his risky April 1634 evacuation to Quebec.

A Trio of Deaths

Ensconced once again at the Jesuit convent of Notre Dames des Anges, Le Jeune's bedridden recovery from his physical and spiritual malaise began his protracted hiatus from contact with his former Innu hosts. Estranged from Pastedechouan, probably because of the young man's continuing spiritual truculence, Le Jeune only mentioned the exploits of his one-time travelling companions as, with the passing months, they took a turn for the tragic. Carigonan, Mestigoit and Pastedechouan were preceded in death by their fourth sibling, Sasousmat, who succumbed to illness in January 1634, dying, like Pastedechouan, a baptized Catholic (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VI). The remaining trio would successively meet their respective fates throughout 1635 and 1636.

Carigonan was the first of the three to perish, burning to death when his home caught fire under suspicious circumstances. Mestigoit only briefly outlasted his elder brother. Having barely survived his harrowing journey to deliver the ill Le Jeune back to Quebec in April of 1634, when the first thaw rendered the St. Lawrence a formidable obstacle course of giant chunks of ice, Mestigoit was to perish in its waters the following year. Deprived of his sanity by a raging fever, he apparently slipped into the river's calm depths and never emerged (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII, IX).

Only Pastedechouan remained. The deaths of his older siblings would have left him devastatingly bereft, as he owed his life to the brothers who had taken him under their collective wing following his abandonment by his French mentors in 1629. While they lived, they had used their social prestige to shelter their youngest sibling from the worst of the social ridicule precipitated by his disturbingly liminal status. Deprived of his brothers' generous succour, Pastedechouan now faced an uncertain future.

Confused and grieving, the young Innu returned to Notre Dame des Anges and confided to Le Jeune his wish to "be reconciled to the Church"(Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII:303). Given his determined campaign against the Superior's mission the previous winter, which seemed to have ripened his religious ambivalence into a decisive rejection of Christianity, Pastedechouan's pleas are somewhat surprising, and initially seem to offer a stark interpretive choice between religious sincerity and economic opportunism. But with the death of his brothers, it is perhaps not surprising that Pastedechouan, incapable of supporting himself in a traditional Innu manner, once again sought out the ministrations of a missionary order, the only other reliable providers he had ever known. Moreover, given the abrupt cessation of his brother's countervailing traditionalist influences, it is not unthinkable that Catholicism might once again have exerted its subtle pull upon the deeply ambivalent young man. As vociferous as Pastedechouan's theological diatribes had sometimes been, none of his comments had questioned the existence of a God whose ritual demands and threatened punishments seemed to have an inexorable hold upon his religious imagination, such that they decisively shaped even his most impious outbursts.

Le Jeune, however, discounted his ex-teacher's possible spiritual motivations, interpreting Pastedechouan's apparent change of heart as instigated by his stomach rather than his soul. Rebuffing the young man, the Superior told him to return during a time of plenty, so that his religious sincerity would be more readily apparent. Only after Pastedechouan had left the convent did Le Jeune come to regret his cavalier dismissal of his former teacher. Berating himself for his lack of Christian charity, the Jesuit besieged Tadoussac, Pastedechouan's probable destination, with a blizzard of letters proposing the young man's immediate return (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII, IX). But his missives went unanswered. Having spurned Pastedechouan, Le Jeune never saw him alive again. Apparently "abandoned in the woods like a dog," the young Innu's fate proved his eldest brother's prediction that he would "die of hunger, unless we feed him" eerily prescient (Thwaites 1898 Vol. IX: 173). His solitary demise in the frozen forest is eloquent testimony to his rejection by both the band whose approval he had so assiduously courted, and by the Church which had instilled within him such fatal ambivalence.

In his long days and nights alone, before the end finally came, mounting anxiety probably drove Pastedechouan to seek a range of solutions to his isolation and privation. Perhaps he walked for miles through the woods seeking his kin, startling when the ice-laden trees cracked like gunshots, shattering the unearthly stillness. Likely, he tried to stalk game, silently pleading with the Innu and Christian pantheons to guide his aim, but with failure and the howling wind his only answers. Weakening, he would have struggled to maintain his fire and to build a rude shelter from the indomitable cold. As starvation and exhaustion took their toll, Pastedechouan's vision would have dimmed, cutting the snow's harsh glare. The unbearable numbness and pain in his extremities would have given way, in his last hours, to an illusion of comforting warmth.

But the rigid theology which had long held him in its inflexible grip afforded him not even the meager illusion of comfort. His always lively fears of hell, first inculcated in the Recollet classroom at La Baumette, and cannily manipulated by Le Jeune throughout their association, may well have intensified as his physical strength ebbed, as Pastedechouan surmised that his eternal fate might escalate rather than relieve his current agony (Thwaites 1898 Vol. VII). Pastedechouan's alienated vision of the Almighty, which envisioned Him as a winter sun which blinded without warming, would have been as cold a comfort as the frozen streams and icy, wind-rocked woods around him. Any pleas he made to the other-than-human persons of Innu traditional religion, moreover, were met only with the harsh reality of continuing privation. Though the isolation and fasting of Pastedechouan's last days ironically mimicked that of a youth seeking the lifelong guidance of an animal, his presence alone in the woods signaled his ejection from, rather than his entry into, the interdependent web of Innu social relationships.

Concluding his extended reflection upon Pastedechouan's death and probable fate, Paul Le Jeune exclaimed:

> If it were in my power to free him from the irons and chains in which perhaps he now is, I would release him, that I might procure for him, in exchange for the wrongs he has done me, the greatest blessing that can be obtained for a reasonable creature, eternal salvation. Alas! is it then so small a thing that a soul be damned? All the great affairs of Conclaves, of the Courts of sovereigns, of Palaces, and of Cabinets are only child's play, in comparison with saving or losing a soul. But let us pass on. [Thwaites 1898 Vol. IX:71-73]

We, too, in our capacity as the witnesses of Pastedechouan's short life and tragic death, albeit from the remove of almost 400 years, are similarly faced with the somewhat anti-climactic duty of "passing on" from dramatic narrative to more general reflection and assessment. Having pursued, in all of its intimate contours, the life of this young Innu man, what have we found to challenge or illuminate our scholarly preconceptions? What is Pastedechouan's legacy and contemporary relevance?

Pastedechouan's Legacy

Pastedechouan's contributions to our understanding of life in 17th-century North America are several. His story, in its nuanced complexity, poses significant new theoretical challenges to the study of European–Aboriginal interaction; allowing us to challenge the entrenched historiographic stereotypes of which we are all too often unaware and inviting us to work toward subtler understandings which more deftly capture the realities of Aboriginal people facing a maelstrom of political, military, cultural and religious change. Despite the professed delight of postmodernists in the ambiguous and the liminal, Aboriginal individuals who defy easy cultural or religious categorization have long languished unstudied, resulting in a continuing perception of Aboriginal religious affiliation as a zero sum proposition, instead of what Pastedechouan's story reveals it to be: a shifting, ambiguous and highly variable association. This young Innu man's agonistic experiences with early modern Catholicism stand as a mute rebuke to the ongoing scholarly propensity to isolate the experiences of well documented exemplary converts for intensive study, as well as to the self-perpetuating assumptions which such a selection invariably brings to the study of Aboriginal lives.[10] As a figure who eludes easy religious categorization into the ubiquitous historiographic designations of "convert" or "apostate," Pastedechouan suggests the necessity of a new understanding of Aboriginal religious change. Speaking of the entrenched tendency of scholars to view Aboriginal religious conversion in stark, binary terms, historian Allan Greer has recently written:

> Current debates in history are frequently conducted in the secular language of "assimilation" and "resistance," but in fundamental respects the framework of discussion remains that inherited from the Jesuits and their seventeenth-century critics. That is to say, conversion is understood in bipolar terms—successful or unsuccessful, real or false...The effect is to keep the focus upon the missionaries, their criteria and aspirations, rather than on the "missionized." [2003:176]

Though he was a "convert" to Christianity, the complex variability of Pastedechouan's self-identification as such

should complicate our understanding of this term, which, as Greer suggests, is all too often seen as designating a clear, final and definitive choice. While his apparent "apostasy" questioned the necessity of Catholicism's ritual panoply and challenged its theological assertions of God's benevolence, his transactions with his Recollet mentors, Jesuit antagonists and the members of his own family vividly dramatize his lifelong retention of 17th century Catholic exclusivism. Rather than approximating either of the traditional categories of "conversion" and "apostasy," Pastedechouan, in his characteristic religious ambivalence, was crucified between their extremes.

Pastedechouan's story is also of enduring value because of its contemporary relevance. His experiences of cultural and religious disjunction, though they took place nearly 400 years ago, presaged Aboriginal endurance of centuries of strikingly similar religious and cultural indoctrination. As we have seen, 17th-century missionaries' minority status in an Aboriginal-dominated context made their dreams of transforming such societies unrealistic, even laughable. Their tiny numbers initially forced early Recollet and Jesuit missionaries to miniaturize their aspirations in the persons of individual children, whom they removed to a setting in which they could enjoy an artificial cultural dominance. Though the Jesuits, recognizing its failure, eventually abandoned this child-focussed missionization strategy, their discredited pedagogical model of extraction, isolation and re-education was to prove fatefully influential in subsequent centuries.

When disease-decimated and geographically displaced Aboriginal populations eventually became a minority in their own land, ascendant Euro-North Americans were quick to label them, in the verbiage of the day, a social, economic and religious "problem" or "question." Like their 17th-century predecessors, North America's political and religious elites enthusiastically endorsed educational institutions which, though they took numerous denominational incarnations, collectively promised to assimilate Aboriginal cultures by removing the education of their children from the hands of Native parents. By disrupting the inter-generational replication of cultural and religious life-ways, educational leaders boasted that they could "have the Indian educated out of them" rendering their young charges productive, loyal citizens and devout Christians (Miller 1996:151). Just as Champlain and his Recollet allies had argued that the Native inhabitants of North America could become, through the softening influences of Christianity and agriculture, proxy Frenchmen, 19th-century promoters of Canadian residential schools for Aboriginal youth promised that the troubling wildness of these scattered, uncivilized bands could be effectively tamed, and their distinctive cultures discretely extinguished, through a gradual process of assimilative education. The dream of a widespread imposition of Old World religious ideas upon New World native groups, cherished but unrealized by figures such as Le Jeune, would gradually make European-influenced aboriginal figures like Pastedechouan the norm, rather than the exception.

Though the intervening 200 years brought new pedagogical developments and vocational priorities, the overall premise of these educational institutions remained unchanged from that of their 17th-century progenitors: to extract, isolate and re-educate native children, stripping them of their ontology, epistemology, ethics and identity and enforcing their adherence to the theological and behavioural dictates of an essentially foreign religious and cultural ideology (Haig-Brown 1988; Johnston 1988; Lomawaima 1994). Despite the passage of centuries, the damaging psychological effects of prolonged immersion in such assimilationist institutions, referred to by many survivors as "cultural" or "emotional genocide" have remained horrifyingly consistent (Frank 2003:35, 39; Haig-Brown 1988:11).

For a number of reasons, however, the renewed European assault upon Aboriginal religions and cultures witnessed by the 19th and 20th centuries was both more ferocious and more ambitious than the 17th-century experiments which preceded them. First, the sheer scope of the unfolding educational project dwarfed even the wildest dreams of its missionary progenitors. While the number of Aboriginal children housed in 17th-century seminaries never exceeded more than perhaps 10 or 15 simultaneously, each residential school in 19th- and 20th-century North America brought together hundreds of students from large catchment areas. The sheer number of students incarcerated in these large institutions dramatically amplified their sociological impact on Aboriginal communities. Large, diverse student populations fermented both factionalism and fellowship, fostering multiple forms of covert resistance to institutional authority. Because Aboriginal students, some as young as four, faced a regimented, depersonalized existence, were often the victims of emotional, physical or sexual abuse, and visited their families only infrequently, they needed all the potential venues for comfort and collusion that such childhood alliances could afford (Adams 1995; Haig-Brown 1988; Johnston 1988; Lomawaima 1994).

Secondly, the mandate of later schools considerably expanded the earlier emphasis upon children's cultural and religious reformation, seeking, in addition, to quash student usage of their Native tongues. Native linguistic

proficiency, deliberately fostered by Recollets and Jesuits eager to master Aboriginal languages, was specifically targeted for elimination in the new school system. Met at schools' thresholds, incoming students were informed that to speak what was for many the only language they knew was to invite swift and brutal corporal punishment (Kim Cheena, personal communication, October 2004; Frank 2003:34-35; Haig-Brown 1988:11; Johnston 1988:7, 9-10; Lomawaima 1994:xiv-xv; Miller 1996:199-220).

Thirdly, though 19th- and 20th-century presentations of Christianity and Native religious ideations stressed their incomparability and incommensurability, standards for Aboriginal conformation to Euro-Canadian religious norms differed considerably from the "exceptionalist" agenda of earlier French missionaries. Seventeenth-century missionaries sought to inculcate in their Aboriginal pupils a passionate, internalized faith, and fully expected that they might eventually spiritually surpass their European mentors. In modern residential schools, however, children's piety was seen merely as the religious dimension of their capitulation to the self-evident superiority of the now dominant culture. Conversion was envisioned less as a radical interior transformation than as another indicator of student conformity with institutional expectations.

Fourthly, 19th- and early 20th-century residential schools coupled earlier assumptions of Aboriginal cultural inferiority with a new spectre—that of racial difference. Seventeenth-century expectations of Aboriginal amenability to missionary influence, while predicated upon a condescending assessment of indigenous religious and cultural commitments, did not perceive Native populations racially different from Europeans. The architects of French colonialism dreamed of the establishment of a *métis* culture guided by European cultural and religious imperatives but largely populated by "Francized" Natives (Biggar 1925 Vol. I: 110, 117, 295-296, Vol. III, 15-16; Thwaites 1898 Vol. V:23, 33-35). In the intervening centuries, however, Aboriginal "otherness" had taken on a racial connotation, and deprecations of Aboriginal culture were grounded in an essentially new perception of indigenous peoples as racially inferior. Educators of Aboriginal youth, even as they attempted to effect their assimilation to the dominant culture, pessimistically intoned that their young charges' inherent inferiority would preclude them from making genuine contributions to it (Lomawaima 1994:xiii, 3-4; Miller 1996:183-216).

Finally, modern Aboriginal residential schools seem to have differed from their 17th-century predecessors in the amount of violence which they promoted, tolerated, or discretely ignored. In both eras, coercion and abuse can be divided into two categories: the first being disciplinary violence, which, because it was seen as aiding in the accomplishment of educational and behavioural objectives, was openly condoned by the pedagogical mores of each period. The second form of mistreatment was covert abuse, either physical or sexual in nature, which, though it may have been tacitly tolerated by the institution's authorities, was not publicly acknowledged or admitted. Any comparison of early modern and modern Aboriginal experiences of abuse in educational settings, however, can only consider the question of licit violence, as the one-sided nature of missionary-generated documents and the absence of Aboriginal-authored descriptions of their experiences in missionary-run institutions during this period do not permit the reconstruction of illicit violence in the 17th-century context.

Seventeenth-century missionaries clearly relied upon physical punishment as an essential part of their educational program. Paul Le Jeune, in letters to his superiors in France, emphasized that Aboriginal children receiving a Jesuit education had to first be isolated from their families and communities because of Aboriginal objections to disciplinary violence:

> The reason why I would not like to take the children of one locality [and teach them] in that locality itself, but rather in some other place, is because these Barbarians cannot bear to have their children punished, nor even scolded, not being able to refuse anything to a crying child. They carry this to such an extent that upon the slightest pretext they would take them away from us, before they were educated. [Thwaites 1898 Vol. VI:153-155]

Denied their traditional recourse to coercive tactics, he stated, the Jesuits would not be able to succeed in their educational objectives.

If, earlier, pedagogical violence had been a requirement for the success of the famed Jesuit educational model, in the 19th and 20th centuries licit and illicit physical and sexual violence exploded in Aboriginal assimilative schools. Missionary scrutiny of their Aboriginal pupils through the newly ground lens of race likely facilitated their perception of students in the distant, depersonalized terms which often precipitate the violence or degradation of those so perceived. The changed demographic and legal situation, moreover, was one which encouraged rather than thwarted coercion. While 17th-century residential schools existed at the whim of numerically dominant Aboriginal cultures, in the 20th century Aboriginal peoples' willingness to participate in education was no longer integral to such institutions' viability. After the

Canadian government, in 1920, made attendance at such assimilative institutions compulsory, threatening Aboriginal families who resisted with economic and legal retaliation, coercion became the very foundation upon which the system rested (Frank 2003:34). Teachers and administrators who utilized violence and degradation *within* such institutions were simply taking their coercive cue directly from the Canadian government itself. Tragically, some Aboriginal children, isolated in dehumanizing institutions, learned themselves to exploit the younger and weaker members of their own peer groups. The rigidly maintained code of silence around physical and sexual violence in residential schools, moreover, facilitated the inception and continuation of a wide spectrum of abusive behaviours. Administrative supervision of outgoing student communications, combined with the self-censorship of Aboriginal young people due to shame or fear, formed a near impenetrable wall of secrecy which is only now being recognized and breached. Today, thousands of Aboriginal peoples throughout North America are seeking to bring their individual abusers to justice and pursuing recognition of and compensation for their suffering in schools which had as their fundamental mandate the cultural, linguistic and religious refashioning of Aboriginal children (Miller 1996:439-441).

While the modern assimilative education of Aboriginal children thus differed in important ways from 17th-century models, the psychological effects upon contemporary graduates and their descendants appear remarkably reminiscent of those suffered by the early modern Innu man who is the chief subject of this article. Pastedechouan, as the direct result of his assimilative experiences in France, spent the remainder of his short life searching for personal identity and societal acceptance, each of which proved painfully elusive. His equivocal pattern of conformity and rebellion, despair and lashing out, also characterizes the experiences of subsequent generations of Aboriginal peoples, whose education engendered their physical and psychological distance from family and community and often precluded their formation of a coherent Native identity. Like Pastedechouan's, their education systemically estranged them religiously and culturally from their natal communities, even as racism often precluded their acceptance in the white world they had been groomed to join (Barman et al. 1986; Frank 2003; Haig-Brown 1988; Johnston 1988; Miller 1996).

However, Pastedechouan's experiences, as tragic as they were, had only a peripheral effect upon the familial members of his own generation and virtually no repercussions upon his descendents. His experiences, in the Innu-dominant context of his time, were dismissed as troubling, but ultimately anomalous. Modern assimilative education, however, has had complex inter-generational effects upon every aspect of Aboriginal societies. Even though Aboriginal residential schooling in Canada is today defunct, the recently deceased system continues to exert its influence, from beyond the grave as it were, upon the religious and cultural identities of the rising generation. By breaking the inter-generational Aboriginal transmission of traditional knowledge and practices, residential schools have profoundly affected Aboriginal community cohesion and individual and collective sense of Native selfhood. The children and grandchildren of those who attended residential schools, though they may not have personally experienced its rigours, thus remain in its long shadow, a shadow first cast over Pastedechouan's childhood in the early years of the 17th century.

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Notes

1 Innu, meaning simply "the people," is the self-designated term of the contemporary community (Jauvin 1993) encompassing two culturally similar groups, the Montagnais and the Naskapi.

2 Jean Dolbeau, who in 1620 brought Pastedechouan to France describes him as "un petit sauvage de douze ou treize ans" (Bibliothèque Municipal d'Orléans, MS 509, fol. 171), giving us a birth date of 1607 or 1608. La Flèche (1973) uses the younger estimate, as does Uzureau (1922). Jean Louvet, an eyewitness to his baptism at Angers in 1621, describes him as "a young boy aged 10 or 11 years" (Bibliothèque Municipal d'Angers, MS 862). Others (Campeau 1979 and Dionne 1907) paraphrase Jesuit Paul Le Jeune, who simply states that he was "conduit en France en son bas age par les RR. Peres Recolets" (Thwaites 1897 Vol. V:109).

3 Irving Hallowell (1976) pioneered usage of this term to describe the Aboriginal pantheon, rejecting "beings" or "spirits" as misleadingly impersonal. His terminology has subsequently been widely adopted by scholars of Aboriginal religions.

4 This term, taken from Richard White's book (1991) of the same name, suggests that before the achievement of an outright European hegemony, Aboriginals and colonists tend to seek mutually comprehensible and acceptable ways of relating to one another, facilitating the development of social, political and especially economic liaisons. White's model fits the Aboriginal–European trade which characterized 16th- and early 17th-century Canada, but is less helpful for describing missionary–Aboriginal interactions.

5 It was the same Recollet, Father Garnier, whom Samuel de Champlain consulted in 1614 when he sought and obtained from him an expeditionary force of missionaries to accompany him to Canada the following year (Uzureau 1921).

6 Mathican Atic's personal expectations for Pastedechouan's trip would only have been heightened by the fact that his family had long supported such overseas endeavours. Mathican Atic's father, Anadabijou, had enthusiastically endorsed the military and political gains made by young Innu agents sent to France in 1602, encouraging other prominent Innu headmen to send their sons on similar missions (Biggar 1925 Vol. I).

7 The individual mentioned in the quote as "our Savage" was Pastedechouan's former father-in-law, Manitougatche, whose status as a Catholic neophyte and French ally long predated his association with the newly arrived Jesuit Superior (Thwaites 1898 Vol. V, VI).

8 For a retracing of the probable trajectory of their journey, see Caron 1963.

9 For a critical overview of Jesuit–shaman relations in 17th-century Canada, see Goddard 1997. On Le Jeune's Augustinian attitudes, see LaFlèche 1980, Principe 1990, Goddard 1998, Ouellet 1993 and Fournier 1995.

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