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Exemplars of Taking Liberties: The Iroquois Influence Theory and the Problem of Evidence

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EXEMPLARS OF TAKING LIBERTIES: THE IROQUOIS INFLUENCE THEORY AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIDENCE

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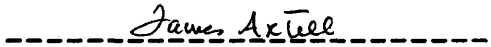

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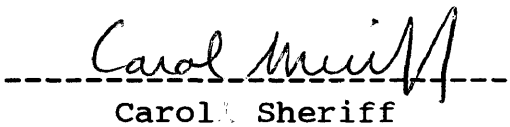

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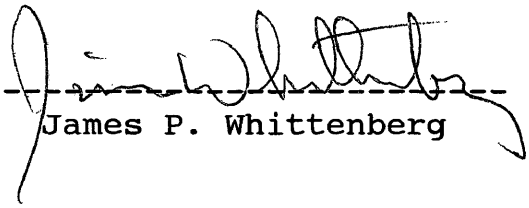

James P. Whittenberg

DEDICATION

To the beloved memory of Frances F. Turner.

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ABSTRACT

In 1991 Donald Grinde Jr., and Bruce Johansen published *Exemplar of Liberty*. The book is the most comprehensive presentation of evidence supporting the controversial theory that the Iroquois Confederacy was an important influence on the United States founding fathers. This "influence thesis" contends that men such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and James Madison witnessed in Iroquois government Indian governmental principals such as 'liberty' and 'democracy' and used these models in the new state they created. Influence thesis supporters hold that Americans should recognize the Iroquois as founding fathers in their own right.

Despite some popular and official recognition the influence thesis has not become common in the nation's university's text books and syllabi. Grinde and Johansen believe that Anglo cultural chauvinism has been their theory's biggest obstacle to wide spread acceptance. But a careful review of the influence thesis's supporting evidence reveals a pattern of documentary misquotations and decontextualizations that seriously undermine the influence thesis's central contentions.

This thesis examines Grinde and Johansen's contentions about several founding fathers who, according to influence thesis thinking, constitute direct links between the Iroquois and the Constitution. In May, 1995 *The William and Mary Quarterly* accepted for publication a reduced version of this thesis.

EXEMPLARS OF TAKING LIBERTIES:

THE IROQUOIS INFLUENCE THESIS AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIDENCE

"The credibility of any argument rests on the quality of the evidence that supports it."[1]
Donald Grinde, Jr., and Bruce Johansen

For nearly two decades, Donald Grinde, Jr. and Bruce Johansen have been the most outspoken proponents of the controversial theory that the Iroquois Confederacy and Great Law of Peace had an important influence on the constitutional design of the United States government. In three books--Grinde's *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* (1977), Johansen's *Forgotten Founders* (1982), and their 1991 co-authored *of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy*,[2]--as well as in numerous articles and essays--the two have made the case for what supporters call the influence thesis. Grinde's and Johansen's writings contend that the nation's founders saw liberty, government by reason, religious toleration, checks and balances, and federalism in Indian societies and put these "American Indian ideas"[3] to work in the Albany Plan of Union, the Articles of Confederation, and the federal

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[1]Donald Grinde, Jr. and Bruce Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy* (Los Angeles: 1991), 241 (hereafter cited as *Exemplar*).

[2]Donald Grinde, Jr., *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* (Indian Historian Press, 1977); Bruce Johansen, *Forgotten Founders* (Ipswich, Mass.,1982).

[3]Donald Grinde, Jr., "Iroquoian Political Concept and the Genesis of American Government: Further Research and Contentions," *Northeast Indian Quarterly* (Winter 1989), 10.

Constitution. Supporters of the influence thesis applaud Grinde and Johansen's work as a praiseworthy inclusion of Indians in American history, while critics see the influence thesis as deceptive and shoddy scholarship.

Grinde and Johansen's *Exemplar of Liberty* is the most comprehensive exhibit of influence thesis arguments and evidence to date. In *Exemplar* Grinde and Johansen contend that "the character of American democracy evolved importantly (although, of course, not solely) from the examples provided by the American Indian confederacies that bordered the British colonies"[4] and that "the Founding Fathers respected and used American Indian ideas as the American government evolved." They also believe that the "League of the Iroquois, with its representative form of democracy"[5] was especially influential and "served as a catalyst for American unity."[6] They assert that "during the framing and ratification process of the United States Constitution, the Iroquois lectured to colonial and revolutionary leaders on the virtues of unity and served as an example of democracy for Europeans and colonial Americans"[7] and that "the Iroquois had a profound impact on American notions about unity, territorial expansion, the

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[4]*Exemplar*, xx.

[5]Ibid., xxii.

[6]Ibid., 177.

[7]Ibid., xxiv.

origins of sovereignty in the people, and universal suffrage."[8] They conclude that, "in essence, American democracy is a synthesis of Native American and European political theories."[9]

Grinde and Johansen consider the "interpretive and documentary evidence"[10] of the "intellectual transference of American Indian governmental theories to the American people" to be so "clearly present in the colonial, revolutionary, and early national records of the United States"[11] that "the question is not whether the Iroquois had an influence on formation of the American government but to what degree."[12]

Many Native Americans and educational multiculturalists have warmly received the influence thesis. In 1989 a New York State public school curriculum review panel recommended the teaching that Indian traditions "such as the Iroquois system of governance have had an impact on the development

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[8]Ibid., xxiii.

[9]Ibid., xxiv.

[10]Grinde, "Iroquoian Political Concept and the Genesis of American Government," 10.

[11]*Exemplar*, xxii.

[12]Jose Barriero, ed., *The Indian Roots of American Democracy* (Ithaca: *The Northeastern Indian Quarterly, Special Edition,* Vol. V, No. 1, 1988), 32; *Exemplar*, 96; Donald Grinde, Jr., and Bruce Johansen, "The Debate Regarding Native American Precedents for Democracy: A Recent Historiography," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 14: (1990), 61-88.

of institutions and practices of the State of New York and the United States."[13] Furthermore, during the 1987 Constitutional Bicentennial, the United States Senate passed Senator Daniel Inouye's resolution "to acknowledge the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations to the development of the United States Constitution."[14] Although this support is phrased in unspecific language such as "had an *impact* on" and "acknowledge the *contribution* of," the importance of these influence-thesis victories is self evident.

Despite signs of growing official acceptance, much of the academic community has remained skeptical about the influence thesis's logic and supporting evidence. Grinde and Johansen have frequently dismissed their critics' rebukes as motivated by professional elitism, cultural chauvinism, or outright racism.[15] In a 1989 "Critique of Responses" in the

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[13]The Commissioner's Task Force on Minorities, *A Curriculum of Inclusion* (Reprint, Springfield, VA., [1989]), 21/71.

[14]Text of Senate Resolution S. Cong. Res. 76 reprinted in David Wientraub, "Iroquois Influence on the Founding of the American Nation," *Court Review* Vol. 29 No. 4 (Winter 1992), 17-32.

[15]For a review of the influence thesis debate and its tone, see Jose Barreiro, ed. *The Roots of American Democracy*; Donald Grinde, Jr., "Iroquoian Political Concept and the Genesis of American Government"; Bruce Johansen and Donald Grinde, Jr. "Native Voices and the Diffusion of an Idea," *Akwe:kon Journal* Vol. X No.2 (Summer 1993) 30-40; Bruce Johansen and Donald Grinde, Jr., "The Debate Regarding Native American Precedents for Democracy: A Recent Historiography," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal 14:1*, (Winter 1991); Elisabeth Tooker, "The United

Northeast Indian Quarterly, Grinde wrote:

> Some scholars are seeking to stop the process of de-Europeanizing American history. Such attempts in the 21st century will be seen as last ditch efforts to maintain an Anglo cultural veneer that sought to dominate new scholarship in a rapidly changing intellectual and social environment. This Eurocentric approach with its 'gatekeepers,' etc. is playing to the subliminal motivations that are present in the contemporary political situation.[16]

This opinion is repeated in the introduction to *Exemplar of Liberty*. By affirming that "history is discovered through the debate of many voices, not just a few 'expert' opinions,"[17] Grinde and Johansen wish to "let American Indian voices be heard on the issue of Iroquois political theory and its role in the development of American governmental structures,"[18] in the hope that

> when the dominant society becomes more concerned about

States Constitution and The Iroquois League," *Ethnohistory Vol.35 No.4* (Fall 1988); Bruce Johansen, Elisabeth Tooker, "Commentary on the Iroquois and the United States Constitution," *Ethnohistory Vol.37 No.3*, (Summer 1988); Donald Grinde, Jr., "Teaching American Indian History: A Native Voice," *Perspectives* Vol. 32 No.6, (September 1994) 1.

[16]Grinde, "Iroquoian Political Concept and the Genesis of American Government," 16.

[17]*Exemplar*, xxv.

[18]Ibid., xxiv.

> reciprocity and less concerned about superiority and domination, we may be able to join hands and celebrate the diverse roots of the American democratic tradition without the blinders of indifference and cultural arrogance.[19]

Despite Grinde and Johansen's laudably inclusive sentiments, skepticism about the influence thesis stems from something more basic and less socially divisive than "indifference," "cultural arrogance," or the historical establishment's perceived devotion to the intellectual status quo. As Grinde and Johansen's words in the epigraph state, evidence is the appropriate measure of a historical argument's validity. Unfortunately, the influence thesis as portrayed by Grinde and Johansen in *Exemplar* simply does not meet their own professed standards for historical credibility.

Although Grinde and Johansen believe that "the oral and written traditions of the Iroquois"[20] substantiate the influence thesis, little native testimony appears in *Exemplar*'s text or endnotes. Instead, the authors attempt to reveal what influence-thesis advocates have termed the "Indian roots of American democracy"[21] largely through the words of Anglo-American founders such as Thomas Jefferson,

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[19]Ibid., xxiv.

[20]Ibid., xxii.

[21]Jose Barreiro, ed., *The Roots of American Democracy*.

James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams. However, in their zeal to prove their thesis, Grinde and Johansen misquote, misattribute, decontextualize, inaccurately paraphrase, liberally edit, and misinterpret the documentation that they claim supports their conclusions.

To date most of the published debate surrounding the influence thesis has focused on the historical, political, and anthropological merits of Grinde and Johansen's (and other advocates') findings. But few critics have closely examined the evidence Grinde and Johansen use to argue for a direct connection between the Iroquois and the most prominent founders of "American democracy." A critical review of Grinde and Johansen's cited and quoted primary and secondary writings reveals the influence thesis's weak documentary basis. Moreover, much of Grinde and Johansen's own cited evidence actually undermines or disproves the authors' conclusions and the influence thesis's central tenets. It also exposes the questionable historical methods that have made Grinde and Johansen the targets of academic criticism.

Two quotations lay at the center of influence historiography. The first is from Onondaga chief Canasatego's speech at the 1744 Treaty Council at Lancaster, Pennsylvania.[22]

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[22]Thorough reviews of Grinde and Johansen's errors surrounding the 1742 Philadelphia and the 1744 Lancaster Treaty Councils and Benjamin Franklin are contained in

> Our wise forefathers established Union and Amity between the Five Nations. This has made us formidable; this has given us great Weight and Authority with our neighboring Nations. We are a powerful Confederacy; and by your observing the same methods, our wise forefathers have taken, you will acquire such Strength and power. Therefore whatever befalls you, never fall out with one another.[23]

The second is from a letter that Benjamin Franklin penned to New York printer and postmaster James Parker on March 20, 1751. Franklin was an outspoken advocate of a union of British colonies and an active and interested participant in Indian diplomacy. He wrote Parker that

> It would be a very strange Thing, if *Six Nations* of ignorant Savages should be capable of forming a Scheme for such a Union, and be able to execute it in such a Manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble; and yet that a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a Dozen *English* Colonies, to whom it is more necessary, and must be more

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William Starna and George Hamell, "History and the Burden of Proof: The Case of Iroquois Influence on the United States Constitution" (unpublished conference paper) and Nancy Dieter Egloff,"Six Nations of Ignorant Savages: Benjamin Franklin and the Iroquois League of Nations," (M.A. Thesis, College of William and Mary, 1987).

[23]*Exemplar*, 94.

advantageous; and who cannot be supposed to want an equal Understanding of their Interests.[24]

In a 1952 *American Scholar* article entitled "Americanizing the White Man," Indian law expert and author of the *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* Felix Cohen connected these two passages and concluded that "the advice of Canasatego was eagerly taken up by Franklin."[25] Wilbur Jacobs's 1972 *Dispossessing the American Indian* echoed Cohen's conclusions and provocatively suggested that "it is known that other framers of the Constitution had knowledge of Indian confederation systems and the ideals of Indian democracy."[26] Both Grinde's *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* and Johansen's *Forgotten Founders*

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[24]Benjamin Franklin, *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Albert Henry Smith, 10 vols. (New York, 1907), 3:42.

[25]Felix Cohen, "Americanizing the White Man," *The American Scholar* 21 (1952): 184; Other lawyers have followed in Cohen's intellectual footsteps and used Grinde and Johansen's writings to support their own. Northwestern University Adjunct Professor of Law Robert J. Miller published an article entitled "American Indian Influence on the United States Constitution and Its Framers" in *The American Indian Law Review* (Vol. 18:1, 1991, pp.133-160). The article cited Cohen's 1952 *American Scholar* article and Grinde and Johansen's work. The 1992 American Judges Foundation Law Student Essay first prize went to David Weintraub's "Iroquois Influence on the Founding of the American Nation." The article was published in *Court Review* (vol. 29 no. 4, Winter 1992, pp. 17-32). Weintraub relied almost entirely on Grinde and Johansen's research and analysis.

[26]Wilbur Jacobs, *Dispossessing the American Indian: Indians and Whites on the Colonial Frontier* (New York, 1972), 168.

devoted considerable space to Cohen's Canasetego-Franklin connection and the topic received an entire chapter in *Exemplar*.

In that chapter--"The White Roots Reach Out"--Grinde and Johansen argue that the 1754 "Albany Plan of Union was the product"[27] of Franklin's meetings with the Iroquois and that on the "eve of the Albany conference, Franklin was already persuaded that Canassatego's words of the previous decade were good council."[28] *Exemplar* offers no citation from Franklin's writings to support the authors' assessment of his motivations. The authors also see important parallels between the Albany Plan (which no colony ratified) and the League of the Iroquois such as Franklin's choice of the title "Grand Council" for the plan's deliberative body. Grinde and Johansen note that this is "the same title generally applied to the Iroquois central council. Even the proposed number of delegates, forty-eight, was similar to the Iroquois council's size of fifty."[29] But these parallels are superficial at best (48 is not 50), and Grinde and Johansen's contention that the plans' "retention of internal sovereignty within the individual colonies" had "no existing precedent in Europe" is hyperbolic and lacks a supporting

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[27]*Exemplar*, 93-94. Restated differently on 144.

[28]Ibid., 104.

[29]Ibid., 107.

citation.[30]

Despite its tenuousness, Cohen's Franklin-Canasatego connection is the best piece of evidence in the influence-thesis arsenal. Franklin wrote extensively about Indians and Indian diplomacy, and the two quotations do contain similar sentiments. But as anthropologist, Iroquois specialist, and influence-thesis critic Elisabeth Tooker stated in a 1988 article in *Ethnohistory*, "considered together these statements confirm what is already well known: at least some whites and some Indians in the eighteenth century realized the advantages of confederation."[31]

For the most part, Grinde and Johansen merely echo Cohen's and Jacob's earlier conclusions, but *Exemplar's* discussion of Franklin and the Iroquois demonstrates how influence theorists are prepared to make revisionist mountains out of historical molehills. It also reveals another important influence thesis paradigm. The authors employ a form of circular logic in which Indian contact serves as both the vehicle of influence and the proof of

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[30]Ibid., 107; Contemporary Switzerland (the "old country" for many colonists) exhibited this type of federation and was written about extensively by John Adams in his 1787 *Defence of the Constitutions of the Government of the United States of America*. Furthermore, Indian diplomat John Bartram during a 1743 visit to Iroquoia compared the League of the Iroquois to "the thirteen cantons of Switzerland" in *A Journey from Pennsylvania to Onondaga in 1743* (Barre Mass.,1973).

[31]Elisabeth Tooker, "The United States Constitution and The Iroquois League," *Ethnohistory Vol.35 No.4* (Fall 1988), 310.

influence. The authors assume that Franklin's and other founders' interest in any aspect of Indian culture or their personal contact with Indians resulted in substantive and accurate knowledge of the workings of Native governments. They then see this assumed substantive and accurate knowledge transferred into the development of American government, either through any mention of Indians in the individual's writings, (as in the cases of Franklin, Jefferson and Adams) or, in some cases, through the individual's mere physical presence at treaty councils, meetings, or conventions (as in the case of Madison).[32]

One of *Exemplar*'s most farfetched examples of this personal transference is that of John Rutledge of South Carolina. Grinde and Johansen wrote that Rutledge was "exposed to Iroquois political theory"[33] at the Stamp Act

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[32]Similarly, Grinde and Johansen's analysis of the St. Tammany Society, and its revolutionary predecessor the Sons of Liberty, relies on equating the ceremonial wearing of pseudo-Indian garb with being influenced by Indian governments and values. Their discussion of the St. Tammany Society (also called the Columbian Order) of which many founders were members, overlooks the salient fact that the society had among its principal goals the acquisition of new lands, westward expansion, and the displacement of the Indians. In fact, the society lionized its Indian patron "saint" Chief Tammany precisely for his willingness to hand over his Pennsylvania lands to William Penn, making him in their eyes a fitting role model for other Indians blocking United States's land ambitions. See John Pitman, "A Long Talk Delivered before the Tammany Society or Columbian Order on their Anniversary, 1810. (Microfilm), Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

[33]*Exemplar*, 113.

Congress in 1767, and that at the Constitutional Convention twenty years later "Rutledge recalled his experience with the Iroquois"[34] or alternately "Rutledge supposedly read aloud some Iroquois advice regarding the will of 'the people.'"[35] Grinde and Johansen see Rutledge as a vehicle in which unspecified elements of "Iroquois political theory" were transferred over a twenty-year period to the constitutional convention. Furthermore, the authors make this claim without reference to Rutledge's own writings.

Grinde and Johansen's only authority for their assertions about Rutledge and the Iroquois is Richard Barry's 1942 biography of the South Carolinian.[36] The authors assert that "Richard Barry, has reported that, according to family lore, Rutledge was deeply influenced by Iroquois political theory."[37] But Barry's text contains no support for this claim and Grinde and Johansen offer no supporting page citation from Barry's book. Barry's text does indicate that Rutledge's only contact with the Iroquois was a series of visits with Indian trader and diplomat Sir William Johnson during the weeks of the Stamp Act Congress. While chatting in Johnson's tent or at the King's Arms Tavern, Johnson

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[34]Ibid., 173.

[35]Ibid., 208.

[36]Richard Barry, *Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1942).

[37]*Exemplar,* 296.

described aspects of the Iroquois's government to Rutledge and extolled the virtues of the Iroquois's "parliament."[38] If Rutledge was "exposed to Iroquois political theory," it was William Johnson's version of Iroquois government.

Barry wrote that at the first meeting of the Constitutional drafting committee (of which Rutledge was the chairman) Rutledge drew from his pocket,

> a replica of the constitution of the Five Nations (the Iroquois) of 1520. Rutledge read what the Indians had written more than two and a half centuries before: "We, the people, to form a union, to establish peace, equality and order..."[39]

The idea that this document with its oddly familiar wording was actually an Indian "parchment" from the early sixteenth century strains credibility. Yet Grinde and Johansen have taken Barry's story at face value and see it as an example of Iroquois influence on the constitution. Ironically, Barry's description of this incident also notes that this alleged Indian constitution "had never been referred to in the Convention or by any of its delegates outside."[40] Therefore, even if this improbable document was legitimate, Grinde and Johansen's only source of information about it also denies its importance or influence.

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[38]Ibid., 108.

[39]Barry, *Mr. Rutledge*, 339.

[40]Ibid., 339.

Grinde and Johansen see evidence of Indian influence in the Continental Congress and the events surrounding the drafting and signing of the Declaration of Independence. The authors contend that several groups of Iroquois sachems visited Philadelphia in the "midst of this debate on government and independence" and that throughout the month of May "twenty-one Iroquois observed the operations of the Continental Congress and its president John Hancock."[41] In June 1776 a delegation of Six Nation chiefs visited Philadelphia and was addressed by John Hancock on the floor of the Continental Congress. Grinde and Johansen assert that "they were addressed as 'Brothers' and told of the delegates' wish that the 'friendship' between them would 'continue as long as the sun shall shine' and the 'waters run.'"[42] In response an Onondaga sachem gave Hancock the name "Karanduawn" meaning "Great Tree." The authors see this event--"the day of Hancock's renaming"--as being pregnant with meaning: "with the Iroquois chiefs inside the halls of Congress on the eve of the Declaration of Independence, the impact of Iroquois ideas on its makers unmistakable" because "immediately after the meeting with the Iroquois, the Congress proceeded to appoint a committee (composed of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Roger Sherman, and Roger

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[41]*Exemplar*, 145.

[42]Ibid., 145.

Livingston) to draft a Declaration of Independence."[43] Grinde and Johansen believe that native inspiration, derived from the Iroquois sachems' visit to Philadelphia and "Hancock's renaming," was an important catalyst for the Continental Congress' Declaration of Independence.

Their interpretation rests on an incorrect chronology of events and a flawed reading of the Congressional record. During the spring of 1776 several Iroquois delegations did indeed visit Philadelphia, but they were not for political consultations as Grinde and Johansen suggest. Instead, the Iroquois were there to address issues of military alliances. War with Britain was in breaking out and the Americans were interested in securing Indian alliances or promises of neutrality. In May the Congress decided to actively recruit allied Indians to fight the British and empowered General Washington to raise "a number of Indians, not exceeding two thousand."[44] But with the powerful (and British leaning) Iroquois nations the Congress continued its strategy of requesting their noninvolvement.[45] As part of that plan the Congress provided the visiting sachems with gifts and regaled them with military displays.

Grinde and Johansen quote only from the preamble of

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[43]Ibid., 145.

[44]*Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1776*, Vol. V, 1776: 421; hereafter cited as *Congress*.

[45]Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 100.

Congress's June 11 speech to the Iroquois and omit the passage's central sections. Congress urged the Indians to maintain their neutrality stating that,

> Brothers,
>
> We shall order all our warriors and young men not to hurt you or any of your kindred, and we hope you will not suffer any of your young men to join with our enemies, or to do any wrong to us, that nothing may happen to make any quarrel between us.[46]

Grinde and Johansen's discussion of the speech overlooks the Congress's clearly stated intent. The authors also state that "history is indebted to Charles Thomson, an adopted Delaware, whose knowledge of and respect for American Indians is reflected in the attention that he gave to this ceremony in the records of the Continental Congress."[47] In fact the report was written by George Wythe and not Thomson.[48]

Grinde and Johansen correctly note that after the Iroquois delegation "took their leave and withdrew"[49] the Congress appointed a committee to draft the Declaration of Independence. But their assessment that the two events are directly related is simply an ecological fallacy. The

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[46]*Congress*, V:431.

[47]*Exemplar*, 145.

[48]*Congress*, V:430.

[49]Ibid., V:431.

Congress was already discussing the particulars of such a declaration well before the June 11 Iroquois visitation and on June 7 it resolved

> That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.[50]

The resolution also authorized a committee to prepare a declaration to this effect. But Congress postponed the drafting so that the "Delegates from those Colonies which had not as yet given authority to adopt this decisive measure" would have ample opportunity to "consult their constituents."[51] On June 10, the Congress reversed itself and decided to delay only the formal statement of independence until July 1, but to move ahead with the drafting of the declaration. On June 11 the Congress appointed the required committee. Grinde and Johansen overlook the chain of events that led to the Declaration of Independence to contend incorrectly that the Congress' contact with the Iroquois fostered influence by the Iroquois.

Grinde and Johansen's discussion of Thomas Jefferson displays the same contact=influence logical paradigm that

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[50]Ibid., V:425.

[51]Ibid., V:426.

they applied to Franklin and Rutledge, but here the authors demonstrate the questionable use of evidence that mars much of their work. Jefferson's interest in Virginia Indians' languages, histories, and burial mounds forms the basis of Grinde and Johansen's discussion of his Indian influences. They argue that "American Indians and their societies figured into the conception of 'life, liberty and happiness' as understood by Jefferson" and that Jefferson's "descriptions of American Indian societies played a provocative role in a major debate of the time, which erupted when the phrase 'happiness' was substituted for 'property.'"[52] Grinde and Johansen offer no support for these specific assertions through Jefferson's writings. Instead, they cite only co-author Bruce Johansen's largely citation-free *Forgotten Founders*, pages 103 to 108. The cited work neither clarifies *Exemplar*'s claims nor offers any supporting primary source evidence.

Grinde and Johansen also state that in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "Jefferson rather accurately described the deliberations of native national councils,"[53] and that these generalizations were "drawn from the Indian nations he knew."[54] Grinde and Johansen support this assertion with two quotations they attribute to Jefferson. But the reprinted

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[52]*Exemplar*, 158.

[53]Ibid., 161.

[54]Ibid., 161.

quotations are from a *Notes on the State of Virginia* appendix actually written by Charles Thompson, not Jefferson.[55]

The authors try to prove Jefferson's deep respect for Indians and possible familiarity with the Iroquois by arguing that "believing as he did in the universal morality of humankind, Jefferson had no objection to intermarriage" and that he "occasionally promoted intermarriage with native peoples in order to create a 'continental family.'" They support this statement by writing that "in 1802, Jefferson told an Indian delegation that '[y]our blood will mix with ours, and will spread, with ours, over this great island.'" Grinde and Johansen speculate that Jefferson's "great island" might refer to the Iroquois's creation story.[56] But these assertions are based on an ironical misreading of the cited evidence.

The quotation is drawn from a speech Jefferson delivered to "Captain Hendrick, The Delawares, Mohiccons, and Munries" in which he urged these Ohio Valley Indians to abandon their traditions and live more like Anglo-Americans. Jefferson advised them to "give up the deer and buffalo, live in peace, and cultivate the earth." He urged them to adopt Euro-American agriculture: "on the land now given you (to)

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[55]Thomas Jefferson, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Liecester (New York, 1894), 198-202.

[56]*Exemplar*, 156.

begin to give every man a farm; let him enclose it, cultivate it, build a warm house on it, and when he dies, let it belong to his wife and children after him." Jefferson also offered American help in this process: "we are ready to teach you how to make ploughs, hoes, and necessary utensils" and, in direct opposition to the influence thesis's central tenet Jefferson prophesied that

> when once you have property, you will want laws and magistrates to protect your property and persons, and to punish those among you who commit crimes. You will find that our laws are good for this purpose; you will wish to live under them, you will unite yourselves with us, join in our great councils and form one people with us, and we shall all be Americans; you will mix with us by marriage, your blood will run in our veins, and will spread with us over this great island. Instead, then, my children, of the gloomy prospect you have drawn of your total disappearance from the face of the earth, which is true, if you continue to hunt the deer and buffalo and go to war, you see what a brilliant aspect is offered to your future history, if you give up war and hunting. Adopt the culture of the earth and raise domestic animals; you see how from a small family you may become a great nation by adopting the course which from the small beginning you describe has made us a

great nation.[57]

Not only do Grinde and Johansen entirely miss the larger meaning and cultural implications of Jefferson's speech, but they misquote the small portion they reprinted. Moreover, the possibility that the "great island" might refer to Iroquois cosmology is insignificant considering the quotation's revelations about Thomas Jefferson and the state of Indian-American relations in 1802.

Grinde and Johansen make a similar claim about Patrick Henry's alleged admiration for Indians. The authors contend that Henry "advocated state subsidies for marriages between natives and Euro-Americans."[58] In 1784 Henry introduced "A bill for the encouragement of marriages with Indians" to the Virginia House of Delegates in order that Virginians may be more effective in "conciliating the friendship and the confidence of the latter [Virginia's Indians], whereby not only their civilization may in some degree be finally brought about, but in the mean time their hostile inroads be prevented."[59] In order to qualify for the state subsidy a "free white male inhabitant of this commonwealth"[60] had to

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[57]Thomas Jefferson, *The Complete Jefferson*, ed. Saul Padover (New York, 1943), 502-504.

[58]*Exemplar,* 156.

[59]William Wirt, *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry* (New York, 1834), 258.

[60]Ibid., 258.

lawfully marry an Indian woman and "induce her to become an inhabitant of this commonwealth, and to live with him in the character of a wife."[61] Similar incentives and guidelines were offered for "free white" women who married Indian men. The Virginia House of Delegates rejected the interracial marriage sanctioning bill. Grinde and Johansen interpret Henry's bill as evidence that American leader sought connections between themselves and the Indians out a desire to emulate Indian societies. But their interpretation misses the salient fact that Henry's bill was intended to secure frontier peace and make Indians become more like Euro-Americans, and not vice-versa.

Just as they do with Franklin, Grinde and Johansen equate Jefferson's and Henry's interest in, or contact with, Indians with emulation of Indians--particularly the Iroquois. In their discussion of Jefferson they misattribute quotations, cite their own previous work for authority in lieu of Jefferson's own words and do violence to Jefferson's words by taking them out of context. Unfortunately, these techniques are not isolated to their study of Jefferson. One of the most egregious examples of Grinde and Johansen's distortions of the historical record is their discussion of John Adams and the Iroquois.

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[61]Ibid., 258.

The authors contend that Adams was a "student of Native American societies"[62] who possessed "firsthand knowledge of American Indian governments,"[63] and that "Adams remembered and used the lessons from the Iroquois (;) while pondering the reconstructing of American government during the period from 1786-1787."[64] They also claim that Adams wrote detailed -reports about American Indian governments "particularly those of the Mohawks and the Iroquois"[65] and that "Adams's insight indicates that the founders knew a great deal more about the Iroquois governance system than has previously been acknowledged."[66] They base virtually all of these contentions on quotations drawn from Adams's 1787 *Defence of the Constitutions of Governments of the United States of America,* a sweeping three-volume review and analysis of governmental systems from the ancient Greeks to the modern English which also contained six references to American Indians. Adams strongly believed in bicameral government comprising elected and appointed branches that, through a separation of powers, counterbalanced one another's excesses. The *Defence* frequently commended England's King-in-Parliament as the best example of this balanced

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[62]*Exemplar*, 153.

[63]Ibid., 203.

[64]Ibid., 279.

[65]Ibid., 286.

[66]Ibid., 202.

separation. Grinde and Johansen contend otherwise.

Adams was in London when the Constitution was drafted, but the *Defence* allowed his opinions to be read by the delegates at the Philadelphia Constitutional convention. Grinde and Johansen believe that Iroquois political ideas were in the hands and minds of the Constitution's drafters through Adams's *Defence*'s Indian references . This makes John Adams and his writings important links in the chain of Indian influence proposed in *Exemplar*. Grinde and Johansen combine the *Defence*'s Indian references with Charles Francis Adams's (John Adams's grandson and editor of *The Works of John Adams*) assertion that the books were "much circulated" at the convention, to conclude that "given the nature of Adams's *Defence*, there can be no doubt that Native American governmental structures and ideas were part of the process of constitution-making."[67] But as with Jefferson's writings, Grinde and Johansen liberally edited Adams's words and opinions and remove them from their intended contexts in order to support the influence thesis.

In this respect they have historical precedent. Charles Francis Adams prophetically wrote that during the constitutional convention,

> single passages, [from the *Defence*] appearing to favor monarchy or an aristocracy, were torn from the context to prove that the writer [John Adams] was in his heart

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[67]Ibid., 204.

> an enemy of liberty; whilst those which looked the other way and exposed the defects of both, were overlooked or forgotten.[68]

Grinde and Johansen do the same in an attempt to prove that the writer was in his heart a friend and student of the Iroquois.

They posit three sources for Adams's "firsthand knowledge" of Iroquois government. The first is that Adams "received intelligence" about the Iroquois in 1776, and according to Grinde and Johansen, these unspecified "lessons from the Iroquois" were later codified in the *Defence*.[69] Adams's papers cited in *Exemplar* indicate that he received military intelligence from Samuel Chase regarding the Six Nations' possible stance in the war with Britain. But Chase made no mention of Iroquois governmental systems.[70]

The second source stems from meetings between Adams and "Iroquois missionary, Reverend Samuel Kirkland" throughout the summer of 1775. Grinde and Johansen assert that "Kirkland received frequent visits from Iroquois sachems, and he probably made routine reports about their behavior

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[68]John Adams, *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America,* in *The Works of John Adams* 10 vols. (Boston, 1865) 4:276.

[69]*Exemplar*, 279.

[70]*Papers of John Adams* , ed. Robert Taylor, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 4:129.

and habits to the curious Adams."[71] They cite *The Journals of Samuel Kirkland* as their authority. But only the biographical notes by editor Walter Pilkington mention Kirkland's visiting Philadelphia in the summer of 1775 to "consult with John Adams and members of the Continental Congress" about Kirkland's "work toward keeping the Six Nations neutral."[72] Their cited evidence offers no support, primary or otherwise, for their speculations.

The third posited source is that "just a year before he wrote *Defence,* Adams received a visit from the Mohawk leader Joseph Brant at his residence in Boston." Grinde and Johansen claim that "perhaps they talked of the Iroquois system of government."[73] In fact Adams was in London (not Boston) that winter acting as the United States minister to England, and no such meeting took place. The authors attempt to support this false assertion on a misquotation of a letter from Adams. They argue that

> association with native leaders was a rather routine matter in the late eighteenth century. On 23 December 1785, for example, Adams wrote to Rufus King that "Joseph Brant was yesterday in the Drawing Room."[74]

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[71]*Exemplar*, 279.

[72]*The Journals of Samuel Kirkland 1764-1807*, ed. Walter Pilkington (Clinton, New York, 1980),

[73]*Exemplar*, 295.

[74]Ibid., 280.

But Adams actually wrote that "Joseph Brant was yesterday *at* the Drawing Room"[75] (emphasis added) referring to the Royal Drawing Room. Brant also was in London that winter and frequently visited the royal household, meeting with George III to discuss the particulars of their anti-United States military alliance.[76] Adams's letter to King refers to one of these diplomatically significant meetings--quite a different scenario from the Brant-Adams political consultations Grinde and Johansen attempt to portray.

These errors leave no credible basis for Grinde and Johansen's important claim that "Adams remembered and used the lessons of the Iroquois"[77] when writing the *Defence* in 1786-1787. Nevertheless, the authors make much of the few times Adams referred to Indians in the text of the *Defence*. They argue that Adams "discoursed on the need to study Indian governments--citing examples such as their separation of powers,"[78] and that he believed "the League of the Iroquois was the best example of the governmental separation of powers available to Americans for direct observation."[79]

Exemplar's text includes a specially edited passage from

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[75]Rufus King, *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, ed., Charles King (New York, 1892), 1:118.

[76]Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant 1743-1807: Man of Two Worlds* (Syracuse, 1984), 385.

[77]*Exemplar,* 279.

[78]Ibid., 175.

[79]Ibid., 202.

the *Defence*'s preface to support the authors' assertions, here printed alongside Adams's original quotation.

Exemplar Version

> If Cicero and Tacitus could revisit the earth, and learn that the English nation had reduced the great idea to practice. . . and that the Americans, after having enjoyed the benefits of such a constitution a century and a half, were advised by some of the greatest philosophers and politicians to renounce it, and set up governments of the ancient Goths and modern Indians--what would they say? That the Americans would be more reprehensible than the Cappadocians, if they should listen to such advice.
>
> It would have been much to the purpose, to have inserted a more accurate investigation of the form of government of the ancient Germans and modern Indians; in both, the existence of the three divisions of power is marked with a precision that excludes all controversy. The democratical branch, especially, is so determined, that the real sovereignty resided in the body of the people, and was exercised in the assembly of kings,

nobles, and commons together.[80]

John Adams Version

If Cicero and Tacitus could revisit the Earth, and learn that the English nation had reduced the great idea to practice, and brought it nearly to perfection, by giving each division a power to defend itself by a negative; had found it the most solid and durable government, as well as the most free; had obtained by means of it a prosperity among civilized nations, in an enlightened age, like that of the Romans among barbarians; and that the Americans, after having enjoyed the benefits of such a constitution a century and a half, were advised by some of the greatest philosophers and politicians to renounce it, and set up governments of the ancient Goths and modern Indians,--what would they say? That the Americans would be more reprehensible than the Cappadocians, if they should listen to such advice.

It would have been much to the purpose, to have inserted a more accurate investigation of the form of government of the ancient

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[80]Ibid., 241-242.

> Germans and modern Indians; in both, the existence of the three divisions of power is marked with a precision that excludes all controversy. The democratical branch, especially, is so determined, that the real sovereignty resided in the body of the people, and was exercised in the assembly of kings, nobles, and commons together.[81]

The "great idea" to which Adams refers is "a republic, in which there is a governor, a senate, and a house of representatives."[82] *Exemplar* has Adams believing that "the League of the Iroquois was the best example of the governmental separation of powers available to Americans for direct observation."[83] But Grinde and Johansen can only make this claim by omitting Adams's assessment that England possessed "the most solid and durable government, as well as the most free" which gave "each division a power to defend itself by a negative," and replace these crucial words with an ellipse. Once again, their cited primary material offers no support for their conclusions. Furthermore, Adams never used the name "Iroquois" in the *Defence*. He referred only to "Indians," "modern Indians," "savages," "savages of North

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[81]*Works*, 4:296.

[82]Ibid., 4:294.

[83]*Exemplar*, 202.

(or South) America," and "Mohawks."[84] Every time Adams wrote *Indians*, Grinde and Johansen read *Iroquois*.

The second part of the quotation is the basis for Grinde and Johansen's exaggerated statement that "Adams discoursed on the need to study Indian governments."[85] Adams indeed noted that further study of the "governments of the ancient Germans and modern Indians" would aid his study. But he also noted that, although Indian and German governments, possessed "three divisions of power" that were "marked with a precision that excludes all controversy," in fact "these institutions really collected all authority into *one* centre of kings, nobles, and people" (emphasis added) and that "the consequence was confusion."[86] Adams used Indians and Germans as negative examples. He went on to write, clearly referring more to the ancient Germans than to the modern Indians, that

> each part believed it governed the whole; the chiefs thought they were sovereigns; the nobles believed the power to be in their hands; and the people flattered themselves that all depended upon them. Their purposes were well enough answered, without coming to an explanation, so long as they were few in number, and had no property; but when spread over large provinces of the Roman empire,

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[84]*Works*, 4:296, 298, 292, 398, 511, 566.

[85]*Exemplar*, 175.

[86]*Works*, 4:296-297.

> now the great kingdoms of Europe, and grown populous and rich, they found the inconvenience of each not knowing its place.[87]

Adams believed that the "ancient Germans" provided a *negative* governmental example, and merely tagged the "modern Indians" onto his review of the Goths. Far from discoursing on "the need to study Indian governments," Adams's mention of the "modern Indians" was little more than a passing negative reference.

Grinde and Johansen are correct in stating that Adams referred to Indians to help him "clarify his positions in the debates surrounding the emerging republicanism of the eighteenth century."[88] But their interpretation obscures the fact that Adams devoted hundreds of pages to detailed governmental, philosophical, and historical studies of Greece, Rome, the medieval Italian city states, England, and many other ancient and contemporary European precedents. Adams's distribution of *Defence* page space strongly suggests that he believed that Anglo-Americans could learn far more, for better or worse, from Athens, Sparta, Mycenae, Argos, Thebes, Corinth, Rome, Siena, Genoa, Milan, Florence, Padua, San Marino, Biscay, Appenzel, Underwald, Glarus, Bern, Lucerne, Zurich, Geneva, Poland, and Neuchatel than from the Indians. To assert otherwise is to make the tail wag the

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[87]Ibid., 4:297.

[88]*Exemplar*, 203.

elephant.

Grinde and Johansen also use the *Defence* to substantiate their assertion that Adams was familiar with many specific aspects of Iroquois governance and the symbols relating to them. They argue that "Adams's knowledge of Iroquois and other American Indian confederacies extended to their sachemship system," that "Adams understood the voluntary nature of Iroquois warfare,"[89] and that "the historical record shows that Adams knew some very basic things about American Indian governments, specifically the Iroquois."[90] They base these claims on the longest passage about Indian governments in *Defence*--a paragraph sandwiched between discussions of the ancient Germans and Phæacia, as represented in the *Odyssey*. Adams wrote,

> Before we proceed to the Greeks, we may even mention the savages. Every nation in North America has a king, a senate, and a people. The royal office is elective, but it is for life; his sachems are his ordinary council, where all the national affairs are deliberated and resolved in the first instance; but in the greatest of all, which is declaring war, the king and sachems call a national assembly round a great council fire, communicate to their

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[89]Ibid., 202, 203.

[90]Ibid., 306.

> people their resolution, and sacrifice an animal. Those of the people who approve the war, partake of the sacrifice; throw the hatchet into a tree, after the example of the king; and join in the subsequent war songs and dances. Those who disapprove, take no part of the sacrifice, but retire.[91]

Grinde and Johansen state that Adams "wrote that a sachem was elected for life and had an "ordinary council" of lesser sachems."[92] In fact, Adams wrote that a "king" was elected for life and that the sachems were his "ordinary council." Furthermore, Adams's language clearly echoes his discussion of the "ancient Germans," undermining *Exemplar*'s claim that Adams understood Iroquois government. But Grinde and Johansen go on to use their misquotation to argue that Adams was familiar with the Iroquois sachemship system before it was recorded by the pioneering ethnographer Lewis Henry Morgan in the 1840s.[93] They also interpret Adams's mention of animal sacrifice as "no doubt a reference to the 'white dog ceremony' of the Iroquois also described by Morgan more than six decades after Adams."[94] But here Adams's reference to the sacrifice is so unspecific that their Iroquois spin

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[91]*Works,* 4:566-7.

[92]*Exemplar,* 202.

[93]Ibid., 202-3.

[94]Ibid., 203.

is merely thesis-driven speculation.

They go on to state that Adams "knew about the 'fifty families' of the Iroquois long before Lewis Henry Morgan,"[95] that "while discussing the Mohawks, Adams referred to 'fifty families governed by all authority in one centre,'" and that "personal liberty was so important to them [American Indians] that Mohawks might be characterized as having 'complete individual independence.'"[96] Grinde and Johansen attempt to support these conclusions with an out-of-context passage from Adams's chapter on Argos, here printed alongside Adams's own words.

Exemplar Version

> Is it not sublime wisdom [according to the Iroquois system],[97] to rush headlong into all the distractions and divisions. . .which are the certain consequence of the want of order and balances, merely for the sake of the popular caprice of having fifty families governed by all authority in one centre? Even this would not satisfy; the fifty families would dissolve their union, and nothing would ever content them short of the complete individual independence of the Mohawks; for it may be

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[95]Ibid., 306.

[96]Ibid., 202.

[97]Brackets theirs.

depended on, that individual independence is what every unthinking human heart aims at, nearly or remotely.[98]

John Adams Version

Argos alone, of all the other cities in the Peloponnesus, openly espoused the cause of Athens. This single circumstance, if it was not accidental, is enough to show that this city had more sense and profound wisdom than all the rest; for Sparta was certainly then leading all Greece to destruction. In other respects the Argives discovered the same temper and the same understanding with all the others; for they led their whole forces against Mycenæ, took it by storm, decimated the inhabitants, and demolished the town. Is it not sublime wisdom, to rush headlong into all the distractions and divisions, all the assassinations and massacres, all the seditions, rebellions, and eternal revolutions, which are the certain consequence of the want of orders and balances, merely for the sake of the popular caprice of having every fifty families governed by all authority in one centre? Even

[98]*Exemplar*, 203.

> this would not satisfy; the fifty families would dissolve their union, and nothing would ever content them short of the complete individual independence of the Mohawks; for it may be depended on, that individual independence is what every unthinking human heart aims at, nearly or remotely.[99]

The context of the passage reveals that Adams viewed the "complete individual independence of the Mohawks" as little more than anarchy. More importantly, the passage's context strongly suggests that Adams's use of the phrase "fifty families" refers to ancient Greece's ever-Balkanizing oligarchical city states and not the Iroquois.

Furthermore, Grinde and Johansen's claim that "Adams's 'discovery' of the fifty families"[100] predates Lewis Henry Morgan's research is rendered largely meaningless by the fact that Morgan's research identified "fifty permanent Sachemships," not "fifty families."[101] This is more than a small point of ethnographic language. Grinde and Johansen's vital claim that "Adams's insight indicates that the founders knew a great deal more about the Iroquois

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[99]*Works*, 4:511.

[100]*Exemplar*, 306.

[101]Ibid., 306; Lewis Henry Morgan, *League of the Ho-Dé-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois,* 2 vols. (New York, 1901), 1:59.

governance system than has previously been acknowledged"[102] rests on their ignoring the Greek context of Adams's passage (and the "ancient German context" of the other passages) and then surreptitiously equating these "fifty families" with Morgan's "fifty permanent Sachemships."

In his *League of the Ho-Dé-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois,* Morgan wrote that "at the institution of the League, fifty permanent Sachemships were created, with appropriate names; and in the Sachems who held these titles were vested the supreme powers of the Confederacy."[103] These Sachemships were divided unevenly among the nations; the Mohawks, for example, received nine. The titles were hereditary and belonged to their particular clan, which Morgan called "the several tribes of which each nation was composed."[104] Morgan described each Sachemship as hereditary and owned by a tribe (clan), but it is inaccurate for the authors to identify these Sachemships as families, especially without explaining their reasons in the text. Ultimately, Grinde and Johansen base their claim that "this statement reflected the extent of his [Adams's] knowledge of the structure of the Iroquois Confederacy"[105] on little more than Adams's use of the number fifty in his writings.

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[102]*Exemplar*, 202.

[103]Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, 1:59.

[104]Ibid., 1:62.

[105]*Exemplar*, 202.

This example also demonstrates Grinde and Johansen's propensity to change their definitions to suit their many arguments. They categorize the Iroquois confederacy as being governed by "fifty families" when discussing Adams, but earlier in *Exemplar* called the same system a "central council" of fifty "delegates" when they sought parallels with Franklin's forty-eight delegates in the Albany Plan of Union.[106]

These systemic problems derail Grinde and Johansen's conclusions about Adams's detailed knowledge of the Iroquois, while Adams's own words seriously undermine the influence thesis itself. Ultimately, Grinde and Johansen's assertions about Adams and the Iroquois are based on speculations and innuendo drawn from inaccurate or decontextualized quotations. Charles Francis Adams's criticism of his grandfather's 1780s opponents' methods is also applicable to today's influence theorists.

Exemplar's discussion of Adams rests on flawed uses of primary source evidence. The authors rely largely on an equally faulty and thesis-driven reading of secondary literature to contend that James Madison, who they rightly identify as "one of the major architects of the United States Constitution," was also influenced by Iroquois government.[107] Madison's central role in the drafting of the

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[106]Ibid., 107.

[107]Ibid., 182.

Constitution makes him another vital link in the influence thesis. But Grinde and Johansen's discussion of Madison's alleged Indian "influences" relies on many of the same systemic misuses of evidence and questionable logic that hobbled their studies of Adams and Jefferson.

In the spring of 1784, Madison traveled to Fort Stanwix near what is now Rome, New York, to attend treaty negotiations between delegates of the United States and the then-disunited League of the Iroquois. While at Fort Stanwix, Madison and his traveling companions, Revolutionary war hero and independent delegate the Marquis de Lafayette, his aide the Chevalier de Caraman, and French chargé d'affaires the Marquis de Barbé-Marbois, also visited the Oneida village of Chief Grasshopper.[108]

Grinde and Johansen use Madison's visit to Iroquoia to support their claims that "Madison was exposed to the governmental structure and ideas of freedom of the Iroquois people" and that this exposure "doubtless had an influence upon Madison in his search for a workable government for America during the next few years."[109] They also state that "certainly, Madison would find a model for territorial expansion that was capable of incorporating diverse elements

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[108]Irving Brant, *James Madison* 4 vols. (Indianapolis, 1948), 2:235-6.

[109]*Exemplar*, 183.

when he encountered the union and society of the Iroquois."[110] Their authority for these claims is principally Irving Brant's 1948 six-volume biography of James Madison, which they supplement with a letter of Madison's discussing the Fort Stanwix treaty, and the Barbé-Marbois travel reminiscences.[111] Unlike their discussions of Adams and Jefferson, the authors make no attempt to support their conclusions by quoting Madison's own words.

Grinde and Johansen argue that Madison "tired of Virginia politics and decided to travel to Iroquois country in 1784 to renew his friendship with the Oneida chief, Grasshopper," because "perhaps he [Madison] was curious about American Indian governments."[112] Their speculations about the Indian-related aspects of Madison's motives are not supported by Brant's text, which states that Madison was taking a relaxing tour of the eastern states. He had gone first to Philadelphia and then to Baltimore where he met Lafayette, who urged Madison to accompany him to Fort Stanwix. But even then Madison agreed to travel only as far as New York City and only there decided to continue on to Iroquoia.[113]

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[110]Ibid., 182.

[111]Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian Boyd (Princeton, 1950-), 7:439-441; François, Marquis de Barbé-Marbois, *Our Revolutionary Forefathers: The Letters of François, Marquis de Barbé-Marbois 1779-1785*, ed., Eugene Parker Chase (New York, 1929), 193-212.

[112]*Exemplar,* 182.

[113]Brant, *James Madison*, 2:328-9.

The portion of Brant's text cited by Grinde and Johansen offers no support for their claim that at the Oneida village "Madison was exposed to the governmental structure and ideas of freedom of the Iroquois people."[114] Instead, Brant unflattering described Madison's visit as a night-long revelry. He wrote that "Madison and the Frenchmen took with them five 'breasts of milk' (small kegs of brandy) each carried by an Indian" and that Grasshopper "received his guests in a Bavarian court hunting costume" given him by the Chevalier de la Luzerne. Upon the travelers' arrival, the "young warriors began a masked dance, interrupted only by side trips to the brandy kegs." The exhausted visitors found the dance "an appalling prospect" and appealed to Grasshopper to curtail the revelries. But Grasshopper informed them that "he had no right" to stop the dancers. The night concluded with "the white man's servants going off with temporary wives who gave up on the masters when the likeliest of them, the youthful Caraman, refused to be seduced." The following morning "the strayed horses were brought down from the hills," the "servants said farewell to the squaws," and the travelers headed back to Fort Stanwix.[115] Brant's text makes no mention of Iroquois "governmental structures and ideas of freedom," nor does it suggest in any way that Madison's visit with the Oneidas was

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[114]*Exemplar*, 183.

[115]Brant, *James Madison* 2:332-333.

anything more than a diplomatically expedient diversion.[116]

According to Grinde and Johansen, Madison and the Frenchmen conversed with two Europeans living with the Oneidas. One was a Frenchman named Nicolas Jordan and the other an unidentified "Euro-American woman." They assert that the two adoptees' "revelations" about the "virtues of American Indian life must have surprised Madison and his companions."[117] Grinde and Johansen printed the unidentified woman's speech, in which she stated that "here I have no master" and asked the travellers "is there a single woman as independent as I in your cities?"[118] The woman's speech comes not from Brant's text as *Exemplar*'s endnotes indicate, but from Barbé-Marbois's letters. The Frenchman dated his meeting with this "rather fine looking squaw"[119] several days after returning from Grasshopper's village and did not indicate whether Madison was with him when the meeting occurred. Madison's papers contain no reference to the meeting, and Brant's text alludes to the time gap between the village visit and the woman's testimony. But Grinde and Johansen unite these separate events to strengthen their unsubstantiated conclusion that "these accounts doubtless had an influence upon Madison in his search for a workable

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[116]*Exemplar*, 183.

[117]Ibid., 182.

[118]Ibid., 183.

[119]Barbé-Marbois, *Our Revolutionary Forefathers*, 211.

government for America."[120]

The authors also pointedly argue that "three Virginians and future presidents--Madison, Jefferson, and Monroe--planned trips to Iroquois country after the American Revolution. Madison and Monroe were able to go, but Jefferson was called to France as ambassador and had to content himself with reports from his friends."[121] The quotation's unstated suggestion is clear given influence-thesis advocates' propensity to equate contact with, knowledge of, or writing about Indians as emulation or informed study of Indian governments and societies (Grinde and Johansen usually interpret Indians as Iroquois). But Grinde and Johansen ignore the salient point that Madison and Monroe were partners in an Iroquoia land speculation venture, and that in 1786 the two purchased nine hundred acres located nine miles from Fort Stanwix.[122] Brant discussed these business dealings in detail in his text, yet no hint of them appears in *Exemplar*. Grinde and Johansen's attempt to reinterpret these land speculations as political science field trips is highly ironic, coming from people who claim to be reversing the "bitterness, indifference, and paternalism towards American Indians."[123]

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[120]*Exemplar,* 183.

[121]Ibid., 182.

[122]Brant, *James Madison*, 2:340.

[123]*Exemplar*, xxiv.

Madison's own words are conspicuously lacking in Grinde and Johansen's discussion of Madison and the Iroquois; therefore their entire case hangs on their flawed reading of Brant's Madison biography. Despite their speculations about what Madison might have been "exposed" to in Iroquoia, they have proven little more than that Madison visited an Iroquois village. But as with Franklin, Rutledge, Jefferson, and Adams, Indian contact of any kind is proof enough for Grinde and Johansen.

Exemplar of Liberty is Grinde and Johansen's most ambitious work to date. It makes impressive revisionist claims about the origins of American government and attempts to support its conclusions with quotations and endnotes. As long as the reader does not closely examine *Exemplar*'s supporting evidence, Grinde and Johansen's conclusions appear credible. But upon close examination, the influence thesis simply falls to pieces.

Grinde and Johansen categorize their book as a "mosaic of fact and opinion"[124] and contend that they seek to "discover the developing pattern [in primary documentation] and build a mosaic that perceptually reinforces itself."[125] In fact what they have created is a crazy quilt of inaccurate assessments, unwarranted speculations and guesswork, incorrect or disembodied quotations, and thesis-driven

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[124]Ibid., xix.

[125]Ibid., 260.

conclusions. Ultimately, Grinde and Johansen's questionable historical methods damage their case and cause far more than academic elitism or cultural chauvinism ever could. In truth, they are their own worst enemies.

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