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ABSTRACT

Volunteering at the Onondaga Nation School and collaborating with Chief Jacobs has exposed me to a new and subversive underbelly of American political and religious life. Working on sovereign Native land also provided valuable on the ground experience in Onondaga language and Haudenosaunee culture - food, humor, lacrosse, art, ceremony, government, education etc. Throughout my tenure at Onondaga I have used comparison as the backdrop for my experiences collaborating with Native peoples as well as the methodological backbone for this dissertation project.

My dissertation project, *Brothers in Blood: the Significance of Land and Loss in the Creation of Jewish and Native American Ethnic and Religious Identity*, represents an educational union between Syracuse University and the Onondaga Nation School as much as it explores the historical, theological and political interfaces between American Jews and American Indians. I argue that while the historical maintenance of a social-religious identity, outside a theological context, has caused patterns of Jewish and Native American identity creation to overlap and intersect the incongruities in the lived experiences of Jews in the United States and Natives in the United States arise from competing Jewish, Christian, and Native American orientations to religion, land, and community. Through the prisms of blood, genocide and theology my dissertation examines the interfaces between American Jews and American Indians as they converge and coalesce around patterns of religion, racism and anti-Semitism. Furthermore, I illustrate how these intersections can serve as a nexus for looking at the formation of race and ethnicity in the United States.

BROTHERS IN BLOOD:
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LAND AND LOSS IN THE CREATION OF JEWISH AND
NATIVE AMERICAN ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religion

Syracuse University
December, 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For E.K. and the students, teachers, parents, administration and custodial crew of the Onondaga Nation School – and for Julia.

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PREFACE

Easy knowledge about Indians is a historical tradition.¹

Where are you from?

“Where are you from?” is a common question in Indian country. For generations, Native peoples have been asking a wide variety of academics, including, but not limited to, historians of religion, anthropologists, sociologists, art historians, psychologists, geographers, geologists, and biologists alike, “where are you from?” In this question, there is a certain beauty in the ambiguity and simplicity illustrative of the subtlety of *onk’we’honwe*² communication within mixed company. While “where are you from?” may seem like a simple query, its hidden depths are quite complicated and potentially problematic for the unwary.

“Where are you from?” is wrought with the pain and misery of five hundred years of boarding schools, broken treaties, and religious persecution. The humiliation and degradation, shame and scars, Native people have experienced at the hands of missionaries, academics, and government agents have made them wary of outsiders - particularly, those outsiders who come to their territories seeking knowledge surrounding religion and culture. Throughout my fieldwork, I have been asked this question enough times, in enough social settings, by enough Native folk to know “where are you from?” carries in its depths the questions of “who do you think you are,” or “what are you doing

¹ Vine Deloria, *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). 5

² Mohawk for “the original people” but a common term throughout the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

here,” or “what do you want?” When these depths are properly navigated, “where are you from?” has the power to invert traditional power dynamics, catalyze cross-cultural exchanges, and cultivate mutual respect and understanding. No matter the context, conquest and colonization dictate that “where are you from?” needs to be handled honestly and thoughtfully, cautiously and carefully. When prodded with this question at Onondaga, I have answered Syracuse, Syracuse University, Chicago, and Ukraine depending on the context of the conversation. Ultimately, only one individual at Onondaga knows all my responses to the depths of this question and his name is Jesse.

I have been visiting my friends at Onondaga for over ten years; without their help and cooperation, humor and love, my work would never have been able to mature. This project would not have been possible without the consent and support of certain individuals from the Onondaga Nation. More specifically this project would not be possible without the blessing, assistance, and friendship of Jesse Ray Jacobs - Beaver Clan Chief of the Onondaga Nation. Throughout this project I have used Jesse’s real name instead of assigning him a pseudonym or relying on some other type of subterfuge to disguise or mask his participation. This is the first occasion that Jesse has ever allowed himself to be recorded and he was adamant that if he agreed to go on the record that he wanted to be personally accountable for his words, actions and deeds. Over the years Jesse and I have cultivated a unique relationship that has transcended traditional academic models governing ethnographers and their “key informants.” Jesse is much more than an informant, he is my friend, he is my family and he has become my brother in blood. Even though Jesse is only quoted sparingly our personal relationship (mutual

trust, curiosity and love of music) anchors this project in constant cycles of exchange and reciprocity.

Jesse has one brother and two sisters; his mother, who passed away several years ago, was the Beaver Clan Mother for generations. From the time he was a boy, Jesse was raised in the longhouse tradition. He subscribes to Onondaga values and is plagued by Indian problems. Jesse is intensely proud of his family's role in maintaining Longhouse traditions even when other families were abandoning their traditional ceremonies for Christianity and their traditional languages for English. Jesse has four children, ages seven, eleven, and nineteen-year-old twins, but is estranged from his children's mother. Jesse has never been married. He views both the institution of marriage as well as the prospect of procreating with non-Indian women with a great deal of skepticism.

Jesse lives along the southwest corner of the Onondaga Nation in a picturesque two-story log cabin I have nicknamed "oasis." The thick woods and hilly terrain make Jesse's home invisible from the road. "Oasis" can only be accessed via an unmarked, sharp turn from route 11a onto a steep, quarter mile dirt road. The house, with accompanying in ground pool and koi pond, is a mixture between Sherman Alexie's pain and Norman Rockwell's romanticism. I have learned the hard way that if there is any snow on the ground, which is often the case during winters in the finger-lakes region of New York, I need to borrow "Big Dave," my wife's Trail Blazer, in order to be able to make it up the hill without incident. Although I have visited "oasis" fifty or more times, when it is pitch black outside, it has taken me over twenty minutes of driving back and forth along the same road in order to find it. While Jesse has many visitors — some

asking for advice, some for favors, and others simply passing through — if you are not looking for the “oasis,” it is impossible to find.

At age forty-two, Jesse is still the second youngest of fourteen Onondaga Chiefs. Although he has been in his position for nearly two decades Jesse is still one of the “bench warmers,” or “seat warmers” who is still learning from his elders. Jesse is not a fully condoled Chief nor is he fluent in the Onondaga language. He is approximately 5’10”, and his weight, depending on his interest in running and Ju-Jitsu Su, fluctuates between a lean and muscular one hundred and eighty pounds and a top-heavy, but still formidable, three hundred and twenty pounds. His skin is dark and his hair is short, black, and unkempt with just a speckling of grey around the temples. He is able to grow a beard, but keeps his face clean-shaven. Jesse’s deep brown eyes can twinkle with kindness, maleficence, and grandeur, darken with loneliness and despair, or redden with fear and loathing. A five-inch scar from his left eye down to his chin is the permanent reminder of youthful transgressions and violence. Under his collarbone is a horrible, dime-sized tattoo of a skull that looks like it was the result of a lost bet.

Jesse is humble, hospitable, and generous with his time, money, and possessions. He would give you the shirt off his back, the money from his wallet, or the guitar from his case. Although he enjoys life’s creature comforts, he puts his family, his friends, and his nation before himself. Jesse worries constantly about the path his community should follow and how that path interacts, intersects, and deviates from American culture. From the time he was a young boy, Jesse has felt a heavy burden to point his people in the right direction and live up to the responsibilities of his name and the expectations of his position.

I have never, in all my years of knowing Chief Jacobs, felt threatened or unsafe in his presence, but some people fear Jesse. I think these fears are based, not on the small arsenal of firearms he has collected over the years, but in the reality that four different people could look him in the eye, at the same time, and see four different gazes — one of malice, one of playfulness, one of ambivalence, and one of love. All four of these interpretations would be correct. When in the company of others, Jesse is a human mood ring reflecting — and even feeding off — the thoughts and emotions of his peers. Excitement and interest are reflected by increased excitement and intrigue; honesty and openness are echoed by honesty and openness; trepidation and ambiguity received more trepidation and ambiguity; fear and aggression are greeted with elevated fear and aggression. In social situations, Jesse doesn't have a strategy, and he doesn't have an agenda. He relies heavily on instincts honed over four decades of Longhouse education. This allows him the freedom to adapt to each and every situation as they unfold. While this can be a devastatingly effective means of communication, it depends on confidence, instincts, and a strong sense of self. Jesse is as unique among his people as he is among all people.

Ultimately, Jesse is kind, modest, and direct. He never took seriously the instruction to “be scarce” - a lesson once taught to him by a Seneca elder. When Jesse is alone, however, he is restless, introspective, introverted, contemplative, and destructive. Although Jesse has four children, as the result of a twenty-year relationship gone to pieces, he is only in regular contact with his two youngest. The absence of children from his homestead has affected every aspect of his life. On the one hand, it has provided him time to travel to places like Italy and to learn to play the guitar. On the other hand, he can

barely tolerate the sounds and smells of an empty house. He fears, now more than ever, the corruption of his people, his children, and himself. Absent from family he has become isolated and withdrawn; he has begun to question his resolve and his place amongst his people.

Jesse's Indian name is *gwa'dee'ho* and it means he who is in the middle of a field/on the bank of a river/in the lodge and with an understanding of everyone's role in the community can point them in the right direction so that things operate as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Jesse takes his role as a Chief very seriously. Over the years, his responsibilities have started to become a burden – not on his time, but on his heart and on his mind. Since he is strong, his community needs him to be stronger. Since he has a voice, his community needs him to speak louder. Since he was raised in the Longhouse tradition, his community needs him to lead. Yet, Jesse has no interest in micro management or in interpersonal drama. His aversion to pettiness makes him an ideal leader, but a lousy politician. Community expectations, combined with the absence of his children, have started to take their toll on Jesse. Jesse is an Indian from an Indian family who lives on Indian land. He has Indian hopes and Indian dreams. He has Indian problems and Indian temptations that only Indian medicine can alleviate.

Ten years ago, I first met Jesse when he arrived to pick up his twin girls from the after school program at the Onondaga Nation School. The after school program, where I worked for many years, ran from when the children got out of school at 2:50 until we sent them home at 4:30. My duties consisted of helping with homework, and supervising computers, art, cooking, and gym for 1-8 graders. Working at the Onondaga Nation School was a prolonged interview; it was my attempt to patiently and quietly enter into

an exchange with the Onondaga community. I knew that the school would be the ideal place to meet potential informants and explain to them who I was, where I came from, and the nature of my project. The school provided a neutral ground where I could be observed by teachers, community leaders, parents, and children, and where I could begin to learn about Haudenosaunee culture from the school and the children themselves.

Truthfully, like every other non-Indian who shows up on a reservation, I wanted something, but I was patient and enterprising in how I went about building trust and resisting the urge to ask too many questions too fast. I wanted to prove it was still possible to learn about Haudenosaunee religion and culture in a progressive and non-abusive fashion. Had it not been for the help, guidance, assistance, and friendship of Jesse it would not have been possible.

One of the most used, and most important, rooms for the after school program was the gymnasium. The gym at the Onondaga Nation School is a large, multipurpose space used for graduation, craft shows, school assemblies, community meetings, academic fairs, and a variety of other community events. The gymnasium's main source of light comes from an enormous set of windows along the west wall in the shape of the Hiawatha wampum belt.³ From the inside looking out and the outside looking in, it is easy to make out the various geometric shapes that represent the original five nations of the *Haudenosaunee* (People of the longhouse) Confederacy - Mohawk, Oneida,

³ Wampum belts, which are constructed from purple and white beads fashioned from the Quahog shell, are important documents throughout the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Hiawatha belt is perhaps the most recognizable belt because it has become the flag of the Confederacy. The Hiawatha belt commemorates the union of the various Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca) that make up the Confederacy. This symbol is widespread throughout the Confederacy and often appears in Native artwork, bumper stickers, clothing and tattoos.

Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. The simplicity of the design highlights the indigenous theologies that have been incorporated into the school's design aesthetic.⁴

In my experience of working with children and adolescence, the gym is a space that, when used properly, can temporarily suspend the protocols of the normal school day. To be able to run, play and compete with the children as equals was essential in establishing the after school staff-student relationship, a relationship quite different than the student-teacher relationship, and the student-administrative staff relationship.

Whether we were playing one base kickball (a modified version of stick ball), basketball, lacrosse, tag, or dodge ball playing, sweating and competing with the children was a way to release tension and temporarily invert power dynamics. The gym was a space where our minds and bodies could come together as one. Maybe it shouldn't be surprising that the gym at the Onondaga Nation School was where I first met Jesse who would later become my best friend at Onondaga and my most significant long-term collaborator.

When parents wanted to pick their children up early, they would wait in their cars and call the school, walk up to the office and have their child paged over the intercom, or wander through the building until they found their children. Jesse was the only parent who I ever encountered who once he found his children, immediately — without thought or hesitation — joined what they were doing. Unbeknownst to me, Jesse didn't only come to pick up his girls, he also came to see what they were doing, who was watching them, and how he could be involved. Also, Jesse came to play.

On the day I first met Jesse, we were playing dodge ball in the gymnasium.⁵

Within seconds of entering the gym, Jesse joined the team opposite his two daughters,

⁴ The beveled glass windows of the gym, along with the circular atrium, known as the "cultural center," are the two architectural focal points included in the school's most recent renovations that helped to transform the old "Onondaga Indian School" to the new "Onondaga Nation School."

then 10 years old, and immediately began mercilessly pelting his girls with every ball he could get his hands on. Although everyone on the other team tried to nail Jesse, who wouldn't want to hit a chief with a well-timed strike, he only had eyes for his daughters. I had never seen a parent act like Jesse. Wild-eyed, jumping, whooping, and aggressively trash talking while simultaneously laughing, grinning, and having the time of his life, Jesse relentlessly pursued his daughters. Jesse played with a child-like reckless abandon that bordered on overly aggressive. His children were neither surprised by his participation nor discouraged by his onslaught. Generally, children on the Onondaga Nation are very tough and family orientated, so it wasn't surprising that Jesse's daughters, instead of being angry or discouraged, were motivated to turn the tables and hit their father. On multiple occasions, they were successful. I think Jesse wanted to test his daughters to see how tough they were and if they could beat him. When the bell rang signifying the end of the after school program, Jesse made sure to introduce himself before he took his girls home.

Afterwards, my supervisor informed me Jesse was a member of the Longhouse leadership and one of the fourteen clan Chiefs of the Onondaga Nation. I was shocked and stunned. Was that how a chief acted? Was that how any adult acted? Was that man really a part of the Longhouse leadership? I imagined Chiefs to be elderly, white-haired, slow talking, slow moving, calm, deliberate, and stoic members of the community. While several Onondaga Chiefs do in fact fit the stereotypical description of an Indian Chief, Jesse has shown me that Chiefs were of the people, not above the people; Chiefs could be young, reckless, flawed, passionate, and loving while being responsible, caring,

⁵ Although dodge ball was outlawed several years ago by the New York State School Boards Association it is still played regularly at Onondaga.

and thoughtful. Jesse, however, does have a certain way of walking and talking that separates him from other men. He doesn't go around trying to talk to animals or "grandfather thunder," but he exudes a personal, charismatic confidence, and love and stewardship for his people. While it was not for several years until Jesse and I became friends, I liked him from the beginning.

The Clan Mothers, a group of elderly women, are responsible for choosing Clan Chiefs. They are instructed to watch the children from an early age and to choose those who are most qualified to be leaders in the community. Jesse, along with his close friend and confidant Shannon Boots of the Eel Clan, are the only young men who currently serve on the Chiefs' council at Onondaga. While still in their early 20's, Jesse and Shannon were identified as leaders of the community and recruited to fill the position of Beaver Clan Chief and Eel Clan Chief. At twenty-one years of age, the women of the community decided Jesse was ready and strong enough to bear the burden of leadership. While Jesse's leadership position has caused his life to be scrutinized, I think his official responsibilities have kept him local, kept him sober, and even kept him alive.

The story of Chief Jacobs granting me permission to write about the Onondaga people has served as a constant reminder, mediating every facet of this project. It has taken me years of reflection and introspection to understand and appreciate the lessons and conversations of inviting my extended family to Onondaga for a visit one day in August 2008. Given the history of others desiring to write on Onondaga life, religion, and philosophy, I knew I was asking a lot. My hope was that I was slowly and patiently building trust while I worked at the Onondaga Nation School. I hoped that, one day, I would be able to take, in the form of interviews, articles, and publications, from the

community. I would have never imagined that it was my extended family that would play such an instrumental role in legitimizing me to my Onondaga friends.

In the summer of 2008, I was contacted by Baruch Slae, one of my many Israeli relatives. He informed me that several of my Israeli relatives would be traveling from Jerusalem to Albany, NY and wanted to stop in Syracuse for a visit. The group would include nineteen people in total: Baruch, his wife, my cousin Leah, her husband, and the combined fifteen children of the two couples. While Albany, the capitol of New York State, is an unconventional destination for Israeli tourists, it was the crux of their two-week voyage, because my relatives had made an appointment to become naturalized citizens of the United States of America. Their two-week odyssey — New York City to Philadelphia to Syracuse to Albany back to New York City — was planned around a scheduled meeting at the federal building in Albany, NY where all nineteen were to become naturalized citizens of the United States.

I was petrified of nineteen Israeli relatives arriving on my doorstep. Having visited their parents and grandparents the year before, I was honor bound to meet with them. My small apartment was not large enough to entertain twenty people. Given their dietary restrictions and my inability to afford a catered, kosher meal, we wouldn't be able to share a meal together. Nevertheless, I immediately invited Baruch and the entire family to Syracuse. I didn't regret the decision; I did, however, begin to fret about what I was going to do with them. Where do you take nineteen relatives who are in town for the afternoon, are on a limited budget, and under strict dietary restrictions?

I decided to ask Jesse for help. I asked if he could meet with my Israeli relatives and show them around the Onondaga Nation School – the setting with which I felt most

comfortable. I imagined the adults and children of the group would all be able to appreciate a visit to Onondaga given that it would be a unique opportunity to see an under-appreciated and under-represented aspect of Native American culture. It was also free, educational, and removed the pressure from me having to entertain or provide for the group.

My Israeli relatives were set to arrive in Syracuse late at night. Our plan was for me to drive to their hotel early in the morning so we could caravan together to Onondaga. At the hotel, I'll never forget the sight of my little cousins devouring the continental breakfast while terrorizing the other early morning diners. After a string of greetings, introductions, embraces, and translations -- only about half of the group spoke fluent English --, my nineteen relatives folded themselves into two rented conversion vans loaded to the brim with luggage, pillows, blankets, tents, cooking stoves, food, electronics and miscellaneous camping supplies. We began our seven-mile trek to the Onondaga Nation.

Once we arrived at the Onondaga Nation School, my family unfolded themselves from their rented vans, and the children began to run wild. Expecting Jesse to take my family on a tour of the school and the school grounds, I was surprised when Jesse looked right at me and said, "ok, let's go up to the longhouse." Until this moment, I'd only been inside the Onondaga longhouse during the specific portion of a funeral where non-Indian peoples are welcome to pay their respects. Every other time, I'd brought family to Onondaga, they always visited the school; never, the longhouse. I would never have suggested the longhouse as the setting for showing my family, because as far as I was concerned, the longhouse was out of bounds. For many years, the longhouse at

Onondaga has been invitation only,⁶ so I was taken aback when Chief Jacobs suggested this specific change in venue. My confusion and anxiety must have read on my face, because Jesse reassured me with a wink and said, “it’s cool don’t worry.” I explained to the adults that they needed to refold themselves back into their rented conversion vans, and we were going to go about half of a mile up the road instead of staying at the school. The kids were tracked down — it is amazing how far fourteen children can spread out in only a matter of minutes — and we caravanned from the Onondaga Nation School to the Onondaga longhouse.

As soon as we arrived at the longhouse, the children, who had all been informed we were going to visit the “Onondaga synagogue,” whipped out their phones and began taking pictures of the longhouse. I shot a panicked look at Jesse and asked, “is this ok?” gesturing to the cameras and phones. He provided a simple nod of his head. On the threshold of the longhouse, Jesse spoke to the group. The conversation wove between many interconnected topics. We talked about the Onondaga language and the significance of sovereignty, ceremony, ritual, and government to the Haudenosaunee community. We talked about the Hebrew language and the significance of sovereignty, ceremony, ritual, and government to the Jewish community. We made comparisons between the great law of peace and Jerusalem the city of peace. As Jesse spoke, the older children would translate for the younger ones so they too could be included in the conversation.

After my relatives were welcomed into the longhouse, the scene became surreal for me. As the conversation between Jesse and my adult relatives continued, the children began to take photographs, beat on water drums, try on the *gustowe* (traditional male

⁶ I will more fully explain the justifications for Onondaga secrecy during the “blood” chapter.

headgear), shake-rattles, and generally explore every nook and cranny of the Onondaga longhouse as only children could. No one was disrespectful. In fact, everyone was laughing, smiling, giggling, playing, or engrossed in the conversation and philosophical debate.

Only I was uncomfortable. Even in that moment, I knew why. I struggled to remain in the moment because my mind was tormented by the ghosts of Iroquoianists past - Fenton, Tooker, and Morgan. Was it ok for me to be inside the longhouse? Was I being selfish for wanting a picture for myself? Did I have a right to this knowledge and experience? In my mind, I had constructed the longhouse as a *Shangi-La* — untouchable and unapproachable. My scholastic interests had caused me to fetishize the Onondaga longhouse, and by extension the Onondaga people, in unhealthy, unflattering, and unrealistic ways. My attempts to be respectful and deferential had crossed the line into overcompensation and paranoia. Paranoia, dis-ease, and overcompensation had caused me to overlook the simple humanity of the Haudenosaunee people and the subtle differences that make Onondaga a unique and special place.

Obsessing over the possibility of doing wrong or acting inappropriately had inhibited me from saying anything meaningful about the Onondaga community. In this moment, I learned if I was ever going to produce meaningful scholarship, I would have to overcome my fears and risk the reality my scholarship would offend someone. Given the history of abuse and neglect, it is unrealistic for any scholar to obtain universal approval amongst Native people. I had permitted the abusive actions of my predecessors to paralyze me to the possibilities of my own work and voice. Being invited into the longhouse was a moment of clarity for me, and it crystallized my relationship with the

Onondaga community. After this visit, I was no longer afraid to ask questions, be critical, and speak openly and honestly about my experiences with the Onondaga community.

After a half hour or so of individual exploration, the group reformed as one. Before parting, we took group pictures under a replica of the George Washington belt along the eastern wall of the longhouse. During the extended good-byes, Jesse bellowed he was glad that on the very same day my relatives were to be naturalized, they started their day at the Onondaga longhouse – the true birthplace of democracy. Jesse said, “You don’t go to Albany to become naturalized. You come here. You come to Onondaga.” This statement is true. The longhouse at Onondaga will forever be part of the naturalization process of these nineteen Israeli-Jewish-American citizens. Before the moment of parting, Jesse gifted a bull horn rattle, used in ceremonies, to my cousin Baruch and told him that he and his family were always welcomed at Onondaga. Before I knew it, and because the time of their appointment was rapidly approaching, my family stuffed themselves back into their rented vans, set their G.P.S., and, giddy with excitement, began the two-hour journey to Albany.

Jesse and I went out for breakfast where I thanked him profusely for showing my family around. He said he got a kick out of meeting them and learning about Israel and the city of peace. We fantasized about visiting Jerusalem together and seeing the Holy Land. At that moment, I knew one of the main reasons why Jesse had invited my family into the longhouse and had made such an effort to get to know them was because of how he felt about me. I was flattered he cared enough about our relationship to treat my extended family like traveling dignitaries. Later that evening, I connected with my

family at a campground outside of Lake George. We cooked macaroni on a gas grill and talked well into the night about their unique path to citizenship. It was the perfect ending to one of the most confusing and emotionally draining days of my academic career. To this day, I have never seen a color photograph taken from inside the longhouse by anyone who is not directly related to me.

A few months after this meeting, I formally asked Jesse to help me with my dissertation project. Jesse responded, “Mike, I was always prepared to tell you no. But that one day with your family convinced me that you might be worth the risk.” It was already difficult for me to understand exactly what took place during my relatives’ visit, but this statement struck me. Jesse’s confession highlighted how special the meeting had been to everyone involved. It has taken me years to fully understand and comprehend how my relatives were so influential in encouraging Jesse to work with me.

I am still ashamed to admit my initial reactions were a mixture of selfishness, arrogance, and ignorance. I thought I had done enough in my more than four years working at the Onondaga Nation School to earn the trust of the Onondaga community. I thought I had done enough to gain Jesse’s confidence. I thought I had done enough to differentiate myself from scholars of the past. I thought I had done enough, given enough, to get what I wanted. Even in victory, I selfishly thought to myself “what else could I have done?” Why wasn’t four plus years of respect and diligence enough to convince Jesse of my motivations, intentions, and agendas? What could I have done differently?

My initial reactions were petty and immature. It was a sign of my selfishness that I had been given permission to complete my project, but I was still perturbed. It was this

same sort of immaturity and selfishness that has driven a wedge between academics and traditional Haudenosaunee people. It is the same self-centered thinking that has caused such misunderstanding and abuse. In Indian country, an individual can have a relationship with another individual, and a community may have a relationship with another community. It is impossible for an individual to have a relationship to an entire native community. The balance is broken; the relationship becomes a one-way street of interpretation instead of a bustling intersection of mutual cultural exchange and communication.

Many years later when I asked Chief Jacobs what changed in his mind after meeting my Israeli relatives he told me that

Seeing that and seeing how strong culturally they were with their language and their ways actually changed my opinion of my own community. Watching them and seeing them and how strong they were in their culture even though for years they had no land base. I think that the juxtaposition of how we have land and you don't have any but you have managed to retain your ways and we have our land but we are still struggling to keep our ways and our language. Looking at that I think it changed my opinion of my community. Looking at that I wanted to know how you did it. How do you do that? That's what I want from you to know how you did it. That's what I want from you. How did you keep that with no land? We have land here and we keep our ways going but how can we get it to the place where everyone understands that?⁷

While I had succeeded in getting to know many members of the Onondaga community, it was my extended family who ultimately convinced Chief Jacobs I was worth the risk by showing him that a knowledge of Jewish people, Jewish history and Jewish religion could actually help him to make his community even stronger. My Israeli relatives balanced the equation and made Jessie as curious to learn about me and my culture as I was to learn about him and his culture. For these reasons, I am as indebted to my family, both

⁷ J. Jacobs, Personal Conversation, January 17, 2016.

immediate and extended, as I am to Chief Jacobs for facilitating the trust and companionship, intellectual curiosity and friendship, necessary for collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

What we call our data are really our own constructions of other peoples constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to.⁸

Jewish-American-Exceptionalism and the Native-American-Dream

Uneven support for the religious freedom and self-determination of Jews and Indians within America reveals deep contradictions in the religious fabric of American society. In the United States, Jewish expressions of land and loss have been protected, mainstreamed, and commemorated while Native expressions of land and loss have been maligned, ignored, and obfuscated. Euro-American immigrants have been systematically oppressing the indigenous inhabitants of the United States for the last 500 years. Treaties have not been honored. Native culture has been decimated by federal Indian policies, like relocation, allotment, reservation, boarding school, and blood-quantum. Modern day “reservations” are defined as “domestic dependents” nations while Columbus and the Founding Fathers have achieved canonization. In 1940 Woody Guthrie penned the famous lyric, “this land was made for you and me.”⁹ While Guthrie’s anthem is more complicated than this one line, we should seriously consider whether any Native American person could legitimately agree that the United States of America was “made for you and me.”

Conversely, during this same period, the United States opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants. Housing, education, and job restrictions once placed on Jewish immigrants have been lifted. Israel has become one of the United States top

⁸ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, NY: Basic Books Inc. Publishing, 1973). 9.

⁹ Woody Guthrie, *This Land is Your Land* (Copyright 1940 and 1944).

allies and the most important partner in the Middle East. A museum has been built on the mall in Washington, D.C. to memorialize the Jewish victims of the German genocide; “Nazi” and “Hitler” have become synonymous with “evil.” The American-Jewish community has achieved an incredible amount of economic, political, and educational success. America is the first nation “where being Jewish can be a complete and utter non-issue” and the only place in the world “where being Jewish isn’t always on one’s mind.”¹⁰ Certainly it would be easier for Jewish Americans to confirm that the United States of America was in fact “made for you and me.”

The American landscape has brought Jews and Indians together, but American values continue to drive them apart. Jews and Indians are most tragically linked through their experiences of catastrophic suffering. David Stannard cautions it is common for afflicted groups to “hold up their peoples experiences as so fundamentally different from the others” that academic comparisons are often times “rejected out of hand” resulting in an almost “preemptive conclusion that one’s own group has suffered more than others.”¹¹ At stake seems to be a desire to earn “a horrible award of distinction that will be diminished if the true extent of another group’s suffering is acknowledged.”¹² Nevertheless, Stannard braves a comparison between the “Jewish Holocaust and the Euro-American genocide against the Indians of America” due to the “similarities of significance” present in these two historic atrocities.¹³ This comparison, although

¹⁰ The Editors, *Promised Land, Golden Land: Why Jewish Survival Depends on Both America and Israel*. Tablet Magazine (November 19, 2013).

¹¹ David Stannard, *American Holocaust: Conquest of the New World* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993). 152.

¹² *Ibid.*, 152

¹³ *Ibid.*, 151-53

embedded in the American genocide and German genocide, is not an attempt to confer “moral authority” or restore honor or dignity onto the victims of genocide.

Instead, these intersections — embedded in the American landscape — are based on the perception of a shared group identity and molded around a resistance to Christianity. In modern times, as patterns of migration and nationhood funneled around anti-Semitism, politics, and economics, the status of the Jewish community has vacillated somewhere between tolerance and ostracism. Throughout the last 200 years of American history, as patterns of migration and nationhood funneled around anti-Indian racism, education, and economics, the status of Native Americans has vacillated somewhere between animal like lesser races, the noble savage (purveyor of mystical ecological knowledge) and the mascot (complete fetishization). By focusing on the relationship between race and religion in America, it is possible to highlight the unyielding differences in the lived experience of American Jews and American Indians.

The pre World War II academic intersections between Jews and Indians originate with Franz Boas and the founding of modern American anthropology. Boas is important to the foundation of this dissertation: [1] the conflation in Boas’ work between academia and activism. [2] The founding of modern American anthropology has its roots in an immigrant Jew exploring Native American cultures. [3] Boas created a pedagogical legacy which propelled an entire generation of anthropologists — many from Jewish upbringings — into Indian country. [4] Boas dedicated his career to solving the “race problem” through a combination of scientific research, social activism, and education. According to Boas, the social evolutionary model, which for years had dominated Euro-American religious (e.g. Doctrine of Christian Discovery, Manifest Destiny),

philosophical (e.g. Herder, Hegel, Kant), and anthropological (e.g. Frazier, Spencer, Tylor) thought, was incapable of capturing the “science of man.” Racial determinism, racial stratification, racial segregation, eugenics, or any model that promoted a “unilineal cultural development” were a “pseudo-science” based on “naive classifications” and “subjective attitudes” instead of “proper biological principles.”¹⁴

One hundred years after Boas revolutionized the field of American anthropology, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz felt comfortable enough to claim the usage of the term “savage” was passé and the “creation of another generation”¹⁵ of scholars motivated by solidifying the superiority of European Christianity. For this previous generation of scholars, the subjugation of “primitive” peoples was a higher priority than “learning about peoples and cultures different than their own.”¹⁶ Even though the primitive was the creation of a previous generation, Eilberg-Schwartz immersed himself in the idea of the “primitive” in order to highlight how the primitive/civilized dialectic continued to shape the fieldwork agendas and academic methodologies of American anthropologists. In a Jewish Studies project, what Eilberg-Schwartz called “savaging Judaism,” was meant to undermine the opposition between Judaism and “paganism” and dismantle the “opposition between savage religions and others” that anthropology had “inadvertently helped to perpetuate.”¹⁷ For Eilberg-Schwartz, “savaging Judaism” was a “political act” of methodological subterfuge intended as a “salvage operation” to “breakdown the traditional dichotomies between primitive and higher religions”¹⁸ that anthropology has

¹⁴ Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York, NY: The MacMillian Company, 1911). 164.

¹⁵ Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990). 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 236

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 239

allowed to continue.

According to Eilberg-Schwartz,

As anthropologists and philosophers dismantled the opposition between savagery and civilization, they began to realize that what they had originally seen in the savage was in fact a shadowy version of ourselves that we had failed to recognize.¹⁹

Inspired by Eilberg-Schwartz's attempt at "savaging Judaism," this project will attempt to "Judaize the savage" in order to further dismantle the opposition between Jewish communities and Native American communities that the history of religions has inadvertently helped to perpetuate. For far too long, indigenous communities have been understood through the lenses of Western Christianity and the primitive/civilized dialectic. If we were to remove these two lenses, it may be possible to "promote the foundation for a new discourse: the savage within us all."²⁰

A range of theoretical and methodological tools will be utilized to uncover and categorize the similarities and differences in the religion, history, and contemporary conditions of Jews and Indians in America. I will use ethnography as a tool to harness my relationships and interactions with contemporary Native communities, religious studies as a framework to understand the historical and theological developments of these communities and Jewish Studies in order to dislodge Native communities from the filter of Christianity. In the end, the goal is not a "Jewish-Indian kinship" but rather an exploration of how the process of Jewish and Native American identity creation have overlapped, intersected, and bifurcated in order to form Jewish-American-Exceptionalism and negate the Native-American-Dream.

¹⁹ Ibid., 21

²⁰ Ibid., 241

Definition of Religion

Nathan Glazer observed that Judaism refers to “(an) enormous body of practices, embracing one’s entire life, more than it refers to a body of doctrine,” and the same is true of Native American religious traditions.²¹ But the grim truth about contemporary Native American communities is that many of them are hanging on by mere threads. Language, ancestry, religion, art, medicine, food, and leadership combined with unrelenting stubbornness and pride are the essential threads currently sustaining native communities. For these reasons, Chief Jacobs of the Onondaga Nation has called this era of his people “the decrepit end.” Chief Jacobs, along with many other native people, live in constant fear of the eve of destruction. Native people wake up each morning with this fear; they go to bed each evening with this fear.

Regarding the vulnerability of contemporary American Indian communities, Christopher Jocks has warned young and upcoming scholars of religion to be “deeply suspicious” of academic pursuits of indigenous traditions. According to Jocks, by “collecting” and “enshrining” the “nice things” about “indigenous ways of life,” scholars of indigenous traditions are “endangering” contemporary indigenous peoples by making conquest and colonization a “nicer” and more palatable process.²² If scholars choose, consciously or unconsciously, to focus attention on to the beautiful aspects of traditional native cultures, they do a disservice to indigenous Americans of the past, present, and future. Out of respect for the violence of contact, the preferred narratives of Indigenous Studies should never be couched in “nicer” language. These types of narratives intentionally belittle and purposefully obfuscate the humiliation, shame, and degradation

²¹ Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). 6.

²² Chris Jocks, ed., Olupona Jacob, *Modernity, Resistance and the Iroquois Longhouse people* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004). 139-40.

native people have been subjected to for the last five hundred years. The conquest and colonization of Native American communities can never become more digestible, least history is allowed to repeat itself. Since the study of indigenous communities has been fundamental to the history of religions, Jocks' warning should be particularly meaningful to any scholar currently engaged with describing, analyzing, and categorizing indigenous religions systems.

"Religion" can be a sinuous or an ambiguous category. Scholars should be as fluid and flexible in their research methodologies as they are in their definitions in order to properly characterize and categorize the communities with which they are involved. The ambiguity surrounding the category of religion has generated countless attempts to harness a definition applicable to all peoples in all places. In his work with subaltern religious communities, historian of religion Charles Long claimed that by thinking "materially," scholars can overcome the types of cultural, linguistic, and geographical barriers inherent to studying "other people's religion."²³ Long defines religion as,

Orientation in the ultimate sense, that is, how one comes to terms with the ultimate significance of one's place in the world...The religion of any people is more than a structure of thought; it is experience, expression, motivations, intentions, behaviors, styles and rhythms.²⁴

Long's contention, that religion must to be defined more broadly than "a structure of thought," thrusts the scholar of religion into the material "experience, expression, motivations, intentions, behaviors, styles, and rhythms" of a group. Furthermore, by deemphasizing the "structure of thought," Long's definition minimizes the role of belief, faith, doctrine, creed, and soteriology in lieu of "behaviors, styles and rhythms." Long's

²³ Charles Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 1995). 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7

insistence religion needs to be defined more broadly than “the belief in spiritual beings,”²⁵ perfectly encapsulates both Jewish and Haudenosaunee communities.

Emile Durkheim, the founder of modern sociology, argued that religion was something “eminently social” and religious representations are “collective representations which express collective realities.”²⁶ Durkheim’s definition, while it fails to encapsulate individual or solitary spiritual traditions, fits well for both Jewish and Native American religions. The moral, philosophical, and theological systems of Jews and Indians are based on the survival, sustainability, and general well-being of the community. For both groups religion, ceremony, and ritual are collective endeavors embedded in community concerns observable in community practices. While the individual will eventually die, the community must live on. For these reasons, the community of Jews in the world and the community of *Onk’we’honwe* in the world, whether they are defined along ethnic, cultural, religious, or racial lines, are more important than the individual. Without community one cannot be a Jew; without community one cannot be *Onk’we’honwe*.

American Jewish thinker Mordecai Kaplan relied heavily on the Durkheimian perspective in order to define both “religion” and “Judaism.” According to Kaplan, the value of the academic “study of religion” was that it could help reinforce the notion that “religion is primarily a group consciousness.” For both Kaplan and Durkheim, “religion as a social phenomenon is a form of the living energy which exists in all social groups;”²⁷ therefore, “Judaism cannot exist without the Jewish people.”²⁸ Kaplan continued to

²⁵ Edward Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture* (New York, NY: Harper, 1958). 424.

²⁶ Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008). 22 & 470.

²⁷ Mordecai Kaplan and Mel Scult. *Communings of the Spirit: The Journals of Mordecai M. Kaplan: Volume 1 1914-1934* (Detroit, MI: Wayne St. University Press, 2001). 58.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 58-59

argue,

Religion is primarily a social phenomenon. To grasp its reality, to observe its workings and to further its growth we must study its functioning in some social group. The individual and his development or perfection may constitute the sole aim of religion, but the fact and substance of religion cannot exist completely and exhaustively in an individual.²⁹

The individual is nothing without the group since the “substance of religion cannot exist completely and exhaustively in an individual.”³⁰ Since religion is a “social phenomenon,” Judaism can only exist within the “Jewish people” not within the Jewish individual. According to Kaplan, the ultimate purpose of the Jewish religion is to “integrate the individual into the Jewish consciousness.”³¹ The function of the Jewish individual is to discover how, when, why, and where they fit into the group structures — land, language, mores, laws, folkways, folk arts, and social structure — of the Jewish people. If only one Jew was left in the world, there would be no Judaism, because the religion of the Jews is a community affair, based in community concerns, and embedded in community practices. Or as Jonathan Boyarin states, “there is no ‘last Jew’ only the next-to-last Jew.”³²

Acknowledging the intimate similarities between Jewish and Indian communities, Vine Deloria states,

Only with the use of Hebrew by the Jewish community, which in so many ways perpetuates the Indian tribal religious conceptions of community, do we find contemporary similarities... The conception of group identity is very strong amongst the Jews, and the phenomenon of having been born into a complete cultural and religious tradition is present, though many Jews, like many Indians, refuse to acknowledge their membership in an exclusive community.³³

²⁹ Ibid., 57

³⁰ Ibid., 57

³¹ Ibid., 112

³² Jonathan Boyarin, *Thinking in Jewish* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996). 158.

³³ Vine Deloria, *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003). 327.

Deloria succinctly identifies the most fundamental similarity between Jews and Indians is their conception and construction of “group identity” through their ancestral links to an “exclusive community.” According to Deloria, only the Jewish community “perpetuates the Indian tribal conceptions of community,” because both Jewish and Indian individuals are “born into a complete cultural and religious tradition.” In these systems, the individual discovers how he or she fit into the “exclusive community” of his or her birth. If Jews and Indians display similar patterns of community development, and if Jews and Indians both define religion as a community affair, then it should also come as no surprise there are other significant similarities between Jews and Indians as well as between Judaism and Native American religions. In concert with Long, Durkheim, Deloria, and Kaplan, this work will approach religion as “collective orientations that assist a community to come to terms with their unique places in the world.”³⁴

Terms and Origins: The Power of Naming

Over the last 150 years, the primitive - civilized dialectic has become a ubiquitous plague throughout the development of the University system. Disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including but not limited to anthropology, religious studies, sociology, psychology, art history, geography, and philosophy, have all been infested by the racist, pseudo-scientific, false dichotomy between primitive and civilized cultures. Even the introduction of new departments like Post-Colonial Studies, Ethnic

³⁴ In Shaul Magid’s recent work *American Post-Judaism: Identity and Renewal in a Postethnic Society* he argues that Israel and the Holocaust will cease to anchor American Jewish identity creation in the “postethnic” American society. While I applaud Magid’s work in highlighting the deficiencies of Zionism and the Holocaust in centering modern American Jewish identity I do not agree that America is becoming a “postethnic” society. If anything America is becoming a more tribal society with regards to politics, culture and racial identity/assignment. I will argue that the ethnic element of American Jews is one of the ties that bind contemporary American Jews to modern American Indians.

Studies, and American Indian studies have not managed to rid the academy of this interpretive device.

Outside of the academy, the primitive - civilized dialectic waits in the weeds ready to be unearthed and invoked whenever someone is desperate enough to signify their opponents as “primitive,” “savage,” or “uncivilized.” Outside the context of indigenous communities, the primitive - civilized dialectic remains operational in contemporary American political discourses, like Palestine - Israel, Clinton - Trump, religious discourses, like Christianity - Islam, and social discourses, like Black Lives Matter - All Lives Matter - Blue Lives Matter. The primary motivation for dividing human communities along primitive and civilized lines has always been to ostracize the opponent in order to justify harsh treatment. When Palestinians are defined as “savage,” they become vulnerable to oppression. When Muslims are defined as “barbarians,” they become susceptible to maltreatment. When black Americans are defined as “uncivilized,” they become available for imprisonment and police violence. When Jews are defined as “biologically inferior,” they become vulnerable to attack. When Native American peoples are defined as “primal,” they become naked to conquest and colonization.

Concerning the social and psychological motivations behind primitive - civilized classifications, Charles Long has argued that the “pervasive influence” of “ideologies of primitivism” among “modern Western cultures” concerning the “cultures and peoples” classified as “archaic, primal or indigenous” are not momentous “in their own worth and value,” but in the significance they allow “civilization” when “contrasted with it.”³⁵ Long contends that the category of “primitive” operates as a “negative structure of

³⁵ Charles Long, *Significations*, p. 101.

concreteness” allowing civilization and civilized peoples to appear superior to this “ill-defined and inferior other.”³⁶ By defining whom and what is “primitive,” politicians, theologians, philosophers, and scholars are simultaneously describing whom and what are “civilized.” This is the insidious double edge of the primitive - civilized dialectic. “Primitive” and “civilized” are enmeshed in an unholy union in order to elevate “civilized” Euro-American cultures by denigrate “primitive” indigenous cultures. “Primitive” and “civilized” have become more than just adjectives; it is the means to justify domination of one group over another group.

As a result of the widespread popularity and pervasiveness of the primitive - civilized dialectic, contemporary scholars who deal with modern indigenous communities must linguistically, semantically, and methodologically negotiate the “inherent racism and classism of the history of the history of religions.”³⁷ The vast majority of modern scholars now consider it antiquated, passé, and no longer appropriate to refer to Native Americans as “primitive” or “savage;” however, “non-literate” and “pre-literate” remain quite common. The primitive - civilized dialectic has not disappeared from public discourse and debate.

A recent subway advertisement, first displayed in San Francisco and then in New York City, created and paid for by the American Freedom Defense Initiative has caused a small public outcry due to its reliance on the centuries old primitive - civilized dialectic. The advertisement billboard reads, “In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man. Support Israel. Defeat Jihad.”³⁸ This billboard, steeped in the

³⁶ Ibid., 101,

³⁷ Ibid., 101 & 168

³⁸ Hamid Dabashi, *The War Between the Civilized Man and the Savage* (Al-Jazeera English, September 24, 2012).

language of social Darwinism, depends upon the primitive - civilized dialectic for shock value and persuasion. The only unique element of this advertisement campaign is that it shifts the location of the primitive - civilized dialectic from America to Israel and Palestine. Throughout American history and the academy, white, Euro-American, Christian civilization has been repeatedly juxtaposed against non-white, Indigenous, tribal primitiveness. These billboards, on the other hand, have defined the Jewish community in the land of Israel as the “civilized” and Muslims/Jihadists in the Palestinian territories as “savage.” This advertisement campaign relies on the symbolic importance of the primitive - civilized dialectic to shock viewers to identify the Israel - Palestine conflict through the prism of the primitive - civilized dialectic. The billboards simply replaced anti-Indian racism with anti-Islamic prejudice. By constructing religious hierarchies tied to human development, this billboard utilizes, while reinforcing, the continued power of the primitive - civilized dialectic in order to shape current political discourses.³⁹

The academic study of religion originated from the instinct to provide conclusive, scientific evidence for the superiority of Christianity – an argument that elite Christian leaders had been advocating for generations. As a discipline, the history of religions has materially, theoretically, and methodologically distanced itself from early academic approaches to religion. Nevertheless, specters of the instincts to elevate Christianity over all other religious traditions continue to mold and shape the subdivision of Native American religions. Nowhere is this tension more pronounced than the arena of

³⁹ Ron Meier of the Anti-Defamation League said in a statement, “We support the court’s conclusion that the ad is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment, yet we still strongly object to both the message and the messenger. We believe these ads are highly offensive and inflammatory. Pro-Israel doesn’t mean anti-Muslim. It is possible to support Israel without engaging in bigoted anti-Muslim and anti-Arab stereotypes.”

language. For scholars of indigenous religions, terminology has become a particularly vexing conundrum. There is great power in naming, but after “primitive,” “savage,” and “barbarian” became passé, scholars could not agree on a suitable way to refer to native communities. The great debate — filled with disagreement and confusion — had begun. What is the appropriate way for scholars to refer to the communities with which they are involved? Indian, Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, *Onk’we’honwe*, Aboriginal, archaic, backward, barbarian, basic, cold cultures, cultures of contact, first nations, oppressed cultures, non-civilized, non-literate, exotic, heathen, lower races, colored races, minor, native, original, primal, primeval, primitive, prehistoric, preliterate, savage, semi-savage, savage races, submerged, subaltern, skin, tribal and uncivilized. The words chosen depend on the methods and motives of the investigator.

Every alternative euphemism for “primitive” reflects a minute shift in the motive and agenda of individual scholars. Some terms like “savage,” “heathen,” “backward,” “submerged,” “prehistoric,” “uncivilized,” and “archaic” are simply alternative terminologies used to reinforce the primitive - civilized dialectic. Other terms like “Native American,” “American Indian,” “First Nations,” “original,” “native,” and “indigenous” are geotemporal terms. These place specific terms appear to have been motivated by the need to remove the biological dimension of the primitive - civilized dialectic and replace it with a cultural dimension. Still other terms like “subaltern,” “oppressed cultures,” and “*onk’we’honwe*” are deliberately employed in order to upend the civilized - primitive dialectic by directly pointing out the devastating real world consequences of being labeled as “basic,” “primal,” “cold cultures,” or “exotic.”

Years before the rise of “politically correct” language, social scientists had made the manipulation of terms and terminology an essential component of ethnographic research. Innumerable scholars embraced the task of renaming, redefining, and rethinking the relationships between primitive and civilized societies. Like politically correct language of the present, these euphemisms of the past were not able to remove or replace the racist, Euro-centric, Christo-centric motivations behind the primitive - civilized dialectic. These new euphemisms inevitably have contributed to the obfuscation of the civilized - primitive dialectic, but never to its replacement. By inventing their own terms and terminologies, academics sought to soften the language surrounding “primitive” communities, but they did not challenge the overall value system categorizing communities along the primitive - civilized dialectic.

Of his use of the term “savage,” EE Evans Pritchard comments,

Some people today find it embarrassing to hear peoples described as primitives or natives, and even more so to hear them spoken of as savages. But I am sometimes obliged to use the designations of my authors, who wrote in the robust language of a time when offence to the peoples they wrote about could scarcely be given.⁴⁰

By choosing to honor the “designations of my authors,” Evans Pritchard stands against euphemisms all together in order to capture those “robust” moments in time wherein “offence to the peoples they wrote about could scarcely be given.”⁴¹ This is a valuable perspective because it recognizes the “embarrassing” and “offensive” legacy behind modern day anthropology and the history of religions. Evans Pritchard recognized “savage” as a loaded term, but refused to stop using it least we forget the legacies of racism, conquest, and colonization justified by the primitive - civilized dialectic.

⁴⁰ E.E. Evans Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1965). 18.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 18

Similarly, Charles Long, one of the founders of the history of religions, justified his usage of the term “indigenous” by arguing that

In many respects, the term indigenous was adopted as a ‘politically correct’ way of referring to what had before been called the primitives, or tribal peoples, these names now falling into disgrace. ‘Indigenous’ proved also to be an acceptable name for members of those cultures which had previously been designated by the former terms.⁴²

In the above passage, Long directly links “indigenous,” which is currently the most appropriate and scholastically sound way to refer to native communities, to the rise of politically correct language. “Indigenous,” a reference to the place specific dimensions of religion and culture, has become the preferred nomenclature because it satisfies both political correct academic circles as well as “those cultures which had previously been designated” as savage, barbarian, primitive, and uncivilized. Scholars and subjects alike have seen value in the label “indigenous.”

Like my predecessors, I feel compelled to substantiate my usage of terms and terminologies. Throughout this project, I will flit between “Indigenous,” “Native American,” “American Indian,” “Iroquois,” and “Haudenosaunee” as they are the “designations of my authors.” Furthermore, I will sometimes invoke “Indian,” and “*onk'we'honwe*” as they are the designations of my collaborators. Additionally, I will occasionally employ the old, passé names like “primitive,” “savage,” “barbarian,” “uncivilized,” “exotic,” “heathen,” “backward,” and “prehistoric” in order to highlight the violence and prejudice that continues to plague the indigenous inhabitants of the Western hemisphere. In the end, the power of language and the power of naming cannot

⁴² Jennifer Reid, *Religion and Global Culture: New Terrain in the Study of Religion and the Work of Charles H. Long* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003). 169.

be underestimated least this new generation of scholars abandon the gains that have been made in the last one hundred and fifty years of social scientific research.

Context is more significant in Native American communities than terms or terminologies. What an individual may prefer to be called can change based on the setting of the interaction, the place and peers, the mood of the informant, and the knowledge and agenda of the questioner. While an individual may bristle at being referred to as an “Indian” either in the media or in a mixed academic setting, this does not mean they do not have an “Indian name” or wear “Indian clothes” or eat “Indian tacos” or make jokes about “Indian time” when the setting is the “rez” or in a group of skins.⁴³ Throughout the course of any meaningful conversation with Haudenosaunee peoples, they will let you know how they prefer to be called. In fact, it is my experience they will make it perfectly clear how they prefer to be addressed; the only trick is that one must pay close attention to the verbal and non-verbal cues.

As George Carlin famously proclaimed, “the words are innocent. The words are neutral. It’s the context. The context tells you if they are good or bad.”⁴⁴ Depending on context, the setting, the relationships, the same word can be neutral, offensive, or comical. This phenomenon offers unique opportunities for humor and play; however, it also places the moral and ethical responsibility on the individual scholar (and individual informant) to be able to recognize where and when certain terms may be appropriate as well as where and when certain terms may be inappropriate. Ultimately, terms and

⁴³ “Rez” and “skins” are two perfect examples of the context driven value system. “Rez” and “skins” are terms that can be neutral, positive or negative depending on the context (who, when, where, why, how) in which they are invoked.

⁴⁴ George Carlin, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUvdXxhLPa8>. Viewed October 15, 2016.

terminologies, like so many other facets of Indian country, are meaningless until they are filtered through the rich tapestry of relationships of exchange.

Cultural Evolution and the Problem of the “Primitive”

The process of defining the “other” as morally and spiritually depraved in order to justify war, conquest, missionization, or economic exploitation did not originate in the mid-19th century amongst a group of European social scientists. However, early anthropologists led by E.B. Tylor and his student James Frazier solidified the role of ethnography and anthropology in the colonial process. Like Freud, who described primitive peoples as “child-like” and “children,”⁴⁵ Tylor believed primitive peoples represented a more basic stage of human cultural development; primitive peoples and communities were remnants of a bygone past, frozen in time. Civilized communities of people (namely European Christians), on the other hand, evolved into literate, freethinking, complicated, ethical beings capable of complex moral and philosophical thought. Primitive peoples, being from a bygone, past had never evolved and developed the skills necessary to become civilized communities.

Tylor’s assumptions guided his investigation of primitive cultures as part of his much larger project of mapping all of the various stages of human development. Tylor’s fascination with primitive cultures was motivated by his assertion that “no human thought” was “so primitive” as to have “lost its bearing on our own thought, nor so ancient as to have broken its connection with our own life.”⁴⁶ As a strong supporter of the theory of cultural evolution, Tylor’s interest in studying primitive and savage

⁴⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2011). V & 28.

⁴⁶ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, p. 40.

communities was to understand how human populations evolved from primitive to savage to civilized.

While Tylor was fundamentally focused on differentiating between primitive, savage, and civilized, he utilized a “temporal continuum” instilled by the “evolutionary perspective” in order to formulate his religious hierarchy.⁴⁷ The evolutionary perspective imposed a value-based classification hierarchy onto the world’s diverse religious traditions. As an advocate of Malthusian-Darwinism, Tylor was fully embraced the more brutal responsibilities of anthropology and ethnography. Already in 1871 he wrote,

It is a harsher, and at times even painful, office of ethnography to expose the remains of crude old culture which have passed into harmful superstition, and to mark these out for destruction. Yet this work, if less genial, is not less urgently needful for the good of mankind. Thus, active at once in aiding progress and in removing hindrance, the science of culture is essentially a reformer’s science.⁴⁸

In Tylor’s view, anthropology and ethnography were instruments for identifying those “primitive” peoples who should be marked “out for destruction.” In the above passage Tylor explains, without remorse, the purpose of ethnography is to identify which cultures ought to be destroyed for the good of mankind. Tylor viewed anthropology’s role in pruning humanity’s family tree as an essential part of the “reformer’s science.” Marking human communities for destruction was, according to Tylor, a necessary evil that had been embraced by the “science of culture” for the “good of mankind.”⁴⁹

With the assistance of ethnographic data, anthropologists began ranking all societies with which Western culture had come into contact along a linear evolutionary schema. Under this schema, the remnants of primitive communities — indigenous

⁴⁷ Ibid., 589

⁴⁸ Ibid., 569

⁴⁹ Ibid., 539

peoples — retained value only as long as it took for anthropologists to record their raw data — language, culture, religion, customs. Ethnographies of the so-called “primitive” communities were produced in order 1) to serve as the historical record of a community once it had been destroyed; 2) to plot specific communities along the social evolutionary spectrum. Ethnography, the anthropologist’s most fundamental tool of publication, would serve as the written record of “primitive culture” in face of eventual demise.

Whereas Darwin’s theory of evolution sought to identify the markers and elucidate how one species could evolve into another, this new — and far less rigorously and scientifically researched — theory of cultural evolution sought to identify the markers (education, industrialization, written language, art, material culture) and elucidate how human culture, as a singular entity, could evolve from primitive thru barbarous and onto civilized. According to the theory of cultural evolution, human culture has evolved in a straight line from point P (primitive) to point C (Civilized) with little to no deviations. Therefore, “primitive” culture and modern “primitive” peoples represent an earlier, a more infantile or childlike, version of modern culture and modern peoples. E.B. Tylor was an early proponent of cultural evolutionary theory. His legendary two-volume set *Primitive Culture* remains a seminal piece in the history of anthropology. By promoting the theory of cultural evolution at every level — teaching, publication, and public lectures — of his academic career, Tylor, along with his disciples, successfully enmeshed the founding of the discipline of anthropology, as well as the practice of ethnography, with the theory of cultural evolution. Unfortunately, we will never know how anthropology “might have been different had the opposition between

primitive and civilized not had such a significant impact on the formation of the discipline.”⁵⁰

Tylor identified religion as the most fundamental differences between primitive and civilized cultures. As a result, the second portion of *Primitive Culture*, subtitled *Religion in Primitive Culture*, is dedicated to an examination of “animism” – Tylor’s unique term for the religious activities of primitive peoples. By defining religion as the “belief in spiritual beings,” Tylor stated all “low races” who he was “intimate” with “exhibited” some form of “religion.”⁵¹ Religion, however, still divided primitive from civilized culture, because the most “vital part” of religion, the “moral element” that was so “intimate” and “powerful” in “higher culture” and among “higher nations,” was scarce and “little represented” among the “lower races.”⁵² By making this bold proclamation Tylor created a virtual cottage industry of academics who dedicated their entire career to either endorsing or contradicting Tylor’s theory of cultural evolution and its assorted implications.

Among the academics who felt obligated to criticize, critique, and amend the theory of cultural evolution while preserving the meaningful impact of the civilized - primitive dialectic on Western thought were Franz Boas and Charles Long. Boas immersed himself in Americas “primitive” communities in order to prove the inadequacy of the theory of cultural evolution, eugenics, and biological determinism. Boas investigated “primitiveness” along two fronts: first, to “enquire whether certain bodily characteristics of races exist that doom them to a permanent mental and social inferiority,” second, “we shall have to discuss the traits of the mental and social life of

⁵⁰ Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savaging Judaism*, p. 20.

⁵¹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, p. 437.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 11

those people whom we call primitive from a cultural point of view.”⁵³ Boas sought to reform generations of anthropological thought from the inside out using the same tools and mechanisms of the trade. After many years of field and laboratory work, Boas concluded,

There is no fundamental difference in the ways of thinking of primitive and civilized man. A close connection between race and personality has never been established.⁵⁴

The behavior of an individual is therefore determined not by his racial affiliation, but by the character of his ancestry and his cultural environment.⁵⁵

Nurture, or one’s cultural environment, according to Boas, played a much larger role in determining a person’s “character” than nature, or one’s racial affiliation. Boas’ claim that “behavior” was determined by “cultural environment” not by “racial affiliation” contradicted the scientific and religious orthodoxy of the time. While his sentiments may appear rudimentary or obvious to a person with knowledge of critical race theory, we must remember that Boas’ thought was avant-garde in the early 1900s. For his contributions to the field of anthropology, Boas is remembered as the intellectual impetus behind interpreting race as a social construct instead of a biological principle. Boas intended for his conclusions that “hereditary racial traits are unimportant as compared to cultural conditions” to promote an anthropological interpretation of society based on cultural relativism, not cultural evolution.⁵⁶

Decades after Boas’ groundbreaking research, the primitive - civilized dialect still remained popular amongst the social scientific disciplines. Charles Long, among the co-

⁵³ Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, p. 31.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 17

⁵⁵ Franz Boas, *Race and Democratic Society* (Cambridge, NY: Biblo & Tannen, 1945). 27

⁵⁶ Franz Boas, *Race, Language and Culture* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995). 13

founders of the History of Religions, saw the “problem surrounding the usage of the term ‘primitive’” as a “crisis of the term ‘civilization.’”⁵⁷ According to Long, the

Self-conscious realization of Western European rise to the level of civilization must be seen simultaneously in its relationship to the discovery of a new world which must necessarily be perceived as inhabited by savages and primitives who constitute the lowest rung on the ladder of cultural reality.⁵⁸

As a result of these imbalances in power, Long dedicated a substantial portion of his scholarship to a “discussion” of those “others” whom had previously been referred to as “primitives” in order to “demystify” the “religious traditions” of “indigenous” peoples.⁵⁹ Unlike Tylor, whose investigation of “primitiveness” was motivated by his grandiose vision of mapping all of human culture, Long’s investigation of primitiveness was undertaken in order to “demythologize the symbolic myth of civilization”⁶⁰ – or, rattle the cornerstone of evolutionary anthropology. For Long, the primary function of “indigenous studies” was to illuminate how “primitive” communities have been used as a “negative structure of concreteness” that has allowed civilization to define itself as a “superior structure” to the “ill-defined other.”⁶¹ Long labeled all previous — like Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* and Frazier’s *Golden Bough* — attempts to “prove” the “metaphysical, theological or spiritual-moral evolution of humanity” as “self-serving,” fabricated, misguided, pseudo-science. According to Long, theories of cultural evolution were conjured in order to justify the “violence” between the civilized inhabitants of Western Europe and the primitive inhabitants of the New World.

⁵⁷ Long, *Significations*, p. 95.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 94

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 101

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 102

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 101

In combination with “demystifying the religious traditions of aboriginal cultures,” Long asserted that a “proper study” of “indigenous” traditions might “enable” historians of religion to “demythologize” their discipline.⁶² Long anticipated that “demythologizing” the religious traditions of indigenous communities would lead to a more thorough and complete understanding of religion by removing the crutch of the primitive - civilized dialectic. As part of the “demythologizing” process, Long insisted that the term “primitive,” along with the “ideology of the primitive” and all other aforementioned euphemisms, should be retired in order for a “new epistemological stance in the world” to be promoted. Indigenous communities were at the heart of Long’s “new epistemological stance,” because they mounted a challenge to the “solutions and resolutions” of the “Enlightenment sciences” of the “West.” If Long was correct that indigenous communities were no more or less “primitive” than “Western European” communities, then “Western European” communities were no more or less “civilized” than indigenous communities. Long’s contentions challenged the long held beliefs of proponents of cultural evolutionary theory and the inherent superiority of the Christian faith. Long concluded that a deep focus and reflection on indigenous religions and on how indigenous religions challenged modern ways of being could change, “in a progressive fashion,” the “inherent racism and classism” of the “history of the history of religions.”⁶³

⁶² Ibid., 101

⁶³ Ibid., 89-105, 178

Being Jewish on the Onondaga Nation

Occupying approximately four-square-miles of an ancestral territory that once spanned tens of thousands of square miles, the Onondaga are fiercely protective of their territorial boundaries. The Onondaga Nation is one of the last three remaining Native territories not controlled by the United States Federal government and the Department of the Interior.⁶⁴ The Onondaga (“people of the hills”) along with the Seneca (“people of the Hill”), Tuscarora (“people of the hemp”), Mohawk (“people of the flint”), Oneida (“people of the standing stone”), and Cayuga (“people of the bog”) refer to themselves as the *Haudenosaunee* or “people of the longhouse.” Throughout American history they have been mistakenly referred to as the “Iroquois,” “Five Nations Iroquois,” and “Six Nations Iroquois.”

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy — an alliance of five nations until the Tuscarora joined in the late 18th century — was founded approximately one thousand years ago on the banks of the Onondaga Lake.⁶⁵ A prophet known as the “Peacemaker” joined with another man named “Hiawatha” to promote the messages of peace across a war torn society. These two men, preaching a message of peace, were able to convert a powerful and twisted sorcerer known as the “Tadadaho” from the ways of darkness, sorcery, and strife — the “bad mind” — to the ways of peace — the “good mind.” The forming of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, forever memorialized in the Hiawatha wampum belt, along with the story of creation and the prophecies of Handsome Lake, are

⁶⁴ Instead, the Onondaga follow their traditional style of longhouse government. The other two territories not affiliated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are the Tonawanda-Seneca Nation territory and the Tuscarora Nation territory. These three territories are all in New York State and they are all Haudenosaunee territories. The reasons behind this phenomenon are complicated but can be traced all of the way back to the significance of the Haudenosaunee in the early history of the United States particularly in regards to the American Revolution.

⁶⁵ Jack Rossen. *Corey Village and the Cayuga World: Implications from Archaeology and Beyond* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2015).

the three main instructions around which a majority of Haudenosaunee religion and ritual, ceremony and theology are centered.

There are nine clans at Onondaga: Hawk, Turtle, Deer, Beaver, Eel, Snipe, Bear, Wolf, and Heron. Clans are the most basic organizing structures of Haudenosaunee society and follow a strict pattern of matrilineal descent.⁶⁶ Everything from kinship and genealogy to where an individual may sit in the longhouse — the political, social, and ceremonial meeting place of the Haudenosaunee — is established through clan. Each clan has a clan chief, clan mother, and two faith keepers (one male and one female) whose job it is to lead the community. Clan mothers, who are instructed to closely watch children of the community, are in charge of selecting which community members are chosen to fill each, lifelong, leadership position. Though the longhouse religion is the most popular expression of faith, there are currently three churches that still exist at Onondaga -- Jesuit, Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist. At Onondaga, as is the case in many other native territories, substance abuse, poverty, malnutrition, teen pregnancy, and alcohol abuse remain a visible problem; however, the epidemic of teenage suicide, so common in native communities, is virtually non-existent at Onondaga.⁶⁷ Most controversy surrounding the Onondaga Nation, and the greater Haudenosaunee Confederacy, with their neighbors is related to issues of sovereignty and religious freedom. Sovereignty, the freedom of self-autonomy, and the ability to self-govern

⁶⁶ I will more thoroughly discuss Haudenosaunee Clan types in chapter 2 “Blood.”

⁶⁷ I wish that I could report that in my tenure of working at the Onondaga Nation School that I did not know one child who committed suicide. Unfortunately earlier this year, for the first time in my career, one of my former students took his own life. While this terrible incident was well outside of my control I still feel a profound sense of failure and remorse that this young man, who felt that he had nowhere else to turn, decided to end his own life.

should be understood as the opposite of assimilation and the ultimate goal of the Onondaga community.

The community at Onondaga is very small and generally keeps to themselves. While they are revered throughout Indian country for their prized sovereign status and famous internationally for their work in the United Nations, they are at best a curious relic, if not unknown, to the vast majority of the residents of central New York. Generations of abuse and neglect from scholars, Christian missionaries, soldiers, lawyers, land speculators, diplomats, new-agers, and tourists have made Onondaga people skeptical, wary, and distrustful of outsiders.

When I began my graduate studies at Syracuse University, I was violently confronted with the academy's role, both past and present, as colonial agents. I was also pointed in the right direction. South. Approximately five miles south to the Onondaga Nation. To supplement my scholastic pursuits, I began working from three to five days a week as a youth development specialist at the Onondaga Nation School. My graduate education took place with one foot in the University and one foot in Indian Country. By consistently serving as a positive role model for the children and adolescence (k-8) of the Onondaga Nation School, I earned the respect of Nation members, young and old, and became part of their community. Working at the Nation School was my way of attempting to be in exchange with, and give back to, the community at Onondaga. While doing so, the realization grew slowly that I was really examining Jewish religion, Jewish culture, and Jewish history just as much as I was examining the moral and philosophical systems of the Haudenosaunee.

Work at the Nation School provided my future collaborators the time and space necessary to analyze me and evaluate my intentions long before I asked for their assistance. Furthermore, my collaborations with Longhouse leadership, necessary for this project, all begin with my work with the after-school program at the Onondaga Nation School. This tentative and patient process of exchange and growing mutual respect is cornerstone to any meaningful collaboration between America's academic and indigenous communities.

At the school, two women, Bonnie, a Mohawk, and Shelly, an Onondaga, have the job of sitting at the front door and observing the comings and goings. Sometimes, they are working on beadwork; other times, they are outside smoking. No matter the case, if you want to enter the school, you must first pass these two women. Throughout the school day, you can hear Bonnie or Shelly booming, "slow down," or "sign in," and generally harassing each and every person walking through the main entrance. These are the only obvious gatekeepers I have ever encountered in all my years of visiting my Onondaga friends.

A few years ago, the school received a new principal — a non-Indian woman who had no previous experience with the Onondaga community. After a few months the new principle was so uncomfortable with Bonnie that the principal requested Bonnie be reassigned to a different security detail. Bonnie was moved to the school's parking lot where she, remains, sitting in her car, doing her beadwork, and watching the door.

Once I heard this story, I instantly knew how Bonnie had made the principal feel uncomfortable, because Bonnie, for my first two years, excelled at making me feel uncomfortable. Bonnie has a funny and intimidating way of looking at you that makes

most people uneasy. Sometimes, it feels as if Bonnie is playing her own game, trying to make you distressed, evaluating how you will react, and enjoying every minute of it.

Eventually, I understood Bonnie's ability to make people feel out of place was one of the primary reasons she had been assigned to the front door in the first place. Bonnie was a guardian of the children; she set the tone for that space. Her ability to work security didn't depend on a muscular physique or self-defense prowess; she simply knew who belonged and who didn't. For those that did not, her gaze could easily make one feel out of place.

For those able to sustain Bonnie's gaze, they can be rewarded with the revelation of the rest of Bonnie — a soft, gentle, generous, and humorous woman. Usually, the after school staff would meet in the cafeteria. One afternoon, however, the floor had been disinfected, so the staff was waiting on the front steps. I joined the other staff, and began talking with Bonnie and Shelly. In the midst of the conversation, Bonnie — staring at me with her intense gaze — blurted out, “Hey, Mike, are you really Jewish?” As soon as she spoke, I knew that her daughter, one of my co-workers, must have told her I was Jewish - my Jewish heritage was often a popular topic of humor and misunderstanding among the after school staff and students. I hesitantly answered, “yes” while carefully avoiding looking Bonnie directly in the eyes. Bonnie immediately responded, “What's that Kwanzaa like?” All the side conversations instantly fell silently. All eyes of the gathered staff fell on me. It felt like an eternity, before I could summon all the cheek I could muster and said, “I don't know Bonnie. . . I'm not black.” Everyone gathered on the front steps, including Bonnie, broke into hysterical laughter; someone, had for once made Bonnie the one who felt embarrassed and uncomfortable.

Humor can be a great way to handle these types of potentially sticky situations. At the same time, jokes can be risky if not well received. Fortunately for me, Indians and Jews generally have a terrific sense of humor and many possess the ability to laugh at themselves.⁶⁸ To this day, Bonnie and Shelly occasionally refer to me as “Kwanzaa” and often ask questions about various aspects of Judaism. After that day, I never had to face Bonnie’s glare again; I always met her smile and was able to joke freely with her. Bonnie’s question was not off-putting to me. Instead, I understood the recognition of difference as a possible segue for cultural exchange.

Often, the issues in contemporary American Indian communities are reduced to Traditional / Christian or red / white dialectics – just like in Jewish community’s issues being reduced to Jewish / Gentile or off-white / white dialectics. Bonnie meshing Kwanzaa and Chanukah, black and Jewish, and othering me in this fashion was evidence that these dialectics do not accurately describe my involvement with the Onondaga community or the historical relationships between Jews and Indians. I am not Indian. I have no native relatives, I do not attend Longhouse, I have no Clan, I have no name, and I don’t speak the language. I am not Christian. I have no Christian relatives, I wasn’t baptized, I wasn’t confirmed, and I don’t attend Church. I went to Hebrew school as a child, I have a Hebrew name, I became bar-mitzvah’d at age twelve, and recognize America as my homeland. America has brought me into contact with the Onondaga people just as it has been bringing Jews into contact with Native American peoples for the past four hundred years. The layers of meaning embedding the moment when a Mohawk woman asks an American Jew, working on a Ph.D. in indigenous religions, if he

⁶⁸ As Sherman Alexie famously said “the two funniest tribes I have ever been around are Indians and Jews, so I guess that is saying something about the inherent humor of genocide.” (*Ten Little Indians*, p. 187).

celebrates Kwanzaa while they sit in the “cultural center” at the Onondaga Nation School highlights the radically Indian spaces and dialectics of difference a scholar of indigenous religions must be able to successfully navigate if desiring to foster long term collaborative relationships with modern American Indian communities.

It has been a long and difficult process, but working on the Onondaga Nation has taught me about patience, respect, and what it means to be a Jew in America as much as any text, class, seminar, ceremony, lecture, or travel. A few aspects of my identity and personality provided me with an advantage that cannot be underestimated and should not go unreported. The first aspect was I did not want to convert any Indians. When it comes to matters of religion, ritual, and ceremony, the Onondaga community is still very sensitive. The beginnings of this are rooted in the time of Handsome Lake, the famed Seneca Prophet of the late 18th century. Handsome Lake cautioned the Haudenosaunee regarding the influence of Euro-American culture. According to Haudenosaunee mythology, Handsome Lake warned against four symbols of Euro-American culture: the bible (religion), playing cards (gambling), the fiddle (European music and culture), and the bottle (alcohol). Handsome Lake claimed that those four symbols of Euro-American culture had the power to destroy the Haudenosaunee community from the inside out.

In addition to the prophecies of Handsome Lake, which are retold every other fall during the *Gi'wee'yo* ceremonies, the wounds inflicted upon Indian peoples during the era of Christian boarding schools have never been healed. According to Robert Miller,

In the 1880's the federal government commenced operating boarding schools to educate and civilize Indians. The goal of these schools was aptly summed up by the creator of the very first one: Captain Henry Pratt said the goal was “to kill the Indian, save the man.” During this same time

period, the Bureau of Indian Affairs attempted to take absolute control of Indian life and to squeeze out Indian government, religion and culture.⁶⁹

Although many were stolen from their homes and shipped to Christian boarding schools, the Onondaga people relentlessly fought against the BIA taking control of their government, religion, and culture. Nevertheless, the imprint of Christian boarding schools can be seen and felt by the shame, humiliation, and degradation passed throughout generations of Indian peoples. Individuals who were forced to attend Christian boarding schools, more re-education centers or slave labor camps than schools, were verbally, physically, and sexually abused in the name of killing the Indian to save the man. The boarding school system, this institutionalized ethnic cleansing and religious persecution, was so violent and traumatic that it continues to shape native opinions of American Christianity, American government, and American educational systems.⁷⁰

This violence and trauma is manifest in distrust between community members (those who had attended and those who didn't), family members (parents unable to love and nurture their children), Native people and the United States Federal government.

According to Tinker

Churches, in particular, through their missionizing efforts and schools, tried explicitly to destroy Indian cultures and their ancient ceremonial (religious) traditions. Implanting notions of male dominance was high on the curricular list, along with the destruction of Native languages and the

⁶⁹ Robert Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008). 171

⁷⁰ A plethora of excellent scholarship relating to the Indian Boarding Schools has been produced in the last decade. Brenda Child, K Tsianina Lomawaima, Adam Fortunate Eagle, Laurence Hauptman, George Tinker, Andrew Woolford, Marinella Lentis, Keith Burich, Kevin Annett and Tim Giago have all contributed to this surge in emphasis on the boarding school/residential school project in the United States and Canada. These ventures cover a wide range of genres and methodologies from history and ethnography, to literature and film, to art and psychology. The Indian boarding school program is one of the darkest and most sinister ideas ever put into place by the United States Federal Government and the Christian missionaries. As a result the history of Indian boarding schools, still to this day, are shrouded in secrecy. Therefore, these projects are necessary components of the scholastic mechanism least we begin to repeat the horrors of history.

conversion of children to English-only speakers. Boarding schools were not only patently racist institutions for Indian children, but they also intentionally impressed Victorian gender and class structures in the young minds of their wards. For instance, young Indian girls were taught to be subservient to men generally and White women; in other words, to buy in to the sexist structures that had already long insured that White women live a defined subservience to their men.⁷¹

These experiences of missionization have made Onondaga people wary of outsiders, wary of Christians, and particularly wary of any non-native folk who arrive at Onondaga wanting to discuss and debate religion, culture, and politics.

Though there are a number of small churches at Onondaga, many community members continue to view Christian Churches as a destructive force in their communities and Christian values as antithetical to their traditional teachings.⁷² In 2009, several youths from the Onondaga Nation were arrested and charged with larceny after they burned down two of the last remaining churches at Onondaga. While their rage, anger, and stupidity were fueled by more than just anti-Christian bias, it is significant that of all the structures and buildings on the Onondaga Nation, they chose to destroy churches. Destroying Christian edifices is a manifestation of the trauma of conquest and colonization. There is no getting over colonization. There is no getting over boarding schools. These wounds, this violence and trauma, are the daily lived reality of modern Haudenosaunee peoples. Due to this traumatic religious history, it took years of patient conversation to explain to the members of the Onondaga community that although I was interested in learning about the moral and philosophical elements of Haudenosaunee

⁷¹ Andrea Smith, Michelene Pesantubbee, Dianne M. Stewart, Michelle A. Gonzalez, Sylvester Johnson and Tink Tinker, Roundtable Discussion: Native/First Nation Theology [with Response] (Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall, 2006), pp. 85-121).

⁷² http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2009/09/nedrow_teenager_sentenced_in_c.html. Viewed October 16, 2016.

religion, I had no vested interest in converting Onondaga people away from their traditional beliefs.

The second aspect of my identity that allowed me to connect to with the Onondaga people was I never tried to be a “want to-be.” I never wanted to “play Indian,” a term coined by Philip Deloria as a catch all term to encompass all the forms of non-Indian people dressing up like Indians. From the Boston Tea Party to the Boy Scouts to the New-Age movement, Deloria documents the history and motivations behind “playing Indian.” Deloria called “playing Indian” the most “persistent tradition in American culture, stretching from the very instant of the national big bang into an ever-expanding present and future.”⁷³ According to Deloria,

At the turn of the century, the thoroughly modern children of angst-ridden upper-and middle-class parents wore feathers and slept in tipis and wigwams at camps with multisyllabic Indian names. Their equally nervous post-World war II descendants made Indian dress and powwow-going into a hobby, with formal newsletters and regular monthly meetings. Over the past thirty years, the counterculture, the New Age, the men’s movement, and a host of other Indian performance options have given meaning to Americans lost in a (post) modern freefall. In each of these historical moments, Americans have returned to the Indian, reinterpreting the intuitive dilemmas surrounding Indianness to meet the circumstances of their times.⁷⁴

While there are no powwow’s held at Onondaga and no one there lives in a tipi, many non-Indian people arrive at Onondaga with the expectation of learning the Onondaga language, participating in Longhouse ceremonies, receiving an Indian name, and learning about Haudenosaunee religion. At Onondaga, they call these types of people “wanna-be’s;” they are not well received, and they never accomplish their goals. Some wanna-be’s want to “play-Indian,” because they think it would be cool to “go native.” Others are

⁷³ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). 7

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 7

spiritual seekers. Some are lost and searching for an authentic identity. Ultimately, they are attempts to give “meaning to Americans lost in a (post)modern freefall.”⁷⁵ While I never hid my interest in Haudenosaunee religion and culture, I never wanted to incorporate any part of Onondaga language, religion, dance, dress, or style into my own religious worldview. While this might seem a fine line, once my friends realized I had no interest in “playing Indian,” my work became exponentially easier. Had the community perceived me as a “wanna-be,” this project never would have been possible.

The third aspect of my identity assisted my ability to engage with the Onondaga was I had something to share with the members of the Onondaga Nation. From introducing myself in Hebrew in the language lab at the Nation school, to instructing 1st graders on how to play dreidel, to accompanying the 6-8th graders on their visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, to long nights and early mornings discussing the philosophy, religion, culture, and language of “thinking in Jewish,” I was able to share Jewish community practices during moments of cultural exchange. This ability provided me a platform through which to understand Native culture, interpret Native religious phenomenon, and befriend Native peoples, because it provided me a framework to be respectful, compassionate, and empathetic to Native people and cultures. Judaism, Jewishness and Jewish history amplified the process of cultural exchange and understanding. Judaism completed a circle of mutual respect, exchange and understanding.

As academic disciplines anthropology, history, and religious studies have all participated in the climate of cultural imperialism currently experienced by Native American communities. According to Jonathan Boyarin’s “reading” as a “student of

⁷⁵ Ibid., 7

Anthropology,” if “I concentrate on Jewish culture,” then no one would “accuse me of cultural imperialism.”⁷⁶ This epiphany combined with the realization that “a tradition so old and varied must contain the seeds of a worthwhile life for me” made it natural for Boyarin to make Judaism and Jewish peoples the focus of his anthropological gaze.⁷⁷ Boyarin has referred to his methodological position as “Thinking in Jewish.” This has both personal as well as professional dimensions. While partially motivated by a fear of “cultural imperialism,” Boyarin’s career trajectory into anthropology and Jewish studies has been guided by his Jewish heritage. Throughout this dissertation, I will employ “thinking in Jewish” in order to bring Native peoples into Jewish studies, to bring Jewish people into Native studies, and to bring a comparison between Jewish and Native communities into American studies. By doing so, I hope to negotiate some of the legacy of cultural imperialism of anthropology and religious studies.

When it comes to collaborating with contemporary native communities, very little is simple, or neat, or can even be discussed without being able to see and smell, taste and touch. In my experience, long-term dedication is the only way to begin to understand and communicate. My personal, academic, and intellectual support of native communities is motivated by the indebtedness I feel towards the original inhabitants of this land. My support of native communities is influenced by the fact my family exists, because they were able to flee from genocide and persecution to America. My support of Native communities does not, and never will, depend on Native support of Israel or even Native support of American Jews. I live in America; that’s why I support indigenous human rights.

⁷⁶ Boyarin, Johathan, *Jewishness and the Human Dimension* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2008). 10

⁷⁷ Boyarin, *Thinking in Jewish*, p. 17.

Chapters

Chapter one, “Method”, will position the dissertation within and between the fields of anthropology, history of religions and Jewish studies. It will begin by briefly discussing the phenomenon of Jewish anthropologists doing fieldwork amongst Native American communities before demonstrating how this project breaks from formal anthropology. *Iroquoianist* — William Fenton, Elisabeth Tooker, and Lewis Henry Morgan — will figure prominently in the discussion of academia’s role in the colonial process. Instead, this project’s comparative methodological framework will be in the lineage of history of religions -- especially Eilberg-Schwartz, Doniger and Arnold – and Boyarin’s “thinking in Jewish.”

Chapter two “Blood” will describe how blood laws and blood boundaries have organized Jewish and Native American communities. Blood binds modern communities to their ancestral past by illuminating the bonds between religion, community, and peoplehood. Blood has organized religious communities and catalyzed political movements from the inside out, but it has also been used as a justification for violence and genocide from the outside in. In a number of diverse historical settings, the taint of Jewish and Indian blood has resulted in ostracism and violence. The “blood libel” legends, stories centered upon the ritualistic murders of Christian children by Jewish people, have dogged Jewish communities for at least the last nine hundred years. As a result of colonization, Native American communities have been forced to incorporate “blood quantum”⁷⁸ into their tribal constitutions. From the outside in blood ostracizes Jews and Indians and makes them vulnerable to targeting by the surrounding American-

⁷⁸ “Blood Quantum” is a pseudo-scientific way of genetically mapping the percentage of “Indian Blood” housed inside the veins of a potentially Indian person. Chapter 2 “Blood” will deal explicitly with this topic.

Christian culture.

Building on the devastating long-term effects of blood quantum, Chapter three “Genocide” will be dedicated investigating how the German and American genocides has been used as an intersection to compare Jewish and Native American communities. The first portion will be dedicated to museum space. On the mall in Washington D.C., the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) enact a grotesque relationship. The proximity of these edifices promotes a possibility of inter-cultural dialogues and exchanges between Jews and Indians found nowhere else in America. After a discussion of museum space, I will move onto a critique of Ward Churchill’s “Jewish Exclusivism.” I will conclude by suggesting how through a combination of Hirsch’s theory of “post-memory,” Mohawk’s conception of “utopian ideologies” and the “imaginative” aspects of Boyarin’s methodology can illuminate the possible risks and potential rewards of using genocide as an interface to compare Jewish and Native American history.

Finally, Chapter four “Theology” will focus on a few of the significant divergences present in American Jewish and Native American theology. Chapter four will begin with a discussion of how food, consumption patterns, and dietary restrictions have theologically shaped both Jewish and Native American communities. I will then move on to unpacking the theological tensions present in the works of Abraham Joshua Heschel and Vine Deloria Jr. The areas of contention between these two theologians will be explored through the categories of time, space, place and revelation. The writings of Nathan Glazer, Jonathan Boyarin, Richard Rubenstein, and conversations with members of the Onondaga Nation will supplement the Heschel and Deloria materials.

METHOD

Even with much time and care and knowledge of language, it is not always easy to elicit from savages the details of their theology. They try to hide from the prying and contemptuous foreigner their worship of gods who seem to shrink, like their worshippers, before the white man and his mightier deity.⁷⁹

One who is against comparison is in favor of preserving the dichotomy between Judaism and savage religions...The effect of that rejection is to reproduce this pernicious opposition that has been perpetuated in modern discourse.⁸⁰

Jewish Ethnographers and Indian Informants

Jewish intellectuals have been disproportionately involved in parsing the moral, political, and religious intersections between Euroamerican and Native American communities. Jewish involvement with Native American communities has shaped the disciplines of religious studies, anthropology, and native studies, and set the trajectory of representations of native peoples. According to Rachel Rubinstein, Jewish interpretations and challenges, identifications and projections, of Indians have been paramount in shaping the “ways in which Indians have been imagined and consumed by the larger American public.”⁸¹ At the ethnographic level, Jewish representations of Indians have informed Euroamerican “cultural fantasies” of native communities while warning against “interventions” into and onto native territories.⁸²

If Rubenstein is correct in her assertion that Jews have attempted to ameliorate anxieties between their national, tribal, and political identities by using Indians as a magic mirror, they could not have chosen a more troublesome or problematic reflection.

79 Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, p. 422.

80 Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savaging Judaism*, p. 238.

81 Rubinstein, Rachel, *Members of the Tribe: Native America in the Jewish Imagination* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2010). 18

82 Ibid., 9

The distinct lack of indigeneity that defined Jews for two millennia -- exhibited by the American Jewish community -- represents a massive difference between American Jewish and American Indian communities. Furthermore, following the events of WWII, the Jewish community in America or rather the “Judeo-Christian” ethic, become a cornerstone of American multiculturalism. Furthermore, Jews have been allowed to become “white folk,” and as their economic power began to increase, it became socially and scientifically unpopular to define Jews as an independent “race” of people. “Native American,” on the other hand, is still a catch all term that can be used to define the culture, ethnicity, race, language and religion of indigenous American peoples.⁸³

Without the United States, comparisons between Jews and Indians would lack focus, organization, depth, and meaning. Over the generations social, political, and economic factors, including but not limited to migration patterns, job specialization, civil rights, assimilation, and federal Indian policy, have inhibited the growth of long lasting partnerships between American Indian and American Jewish communities. Location, religion, culture, and ethnicity have all played a key role in keeping these two subaltern communities in their respective lanes. Both Jews and Indians are born into preexisting religious and cultural systems, yet neither Jewish nor Native American communities evangelize their religious traditions or actively seek converts. Furthermore, there is no Jewish evangelism specifically aimed at Native American individuals, and there is no Native American evangelism specifically aimed at Jewish individuals. As a result, there

⁸³ According to Arthur Cohen the “Judeo-Christian tradition” is a “polemic” and “intrinsically meaningless” “eschatological myth” propped up by Christians who can “no longer deal with actual history” and Jews who can “no longer deal with the radical negations of eschatology.” Ultimately Cohen argues that a new discourse must be forged, outside the context of “Judeo-Christian,” so that Jews and Christians may relate to one another in a “postreligious” time and space. This project will develop a “Judeo-Indian” ethic in order to deal with the actual history of Federal Indian Policy and so that Jews and Indians may relate to one another in an increasingly tribal time and space.

are no communities of Native American Jews, and there are there no communities of Jewish Native Americans. While it may seem like an oversimplification, the lack of evangelism and conversion is key to the long-term sustainability of Jewish and Indian collaborations.

For the most part, Jews and Indians keep their religious traditions to themselves.

According to Deloria,

Even within the ethical systems of the later prophets of the Hebrew religion, however, the chosen-people concept did not spill out from its ethnic boundaries...The absence of missionaries indicates that while the conception of God, particularly the God of Israel, may have narrowed in the centuries before the advent of Christianity, there is no impelling reason within the Hebrew religion to convert non-Hebrews to the religion of the nation.⁸⁴

Deloria attributes the lack of Jewish and Native American evangelism to the spatial-ethnic dimension of religion. The dearth of an “impelling reason” to “convert” has liberated collaborations between Jews and Indians from the stigma of Christianity. Absent the concern of salvation and damnation, and the expectations of conversion, conversations between Jews and Indians can take place outside the toxic history of missionization and forced religious education. Exempt from the burden and baggage of conversion has allowed exchanges between Jewish and Native American peoples to exist outside of the context of either the primitive/civilized dialectic or the theory of cultural evolution.

According to Deloria, “group identity” or membership in the “exclusive community” for both Jewish and Native American peoples is determined by language, blood, and ancestry not by faith, belief, doctrine, or creed. Deloria refers to this as the

84 Deloria, *God is Red*, p. 204.

“tribal-religious interpretation of identity”⁸⁵ and Nathan Glazer calls it the “ethnic element” of Judaism “essential to the Jews and to any understanding of the Jewish people/religion.”⁸⁶ By comparing Jews with Indians, Deloria sought to legitimize Native views of religion in light of the historical significance of Judaism - the religion which begat Christianity. Furthermore, by highlighting the similarities between Judaism and Native American Religions in regards to history, community, language, religion, and culture, Deloria attempted to link Judaism to Native religions as part of his meta-critique of Christian civilization. If Native civilization can be proven to meaningfully mirror Jewish civilization, then Native religions might be able free themselves from the yoke of Christianity and the bondage of primitivism.

While Jews have been responsible for creating a massive amount of ethnographic data concerning American Indians, there is a dearth of knowledge concerning the future of Jewish and Indian interactions. It would be naïve to think the plethora of Jewish representations of Native peoples are the results of random happenstance. Investigating the psychological and political, the religious and cultural motivations behind Jewish representations of American Indian communities is part of Rubinstein’s larger project of exploring how American Jews have negotiated their hyphenated identity in relation to other ethnic and religious minorities. By attributing Jewish representations of Indians as a combination of insecurities surrounding their political, social, and economic identities, Rubinstein illuminates the complex motivations behind Jewish involvements with Native American communities. Rubinstein demonstrates how the “polyvalent” racial, historical, political, and artistic links between Jews and Indians have provoked these communities to

85 Vine Deloria, *We Talk, You Listen* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997). 121

86 Glazer, *American Judaism*, p. 5.

“deploy a rhetoric of similarity and kinship as well as displacement and supersession, around competing narratives of homeland, nationhood, exile and genocide.”⁸⁷ Ultimately by

Constantly interrogating and examining their own indigenoussness and their own sense of being ‘at home,’ Jews found the figure of the Indian a mirror for their simultaneous and interacting desires for, and anxieties about, tribal and national belonging. In identifying sympathetically with Indians many Jews could register a covert resistance to American political culture that historically policed the kinds of difference it could tolerate.⁸⁸

Besides outlining the possible racial, political, and psychological motivations behind Jewish representations of Native Americans, Rubinstein identifies the complex artistic tapestry of media -- literature, poetry, film, cartoon, advertisement -- that has been created as a result of the interactions and imaginations of Jewish and Native American communities. Even though many Native intellectuals (e.g. Deloria, Mohawk, Churchill, and Alexie) have commented on Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism, the influence of academic and cultural data -- ethnographies, books, films, fantasies -- produced by Indians pertaining to Jews is minuscule compared to the data produced by Jews concerning Indians. Moreover, American Jews experience more power and control of the means of production over their own stories and histories than American Indians have ever enjoyed over their stories and histories.

Jewish Americans dominate the academic fields dealing with Judaism and Jewishness - Jewish studies, religious studies, biblical studies, Holocaust studies and anthropology. According to Aaron Hughes

As Jewish studies has become a valid field of study that has become firmly entrenched within the humanities and social sciences curriculum, Judaism ought to be the subject of analysis in the same manner that every

⁸⁷ Rubinstein, *Members of the Tribe*, p. 18.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 18

other religion is; that is, something that can be studied by those who are of the particular religion and those who are not. Yet, despite the change in intellectual contexts and the inclusion and normalization of Jewish studies within contemporary university, the tension nevertheless remains concerning who is authorized to study Jews and Indians.⁸⁹

Native Americans, on the other hand, have never dominated the academic disciplines dealing with Native American religion and culture - anthropology, museum studies, religious studies, art history, psychology, sociology, environmental studies. As a result of these power imbalances, Native representations of Jews have had almost no effect on how Jews have been imagined and consumed by either the academic community or the larger American public. This power imbalance will continue for the foreseeable future; however, a trend of Native American scholars, Native American stories, Native American histories and Native American voices entering into Jewish studies would be a fascinating development and would lead to a more robust and well-rounded discipline – it also might assuage some of the current issues in the field. If anyone could successfully navigate the “number of external forces” outlined by Hughes that have caused Jewish studies to be a “discipline that is largely populated by insiders” it is Native people. Native people are constantly negotiating the “insider/outsider problem,” the “emphasis on Protestant religious forms,” and “marginalization within the academic study of religion” and they are sensitive to the “insular nature” of Jewish studies.⁹⁰ Anthropology has not divorced Jews from their own communities nor should Jewish studies divest Native people from their own communities; instead both groups should use the aforementioned disciplines as critical lenses through which to investigate the unique challenges and obstacles facing their communities.

⁸⁹ Hughes, Aaron W., *The Study of Judaism: Authenticity, Identity, Scholarship* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2013). 21

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27-38

St. Boas among the Iroquoisanists

Collaborations between Lewis Henry Morgan and Haudenosaunee peoples, particularly Ely Parker and his extended family, were essential to the founding of American anthropology. Morgan is both the patriarch and progenitor of “Iroquois Studies” and among the grandfathers of modern American anthropology. If there were a Mt. Rushmore of Anthropology, Morgan’s head would figure prominently between Edward Tylor and Borislav Malinowski. In 1851 Morgan, a lawyer by trade and native New Yorker, published a two volume set entitled *League of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)*. Throughout the massive two-volume set Morgan detailed his vision of the human mind and his proscriptions for elevating the Iroquois mind. *League* was the first American ethnography and marked the beginning of the American school of anthropology. Elisabeth Tooker called *League* the “first true ethnography” and Morgan one of the “most remarkable of all anthropologists.” Tooker claimed it is Morgan’s “vision,” not his “findings,” that still “attracts scholars and commands their attention today.”⁹¹ While Morgan began his ethnographic fieldwork among the Haudenosaunee, he quickly expanded to collect kinship data amongst the Winnebago, Crow, Yankton, Blackfeet, and Omaha. Working closely with indigenous peoples was part of Morgan’s larger project of mapping the various levels of cultural evolution. Morgan is the great-great-great academic grandfather of this project. In the academy, as well as on the reservation, all roads lead through Morgan.

13 Tooker, Elisabeth, *Lewis H. Morgan on Iroquois Material Culture* (Tuscan, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1994). 24-37

Morgan's professional interest in Haudenosaunee linguistics, religion, and culture were catalyzed by his "boyish" participation in the "New Confederacy of the Iroquois."⁹² The "New Confederacy" was an "Indian Society," or literary and fraternal organization, modeled after the "vanishing" Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Concerning his participation in the "New Confederacy," Morgan wrote, whatever "interest I have since taken in Indian studies was awakened through my connection with this Indian fraternity."⁹³ From 1846 to 1848, Morgan served as the leader, or "grand sachem," of the New Confederacy. It was during this time Morgan began to dedicate his professional efforts to researching Iroquois history and culture. Morgan designed elaborate induction rituals, which he called "Inindianation" ceremonies, in order to welcome new members into the tribe and bestow upon them their new Indian name. Elisabeth Tooker claimed that the "initiation of new members was one of the high points of the meetings, as were dances performed in Indian costume." According to Tooker "Morgan himself believed full Indian costume essential to the maintenance of interest in the society...but underneath there remained a genuine concern with the Iroquois."⁹⁴

According to Philip Deloria, Morgan's "Inindianation" ceremony was

Primarily a literary exercise, wrapping high-toned language around the standard tropes of fraternal brotherhood. The ceremony commences with the spirits of departed Indian fathers rising from the grave to chide their Indian children for forgetting them. The children protest, blaming the white strangers whom the fathers once welcomed and who destroyed the Iroquois and drove them from their ancestors graves...The ceremony moves quickly, however, to cleanse the initiate's soul, tempering the curse by pointing to the sheer inevitability of Indian disappearance...The spirit tells initiates that the only way to placate the mournful Indian shades is to preserve their memory and customs...The ceremony concludes by offering

92 Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society* (New York, NY: MacMillan and Company, 1877). xiii

93 Ibid., xiv

94 Tooker, *Lewis H. Morgan*, p. 19.

the initiate complete redemption and a new life through mystic rebirth as an Indian child.⁹⁵

Deloria asserts, “by claiming to be the mystic descendants of the Iroquois and using costumed rituals to bring the imagined life, the New Confederacy hoped to gain emotional access to these native muses who would help proclaim American identity.”⁹⁶

In the ethos of the New Confederacy, “Indians appeared not only as pieces of an incorporative American history, but as nostalgic reminders of the good old days and as object lessons in chastening consequences of progress.”⁹⁷ It is significant that in the beginning stages of Morgan’s career, he was desperately attempting to access some form of Indian identity through these various literary and fraternal organizations. Morgan’s “playing Indian,” however, inevitably would have a huge impact on the field of American anthropology.

While the “New Leagues” stated purpose was to “encourage a kinder feeling towards the Indians and to assist him with his problems,” they were much more preoccupied with performing elaborate costumed rituals, taking on Indian names, and creating a neo-indigenous literary tradition than in the safety or well-being of any living Haudenosaunee peoples.⁹⁸ Soon, however, Morgan’s interest in living Haudenosaunee communities overtook his fascination with playing dress up. Concerning Morgan’s evolution from dress up to cultural analysis Philip Deloria comments,

Morgan’s New Confederacy (or Grand Order) of the Iroquois eventually turned from nostalgia towards rationalized, objective scientific investigation. Fictional creation gave way to the compelling and factual

95 Deloria, *Playing Indian*, p. 78-9.

96 Ibid., 79

97 Ibid., 79

98 Lewis H. Morgan, *League of the Iroquois: A Classic Study of an American Indian Tribe* (New York, NY: Citadel Press, 1984). ix

knowledge, and what began as an effort to define a literary national identity took on a modern, ethnographic character.⁹⁹

League was the result of Morgan's shift from "Grand Sachem" of the "New Confederacy of the Iroquois" to ethnographer and museum curator. Although he never held an official academic position, even after being offered one by Cornell University, Morgan spent the remainder of his career refining and perfecting the "ethnographic character" of his work.¹⁰⁰

Even though Morgan never held an official academic position, his ethnographic fieldwork among the Iroquois left an indelible mark upon the field of anthropology. *League* casts a large and foreboding shadow over any and all future collaborations between academic and Iroquois peoples. By promoting a paternalistic relationship between Native communities and the United States Federal government, Morgan set the stage for an entire generation of American ethnographers and solidified the role of the Iroquois in this new atavistic endeavor. According to Morgan, the "present Iroquois" community were the descendants of a "once gifted race" who "acquired a higher degree of influence than any other race of Indian lineage."¹⁰¹ Now, however, as a result of the paralyzing effects of civilization and Christianization, this "once gifted race" dwells in "our limits" as "dependent nations."¹⁰² As a result, the United States Federal government has a "vast responsibility, as the administrator of their affairs, and a solemn trust, as the guardian of their future welfare."¹⁰³ Following Morgan's thoughts, Native peoples were described as "subject to the tutelage and supervision of the people who displaced their

99 Deloria, *Playing Indian*, p. 73.

100 Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, p. 2.

101 Ibid., ix

102 Ibid., ix

103 Ibid., 109

fathers.”¹⁰⁴ Morgan was essential in organizing anthropology as the discipline responsible for managing the decline of non-civilized communities and for forming ethnography as the primary tool through which anthropologists could record the deterioration of Native American peoples. The condescending and paternalistic attitude displayed by Morgan condemned scholars to the role of colonial agents of the United States government.

Morgan was fascinated by the “old ways,” what he called the “passions” and “institutions” of the “red man,” and dedicated a significant portion of his life to recording them “lest, in addition to the extinguishment of their council fires, we subject their memory, as a people, to an unjust and unmerited judgment.”¹⁰⁵ Morgan didn’t feel passionate about Haudenosaunee religion, Haudenosaunee language, Haudenosaunee material culture, or even Haudenosaunee people, because to him Indian society was clearly coming to an end. Morgan felt passionate about recording the demise of Iroquois society so that future generations may learn about the “passions of the red man” and how “through the events of peaceful intercourse, rather than from conquest or forcible subjugation, they fell under the giant embrace of civilization, victims of the successful warfare of intelligent social life upon the rugged obstacles of native.”¹⁰⁶

Throughout the pages of *League*, Morgan weaves his study of Iroquois geography, migration, orality, language, government, ceremony, and religion around cultural artifacts like artwork and wampum, tobacco and rattles, drums and jewelry, food and masks. The feelings expressed by Morgan, towards the Iroquois community, were actually quite complex. While a cursory examination of *League* might lead the reader to conclude that Morgan’s thoughts, feelings, and emotions contradict his logic and

104 Ibid., ix-x

105 Ibid., 56

106 Ibid., 4

analysis, a deep read of Morgan reveals that they are one in the same. In *League*, Morgan was interested in two main objectives: 1) to record what was left of traditional Iroquois society; and 2) offer suggestions on how the United States federal government might deal with their Indian problem. According to Morgan,

Since this race must ever figure upon the opening pages of our territorial history, and some judgment be passed upon them, it becomes our duty to search out their government and institutions, and to record with impartiality their political transactions.¹⁰⁷

Morgan assigns and condemns Native people to the “opening pages” of American history and defines the duty of ethnography to recording the “political transactions” of these vanishing communities lest they disappear completely from the face of the earth.

Oscillating between hope and awe, pity and loathing, Morgan’s stark ambivalence concerning the “vanishing” of the Iroquois and of the entire “Indian race” highlights his apathy towards contemporary Native communities.

Using phrases like “cling to the shadow,” “twilight of its existence,” “dismembered and in fragments,” and “spectacle” to describe the modern Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Morgan barely hide his disdain for Iroquois people who bitterly clung to their old ways (e.g. language, religion, agriculture, communal land holding) in the face of a blinding and uncompromising civilization.¹⁰⁸ Morgan claimed it was “institutions” of the “red man” that served as his “fatal deficiency” since they fixed him to the land with a “fragile and precarious nature.”¹⁰⁹ Unlike civilized man, who “defied displacement” the “passions of the red man for the hunter life” anchored Native Americans to “their

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 76

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 34 & 53

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 67-8

primitive state.”¹¹⁰ This is one of Morgan’s most significant long-term contributions to Native studies: Native communities inability to assimilate into American culture was directly tied to Native conceptions of land and religion, space and place. Morgan’s assertion that the “fatal deficiency” of Native communities was their ties to the land foreshadowed centuries of Indian removal and forced relocation.

Throughout the pages of *League*, Morgan champions the opinion that “Indians” could be “reclaimed” and thereby “civilized.” The “means” available of “rescuing” the Indians from their “impending destiny” were, according to Morgan, “education” and “Christianity.”¹¹¹ Morgan was an early and avid proponent of the “kill the Indian, save the man” school of thought which did not become official Federal policy until the 1890’s. Throughout *League*, Morgan advised the United States government to curtail native religions, languages, and ceremonies. Although it was Col. Richard Henry Pratt who coined the phrase “kill the Indian, save the man,” generations before the opening of the first Indian boarding school Morgan claimed that “when the time arrives, they will cease to be Indians, except in name.”¹¹² According to Morgan, to “work off the Indian temper of mind, and infuse that of another race”¹¹³ was an enormous undertaking. Civilizing the Iroquois was not merely a matter of education or conversion to Christianity; there was a racial component to Morgan’s ruminations and recommendations. The process of “working off the Indian temper of mind and infusing that of another race” was to begin in infancy “at the missionary school, where our language is substituted for the Indian language, our religion for the Indian mythology, and our amusements and mode of life

110 Ibid., 53 & 108

111 Ibid., 111-3

112 Ibid., 128

113 Ibid., 113

for theirs.”¹¹⁴ Morgan, after careful consideration and intimate contact with Haudenosaunee communities, proposed cultural genocide as the final solution to deal with Native communities.

It is painfully clear that cultural destruction was Morgan’s answer to solving the Indian problem. In his solution, Christianity and the residential school system, what Winona LaDuke has called conquest, colonize, and genocide, would “reclaim” the Iroquois from the “rudeness of life” and deliver them the “rights and privileges” of civilized, Christian society.¹¹⁵ Campaigning for the “destruction” of the Iroquois placed Morgan in the mainstream of anthropological theory. EB Tylor, the founder of British Anthropology and pioneer of the cultural evolutionary theory, with whom Morgan had corresponded, claimed one of the “harsher” and more “painful” aspects of ethnography was to “expose the remains of crude old culture which have passed into harmful superstition” and to “mark” those cultures for “destruction.”¹¹⁶ The identification, classification, and weeding out of “survival” cultures was, according to Tylor, “urgently needful for the good of mankind.”¹¹⁷ Therefore, Tylor designed ethnology, what he called a “reformer’s science,” as a tool to academically justify the social and political, economic and educational, policies necessary to “remove the hindrance” of primitive communities.¹¹⁸ Ultimately, Morgan’s recommendations for how the United States Federal government, Congress, the Department of the Interior, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs should deal with Native Americans were as detrimental to native communities as any military campaign or government tribunal.

114 Ibid., 116

115 Ibid., 108

116 Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, p. 539.

117 Ibid., 539

118 Ibid., 539

One possible explanation for Morgan's coldness towards modern Iroquois peoples, and his relative ambivalence concerning their "vanishing," was he viewed the Iroquois as "belonging to the lower status of barbarism" — forever suspended in a more infantile and childlike state of being.¹¹⁹ Even though Morgan was fascinated by Iroquois languages, ceremonies, and material culture, his reliance on the theory of cultural evolution made it impossible for Morgan to appreciate or advocate for actual living Haudenosaunee peoples. In his later career, Morgan advocated for the theory of cultural evolution:

American Indian tribes represent, more or less nearly, the history and experience of our own remote ancestors...Portions of the human family have existed in a state of savagery, other portions in a state of barbarism, and still other portions in a state of civilization, it seems equally so that these three distinct conditions are connected with each other in a natural as well as necessary sequence of progress.¹²⁰

The theory of cultural evolution has been detrimental to indigenous communities all over the world. Cultural evolution has been used to justify oppression and exploitation, forced conversion and land theft, colonization and conquest. The theory of cultural evolution hypothesized that all human cultures could be placed on a linear continuum of savagery, barbarism, and civilized. Over time, savages could become barbarians, and barbarians could become civilized, but civilized folk were incapable of reverting back to either savagery or barbarism.

Cultural evolution posits the level of education, sophistication of language, religious orientation, along with other characterizations, could be entered into an equation in order to calculate the status as savagery, barbarism, or civilized of all communities of the world. For Morgan, race factored heavily into the cultural evolutionary equation:

¹¹⁹ Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. xxx.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 11

“the Aryan family represents the central stream of human progress, because it produced the highest type of mankind, and because it has proved its intrinsic superiority by gradually assuming the control of the earth.”¹²¹ The “race of red men,” on the other hand, were staring extinction right in the face as “the shades of evening are now gathering thickly over the scattered and feeble remnants of this once powerful League.”¹²² Ultimately, Morgan’s over reliance on racist quasi-science made it easier for him to treat Iroquois people as data rather than people. Since Morgan was convinced, beyond a shadow of a doubt, Iroquois people were in the twilight of their existence, he failed to comprehend his own personal role in catalyzing the destruction of Haudenosaunee religion and culture.

The reliance on cultural evolution made it easier for Morgan to simultaneously wax poetically about the “eradication of Indian stock,” the “disappearing” of their languages and arts, and the “dissolving” of their institutions while simultaneously advocating for the institutions and policies responsible for decimating American Indian communities.¹²³ By ignoring “good fortune” and “military conquest,” Morgan was, according to John Mohawk, part of the “intellectual community” who considered the success of Euro-American subjugation of “practically the whole world” a product of the “natural superiority of their own group, which they then dubbed the Aryans.”¹²⁴ Winona Laduke has claimed Morgan’s biological determinism

121 Ibid., 468

122 Morgan, *League*, p. 145.

123 Ibid., 137

124 John Mohawk, *Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Books, 1999).

Allowed American policy and other collective American psyche to divorce itself from the responsibility later associated with colonialism – that is, the colonizers responsibility to care for the colonized.¹²⁵

While Morgan never directly mentions the theory of cultural evolution in the pages of *League*, it is clear he was familiar with the theory and believed it applied to Native American communities. In the end, Morgan documented and examined Iroquois society as part of his larger project of mapping the evolution of human cultures from savage to barbarian to civilized.

Morgan, and those who championed the theory of cultural evolution¹²⁶ dominated the field of Anthropology until the end of the 19th century when the “new school of American Anthropology, dominated by Franz Boas and his students, rejected the theory of cultural evolution” and began to promote the theory of cultural relativism.¹²⁷ Franz Boas dedicated his career to solving the “race problem” thru a combination of scientific research, social activism, and education. The social evolutionary model, which for years had dominated Euro-American thought in the areas of religion (Doctrine of Christian Discovery, Manifest Destiny), philosophy (Herder, Hegel), and academia (Frazier, Spencer, Tylor), Boas believed incapable of capturing the “science of man.”¹²⁸ Racial determinism, racial stratification, racial segregation, eugenics, or any model promoting a “unilinear cultural development” were “pseudo-science” based on “naive classifications and subjective attitudes” instead of “proper biological principles.”¹²⁹

Subsequently, Boas immersed himself in America’s “primitive” communities in

125 Laduke, Winona, *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1999). 76

126 Some such individuals like Herbert Spencer, Edward Tylor, James Frazier, Claude Levi-Strauss and William Fenton.

127 Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. xxxii.

128 Boas, *Mind of Primitive Man*, p. 36

129 *Ibid.*, 36

order to prove the racist motivations, methodological flaws, and scholastic ineptitude of scientific evolutionism. One reason Boas investigated primitiveness was to “enquire whether certain bodily characteristics of races exist that doom them to a permanent mental and social inferiority” in order to discuss the “traits of the mental and social life of those people whom we call primitive from a cultural point of view.”¹³⁰ After many years of field and laboratory work, Boas concluded,

There is no fundamental difference in the ways of thinking of primitive and civilized man. A close connection between race and personality has never been established. . . the behavior of an individual is therefore determined not by his racial affiliation, but by the character of his ancestry and his cultural environment.¹³¹

Boas intended for his conclusions that “hereditary racial traits are unimportant as compared to cultural conditions” to promote an anthropological interpretation of society based on cultural relativism and contextuality, not cultural evolution.¹³²

While Philip Deloria observed the New Confederacy’s “involvement with the Seneca’s foreshadowed what has since become something of an anthropological tradition: political activism on behalf of the native peoples who serve as objects of study,”¹³³ it wasn’t until Boas that the “anthropological tradition” of “political activism” actually began to be applied to “primitive” peoples. While Morgan was content to simply record the dying days of the Iroquois, careful to map their progress on the human cultural genome project, Boas saw it as his responsibility to proactively teach and preach the indisputable fact that “the color of skin, class, religious belief, geographical or national

130 *ibid.*, 18

131 *ibid.*, 17

132 Boas, *Race, Language and Culture*, p. 13.

133 Deloria, *Playing Indian*, p. 84

origin are no tests of social adaptability.”¹³⁴ Even though he never worked with the Iroquois community, Boas’ critique of anthropological theory and ethnographic fieldwork are invaluable contributions to any social scientist working with contemporary Haudenosaunee peoples.

If Lewis Henry Morgan originated Iroquois studies, and Boas reformed it, William Fenton killed it. Fenton began working with Iroquois communities -- mainly the Seneca - - and completed his dissertation, *The Iroquois Eagle Dance: An Offshoot of the Calumet Dance*, at Yale in 1937. Throughout his career, Fenton worked as both a professor of anthropology and as a museum director. By combining his ethnographic interpretation of Iroquois rituals from the present with displaying Iroquois cultural artifacts from the past, Fenton wed anthropology to museum curation. Fenton’s reliance on “upstreaming” and “salvage ethnology,” the act of buying and selling cultural artifacts in order to finance ethnographic field trips, successfully merged his teaching and research pedagogies in anthropology with museum studies.

Fenton is notorious throughout Haudenosaunee communities for his book *The False Faces of the Iroquois* first published in 1987. *False Faces* represented an abusive incursion into traditional Haudenosaunee ceremony and exposure of a ceremony that ought to have been kept private. The publication of *False Faces* effectively ended his collaborations with the traditional people of the Onondaga Nation. Although *False Faces* ended Fenton’s fieldwork, the book, as well as Fenton’s refusal to support the repatriation of religious and cultural artifacts, has continued to hinder collaborations between Haudenosaunee peoples and non-Native academics.

While salvage ethnology was once an acceptable and appropriate means of

134 Boas, *Race and Democratic Society*, p. 14.

generating funds for fieldwork, the practice has since come under harsh criticism and fallen out of fashion amongst anthropologists. Salvage anthropology is no longer an acceptable way of engaging with contemporary Native American communities. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), first passed in 1990, is primarily concerned with returning Native American cultural and religious artifacts (e.g. drums, rattles, masks and a variety of human remains) from museums back to Native Nations. This has replaced “salvage ethnology” as the dominant metric for dealing with Native American artifacts and burials. NAGPRA, however, has not put a stop to displaying Native American artifacts nor the collecting of Native American regalia. Winona LaDuke has claimed “collecting” Indian artifacts has its roots in “paradigms of imperialism,” “racism,” and the “bounties of war.”¹³⁵ In attempting to explain the psychological motivations behind Euro-American collecting, LaDuke called the behavior an “effort to feed the immense spiritual void inherited from its colonial past.”¹³⁶ According to LaDuke, the instinct to “discover, classify, and collect everything the mainstream considers exotic” reveals a deeply rooted sickness of American culture.¹³⁷ Salvage ethnology, before the era of academic internal review boards, was an acceptable means of building museums and funding anthropological fieldwork; now the practice has been recognized as dishonest, deplorable, and destructive for academics, museums, and indigenous communities alike.

While salvage anthropology financed Fenton’s first forays into Indian country, he relied on “upstreaming” to unite Iroquois peoples and Iroquois material culture with

135 LaDuke, Winona, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 2005). 75

136 Ibid., 75-6

137 Ibid., 76

museum space. Upstreaming, a unique methodology invented by Fenton, used “major patterns of culture” which remained “stable over long periods of time” and produced “repeated uniformities” to proceed “from the known ethnological present to the unknown past” by using “recent sources first and then earlier sources.”¹³⁸ Upstreaming focused Fenton’s research around detailing, in great minutia, several Iroquois ritual artifacts (medicine bundle, false face masks – “repeated uniformities”) and ceremonial practices (eagle dance – “major patterns of culture” of the “ethnological present”) for the purposes of understanding pre-contact generations of Iroquois society. Through upstreaming, Fenton utilized modern Iroquois rituals and regalia as a vehicle to communicate between the “ethnological present” and the “unknown past.”¹³⁹ By working from the present, Fenton hoped to shed light onto the past. It is highly significant that Fenton’s methodological approach placed more emphasis on the “unknown past” than either the present or future generations of Haudenosaunee peoples.

As part anthropologist and part museum director, it was logical for Fenton’s fieldwork methodologies to reflect these dual loyalties. Fenton went so far as to call the “relationship” between “museum studies” and “fieldwork” a “reciprocal” if not “circular” endeavor with one hand washing the other, and sometimes one palm greasing the other.¹⁴⁰ Concerning the relationship between ethnography and museum spaces, Fenton claimed, “making a collection for a museum was the accepted way of financing ethnological fieldwork before 1930.”¹⁴¹ Unfortunately for Fenton, during the latter half of the 20th century, as self-determination, sovereignty, and the American Indian

138 Fenton, William, *Little Water Medicine Society of the Seneca’s* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002). xiv

139 Ibid., 1

140 Fenton, William, *False Faces of the Iroquois* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987). 12

141 Ibid., 12

movement began to gain prominence, allegations of cultural imperialism began to be taken seriously; anthropologists were requested to tweak previously accepted ways of interacting with indigenous peoples and communities. Specifically, in 1971, as a response to widespread ethics violations, the leading academic organization of American Anthropologists (AAA) adopted a new standard of ethnographic research, explicitly stating, “in research, an anthropologist’s responsibility is to those he studies. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first.”¹⁴²

By the time he published *False Faces* in 1987, Fenton had personally observed the shift in anthropological methodology and fieldwork. He lamented that “Iroquois fieldwork” was “not as accessible to outside observers as in former years” and that “this kind of fieldwork” could not be replicated by modern scholars.¹⁴³ At some point during Fenton’s tenure as the top Iroquoianist, tensions began to boil over between traditional Iroquois leadership and academic interlocutors. These tensions, according to Fenton, originated during the 1970’s during the “dawn of native consciousness” and resulted in 1) “the genetic fallacy that being of Indian descent gives one especial insight into one’s native culture;” 2) “white persons would no longer be welcome at longhouse ceremonies;” 3) “teaching Indian religion and even the language would be verboten.”¹⁴⁴ This shift meant that upstreaming and salvage ethnology were no longer an option for modern scholars. Furthermore, if modern Iroquoianists were to consider seriously points two and three, it would mean an entirely new methodological framework would have to be established in order for non-Indian people to continue their teaching and research

142 Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Ethics and the Profession of Anthropology: Dialogue for Ethically Conscious Practice* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2003). 12

143 Fenton, *False Faces*, p. 1.

144 Ibid., 455

interests in Iroquois communities. Fenton refused to change his approach, and as a result, he was banned from the longhouse. This did not mean, however, that Fenton was finished teaching and writing, collecting and displaying. His refusal meant he was unwilling to make the necessary methodological adjustments in order to continue collaborating with Haudenosaunee peoples.

While some academics might have taken this official shift in Iroquois attitudes towards non-Indian involvement in longhouse as an opportunity to alter their professional interests, Fenton chose to double down on his area of expertise. Fenton, once he was banned from the longhouse, far from abandoning Iroquois studies, interpreted the controversy as “reason alone” to “write up” his many “notes and observations” that “span nearly ½ a century.”¹⁴⁵ According to Winona Laduke, “there is no doubt that the repatriation process is fundamental to the healing of the community”¹⁴⁶ and in 1981 the grand council of the Haudenosaunee called for the repatriation of all ceremonial masks held in museum and private collections.¹⁴⁷ William Fenton’s decision to fight against the repatriation of Haudenosaunee cultural artifacts, in favor of the “greater good,” was a turning point in modern Iroquois studies.

Fenton recognized two conflicting sets of values were at work: “those of native people who would hold their religion exclusively” and “persons of the larger society who act on behalf of museum goers in the name of public benefit.”¹⁴⁸ Citing the “public benefit,” Fenton doubled down on his beliefs that museums are “chartered for educational purposes and operate for the public benefit, few requests for repatriation of objects can be

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 457

¹⁴⁶ LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred*, p. 85.

¹⁴⁷ Fenton, *False Faces*, p. 457.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 457

entertained.”¹⁴⁹ Fenton’s defense “on the behalf of museum goers” over “those of native people” broke with what Boas referred to as the “anthropological tradition” of “political activism” on behalf of the “objects of study” and as a result of his actions -- along with others like Elizabeth Tooker -- the doors of the Onondaga Longhouse were shut, and they have remained shut, to academics and seeker, tourists and travelers alike.

Even though Fenton was a student of Boas’ pupils Edward Sapir, Clark Wissler, and Leslie Spier, upstreaming is really much closer to Lewis Henry Morgan, whom Fenton held in high regard, and the “vanishing Indian” than it is to Boas and cultural relativism. While Boas’ research focused attention onto American Indian communities of the present (and future), both Morgan and Fenton’s research interests focused attention onto American Indian communities of the past. Similar to how Morgan’s “vanishing Indian” perception could have influenced his suggestions concerning Iroquois “barbarism” and the necessity of Native conversion to Christianity, Fenton’s “upstreaming” methodology might have influenced his refusal to support the repatriation of Native American artifacts. This moment, when Fenton chose to stand with the museums instead of choosing to stand with traditional Iroquois people, forever altered the trajectory of Iroquois studies and Iroquois fieldwork. As a consequence of Grandfather Fenton’s work, the whole concept behind Iroquois fieldwork had to be rethought and reworked.

149 Ibid., 458

Comparisons, Collaboration, and Thinking in Jewish

Since the late eighteenth century, academics have been working hand in hand with the United States Federal government and with various Christian denominations to strip Native peoples of their lands, customs, children, traditions, and ultimately their lives. Louis Henry Morgan erred by prescribing Boarding Schools for Native children, a genocidal enterprise we now know had a devastating effect on native communities as well as a devastating effect on Native-Christian and Native-Academic relationships. Fenton erred by not respecting the protocols of the Longhouse and the wishes of the Grand Council of Chiefs. In lieu of the “greater good,” I will employ “thinking in Jewish” in order to foreground the need for compassion and humanism, empathy and family, in modern collaborations with contemporary American Indian communities. Academic intersections between Jews and Indians, while sporadic, have been increasing in recent years. Why has there been an increase in these kinds of comparisons? What is the purpose of a comparison between Jewish and Native American communities? What does it reveal? What does it accomplish? The United States has brought Jews and Indians into contact with each other, but specific inconsistencies in America’s political, religious, and racial landscape has guided Jewish and Native American communities onto two separate tracks. The plethora of obstacles that have evolved from scholars studying, classifying, and pontificating upon Native American communities is not insurmountable, but it will take more than good theory or sound method to get the job done. The future of Native Studies depends on people who are willing to sacrifice the pleasantries of intellectual curiosity in order to drudge the murkiest and most desolate corners of

American society. Working with Native communities is a gamble, but it is a high-risk, high-reward endeavor.

Wendy Doniger, the mother of comparative mythology, has called comparison the “basis of our entire way of making sense of the world.”¹⁵⁰ Doniger explains that comparison “defamiliarizes what we take for granted” and “makes it possible for us to cross-examine cultures.”¹⁵¹ My comparative methodology is intended for scholars of religion to cope with teaching “the other” in the classroom while simultaneously being “the other” in the field. It is a methodological answer to the insider / outsider dynamic. An understanding of American Judaism will help bridge the gap between Native American Religions as an academic discipline and Indianness as cultural expression while an understanding of Native American Religions will help bridge the gap between Judaism as a religion and Jewishness as a cultural expression. Orthodox American political and religious values will serve as the “visible third eye” in the “eternal triangle” of my comparison.¹⁵² Doniger warns it is impossible to have a “value free comparison;” concurrently, the motivations behind this project have become enmeshed with its methodologies.¹⁵³ My comparison will expand upon the political, religious, and racial discrepancies that have segregated Native American communities from mainstream American culture and made it possible for Jewish communities to enter into mainstream American society.

Eilberg-Schwartz differentiated between the comparative enterprise as a tool for human survival and comparison as a tool for scholastic integrity. This distinction is

150 Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth* (Columbia University Press, 2010). 28

151 Ibid., 33

152 Ibid., 36

153 Ibid., 35

essential to understanding the different motivations behind cross-cultural comparisons.

According to Eilberg-Schwartz, comparison is part of the day-to-day human interactions, because

Comparative inquiry is inescapable whether we perform comparisons consciously or not, our interpretations of cultures always presuppose ideas that derived from and can only be validated through comparison.

Comparative inquiry captures a truth about cultures: that despite their important differences there are certain interesting convergences that our account of human activity must try and comprehend”.¹⁵⁴

In other words, on the everyday, cognitive level, all humans are performing comparisons constantly in order to organize and make sense of the material universe. On the absolute level, humans are using comparative inquiry to “capture a truth about certain cultures” in order to understand the “interesting convergences” between cultures that influence the ebbs and flows of human civilizations. Comparison, for Eilberg-Schwartz, is a matter of survival, because it is a precursor to comprehending the truth of human activity.

The legacy of conquest and colonization dictates that for scholars to survive collaborating with contemporary Native American communities, they need to have skin in the game. Therefore, scholars must ask themselves

What should be compared and why? Is the comparison of the two traits valid? What are the criteria for deciding? How can one be sure that parallel traits in two contiguous cultures have the same meanings in their respective cultural systems?¹⁵⁵

Is comparing religions a worthwhile endeavor and if so under what conditions and for what purposes. Are there commonalities among cultures that are not temporarily or geographically connected? What are the nature of those commonalities and how may they be explained? Are there laws regulating human societies that may be generalized to all forms of social life, or is every culture unique and thus comparable?¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savaging Judaism*, p. 102.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 16

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 86

These questions go to the very heart of comparisons between Jewish and Native communities. Eilberg-Schwartz was willing to risk the possible scholarly backlash of applying the comparative method in order to obliterate the “opposition between Judaism and savage religions” so that the “truths about cultures” may be “captured” and extolled.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Eilberg-Schwartz cautioned that before engaging in cross cultural comparisons, authors need to be absolutely sure “comparing religions” is a “worthwhile endeavor” and must consider “under what conditions and for what purposes comparisons are made.”¹⁵⁸ Rejection of the comparative method, according to Eilberg-Schwartz, was an over compensation for the “evolutionary assumptions” that governed the foundations of anthropology – in America as well as Europe. Scholars mistakenly believed dismantling the comparative method was a precursor for repudiating the theory of cultural evolution. In reality there is no direct relationship between comparison and the theory of cultural evolution. Simply because the comparative method fell out of favor amongst a sub-set of American anthropologists does not mean the theory of cultural evolution is no longer operational.

Comparison, while a necessary component, is not a sufficient methodology when analyzing the fundamental religious tenets of communities on the precipice of total cultural destruction. Colonization, conquest, genocide, and the theory of cultural evolution have made collaboration a necessary aspect of any comparative enterprise involving contemporary Native American communities. According to Philip Arnold, the otherness of Indigenous religions reveals “tremendous problems” with “modern orientations,” and in specific ways they “point out the deep deficiencies in Modernity that

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 21 & 102

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 102

will lead to its eventual demise.”¹⁵⁹ Arnold argues, “seriously navigating the world of marginalized people is the future of the university. Moving these worlds into theoretical and methodological reflections is the means by which conversation can occur.”¹⁶⁰ Like his predecessors, Arnold investigates the influence of primitive society on modern society; however, his collaborations are constructed to reveal the “deep deficiencies” of modernity not the “deep deficiencies” of primitive culture or the “red race of man.” By placing the “deficiency” tag on Western civilizations, Arnold’s “indigenous religions” category contradicts many assertions long held by the school of cultural evolution.

This new way of thinking abandons the “worn-out perspective of being more objective” by placing a greater emphasis on the “physical violence that accompanies the history of contact” and focusing on the risks involved in “forging new alliances, new friendships and new colleagues.”¹⁶¹ In Arnold’s vision, the modern study of the history of religion should emphasize indigenous religions because of their “tremendous potential in the current, post-modern/post-colonial climate to critically evaluate the viability of modernity.”¹⁶² In this equation, indigenous communities are significant because of their ability to critique modernity, not because of their importance in the theory of cultural evolution.

The theory of cultural evolution places emphasis on the primitive cultures and primitive religions in order to 1) learn the origins of human cultures; 2) map the various stages of cultural evolution; and 3) investigate the influence that primitive cultures and customs have had on civilized cultures and customs. According to EB Tylor, it was the

159 Philip Arnold, *Unpublished Manuscript on Indigenous Religions*

160 Ibid.,

161 Ibid.,

162 Ibid.,

job of the “historian and the ethnographer” to assign “hereditary standing” to each and every “opinion and practice.”¹⁶³ In direct contrast with Tylor, Arnold claims “in light of past cultural relationships, Indigenous religions, more than other religions, can create the most fertile arenas for cultural critiques.”¹⁶⁴ Jewish / Indian interactions are nowhere near as plentiful as the “past cultural relationships” to which Arnold is referring; however, a comparison between these two subaltern communities yields significant results in the “arena of cultural critique” as well as the arena of racial assignment and religious freedom in America.

Many well-known Native theorists — Ward Churchill, John Mohawk, Sherman Alexie, and Winona LaDuke — have felt compelled to publicly negotiate their community’s livelihood and sovereignty vis-à-vis the perceived importance of Jewish history to American culture. According to Winona Laduke,

History is filled with fascinating ironies and contrasts. The horrors of the Nazi Holocaust remain indelibly etched in the memories of survivors and descendants, and hopefully on the psyches of all alive today. Yet the ethics applied to one holocaust experience are not necessarily applied to another.¹⁶⁵

In the above passage, LaDuke uses “ethics” to promote comparisons between Jewish and Indian communities. LaDuke succinctly describes the incongruities that have brought modern Native communities into conversation with contemporary Jewish communities. Modern comparisons between Jewish and Native American communities are driven by the ethical inconsistencies of modern American culture. At their core, these “fascinating ironies” and “contrasts” reveal several inconsistencies in contemporary American society.

163 Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, p. 538.

164 Arnold, *Unpublished Manuscript on Indigenous Religions*

165 LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred*, p. 84.

In accordance with LaDuke, Boyarin has claimed that “investigating the link between Jewishness and the human dimension means, among other things, that sometimes ‘Jewish studies’ will explicitly concentrate on names other than ‘Jew.’”¹⁶⁶ Boyarin wonders what it would look like for the University system if classes like “A Native American Introduction to the Human Sciences” began to populate institutions of higher learning.¹⁶⁷ Boyarin has referred to his methodological position as “Thinking in Jewish.” Throughout this dissertation, I will employ “Thinking in Jewish” in order to make Native peoples a part of Jewish studies, to make Jewish people a part of Native studies, and to make a comparison between Jewish and Native communities applicable to religious studies and anthropology. This is one of my ways of negotiating the legacy of cultural imperialism of anthropology and religious studies. Like Boyarin, my task will be “not to see others as how they saw themselves but to articulate the inherited fragments of their world in a way that makes empathetic sense.”¹⁶⁸ Essentially, this dissertation will be an exercise in “Thinking in Jewish” about Native people, Native history, and Native Religions. While I am relying heavily on comparison, this project is as much a political act as it is a scholarly statement.

While “thinking in Jewish” is far from fool-proof and could still result in “cultural imperialism,” it forces the investigator to place him or herself, family, and ancestors under the same academic scrutiny as their subjects. It isn’t easy for contemporary scholars of religion to collaborate with modern Native American communities. Collaborating with Native people can be a violent, dangerous, and depressing endeavor; however, it can also be rewarding, beautiful, and inspirational. Working with Native

166 Jonathan Boyarin, *Jewishness and the Human Dimension*, p. 6.

167 Ibid., 14

168 Ibid., 33

communities creates life long bonds of friendship, loyalty, and trust. “Thinking in Jewish” has allowed me to understand the deep seated mistrust many Native people harbor against outsiders, and it has allowed me to position myself as a sympathetic, but not patronizing, visitor and ally. Ultimately, “thinking in Jewish” has been partially responsible for my success on the Onondaga Nation.

Empathy and compassion should be precursors for collaboration. “Thinking in Christian” about native peoples has had disastrous effects on indigenous communities and all but stymied academic collaborations between Native peoples and non-Native scholars. Interpreting Native cultures through the lens of Christianity has made many Native peoples wary of outsiders visiting their territories. I will show how “thinking in Jewish” about native communities can help to get beyond the pressures of “cultural imperialism” that have dominated the field of Native American Religions. Working at the Nation School was my way of attempting to enter into exchange with the community at Onondaga. The realization came slowly that I was really examining Judaism and Jewishness just as much as I was examining Native American religions. I will use Judaism, Jewishness, and Jewish history as a lens for viewing Native cultures in order to discuss the formation of race and the practice of religion in America. This is not an attempt to avoid cultural imperialism, but to directly confront cultural imperialism and offer a new way in which progressive collaborations between Native and non-Native people may continue to take place. Going slowly, paying attention, and “thinking in Jewish” will not solve the problems of “cultural imperialism;” instead, I will attempt to answer the question is there a place in America for Indians beyond otherness?

Melting Pot, Salad Bowl and Toy Box: the Intersection of Jewish and Native Studies

The diversity and richness of American society has brought Jews and Indians into contact with one another through a discombobulated and traumatic set of historical circumstances. After the failure of civil rights movements -- black power, brown power, red power -- to create either a post-racial or a racially delicious society, the myth of the “melting pot” began to lose its popularity and momentum. According to Glazer, “the idea of the melting pot is as old as the republic” and was “close to the heart of the American self-image.”¹⁶⁹ Melting pot schemas promoted the idea there was space for non-American peoples to assimilate into mainstream American society by blending their unique cultural and religious systems into the dominant paradigms of American culture and religion. The myth of the melting pot, wherein all the different peoples and cultures, religions and races of the world, mold together to form one homogenous super community was a powerful and seductive narrative meant to cultivate patriotism and instill nationalism amongst America’s immigrant communities. Even though the myth of the melting pot has exerted a powerful control over the American psyche, the melting pot has always been a flawed metaphor. According to Glazer “as the century passed, and the number of individuals and nations involved grew, the confidence that they could be fused together waned, and so also the conviction that it would be a good thing if they were to be.”¹⁷⁰

By the 1950’s, Herberg had begun to use the concept of multiculturalism to highlight the ineptitude of the single melting pot. Herberg, however, tried to save the melting pot schema by claiming there were actually three melting pots, one Protestant,

169 Nathan Glazer, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Irish and Italians of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1970). 288

170 Ibid., 288-89

one Catholic, and one Jew, operating inside of American society. According to Herberg, “religious boundary lines have replaced national origin lines as the significant form of ethnic differentiation among whites in American society.”¹⁷¹ Herberg argued,

The outstanding feature of the religious situation in America today is the pervasiveness of religious self-identification along the tripartite scheme of Protestant, Catholic, Jew. From the “land of immigrants,” America has, as we have seen, become the “triple melting pot,” restructured in three great communities with religious labels, defining three great “communities” or “faiths.”¹⁷²

Herberg’s instinct to differentiate between the melting pot and the “triple melting pot” was an effort to salvage the melting pot schema by allowing for some level of racial and religious diversity. These “three great communities” (one Protestant, one Catholic, one Jewish) were, for Herberg, the cornerstones “of the religion and the sociology of contemporary America.”¹⁷³ Unfortunately, America is neither the “melting pot” nor the “triple melting pot,” and, outside of New York City in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it may never have been one. American society has now entered the post-melting pot era of racial and cultural diversity.

Racial and religious distinctions that ought to have softened into one another remain as bold and contrasted as any other point in United States history. Herberg recognized “the Negroes” and the “Negro church” as an “anomaly of considerable importance in the general sociological scheme of the triple melting pot.”¹⁷⁴ Herberg was only writing about “white” communities, not black or brown, red or yellow. Native Americans are more than just an “anomaly” to the sociological schema of the triple

171 Will Herberg, *Protestant—Catholic—Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983). 18

172 Ibid., 273

173 Ibid., 16

174 Ibid., 129

melting pot. Indigenous American communities are a poison pill capable of dismantling the entire schema. In traditional native communities, religious boundary lines and national origin lines are one in the same; ethnic differentiation is a matter of cultural difference not a matter of racial categorization. There is no way to logically incorporate Native American peoples and religions, cultures and worldviews, into Herberg's "triple melting pot" schema. The continued existence of Native American communities threatens to derail many of the preferred narratives of American society, including but not limited to, Columbus' discovery of America, manifest destiny, American exceptionalism, and even the "triple melting pot." These so called "anomalies" have caused some social theorists to reform the "melting pot" schema into the "salad bowl" in order to more accurately reflect America's diverse religious, cultural, and racial communities.

In the salad bowl schema, also known as the "cultural mosaic," each item (e.g. vegetable, grain, fruit, nut, etc) maintains its unique taste, shape, texture, and feel; however, when you mix various foodstuffs together and consume them in unison, the whole will become greater than the sum of its parts. In the salad bowl metaphor Nations are made exceptional because of their heterogeneity, not because of their homogeneity. According to the salad bowl schema, America is exceptional because it has found the perfect recipe to incorporate ingredients -- peoples, cultures, values -- from all over the world not because everyone adopts a similar worldview and ethos. The salad bowl embraces the heterogeneity of America's minority communities while warning against the possible negative effects of acculturation and assimilation -- loss of culture, language, religion. In the salad bowl, each race, religion, and culture can maintain their own unique structural integrity. There is no fusion in the salad bowl, but when the various

ingredients are combined, they become a delicious and nutritious staple of a healthy diet. The shift from the melting pot to the salad bowl represents a shift in American values from assimilation to multiculturalism. Unfortunately, neither the melting pot, the triple melting pot, nor the salad bowl schema have been able to accurately capture the experience of Jewish and Native communities in America. As Fitzgerald has warned, “despite the wonderful richness of such imagery, metaphor in scientific discourse remains problematic at several levels. When judging the elegance of research models, the effectiveness of its guiding metaphors must always be carefully evaluated.”¹⁷⁵

Jews and Indians were never fully dissolved into the melting pot nor have they been shown to complement the effects and flavors of other cultures. As subaltern religious traditions, the fate of American Jewish communities and the fate of American Indian communities depend on their ability to critique the dominant paradigms of race (whiteness/blackness), religion (Christianity) and culture (American Protestantism) in contemporary American society. A more proper analogy to describe the history of intersections between Jews and Indians in America is the toy chest.

Imagine how a child would clean the toys off of their bedroom floor after being instructed by an adult to “clean your room.” Most children would begin to indiscriminately and haphazardly stuff all of their toys, along with any clothes or art supplies, which may have been scattered throughout the room into their chest until it began to overflow and the lid became impossible to close. Mr. Potato Head might be crammed in between Barbie dolls and play-doh. LEGOs might be sandwiched between a deck of cards and a stuffed giraffe. Without rhyme or reason, children throw their toys

175 Thomas Fitzgerald, *Ethnic Markers: Media and Changing Metaphors of Ethnicity and Identity* (Race, Gender and Class: Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 1995).

into the chest in order to be finished cleaning as soon as possible. There is no cohesion, order, or organization in a toy chest. Nor are there any no rules, regulations or protocols. There is only chaos, confusion and disorder inside the chest. Although each toy retains its own unique properties, each time the toys are put away, they are a little worse for the wear. Although the children have successfully cleaned their room, the inside of the toy chest is still a big mess of disparate toys -- cultural artifacts -- that have been hastily thrown together.

In the toy chest schema, America is the chest and the toys are the various races and religions, languages and cultures, that comprise America's diverse ethnic communities. There is no overarching interpretive framework that can cohesively explain the relationships between religion, race, and nationality for America's diverse populations. Pretending otherwise violates the entire premise behind multiculturalism.

Through this schema, we can begin to appreciate how and why Jews have utilized anthropological theories and methods in order understand and appreciate Native American communities. Over the last few hundred years -- their time in the toy box -- Jews have attempted to use anthropological theory in order to make sense of their new and unfamiliar surroundings in the American Toy Box. Time and time again, Jews (Mr. Potato Head) and Indians (LEGOs) have been smashed together and confined to the cold darkness of the bottom of the toy chest. Rachel Rubinstein has argued that through the Jewish imagination, "primarily but not only as anthropologists, filmmakers, translators, or critics,"¹⁷⁶ individual Jews have "set themselves up as mediators between Native and Euro-American cultures."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Rubinstein, *Members of the Tribe*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 19

According to Boyarin, Jewish anthropologists are “motivated by a sense of loss” and “our strategy should be to attempt to understand what it is we miss and need, which is available in still-living communities in another form.”¹⁷⁸ Boyarin continued to claim Jewish anthropologists are “privileged to belong to the world of academic discourse, and to have an entrée into a variety of unique communities that maintain cultural frameworks in opposition to mass society.”¹⁷⁹ In contemporary Indian country today, it would be very inappropriate for anthropologists, Jewish or gentile, to enter into native communities in order to find something that has been lost, discover what it is that they “miss and need,” or to fix — in any way, shape, or form — the religious or cultural systems of the investigator. Examining living communities in order to ease the discomfort of loss is one step away from religious borrowing which is one step away from cultural imperialism. This misstep might be due to Boyarin’s position as a Jew doing work with Jewish communities. According to Boyarin, “in order to gain the confidence of the traditionalist communities, the fieldworker has to give the impression, whether implicitly or explicitly, that he or she is likely eventually to accept their standards in all areas of life.”¹⁸⁰ I have found the exact opposite is true in contemporary Native American communities. In order to gain the confidence of the Onondaga community, the fieldworker must explicitly give the impression he or she will never incorporate the standards of the Haudenosaunee confederacy into any area of their private life.

Deloria claimed many Indians have noticed similarities between themselves and the Jewish community. According to Deloria,

178 Boyarin, *Thinking in Jewish*, p. 32.

179 Ibid., 17-18

180 Ibid., 23

The closest parallel that we find in history to the present condition of Indians is the Diaspora of the Jews following the destruction of the temple. A surprising number of Indian activists have made this comparison without considering that the exile of the Jews was for a significant period of time and that the Jewish people almost immediately developed a strong scholarly tradition to preserve their ceremonies and beliefs in exile. The Indian exile is in a sense more drastic. The people often live less than 100 miles away from their traditional homelands; yet in the relative complexities of reservation and urban life, they might be two thousand or more years apart. It is not simply a spatial separation that has occurred but a temporal one as well.¹⁸¹

Deloria attributes the preservation of Jewish ceremonies and beliefs to a robust scholarly tradition. He respects, and even envies, the Jewish commitment to “preserve their ceremonies and beliefs in exile.” It should come as no surprise that Jews, once again faced with an unexpected but traumatic forced relocation, utilized their “strong scholarly tradition” to understand America. Once in America, anthropology became an additional tool, in the strong scholarly tradition, Jews utilized in order to “negotiate their Americanness in relation to other cultural groups in the United States.”¹⁸²

Anthropological fieldwork has played an unnaturally large role in catalyzing material relationships between Jews and Indians, because it has become part of a much larger scholarly tradition.

Even though “civilization” has an exceedingly problematic connotation when discussing indigenous communities, Kaplan’s concept of “Jewish Civilization” and “cultural hyphenisms” can help illuminate the “similarities of significance” and “worthwhile endeavors” behind Jewish / Indian comparisons. According to Kaplan, “the significance of the conception of Judaism as a civilization is that it provides us with an effective instrument for so ordering Jewish life that not only shall its continuance be

181 Deloria, *God is Red*, p. 249.

182 Rubinstein, *Members of the Tribe*, p. 8.

assured, but also that its *raison d'être* be fully vindicated.”¹⁸³ For Kaplan, “Jewish civilization” was proof of Jews’ role in American civil religion and evidence of the “promise of American democracy.”¹⁸⁴ Kaplan believed that in America, or any nation that would share its “sovereignty with minorities,” the Jewish community could “be integrated into the nation of which they are citizens and at the same time remain sufficiently autonomous to be identifiable as a group.”¹⁸⁵ Kaplan called this type of double identity “cultural hyphenisms” and attributed the success or failure of American civil religion to the freedom of “hyphenated Americans” to “complete their development as persons.”¹⁸⁶

According to Kaplan, survival for the Jewish-American community depended on their ability to “live in two civilizations, in his own and in that of the country of his adaption.”¹⁸⁷ Jewish-Americans, he contended, would not be “fifty percent Jew and fifty percent American, but one hundred percent of each.”¹⁸⁸ Hyphenated identities were not the exclusive domain of the Jewish community; they were the right of any religious minority who “cannot possibly make peace with the conception of the strict cultural homogeneity of the state.”¹⁸⁹ According to Wenger,

Kaplan clung tenaciously to an unwavering belief in the promise of America. Steadfast faith in the ideal of American democracy served as a cornerstone of his program for the Jewish future, the American future, and the relationship between the two... The America that Kaplan celebrated in prayer was ultimately an imagined nation, defined by unadulterated

183 Kaplan and Scult, *Communings of the Spirit*, p. 261.

184 Marybeth Wenger, *Making American Civilization Jewish: Mordecai Kaplan's Civil Religion* (Jewish Sociological Studies, New Series, Vol 12, No. 2).

185 Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of American-Jewish Life* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publications Society of America, 1994). 216-7

186 Ibid., 217

187 Ibid., 216

188 Mordecai Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask: Reconstructionist Answers* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 1956). 452

189 Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 217.

democracy, pure equality, and, most of all, unwavering commitment to pluralism. Although his vision of America was undeniably idealistic, his program was by no means naive.¹⁹⁰

The history of oppression of Native peoples highlights the “undeniably idealistic” elements of Kaplan’s “unwavering belief in the promise of America.” Native communities reveal deep tensions behind the idea of cultural hyphenisms and particularly the inconsistencies behind being one hundred percent American and one hundred percent Jewish.

The cultural hyphenisms that have been attached to Native people are colonial fallacies that are counterproductive to the idea of Indian sovereignty. Additionally, Native communities were never afforded the “sovereignty with minorities,” “religious freedom,” or “the right to practice their own religion” that Kaplan has identified as crucial to hyphenated-American identities.¹⁹¹ “Native-American” and “American-Indian” are both inherently contradictory, though for slightly different reasons. “Native-American,” one of most scholastically sound euphemisms for the indigenous inhabitants of the United States, is awkward because Native peoples and communities are not Native to America – as implied by the hyphenism. After spending many years with my friends at Onondaga, I can confidently say Haudenosaunee people could not be more foreign to the values, concepts, and traditions of mainstream American culture. Native communities value sovereignty and are willing to fight, even die for, the ability to control their own political, religious, and economic destiny. Haudenosaunee people never wanted to assimilate; they wanted to be separate but equal.¹⁹² It would be exceedingly

¹⁹⁰ Wenger, *Making American Civilization Jewish*

¹⁹¹ Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 217.

¹⁹² This is one of the central differences between the American Indian Movement (AIM) and other civil rights movements from the 1960’s and 1970’s.

difficult, if not downright impossible, for a Native person to be one hundred percent *Onk'we'honwe* and one hundred percent American, because the values of American culture run perpendicular to traditional Haudenosaunee values. Furthermore, very few Native people would invest in American civil religion, depend on the promises and ideals of American democracy, or rely on American civilization to protect their sovereign status.

Sometime in the 1970's, after the prominence of the American Indian Movement (AIM), "American-Indian" became popularized throughout the academic community. "American-Indian" simply slaps together two incorrect cultural and geographical distinctions by connecting them with a hyphen. I have observed that Native people only use the terms "Native American" or "American Indian" when they are in the company of non-Native peoples. By themselves, or when they are in the majority, they use "Indian," "onk'we'honwe," or "skin." While "Indian" has its own complicated colonial roots, Native people have successfully repurposed "Indian" for their own use. Indian clothes is shorthand for their traditional regalia, Indian name is shorthand for their longhouse name, and Indian tacos is shorthand for modern Native cuisine.¹⁹³ However, the addition of "American" to "Indian" in order to form a cultural hyphenate removes the power and autonomy of naming from the Native community. The connotation of "American-Indian" is that an individual could be one hundred percent American while being one hundred percent Indian. The history of federal Indian policy has proved "America" is not for "Indians" as long as they insist on practicing their traditional religions and exercising their sovereign right to the land. Native communities challenge Kaplan's assertion that

193 An Indian taco in Haudenosaunee country is an open-faced fry bread sandwich consisting of meat (beef or deer), beans, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes and sour cream. Even though it is called a "taco" Indian tacos are impossible to eat with your hands and require a knife and fork to properly consume.

America “shares their sovereignty with minorities” or supports the “moral and spiritual right of cultural hyphenisms.”¹⁹⁴

There is a tension in Kaplan’s cultural hyphenism that goes beyond the “idealism” mentioned by Wegner. Indians reveal the tensions in being one hundred percent Jewish and one hundred percent American. Native history reveals what you need to accept and stomach in order to be one hundred percent American. Native peoples reveal the inherent contradiction between the values and assertions of the constitution of the United States and the reality of federal Indian policy. The history of oppression in Europe has psychically connected modern Jewish communities to the continued colonization of Native communities and to the treatment of Indian peoples. This sensitivity, almost a cultural awareness, to suffering has catalyzed Jewish incursions into Indian country and forced them to confront some of the darker crevices of American society. Furthermore, the intersections between Jews and Indians have forced Jews to consider how American they feel and how Jewish they feel. Again and again, Native peoples have protested against the “strict cultural homogeneity of the state” and again and again they have been defeated, debased, and degraded. Ultimately, the fact that hyphenated identities were never available for the original inhabitants of America should seriously cast doubt onto the sustainability of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Native, or any other type of Hyphenated-American identity.

194 Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 217.

BLOOD

The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows.¹⁹⁵

Blood Complications

Appreciating the contrasting states of blood -- its fluidity and flexibility, its permanence and concreteness -- is an essential ingredient to understanding the religious, political and historical dimensions of Jew /Indian comparisons and representations. Blood is an indispensable texture in recognizing the subtle similarities and discordant differences in how the Jewish and Native American identities have developed in America. How does one speak about the amorphous qualities of blood? Blood is mythical and metaphysical; Blood is ancestral and familial. Blood is life and power; Blood is death and pollution. Blood creates and constitutes communities; Blood shapes and signifies the other. How does one speak about Jewish blood given the narratives of anti-Semitic discourses? How can one speak about Indian blood outside the context of anti-Indian racism?

From the outside-in blood has historically shaped both Jewish and Native American ethnic, religious, and cultural identities. There is power in blood yet blood is taboo. Blood can symbolize life; Blood can symbolize death. Blood flows and pumps; Blood circulates and coagulates. Blood is ancestral, familial and genealogical. Blood is dynamic, enigmatic and combustible. Blood has the power to besmirch, contaminate, pollute, or taint. Blood can be spilt, drawn, drained, transfused, smeared, collected,

¹⁹⁵ Foucault, Michael, *Religion and Culture* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999). 60

dispersed, sprinkled, or consumed. Blood laws have bonded Jews to Indians as blood boundaries have repelled them. Blood is the most basic element of comparison because blood connects the dots between land, genocide and theology. Eilberg-Schwartz defined blood, along with semen and discharge, as part of the “fluid symbolism of the human body” which provides “as a space for a whole range of social representations.”¹⁹⁶ In this sense, the body is a “prime locus for the articulation of larger complexes of meaning which constitute a cultural system...The body is where culture and psychology meet.”¹⁹⁷ Blood is part of the body and bodies are paramount to the moral, philosophical and psychological systems of both Jews and Indians. Throughout this chapter I will examine how blood, Jewish blood and Indian blood, have shaped these communities from the outside in and from the inside out.

Equal parts religion, politics, and economics, blood is as complicated as it is contentious. When the belief that blood (biology) has a direct effect on both intelligence (brain) and morality (culture) becomes paramount, the political dimensions of blood boil over into violence and oppression. Throughout European and American history, the metaphor of blood has been wielded as a powerful and dangerous political tool in order to ostracize, tarnish, and implicate subaltern communities. The weaponization of blood -- blood libel and blood quantum, racialization and eugenics -- has caused Jewish and Native communities to be apprehensive and fearful, if not openly antagonistic, of being classified or primarily understood as a unique blood community. Still, blood has played an important role in constructing and reconstructing Jewish and Native American

¹⁹⁶ Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savaging Judaism*, p. 178.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 178

“identity, ritual and culture” from the outside in.”¹⁹⁸ Similarities in the history of Jewish and Indian blood juxtaposed against the discrepancies in contemporary ethno-racial classifications of Jews and Indians provide useful insights surrounding how blood establishes the relationships between race and religion in America. Through the spectrum of blood laws and blood boundaries this chapter will explore how philosophies of blood and beliefs in blood have shaped patterns of anti-Semitism and anti-Indian racism. This process of coagulation can transform Jews and Native Americans from disparate cultural groups to “Brothers in Blood.”

Blood Libel and Blood Curse

Tumultuous and unstable, the 20th century forever transformed the cultural, political, and geographic makeup of the Jewish community. Emigration out of Europe to North America, South America, Palestine and Israel considerably changed Jewish geography, and thereby Jewish culture, by redefining the spaces and places of the Jewish community. The creation of the State of Israel radically modified the political climate of the modern Jewish community by attempting to put an end to the period of exile and diaspora. Lastly, the German genocide gravely altered Jewish ethics, morality, and theology while setting the stage for a dramatic shift in the racial, scientific, and ethnographic classifications of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness. Jewish identity in medieval Europe and 20th century America has been a constant negotiation of violence

¹⁹⁸ Mitchell Hart, “Introduction,” *Jewish Blood: Reality and metaphor in history, religion and culture*, edited by Mitchell B. Hart, Routledge, 2009, 1-13. 3

and emancipation, assimilation and sovereignty, marginality and religious freedom, blood and bodies.

Throughout these manifestations, blood has played a powerful role in the ever-evolving ethno-racial assignment of the Jewish community. From the modern Jewish perspective, family, ancestry and tradition connect Jews of the present to Jews of the past – not blood. According to Biale

Whether or not one sees the Jews as a colonized group on the European continent, the accusation that they stole the blood of Christians was surely a case of reversal in which the majority of culture projected its fears upon a minority...Blood arouses the powerful emotions that are harnessed by ritual, since, when it does become visible, it is often a sign that the body is no longer whole...Blood has the power to act as a liminal fluid, as the mediator between what is within the body and what is without, the one realm hidden and hermetic, the other visible and tangible. It is therefore at once an ambivalent symbol of purity and of impurity. It is, then, then the very “fluidity” of blood as a symbol that gives it its power, because it can be filled with a host of meanings, some of them even contradictory.¹⁹⁹

Forced identification through blood, however, hangs like a dark cloud over Jewish experiences of anti-Semitism, emigration, assimilation, sovereignty, and religious freedom. Ownership of one’s own blood, in the Jewish experience, seems to parallel sovereignty, autonomy, and agency in a very substantial way. When exhibiting a high degree of sovereignty and autonomy, either in the ancient world or in modern Israel, the Jewish community controlled the narrative and materiality of their own blood. When sovereignty was threatened or non-existent, this control diminished.

While blood played a crucial role in the ancient Jewish world, i.e. temple sacrifice (*karbanot*), dietary restrictions (*kashrut*), and menstruation (*niddah*), as the Jewish community began to lose political, economic and religious autonomy it simultaneously

¹⁹⁹ David Biale, *Blood and Belief: The Circulation of a Symbol Between Jews and Christians* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007). 3-4

began to lose control over its own blood. In this way, blood shifted from a shield shaping and defining the Jewish community to a philosophy posing a violent threat. Hart has argued that these multifaceted Jewish “engagements” with blood have been “fraught and dangerous for Jews, even as it also has been, from biblical times forward, an essential component of Jewish religious and cultural belief and practice.”²⁰⁰ It is an arduous double-edged sword that blood, throughout Jewish history, has been a crucial ingredient of Jewish religious and cultural beliefs, and practice as well as a treacherous and potentially deadly threat capable of destroying the entire community.

Anti-Jewish prejudices, which went on to influence institutionalized housing, education, and employment discrimination were often justified by either popular European folklore or Christian theology. The accusation of Jewish deicide and the blood libel legend represent two of the most well-known and damaging Euro-Christian allegations against the Jewish community. It is highly significant that both of these allegations against Jews are based in blood. The blood libel, which began in twelfth century Europe, was a conglomerate of Christian myths, stories, folktales, legends, and accusations centering around the alleged Jewish tradition of ritualistically murdering Christians youths in order to consume their blood during ceremonies. According to Nirenberg,

The efforts of medieval Christians to heighten the tension between royal favor toward Jews and Jewish enmity toward Christians produced new and durable ways of imagining both elements...Beginning in the twelfth century, the dangers that Jewish enmity posed to Christian society also found new embodiments. Jewish usurers sucked the blood and gnawed the bones of Christian peasants. Jewish blasphemers desecrated consecrated hosts and ritually murdered Christian children. Jewish men raped Christian women. Jewish doctors killed Christian patients. Jews caused plague and disease, either actively through poison or passively

²⁰⁰ Hart, *Jewish Blood*, p. 10.

because Christian toleration of their malign presence angered God and roused him to punishment.²⁰¹

The blood libel has been one of the most devastating, destructive, and influential anti-Semitic legends. The blood libel directly empowered the fervor of European anti-Semitism by promoting fears of the Jewish community and painting the Jewish community as bloodthirsty vampires. Dundes called the blood libel legend one of the most “dangerous legends ever created by the human imagination” that has caused “great grief” to “countless numbers and generations of Jews” by influencing the murder and mistreatment of Jews throughout medieval Europe.²⁰² By basing anti-Jewish sentiments in blood -- through ancestry, genealogy, and later genetics -- medieval Christian communities enshrined Jews as “the other” along social, religious, and temporal lines. It is odd that one of the most influential anti-Jewish tropes in Europe is based on the allegation of Jewish consumption of Christian blood. According to Nicholls,

The accusations could never have been made by anyone who knew anything about actual Jews or Judas. As even the more honest medieval authorities were ready to admit, Jews are forbidden by the Torah to consume blood in any form. The laws of ritual slaughtering require that all the blood be drained out of the animal, and that it then be salted and washed to absorb whatever remains. Even the tiny speck of blood in a fertilized egg renders that egg forbidden to the observant Jew. In the Middle Ages, almost all Jews were observant.²⁰³

This alleged consumption of human blood, along with its accompanying ritualistic murder, was strategically implemented religious propaganda specifically constructed to politically and economically ostracize the European Jewish community.

²⁰¹ Nirenberg, David, *Anti-Judaism* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2003). 203

²⁰² Dundes, Alan, *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). vii

²⁰³ Nichols, William, *Christian Anti-Semitism: A History of Hate* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1993). 239

Similar to the blood libel legend, the accusation of the myth of Jewish deicide, alternatively known as the “blood curse,” has provided a theological justification for Christian anti-Judaism since at least the eleventh century. The charge of Jewish deicide alleged that the ancient Jewish community was responsible for the death, suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth – one third of the Christian holy trinity or avatars of God. The “blood curse” legend has its origins in certain theological interpretations of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth – a political radical itinerant rabbi from the Galilee area of ancient Israel. The story of the crucifixion and death, the resurrection and life of Jesus of Nazareth is the founding hierophany -- manifestation of the sacred -- around which Christianity is organized. According to Matthew 27:24-25,

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood see to it yourselves.” Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and our children!”²⁰⁴

Blood plays a fundamental role in defining innocence and guilt throughout Matthew.

Blood, in Matthew 27, is material and can be washed away but blood is also presented as a powerful supernatural substance that can condemn current and future communities.

While this particular verse can be understood in a number of ways (particularly the pronouns), proponents of the Jewish deicide theory interpret the passage to mean that the Jewish community is responsible for the suffering, crucifixion, and death of Jesus of Nazareth and, as a result, have been cursed. Advocates of the Jewish deicide have highlighted the insistence and bloodthirsty enthusiasm of the Jewish community to see Jesus crucified, the Jewish community’s guilt in the murder of Christ, Pontius Pilate’s hesitancy to be involved in either the sentence or judgment of Jesus, and the Jewish

²⁰⁴ NRSV, Matthew 27:24-25

community's acceptance of the blood curse for the murder and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. According to the myth of Jewish deicide, the bloodthirsty insistence of the Jewish community on the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth created a cosmic imbalance for the Jewish community. In this equation, the actions of ancient Jewish communities were so evil, so heinous, and so powerfully potent that they created a fissure in the cosmos strong enough to permanently imprint a shadow onto the blood of the Jews – almost like a genetic mutation of the DNA of the Jewish community -- that marked a predisposition for suffering and misfortune. Henceforth, Jews became ancestrally linked and culturally responsible for the suffering, crucifixion, and death of Jesus of Nazareth.

The accusation of Jewish ritualistic murder has plagued the Jewish community since medieval Europe. According to Nicholls it was during the high middle ages that,

The myth became the vehicle of intense popular hatred...Hatred, fueled by and expressed through the ancient myth of the Christ-killers, broke out in unbridled violence...Jews were massacred and tortured, and soon whole Jewish populations were expelled from countries where they had long resided.²⁰⁵

Countless pogroms, outbreaks of violence, expulsions, persecutions, and murders were justified on the grounds that the Jews were “Christ Killers.” At this point “it is probably not yet true to speak of anti-Semitism in the modern racist sense. Christians still identified Jews as members of a religious community, not yet as a race.”²⁰⁶ Even though Jews were still conceived of as a religious community by the end of the Medieval period “Christians were already beginning to think of Jewishness as a permanent characteristic...No longer only a religious status, it was connected with blood, or

²⁰⁵ Nicholls, *Christian Anti-Semitism*, p. 225.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 225

descent.”²⁰⁷ The debilitating long-lasting influence of the myth of Jewish deicide is that because the curse lies in the blood of the Jews, as long as there are still Jews it will never go away; they will be forever polluted by the actions of their ancestors and will suffer the consequences continually. The unforgivable act of deicide created an imprint on Jewish blood and that blemish continues to taint, and thereby segregate, the modern Jewish community.²⁰⁸ According to Nicholls “even though the blood libel has already been officially repudiated a number of times...the libel remains in full force, so long as the Church can delude itself that there are some cases of ritual murder, however few.”²⁰⁹

Ebbs and flows, expulsions and admissions, freedoms and oppressions, made European Jewish life in medieval Europe an unstable and precarious existence. The anti-Semitism of 1930s Germany, which catalyzed emigration as well as the establishment of the state of Israel, did not exist in a vacuum. Christian anti-Jewish legends -- blood libel -- and theologies -- Jews as Christ Killers -- provided fertile ground for the growth and propagation of anti-Jewish beliefs all throughout Europe. It is significant to note that Nazis who believed in the Jewish deicide defined the Jewish community as a blood community -- not as a religion, culture, ethnicity, or linguistic group. Nazi anti-Semitism was the genocidal culmination of centuries of blood based Christian anti-Judaism. Richard Rubenstein, who defined Nazis as “satanic anti-Christians”, has argued that the one area where Nazi’s embraced Christianity earnestly was in regards to the inherent wickedness and depravity of the Jewish community. According to Rubenstein,

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 226

²⁰⁸ This belief in the blood libel of the Jewish community became such a widespread phenomenon amongst European Christians that a portion of Vatican II (1965) was dedicated to exonerating the Jewish community of the blood libel.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 365

They (Nazi's) did not invent a new villain. Nor did the Nazi's create a new hatred. Folk hatred of the Jews is at least as old as Christianity. The Nazi's intensified what they found...They transformed a theological conflict, normally limited in its overt destructiveness by religious and moral considerations, into a biological struggle in which only one conclusion was thinkable, the total extermination of every living Jew...No possible alteration of Jewish behavior could have prevented this fatality; the crime was simply to be a Jew.²¹⁰

Transforming an age old “theological conflict” between Judaism and Christianity into a “biological”, or blood based struggle, between dirty Jewish peoples and pure Aryan peoples was an essential part of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. Through transforming a theological and mythological conflict into a biological struggle, Nazis still utilize blood as the medium to explain and justify their beliefs and practices. According to Nazi pseudo-science, blood (nature) not culture (nurture) was the key ingredient in determining and defining Jewish identity as well as German identity; blood signified who were destined for extermination and who were eligible for “laws of protection.”

Nazi's reconstituted the blood libel legend and the myth of the blood curse into a complicated mixture of laws and regulations meant to catalyze German nationalism and remove the unclean – now biologically dangerous -- Jewish influence from German society. In his autobiographical opus *Mein Kampf*, Hitler asserted,

The black-haired Jewish youth lies in wait for hours on end, satanically glaring at and spying on the unsuspecting girl whom he plans to seduce, adulterating her blood and removing her from the bosom of her own people. The Jew uses every possible means to undermine the racial foundations of a subjugated people.²¹¹

In this passage, Hitler explains the contaminating consequences of German women cohabiting with Jewish men. According to Hitler, the polluting influences of Jewish blood had the capacity to remove “unsuspecting” German women from the “bosom of her

²¹⁰ Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, p 6-7.

²¹¹ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Book I Chapter 11

own people.” Mixing with the blood of “black-haired Jewish youths” with the blood of German women was powerful enough to “undermine the racial foundations” of European society and condemn the German people.

Over time, as Hitler gained control in Germany, his biological anti-Semitism was written into German law. For example, the Nuremberg Laws, enacted into law on September 15th 1935, were constructed to define, protect, and segregate “German Blood” and “German Honour” against the poisonous influence of “Jewish Blood.”²¹² By defining Jewish peoples as “subjects of the state,” as opposed to “Reich citizenship,” the Nuremberg Laws defined citizenship in terms of a blood status.²¹³ “Jewish Blood”, genetically defined by having one great grandparent, restricted Jewish citizenship while “Aryan” blood granted and confirmed German citizenship.²¹⁴ In using blood to justify the restriction of Jewish citizenship and wedding the concept of a blood-based identity to full participation and protection from the German state (Third Reich), Nazis segregated and ostracized the Jewish community from mainstream Germany society.

The Nuremberg laws focused on outlawing sexual relations, both casual sex as well as marital sex, between Jews and “subjects of the state of German or related blood,” because Jewish blood had the ability to tarnish and desecrate German society. Ultimately, sexual relations between Jews and German citizens were expressly forbidden for fear of the polluting effects -- be they genetic, cultural, linguistic, religious, or political -- of Jewish blood. Essentially the Nuremberg laws used a convoluted system of blood status to institutionalize the marginal ethno-racial status of the Jewish community in Germany. As a result, Jewish employment, Jewish education, Jewish housing options,

²¹² <http://faculty.polytechnic.org/gfeldmeth/lecnuremberglaws.pdf>, viewed on October 16, 2016

²¹³ Ibid.,

²¹⁴ Ibid.,

and outward expressions of the Jewish religion were restricted. The collection of social, cultural, and legal protections, which characterized German-Jewish emancipation, were either walked back or outright eviscerated. Nazi investment in “Jewish blood” caused Jewish blood to be “implicated in the crimes against the Jewish people, and therefore both scientifically invalid and politically dangerous.”²¹⁵

The Jewish experience in Europe, up to and including the German genocide, has made it both scientifically unacceptable and socially unpopular to define the Jewish community as a blood community. Taboos against defining Jews as a blood community, which only remains popular amongst America’s various white supremacist ideologies, has provided the Jewish community with a cloak of ambiguity. This ethno-racial ambiguity has allowed the American Jewish community the freedom to be critical of both its racial assignments as well as its racial identities. Arthur Cohen has called the “Judeo-Christian tradition a myth. It is, moreover, not only a myth of history but an eschatological myth which bears within it an optimism, a hope which transcends and obliterates the historicism of the myth.”²¹⁶ For Cohen if a meaningful cooperation could emerge then it would be possible for the “Judeo-Christian humanism” to overtake the “Judeo-Christian myth” or “Judeo-Christian” faux-multiculturalism. The hesitancy to institutionally define Jews as a blood based religio-racial community has been an essential element to the inclusion of the Jewish community into mainstream American society and a mainstay of any kind of “Judeo-Christian humanism.”

²¹⁵ Hart, *Jewish Blood*, p. 1.

²¹⁶ Cohen, Arthur, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1963). ix

Blood Laws

While invoking “Jewish Blood” as a sound biological principle or the “Jewish race” as a sound sociological proposition has been awkward and unpopular for generations, invoking “Indian Blood” and the degree of Indian Blood continues to be a valid avenue to identify and classify the religion, race, culture, languages, ethnicities and personhood of contemporary Native American peoples. Tumultuous and unstable since contact with Europeans, conquest and colonization have forever transformed the cultural, political, and geographic makeup of the Native American community. Since contact, Native identity has been a constant negotiation of violence, marginality, sovereignty, assimilation, religious freedom, and blood. Throughout these changes, blood has played a powerful and dynamic role in the establishment of Native American identity and the ever-evolving ethno-racial assignment of the Native community.

Warfare, removal, reservation, allotment, boarding schools, and missionization have changed Native American culture and American Indian geography by redefining the spaces, places, rituals, ceremonies, and languages of the native community. The twentieth century shift away from the termination era policies of the Indian Citizenship Act and Boarding Schools towards Self-Determination policies of the Indian Religious Freedom Act and unique tribal constitutions has modified the political and religious climate of the modern Native American community. The American genocide, while gravely altering all aspects of traditional Native American culture, was part of a larger project to institutionalize the racial, scientific, and ethnographic classifications of Indians, Native American Religions, and Indigenous peoples. Similarly to Jews, the presence and power of blood is involved in the violent geographic, political, and cultural

transformations of Native Americans since contact with Europeans in the twentieth century and Native experiences of anti-Indian racism, assimilation, acculturation, and Christianization; however, unlike in the Jewish community, blood remains the institutional standard for defining who is and who is not part of the Native American community.

Blood quantum, a means of organizing the native community by a percentage of Indian blood, is a colonial policy implemented by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), a subsection of the department of the Interior of the United States Federal Government, in order to identify, track, regulate, and control the remaining Native American populations. Although blood quantum laws have been around since the early 18th century, they did not become enmeshed into Native American communities until the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, signed into law by president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, officially ended the era of allotment,²¹⁷ or forced assimilation, and began the era of “self-determination.” The IRA was also a response to the passing of the 1883 “Indian Religious Crimes Code,” which made it illegal for Native people to practice their traditional religions and the 1924 “Indian Citizenship Act” which transferred American citizenship onto all living Native American peoples – effectively dissolving all notions of Indian sovereignty.

²¹⁷ Allotment, which began with the 1887 Dawes Act, was an assimilation project that aimed to make Native men into farmers. Reservation territories were divided and each native man received 160 acres on which to cultivate crops. The United States federal government was allowed to purchase any excess lands and auction them to the highest bidder --more often than not, non-Native men and women. While the Dawes Act failed miserably to assimilate Native people (poor farm land, many native communities were not accustomed to an agrarian lifestyle, many native communities were traditionally run by women not by men) into American society, it worked splendidly as a land grab. As a result of allotment, Indian land holdings were reduced from 138 million acres to 48 million acres – a reduction of nearly 2/3 of all native land holdings. In many respects the failures of allotment set the stage for renewed suppression of Native religions (which were made illegal in 1883) and a renewed violence against Native communities culminating in the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre.

The “termination” era of federal Indian policy, which lasted approximately from the 1880s to the 1930s, were a collection of legal, social, and economic policies geared at eliminating the remaining American Indian populations through means other than warfare. Termination was genocide via paperwork and policies, laws and injunctions, as opposed to genocide via warfare and slaughter, removal and disease.

Blood quantum laws, passé and antiquated as they may be, are a relic from the “termination” era. Once written into tribal constitutions, blood quantum laws became ingrained in the popular American psyche and eventually became ingrained on the blood of native peoples themselves. Blood quantum laws threaten to succeed in eliminating the native community once and for all. Long after the last Indian boarding school closed, long after the last Indian battle was fought, and long after the last bout of tuberculosis or smallpox had subsided, blood quantum remains stronger than ever. With enough time, given the rates of inter-marriage and the miniscule population of native people, if Native Americans do not throw off the yoke of blood quantum, then they will eventually be bred out of existence.

While various individual tribes have established their own constitutions, the process of ratification has been controlled exclusively by the BIA. Tribal constitutions are just as much of an exercise in colonization and domination as they are in sovereignty or self-determination. While each individual tribe has the power to establish their own quantum requirements (from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1/1024^{\text{th}}$), the BIA verifies all of the paperwork and background checks necessary to issue the certificate degree of Indian blood (CDIB) identification cards. The superimposition of the blood quantum standard has forced the vast majority of Native American peoples to genealogically prove to the United States

Federal Government their degree of Indian blood before they become tribally enrolled.

Unlike Jewish Americans, who are no longer defined by their percentage of Jewish blood, American Indian peoples are required by law to prove the percentage of Indian blood coursing through their veins in order to maintain tribal enrollment status.

Traditional Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people have no blood quantum.

Haudenosaunee culture, like the Orthodox Jewish standard, is matrilineal. A child's identity is decided by their mother. If the mother is Onondaga Eel Clan, then the child is Onondaga Eel Clan; if the mother is Mohawk Wolf Clan, then the child is Mohawk Wolf Clan; and if the mother is Seneca Snipe Clan, then the child is Seneca Snipe Clan.

According to the "culture" section on the Onondaga Nation website,

The women who are our life givers were given the important responsibility of carrying on the clans and the citizenship of the Haudenosaunee. At Onondaga, there are nine "clans" which are; wolf, turtle, beaver, snipe, heron, deer, eel, bear, and hawk. Only an Onondaga woman can provide Onondaga children. Only an Onondaga woman of the turtle clan can provide Onondaga turtle clan children, etc. Therefore, children are very proud of their clans as it automatically gives them a link to their female ancestors back to the beginning of our people.

The clan system lives throughout the Haudenosaunee. People of your clan but of different nations are still considered to be part of your family. This is important as when you travel through the different nations of the Haudenosaunee. You know that there are people willing to welcome you to their lands as being part of their family.

The role of clans also plays a part in marriage. When a young person looks to marry, they look to individuals from other clans. Even if you are not of "blood relations", they are a part of your clan family. Since clan members no longer all live in one longhouse, mothers, grandmothers, and aunts watch to make sure that it's a good match.

Our clan system is also important in our way of life. When you are in need of help in tough times such as sickness or death, it is the duty of the members of the other clans to help. The Creator gave us this method of helping each other to make sure that we care for one another to make us

strong which has helped us survive as a people for countless centuries. We look to our relations in the other clans for help.²¹⁸

Consequently, in traditional Haudenosaunee society, men can pass neither nationhood nor clan to their offspring. There is no percentage to work out, nor are there ID cards to be issued. Blood Quantum is as foreign to the Haudenosaunee as alcohol, gambling, Christianity, or the Euro-American music.

Blood quantum is an implementation of colonization and a tool of cultural genocide. Tribal governments who have succumbed to blood quantum have done so not from a position of power, but from a position of desperation. According to Woody,

To be enrolled in any Indian Tribe, one must be able to certify that he or she is of one quarter Indian blood quantum. This Indian blood must belong to a tribe that has entered into a treaty with the United States, ratified by Congress.²¹⁹

With each passing generation it gets -- figuratively and literally -- harder and harder to be a tribally enrolled member of an Indian nation. It's a numbers game; the overwhelming majority of non-Natives and the rates of intermarriage between Natives and non-Natives makes it a near certainty that Indians will eventually breed themselves out of existence in the name of "tribal enrollments" and "entitlements." Cuison-Villazor has claimed that modern blood quantum laws are an assault on Indian sovereignty. According to Cuison-Villazor "blood quantum rules had the double effect of not only racializing American Indians but also undercutting their right of sovereignty, including their property rights."²²⁰ There is a final solution, or rather a final dilution, for Indians that is fully

²¹⁸ <http://www.onondaganation.org/culture/>, viewed on October 16, 2016

²¹⁹ Woody, Elizabeth, *Translation of Blood Quantum* (Chicago Review, Vol. 39, No. ¾, A North Pacific Rim Reader).

²²⁰ Cuison-Villazor, *Blood Quantum Land Laws and the Race Versus Political Identity Dilemma*. (California Law Review, Vol. 96, No. 3, June 2008).

entrenched in Native American blood-based identity politics and fully operational in United States Federal Indian policy.

Of the 566 federally recognized “tribes” of Native American nations that have managed to survive to the present day, none relied on blood quantum prior to contact. Native American identity was not a uniform phenomenon and not all Indian communities followed matrilineal clan descent. Some native nations, like Iowa, Kansa, Omaha, Osage, and Ponca, were patrilineal and drew their nation and clan identities from their father. In other native communities a complex system of knowledge (family, language, land, religion, and culture) went into defining their unique tribal and national identities. Whether matrilineal, patrilineal, knowledge, or adoption based, no Native American communities defined who was and who was not part of the community in terms of a blood percentage. Furthermore, outside of the vague and antiquated “one drop rule” concerning African-Americans (more of an unwritten rule rather than an institutional standard), no other American ethnic communities are defined by a percentage of blood. Certainly no other American ethnic community is forced to carry a federally issued ID card in order to prove to prove their identity as a percentage of their blood.

According to the *Certificate Degree of Indian or Alaska Native Blood Application* (CDIB) application form, “your degree of Indian blood is computed from lineal ancestors of Indian blood who were enrolled with a federally recognized Indian tribe or whose names appear on the designated base rolls of a federally recognized Indian tribe.”²²¹ In order to qualify as Native American, and all of the accompanying bonuses, bigotries, and baggage that come along with tribal enrollment, individuals need to file supporting documents, usually a birth certificate and Certificate Degree of Indian or Alaska Native

²²¹ <http://www.bia.gov/cs/groups/xraca/documents/text/idc1-029262.pdf>, viewed on October 16, 2016

Blood Application (CDIB) Control #1076-0153, to the “Agency from whom you receive services.”²²² It is clear from the application form that the BIA is more concerned with entitlements than existence, perks than personhood, cash than culture.

Requiring American Indian people to identify based on a percentage of their blood has introduced a great deal of shame, confusion, and embarrassment to the process of claiming Indian identity – from both the inside-out as well as the outside-in. The blood quantum algorithm, the exact percentage of Indian blood required for tribal enrollment, is a disturbing mixture of colonization, eugenics, and racial determinism seemingly justified under the pretense of entitlements and treaty arrangements. As a result of the historical differences in the experience of conquest, there are vast differences in the social, religious, and political capital of various Indian nations; the exact percentage of Indian blood needed to qualify as Native American is not a uniform percentage. Though blood is the uniformed policy, the amount of Indian blood an individual needs in order to be considered Native varies from tribe to tribe and nation to nation. According to Cuison-Villazor “when placed within the context of past and arguably ongoing colonialism in the territories, these laws facilitate a measure of political control over the indigenous peoples' social, economic and cultural developments.”²²³

Ultimately, by defining who is and is not Native American by a percentage of blood in their veins, the blood quantum algorithm institutionalized “Native American” as racial categorization and set them on a path of destruction. It is particularly problematic to understand or describe Native American people as a race or as a biological product. Nazi anti-Semitism and the liquidation of European Jews can offer a glimpse into the

²²² Ibid.,

²²³ Cuison-Villazor, *Blood Quantum Land Laws and the Race Versus Political Identity Dilemma*. (California Law Review, Vol. 96, No. 3, June 2008). 824

horrific results when minority communities are defined by blood. Blood quantum is an attempt to control, regulate, and institutionalize Native American identity. Blood quantum laws must be stopped, as a legal means of persecution, in order for Native communities to regain control over their own personal agency, cultural autonomy, and political sovereignty.

One unintended consequence of divorcing Native people from their pre-contact systems of identity and forcing them to identify via blood quantum is that blood quantum has effectively opened the category of “Native American” to anyone who could claim one Indian relative – no matter how distant. “Wannabes,” “Plastic Shamans,” and “Pretendians” are perceived as parasites, sucking the blood from Native peoples and infesting Native communities while giving nothing back in return. Only in this analogy, the host organism is neither healthy nor hearty, but feeble, broken and on the verge of obliteration. According to Allred

New Agers romanticize an “authentic” and “traditional” Native American culture whose spirituality can save them from their own sense of malaise. However, as products of the very consumer culture they seek to escape, these New Agers pursue meaning and cultural identification through acts of purchase. Although New Agers identify as a countercultural group, their commercial actions mesh quite well with mainstream capitalism. Ultimately, their search for spiritual and cultural meaning through material acquisition leaves them feeling unsatisfied. The community they seek is only imagined, a world conjured up by the promises of advertised products, but with no history, social relations, or contextualized culture that would make for a real sense of belonging. Meanwhile, their fetishization of Native American Spirituality not only masks the social oppression of real Indian peoples but also perpetuates it.²²⁴

²²⁴ Lisa Allred, *Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality* (American Indian Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 3. Summer 2000).

Masquerading parasites are often guilty of misrepresenting Native American political and religious goals by elevating their own selfish interests above the well-being of real Indian peoples.

While no BIA officials could have foreseen white folk actually wanting to identify as Native American, the phenomenon of non-Native peoples claiming Native American identity is partially a result of the vague and ambiguous laws surrounding the blood quantum algorithm. Blood quantum laws have effectively attacked the Native community by making Native identity a matter of blood rather than a matter of knowledge and culture. Reducing Native identity to a genealogical equation, has given rise to what Vine Deloria called the “Indian-grandmother complex” -- otherwise known at Onondaga as the “Cherokee Grandmother”, on urban dictionary as the “Cherokee Grandmother Syndrome” or “American Indian Princess Syndrome” and by genealogists as an “ancestral myth.”²²⁵

The “Indian-grandmother complex,” a euphemism for non-Native folk who claim to have Native “blood” and thereby identify as “Native American” because of a long lost distant relation, is a bit of a running joke inside Native communities. Perhaps the most curious aspect of the “Indian-grandmother complex” is that the nine times out of ten the nation of the long lost family member is Cherokee and nine times out of ten the relation is grandmother. In the May 2012 issue of the Atlantic magazine, Lenzy Krehbiel-Burton, a spokesman for the Cherokee nation in Oklahoma, revealed that “there's a running joke in Indian country: If you meet somebody who you wouldn't necessarily think they're Native, but they say they're Native, chances are they'll tell you they're Cherokee.”²²⁶ In the

²²⁵ Deloria, *Custer Died*, p. 3.

²²⁶ Franke-Ruta, *Is Elizabeth Warren Native American or What?* (The Atlantic, May 20, 2012).

early 1970's Vine Deloria was already warning that "whites claiming Indian blood generally tend to reinforce mythical beliefs about Indians."²²⁷ On the surface level, Deloria claimed that the "Indian-grandmother complex" should be understood as an attraction to the mystical female "Indian princess" or noble savage stereotype and as a rejection from the mythical male or "savage warrior" stereotype. At a deeper level, however, the preponderance of the "Indian-grandmother complex" might be a way of attempting to authentically connect to the American landscape and/or fix the conflicts and tensions between white, Euro-American, Christian society and red, Native American, traditional society. The fact that in many of these cases there is no actual "Indian grandmother" is inconsequential to the power of the possibility of an Indian grandmother.

The confusion and discord over who is and who is not Native American is partially a result of the ambiguities of blood quantum. If Native American ethnic and religious identity is classified as a percentage of blood, not based on culture, language, land, religion, ritual, ceremony, food, or knowledge, then it becomes open for any individual who wishes to claim Native American heritage. While many examples of the "Indian-grandmother complex" are purely anecdotal,²²⁸ this phenomenon is reflected in census data, commercial advertisements, pop culture, and modern American politics. According to the 2010 U.S. census 800,000 individuals self-identified as Cherokee but there are only around 300,000 tribally enrolled members of the Cherokee nation.²²⁹ These figures reveal that the number of individuals claiming Cherokee identity thoroughly dwarfs, by almost a three to one ratio, the actual amount of tribally enrolled

²²⁷ Deloria, *Custer Died*, p.3.

²²⁸ I have personally lost track of how many non-Native people I have met who confess to having "Indian blood" because of a "Cherokee grandmother." In these social situations it is always "Cherokee" and always "grandmother."

²²⁹ <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-10.pdf>, viewed on October 16, 2016

members of the Cherokee nation. While blood quantum laws are inherently flawed, as there are plenty of people who are legitimately Native American but for one reason or another can't prove their Indian ancestry, the unnatural preponderance of non-Native people who claim to be Native American threaten to overrun, misrepresent, and undermine the cultural, political, and economic goals of contemporary Native communities.

We can also observe the shadow of the "Indian Grandmother Complex" amongst modern academics involved with contemporary Native American communities. Controversies continue to swirl around both Ward Churchill,²³⁰ former Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado-Boulder, and Andrea Smith,²³¹ associate professor in the department of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California-Riverside, for identifying themselves as having Cherokee heritage while being unable to offer either proof of lineage or tribal enrollment.

Concurrently the specter of the "Indian Grandmother complex" haunts American politicians. For example, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, whom Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has recently begun referring to as "Pocahontas,"²³² has said that "being Native American has been part of my story I guess since the day I was born... These are my family stories, I have lived in a family that has talked about Native Americans and talked about tribes since I was a little girl."²³³ Although Senator Warren has never been able to provide proof of Cherokee lineage, nor was she raised in a

²³⁰ Scott R. Lyons, *The termination and removal of Ward Churchill* (Indian Country Today, February 23, 2005).

²³¹ Various Authors, Open Letter From Indigenous Women Scholars Regarding Discussions of Andrea Smith (Indian Country Today, July 7, 2015).

²³² <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/741240449906663424?lang=en>, viewed on October 16, 2016

²³³ Franke-Ruta, *Is Elizabeth Warren Native American or What?* (The Atlantic, May 20, 2012).

Native community with a Native family that had Native values and taught her Native culture, her “family stories” concerning her Cherokee grandmother appear to be central to her personal ethno-racial identity.

Outside the realm of politics and academics, entertainers -- particularly actors and musicians -- have a long history of claiming Native American heritage as part of their celebrity status. Miley Cyrus, Billy Ray Cyrus, Johnny Depp, Johnny Cash, Cher, Chuck Norris, and Elvis Presley have all claimed to have Cherokee “blood” due to a grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great grandmother, or great-great-great-great grandmother. A recent commercial for ancestry.com entitled “Kim” is based on fulfilling the popular fantasy of Native American ancestry. The short TV spot ‘Kim’ depicts a woman relishing her “discovery” that she is actually “26% Native American” has “opened up a whole new world” and how she “absolutely wants to know more about her Native American heritage.”²³⁴ “Kim” uses the popular fantasy of possible Native American ancestry as a hook to attract potential customers to ancestry.com. While “Kim” may very well be 26% Native American, this commercial casually and erroneously reinforces the myth that Indians can be defined by a percentage of blood as opposed to culture – language, philosophy, religion, art, food, land, ceremony, dress etc. According to genealogist Megan Smolenyak,

Many more Americans believe they have Native ancestry than actually do (we always suspected this, but can now confirm it through genetic testing)...In fact, in terms of wide-spread ancestral myths, this is one of the top two (the other being those who think their names were changed at Ellis Island).²³⁵

²³⁴ <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/AZTW/ancestrydna-kim>, viewed on October 16, 2016

²³⁵ Franke-Ruta, *Is Elizabeth Warren Native American or What?* (The Atlantic, May 20, 2012).

Claiming Indian blood has become a fashionable accessory for academics, celebrities, politicians, as well as normal everyday American citizens. According to Henry Louis Gates, who called the “Indian grandmother complex” the “biggest myth in African-American genealogy,”²³⁶ this is a cross cultural and interracial phenomenon. The “wide-spread ancestral myth” of American Indian heritage provides non-Indian peoples political, economic, and social cover for ignoring contemporary American Indian communities and neglecting or obfuscating some of the more degrading and shameful aspects of American history. All examples of the “Indian-Grandmother complex” damage Native communities, because they divert attention away from poverty, sovereignty, religious freedom, and environmental stewardship towards consumerism, celebrity, polemics, and the vicious cycle of American politics. Blood quantum, which was enacted in order to dilute Native communities, and the “Indian Grandmother complex,” are just two of the many ways which an over reliance on blood has betrayed and forsaken the Native community.

Not all communities are attracted to the fallacy of Native American identity. According to Deloria “only among the Jewish community, which has a long tribal religious tradition of its own, does the mysterious Indian grandmother, the primeval princess, fail to dominate the family tree.”²³⁷ It is fascinating that Deloria has been able to delineate between Jews and gentiles on the basis of Native identity. Why haven’t Jews, who have been disproportionately active in Native communities, fallen victim of the “Indian-grandmother” complex? Maybe Jews still feel like foreigners in America. Possibly, Jews maintain a hypersensitivity to being defined as a blood community or

²³⁶ John Jurgensen, *Doubling Down on DNA* (The Wall Street Journal, March 22, 2012).

²³⁷ Deloria, *Custer Died*, p. 4.

defining themselves in terms of a percentage. Perhaps Jews were more interested in intellectual comparisons to the Native American community than in actually “playing Indian.” Or perhaps Jews in America are not as prone to the settler complex as other European immigrants have been.

Given their experiences and cultural memories from Europe, perhaps Jewish people intimately understood the heavy burden, and almost curse, of Native American identity. Jews can empathize with Native people over issues of history, culture, loss, devastation, humiliation, and discord; blood runs through all of those connections. Jews also understand that no logical person would ever, for any reason, actually believe that identifying as Native American could somehow solve struggles over their ethno-racial identity. Who would want to shoulder that load? Who would want to observe the lingering and decrepit death of traditional Native American society? Indian blood laws, as outlined in various tribal constitutions, seem to harken back to Jewish blood laws, as outlined in the Nuremberg code. In paradigms of blood, Jewish and Native American history resonates and intersects to reveal how and why racialized definitions of Indian people have become institutionalized while racialized definitions of Jews have been repealed and replaced. The “Indian-grandmother complex,” so popular in American identity politics, appears to be practically absent from inside the American Jewish community, because Jews have realized that “Native Americans” have been marked for death.

In the United States, neither the denial of the Nazi Holocaust nor the denial of the American Holocaust is an illegal activity; however, denial of the Nazi Holocaust is

scholastically unsound and socially sparse -- popular primarily amongst white-supremacist organizations. According to Whine,

Fourteen European states have now criminalized Holocaust denial. All have adopted the basic premise that deniers are extremists who use denial as a means to rehabilitate Nazism. Thus, denial activity strikes at the heart of democratic governance in a continent that was torn apart from 1939 to 1945.²³⁸

Nevertheless, the denial, and flat out ignorance, of the American genocide is a widely accepted cultural norm in America. It is even popular, amongst individuals who acknowledge the American genocide, to downplay the amount of people killed during the American genocide and speak in exaggerated euphemisms like “progress,” “inevitability,” and “cultivation” instead of “catastrophic evil”, “horror” and “destruction” – common language for referring to the German genocide. The popular canonization of Christopher Columbus²³⁹ combined with the myth of the pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving, and a rigid indoctrination to manifest destiny has left very little room for actual Native peoples in the popular telling of early American history. Additionally, the preferred narratives of the founding of America --America as established on the principles of religious freedom, democracy, and equality -- purposefully gloss over the indigenous inhabitants of the Western hemisphere. Ronald Reagan famously referred to America as a “shining city on the hill;” this image, so ingrained in the popular American psyche, depends on preserving the “moral reputations” of early Euro-American

²³⁸ Michael Whine, *Expanding Holocaust Denial and Legislation Against It* (Jewish Political Studies Review, Vol. 20, No. ½, Spring 2008).

²³⁹ Christopher Columbus is one of two individuals who have been honored with their own federally recognized holiday and the other is Martin Luther King Jr. The competing values and narratives of American exceptionalism are on full display when we consider that only these two men (one a captain of genocide and the other a non-violent civil rights leader) have been awarded that particular honor.

communities and ignoring the continued violence perpetrated against contemporary Native communities.

Blood Boundaries

While blood laws demonstrate how blood has been used at the institutional level to control Jewish and Native American identities, blood is also a way that Jewish and Native American communities structured and maintained boundaries of their own communities. The materiality of blood provides ample opportunities to create connections between Jewish and Native communities over issues of ritual, gender, sexuality, land, identity, and violence. Blood, a topic that has been conspicuously absent from previous Jew/Indian comparisons, is key to unpacking the layers of attraction between Jewish and Indian communities. Blood can also shed light on some of the more uncomfortable religious and historical dimensions of Jew/Indian comparisons.

Eilberg-Schwartz, one of the few previous scholars to identify blood as a primary artery of comparison between Jews and Indians, has claimed that blood, along with semen and discharge, has been intentionally overlooked by modern Jews because of the inflammatory and besmirched connotation blood carries in the Protestant-Christian imagination. This analysis calls back to Bakhtin who classified blood an essential part of the “grotesque body.”²⁴⁰ Bakhtin identified blood as the primary bodily fluid related to both life and death in his extended “carnival” metaphor. In regard to ignoring blood, Eilberg-Schwartz states,

[The] impulse to radically differentiate Judaism and savage religions was part of an ongoing attempt to protect the privileged status of Judaism, and by extension Christianity. This motivation informed the work of both

²⁴⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1984).

Jewish and Christian interpretations from the Enlightenment until the present day...Once it became clear that commonalities between the religion of ancient Jews and contemporary savages posed a problem for the unique and privileged status of Christianity, various strategies were devised to neutralize this powerful weapon of the enlightenment.²⁴¹

In order to elevate Christianity over and above the “primitive” religions of “savage cultures”, the possible similarities between the religion of the Jews and the religion of indigenous peoples were obfuscated in order to justify and legitimize the evolutionary perspective. Protestant-Christian theology and dogma ignored the significance of blood (and the body) in order to construct a false boundary between Jewish and primitive communities. Blood has the power to disintegrate the “false dichotomy between Judaism and savage religions” that has been “perpetuated in modern discourse.”²⁴²

Nevertheless, the idea of a blood-community also has the power to strengthen and solidify substantial boundaries between Jewish and Native American communities. An understanding of how blood creates boundaries is a necessary precursor to understanding the cultural -- linguistic, religious, moral, and philosophical -- differences that exist between Jewish and Native American communities. These boundaries need to be properly identified and respectfully recognized so modern scholars do not repeat the same transgressions and abuses of past scholars.

Boundaries have always been an essential part of my work with Native American peoples and communities. Appreciation and awareness of boundaries are an essential precursor to respect and understanding -- the basic blocks upon which analysis and interpretation should be built. In the United States, the racial boundaries that exist between indigenous and Euro-American peoples are the outcome of five centuries of

²⁴¹ Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savaging Judaism*, p. 3.

²⁴² Ibid., 239

colonization and genocide. Boundaries have been established by federal mandates like the 1830 Indian Reorganization Act, 1883 Religious Crimes Code, 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, court cases like *Johnson v McIntosh*, *Cherokee Nation V State of Georgia*, *Sherill v Oneida Nation*, and legal contortionism like the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, and latches. These mandates, cases, and legal actions against Native communities have resulted in the theft of Native lands, encroachment onto Native territories, and suppression of Native religions. Boundaries are strengthened every time the Columbus myth is allowed to serve as the preferred narrative of the founding of America. Boundaries are created wherever and whenever “race” -- black, white, red, yellow, brown -- remains a viable means of categorizing, thereby segregating, human communities. Boundaries are reinforced every time Native people are mythologized and historicized in museum spaces. Boundaries are bolstered by every fetishized representation of Native peoples as mascots and every instance of “playing Indian” as boy scouts, hobbyists, Halloweeners, and New-Age cultural appropriationists.

Of all the robust boundaries that exist between Native and non-Native people, blood is the most prescient, sophisticated, and complicated boundary. Many years working alongside Haudenosaunee people has informed me of the blood boundaries (phenotype, genotype, ancestry, family, pedigree, religion) that exist between my family and my Onondaga friends. The title of this project, “Brothers in Blood,” is meant to imply the potential for a political alliance built on empathy, understanding, and compassion along with a personal, familial, and community wide allegiance between American Jewish and American Indian communities. Nevertheless, “Brothers in Blood” implies a transgression of the blood/religious boundaries that exist between Jews and

Indians. In the case of Jews and Indians, transgressions are an essential precursor for alliance. Foucault argued that “transgression opens onto a scintillating and constantly affirmed world, a world without shadow or twilight.”²⁴³ While material, imaginative, and academic transgressions of the blood boundaries between Jews and Indians “open onto a scintillating and constantly affirmed world”, they should also give way to a religious understanding and political partnership between contemporary Jewish and Native American communities.

The seeds of the religious boundaries between Euro-American and Native American communities, sown hundreds of years ago, still have a huge impact on the religious lives of modern Native American communities. Religious boundaries are the culmination of decisions made generations ago by a combination of elite Christian leaders, European aristocrats, early Euro-American settlers, and early American federal and state governments. The gulf between Haudenosaunee and American communities is the residual by-product of institutional decisions and government decrees to define Native communities as primitive, delineate Native religions as immature, and designate Native people as dangerously underdeveloped. Hiram Price, a five term congressional representative from Iowa’s 2nd district, who served as chief clerk of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) before his eventual promotion to Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the Garfield administration, perfectly represented the rabidly anti-Indian sentiments that informed United States Federal Indian Policy from Washington (birth of the United States) to Nixon (self-determination). In an 1893 publication, on the heels of the Massacre at Wounded Knee, Price claimed that

²⁴³ Foucault, *Religion and Culture*, p. 60.

There is no good reason why an Indian should be permitted to indulge in practices which are alike repugnant to common decency and morality; and the preservation of good social order on the reservations demands that some active measures should be taken to discourage and, if possible, put a stop to the demoralizing influence of heathenish rites.²⁴⁴

Price is open and honest about his disdain of Native American cultural practices and peoples. By referring to Native American religions, customs, and languages as “heathenish rites” that were altogether “repugnant to common decency and morality,” Price is attempting to justify the destruction of traditional Native cultures under the guise of progress, evolution, and the “greater good”. Price saw it as his duty, as Commissioner of the BIA, to once and for all put a stop to any and all “heathenish rites” in order to preserve “good social order.” The racial bigotry and religious superiority expressed by Price are not the cause of institutional racism but rather a symptom of an overreliance on the theory of cultural evolution and the superiority of the Christian religion.

While Price is a cog in the system, his sentiments accurately represent hundreds of years of American Federal Indian policy. The American revolution (and the subsequent land speculation), the Sullivan-Clinton campaign, Removal, Reservation, and Christian missionization (e.g. Indian boarding school system) are just a few of the major policy decisions that have resulted in a great deal of mistrust between Haudenosaunee and American communities. As a result of these macro-level aggressions, Native communities harbor a good deal of resentment and foreboding, if not outright hostility, towards foreign governments, missionaries, academics, tourists, and uninvited visitors.

Some boundaries exist in the immediacy of the surface, the skin. While these boundaries are the most obvious they can also be the hardest to see. There are no

²⁴⁴ Hiram Price, *Secretary of the Interior: Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1883* (Volume I). <https://archive.org/details/annualreportofse83unit>, viewed on October 16, 2016.

material or armed borders. Absent are the fences, walls, check-points, and customs agents demarcating the borders of Onondaga Nation Territory. Although there are no tollbooths, border patrol, or any other kinds of physical barriers designating the borders between the United States of America and the Onondaga Nation,²⁴⁵ there are several signs indicating passage onto the Onondaga Nation. When one enters Onondaga Nation Territory via route 11a, there is an old abandoned building spray-painted with the warning “Onondaga Nation...Enter at Your Own Risk.” Although this ominous message, scribbled by vandals, was painted over many years ago, the letters are still visible underneath the layers of concealment and years of weathering. The bitterness, indignation, and rage represented in this graffiti symbolizes the pain of centuries of disease, warfare, broken treaties, and racism. The warning is motivated by the poverty and desperation experienced by many modern American Indian communities.

“Onondaga Nation, Enter at Your Own Risk” simultaneously serves as a makeshift border, cautions confused motorists of crossing an international border, and warns all potential interlocutors of the painful history of colonization, domination, and genocide. The graffiti is a direct challenge to all non-Indian peoples to examine their own motivations for crossing this boundary. This boundary forces all visitors to question whether the inherent risk of transgressing this border is worth the possible rewards. Like a trained customs agent, the graffiti asks, “Who are you? Why are you here? Where are you from?” Visitors driving onto Onondaga Nation Territory are forcefully reminded that the fight for sovereignty is an ongoing battle and that the people of Onondaga will fiercely defend what is left of their traditional homeland.

²⁴⁵ As a result of the 2015 World Championships of Lacrosse several new signs have been posted along route 11/11a pointing towards the Onondaga Nation as well as the Onondaga Nation Arena.

Some boundaries are only become evident after spending a considerable amount of time in Indian country. Upon first glance, these boundaries are hidden; however, scratching the surface can reveal the scar tissue beneath. Exploring and transgressing these boundaries will cause further bleeding, but if approached and treated in the right manner, may lead to a more complete healing.

Capable of housing multiple families of the same clan, with designated spaces for food storage, cooking, and sleeping, Longhouses (plural) are the traditional dwelling of the Haudenosaunee people. The Longhouse (singular) at Onondaga is no longer used as a residence – the vast majority of people who live on the Onondaga Nation live in houses or trailers. The Longhouse is now the political and ceremonial center of the Onondaga Nation and the greater Haudenosaunee Confederacy. By choosing to participate in traditional Longhouse meetings and ceremonies, Haudenosaunee choose to maintain their ancient traditions. Participation in Longhouse, over and against the many churches that pepper the landscape of the Onondaga Nation, is a political, religious, and cultural decision. Everything from Chiefs’ council meetings, to the meeting of the Grand Council of Chiefs, to the reception of foreign dignitaries, to religious ceremonies take place in or around the Onondaga Longhouse. The Longhouse at Onondaga functions primarily as a community center much in the same way that Levin has described the ancient Jewish synagogue or *shul*. According to Levin

Within the confines of the synagogue the Jewish community not only worshipped, but also studied, held court, administered punishment, organized sacred meals, collected charitable donations, housed the communal archives and library, and assembled for political and social purposes.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Lee Levin, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

Located near the intersection of Rt. 11a and Gibson road outside the town of Nedrow, New York the Longhouse at Onondaga looks like a nondescript, early century log cabin anchored by giant cedar logs and a simple roof. The Longhouse is flanked on either side by the Mud House and the Cook House. All three buildings are simple and unassuming, only noticeable during events -- ceremonies, dinners, funerals -- attended by large portions of the community. Behind the Longhouse, there is a small 1-2 acre field containing one of the Nation's few modest cemeteries; across the street, there is a giant gravestone labeled "HANDSOME LAKE."²⁴⁷

The skull and horns of a stag mounted above the Longhouse door are meant to protect the minds and bodies of people who enter into the Longhouse from "bad medicine" or negative metaphysical energies. The Longhouse door is both warm and welcoming, intriguing and intimidating. Inside, the Longhouse is almost entirely made of wood and exudes the sensitivities and design of a hunting cabin or ski lodge. The comfortable feelings of dark wood are mixed with the authority and austerity of an empty courtroom. Three rows of benches frame the perimeter of the room. In the center sits an ancient wood-burning stove recalling the status of the Onondaga as the "central fire keepers" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Mounted at the north end of the Longhouse is a replica of the George Washington Belt.²⁴⁸ *Gustoweh*, or the traditional

²⁴⁷ Handsome Lake, a Seneca preacher and visionary, who warned his communities against the negative effects of assimilation and acculturation was among the most important Haudenosaunee prophets in the 18-19th century. His messages, called Gai-we-Yo, became central to the ceremonial calendar of the Onondaga. While his gravestone is located less than 100 yards from the Longhouse door his actual burial spot has never been published – but is rumored to be somewhere in the hills at Onondaga.

²⁴⁸ The George Washington belt was created in order to commemorate the signing of the Canandaigua Treaty in 1794. Measuring six feet long the George Washington belt is the longest Wampum belt. The belt depicts thirteen figures, who represent the thirteen colonies, all holding hands. In the middle of those thirteen figures there are two smaller figures and a longhouse. The smaller figures and the longhouse symbolize the Haudenosaunee confederacy. This belt was created in order to ratify the Canandaigua treaty

headwear of Haudenosaunee men, are mounted on the walls. Traditional water drums and bull-horn rattles are gathered in a niche near the entrance. When in season Indian tobacco, *Nicotiana tabacum*, used in many Haudenosaunee ceremonies may be drying in the rafters. Additionally, disemboweled snapping turtles, *Chelydra serpentina*, may be hanging from the crossbeams – an essential step in the drying and elongating process of creating ceremonial turtle rattles.²⁴⁹

For hundreds of years, from Lewis Henry Morgan in the 1830s to William Fenton in the 1970's, scholars, curious neighbors, and tourists²⁵⁰ were welcomed, sometimes even invited, to attend Longhouse ceremonies. Since the late 1970s, however, Onondaga people have made it known that their traditional ceremonies were off limits to anyone who was not a clan-member of the Haudenosaunee confederacy. For the Onondaga, religious privacy has become an essential aspect of national sovereignty and personal autonomy. Over the past forty years, the Onondaga have developed a zero tolerance policy in regards to curious interlopers. Haudenosaunee people do not evangelize their traditions, have no vested interest in gaining converts from outside their community, or have no desire to adopt disenfranchised white folk. There is no way to convert to the Longhouse religion.²⁵¹ Outsiders who have no clan quite literally have no place to sit during traditional ceremonial events and government meetings. For these reasons, ceremonies and government meetings only make sense as a private affair for traditional Haudenosaunee people. The door of the Longhouse represents a major blood boundary

and end the warring and bloodshed between the Haudenosaunee and the newly created United States of America.

²⁴⁹ I have been told that there is truly nothing like the smell of a freshly disembowled Turtle.

²⁵⁰ There is a long history of European tourists visiting the Onondaga Nation. This tradition continues on to the current day when one or two European (British, German, Czech, Dutch etc) backpackers will arrive at the Onondaga Nation wanting to seeking an authentic Native American experience.

²⁵¹ Although under certain circumstances traditional ceremonies of adoption can be performed.

of the Onondaga community. It signifies pain and loss, paranoia and segregation, as well as survival and sovereignty, triumph and hope.

The Longhouse door looms large for any scholar of religion hoping to collaborate with traditional Onondaga people and has gravely affected how indigenous religions are taught in Religion, Religious Studies, and Anthropology departments around the United States. The Longhouse door represents privacy, symbolizes control, and exudes power. In the 1970's, during his tenure at Syracuse University, Huston Smith wrote with excitement about being excluded from the Onondaga Longhouse. According to Smith, on "one of the many splendid afternoons" he spent "hanging out" with the "chiefs" at Onondaga" Oren Lyons "looked at his watch and said, 'Well its 11:00. Time for us to begin.' Then looking me square in the eye, he said, 'And, Huston, that means that we are going into the longhouse, and you are not.'"²⁵² Smith, who by then had been "circling the globe for 30 years" studying, documenting and participating in a plethora of diverse religious rituals and ceremonies, recalled his denial into the Onondaga Longhouse as one of "three moments" in the decade of the 1970s that revealed to him the significance of indigenous religious traditions.²⁵³

Smith credits his involvement with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and his exclusion from the Onondaga Longhouse, in opening his eyes to the category of "primal religions" as a "totally new area of world religions" that he had previously ignored. The locked door of the Onondaga Longhouse is partially responsible for the inclusion of a "Primal Religions" chapter in Smith's opus *The World's Religions*, one of the most popular religious studies textbooks of the last fifty years. If Smith had never been turned

²⁵² Smith, Huston, *A Seat at the Table: Huston Smith in Conversation with Native Americans on Religious Freedom* (University of California, 2006). 3

²⁵³ Ibid., 3

away, his interests in indigenous communities would never have been fully realized. Smith did not interpret the locked Longhouse door as a deterrent. Instead denial upon the threshold of the Longhouse door excited Smith and catalyzed his interest in Haudenosaunee culture, philosophy, and morality. Reinvigorated by Haudenosaunee privacy, and grateful for the world which the leadership had opened up, Smith dedicated a significant portion of the later part of his life to collaborating with Native American communities, culminating in co-authoring *One Nation Under God: The Triumph of the Native American Church* with Reuben Snake.²⁵⁴ While Smith respected that the Longhouse door was locked, he set an example for how collaborations with native people should look when ceremony is off limits for outsiders.

While some might have viewed the locked Longhouse door as a deterrent and the end of collaboration, the prospect of secrecy amazed and intrigued Smith into finding alternative ways to be present and collaborate; for this, he should be commended. Onondaga people have chosen to keep their religious ceremonies, government meetings, and language private. This does not mean -- in other spaces and places -- collaborations, serious discussions of Native American history, and the moral and philosophical traditions of the Haudenosaunee are also closed. The locked Longhouse door means historians of religion need to be as fluid and flexible as they are respectful and considerate. One closed door does not mean all doors are closed.

²⁵⁴ It makes a great deal of sense that Huston Smith, a lifelong Christian, original test subject of Timothy Leary and avid proponent of entheogenic research, would gravitate towards the Native American Church and peyote after learning about the traditional teachings and boundaries of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

When I asked Chief Jacobs why people without clans were not welcomed into the Longhouse he told me that it was an issue of control. According to Jesse being invited into the Longhouse is

Very sensitive to who you are. It comes down to a lot of where we are as people. A lot of decisions had to be made based on non-Natives having influence inside of there – inside the government. Looking at the small portions that we have left I think that a lot of that came from non-Native people that were actually in the community. They did a good job with their infiltration. I think that this is actually a good point in time for you to come and take a look at it in order to start to demystify.²⁵⁵

Although outsiders may never again be welcome in the Longhouse through the process of mutual respect and understanding we may begin a process to “demystify” Haudenosaunee religion and culture. Haudenosaunee culture, morality, and philosophy are expressed in a wide variety of spaces and places besides the Longhouse. These arenas will slowly reveal themselves to those who display patience, empathy, and compassion in the face of blood boundaries. Paradoxically, by respecting some closed door others may open. Empathy is essential to understanding why peoples, who by all logic should be either dead, gone, or assimilated -- wiped from these earth generations ago -- would choose to keep the few fragments of songs and dances, ceremonies and masks, government and law of their ancient traditions to themselves. The people of the Onondaga Nation, even those who do not actively participate in Longhouse ceremonies, draw a great deal of strength and dignity from knowing that the Longhouse religion still exists and is still open to them. The Longhouse door, how it is opened and how it is closed, represents a powerful and symbolic blood boundary to residents, tourists, and scholastic interlopers alike.

²⁵⁵ J. Jacobs, Personal Communication, September 12, 2014.

An intimate knowledge and respect of boundaries is essential for survival in Indian country. Under the proper circumstances, there are great power and possibilities in crossing boundaries. Under the right set of circumstances, when surrounded by the right group people, and in the right cultural context, transgressing boundaries can lead to the most compelling, thought-provoking, amusing, and meaningful scholarship. These types of transgressions, according to Foucault, are actions that involve the limit. Transgressions can measure the distance between banality and ethics by measuring the “excessive distance that it opens at the heart of the limit.”²⁵⁶ Consequently, disentangling the intimate bonds between transgression and limit can “open up a scintillating and constantly affirmed world, a world without shadow or twilight”.²⁵⁷ According to Foucault transgression is neither negative, positive, nor transformative because

The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows... Transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the face of its imminent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes (perhaps, to be more exact, to recognize itself for the first time), to experience its positive truth in its downward fall?²⁵⁸

While Foucault was careful to position transgressions as dependent on limits, transgressing boundaries can also be a manifestation of power. Eliade referred to this type of activity as a “kratophany.”²⁵⁹ While I do not think that my relations to the Onondaga community constitute a “manifestation of the sacred” there is power in transgressing boundaries. If scholars can harness the power of transgression and mediate

²⁵⁶ Foucault, Michel, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980). 34

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 34

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 34

²⁵⁹ Eliade, Mircea, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 1996). 17-20

that power through relationships of exchange, then we can build an entire new paradigm for the field of Native American religions.

Some boundaries must be transgressed immediately. Other boundaries may take years to cross. A select few boundaries must never be violated if modern scholars are to promote progressive collaborations with contemporary Native American communities. Nevertheless, transgressions must be meaningful and intentional or else they risk falling into “illusions and shadows.” Purposeful transgressions can illuminate the historical, political, and economic significance of Native American communities. They may also reveal the pain, degradation, and humiliation that went into the founding of America. Only through thoughtful analysis of the conception and perception of blood boundaries can we more acutely understand the actual cultural boundaries that exist between contemporary native and non-native peoples. Blood, even as boundary, is a fluid which can be shaped and manipulated to fill almost any vessel. Blood is the key to understanding. Blood is the essence of institutional racism perpetrated against Native American communities. Blood is the motivator of the inclusion of Jews into mainstream American society. Blood is the power to transgressing the boundaries between American Indian and American Jewish communities.

Blood boundaries have been the most persistent boundaries I have encountered while working on the Onondaga Nation. Blood boundaries are both the visible of phenotype, of family and lineage. Blood boundaries are also hidden. Some boundaries I have crossed while others I have come to respect and leave untraveled. Paradoxically, blood can be the easiest boundary to transgress while also being the most persistent. Indians, like Jews, know blood is fraudulent and violent -- a tool to decimate and destroy

the community. Indians, like Jews, also know blood can be strength and sustaining -- a way and means to segregate and shelter themselves from the larger gentile community.

There is a perception, based on decades of experience, that outsiders who arrive at Onondaga and want to talk about religion fall into one of two categories: 1) the outsider is an agent of the Lord and is invested in converting Onondaga people away from their traditional Longhouse religion towards Christianity; 2) The outsider is a “wannabe” who is interested in “going native” and replacing the culture, religion, and language of their family with Onondaga culture, Onondaga religion, and Onondaga language. Over the centuries and still occurring today, these missionaries and wannabes have repeatedly ventured into Onondaga Nation territory. Blood boundaries have been enacted in order to keep these outsiders at a safe distance from the community. For scholars to succeed, they need to position themselves as neither wannabe nor missionary. If successful, the blood boundary shifts from detriment to resource.

It was refreshing for Onondaga people when they realized while I was interested in the moral and philosophical systems of the Haudenosaunee, I never wanted any part of Haudenosaunee culture or religion for myself. I have no “Indian blood,” no “Native heritage,” and certainly no “Cherokee grandmother.” This assisted me with understanding and respecting the boundaries of the Onondaga community. “Thinking in Jewish,” or applying a Jewish historical and cultural lens to modern ethnographic fieldwork, has been an effective tool in relating to contemporary native peoples. Without a solid understanding of who you are, where you come from, and the language and religion of your ancestors, it would very difficult to survive Indian country or comprehend why Native people are so wary and distrustful of outsiders. Being able to

share aspects of Jewish history, Jewish culture, and the Jewish religion, as my friends at Onondaga shared with me, endeared me to my informants and allowed understanding to blossom between us. Being unencumbered by fantasies of conversion -- from me to them or them to me -- allowed our conversations to be based on the process of mutual respect and exchange. From this freedom of thought, we began to notice certain similarities in the religious lives and worldviews of Jewish and Native American peoples. This project was birthed from sharing without the expectation of conversion and teaching without the expectation of adoption. It took centuries of abuse and institutionalized racism to create the blood boundaries that dominate Native American communities. Noticing, cataloging, respecting, discussing, and transgressing these boundaries is one way to investigate the intersections between Jews and Indians.

GENOCIDE

The transformation of human beings into feces was the camps principal industry. The whole enterprise was directed primarily to the manufacture of corpses. The decaying corpses represented the final transformation of human beings into feces. The people of the Devil were turned into the ultimate element of the Devil.²⁶⁰

The immediate objectives are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops in the ground and prevent their planting more.²⁶¹

Genocide as Interface

Genocide is the most perfunctory interface, almost a fulcrum, between Jews and Indians. Although the experience of mass death links these two communities, modern comparisons between the German genocide and the American genocide have suffered from a lack of cohesion, context, and collaboration. Concerning the considerable obstacles surrounding projects of comparative genocide, David Stannard has cautioned that it is common for groups afflicted by genocide to “hold up their peoples experiences” as “fundamentally different from the others.”²⁶² As a result of this phenomenon, academic comparisons are simply “rejected out of hand,” resulting in an almost “preemptive conclusion that one’s own group has suffered more than others.”²⁶³ These impulses are grounded in the fearful need to earn “a horrible award of distinction that will be diminished if the true extent of another group’s suffering is acknowledged.”²⁶⁴

Nevertheless, Stannard braves a comparison between the “Jewish Holocaust and the Euro-American genocide against the Indians of America,” because of the “similarities of

²⁶⁰ Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, p. 39

²⁶¹ Edward Lengel ed., *The Papers of George Washington: Revolutionary War Series* volume 20, 8 April – 31 May 1779 (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

²⁶² Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. 152.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 152

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 152

significance” present in these two atrocities.²⁶⁵ Only by emphasizing cooperation and collaboration, understanding and empathy, between afflicted groups (victims) can academic comparisons move into social and political spheres.

The systematic liquidation of a cultural or religious group is not a modern phenomenon. Nevertheless, it was only after the atrocities of the Third Reich that “genocide” became part of the English lexicon. “Genocide,” a term first coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish immigrant to the United States, was defined in 1948 by the Office of the UN special advisor on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG) as

[G]enocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.²⁶⁶

According to David Stannard, the purpose of genocide is to “do away with an entire people, or to indiscriminately consume them, either by outright mass murder or by creating conditions that lead to their oblivion.”²⁶⁷ The discipline of “comparative genocide” did not become popular in American academic circles until the late 1980’s. Today, however, “genocide” has been identified as a worldwide phenomenon - perhaps endemic to the entire human race. All over the world, academic and social, political and humanitarian, organizations have mobilized around inhibiting the perpetrators of genocide and assisting the victims of these terrible crimes.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 151-53

²⁶⁶ http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf, viewed on October 16, 2016.

²⁶⁷ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. 254.

In order to compare the American genocide with the German genocide, it is necessary to differentiate between cultural genocide and physical genocide. "Cultural genocide," according to Tinker, is "more subtle than overt military extermination, yet is no less devastating to a people."²⁶⁸ Cultural genocide involves the

Effective destruction of a people by systematically or systemically destroying, eroding, or undermining the integrity of the culture and system of values that defines a people and gives them life. First of all, it involves the destruction of those cultural structures of existence that give a people a sense of holistic and communal integrity. It does this by limiting a people's freedom to practice their culture and to live out their lives in culturally appropriate patterns. It effectively destroys a people by eroding both their self-esteem and the interrelationships that bind them together as a community.²⁶⁹

Lemkin's definition of physical genocide involves "killing," "causing harm," "inflicting physical destruction," "preventing births," and "forcing" assimilation. This definition reflects the motivation of the architects of the German genocide to liquidate the entire European Jewish population. As a result, the continued significance of the German genocide in American society is directly linked to the physical destruction of Jewish bodies - not the implications and long term effects of "cultural genocide." The devastating influence of the American genocide is that the cultural aspects of genocide -- Christianization, blood quantum, land theft, and religious persecution -- have been allowed to operate, more or less unchallenged, long after the Indian wars (physical genocide) came to an end.²⁷⁰ This comparative enterprise is intended to exhibit how a knowledge of the history and culture of Jewish communities, not just their destruction,

²⁶⁸ Tinker, George, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993). 5

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 6

²⁷⁰ The wounded knee massacre, which took place on December 29, 1890, is generally accepted as the end of the Indian Wars. Although Indian wars were waged against California tribes through the 1920's it was after the murder of 300+ Lakota men, women and children who were part of the ghost dance revival movement that the United States Federal Government began to shift their policies of physical genocide and open warfare more towards cultural genocide (boarding schools, blood quantum, missionization).

has the power to reposition and redirect conventional attitudes and interpretations of Native American peoples.

I agree with Stannard that comparative genocide can't devolve into an academic one-ups-manship or scholars run the risk of reducing the victims of genocide into a political prop. Reducing genocide to a political tool re-victimizes the dead by ranking -- thereby trivializing -- the significance and impact of their suffering. For comparative genocide to be successful, it must be an act of contrition and condolence that educates the uninformed and promotes cross-cultural dialogue. As Michael Berenbaum has stated, "we should let our suffering, however incommensurate, unite us in condemnation of inhumanity rather than divide us in a calculus of calamity."²⁷¹ This chapter will explore how genocide has been used as a strategy -- political, religious and educational -- for comparing American Jewish and Native American communities. I will begin by discussing how museum spaces have catalyzed comparisons between the German genocide and the American genocide. Then, I will critique Churchill's accusations concerning "Jewish Exclusivism" and the lack of a religious dimension throughout his project. The chapter will end with a discussion of how Mohawk's "utopian legacies," Hirsch's "post-memory," and Boyarin's "imagination" can help embed the cerebral enterprise of comparative genocide in living communities. Ultimately, I hope to identify the role that genocide could play in forging new politico-religious alliances between American Indian and American Jewish communities.

²⁷¹ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. 152-3.

Horror, Respect and Empathy in the Nation's Capitol

Discussing genocide may be the most difficult task of any scholar. Death and loss, humiliation and degradation, shame and misery, are almost impossible to convey without simplifying the unexplainable and inexplicable. When discussed incorrectly -- or insensitively -- it results in pain, hurt feelings, misery, and academic purgatory. Even when done well, these same results often occur. It is a daunting and overwhelming task to speaking meaningfully about the horrors of history. According to Fackenheim, "all writing about the Holocaust is in the grip of paradox: the event must be communicated, yet is incommunicable. And the writer must accept this paradox and endure."²⁷²

According to Churchill the unavoidable moral elements of prevention must be embraced because "we have the obligation to do so, not only for ourselves and one another, but for our children, and their children on through the coming generations." I am not ashamed to admit that I doubt that my words have the power stop or prevent future acts of genocide. Fackenheim's paradox, to communicate the incommunicable, is a more pragmatic and realistic approach to scholarship than preventing future acts of genocide.

While academic scholarship may motivate political movements the actual prevention of genocide takes a whole lot more than words on a page. This paradox has resulted in an entire sub-genre of academic work dedicated to teaching about the German genocide. American educators -- whether they teach middle school, high school or college -- looking for resources concerning guidelines and strategies, theories and methods, to assist their pedagogical approaches to the German genocide will find a

²⁷² Emil Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Thought* (New York, NY: Schocken, 1989). 26

plethora of up to date sources designed to help them “communicate the incommunicable.”²⁷³

An equivalent sub-genre of scholarship does not exist for educators dealing with the American genocide. While many scholars, Native and non-Native, have written about the devastating effects of the American genocide, it is a responsibility often left to the realm of University professors. The intentional obfuscation of the American genocide is systemic throughout American society. Denial of the American genocide is built into the structure of modern American culture, religion, politics, and education. Throughout American history, Fackenheim’s paradox has been ignored in lieu of the preferred narratives of manifest destiny and the American Dream, religious freedom and personal liberties, multiculturalism and American exceptionalism. Nevertheless, the specters of exterminated Jews and shadows of slaughtered Indians have dominated intellectual comparisons between Jewish and Native American communities. In no place is this phenomenon more readily observable than on the national mall in Washington, D.C.

The mall in Washington, D.C. might be the quintessential tourist destination in the entire United States of America. While Times Square in New York City, the Gettysburg battlefield in Pennsylvania, and the Grand Canyon in Arizona might challenge D.C. for the America’s most iconic tourist destination, no other destination conveys the power and authority of American culture better than D.C. The monuments

²⁷³ Michael Gray, Simone Schweber, Debbie Findling, Samuel Totten, Stephen Feinberg, Marianne Hirsch, Howard Tinberg, Ronald Weisberger have all written extensively about strategies that teachers can utilize in order to engage students with the difficult themes surrounding the German genocide. From using film and photographs to resources specifically designed at teaching teenagers there is no shortage of resources available for educators who need pedagogical assistance for teaching about the German genocide. The USHMM website also offers a set of specific “guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust” that are made to assist in the process of teaching about the German genocide.

and museums, memorials and cemeteries, art and architecture, expressed in D.C. have been consciously constructed in order to convey the dominance of the United States Federal government. This is one reason why millions of school children visit D.C. every summer – not to mention the millions of national and international tourists who visit D.C. on a year round basis. Museum spaces, specifically the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), have generated a deluge of intersections -- artistic, theological, and political -- between Jews and Indians.

The USHMM, with over seventeen million visitors in 2015, is one of the most popular museums in America and among the top tourist destinations in all of Washington, D.C.²⁷⁴ The NMAI, on the other hand, registered a grand total of 1.3 million visitors in 2014.²⁷⁵ Due to the design of D.C., combined with how tourism has developed in the area, many visitors go to multiple museums and multiple monuments on the same day. It would not be uncommon for tourists to visit both the USHMM and the NMAI in the same weekend – if not on the same day. The proximity of the USHMM to the NMAI, roughly a one-mile walk from building to building, has created an unstable metaphysical bond between the American genocide and the German genocide in one of the most symbolically significant landscapes in America.

Museum spaces have proved to be highly problematic for living Native communities.²⁷⁶ For generations, museums were part of the colonial process – taking

²⁷⁴ <https://www.ushmm.org/information/press/press-kits/united-states-holocaust-memorial-museum-press-kit>, visited October 16, 2016

²⁷⁵ http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/press_releases/NMAI-DC-Museum-Fact-Sheet-June%202015.pdf, visited October 16, 2016

²⁷⁶ While I have previously discussed both William Fenton and NAGPRA there is an entire body of scholarship which deals exclusively with the problematic relationship between Native American communities and museum's. *Skull Wars* by David Hurst Thomas and *Reclaiming the Sacred* by Winona

from Native communities, but giving little to nothing back in return. Only in the last few decades, since NAGPRA, have museum spaces begun to adopt an ethic of “decolonization.” Decolonization is a lofty goal, but the preponderance of Native ceremonial objects and Native human remains still in the possession of museums means it will take generations to transform museums from a colonial agent to a decolonizing force.

According to Rubinstein, “from the moment that planning began on a national Holocaust memorial, Native American and Jewish histories became competitively, intimately, and inversely linked.”²⁷⁷ The proximity of these two edifices has unintentionally dismantled the social and economic, political and religious, barriers that have traditionally separated Jewish and Native American communities; however, it is left to the individual to make sense of this juxtaposition. Both museums are overtly deliberate in how materials are presented. Absent is a means capable of connecting the two or explaining why there is an art museum for Indians and a genocide museum for Jews. This has created a great deal of cognitive dissonance and unanswerable questions for people who are fortunate enough to visit both museums.

Although these two spaces have linked Native American and Jewish histories, the museums are radically different spaces. There are significant and unavoidable material discrepancies between the two museums. According to James Ingo Freed, one of the architects responsible for designing the USHMM,

LaDuke are some of the most well known examples of texts that are critical of the history of abuse between museums and Native Communities. Amy Lonetree, Chip Colwell and Bryony Onciul have continued this work and have now introduced the concept of “decolonizing” museum’s in order to make them function as critical instead of colonial spaces.

²⁷⁷ Rubinstein, *Members of the Tribe*, p. 165.

I was working with the idea of a visceral memory, visceral as well as visual.

I don't believe that you could ever understand the Holocaust with the mind. You have to feel it. Feeling may be a better way of getting at it because horror is not an intellectual category as far as I can tell.

I want to leave it open as a resonator of emotions. Odd or quiet is not enough. It must be intestinal, visceral; it must take you in its grip. This is indeterminate thing to do, and we are that saying that we are using architecture to do it.²⁷⁸

The architecture of USHMM and the exhibits contained within were consciously designed in order to invoke an “intestinal” and “visceral” memory of “horror.” It is intended for visitors to the USHMM to have a transformative experience. Linenthal has argued that there are undeniable political dimensions embedded in the museum’s preferred narratives. According to Linenthal,

Visitors to the museum's permanent exhibition are drawn into a Holocaust narrative that builds in intensity from the moment they are herded into intentionally ugly, dark grey metal elevators in the Hall of Witness.

The Holocaust is to be "inflicted" on the museum visitor as the narrative seeks to arouse empathy for victims, inform visitors about wartime America's role as both bystander and liberator, and ask visitors to ponder the power of a murderous ideology that produced those capable of implementing official mass extermination. No longer occupying American space, visitors undergo an initiatory passage through a Holocaust narrative designed, in part, to help them appreciate the virtues and frailty of American democracy and designed to instill an attitude of civic responsibility. They are to emerge from the exhibit "born again," chastened citizens, alert to the stirrings of genocidal possibilities in their own society and elsewhere.²⁷⁹

To be “inflicted” by a museum narrative is a bold and unusual pedagogical tool but it is related to Freed’s intent to invoke a “visceral” and “intentional” response to the

²⁷⁸ James Ingo Freed, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Assemblage, No. 9, Jun., 1989).

²⁷⁹ Edward Linenthal, *The Boundaries of Memory: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* American Quarterly, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Sep., 1994).

architecture and exhibit pieces. Removing visitors from the comfort of their vacation and subjecting them to “mass extermination” is a political ploy to chastise citizens and “alert them to the stirrings of genocidal possibilities.” To be “born again” visitors must subject themselves to the pain and humiliation, depravity and degradation of the victims of the German genocide.

The intentions behind the architectural design and colorful exhibits of the NMAI could not be more diametrically opposed to the USHMM. According to Evelyn,

The theme “Welcome to a Native Place” guided the architecture and our preparations for Mall visitors. Consultants for *The Way of the People* envisioned the Mall Museum as a welcoming building, open to the sky, warm in color and tone, and facing the East—an orientation toward the rising sun being important to many Native peoples and communities. Visitors proceed through a carefully designed landscape of water elements, plants, trees, “grandfather” rocks, honoring spaces, and sites for outdoor presentations. Distinctive stones mark the cardinal directions.²⁸⁰

The USHMM was designed to be a confusing and disorientating building that would remove the visitor from the noise and congestion of the city. It is not a “welcoming building,” nor is it “warm in color;” there is no emphasis on water, plants, trees, rocks, or “sites for outdoor presentations.” The circular cultural center, brightly lit gift shop, and bustling food court of the NMAI directly contrast with the space of the USHMM. Although there is no evidence that these differences were intentional, in many ways these two museums are the yin and yang of the National Mall.

The NMAI is constructed to invite people into dialogue. As Rickard states,

Peppered throughout the experience of the opening with the Procession of Native Nations and in every installation in the museum, the visitor encounters photographic, digital, and film representations of contemporary, living Native people. This encounter is long overdue and

²⁸⁰ Evelyn Douglas, *The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indians: An International Institution of Living Cultures* (The Public Historian, Vol. 28, No 2 Spring 2006). 53

the museum provides a first safe space to begin to reconnect with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas.²⁸¹

There are no safe spaces inside the USHMM. In several respects, it is the exact opposite of a safe space. One museum emphasizes life, and the other museum emphasizes death. One museum highlights the aesthetic beauty of human communities, and the other museum highlights the depravity of human communities. One museum relies on power, and the other museum relies on powerlessness. One museum is designed to provide visitors a “safe space to begin to reconnect with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas,” and the other attempts to contaminate visitors with stories of shame and humiliation, degradation and murder so that they may be reborn as “chastened citizens.” According to Rubinstein, the NMAI

Deliberately skirts the potentially competitive and displacing discourse of genocidal histories entirely, instead building narrative about Native individual and communal identities, self-determination, and living cultures. “Survivance” is a key term, meaning cultural persistence and adaptiveness, that resurfaces throughout the language of the museum.²⁸²

It is not my intention to impugn the architects and curators of the NMAI, but to illustrate the deliberate differences in the design aesthetic and agendas, motivations and preferred narratives, of these two important museum spaces. Ultimately, this chapter is an attempt to come to terms with the histories and ideologies of these two museum spaces. Both of these museums accomplish the goals of their respective mission statements; however, neither one is capable of engaging with the similarities and differences between American Jewish and American Indian communities.

²⁸¹ Jolene Rickard, *Absorbing or Obscuring the Absence of Critical Space in the Americas for Indigneneity* (Anthropology and Aesthetics, No. 52, Autumn 2007). 93

²⁸² Rubinstein, *Members of the Tribe*, p. 168.

As soon as the NMAI opened to the public, critics began to pick apart the a-historical presentation of the artifacts and exhibits contained in the museum. On the very same day the museum opened, Marc Fisher published a piece for the Washington Post entitled *Indian Museum's Appeal, Sadly, Only Skin-Deep*. Throughout the article Fisher details the “missed opportunities” of the NMAI. According to Fisher,

The museum seems to want us to accept a particular passive-voice presentation of the colonizing forces in our history. In so doing, the museum fails to hold the United States government accountable for its genocidal acts committed against our ancestors. It is difficult to accept this vision of our present, full of heroic survivors who have moved on from the painful past and only embraced a utopian version of the present.

Poverty and substance abuse, domestic violence and unemployment -- the social ills that developed over generations of displacement, discrimination and disconnect from the wider society are mentioned, but not explored.

Rather, we get repetitive stories of survival, of how tribal customs and rituals are nourished today -- a painfully narrow prism through which to view American Indians. The museum feels like a trade show in which each group of Indians gets space to sell its founding myth and favorite anecdotes of survival.²⁸³

This brutal critique of the “missed opportunities” of the NMAI set the stage for a plethora of scathing editorials. The NMAI was never intended to be a Holocaust museum; however, the failure to confront the devastating effects of war, missionization, and boarding schools presumes that the visitors of the museum are already aware of the devastating effects of conquest and colonization.

Fisher was the first person to connect his experience of the NMAI to his experience of the USHMM. According to Fisher,

The Holocaust Memorial Museum started us down this troubling path. A first-rate endeavor with a rigorous, probing approach to history, the Holocaust museum -- a privately funded enterprise on government land -- should nonetheless never have been given a spot near the Mall. Its location

²⁸³ Fisher, Marc, *Indian Museum's Appeal, Sadly, Only Skin-Deep* (Washington Post, 21 September 2004).

there opened the gate for the deconstruction of American history into ethnically separate stories told in separate buildings.²⁸⁴

Fisher taps into the dis-ease felt by individuals who visit both the USHMM and the NMAI. The issue with these two museums is not, as Fisher argues, that they “opened the gate for the deconstruction of American history into ethnically separate stories in separate buildings.” America had been divided into ethnically separate stories long before the creation of either of these two museums. The tensions that arise from visiting the USHMM and the NMAI are religious -- not architectural or curatorial -- in nature. Neither the USHMM nor the NMAI can negotiate the different historical trajectories of Jewish and Native American communities, because they are museums. Museum space is invaluable for starting the conversation. Certainly, the proximity of the USHMM and the NMAI have started innumerable conversations surrounding the German genocide and the American genocide, but it will take communities (not individuals) to make sense of these two spaces.

A Tale of Two Catastrophes: Motivations of Comparison

Far from denial, the German genocide now serves an important function inside the ethos of American exceptionalism. Comparisons to the German genocide are so prevalent inside the beltway of American politics that hardly a week goes by when some congressman, governor, state official, or political staffer is not sanctioned and publicly forced to apologize for their distasteful comparisons. While trivial, the endless stream of analogies, metaphors, and comparisons made by American politicians -- on both sides of the aisle -- centering on “Nazis,” “Hitler,” “Himmler,” “Eichmann,” “Goebbels,” “Brown

²⁸⁴ Ibid.,

shirts,” “S.S.,” “Gestapo,” and “concentration camps” has reinforced the mythic importance of the German genocide to American history and religion, politics, and culture.

There is no doubt the Jewish community in Europe and the indigenous inhabitants of the Western hemisphere were both subjected to genocide. Nevertheless, in American culture, the German genocide has been distinguished as a pivotal turning point in 20th century history while the American genocide has never been properly acknowledged or negotiated. The American genocide has been obfuscated by a complex web of social strategies and educational pedagogies, political justifications, and religious doctrines. This comparison, while based on certain “similarities of significance,” also portends to uncover how the differences in these two atrocities continues to shape the process of Jewish and Native American identity creation.

In his book, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust Denial in America from 1492 to the Present*, Ward Churchill employs a wide variety of comparisons between the American genocide and the Germany genocide, Jewish academics and Native victims, Nazism and Americanism. According to Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide* is a “synthesizing effort, the book seeks to contextualize the American holocaust through direct comparison to other genocides – most especially the nazi Holocaust – to an extent not previously undertaken on such a scale.”²⁸⁵ Throughout his career, Churchill wed his criticisms of the denial of the American genocide to the recognition of the German genocide. Although controversial, and by some estimates “fraudulent,” Churchill has endeavored to link the significance of American genocide to American history to the

285 Churchill, Ward, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 1997). 8

significance of the German genocide to American history. Churchill's complicated political, social, and academic motivations, combined with his long history of activism, have made him particularly relevant to this project. Churchill's demise is an example of what happens when Native political issues are divorced from land and from living Native communities.

Churchill's expansive comparison is politically motivated to 1) force non-Native people to recognize the American genocide, and 2) to transfer "moral authority" onto contemporary Native peoples, and 3) to promote Churchill's anti-Zionist agenda. A central part of *A Little Matter of Genocide* is Churchill's critique of "Jewish Exclusivism" and American "Holocaust denial."²⁸⁶ These accusations are aimed at a select cabal of "Jewish American writers" (e.g. Steven Katz, Deborah Lipstadt, Michael Berenbaum) whose "Jewish Exclusivism" has poisoned the well of comparative genocide by fueling the misconception of the historical "uniqueness" and singularity of the German genocide. Churchill believes he has uncovered an active Zionist plot to elevate the significance of the German genocide over and above all other instances of genocide. As a result of the push to elevate the German genocide, certain "Jewish American writers" have actively suppressed evidence of the American genocide in order to prove the uniqueness of the Jewish experience. This has robbed Native communities of the "moral authority" and "high grade moral capital" that they should rightfully possess.²⁸⁷

The tone, manner, and style of Churchill's comparisons between the United States Federal government and Nazi Germany are specifically crafted in order to facilitate a new understanding and appreciation of the "victimhood" of Native communities as well as the

²⁸⁶ Ibid., xvi

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 2

noxious history of Federal Indian Policy. Churchill argues that a more precise understanding of the American genocide should lead to a transfer of “moral authority” and “high grade moral capital” to the surviving victims of the American genocide.²⁸⁸ Churchill claims Jewish writers have consistently incorporated a “subtext” into their publications that

Undoes quite a lot of the good they might otherwise have accomplished. Moreover, they do so with a heavy overload of precisely the distortion, polemicism, and emotion-laden prose she herself condemns.²⁸⁹

Unfortunately, Churchill’s missteps and mischaracterizations of Zionism and Holocaust studies have poisoned the well for studies in comparative genocide through the same “distortion, polemicism and emotion-laden prose” that Churchill himself has claimed to condemn.

The prevention of future acts of genocide should be understood as a moral commandment. Churchill claims to have been heavily influenced by Chalk and Jonassohn, who famously asserted that any worthwhile comparative study of genocide must assist in the “prevention of future genocides,”²⁹⁰ and by Stannard who surmised “the most important question for the future in this case is not ‘can it happen again?’ Rather, it is ‘can it be stopped.’”²⁹¹ Churchill argued, “the major reason for doing comparative research on genocides is the hope of preventing them in the future.”²⁹² This preventative requirement evaluates scholarship based on its ability to yield “predictive indicators” and to encourage future “efforts at prevention.” According to Churchill, any “worthwhile

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 11

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 29

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 250-51

²⁹¹ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. xiv.

²⁹² Churchill, *A Little Matter*, p. 11.

activism” concerning genocide must be “radically different from other human rights efforts” in order to “intervene constructively in its outcomes.”²⁹³

Throughout *Little Matter* Churchill includes references to current geopolitical climate in Israel and Palestine. These ideas are not developed. Instead, they are usually tacked onto the end of paragraphs or hidden in footnotes. When taken as a whole, it becomes clear Churchill’s references to “ideas like the ‘moral right’ of the Israeli settler state to impose itself directly atop the Palestinian Arab homeland” and “Israel’s ongoing genocide against the Palestinian population whose rights and property were usurped in its very creation” are deliberately constructed to focus the reader’s attention onto “Israel’s ongoing genocide.”²⁹⁴ Slowly, it becomes clear that one of Churchill’s unstated goals is to foster political alliances between contemporary American Indians and contemporary Palestinians. Churchill consciously triangulated his comparisons between the American genocide and the German genocide in order to speak about modern conflicts in Israel and Palestine.

The main villains in Churchill’s work are a selected group of “Jewish American authors” who have perverted, disgraced, and politicized the field of comparative genocide studies. Crucial to Churchill’s project is a dismantling of the school of “American Holocaust denial.” Churchill calls “German Holocaust denial,” whereby the “genocide of Europe’s Jews is minimized or denied altogether,” a particularly repugnant and “unsavory” phenomena marking the “post-war intellectual environment.”²⁹⁵ While there are no laws in the United States against denying the German genocide -- as there are in a plethora of countries in Europe and Israel -- participating in the active denial of the

²⁹³ Ibid., 11

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 74

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 63

German genocide is an unpopular opinion to take whether inside or outside the academy. In America, the German genocide has been recognized as a significant historical event worthy of study and commemoration, meditation and negotiation.

According to Churchill, by refusing to acknowledge “scores of other instances of genocide,” including the genocide inflicted upon the indigenous inhabitants of the Western hemisphere, “Exclusivists” have effectively engaged in “holocaust denial on a grand scale.”²⁹⁶ “Jewish Exclusivism,” according to Churchill, is a key cog in the much larger machine meant to deny the American genocide took place. Denial, according to Stannard, is primarily motivated by two main factors:

First, protection of the moral reputations of those people and that country responsible for the genocidal activity; and second, on occasion, the desire to continue carrying out virulent racist assaults upon those who were the victims of the genocide in question.²⁹⁷

Churchill argues both of these motives have driven Jews to “adopt the Zionist perspective.”²⁹⁸ Zionism, according to Churchill, promotes the

‘Unique historical suffering’ under nazism translates into fulfillment of biblical prophecy that they are ‘the chosen’, entitled by virtue of their destiny of special persecution to assume a rarefied status among the remainder of humanity...ignoring the realities of Israel’s ongoing genocide against the Palestinian population.²⁹⁹

For Churchill, these “Jewish exclusivists,” (aka Zionists), are actually engaged in a “perverse...psychic...symbiotic relationship” in order to bolster and justify the occupation of Palestine.

Churchill argues that “prominent Jewish American writers” have elevated the German genocide to privileged and “unparalleled” status in order protect the “privileged

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 11 & 36

²⁹⁷ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. 152.

²⁹⁸ Churchill, *A Little Matter*, p. 83.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 83 & 74

political status of Israel” and maintain “certain political advantages enjoyed by the state of Israel.”³⁰⁰ Jewish Exclusivists have, according to Churchill, doctored the historical record in order to promote the legitimacy of Israel as the Jewish homeland. Additionally, the Exclusivist community has been religiously motivated to protect “Judaism’s theological belief in itself as comprising a ‘special’ or ‘chosen’ people.”³⁰¹ Ultimately, “Jewish Exclusivists” are, according to Churchill, part of a much larger “Zionist” conspiracy meant to justify the colonization of “Arab” Palestine and obfuscate the “realities of Israel’s ongoing genocide against the Palestinian population.”³⁰²

Churchill identifies Deborah Lipstadt as one of the most central members of the school of “Jewish Exceptionalism.” According to Churchill, Lipstadt is a “firm denier of the American holocaust” whose “complex of lies, consciously and maliciously uttered” should place her in the same category of “the very deniers Lipstadt has devoted the bulk of her text to combating.”³⁰³ Of issue to Churchill is the final chapter of Lipstadt’s book *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* where Churchill claims Lipstadt’s otherwise “good and useful book” transitions from the “worthy objective of systematically exposing, confronting and repudiating those who deny the existence of the Holocaust to a more dubious attempt to confirm the nazi genocide of European Jewry as something absolutely singular.”³⁰⁴ While Churchill’s work is inundated with footnotes and citations, the only passage he quotes from the last chapter of *Denying the Holocaust* has nothing to do with Lipstadt denying the American, Armenian, Cambodian, or any other genocide. Churchill misreads Lipstadt’s claim that

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 2

³⁰¹ Ibid., 74

³⁰² Ibid., 74

³⁰³ Ibid., 31

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 31

“for the deniers and many others who are 'not yet' deniers, the answer to this final question is obvious: because of the power of the Jews”³⁰⁵ as a proclamation of Jewish superiority rather than a condemnation of the “Yes, but” syndrome. Churchill’s claims,

In her (Lipstadt) project’s final pages, the author has subtly substituted one agenda for another. Without pause or notification, she shifts from the entirely worthy objective of systematically exposing, confronting, and repudiating those who deny the existence of the Holocaust to a far more dubious attempt to confirm the nazi genocide of European Jewry as something singular.³⁰⁶

These assertions are at best a deliberate misread and at worst a libelous attempt to distort Lipstadt’s argument in order to make a moral equivalency between her and David Duke and by extension Jews / Zionists and neo-Nazis.

Along with Lipstadt, Churchill identifies Stephen Katz as another principal member of the cabal of “Jewish Exclusivism.” Churchill’s evidence for this claim is even thinner than his misreading of Lipstadt. Churchill’s evidence that Katz sought to elevate the position of the German genocide above the American genocide as a means of promoting Zionism does not come from Katz’s published work. Instead, Churchill cites an anecdote, unclear as to the source, but presumably told to him by David Stannard, surrounding the publishing process of the book *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives in Comparative Genocide* for proof of Katz’s “Jewish Exclusivism.” According to Churchill,

Only when the editor accidentally faxed a memo intended for Katz to one of the more trenchant critics, historian David E. Stannard, was the subterfuge revealed (the missive outlined various contributors’ compliance with Katz’s secret manipulations). After a series of meetings with the publisher and its lawyers, most of the essays were returned to their

³⁰⁵ Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1993). 215

³⁰⁶ Churchill, *A Little Matter*, p. 31.

original form – a matter Katz, apparently waxing indignant at having been caught, calls “a disgraceful business” – and the book was sent to press.³⁰⁷

For someone who rails against academic dishonesty, it is shocking Churchill utilizes this anecdote as a source of sound scholarship. Churchill provides neither the aforementioned fax nor any evidence of Katz’s “secret manipulations.” Churchill’s accusation of Katz’s “Jewish Exclusivism” appears to be based on nothing more than paranoia and his need to squeeze multiple “Jewish American writers” into his theory of “Jewish Exclusivism.” Churchill’s dishonesty with regards to Lipstadt and Katz casts doubt on his entire theory of “Jewish Exclusivism.” To falsify his sources and then to project his “findings” onto the rest of the Jewish community is nothing short of academic malpractice.

Churchill claims to despise “Jewish Exclusivism.” Perhaps, envy is a more accurate in categorizing his feelings towards the modern Jewish community. By attributing the political capital and social mobility of American Jews to the privileged status that “singular victimhood” has bestowed upon them, Churchill seems to be reasoning that a similar strategy would assist him to “meet my responsibilities of helping deliver that to which my people is due.”³⁰⁸ Churchill’s goals, as an “American Indian” and “simply as a human being imbued with the conscience,” are “unequivocally political” in that he seeks to demonstrate “the genocide inflicted upon the American Indians over the past five centuries is unparalleled in human history, both in terms of its sheer magnitude and its duration.”³⁰⁹

Even though Churchill is careful to include prevention and education in his list of goals, he is primarily concerned with cultivating “moral authority” for American Indians.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 65

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 11

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 11 & 97

Churchill's usage of "unparalleled" is key. While he claims to be morally repulsed with the school of thought that labeled the German genocide as "unparalleled," Churchill is comfortable with employing the adjective in order to describe the American genocide. By portraying American Indians as "one of the most victimized groups in the history of humanity," Churchill seeks to endow native communities with "every ounce of moral authority" due to them. In this calculation "moral authority" and "high grade moral capital" is derived from the destruction of culture, not from the culture that was destroyed.³¹⁰

While on the surface, it may appear that Churchill is comparing Jews and Indians, in reality he is much more invested in a comparison between Nazi Germany and the United States Federal government. Throughout Churchill's work comparisons between Jews and Indians -- Jewishness and Indianness, Judaism and Native American Religions - - are outnumbered 20:1 by comparisons between Nazism and Federal Indian Policy. Churchill uses the German genocide as a trope to prove the savagery of the American government and the subsequent righteousness of American Indian communities.

For Churchill, the school of "Jewish Exclusivism" is a symptom of a much larger effort to deny the American genocide took place. Churchill's repeated comparisons between the American genocide and the German genocide is a political strategy. If Churchill could successfully illustrate enough similarities between the American genocide and the German genocide, then these two events would become morally equivalent. In Churchill's mind, forging a moral equivalency between the Third Reich and the American government should elevate the political status of contemporary American Indian peoples. By proving once and for all that the genocide inflicted upon

³¹⁰ Ibid., 11

Jews was no more “unique,” “terrible,” “systemic,” or “ferocious” than the genocide inflicted upon Native American communities Churchill hopes to highlight the inaccuracies of “Jewish Exclusivism” in order to bolster the moral and political status of contemporary American Indian communities. Ultimately Churchill has embraced the idea that genocide and politics, not religion and culture, define contemporary Native American communities.

Nowhere in Churchill’s text does he deal with living Jewish communities – whether in America or Israel. Through a diverse array of comparisons and anecdotes Churchill utilizes the liquidation of Jews during the German genocide as a trope. It is curious that “Zionism” and “Israel” are the only aspect of Jews, Judaism, or Jewishness mentioned by Churchill outside the context of destruction. Perhaps Churchill associates Zionism with the German genocide because of the history of the founding of the State of Israel. Or perhaps Churchill is making an allusion to colonization. Nevertheless, Churchill completely ignores the considerable differences between political and cultural, religious and secular, forms of Zionism. He also ignores that modern Zionism predates the Third Reich by some forty years. Ultimately, Churchill employs “straw Zionists” in order to illustrate how the ethos of denial has infected modern Jewish communities in both America and Israel. Jews are Zionists and Zionists are the perpetrators of genocide is as far as Churchill is willing to go with his relationships to the Jewish community.

Although he alludes to certain similarities between Palestinian Muslims and American Indians, he does not provide any analysis. The reader is left to ponder why Palestinian relationships to the land look almost nothing like American Indian relationships to the land, why Islam looks almost nothing like traditional Native religions,

and why the colonization of America looks almost nothing like the colonization of Palestine. These are all areas that deserve their own exploration, but Churchill doesn't attempt to answer these questions. Throughout the pages of *A Little Matter of Genocide*, Jewish people and Jewish history are used as a device to sensationalize and condemn Israel, the United States, U.S. support of Israel, and Israel's support of the United States. It is not clear how Churchill's one-dimensional criticisms of Zionism are meant to benefit Native peoples or how these comparisons shed light on the history of genocide in America. Churchill never cites examples for how "moral authority" has affected the modern Jewish community, nor does he present the Jewish community as anything other than "victims," "Zionists," or "holocaust Exclusivists."

Imagination, Comparative Genocide and Post-Memory

In order to combat denial, misinformation, and outright propaganda, Churchill embeds his comparison in imagination and shock. Throughout his work, Churchill employed an "imaginary / imagined" Germany, one in which Nazis won WWII and maintained control of a large chunk of Europe, in order to highlight the harsh inequalities contemporary American Indians are meant to endure. For example, Churchill claims America's "elementary and secondary school systems" indoctrinates students by subjecting them to a "historiography" expected of "nazi academics a century after a German victory in wwii."³¹¹ Additionally, the United States, "in perfect Hitlerian fashion," exists "outside the law, claiming to transcend mere international legality on its

³¹¹ Churchill, Ward, *On the Justice of Roosting Chickens: Reflections on the Consequences of U.S. Imperial Arrogance and Criminality* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2003). 1

own authority.”³¹² The imaginary dimension can be applied to Jews, Germans, Euro-Americans, and American Indians alike. Churchill’s characterization of the United States Federal Government as “Hitlerian” and its citizens as “Little Eichmanns” are meant to shock the audience into appreciating the genocidal structures present in United States foreign and domestic policies. Churchill’s imaginative comparisons are consciously structured to shock and provoke the reader into the realization that Federal Indian Policy is every bit as evil as the policies of Nazi Germany and that American Indians, like European Jews, are the survivors of genocide.

Perhaps the most (in)famous example of the imaginative element of Churchill’s comparative genocide is contained in his 2001 essay *Some People Push Back* wherein Churchill argues that the “American civilians” who perished in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, like the “Good Germans” who “gleefully” cheered Nazi “butchery” during WWII, were far from “innocent.” He argues the “Good Americans,” or “Little Eichmann’s” as Churchill refers to them, who perished in the 9/11 attacks were neither “innocent” nor “civilians.” They were active participants in the “technocratic corps at the very heart of America’s global financial empire” whom were all too busy “braying, incessantly and self-importantly into their cell phones, arranging power lunches and stock transactions” to notice the “starved and rotting flesh of 500,000 dead Iraqi children.”³¹³

Churchill asks the reader to imagine modern day “Good Americans” were just as responsible for genocide as “Good Germans” in the 1930’s and 40’s. Far from “innocent,” those who died in the attacks on September 11, 2001 were actually “Little Eichmann’s” guilty of crimes ranging from willful “ignorance” to calculated

³¹² Ibid., 7

³¹³ Churchill, Ward. *Some People Push Back: On the Justive of Roosting Chickens*. <http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/s11/churchill.html>, Viewed on October 16, 2016

“evil.”³¹⁴ For years Churchill had been making comparisons between the American genocide and the German genocide; why, then, did these comments cause such a national controversy? Certainly, the cultural and emotional sensitivity surrounding the 9/11 attacks in America cannot go overstated; however, Churchill’s larger arguments concerning comparative genocide were completely ignored in lieu of demonizing and over-sensationalizing his “little Eichmann’s” analogy. For many years, Churchill’s essay went unnoticed. Late 2005, in preparation to speak at Hamilton College, Churchill’s essay went viral culminating in nine primetime segments of the *O’Reilly Factor* television program dedicated to condemning Churchill’s essay, doubting his academic credentials, and vilifying him personally. The furor surrounding Churchill in late 2005 and culminating in his dismissal from his tenured position at the University of Colorado-Boulder is beyond the scope of this chapter. It is significant to note the power of the “imaginary” element of comparative genocide studies.

American exceptionalism is defined by Ian Tyrrel as the “special character of the United States as a uniquely free nation based on democratic ideals and personal liberty”³¹⁵ and by Rush Limbaugh as “the first time in human history, a government and country was founded on the belief that leaders serve the population....The exception to the rule is what American exceptionalism is.”³¹⁶ Since the German genocide has come to represent the essence of evil, establishing a moral equivalency between the American genocide and German genocide challenges many of the preferred narratives of American exceptionalism. Ultimately, Churchill was reprimanded, both by the American news

³¹⁴ Ibid.,

³¹⁵ Ian Tyrrell, *American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History* (American Historical Review, Vol. 96, No. 4, Oct., 1991). 1032

³¹⁶ http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/daily/2013/09/12/an_explanation_of_american_exceptionalism_for_vladimir_putin_and_barack_obama, viewed on October 16, 2016

media as well as his University colleagues, for his refusal to back down from his comparison between the Third Reich and German citizens to the United States Federal government and American citizens. It is not ironic that comparative genocide ended up catalyzing his termination from the University of Colorado-Boulder and his expulsion from the academy. Fackenheim's paradox should have warned Churchill that his job was to "communicate the incommunicable" not to award "moral authority" to contemporary Native communities.

Imagining the other, in the case of Jews and Indians, has been a two-way street. Imagining Indians has, according to Rubenstein, had a potent effect on the process of identity creation amongst Jews in the United States. Furthermore, "in identifying sympathetically with Indians Jews could register a covert resistance to American political culture that historically policed the kinds of difference it could not tolerate."³¹⁷ American Jews have also "imagined" themselves "in relation to white Gentile culture's ambivalent representations" in order to make sense of their own political and cultural position in America vis-a-vis the political and cultural position of American Indians.³¹⁸ Jews in the United States have "imagined Indians in relation to themselves, and themselves in relation to Indians" in order to make sense of their marginalized racial, cultural, and religious positions. In this regard, Indians have played a significant role in negotiating the "multiple" and "polyvalent" Jewish "identifications." Aside from influencing how Jews see themselves, these types of imaginative exercises have also had an influence on the fields of anthropology, film, cultural studies, and literature.

³¹⁷ Rubenstein, *Members of the Tribe*, p. 18.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 16

Inside or outside the academy, genocide is far from a polite topic of conversation. It is therefore inevitable for projects of comparative genocide to provoke hurt feelings - from one side or another. While I agree with the spirit of Ken Frieden's claim that

It is unfortunate that Holocaust Studies have become such a major part of American Jewish Studies, because I think that it is more important to study the culture that was destroyed than the destruction of the culture.

When trying to be provocative, I have remarked that the Holocaust should be German Studies, not Jewish Studies. As I focus on Jewish literature and culture, I regret that the history of Jews becoming victims takes up an inordinately large place in Jewish Studies.³¹⁹

Nevertheless I cannot ignore the fact that genocide has been the most basis between Jewish and Native American communities in previous comparisons.³²⁰ I also cannot ignore the feeling that "the experience of contemporary Jews has a relevance which exceeds the limits of the Jewish community." Richard Rubenstein cautioned, "we cannot ignore the fact that catastrophe has had and will continue to have an extraordinary influence on Jewish life."³²¹ On a similar note, Ward Churchill has warned that "coming to grips with the significance of the relentless butchery marking the European conquest of America no more changes its nature than does recognition of the horror that was embodied in Auschwitz."³²²

According to Stannard,

Explaining the Jewish Holocaust, to the extent that such monstrosities can ever adequately be explained, requires the understanding of an intertwined complex of phenomenon and an understanding, at the very least, of the deep historical tradition of Christianity's persecution of Jews, of the modern evolution of "racial" anti-Semitism, of the Nazi eugenicists' attitudes toward non-Jewish "life devoid of value," and of specific

³¹⁹ K. Frieden, Personal Correspondence, December 16, 2016.

³²⁰ Which would consequently make Holocaust studies a part of American studies not a part of Native American studies.

³²¹ Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, p. x-xi.

³²² Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, p. 118.

political, economic, and military events that occurred during the early 1940s.³²³

Of the myriad arguments concerning the role of religion in the American and German genocides, John Mohawk espouses an exquisite argument based on the role of violence in Western society. In order to process and explain the ebbs and flows of violence in Western society, Mohawk introduces the concept of “utopian ideologies.” “Ideology” is a significant category for Mohawk, because “after the movements have altered or lost their energy, the ideologies may persist, preserved in the memory of culture in an honored position and capable of reemerging at a later time.”³²⁴

According to Mohawk, all “utopian ideologies” share several interrelated characteristics: first, “the group expects that their utopian story will culminate in the production of a perfect world,” and second “the utopia does not actually arrive; it is always in the future.”³²⁵ Additionally, the “notion of progress” and “chosen people” is inherent to “true utopian thought.”³²⁶ By savaging the notion that “people educated in the Western tradition” are incapable of genocide Mohawk casts into doubt the moral superiority of Western civilization. Since Germany was a “fully accepted member” of the league of “civilized nations,” the German genocide delivered a “profound shock” to Western culture.³²⁷ Civilized nations were supposed to be “incapable of unrestrained barbarism,” the type of which proliferated throughout the German holocaust.³²⁸ The

³²³ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. 185.

³²⁴ John Mohawk, *Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Books, 1999). 3

³²⁵ Ibid., 4

³²⁶ Ibid., 4

³²⁷ Ibid., 209

³²⁸ Ibid., 209

German genocide provided undeniable proof that “people educated in the Western tradition can be capable of genocide.”³²⁹

While most “utopian ideologies” have not been embraced by mainstream society, the few that have become popularized have “provided background and context for some of the culture’s defining moments.”³³⁰ Mohawk identifies the Nazi “third reich” and the “Christian Kingdom of God” as “pursuits of the cultural idea” that have had a profound effect on Western civilization and whose ideologies have become ingrained and preserved in Western society. By arguing that the German genocide and the American genocide were byproducts of “utopian social movements,” Mohawk paints the trauma (historical, religious, cultural) of the German genocide in the exact same light as the trauma of the American genocide. These two acts of terror, separated by hundreds of years and thousands of miles, are comparable because the “utopian ideologies” governing their justifications shifted world events and lead to major geopolitical transformations.

Violence, genocide, and other crimes against humanity, the byproducts of “utopian” movements, are not endemic to Christianity / Christian theology. They are instead the byproducts of “utopian ideologies.” One side effect of “Western Utopianism” is that “people caught up in such movements tend to be intolerant of others” who are not part of the “projected destiny.”³³¹ This kind of intolerance and ostracism can lead to the “denial of rights, including the right to live, to hold property, to vote, or to hold professional licenses” of non-believers.”³³² According to Mohawk, the “scornful indifference” of the “unbelieving” and “unentitled” can manifest as “racism” and

329 Ibid., 209

330 Ibid., 1

331 Ibid., 10-13

332 Ibid., 10-13

“ethnocentrism” as well as “crimes against humanity including systematic acts of genocide.” As a result of their liminal status as non-believers, Jews in Europe and *onk’we’honwe* in America were subjected to the full force of racism, ethnocentrism, and genocide characteristic of “utopian ideologies.”³³³ The racialized tyranny and religious persecution promoted under Hitler’s “Third Reich” and American Christianity’s “Kingdom of God” set the stage for Jewish and Indian liquidation by devaluing Jewish and Indian lives in light of the “pursuit of the ideal.” Furthermore, the “pursuit of utopia,” the “pursuit of the ideal,” has

Provided a stream of rationalization that justified plunder, racism and oppression in the name of a better future. The fact that conquests and their reward were acceptable and continue to be celebrated in Western history is key to the story of how the world came to be the way it is.³³⁴

Mohawk proposes an eloquent balance between Jew and Indian, American and German, religion and utopian. The overlap between Jews and Native Americans has resulted from a shared subjection to “utopian” or “futuristic” social movements steeped in a pursuit of the greater good.³³⁵ Anti-Indian racism and anti-Semitism, used to justify and rationalized the liquidation of the Indians of America and the Jews of Europe, were birthed from analogous “utopian ideologies” that are a significant undercurrent of the D.N.A. of Euro-American history. Contemporary anti-Indian racism in America and the steady stream of anti-Semitism in contemporary Europe suggest how dangerously ingrained “utopian ideologies” have become in Western society and how difficult they are to eliminate. Mohawk incorporates Jews, Natives, Nazi Germany, and colonial America in order to understand the horrors of history with the hope of advancing the

³³³ Ibid., 5

³³⁴ Ibid., 14

³³⁵ Ibid., 2

moral agenda of all humanity; Mohawk's agenda is not to transfer moral or political authority from one subaltern group to another. Ultimately thinking in terms of "utopian movements" provides an advanced framework for investigating the historical similarities between Jewish and Native American communities as well as the consanguinity between American Jewish and American Indian communities.

In addition to "utopian ideologies," Hirsch's concept of "post-memory" can help academics explore some of the more difficult and imaginative elements of the comparative enterprise. According to Hirsch,

I propose the term "post-memory" with some hesitation, conscious that the "post" prefix could carry the implication that we are beyond memory and therefore perhaps, as Nora fears, purely in history. Post-memory, in my reading, has certainly not taken us beyond memory, but is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Post-memory should reflect back on memory, revealing it as equally constructed, equally mediated by the processes of narration and imagination...Post-memory is anything but absent or evacuated: It is as full and as empty as memory itself. Photography is precisely the medium of connecting memory and post-memory.³³⁶

Post-memory can be a powerful tool in which to "communicate the incommunicable." In order for non-Native people to form a "deep personal connection" with the genocide of Native Americans, they must be able to imagine what it would feel like to be singled out for elimination. The Jewish community in America is uniquely qualified to use memory, imagination, and photography in order to emotionally and intellectually connect to the Native American experience. "Post-memory" is not the same as "Playing-Indian," because the Jewish community can rely on their own cultural memories of genocide and displacement in order to empathize with contemporary Native communities. Jewish and Native American communities intersect over issues of genocide, however, in order to

³³⁶ Marianne Hirsch, *Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory* (Discourse, Vol. 15, No. 2, Winter 1992-93). 22

avoid all aspects of one-ups-manship collaborations between contemporary Jews and Indians shouldn't be based on the means, mediums and modes of genocide but on how memories, stories and lessons can help us bridge the gap between "generational distance" and "deep personal connection." Genocide and death must be negotiated, however, in order to not fall into the abyss those negotiations must be grounded in relationships of exchange.

According to Boyarin

The power of imagination is so important in my teaching, and, no matter how hard we must work to imagine the ways that others are both like and different from us, I remain convinced that we can begin to imagine others only from the starting point of who we understand and imagine ourselves to be.³³⁷

What if Jews were forced to live in a world where Germany had won WWII and taken over most of the European continent? What if the remaining Jews who survived German genocide were herded onto tiny reservations peppered throughout the expansive German landscape? What if the faces of Hitler, Himmler, and Eichmann were carved into Mt. Sinai? How would the Jewish community feel if their traditional religious leaders were transformed into mascots, Halloween costumes, and brand labels? These imaginary examples highlight the ludicrous conditions contemporary American Indians are routinely expected to endure. These types of imagined comparisons are markedly different from historical comparisons -- disease, eugenics, death, or museum space. They are culturally specific mechanisms through which the Jewish community can begin to imagine the world which Native peoples have been forced to inhabit. It is the responsibility of the Jewish community in America to force themselves through the uncomfortable process of "post-memory" in order to understand the privileged status of

³³⁷ Boyarin, *Jewishness and the Human Dimension*, p. 32.

Jews in America and the disadvantaged status of Indians in America. This process should lead to religious understanding and political alliances between contemporary American Jewish and modern Native American communities.

A Little Matter of Religion

While Churchill is quite valuable in discussing Christianity's role — from the Doctrine of Discovery to the Residential School System — in the American genocide, his comparative enterprise is void of an examination of the religious dimensions of genocide and religious responses to genocide. The conspicuous absence of religion leaves a glaring hole in Churchill's comparative enterprise. Religion has played a significant role in the implementation and interpretation of German genocide just as it has for the implementation and interpretation of the American genocide. According to Stannard, the "element of religion" is one of the "similarities of significance" between the "Jewish Holocaust and the Euro-American genocide against the Indians of the Americas" that makes comparison a necessary and elucidating activity.³³⁸ Through forced education and religious indoctrination, Christian missionaries participated in both physical and cultural genocide of Native American communities. Likewise Christian theology and mythology -- blood libel and blood curse -- played a direct role in justifications of the German genocide. Ultimately, religion is a medium linking these two catastrophes in "similarities of significance" as well as the dialectics of difference.³³⁹

³³⁸ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. 153.

³³⁹ David Nirenberg, David Biale and Raul Hilberg have written extensively about the links between of medieval Christian Anti-Judaism into German Anti-Semitism. By transforming a religious (theological and mythological) struggle between Christians and Jews into a racial (biological) struggle between Aryan's and Jews the Third Reich used blood to define Jewish identity and target the Jewish community.

In the case of Native Americans, since the “colonizing British” had no use for “Indian servitude” but only wanted “Indian land,” the British turned to “Christian and European sources of “wisdom” in order to “justify their genocide” of native peoples and theft of native lands.³⁴⁰ As a result, Native communities were subjected to the “disdain of Christianity” and lived with the “weary knowledge of their own precarious existence.”³⁴¹ Additionally, the indigenous inhabitants of America were classified as either “murderous wild men of the forest,” lost tribes of Israel, or the last remnants of a vanishing race.³⁴² This interpretation of indigenous people has been so entrenched in American Christianity that modern Americans have a hard time imagining Indians outside of “mythic, magic and theological categories.”³⁴³ Additionally, the American genocide could not have taken place without Christianity.

Christianity is fundamental to the foundation and maintenance of American culture. Christianity has, according to Steve Newcomb, had a large influence on the psychology of modern American society. In what Steve Newcomb has dubbed the “Chosen-People Promised Land” cognitive model, what school children refer to as “manifest destiny,” the Christian “God” is “considered to have granted the United States the divine right to conquer and subdue the “heathen” or “pagan” lands of North America.”³⁴⁴ Christianity’s influence on the creation of the “Chosen-People Promised Land” cognitive model can be traced back to a medieval letter (Papal Bull *Inter Caetera*) written by Pope Alexander VI sent on May 4, 1493. This particular papal announcement

340 Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, p. 247.

341 Ibid., 247

342 Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p.252.

343 Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, p. 56.

344 Steve Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004). 37

bestowed upon Christian explorers the authority to dominate and subdue all non-Christian “pagans” and “saracens” whom they encountered during the discovery of the new world.

According to *Inter Caetera*, the “Catholic faith” and the “Christian religion” should be “everywhere increased and spread.” For the benefit of the “health” and “souls” of the “barbarous nations,” they should “be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.”³⁴⁵ The Spanish aristocracy should “appoint...God fearing, learned, skilled and experienced men” to train the “inhabitants and residents” of the new world in “Catholic faith” and “good morals”” *Inter Caetera* stated “our Savior” should be “carried into those regions...cities, camps, places, and villages...islands and mainlands” of the lands “discovered and to be discovered towards the west and south.”³⁴⁶ Interfering with this “mandate” or with “our beloved son, Christopher Columbus,” will “incur the wrath of Almighty God.” Ultimately, “it is hoped that” the “name of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ” be “introduced into the said countries and islands.” These early Papal documents, which provided the initial justification for the rape and plundering of the New World, became the basis for Federal Indian Law and an important aspect of Federal Indian Policy. As a result, the “Chosen-People Promised Land” cognitive model has been passed from generation to generation from the fifteenth century until today.

The “Doctrine of Christian Discovery” is the legal doctrine, heavily influenced by these 15th century papal bulls, which stated that the indigenous peoples of America only have the right of “inhabitation” not “occupation” or “ownership” of lands. Ultimately, the papal bulls, and the complex legal interpretations they spawned, are a religious

³⁴⁵ <http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/indig-inter-caetera.html>, viewed on October 16, 2016

³⁴⁶ Ibid.,

justification for the theft of the Western hemisphere and the domination of the “heathen” and “pagan” peoples of the new world. The mentality of domination was thus wed to the idea of religious superiority and sovereignty. Papal bulls are not simply letters written by the Pope and the “Doctrine of Discovery” is much more than complicated legalese. The ideas concerning about religion, race, and sovereignty contained in these medieval letters, went on to directly influence all levels of Federal Indian Policy and justify the colonization, institutionalization, and murder of millions of Native American peoples. The missionary effort, including the residential school system, is perhaps the apex of medieval Christianity’s influence on the colonization of American Indians. Following the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890, the United States abandoned the official military campaigns against Native American communities. According to Tinker, “massacre of some 350 people at Wounded Knee, including a great many women, children, and old peoples” provided enough negative optics to put a symbolic end to the “Indian wars,” the direct military campaigns against indigenous communities.³⁴⁷ Ending the “Indian Wars” did not end government sponsored assaults against Native communities. Instead of direct killing on the battlefields, the United States Federal government shifted their assault on Native communities to more indirect ways of subduing and eliminating the remaining Native populations. Christian missions, many of which had already been established among native communities, played a key role in this policy shift. The missionary school became the primary setting for this new phase of American genocide.

The hostile suppression of indigenous religions combined with the aggressive government sponsored promotion of Christianity highlights religion’s role in the suppression and domination of Native communities in America. In the latter half of the

³⁴⁷ Tinker, *Missionary Conquest*, p. 7.

19th century, Christian missionaries become an “important strategic phalanx,” and Christian theology became a “crucial ingredient” in the colonization and eradication of the indigenous inhabitants of America. According to Tinker,

Today, the white missionary, both in the historical memory of Indian people and in the contemporary experience, has become a frequent target of scorn in most segments of the Indian world. Many implicitly recognize some connection between Indian suffering and the missionary presence, even as they struggle to make sense not only of past wrongs, but also of the pain of contemporary Indian existence.³⁴⁸

Christian missionaries - all denominations working among American Indian nations - were partners in genocide. Unwittingly no doubt, and always with the best intentions, nevertheless the missionaries were guilty of complicity in the destruction of Indian cultures and tribal social structures - complicity in the devastating impoverishment and death of the people to whom they preached.³⁴⁹

While Tinker, an ordained Lutheran minister and member of the Osage nation, makes sure to recognize the “best intentions” of the missionaries, he condemns the “complicity” of missionaries in the “destruction of Indian cultures” and names them as co-conspirators and “partners in genocide” with the United States Federal government.³⁵⁰ Furthermore, Tinker has claimed Christian missionization promoted the “religious aspects of genocide” by attempting to overtly “destroy the spiritual solidarity” of Native American peoples.³⁵¹

Missionaries attacked native forms of religion by “preaching promised bliss of conversion to denounce or belittle native forms of prayer and argue their own spiritual superiority.”³⁵² While the government was “outlawing ceremonial forms” through the “1890 legislation that made performance of the plains Sun Dance and the Hopi Snake Dance, among others, a punishable crime,” the missionaries were becoming “deeply

348 Ibid., 3

349 Ibid., 4

350 Ibid., 4

351 Ibid., 7

352 Ibid., 7

involved in the symbiotic relationships with the very structures of power that crushed Indian resistance to the European invasion.”³⁵³ Christian-American missionaries were colonial agents who, justified by a sense of religious and cultural superiority, used God and Christian theology to subdue and dominate those Native American peoples who had managed to survive the outright slaughter of the “Indian Wars.”

The Christian missionary enterprise was, according to Tinker, “enormously successful as a tool of conquest and had a devastating and destructive impact on the aboriginal peoples” of North America. The missionaries were guilty of cultural genocide, a “more subtle than overt military extermination, yet it is no less devastating to a people.”³⁵⁴ In the case Native Americans, cultural genocide has “almost always involved an attack on the spiritual foundations of a people’s unity by denying the existing ceremonial and mythological sense of a community in relationship to the Sacred Other.”³⁵⁵ Churches, priests, nuns, and a variety of other clergy were saddled with the responsibility to “civilize” the remaining members of the “savage” race of American Indians. According to MacBeth, “boarding schools attempted to assimilate Indian children by removing them from family and tribal environment, downgrading tribal traditions, and enforcing strict discipline and military regimentation.”³⁵⁶

The coordinated assault on Native American “cultural structures” (sovereignty, religion, government, language, dance, ceremony, and sport) was left to the Christian church. As a result of Christianity’s role in the colonial process, “most Indian people in North America have been Christianized” and many remain “very faithful to the

353 Ibid., 17

354 Ibid., 6

355 Ibid., 6

356 Sally J. MacBeth, *Indian Boarding Schools and Ethnic Identity: An Example From the Southern Plains Tribes of Oklahoma* (Plains Anthropologist, Vol. 28, No. 100, May 1983).

denominations into which they have been evangelized.”³⁵⁷ Due to the history of missionization in America, it could be argued that Native expression of Christianity is also a reflection of colonization.

Colonel Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the infamous Carlisle Indian school and grandfather of the residential school system in America, notoriously stated the purpose of Christian boarding school was to “kill the Indian” in order to “save the man.” Likewise, William A. Jones wanted the schools to “exterminate the Indian but develop the man.”³⁵⁸ Under this collaboration of Church and State, the missions of specific Christian denominations were provided funds from the United States government (often on a per student basis) in order to educate young native peoples. The boarding schools were perhaps the most devastating, debilitating, and demonic institutional aspect of missionization.

According to a recent study of the survivors of the boarding school experience,

Many reported multiple forms of abuse and neglect. Forms of neglect included poor academics, being prevented normal contact with the opposite sex, being separated from siblings, physical neglect, emotional neglect and negligent supervision. Forms of abuse reported included cultural abuse, physical abuse from staff, physical abuse from peers, hazing, and sexual abuse.³⁵⁹

The first Indian boarding schools were built by Christian missions in the 1860’s during the era of “removal.” The movement grew exponentially in the 1890’s during the era of “assimilation” when federal legislation was passed banning any and all indigenous expressions of religion like rituals, ceremonies, and gatherings. The boarding school

357 Tinker, *Missionary Conquest*, p. 3.

358 Martin Marty, *Modern American Religion, Volume 1: The Irony of It All, 1893-1919* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

359 Stephen Colmant, Lahoma Schultz, Rockey Robbins, Peter Ciali, Julie Dorton and Yvette Rivera-Colmant, *Constructing Meaning to the Indian Boarding School Experience* (Journal of American Indian Education, Vol. 43, No. 3, 2004).

system flourished throughout the first half of the 20th century coinciding with the era of “termination.” According to Dawson,

The U.S. government founded 153 boarding schools during the next quarter century, and while most were placed on reservations, 25 would follow the model to the letter. By 1900 the 17,708 students in boarding schools dwarfed the number of students in the 154 day schools run for Indians, 3,860. By 192 two-fifths of all Indian students under the authority of the federal government (a total of 27,361) were being educated in 19 off-reservation boarding schools. Over the course of a century more than 100,000 Indian children attended boarding schools.³⁶⁰

Boarding schools did not begin to wane in popularity until the late 1960’s when Richard Nixon ushered in the era of “self determination” causing “sovereignty” and “religious freedom” to replace “assimilation” and “missionization.” The “Phoenix Indian School,” which closed in 1990, was the last federally operated Christian boarding school in America. The residential school system became the primary institution charged with “civilizing” and “assimilating” native children.

Laws were enacted which forced native parents to forfeit their children. Under threats of violence, withholding food, clothing, and other annuities, children were stolen from their parents and often never returned. State and local authorities transported students hundreds of miles away from their native lands where they were kept, unable to return home, and forbidden from family visitations, for years, sometimes for more than a decade. According to Davis,

Boarding schools embodied both victimization and agency for Native people, and they served as sites of both cultural loss and cultural persistence. These institutions, intended to assimilate Native people into mainstream society and eradicate Native cultures, became integral

³⁶⁰ Alexander S. Dawson, *Histories and Memories of the Indian Boarding Schools in Mexico, Canada, and the United States* (Latin American Perspectives, Vol. 39, No. 5, September 2012). 80-99

components of American Indian identities and eventually fueled the drive for political and cultural self determination in the late twentieth century.³⁶¹

For the residential schools to be successful, Native children were “removed from his/her home, family, community and culture at the earliest possible age and held for years in state-sponsored ‘educational’ facilities.”³⁶² Breaking down the Indian was a critical first step in building up the man. Boarding schools, modeled after military facilities, were predicated on isolating children from their families and traditions. Similar to military academies, native children enrolled in residential schools followed an austere schedule divided equally between academics, physical labor, and church indoctrination.

Boarding schools attempted to control every aspect -- mind, body, and soul -- of those unfortunate enough to attend. Upon arrival, students’ physical appearance and cultural habits were drastically altered. According to Davis,

School administrators and teachers cut children's hair; changed their dress, their diets, and their names; introduced them to unfamiliar conceptions of space and time; and subjected them to militaristic regimentation and discipline. Educators suppressed tribal languages and cultural practices and sought to replace them with English, Christianity, athletic activities, and a ritual calendar intended to further patriotic citizenship. They instructed students in the industrial and domestic skills appropriate to European American gender roles and taught them manual labor. For many Indian children, this cultural assault led to confusion and alienation, homesickness and resentment.³⁶³

Boarding schools affected every aspect of students lives. The schools attempted to control the spiritual life of Indian children, the social life of Indian children and even their physical appearances. Boarding schools were a total onslaught on traditional religion, education and community. Forcing young Native children to change their diet,

361 Julie Davis, *Indian Boarding School Experiences: Recent Studies From Native Perspectives* (OAH Magazine of History, Vol. 15, No. 2, Winter 2001). 20-22

362 Ibid., 20

363 Ibid., 21

name, space, time and suppressing their language and culture the boarding school system was designed to destroy Native children from the outside in as well as the inside out.

Education in these schools often looked more like indoctrination, abuse -- verbal, mental, physical, and sexual -- and enslavement. According to Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima,

The experience of boarding school, especially during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was often brutal and occasionally fatal. Children were torn, sometimes literally, from their homes and families and transported hundreds or thousands of miles from everyone and everything they knew, often for years at a time. Food was often poor and housing cramped, which facilitated the spread of disease such as tuberculosis and trachoma. Life was reduced to a strictly regimented schedule, and punishment was swift and harsh for even minor failures to meet difficult standards set by teachers and administrators. Academic education generally fell a distant second to vocational training, with boys taught to be laborers and girls to be domestics.³⁶⁴

Clearly there can be no argument concerning whether or not the boarding school experience qualifies as genocide. While boarding school's may blur the lines between physical and cultural genocide the combination of malnutrition, disease, forced labor and re-education made these schools one of the darkest institutions in all of American history. When the boarding schools closed, however, that did put an end to the torment and abuse experienced by Native people. Those children became adults who were totally unprepared to assimilate into American society and incapable of dealing with the psychological trauma inflicted upon them by Christian missionaries.

According to Tinker, "several generations of oppression and conquest, along with persistently hearing the recitation of the superiority of all white forms of existence, have

364 Archuleta, Margaret, Brenda J. Child and K. Tsianina Lomawaima. *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience*. American Anthropologist: Vol. 104, No 2 (Jun., 2002), p 642-646.

taken their toll on the cultural self-confidence of Indian peoples.”³⁶⁵ American Indians incur the “lowest annual and lifetime incomes of any group” in North America and have the highest rates of “infant mortality, death by malnutrition, exposure, and plague disease.”³⁶⁶ These types of conditions have produced “endemic despair” and generated “chronic alcoholism and other forms of substance abuse among more than half the native population.”³⁶⁷ Additionally, the rate of incarceration in Native communities is higher than the national average as well as the rate of teenage suicide.³⁶⁸ These statistics are the results of prolonged institutionalized racism and the failed attempts to assimilate Native peoples into mainstream American society. Reservation life, an overlooked aspect of the contemporary American political and religious landscape, is the result of failed government-religious policies aimed at liquidating, converting, and assimilating Native peoples. According to Stannard,

The deadly predicament that now confronts native people is simply a modern requirement: surrender all hope of continued cultural integrity and effectively cease to exist as autonomous peoples, or endure as independent peoples the torment and deprivation we select as your fate.³⁶⁹

Modern reservation conditions have been heavily influenced by missionization and institutionalization. Christian missionaries attempted to exert control over Native American communities. As a result of their complicity in the oppression and destruction of American Indian peoples, Christian missionaries must share the burden of genocide.

There is no doubt that the Catholic Church, among the most powerful institutions in all of medieval Europe, played a significant role in legitimizing the domination,

³⁶⁵ Tinker, *Missionary Conquest*, p. 119.

³⁶⁶ Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, p. 247.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 247

³⁶⁸ Strickland, June C, *Suicide Among American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Canadian Aboriginal youth: Advancing the Research Agenda* (International Journal of Mental Health, Vol. 25, No. 4). pp. 11-31

³⁶⁹ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, p. 258.

subjugation and colonization of the Indians of the Western Hemisphere. There is considerable disagreement, however, concerning the role and influence of Christianity on the justification and implementation of the German genocide. “Nazism,” according to Rubenstein was an “anti-Christian movement” that was “dialectically related to Christianity,” because it represented the “negation of Christianity.”³⁷⁰ According to Rubenstein, even though Nazis took “Christianity very seriously,” they were “religious rebels against humanity” and “satanic anti-Christians” who hated God.³⁷¹ Even though

They did not invent a new villain. Nor did the Nazis create a new hatred. Folk hatred of Jews is at least as old as Christianity. The Nazis intensified what they found...they transformed a theological conflict, normally limited in its overt destructiveness by religious and moral considerations, into a biological struggle in which only one conclusion was thinkable - the total extermination of every living Jew.³⁷²

Nazism could not have existed without Christianity. According to Rosenbaum, “no other instance of genocide or attempted genocide in modern times elicits associations so directly to the Bible and its worldview as does the Holocaust.”³⁷³ Furthermore, “Europe’s motives for seeking the elimination of the Jews were largely religious.”³⁷⁴ It is therefore the “religious element that makes the Holocaust unique.”³⁷⁵ I think Rubenstein either underestimated or was not aware of the role of Christianity in the American genocide. Even though the role of Christianity in the German genocide is not as easily identifiable as role of Christianity in the American genocide, the liquidation of European Jews and the destruction of American Indians highlights the religious dimensions of comparative genocide.

370 Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 44-56.

371 Ibid., 3

372 Ibid., 3-7

373 Rosenbaum, Alan S. *Is the Holocaust Unique?: Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009). 31.

374 Ibid., 39

375 Ibid., 41

According to Rubenstein, “no Jewish theology will possess even a remote degree of relevance to contemporary Jewish life if it ignores the question of God and the death camps. That is the question for Jewish theology in our times.”³⁷⁶ Chief Jacobs expressed a similar concern to me, but he was not nearly as optimistic about his community’s chances for survival. According to Chief Jacobs,

I don’t think that we have come to terms with genocide. I really don’t think that there has been any resolution amongst the people. I don’t think that we have come to grips with it or actually accepted that this has happened to us. I mean we do, it’s a fact that it happened but I don’t think that there has been any kind of movement to heal our people. Or to understand what has happened and try to move forward. I think that is one of the greatest things that hinders our people. They become so entrenched in this self-defeating attitude that they are less then. It is our own inactivity to actually confront these things and actually get through them and to heal. We are actually holding ourselves back by not understanding. Accepting it, forgiving it and moving forward, bettering ourselves as human beings...Cultural genocide is alive and well it is still going on. We are their biggest problems so the white war is going to continue until the eradication of the American Indian is complete. It’s fucking depressing as shit. Try living it.³⁷⁷

While there was a movement of post-Holocaust Jewish theology dedicated to understanding the extraordinary influence of catastrophe on modern Jewish life, there is no equivalent movement, at least not at Onondaga, to understand and accept the extraordinary influence of genocide on Indian life. Chief Jacobs places the onus on his own community to actively confront genocide so that they may heal. In this regard, I think a knowledge and understanding of Jewish theology could assist Native people to fathom their relationships to Christianity and perhaps begin to heal.

³⁷⁶ Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, p. x.

³⁷⁷ J. Jacobs, Personal Conversation, March 29, 2016.

Making Community Through Post-Memory

In June of 2013, I visited Washington D.C. as a chaperone for approximately 30 children (6,7, and 8th graders) from the Onondaga Nation School. End of the year field trips to Washington D.C. are as American as apple pie. 2013 was the first time the Onondaga Nation School participated in this time honored tradition. As previously discussed, Native communities have a particularly complicated relationship to the United States Federal Government. Nevertheless, the trip was organized, because for years the students at the Nation school have exhibited a borderline unhealthy obsession with the German genocide. While our group visited Arlington cemetery and the Lincoln monument, Ford's Theatre and the White House, the entire trip was anchored around a visit to the USHMM and the NMAI. Without the existence of these two museums, the trip would never have occurred.

When I learned of the school's intentions to take the kids to D.C., I immediately volunteered to be a chaperone for the group. I wasn't the only one who felt compelled to go to Washington D.C. in order to share in this experience. Once my family -- my mother, father, sister, and future wife -- discovered I was intending to go, they immediately began preparations to join me, and the rest of the Onondaga Nation School, in Washington D.C. My entire family instinctively understood this as a unique opportunity. As the Nation school's only Jewish employee, I became the de facto expert on the German genocide. On the bus ride down, the students asked me a host of questions about my family, my religion, and my culture. I did my best to explain the historical circumstances and cultural consequences surrounding the German genocide,

but I also warned them that visiting the museum might be an uncomfortable or distressing experience.

On the day, our group did not have to queue outside the main entrance, because we were allowed access to the museum a full forty-five minutes earlier than any other group. Apparently, the officials at the USHMM also recognized the symbolic power of our visit. It is difficult to describe the rush of pain and anger, loss and heartache, manifested by the museum's various installments; however, I was pleasantly surprised that the preferred narrative of the USHMM did not involve transferring respect, honor, or dignity onto the victims of the German genocide. Instead, they had chosen to foreground the humiliation and degradation, the shame and depravity, of the Jewish, Polish, Catholic, Roma, and homosexual victims of the German genocide. After we had toured the museum, the children were able to speak with a man named Manny, a survivor from Budapest, Hungary, who spoke about the persecution of European Jews, the murder of his family, and the death of his friends. Miraculously, Manny had survived pogroms in Hungary and the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. After the liberation of the camps, Manny eventually relocated to America via Israel.

When we were finished at the museum, I said a hasty goodbye to my family, and the group continued to the Hard Rock Café where we obtained box lunches for the kids. We proceeded to eat them in a grassy park near the south lawn of the White House. While we were eating lunch, one of the other chaperones shared his visceral experience of being subjected to the various installments of the museum. The USHMM can be a challenging place to visit since the museum space and exhibits are intentionally constructed to promote a sense of disorder, chaos, and dis-ease. He and I both agreed

there would most likely never be a museum on the mall in D.C. dedicated to the memory of the victims of the American genocide.

Much can be learned from this day. It is a moment, an image, and an experience. It is a combination of Boyarin's "imagination" and Hirsch's "post-memory." My family and I visiting the USHMM with the children of the Onondaga Nation. There is a notion that academic methodologies are incapable -- or rendered insignificant -- in light of catastrophic events of history like slavery, the American genocide, or the German genocide. This moment, this image, this experience is one of the moments I remember when the "going gets tough," when doubts surface, and when the legacy of conquest and colonization threatens to overwhelm the prospects of academic collaborations. This moment illuminates both the risks, as well as possible rewards, of collaborating with Native communities. The realization that your collaborators may share the same types of burdens as you is not a happy thought, but it is a powerful, dynamic, and potentially transformative phenomenon. This trip to D.C. was a triumphant experience. It suggests that comparative genocide must be grounded in living people and living communities as much as they are focused on recognition and prevention, religion and museum space. Potential political alliances between Jews and Indians, while catalyzed by shared experiences of genocide, should be based on shared materiality's (land) and on the echoes of historic similarities (loss).

THEOLOGY

By recognizing the various aspects of the sacredness of lands as we have described, we place ourselves in a realistic context in which the individual and the group can cultivate and enhance the sacred experience. Recognizing the sacredness of lands on which previous generations have lived and died is the foundation of all other sentiment. Instead of denying this dimension of our emotional lives, we should be setting aside additional places that have transcendent meaning.³⁷⁸

The root of the Jewish faith is, not a comprehension of abstract principles but an inner attachment to sacred events to believe is to remember, not merely to accept the truth of a set of dogmas. Our attachment is expressed by our way of celebrating them, by weekly reading of the Pentateuch rather than by the recital of a creed. To ignore these events and only to pay attention to what Israel was taught in these events is to miss an essential aspect.³⁷⁹

In Israel, all religion is history.³⁸⁰

Incongruities and Challenges to a Judeo-Indian Theology

In the introduction I defined religion as “collective orientations that assist a community to come to terms to their unique places in the world.” Certainly ceremonies and rituals are examples of these kinds of collective orientations. Ceremony, however, is a private matter on the Onondaga Nation and in many other contemporary Native American communities. Theology is more accessible genre than ceremony and it can provide similar insights into the religious and cultural, moral and philosophical values of a community as an analysis of either ritual or ceremony. Theology is a collective orientation that helps both Jewish and Native American communities come to terms with their unique places in the world. Hence theology is one of the most significant interfaces

³⁷⁸ Deloria, *God is Red*, p. 278.

³⁷⁹ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976). 213

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 261

through which we can analyze the similarities and differences between Jewish and Native American religions.

According to Fackenheim,

As every other religion, Judaism requires a theology. To be sure, in many ages Judaism did not produce a theology; but in such ages the immediacy of faith was strong and unreflective enough to make its intellectual clarification practically superfluous. No such immediacy is to be found today. Hence the disparagement of theology in some quarters merely indicates confusion, or else indifference to the substance of Jewish faith.³⁸¹

Neither Jewish nor Native American peoples are fortunate enough to exist in an age where the “immediacy of faith” is “strong and unreflective enough to make its intellectual clarification practically superfluous.” Therefore, both communities have produced a theology in order to strengthen and sustain the community. According to Spero, “one is engaged in it (theology) as soon as one becomes reflective about one's religious faith.”³⁸² A close examination of the theological principles of Jews and Indians highlights several stark differences between these two minority traditions. Those differences can help us understand the creation and maintenance of “Judeo-Christian” ideologies as well as the lack of either “Judeo-Indian” or “Indigenous-Christian” ideologies.

In spite of the high number of Jewish anthropologists who have investigated Native communities, there is a dearth of scholarship concerning the theological similarities and differences between Jews and Indians. Historically, comparisons between the religious worldview and ethos of Jews and Indians were used as a strategy to elevate Christianity above all other religious and theological traditions. Eilberg-Schwartz

³⁸¹ Jacob Neusner, *Understanding Jewish Theology: Classical Issues and Modern Perspectives* (New York, NY: KTAV Publishing, 1973). 153

³⁸² Shubert Spero, *Is There an Indigenous Jewish Theology?* (A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought, Vol. 9, No. ½, SPRING-SUMMER 1967).

has argued a history of subterfuge and academic dishonesty have suppressed comparisons between Jewish and “savage” religions and cultures. According to Eilberg-Schwartz, the entanglements — the prophetic lineage — between Christianity and Judaism, combined with the “commonalities between the religion of ancient Jews and contemporary savages” have “posed a problem for the authority and status of Christianity.”³⁸³

If ancient Judaism begat Christianity and ancient Judaism also mirrors contemporary savage religions, then how could Christianity be the “absolute religion?” As a result of fear of association with savages, “Judaism has typically been regarded as superior to other religions, with the single exception of Christianity.” In essence, the “impulse to radically differentiate Judaism and savage religions was part of an ongoing attempt to protect the privileged status of Judaism, and by extension, Christianity.” Judaism was granted a privileged status, among post Enlightenment intellectuals, in order to reinforce the cultural and theological superiority of Christianity. As a result, “Judaism was not considered sufficiently primitive to be classified with the religion of savages.”³⁸⁴

Once it became clear that comparisons between Judaism and savage religions “posed a problem for the unique and privileged status of Christianity,” various strategies were developed in order to “neutralize” the “savage in Judaism” in order to “protect Christianity” as the “absolute religion.”³⁸⁵ According to Eilberg Schwartz,

The most successful strategy for marginalizing the savage in Judaism appeared in late 18th and early 19th centuries and dominated religious discourse until well into the 20th century. I am referring to the evolutionary perspective that placed religious phenomena along a temporal continuum. An evolutionary perspective solves all problems that were inherent in the other strategies...As long as it dominated the discourse, the savage aspects of Judaism posed no difficulty at all. The

³⁸³ Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savaging Judaism*, p. 39.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., ix

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 3 & 41.

evolutionary perspective thus converts the categorical differences between Ancient Judaism and primitive religions into a temporal distance.³⁸⁶

While Eilberg-Schwartz fails to mention the significant political and economic spoils -- massive transfer of wealth and land from savage communities to Christian communities during conquest -- also influencing the adoption of the evolutionary perspective, his theory is useful in explaining the effects of preserving the “dichotomy between Judaism and savage religions.”³⁸⁷ This dichotomy has inhibited comparisons between Jewish and Indian theology.

According to Eilberg-Schwartz, even after evolutionary schemas were repudiated, “anthropology remained the disciplinary locus for the study of primitive religions” as Judaism “fell outside the purview of anthropologists, to theologians.”³⁸⁸ This disciplinary classification is still alive and well in the Humanities. For the most part, indigenous religions are still the purview of departments of anthropology and rarely in religion, theology, or philosophy.³⁸⁹ While Judaism is still the purview of departments of religion, theology, and the very few departments of Jewish Studies, it is rarely the realm of anthropology. Therefore, theological comparisons between Jews and Indians have been suppressed, at the institutional level, because until the last few decades, no one had created a space, a reason, or a justification to compare Jewish and Native America theology. Judaism’s place among the “world religions” and Christianity’s place as the “absolute religion” both reflect an institutional bias sewn into the fabric of University culture. Departments of religion, anthropology, and theology -- not to mention art

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 61

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 82

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 78

³⁸⁹ Newly created departments of Ethnic Studies, Native American Studies and American Indian Studies have been created in part to wrestle control away from anthropologists, ethnographers and museum curators so that Native communities may exert more control over their academic narratives.

history, psychology, and archeology -- were founded, in part, around the primitive/civilized dialectic. This has resulted in complicated categories arising in order to differentiate between the religion and theology of the Jews and the religion and theology of primitive peoples.

By exploring the theological interfaces between contemporary American Jews and contemporary American Indians, I am actively engaging in what Eilberg-Schwartz called “savaging Judaism.” This is a process whereby scholarship could directly confront and “break down the traditional dichotomies between primitive and higher religions, and between anthropology and the history of Judaism.”³⁹⁰ While cultivating the “savage within us all” may sound like a New-Age mantra, Eilberg-Schwartz is not encouraging a new way to play-Indian. Instead, he is attempting to annihilate the last vestiges of the evolutionary schema and replace it with reasoned comparison, cultural relativism, and cordial discourse. As scholars rediscover the “savage within us all,” they must consider the obstacles and consequences of “Judaizing savages” and what that may mean for the future of anthropology, religious studies, and theology.

The psychological need to separate Christianity from “primitive” religions has resulted in a dearth of theological comparisons between Jewish and Native American communities. According to Neusner,

The power of Judaism is to be laid open to the experience of the student not only through examination of the liturgy and piety of the ordinary people, but also through the analysis of the central issues in Judaic theology.³⁹¹

Therefore, in order to access the power of the Jewish / Indian comparison we must consider theological similarities and differences between these two minority

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 102

³⁹¹ Neusner, *Understanding Jewish Theology*, p. 5.

communities. A theological comparison between Jewish and Native American communities can reveal how and why the American-Jewish community has become incorporated into the American dream as well as how and why the Native American community has been ostracized from mainstream American culture. Although land has always been an essential component of Jewish life, Judaism is not an indigenous tradition. While ancient Judaism may very well have been an indigenous tradition, modern Judaism has been forced to divest itself from land and sacred places. Nevertheless, the Jewish community has a long textual tradition surrounding the cultural and religious significance of land. Being out-of-place has defined the Jewish community as much as being in-place has defined Native American communities.

Throughout the diaspora, Jews were constantly forced to negotiate and renegotiate the phenomenon of being out of place. Once they were exiled from Israel, the Jewish community had to put their energy towards textual studies -- bible, midrash, Talmud, Zohar – in order to maintain their unique cultural and religious, ceremonial and theological, educational and linguistic, traditions. The de-indigenization of the Jewish community was a necessary response so that the community could survive in exile.³⁹² While Jerusalem has consistently remained a significant pilgrimage site for the Jewish community, Jews were forced to adapt their theologies, ceremonies, and rituals to life outside of the Holy land. The (re)creation of the State of Israel in 1948 has complicated the process of de-indigenization just as it has complicated all aspects of Jewish life in the last seventy years. This chapter will investigate the theological differences between modern Judaism and modern Native American traditions as they coalesce around food,

³⁹² There were obviously political and economic dimensions of this shift as well that have been covered extensively by authors like Judith Plaskow, Johathan Boyarin, Rachel Adler, Jacob Neusner, AJ Heschel, Theodore Herzl, Ze'ev Jabotinsky.

land (space and place), time, and revelation. Ultimately, Jewish theologies of space and place have contributed to the Jewish community's ability to enter into mainstream American society in a way that has never been an option for Native American communities.

Indigenous Theologies: Creation, Clan, and Consumption

Failure has always been an essential part of my work at Onondaga. Failure, however, can sometimes lead to the most noteworthy breakthroughs in ethnography. The notion that failure is oftentimes a prerequisite for success, while hidden and obfuscated in academia, is quite popular in the world of sports. Wayne Gretzky is famous for saying, "You miss 100% of the shots you do not take,"³⁹³ and Michael Jordan claimed, "I can accept failure, everyone fails at something. But I cannot accept not trying again."³⁹⁴ Failure to communicate and failure to comprehend, failure to respect and failure to be consistent, combined with bad timing and unrealistic goals, and then multiplied by awkwardness and the cacophony of human frailties, have the potential to destroy even the most promising ethnographic projects. Unfortunately, no amount of diversity training or sensitivity seminars can prepare non-native scholars to work with contemporary Haudenosaunee communities. Cultural relativism and academic integrity are vapid non-sequiturs at Onondaga. Empathy, consistency, and a good sense of humor -- particularly the ability to laugh at your self -- are just as important as any academic theory or fieldwork method. Even though Basso has claimed, "all ethnographers lose their snap, and so, of course, do those with whom they work," I can honestly say this never

³⁹³ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/actiontrumpseverything/2014/01/12/you-miss-100-of-the-shots-you-dont-take-so-start-shooting-at-your-goal/#14519dda5e42>, viewed on October 16, 2016

³⁹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uapFEo86-Rk>, viewed on October 16, 2016

happened throughout the duration of this project. During my fieldwork, however, I have been told to leave the room. I have been lied to and ignored, laughed at and sidelined.

Twice a year at the Onondaga Nation School, once to commemorate Harvest in October and once to celebrate Planting in May, there is a large community dinner during which the students from each grade prepare traditional food items -- seven bean salad, strawberry drink, corn soup, and mush -- for the rest of the community. Menu items made by the children are then supplemented with other items -- mashed potatoes, Turkey, Venison, hot scones, cornbread, Indian tacos -- made by female volunteers. At the first community dinner I ever attended, I was ruthlessly, yet good-naturedly, mocked by a group of unknown Indians after they caught a glimpse of my plate.

My plate, which included many staples of a traditional Haudenosaunee diet, was conspicuously devoid of meat, because I am a vegetarian. I stopped eating meat at the age of fifteen after my high school biology teacher required our class to dissect fetal pigs. This experience prompted me to stop eating meat altogether. The decision to become a vegetarian was one of the first moral decisions of my adult life. It was, nevertheless, a juvenile and panicked attempt at solving a very complex moral and intellectual quagmire. On the Onondaga Nation, my vegetarianism signified me as an outsider just as much as my Jewish heritage, American passport, and academic affiliation. This group of random Indians, whom had never met me yet completely accepted my inclusion at Harvest dinner, could not pass the opportunity to point and laugh. I was the one who was different, not because of phenotype or genotype, not because of language or ceremony, not because of religion or philosophy, but because of what I refused to eat.

My vegetarian plate signified my unwillingness to be part of the group and highlighted my ignorance to some of the subtle aspects of Haudenosaunee manners. The more I thought about being the cause of laughter, the more I began to understand that my inability to share in all aspects of the harvest meal was the result of my puerile decision to stop consuming anything with a face. Food, particularly preparing food and sharing food, is a significant religious event and an easy venue -- practically a lubricant -- for cultural exchanges. Marcel Mauss famously declared that to “refuse the gift is tantamount to declaring war.”³⁹⁵ To put it more simply, in many cultures it is considered rude to refuse food. Time spent at Onondaga has taught me that my self-imposed exile from consuming meat inhibited my abilities to understand and appreciate Haudenosaunee culture and customs. By refusing the gift, I was missing out. Ultimately, there are very few Onondaga vegetarians because cultivating relationships of exchange with animal communities has been cornerstone to the moral and philosophical systems of the Haudenosaunee for hundreds of years. Sharing food, in Native communities, is a religious value and moral commandment that supersedes notions of purity or piety.³⁹⁶

Appreciating the complicated and polyvalent relationships between Haudenosaunee peoples and other animal peoples begins with the Haudenosaunee narrative of Creation – sometimes referred to as the “Legend of Skywoman” or the “Earth-Grasper myth.” Throughout the Haudenosaunee narrative of creation, non-human animals play a sophisticated and proactive role. Animal peoples certainly play a more dynamic role in the Haudenosaunee myth of creation than in other popular creation myths

³⁹⁵ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York, NY: W.W Norton & Company, 2000). 17

³⁹⁶ The subject of Jewish foodways is currently undergoing a mini-renaissance from within the academy. Let by Nora Rubel, Hasia Diner, Aaron Gross, Anat Helman, Ellen Steinberg and Jack Prost this movement has placed food (eating, preparation, sharing, and taboos) at the forefront of Jewish culture in America.

– e.g. Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the *Purusha Sutka* of the *RgVeda*, or either Genesis narrative of the Hebrew bible. In the Skywoman / Earth Grasper narrative, animals predate humans – not by one day, as in Genesis chapter 1, but by generations. Previous to the introduction of human beings, animal peoples were part of complex communities who were capable of verbal and non-verbal communication, morality and empathy, compassion and generosity. At no point during creation were humans granted dominion or control over animals, nor were they granted dominion or control over the natural world.

Furthermore, this land, planet earth, what some traditional Haudenosaunee people still refer to as “turtle island,” would never have taken form had it not been for the intelligence, bravery, quick-thinking, benevolence, and hospitality of the various animal communities. Creation dictates that Haudenosaunee peoples are indebted to animal peoples. According to Mohawk,

Humankind’s relationship to nature projected in this precolonial, pre-patriarchal, pre-modern story carries a fundamental and unchanging truth, but one which subsequent generations would need to relearn over and over. Humans exist in a context of nature, and not vice versa. Everything we have ever had, everything we have, everything we will ever have -- our health, our good looks, our intelligence, everything – is a product not of our own merit but of all that which created our world.³⁹⁷

Indebtedness to animal peoples is highly pronounced in the thanksgiving address - a prayer that opens and closes many Haudenosaunee gatherings. The thanksgiving address consists of slowly and meticulously invoking -- and then thanking -- each and every aspect of Creation from berries and insects, to plants and animals, all the way to the stars, moon, and sun. By repeatedly thanking the various animal communities, Haudenosaunee

³⁹⁷ John Mohawk, *Iroquois Creation Story: Myth Of The Earth Grasper* (Buffalo, NY: Mohawk Publications, 2005). xviii

people are reinforcing the value and prestige of non-human communities. Concurrently, by promoting exchange based relationships with animal communities, Haudenosaunee people are reinforcing the social, spiritual, and symbolic significance of animal peoples.

Since “humans exist in a context of nature, and not vice versa,” they must learn to adapt to nature, not how to dominate or subdue nature. Humans owe their survival to the altruism of animal peoples. Without assistance from geese, loon, duck, turtle, beaver, otter, muskrat, and fox, Skywoman would not have survived her inter-dimensional plunge. Without the kindness and curiosity of the various animal communities, Skywoman never would have been able to give birth to her daughter; humans never would have inhabited the earth. According to Mann,

Skywoman fell from outer space down to earth, landing on Turtle Island, the continent we today call North America that was specifically created for her by earth animals. Different versions have Sky Woman acquiring subsistence plants in different ways, but usually the Three Sisters (Corn, Beans, and Squash) are connected with her arrival on Turtle Island.³⁹⁸

The Earth-Grasper Myth is not just a story about human and animal peoples. It is also a story about how plant communities were introduced to Turtle Island. The three sisters, corn, beans, and squash, the staples of a traditional Haudenosaunee diet, continue to organize the ceremonial, religious, and theological activities of modern Haudenosaunee people.

The Haudenosaunee were never nomadic. They did not follow game, nor did they move from one place to the next based on the position of the stars.³⁹⁹ The

³⁹⁸ Barbara Mann, *The Lynx in Time: Haudenosaunee Women's Traditions and History* (American Indian Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 3, Summer, 1997). 423-449

³⁹⁹ Some great work has been done in the field of Indigenous astronomy and nomadic communities. For example Ronald Goodman's *Lakota Star Knowledge* details the religious and ceremonial significance behind Lakota constellations. Goodman uses a combination of Lakota star charts and maps, storytelling and ethnography to capture the “special relationships” between the Lakota people, Wakan Tanka and the

Haudenosaunee are agrarian; they depended on the lunar calendar to indicate when seeds should be sown and when plants should be harvested. The Haudenosaunee ceremonial calendar was developed through generations of inhabiting the same geographical locations. Gradually, the ceremonial calendar was established based on the best times for planting and harvesting the three sisters. The main ceremonial cycles -- Maple Sap, Planting, Bean, Strawberry, Green Corn, and Harvest – are directly tied to planting and harvesting the various foodstuffs that make up their traditional diet.⁴⁰⁰

Another venue where human / animal interactions influence Haudenosaunee society is Clan. The matrilineal clan system, not blood-quantum, is the most basic building block of Onondaga identity. Clans, symbolized by distinct animal beings, play a unique and powerful role in the construction of Onondaga identity and the maintenance of Haudenosaunee society. At Onondaga, clan organizes government and ceremony, personal identification and cultural taboos. There are nine clans at Onondaga: Hawk, Turtle, Deer, Beaver, Eel, Snipe, Bear, Wolf and Heron. Each clan has four leaders: a male clan chief, a female clan mother, and two faithkeepers - one male and one female. Everything from kinship and genealogy to where an individual may sit in the longhouse is organized through clan. There are also strict taboos against marrying members of your own clan even if they are from a different Nation or territory.

Clans are one-part animal, one-part ancestry, and one-part agency. From an early age, Onondaga children, beginning with their clan animals, are instructed to respect animals as important spiritual beings that are just as sensitive and intelligent as humans. Respect, mindfulness, and thanksgiving for the animal community are all necessary

Black Hills. Goodman's work is an excellent example of the potential benefits of collaboration between indigenous communities and modern scholars.

⁴⁰⁰ Onondaganation.org/ceremony. Viewed on October 16, 2016.

precursors for hunting, trapping, and skinning. Even though deer are hunted and used for food, turtles are captured and transformed into rattles, and beavers are trapped and skinned for their pelts, respect and exchange must accompany the taking of animal life. Onondaga people are very conscious that in order for them to live, something else, whether it is plants or animals, must die. As a result, respect for animals is built into their theological worldview. If animals are not treated with respect, the community is in danger of violating the natural rhythms of the universe and risks the consequences. Only through mutual respect and deference can systems of exchange between human peoples and animal peoples remain cyclical and progressive. Clan animals are the most basic building blocks that guide and supervise the mutually beneficial relationships between human and animal communities.

During a discussion of Native American consumption patterns, and while arguing for a “return to corn,” Laws claims,

In the past, and in more than a few tribes, meat-eating was a rare activity, certainly not a daily event. Since the introduction of European meat-eating customs, the introduction of the horse and the gun, and the proliferation of alcoholic beverages and white traders, a lot has changed. Relatively few Indians can claim to be vegetarians today.⁴⁰¹

Clearly, as a result of colonization, European customs have monumentally changed Native American consumption habits; however, the systems of exchange that govern interactions between humans and animals were established long before contact. For example, at Onondaga “one bowl, one spoon” is a well-known ethical principle – what Inez Talamantez has referred to as an “indigenous theology.” “One bowl, one spoon” conveys a powerful message about the relationships between life and death, community

⁴⁰¹ Rita Laws, *History of Vegetarianism: Native Americans and Vegetarianism* (Vegetarian Journal, September 1994).

and consumption. “One bowl, one spoon” ties together creation and ceremony with clan and consumption into a sophisticated four-word ethical mantra.

“One bowl, one spoon” means that as long as the community has one bowl, one spoon, and at least one food source, they will all eat and they will all survive. The Onondaga view “one bowl, one soon” quite literally -- even if all they have to eat are bugs. From within the Confederacy, the Onondaga are (lovingly) mocked as the “bug eaters,” because they are the only members of the Confederacy that regularly consume insects. After the winter of 1779, the scorched earth policy of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign left the surviving Onondaga people so destitute and desperate, so depleted and degraded, they were forced to survive by eating bugs - specifically the seventeen year locust. According to New York Times writer Charlie LeDuff,

Every 17 years, between the season of the strawberry and the season of the blackberry, the periodical cicada -- more commonly known as the 17-year locust -- crawls from the mud of the Onondaga Nation's land, sheds its shell, grows wings, flies, sings, mates, then dies. For the Onondaga, it is treat-the-taste-buds time. People here prepare the insects in a variety of ways: stir-fried in a wok with butter and salt, or pan-fried with honey, sugar and cloves. Others eat them live.⁴⁰²

Consequently, every seventeen years, when the Locusts hatch, the Onondaga commemorate the *hierophany* of the Locust, and the resiliency of their community by consuming -- in large numbers -- lightly baked, slightly seasoned, or raw locusts. While “one bowl, one spoon” is a popular sentiment throughout the Confederacy, no other Nation was ever forced to survive by consuming bugs. For the Onondaga, “one bowl, one spoon” is an excellent way of understanding how the community “brings their minds together as one.” Death and consumption are part of the complex relationships forged

⁴⁰² Charlie LeDuff, *Onondaga Nation Journal; A Plate of Locusts, as a Delicacy and a Tribute to Survival* (New York Times, July 1, 2001).

between human and non-human populations. Qualifiers like vegetarian, carnivore, or omnivore are incapable of encapsulating the intimate ties between creation, clan, and consumption on the Onondaga Nation. The ethical principle behind the “one bowl, one spoon” theology is that consumption is governed by the principles of sharing and community development. There are no taboos against the consumption of specific foodstuffs, because the community never knows what they will need to eat in order to survive.

The “one bowl, one spoon” principle is also part of the condolence ceremony.

According to Chief Jacobs,

When they set up the condolences everybody eats out of one bowl and one spoon. So everybody actually shares the same dish. It is about sharing and everybody has their own equal portion...When they say one bowl, one spoon it doesn't just encompass eating. Everybody has a say, everybody has a part to play and a voice in the community.⁴⁰³

The condolence ceremony, unlike the yearly planting and harvesting ceremonies, is only performed when it is time to condole a Chief – to sanction him for life. Until a Chief is condoled and bestowed with one of the ancient Chief titles, they are referred to as a “seat warmers.” While “seat warmers” are leaders, they do not yet have the same responsibilities and authorities of full Chiefs. The ritual that a man goes through to become a condoled Chief is a community wide affair. As a Chief is elevated into his position of leadership, he eats from the same bowl with the same spoon as the entire community. As the community raises a Chief into this important position of leadership, the community eats from the same bowl with the same spoon as the Chief. During the ceremony of condolence, the entire community materially enacts the theology principles behind “one bowl, one spoon.” For the community to properly function all its members

⁴⁰³ J. Jacobs, Personal Communication, September 20, 2014.

must play their part. Chiefs are no higher or lower than anyone else in the community – “everybody has a say, everybody has a part to play and a voice in the community.”

Chiefs are representatives of the people, and they are instructed to work for the good of the people. The humility and selflessness demanded of Chiefs is on full display throughout the condolence ceremony. Like many other indigenous theologies, “one bowl, one spoon” is really about the maintenance and stability, health and wellbeing, of the community. To be a successful leader and representative of the community, the Chief must put the interests of the community above his own personal wishes and desires.

Food has just as much of a theological dimension in Judaism as it does in traditional Native American communities. The laws of *kashrut* have shaped the Jewish community for millennia. Food norms, throughout the Jewish diaspora, insulated the Jewish community from the larger gentile world and provided the Jewish community with a bit of food-based sovereignty. In the diaspora, when the Jewish community enjoyed little political, social, or economic autonomy, they could at least control what they put into their bodies. In order for the Jewish community to exert control over their own lives and over their own bodies, they expressly defined what the community was allowed to eat and with whom they were allowed to eat it. According to Riskin,

There is no aspect of Jewish ritual which is not touched by the ethical. "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" is the biblical source for the separation of meat and milk. Our process of kosherizing attempts to remove as much of the blood of the animal as possible because the Bible maintains "that blood is the soul of life." Apparently, in addition to anything else it may be expressing, the rules of *kashrut* serve to inculcate human discipline and emphasize the ethical ambiguities associated with eating meat.

There is another dimension of Jewish foods. Beyond the Eastern European cultural milieu captured in those recipes and beyond spiritual middot [values] conveyed by when and how the food is served, there is a theology

at play here as well. Since the destruction of the Temple, the Talmud tells us that the dining room table is the altar of God with food as a reflection of Divine favor. The traditional grace after meals [Birkat HaMazon] is an elaborate prayer which expresses more than thanks for what we ate, it acknowledges that food brings us closer to God through our appreciation and satisfaction that we had enough to eat. It also incorporates our commitment to the land that yielded the food and the national dream to return to Israel.⁴⁰⁴

In the above passages Riskin anchors Jewish dietary laws to the ethical and ritualistic elements of the Bible and the Talmud. Through negotiating the “ethical ambiguities associated with eating meat,” the laws of *kashrut* were designed to instill a sense of community. Since the destruction of the second temple (approximately 70 C.E.), the laws surrounding the “dining room table” have replaced the “altar of God.” Therefore, Jewish theologies of food are designed to place Jewish community into exchange with the processes of agriculture and the “land that yielded the food.” “Kosherizing” has developed into a way for the Jewish community to standardize the experience of the sacred through food preparation and food consumption. Clearly *kashrut* is as much a matter of theology and identity as it is a matter of purity and ethics.

There are ceremonial and ritualistic, religious and social dimensions of food for Jews. Through mindful eating, prohibitions against eating blood, and blessings over the Jewish community has identified food as a significant opportunity to “serve and respect God.” According to Brumberg-Kraus,

Jewish theological discussions over whether or not to eat meat assume that both animals and humans have souls. The difference of viewpoint about what God wants us to eat depends on whether one believes that the superiority of human souls entitles people to eat animals or that humans out to be above eating them...Regardless of how we answer these questions, one thing is clear: Jewish ritual and mystical traditions intentionally transform eating into moral philosophy. In turn that moral

⁴⁰⁴ Schlomo Riskin, *Inculcating Ethical Ideals Within Our Students* (Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Thought, 19(3), Fall 1981). 236

philosophy transforms our eating into divine service, as if we were offering sacrifices to God in the Temple.⁴⁰⁵

In this system what Jews eat, how they eat it and with whom they eat are reflections of “divine service” and place the modern Jewish community in a continuum of “moral philosophy” that dates all of the way back to the second Temple. God, according to Brumberg-Kraus, has commanded the Jewish community to righteously consume their foodstuffs because dietary rules “promote proper reverence and gratitude toward God.”⁴⁰⁶ Whether it is meat or veggies, fish or fowl the Jewish community must set up the structures whereby they are “eating into divine service” as opposed to mindlessly consuming.

According to Cutler food organizes Jewish communities and customs because “Judaism is a gastronomic religion, that is for sure—we are either giving food or taking it away. Jewish holidays often are associated with certain foods [or in the case of Yom Kippur, NO food].” Cutler goes on to claim that there is a metaphysical or “spiritual link between food and our souls.” Cutler calls this link the “biblical-culinary connection,” which is similar to Brumberg-Kraus’ notion of “divine service,” by arguing that “through the food we eat and how we serve it, we gain insight and understanding as well as extend compassion and create a welcoming setting.”⁴⁰⁷ Here Cutler recognizes the theological significance between when Jews eat -- and do not eat -- food, how Jews serve food and with whom Jews share food.

⁴⁰⁵ Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus, Jonathan D., “Does God Care What We Eat? Jewish Theologies of Food and Reverence for Life,” *Food and Judaism*, edited by Leonard Greenspoon, Ronald Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro, Creighton University Press, 2005, 119-132.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 131

⁴⁰⁷ Matt Cutler, *Jewish Theology of Food* (Times Union, October 15, 2014)

In a recent study of cooking amongst Middle-Eastern Jewish women, Starr Sered claimed women in her study were “aware of, are articulate in describing and expert at manipulating, the boundary and tradition maintaining functions of food. They explain that kashrut is what differentiates Jews from non-Jews.”⁴⁰⁸ Differentiating between Jews and non-Jews, and restricting members of the Jewish community from eating -- thereby sharing – with non-Jews is a significant social and material, theological and economic, decision. The ancient Jewish laws of *kashrut* that govern Orthodox Jewish dietary restrictions continue to shape Jewish food as well as Jewish constructions of gender, religion, and theology. According to Starr Sered,

When the Jewish woman picks through pounds of spinach searching for minuscule bugs, when she sorts through piles of rice for Passover use, when she chops huge quantities of nuts by hand, or boils, fries, and then bakes her stuffed chicken, she is involved in *avodat ha-shem* (worshipping God.) That is what the women mean when they say that they cook "in honor of the holiday." All of this 'extra' work is what, for these women (and for many other Jewish women) turns the profane into the sacred. These women opt to do this work because for them it is a holy activity, and that holiness comes to imbue all of their seemingly profane activities with an aura of sacrality.⁴⁰⁹

For the women in Starr Sered’s study, working with food was a “holy activity” and a means of “worshipping God.” Through sorting and chopping, baking and cooking, Jewish women could transform the “profane into the sacred” and “imbue” their lives with “sacrality” and meaning. Jewish food laws surrounding food preparation and taboos, consumption and sharing, have blurred the lines between sustaining and defining the community to isolating and insulating the community.

⁴⁰⁸ Susan Starr-Sered, *Food and Holiness: Cooking as a Sacred Act among Middle-Eastern Jewish Women* (Anthropological Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 3, Jul., 1988).

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.,

For both Jews and Indians theologies of consumption have instilled a strong sense of community. Although several modern Jewish movements -- reform, reconstructionist, and conservative -- have begun to move away from strict interpretations of Jewish dietary laws, we can't underestimate the importance of *kashrut* in maintaining and sustaining the Jewish community throughout the last two thousand years. Like "one bowl, one spoon," the traditional laws of *kashrut* are theological tools meant to organize the community around shared values and sustainable practices. While both systems are motivated by the success and sustainability of the community, the laws of *kashrut* restrict access to the Jewish community while "one bowl, one spoon" opens the Haudenosaunee community to Native and non-Native peoples sharing and eating together. According to Kraemer "through this separation, they reminded themselves, their families, and their neighbors who they are and were and what community they belonged."⁴¹⁰ "One bowl, one spoon" does remind the Onondaga community who they are and to what community they belong; however, "one bowl, one spoon" does not restrict Haudenosaunee people from eating and sharing with non-Indian peoples. The survival and sustainability of the Onondaga community is based on eating anything -- even bugs -- in order to survive. Ironically "one bowl, one spoon" has not lead to exchanges, relationships, and a strong sense of cultural understanding between Native American and non-Native communities. In Native communities theologies of food and consumption have not led to a greater understanding of their communities. Unlike food, however, stark theological differences in relationships between space and place, time, and revelation have directly influenced

⁴¹⁰ Kraemer, David, "Separating the Dished: The History of a Jewish Eating Practice," *Food and Judaism*, edited by Leonard Greenspoon, Ronald Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro, Creighton University Press, 2005, 235-256.

the abilities of Jews and Indians to integrate into mainstream American society and participate in mainstream American politics.

Is the Land Holy or is the Holy land?

Vine Deloria Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel radically disagree on the power of land to preserve their communities unique cultural and religious heritages. Deloria's tribal, locative, or "sanctified" model, rooted in the natural world, tethers his people's identity and religion to the fate of the land; while Heschel's non-locative, utopian, or "desanctified" model tethers his people's identity and religion to nothing outside themselves (and God) – or as Rosenzweig said "our own body and blood."⁴¹¹ This fundamental difference in religious orientation to land has contributed to the cultural protections experienced by American Jewry and the cultural obstacles experienced by Native Americans.

Equal parts author, historian, teacher, activist, and theologian, as well as the intellectual muscle behind the American Indian Movement (AIM), Vine Deloria is one of the most significant Native voices of the 20th century. Critical of Western orientations to science, history, education, and economics, it was Deloria's critique of Christianity that, in 1974, earned him a place among Time Magazine's list of Christianity's most influential "shapers and movers" and a "theological superstar of the future."⁴¹² Learned in Christianity — one of Deloria's first degrees was earned in theology from the Lutheran School of Theology in Rock Island, Illinois and his father was an Episcopal archdeacon — as well as traditional Lakota knowledge, Deloria was a prolific writer and a master

⁴¹¹ Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1971). 299

⁴¹² Melissa Lorenz, *Vine Deloria Jr* (EMuseum at Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2008).

orator; he was fully capable of holding simultaneous conversations with different audiences in the same room or in the same text. Deloria is the most well-known and celebrated Native American theologian of the 20th century. While Deloria has been (rightly) criticized for presenting a pan-Indian version of Native American religion and Native American spirituality, it was precisely this orientation that thrust Deloria into prominence within the AIM movement and has allowed him to reach people from diverse social and economic, religious and racial, backgrounds. In addition, Deloria never hid behind the claim that native peoples have “no religion” - a response which has become commonplace for indigenous peoples looking to avoid academic entanglements.

According to Deloria, the primary theological dilemma facing modern Christianity is that the Christian God has become dislocated “not only in time and space but also ethnically.”⁴¹³ Deloria argues,

In opening the religion to Gentiles, the whole conception of the Chosen People was radically changed from an identifiable group or nation to a mysterious conglomerate of people who could not be identified with any degree of accuracy.⁴¹⁴

By removing the religious messages of the “Chosen People” from Palestine and “opening the religion to Gentiles,” Christianity divorced itself from place and ethnicity, land and community, time and space. By attributing the flaw of modern Christianity, the “mysterious conglomerate,” to a “departure of Christianity from its Jewish ethnicity,” Deloria draws a line between Christianity and Judaism as he draws another between Christianity and Native American Religions.

Land, for Deloria and all other practitioners of Native religions, is the crux of their theological system. Nature, Land, Earth, and the physical universe -- animals and plants,

⁴¹³ Deloria, *God is Red*, p. 311.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 311

mountains and rivers, streams and valleys, lakes and fields, peaks and laccolithic buttes -- are the fundamentals of Native American Religions and among Deloria's primary theological concerns. It is Deloria's contention that the goal of "tribal religions" is to dictate the "proper relationship that the people of the tribe must have with other living things" so that the community may act "harmoniously with other creatures."⁴¹⁵ According to Deloria's Native view of religion, sacred places "remind us of our unique relationship with the spiritual forces that govern the universe...this knowledge illuminates everything else that we know."⁴¹⁶ Sacred places govern the relationships between the "tribal community," "the land," and "other creatures." Over thousands of years, human populations have learned to recognize and care for sacred places.

Through ceremony people have learned to

Communicate with the spirits. Thousands of years of occupancy on their lands taught tribal peoples the sacred landscapes for which they were responsible and gradually the structure of ceremonial reality became clear...Revelation was seen as a continuous process of adjustment to the natural surroundings and not as a specific message valid for all times and places...No revelation can be regarded as universal because times and conditions change.⁴¹⁷

By continuously delivering "the people" a "specific message," the "sacred landscapes" provide the revelations and inspire the rituals which became the basis for American Indian peoples. Unlike monotheistic religions, which like to claim the "universality of their ideas," in tribal religions "each holy site contains its own revelation."⁴¹⁸ The place specific attributes of Native traditions have deep cultural and religious, theological and philosophical, ramifications for Native theologies. The continual cycle of revelation

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 87

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 278

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 99

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 427

allows for new messages and prophecies to be incorporated into Native religious systems. This knowledge is then incorporated into the community and becomes the basis for dance and song, ceremony and ritual. According to Chief Jacobs,

I don't know how the visions are. I mean they are real but difficult to understand. They have to do with how our lives have changed and how our lives have had to change and how we had to adapt as our lives have changed. It has to do with warning people against outside influences and keeping them strong.⁴¹⁹

The sentiments of Chief Jacobs surrounding visions and prophecy closely align with Deloria's contention that prophecy and visions are an ongoing phenomenon. Although visions may be a private matter and difficult to discuss openly, prophecies and revelations are active and ongoing at Onondaga. Ultimately, new religious messages are essential to the theological climate of Haudenosaunee communities and to many other Native American peoples.

Not all sacred spaces are the same. According to Deloria, there is "immense particularity in the sacred and it is not a blanket category to be applied indiscriminately."⁴²⁰ Deloria outlined three categories of sacred landscapes citing examples from both monotheistic as well as Native American religions. These four major categories of sacred lands are not set in stone. They can both overlap and intersect; they are fluid and flexible. The first and most commonplace types of sacred lands are

Places to which we attribute sanctity because the location is a site where, within our own history, something of great importance has taken place. Unfortunately, many of these places are related to instances of human violence. Gettysburg National Cemetery is a good example of this kind of sacred land... We generally hold these places as sacred because people did there what we might one day be required to do – to give our lives in a cause we hold dear. Wounded Knee, South Dakota, has become such a place for many Indians where a band of Sioux Indians were massacred... Every society

⁴¹⁹ J. Jacobs, Personal Communication, April 9th, 2016.

⁴²⁰ Deloria, *God is Red*, p. 274.

needs these kinds of sacred places because they help to instill a sense of social cohesion in the people and remind them of the passage of generations that have brought them to the present...Indians, because of our considerably longer tenure on this continent, have many more sacred places than do non-Indians. Many different ceremonies can be and have been held at these locations there is both an exclusivity and inclusiveness, depending upon the occasion and the ceremony. In this classification the site is all-important, but it is sanctified each time ceremonies are held and prayers are offered.⁴²¹

Places like the National September 11th Memorial and Museum in New York City, the Alamo Shrine in San Antonio, Texas, and the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii are other examples of this type of sacred space. It is important to note these types of sites are made sacred each time rituals take place and prayers are offered. The Alamo, ground zero, and the USS Arizona are sacred because of the actions of men and women, not because of a *hierophany*. These lands are sacred because of what people have done and will remain sacred as long as the community continues to reinforce and sustain this places through remembrance, presence, and ceremony.

The second category of sacred lands are more metaphysical than the first. The second category is not expressly related to death or battlefields, nor does it depend on events that have taken place within living memory. These types of places,

Have a deeper, more profound sense of the sacred. It can be illustrated in Old Testament stories that have become the foundation of three world religions. After the death of Moses, Joshua led the Hebrews across the River Jordan into the Holy Land. On approaching the river with the Ark of the Covenant, the waters of the Jordan “rose up” or parted and the people, led by the Ark, crossed over on “dry ground,” which is to say they crossed without difficulty...In the crossing of the River Jordan, the sacred or higher powers have appeared in the lives of human beings. Indians would say something holy has appeared in an otherwise secular situation. No matter how we might attempt to explain this event in later historical, political, or economic terms, the essence of the event is that the sacred has become a part of our existence.⁴²²

⁴²¹ Ibid., 272

⁴²² Ibid., 272-3

The second category of sacred lands are not made sacred by the actions of men and women. They are sanctified by actions and events beyond of the control of humankind. Events at these places represent an incursion of the sacred into the secular world that humanity is forced to take notice. In turn, these events begin to shape and form the worldview and ethos of unique religious communities impacting everything from creation myths and ceremonies to taboos and government. These types of sacred places are foundational to a wide range of religious traditions. Local-indigenous religions that prioritize space and nature as well as global-utopian religions that prioritize belief and faith rely on these types of sacred places. Other examples besides the River Jordan include the revelations and recitations of the prophet Mohammed -- which he received from the angel Gabriel -- on Mount Hira, the coming of the locusts to the Onondaga Nation in 1779, the birth of Siddhartha Gautama (*Shakyamuni*), and the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Eliade called these types of experiences *hierophanies*, or “manifestations of the sacred,” and claimed that they were responsible for the “sacred ontological” foundation of the world. According to Eliade, with each hierophany

We are confronted by the same mysterious act – the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong in our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural “profane” world...When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality...Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an eruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different.⁴²³

The eruption of the sacred into the profane was an observable phenomenological starting point and exist in a plethora of religious communities all over the globe. *Hierophanies*,

⁴²³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987). 11

for Eiliade, became one of the primary building blocks upon which he built much of his comparative enterprise. Ultimately mapping and interpreting religions based on their *hierophanies*, what Deloria calls “sacred events,” became the basis for the History of Religions.

The third kind of sacred places are,

Places of overwhelming holiness where the higher Powers, on their own initiative, have revealed Themselves to human beings. Again, we can illustrate this in the Old Testament narrative. Prior to his journey to Egypt, Moses spent his time herding his father-in-law’s sheep on or near Mount Horeb. One day he took the flock to the far side of the mountain and to his amazement saw a bush burning with fire but not being consumed by fire. Approaching this spot with the usual curiosity of a person accustomed to outdoor life, Moses was startled when the Lord spoke to him from the bush... This tradition tells us that there are places of unquestionable, inherent sacredness on this earth, sites that are holy in and of themselves... There will always be a few sites at which the highest spirits dwell... These holy places are locations where people have always gone to communicate and commune with higher spiritual powers.⁴²⁴

This third category of sacred places, unlike category one and two, are those places where the shroud between the sacred and the profane is the thinnest. Places where the “highest spirits dwell” and where people have always gone to correspond with “higher spiritual powers.” Other examples include the Onondaga Lake for Haudenosaunee confederacy, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for Jews, and the Ka’bah in Mecca for Muslims. These places may also be sites of *hierophany*, but in a more absolute sense. In many cases, Native people are hesitant or unwilling to reveal the locations of their community’s holiest of holies out of fear those places will be vandalized, mistreated, or in some other ways polluted. Additionally, “discussing the nature of ceremony would violate the integrity”⁴²⁵ of the relationships between the tribe and the sacred place / power.

⁴²⁴ Deloria, *God is Red*, p. 275.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 274

All three types of sacred places share several key characteristics. Most importantly for Deloria is the relationship between sacred places, revelation, and ceremony.

According to Deloria,

Each holy site contains its own revelation. This knowledge is not the ultimate in the sense that Near Eastern religions like to claim the universality of their ideas. Traditional religious leaders tell us that in many of the ceremonies new messages are communicated to them. The ceremonies enable humans to have continuing relationships with higher spiritual powers so that each bit of information is specific to the time, place and circumstances of the people. No revelation can be regarded as universal because time and conditions change.⁴²⁶

Since revelation was seen as a “continuous process of adjustment” not as a “specific message” valid for all times and all places, Native religions place a much higher value on place and land than on faith and belief, doctrine and creed, text and time. This is one of the basic reasons why non-Native people can’t convert to traditional Native American religions and why Native people do not actively seek converts. How can one convert to a place? How can one evangelize a place? The place specific values of Native American peoples have tied them to their unique landscapes. When personhood and identity, religion and revelation, are embedded in the natural environment, the health of the community is lodged in the earth. Deloria’s claims that “tribal” peoples consider “experience” to be more essential than “belief” and that “oral” history is just as valid as written history are extensions of the place specific theologies of Native American religions.

For Deloria, revelation is not only a matter of space and place, but also a matter of time. For Indigenous people, time is cyclical, ever repeating, alive, and constantly moving in circles. Time does not move in a linear fashion, as it does for Christian

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 277

communities beginning with creation and ending with apocalypse. As a result of a cyclical interpretation of time and space, sacred places — the places of revelation — continually and actively reveal messages and communications from the spirit world. Sacred places allow indigenous people to connect -- and reconnect -- with the circle of revelation, ceremony, and nature. According to Deloria,

The places where revelations were experienced were remembered and set aside as locations where, through rituals and ceremonials, the people could once again communicate with the spirits. Thousands of years of occupancy on their lands taught tribal peoples the sacred landscapes for which they were responsible and gradually the structure of ceremonial reality became clear. It was not what the people believed to be true that was important but what they experienced as true. Hence revelation was seen as a continuous process of adjustment to the natural surroundings and not as a specific message valid for all times and places.⁴²⁷

Under Deloria's theological framework, time is cyclical, revelation is ongoing, places are sacred, mother earth is teacher, and land is the primary agent through which communities experience the sacred. As mentioned in the footnote of Allen Ginsberg's epic poem

Howl

Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy!Holy! Holy! Holy!Holy!Holy! The World is Holy! The Soul is Holy! The Skin is Holy! Everything is Holy! Everybody's Holy! Everywhere is Holy! Holy New York Holy San Francisco Holy Peoria & Seattle Holy Paris Holy Tangiers Holy Moscow Holy Istanbul!"⁴²⁸

The harsh reality of Deloria's theological system is that the loss of lands, if "tribes no longer lived on the dust of their ancestor's bones," will result in the "destruction" of "religious communities" and "individual identities" since "without land and a homeland no movement can survive."⁴²⁹ For the last five hundred years, Native communities have had to adapt to being removed from their sacred landscapes. Removal has disrupted

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 67

⁴²⁸ Ginsberg, Allen, *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 1955).

⁴²⁹ Deloria, *God is Red*, p. 179.

every aspect of Native American society, including but not limited to, their traditional languages, ceremonies, and revelations. One possible reason for the continued survival of Onondaga language, religion, and ceremonies is that the community has never been fully removed from their ancestral homelands; however, they have only managed to maintain four square miles of their ancestral territory that once spanned thousands of square miles. Over the years, the Onondaga community has had to fully commit to protecting their land-base and their sovereign status as a means of preserving their ancestral traditions. The Onondaga community can still claim to have “land and homeland” and that they continue to live “on the dust of their ancestor’s bones,” but they live under constant threat that one day the United States Federal Government or the State of New York will attempt to remove the Onondaga community once and for all. The constant threat of land theft had imbued the community at Onondaga with a great deal of paranoia and mistrust. Without the land, the community can’t survive; for this reason, the Onondaga people are willing to defend their remaining territory by any means necessary.

In contrast with Deloria’s indigenous model of religion, Jewish author, theologian, and civil rights leader Abraham Joshua Heschel promoted a “desanctified,” or utopian model, of religion amongst American Jewry. Heschel, memorialized by his support of Dr. Martin Luther King during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, was key to the development of America’s Conservative Jewish movement. Like Deloria, Heschel is considered a powerhouse of American theology. Also, like Deloria, Heschel was a prolific writer, master orator, and civil rights leader. Both men are highly respected

within their community and both men claim their theologies are an extension of the ancient messages of their traditional religious systems.

According to Heschel, God is the center of Judaism; therefore, Heschel's chief theological concern is how biblical man can experience and respect, know and relate to, God. Judaism, according to Heschel, is a

Religion of history, a religion of time. The God of Israel was not found primarily in the facts of nature. He spoke through events in history. While deities of other peoples were associated with places or things, the God of the prophets was the God of events...Holiness in space, in nature, was known to other religions. New in the teaching of Judaism was that the idea of holiness was gradually shifted from space to time, from the realm of nature to the realm of history, from things to events. The physical world became divested of any inherent sanctity. There were no naturally sacred plants or animals any more. To be sacred, a thing had to be consecrated by a conscious act of man. The quality of holiness is not in the grain of matter. It is a preciousness bestowed upon things by an act of consecration and persisting in relation to God.⁴³⁰

It is clear that Heschel's Judaism and Deloria's Native view of religion present divergent visions and disparate paths to experience the sacred. For Heschel, the God of the Hebrew bible and the ancient Jewish prophets shifted focus from "space to time," from "the realm of nature to the realm of history," and from "things to events."⁴³¹ Heschel's declaration that God manifests in "events of history rather than in things or places" combined with his assertion that "sacred plants or animals" no longer exist, highlight the vast gulf between Deloria's model of sacred places and Heschel's model of chosen time.

At the macro level, Eilberg-Schwartz claimed that the evolutionary schema kept comparisons between Jewish and "savage" communities to a minimum; however, at the micro level, Jewish theologians were more than willing to compare and comment on the superiority of time and history over and above space and place. Heschel's Jewish

⁴³⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2005). 79

⁴³¹ Ibid., 79

theology starts with interpretations of the ancient stories contained in the Hebrew bible.

According to Heschel, there is

No mention of sacred places in the Ten commandments...In the bible no thing, no place on earth, is holy by itself. Even the site on which the only sanctuary was to be built in the Promised Land is never called holy in the Pentateuch, nor was it determined or specified in the time of Moses. More than twenty times it is referred to as 'the place which the Lord your God shall choose.'⁴³²

Heschel's argument about the lack of sacred places is rooted in the Hebrew bible and the Ten commandments — God revealing himself to Moses and the covenant at Sinai.

According to Heschel, sacred places were not sanctified by God; instead, they have been invented by man. While Deloria avoided the concept of consecration, even in his description of the first type of sacred places, Heschel is quite convinced that mankind possesses the unique ability to sanctify land. Mankind, therefore, must also have the power to de-sanctify land. By divesting the world of sanctity, what Heschel refers to as "desanctification," the prophets repudiated nature as an "object of grandeur" and subdued the "tendency of ancient man to endow nature with a mysterious potency like mana or orenda."⁴³³ Heschel's clunky handling of mana / orenda as the "mysterious potency of nature" exposes his unfamiliarity with indigenous theologies. Whereas Deloria had first-hand knowledge of biblical narratives and the tradition of textual exegesis, nowhere throughout Heschel's cannon of work does he mention actually coming into contact with Native American peoples. Discrepancies over time, space, and the nature of revelations strike at the heart of the most significant theological divergences of Judaism and Native American religions. The challenge to the Jewish community has always been how to figure out how to exist as a community in a world devoid of sacred places while the

⁴³² Ibid., 80

⁴³³ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, p. 90.

challenge to Native Americans has always been to figure out how to exist in a world full of sacred places.

While warning of the natural world's "indifference to our values," its proclivity to "menace our spiritual understanding," and "stand as a wall between us and God," Heschel goaded "Western man" for choosing between "the worship of God and the worship of nature."⁴³⁴ Warning that nature is "deaf to our cries and indifferent to our values. Her laws know no mercy, no forbearance. They are inexorable, implacable, ruthless."⁴³⁵ Even though Heschel does not comment on man's ability to hear the cries of nature, we can assume that since God is in search of Man, man is in search of God, and nature is indifferent to man, then man should be indifferent to nature. Nature, according to Heschel, is herself "in need of salvation."⁴³⁶ Along these lines, Franz Rosenzweig cautioned,

For while the earth nourishes, it also binds. Whenever a people loves the soil of its native land more than its own life, it is in danger...The earth betrays a people that entrusted its performance to earth. The soil endures, the peoples who live on it pass...We have struck root in ourselves. We do not root in earth and so we are eternal wanderers, but deeply rooted in our own body and blood. And in this rooting in ourselves, and in nothing but ourselves, that vouch states eternity.⁴³⁷

In this passage, Rosenzweig warns a community is in danger when the soil (land) becomes more important to the community than the community itself. Rosenzweig commands for the Jewish community to root in nothing but their "own body and blood" in order to maintain the traditions of God. Nature and soil, earth and land, space and place, are unnecessary encumberments to those "eternal wanderers," the Jews.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 91

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 89

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 89

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 299-305.

Rosenzweig warned that “pagans,” the “romantic movement,” and the “resurrection of the God Pan” could divert Jewish attentions away from the worship of God and the understanding of chosen time down the wayward path of popular religions.

Ancient rabbis, according to Heschel, delineated between three aspects of the sacred: “the holiness of the Name of God, the holiness of the Sabbath, and the holiness of Israel.”⁴³⁸ Similar to Deloria’s description of the three categories of sacred places, Heschel’s three categories of the sacred – God, Sabbath, and community -- are directly related to mankind’s ability to experience the sacred. Heschel specifically detailed how, and more importantly when, contemporary communities may experience the sacred. For Heschel, the Sabbath -- the Jewish day of rest which traditionally takes place from sun down on Friday to sun down on Saturday -- is the time frame that has been set aside for man to experience the “one true happiness of the universe.”⁴³⁹ Without the Sabbath there would be “no holiness in our world of time” for only during the Sabbath can man participate in the “spirit that unites what is below and what is above.”⁴⁴⁰ Furthermore, Heschel claims,

To observe the seventh day does not mean merely to obey or to conform to the strictness of a divine command. To observe is to celebrate creation of the world and to create the seventh day all over again, the majesty of holiness in time, “a day of rest, a day of freedom,” a day which is like “a lord and king of all other days,” a lord and king in the commonwealth of time... The difference between the Sabbath and all other days is not to be noticed in the physical structure of things, in their spatial dimension. Things do not change on that day. There is only a difference in the dimension of time, in the relation of the universe to God. The Sabbath preceded creation and the Sabbath completed creation. It is all of the spirit that the world can bear.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Israel: An Echo of Eternity* (New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1974). 11

⁴³⁹ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, p. 4-5.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 54

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 20-21

Heschel's love of God was reflected in his love of the Sabbath. Similarly, he relied on the Sabbath day to experience God just as much as he relied on the Sabbath to organize his life and the life of the greater Jewish community. As Judaism is a religion of time, it fits perfectly that a specific portion of the weekly schedule would be set aside and sanctified. Just like Native American communities set aside specific places, Jews have set aside specific times. The Sabbath, for Heschel, might have elements of all types of sacred places discussed by Deloria, but the Sabbath stands out as the maintenance of sacred time rather than the creation of sacred places.

Heschel's assertion that biblical history represents a "triumph of time over space" highlights the Utopian or "placeless" elements of Judaism.⁴⁴² Heschel was not concerned with mother earth, or "sister earth" as he places her in the cosmological family tree, but with Father time (God) and chosen time (events). Heschel's God, God of the Hebrew bible, searches for his people and speaks to them through events in history, not through places or things, not through spaces or nature. Under Heschel's framework, revelation is not an act of seeking, as it is for Deloria, but of being sought after. According to Heschel, the time of revelation has past. It is over. Revelation is not an ongoing part of creation -- as it is for Deloria -- but an event that took place in a "particular" or "unique" moment in history. For Heschel, this time, the time of the prophets, what Eliade called *in illo tempore*, has passed and is no more.

Religious Man, or as Heschel calls him "Biblical Man," can only relate to God through sacred moments in history – not through sacred places. Heschel calls these sacred moments, "Chosen Time," and claims that "chosen time" has created a hierarchy

⁴⁴² Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, p. 91 & 200.

of time and in turn a hierarchy of history.⁴⁴³ Henceforth, according to Heschel, chosen time and sacred texts are the only medium available through which modern Jewish communities can experience the sacred (God). According to Koltun-Fromm “even with this sense of mystery and enchantment in the physical world, Heschel denies the capacity of any one thing to capture holiness or divine presence.”⁴⁴⁴ While Deloria and Eliade are more general in their assertions concerning the sacred, Heschel is quite deliberate that his God, the God of Israel, -- the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- the one and only true God, can only be known through holy moments in history and in the consecration of time in the Sabbath – not through sacred landscapes.

Land is significant to Heschel. He even goes so far as to claim that to “abandon the land would be to repudiate the bible.”⁴⁴⁵ Ergo, there are no negative values attached to the natural universe. Heschel’s lamentations are not centered around the degradation of this world. Instead, he focused on the process of experiencing the sacred through accessing specific moments in time. Places -- as well animals and plants -- are not all equal; however, place is only significant because of events that once happened there, not because of events that will happen there, and certainly not because of events that are presently unfolding. Nevertheless, Heschel was steadfast in his position that biblical man need be more concerned to know the “will of God” who “governed nature” rather than the “order of nature itself.” Or as Koltun-Fromm claimed “Heschel proposed a sharp dichotomy between holiness in time and things in space.”⁴⁴⁶ Heschel called Israel reborn an “extraordinary surprise,” the very “opposite of commonplace” and referred to the level

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 203

⁴⁴⁴ Ken Koltun-Fromm, *Material Culture and Jewish Thought in America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010). 149

⁴⁴⁵ Heschel, *Israel*, p. 44.

⁴⁴⁶ Koltun-Fromm, *Material Culture*, p. 178.

of Jewish attachment to the land of Israel as unlike any attachment to any land “anywhere else in the world.”⁴⁴⁷ Merely being in the State of Israel, for Heschel, is a religious experience for all Jews. Clearly, a knowledge of indigenous cultures would have illuminated Heschel to the possibility that communities from all over the world have become attached to their land in similar ways as the Jewish community is attached to Israel.

Heschel, like Deloria, also acknowledged several other types of sacred places.

According to Heschel,

We are all willing to admit that certain things are sacred. No one would condone the desecration of a national or religious shrine. Everyone will admit that the Grand Canyon is more awe-inspiring than a trench. Everyone knows the difference between a worm and an eagle. But how many of us have a similar sense of discretion for the diversity of time?...Jewish tradition claims that there is a hierarchy of moments within time, that all agree are not alike. Man may pray to God equally at all places, but God does not speak to man equally at all times. At a certain moment, for example, the spirit of prophecy departed from Israel.⁴⁴⁸

Heschel’s admission that “certain things are sacred,” serves a number of purposes. First of all, he assuages critics who might attack his lack of interest in the material world.

Second, and most importantly, Heschel’s admission about a hierarchy of places -- and a hierarchy of animals -- is meant to bolster his contention concerning the “diversity of time” and support his claim that there is a “hierarchy of moments within time.” By juxtaposing the “Grand Canyon” against “a trench” and “an eagle” against “a worm,” Heschel does not really address the sophisticated place based knowledge and theologies of Native American peoples. He quickly glosses over what he calls “religious shrines” in order to return to his explanation of the “diversity of time.” Additionally, Heschel is

⁴⁴⁷ Heschel, *Israel*, p. 51.

⁴⁴⁸ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, p. 205.

careful to couch his claim about “things” that are sacred with the proclamation that the “spirit of prophecy departed from Israel” in order to not contradict his pronouncement concerning the superiority of “Father time” over “sister earth.”

For Heschel, the land is not sacred. The land was merely the setting where something Holy happened – the place where God searched out for Man and the place where Man listened to God. Israel is the land where God spoke to man, but this has not made the Land Holy; it has instead made specific moments in history Holy. According to Heschel,

God has chosen Jerusalem and endowed her with the mystery of his presence; prophets, kings, sages, priests made her a place where God’s calling was heard and accepted. Here lived the people who listened and preserves events in words – the scribes, the copyists... There are moments in history which are unique, moments which have tied the heart of our people to Jerusalem forever.⁴⁴⁹

At best, land is a text. Land links the Jewish community of the present to the Jewish community of the past. God’s revelations, however, are only accessible through “chosen time,” not through Land, nature, sacred spaces, or any other material or physical landscape. To Heschel, “Holy Land” does not mean the land is Holy, but that the Holy once visited the Land a long time ago. In Heschel’s theology of Judaism, time is the medium for revelation, not space or place. Jerusalem is a place where time transcends space and where “space is a dimension of time.”⁴⁵⁰ It is not necessary for the community to be in Jerusalem for them to experience the sublime moments in time. Neither ceremony nor ritual, revelation nor prophecy, are dependent on being on the land in Heschel’s “desanctified” theology. This represents a large departure from Deloria’s place specific ceremonies and his insistence on “living on the dust of his ancestor’s bones.”

⁴⁴⁹ Heschel, *Israel*, p. 12-13.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 120

Holy Time or Chosen Time, not Holy Land, would be a more accurate moniker to describe Heschel's theological positions. The land is significant, highly significant even. Some land is even more significant than other land, but land, while beautiful and awe-inspiring, is a deceiver, a trickster, and not to be trusted. According to Heschel,

Revelation lasted a moment; the text is permanent in time and space. Revelation happened to the prophet; the text is given to all of us. "The Torah is not in heaven;" we are guided by the word, and it is the word, the text, which is our guide, our light in the darkness of platitudes and errors. We must neither reduce revelation to a matter of fact nor spiritualize the Bible and destroy its factual integrity.⁴⁵¹

JZ Smith has categorized Christianity as the atypical "utopian" religion, characterized by conversion, creed, and individual salvation with a no-place or placeless ideology. While Smith highlights Jewish narratives of "exile" and "ancient Israel's ideology of Holy Land" as the "locative" or "place-specific" concerns of ancient Judaism, modern American Judaism has adopted several "utopian" characteristics.⁴⁵² Clearly Heschel's "desanctified" Judaism with its focus on "chosen time" over and above "sacred place" is much more aptly categorized as "utopian," since it depends only on sublime moments of history not on sublime physical landscapes. Land, while luxurious, is not an essential part of Heschel's theological equation, nor is Land a precursor to reach God or to know God's Law.

The locative or place-specific aspects of Native American religions, according to Deloria, are responsible for the survival of contemporary Native communities. Land provides for the community, land teaches the community, and land holds the community together. Even today, the Onondaga do not believe in the idea of private property.

⁴⁵¹ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, p. 259.

⁴⁵² Jonathan Z Smith, *Map is Not Territory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978). xii

Apparently, aboriginal title is something that can neither be bought nor sold. The horrifying truth about Native communities is that their dependence on land and their insistence that land is sacred has simultaneously kept their traditions alive while it has permanently ostracized and “othered” them from contemporary American society. The racial transformation of Jews and the creation of the “Judeo-Christian” ethic, which signified the inclusion of Jews into mainstream American society, would not have been possible if Jews viewed America as a sacred landscape. While this process was accelerated by the GI bill and anti-Eugenics sentiments, the rebirth of the State of Israel and the liquidation millions of European Jews, and the cessation of housing, education, and job restrictions, religion and theology have also played a significant role in the ‘Americanization’ of the Jewish community. How easy would it have been for Jews -- or any other religious or cultural group -- to participate in American culture if they claimed New Jersey, South Florida, or New York -- as the Haudenosaunee have done -- as their Holy Land? Adopting Heschel’s exile-based theology of “desanctification” has primed the Jewish community to become part of American society in ways previously unavailable. Ultimately, viewing time and history as Holy has catalyzed Jewish inclusion into American society while viewing land as Holy has cemented Native American exclusion from American society.

EPILOGUE

I wish I could conclude with a cute, humorous, and insightful story – one I could present and analyze while weaving all of the loose threads into an enlightening hoop of cross cultural exchange and mutual respect. However, Indian country is no fairytale world; my collaborations with Native people have only begun.

Over the last eight months, the residents of the Standing Rock reservation, located in South Dakota, have been involved in a relentless, around the clock, twenty-four hour a day, seven days a week, protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline Project. On December 4th, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Denied a permit for what had been the working of the pipeline, which the Standing Rock Sioux tribe claimed had already destroyed sacred sites and would threaten its water supply. The Army Corps' action seemed to put an end to a standoff between the tribe and Energy Transfer Partners, the company building the pipeline, at least for the remaining six weeks of the Obama administration.⁴⁵³

While this decision, backed by the Obama administration, may be as close to a “win” that the Sioux have experienced since Little Big Horn, the most experienced Native activists know the battle may be over, but the war still wages. As long as Native territories continue to exist, they will be forced to endure the constant onslaught of government interference and the constant threat of private enterprise -- oil pipelines, fracking, mineral extraction, livestock grazing, agriculture, or the extension of state and federal highways. America has changed over the past two hundred years; however, land remains just as valuable a commodity today as it was during contact.

⁴⁵³ Eitan Arom, *Scenes of Jewish Solidarity at Standing Rock* (Jewish Journal, December 7, 2016). http://www.jewishjournal.com/nation/article/scenes_of_jewish_solidarity_from_standing_rock, viewed on December 10, 2016.

News coverage surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protests started slowly, but as celebrities -- Shailene Woodley, Jane Fonda, Mark Ruffalo, Susan Sarandon, just to name a few -- began to visit the Sacred Stone camp, the home base of the “water protectors,” media coverage began to increase. In November when local, state, and federal law officers began violently confronting protestors with dogs, water cannons, pepper spray, rubber bullets, and concussion grenades, the scene became too sensational for the national news media to ignore. Seemingly overnight, people from all over the United States began traveling to Standing Rock. Those unable to attend the protest donated money, clothes, food, and other supplies to the “water protectors.” Print journalists began writing about Standing Rock, television news began covering Standing Rock, and social justice warriors began tweeting about Standing Rock. Standing Rock went viral. It is a strange phenomenon for anything in Indian country to “go viral” and reach a national, let alone an international, audience. Nevertheless, the violent nature of Standing Rock struck a cord with many different groups from all over the world.

Several American Jewish organizations, and a litany of Jewish individuals, vocally supported the Standing Rock water protectors. In an act of civil disobedience and solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux, nine rabbis, rabbinical students, and other members of the Jewish community lead by Rabbi Alissa Wise of the “Jewish Voice for Peace” organization were arrested in downtown Philadelphia when they refused to vacate the premises of the Wells Fargo and TD Ameritrade banks – two of the institutions responsible for financing part of the pipeline’s construction.⁴⁵⁴ Additionally, the Central Conference of American Rabbi’s (CCAR), which was founded in 1889 by Isaac Mayer

⁴⁵⁴ <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/nine-philly-rabbis-jewish-community-members-arrested-protesting-dakota-access-pipeline-td-bank/>, Viewed on December 16, 2016.

Wise, felt compelled to issue their own statement regarding Standing Rock. Part of the statement reads,

The Central Conference of American Rabbis opposes the Dakota Access Pipeline, and in particular to its route that threatens the Standing Rock Sioux Indian community and its sacred burial place. Reform rabbis have called for climate justice repeatedly over the decades, most recently in 2015, and have long supported the rights of Native American Indians and particularly expressed sensitivity for their burial sites.

Reform rabbis are equally disturbed by the response to the protest. Some protesters are reporting being housed in mesh dog kennels with no bedding or furniture. They claim they have been pelted with rubber bullets and had mace sprayed in their faces. The charge that authorities are writing numbers on prisoners' arms brings up painful images of the Holocaust. While the majority of protesters have been prayerful and peaceful, in those rare instances where safety is called into question, we expect that those arrested will be treated with the respect that should be afforded to one made in the image of God.

Within the last week, Jews around the world read the story of creation as told in the Torah. We are reminded that we are all one human family. We are commanded to take responsibility for preserving God's creation. The Dakota Access Pipeline threatens the environment and violates the human rights of the Standing Rock Sioux Indian residents.⁴⁵⁵

In addition to organizational support from Jewish Voice for Peace, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, T'ruah, and CCAR, Jewish peoples felt compelled to participate in the Standing Rock protest. In her article *The Few, The Proud: Jews Stand with Standing Rock*, Amy Clark tells the story of Rabbi Francine Roston who drove, alone, 800 miles from her home in Northern Montana in order to participate, with her fellow clergy, in the Standing Rock protest. According to Rabbi Roston,

This is a human rights issue. To say these people are being treated unfairly is an understatement. The Police are denying them their right to protest, the government is not fulfilling its duty to honor its contract with

⁴⁵⁵ <https://www.ccarnet.org/about-us/ccar-supports-standing-rock-sioux-indians-and-climate-justice/>, Viewed on December 16, 2016.

the Sioux Nation, and every day, every hour of every day, the (oil pipeline) company is continuing to build this pipeline...They are destroying sacred sites on sacred land...Imagine someone tried to build a pipeline through Arlington National Cemetery...I brought my shofar because it's the sound of revelation and the sound of repentance and I thought a call to atonement was appropriate."⁴⁵⁶

In addition to the Jewish peoples and Jewish organizations providing support for the water protectors, Palestinian peoples and pro-Palestinian organizations have also expressed their support for the Standing Rock Sioux. On September 9th, 2016 the Palestinian BDS (boycott, divest, sanction) National Committee issued an official statement regarding their support of Standing Rock. Their statement reads,

We the undersigned Palestinians – artists, academics, activists, elders, laborers, musicians, authors, businesspersons, attorneys, students – hereby declare our unqualified and heartfelt solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in their epic struggle to protect what remains of their ancestral lands, waters and sacred sites.

As an indigenous people whose lands have been robbed and pillaged, and who face existential settler-colonial expansion in Palestine, we recognize that Native American and First Nation peoples have endured centuries of violent settler colonialism that has dismantled and robbed them of home, heritage, dignity, security, narrative, land, language, identity, family, trees, cemeteries, animals, livelihoods and life.

We recognize the multitude of ways that Native American and First Nation struggles to protect indigenous territories have ultimately been struggles on behalf of all of humanity to save the Earth we share from toxic globalization of neoliberal and capitalist ethos that threaten our collective survival.

We also heed the wise leadership of a people who first conceived of mountains and rivers as sacred, who look upon a prairie with reverence, who consider trees as family and who risk their lives to protect the water and the integrity of their ancestral lands.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁶ Amy Sara Clark, *The Few, The Proud: Jews Stand With Standing Rock* (The Jewish Week, November 17, 2016). <http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/new-york/few-proud-jews-stand-standing-rock>, Viewed on December 16, 2016.

⁴⁵⁷ Andrew Kadi, *Palestinians Back Standing Rock Sioux in "struggle for all humanity* (September 10, 2016, The Electronic Intifada). <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/andrew-kadi/palestinians-back-standing-rock-sioux-struggle-all-humanity#fullstatement>, Viewed on December 16, 2016.

In addition to BDS, other Palestinian organizations like the Palestinian Youth Movement (United States branch) and Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) became vocal supporters of the Standing Rock water protectors. Palestinian flags and banners -- one that read “FROM PALESTINE TO STANDING ROCK WE ARE UNITED” -- peppered the landscape of the sacred stone encampment. Clearly, many Palestinian individuals and groups felt compelled to support the Standing Rock water protectors. Similar to the Jewish supporters, they did so out of a sense of justice embedded in their own unique cultural and religious heritage and their own experiences of powerlessness.

In an article published on November 16, 2016 entitled *Gaza writes to Standing Rock: Your story is our story*, Israa Sullman, a twenty year old Palestinian student living in Gaza, makes the argument that Native Americans and Palestinians are “soulmates.” According to Sullman,

Although we are of different color, religion, culture and place, I have learned, as I read about the protests at Standing Rock, that we have much more in common than differences. When I read your history, I can see myself and my people reflected in yours. I feel in my core that your fight is my fight, and that I am not alone in the battle against injustice.

My ancestors were not the only ones who lived in Palestine. Jews, Christians and Arabs all lived side by side in my country. But my ancestors—including my grandparents and great-grandparents—were the indigenous people, just like you. And they suffered the same fate as your people. America’s policy of occupation and displacement through forced marches like the Trail of Tears, and the gradual transfer of so many of your people to massive, impoverished reservations, hurts me deeply because it is so similar to the ethnic cleansing of my ancestors by the Israeli military occupation in what we call “al-Nakba” (the catastrophe). We know what you know: that our land is sacred.

In 1948, my ancestors—along with nearly a million other Palestinians—were frightened away or forced off their lands, in some cases at gunpoint. More than 10,000 others were massacred. Hundreds of our villages and cities were completely destroyed in a systemic plan to erase our identity—just as yours has been under continuing assault.

Like you, we don't control our natural resources. Just as you were not consulted about the Dakota Access Pipeline that will traverse your land and contaminate your water supply if installed, we are not consulted by Israel, which wants to mine the gas supply in our harbor for its own use and monopolizes the water supply in the West Bank for the green lawns of its own residents—leaving Palestinians parched and dry. In Gaza, where I live, only 10 percent of our water supply is drinkable due to the conditions in which we must live. We too know that “water is life.”

Like yours, our resistance has been labeled as acts of terrorism and violence rather than as a fight for survival and dignity. That's not surprising, since this is the policy of every oppressor who seeks to criminalize others to justify its acts. It is the oppressor's way to create its own version of reality to rationalize its behavior and brainwash the masses. And it is the oppressor's plan to make the colonized feel weak and alone. But you are proving they won't succeed and I want you to know that my people are with you.

Seeing your women, elders and youth stand together to protest the pipeline and your exclusion from decision making is so inspiring! It gives us strength to go on with our own struggle.

As a Palestinian in Gaza, I have grown up feeling detached from the rest of the world as Israel tightens its decade-long blockade. I am sure many of you feel the same way. But we are not isolated. We are “soulmates” in the way that counts.⁴⁵⁸

I would never go so far as to call Native Americans and Jews “soulmates;” however, through the controversy at Standing Rock, we can plainly see that many different religious, cultural, and national groups -- from both inside and outside the United States - - feel some sort of indebtedness and camaraderie with contemporary Native American communities and utilized Standing Rock as an opportunity to express those sentiments.

The problem with these alliances, however, is they are primarily politically motivated and secondarily based in personal, or familial, relationships of exchange. This is a classic example of putting the cart before the horse, agenda before exchange. In

⁴⁵⁸ Israa Sullman, *Gaza writes to Standing Rock: Your story is our story* (November 16, 2016) <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/11/writes-standing-story/>, Viewed on December 16, 2016.

order for these alliances to continue into the future, relationships must come before politics. Furthermore, throughout these activist statements I only hear people talking about similarities - similarities between Jews and Indians, similarities between Palestinians and Indians, similarities between Blacks and Indians. It appears differences have been intentionally obfuscated in order to make the process of political alignment an easier and more palatable experience. Nothing in Indian country is easy; nothing ever will be. In going viral, Standing Rock was able to touch a worldwide audience, and a worldwide audience was able to touch Standing Rock. Only time will tell whether or not long lasting, political alliances were forged during the eight-month standoff.

In my experiences with the Onondaga people, it takes years of building trust in order to begin discussing the possibilities of political alliances between Jews and Indians. Unpacking the complex agendas and desires surrounding the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians, Americans and Onk'ew'honwe, needs to occur, but it cannot be done in an op-ed, viral video, or political cartoon. Only a serious discussion of land, religion, and history can unpack the similarities of significance and the dialectics of difference between contemporary Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian, Muslim, and Native American communities.

APPENDIX I: APPROVED IRB CONSENT FORM

Brothers in Blood:
The Significance of Land and Loss in the Creation of Jewish and Native American Ethnic
and Religious Identity

- I. My name is Michael Chaness and I am a graduate student in the department of Religion at Syracuse University. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. This sheet will explain the study to you and please feel free to ask questions about the research if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in detail if you wish.

I am interested in learning more about Haudenosaunee history and culture. You will be asked a series of questions concerning the relationships between blood, land, genocide, culture, religion and previous academic incursions onto Haudenosaunee territories. The interview will take approximately 2 hours of your time and subsequent follow up editing should take no longer than one year to complete.

If you would prefer for your name, title and nation to be included in the dissertation then it shall be done. If you would prefer for your name, title and nation to remain confidential then information will be kept confidential. In this case I will assign a number to your responses, and only Michael Chaness and Dr Philip Arnold will have the key to indicate which number belongs to which participant. In any articles I write or any presentation that I make, I will use a made-up name for you, and I will not reveal details about where you work, live or go to school.

- II. The purpose of this dissertation project is to compare and contrast Judaism with Native American Religions. This comparison will be historic, cultural, literary as well as religious. Ultimately I will comment on the formation of race and the practice of religion in America.

A. This study involves a substantial amount of research. A portion of that research will take place on the Onondaga Nation. There I will meet with Haudenosaunee peoples to discuss my theories concerning a wide variety of religious issues (land, genocide, blood, theology). Direct participation of Haudenosaunee peoples is an essential part of this collaborative venture in order to ensure the validity and veracity of content.

1. This is a collaborative project. Participants will also be involved in the editing process of the dissertation. Sections where participants are referenced, i.e. via quote or footnote, will be collaboratively edited for content and appropriateness before final submission.
2. When appropriate I will audio record my interviews. The purpose of the recording is to remember, word-for-word, the contents of our

conversations and be able to use direct quotes throughout the dissertation. Only Dr Arnold and Michael Channess will have access to the audio recordings and they will be erased five years after the completion of this project.

B. Participation in this project is completely voluntary and participants may refuse to take part in research or withdraw at any time without penalty.

1. There is no monetary compensation for participation.

2. The expected duration of those participating is two hours for the initial interview with the possibility of additional participation (2-4 hours) during the editing process of the dissertation. The project will take no longer than one year to complete from start to finish.

3. Those who participate in this research will benefit from their participation in this project by having their voices heard. This will be an opportunity for Haudenosaunee peoples to directly comment on their current and historic relationship with the United States and with the academic community. They will also learn much about the history of Judaism and about modern Jewish people.

4. Those who participate in this research may risk the possibility that this project will be perceived as harmful to the Haudenosaunee people and/or Haudenosaunee culture. A significant portion of chapter one will be dedicated to fleshing out the errors made and the problems created by previous generations of scholars who did collaborative work with Haudenosaunee communities – the so called ‘Iroquoianists’. Like previous efforts his project will condense oral knowledge of an oral culture into written form. This has the potential to create distrust and animosity. Participants should be made aware that not all community members would support my research efforts or agree to speak with me. If participants would prefer for the actual names, nations and titles to be used in my dissertation/papers/publications then they will be included. If, however, participants would prefer for their actual names, nations and titles not to be used in my dissertation/papers/publications then pseudonyms will be employed in order to protect subject’s identity.

5. My questions will involve several difficult subject areas (for example colonization, racism and genocide) and some may be intense and emotionally draining to answer. As a Jewish person I have direct personal and familial experience with genocide, Anti-Semitism and racial quotas so I understand if you are uncomfortable answering certain questions. If at any time you during the interview you would like to stop (or break) then it will be done.

C. Information obtained in the study will be received by a dissertation committee in the Religion Department of Syracuse University.

1. If the participant has any questions or concern or complaints about the research please contact Dr. Philip P Arnold, Religion Department-Syracuse University, 508 Hall of Languages, Syracuse, NY, 13244. If you have any questions about his or her rights as a research participant, you have questions, concerns or complaints that they wish to address to someone other than Philip Arnold or Michael Chaness, contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at 315.443.3013
3. Each participant will receive a copy of the consent page for their own records.

All of my questions have been answered, I am 18 years of age or older, and I wish to participate in this research study. I have received a copy of this consent form I, the undersigned, agree to provide services for the research study on Brothers in Blood: The Significance of Land and Loss in the Creation of Jewish and Native American Ethnic and Religious Identity. I understand that all information collected for this study is to remain confidential except when directly quoted in the dissertation itself. In adherence with this policy, I will not document, release or reveal any project data or personal information; including names, titles and other identity-revealing information of project participants. My signature below indicates that I fully agree to maintain the confidentiality of all project data and participants. If for any reason I feel that I am unable to uphold this policy, I will terminate my participation in this project.

☐ I agree to be audio taped

☐ I do not agree to be audio taped

☐ You may use my real name and I agree to be directly quoted

☐ You may not use my real name and I do not agree to be directly quoted

I, _____, am aged 18 or above. _____

(Participant Name)

(Date)

(Participant Signature)

(Date)

(Investigator Name)

(Date)

(Investigator Signature)

(Date)

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Department of Sociology and Anthropology - Utica, NY, Fall 2016

- ANT 251: Native American Culture and History

Keuka College --- *Instructor*

Department of the Humanities - Keuka Lake, NY, Fall 2015

- REL 103: Introduction to Religion

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Nov-Dec 2016	Four-week lecture series entitled "World Religions: One Hour at a Time." Jewish Senior Life. Rochester, New York.
May 2016	"No Vegetarians Allowed: Creation, Clan and Consumption on the Onondaga Nation," AAR-EIR, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
March, 2015	Invited presentation "Indebtedness and Indigeneity: The Responsibilities of American Jewry," Temple Concord Adult Education Series. Syracuse, NY.
May, 2014	"Contextualizing Collaboration: Syracuse University and the Onondaga Nation." 'Environmental Ethics, Collaboration and De-Colonization: Indigenous Religions in Central New York', AAR-EIR, Syracuse University. Syracuse, New York
Nov, 2013	"Is the Land Holy? Is the Holy Land?: the Comparative Theologies of Vine Deloria Jr and Abraham Joshua Heschel," 'Comparative Theologies' session at American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.
April, 2013	Invited presentation "Brothers in Blood," United Church of Fayetteville Presents Eco-Feminism, Fayetteville, NY
May, 2012	"The Final Solution v The Final Dilution: Nazi Death Camps and Federal Indian Reservations," AAR-EIR, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada
Feb, 2009	Invited presentation "Native American Religions," Liverpool Public Library Presents Discover World Religions, Liverpool, New York
May, 2007	"To Whom It May Concern: An Open Letter to Ronald Grimes," AAR-EIR, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario
May, 2006	"There Is No Place Like Home: Moral and Philosophical Motivations of the Onondaga Lake Clean Up Reforms," AAR-EIR, Quebec City, Quebec
May, 2005	"Playing Indian and Playing Indian: New Age Appropriations of Hindu and Native American Traditions," AAR-EIR, Montreal, Quebec, May 2005

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2013	Received Syracuse University/University College/Colonial Colloquium Online Developmental Grant. Developer: REL 103 Religion and Sports from on campus to asynchronous format.
2005-2009	Syracuse University – <i>Participant</i> , Future Professoriate Program
Nov, 2009	Presided over session ‘Comparative Studies in Religion Section: <i>Religion and Sports</i> ’ – AAR – Montreal, Quebec
Sept, 2007	Assistant organizer of “Roots of Peacemaking: Indigenous Values, Global Crisis.” An International Day of Peace event at Onondaga Lake Park. Speakers: Evon Peter, Audrey Shenandoah, Tonya Gonnella Frichner, Jerry Mander, Professor Oren Lyons and Jake Swamp. Collaborative event sponsored by SU and the Onondaga Nation. http://rootsofpeacemaking.syr.edu/
Sept, 2006	Assistant organizer of “Roots of Peacemaking: Indigenous Values, Global Crisis.” An International Day of Peace event at Onondaga Lake Park featuring Dr. Jane Goodall, Professor Oren Lyons and Tom Porter. Collaborative event sponsored by SU and the Onondaga Nation. http://rootsofpeacemaking.syr.edu/
Feb, 2005	Assistant organizer screening and panel discussion of “A Seat At the Table: Struggling for American Indian Religious Freedom.” Included talks by Gary Rhine, Phil Cousineau, Oren Lyons, Tonya Gonella Frichner, Doug George-Kanentiio, Joanne Shenandoah, Chancellor Nancy Cantor and Huston Smith. Syracuse University, Shemin Aud.

HONORS

2013	Benjamin Fellowship, Department of Judaic Studies, Syracuse University
2009	Certificate in University Teaching, Future Professoriate Program, Syracuse University
2005-2009, 2011	Teaching Assistantship, Department of Religion, Syracuse University
2004	Tuition Scholarship