11-30-2019

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Recommended Citation

Jorgenson A.G. (2019) Decolonizing and Indigenizing Liberation Theology. In: Timani H., Ashton L. (eds) Post-Christian Interreligious Liberation Theology. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-27308-8_9

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Allen G. Jorgenson

Introduction

This chapter considers how liberation theology might be informed by spiritualities and worldviews from the First Peoples of North America, sometimes called Turtle Island.[1] In so doing, I reference teachings, treaties and ceremonies from the community nearest me, the Six Nations of the Grand River Nation, whose members are Haudenosaunee.

In what follows I first provide an *apologia* for this project before imagining how each verb of the liberation hermeneutic of "see, judge, act" might be informed, in turn, by the Haudenosaunee Dish With One Spoon Wampum, the Two Row Wampum, and the Condolence Ceremony. In so doing, I will explore how a local liberation hermeneutic informed by the spirituality and worldview of First Peoples in my context will be one in which I *see* with all my relations, *judge* in accord with both thought and feeling, and *act* with peace, power and righteousness.

Liberation Theology and Turtle Island

It may appear as self-evident that the First People of Turtle Island would readily welcome liberation theology. After all, liberation theology's attention to sin as systemic speaks well to Indigenous people, who have suffered the burdens of systemic injustices that include genocide, land grabs, cultural assimilation, boarding and residential schools with the stated intent to "kill the Indian in the child," etc.[2] Moreover, liberation theology's attention to the lived experience of all people, but especially those who suffer under the oppressive tyranny of the elite would seem to resound among the Indigenous peoples of this continent. Indeed, one might imagine that the liberation conviction that the poor speak God's word with a special clarity would be most welcome to peoples who suffer in poverty without adequate water sources even while residing among the richest nations on the planet.[3] Further, the idea that both the oppressed and the oppressor are liberated resonates with the invitation from Indigenous thinkers to Settlers to participate in their "vision of respectful and peaceful coexistence," that is a "decolonized alternative to Settler society."[4] But things are not always as they seem.

In an oft-quoted article entitled "Canaanite, Cowboys, and Indians" Robert Allen Warrior problematizes what might otherwise be deemed a "perfect marriage" between the First Peoples of this continent and liberation theology. He notes "Christians have a different way of going about the struggle for justice than most Native Americans."[5] He is especially critical of the propensity to use the narrative of the Exodus as paradigmatic for understanding the contours of liberation. Warrior comments that Exodus "is an inappropriate way for Native Americans to think about liberation" since "the obvious characters in the story for Native Americans to identify with are the Canaanites, the people who already lived in the promised land."[6] He is mindful of the correction to the conquest stories provided by historical critical scholars, who suggest that the Canaanites were willing partners with the Hebrew people in over-throwing

foreign and oppressive powers, but he underscores that this is not how the narrative operates. This latter point is of great consequence since "radical liberation theologies of Latin America are based on empowering the believing communities to read scriptural narratives for themselves and make their reading central to theology and political action."[7] Moreover, he is quite clear that he is not interested in alternate stories to drive the narrative of liberation, but that he wishes to call attention to the assumptions that ground the very enterprise.[8]

This latter point is picked up most clearly in the work of Vine Deloria Jr., who is especially critical of liberation theology as utterly and thoroughly ensconced in Western ideology. Deloria is particularly wary of the Western propensity to privilege time over space. This is especially clear in Christianity's displacement of a Jewish promised land with a heaven without geographic local.[9] This ideological move was and is the condition for the possibility of a universal religion, which travelled well with colonial powers and travels well with global capitalism.[10] This obsession with the universal, of no interest to land-based religions, is further complicated by a Western worldview obsessed with progress that readily undermines a vision of harmony, so foundational to Indigenous worldview. In Deloria's estimation, liberation theology has not adequately addressed this and so does not have adequate resources to critique this turn to time that funds the desire for progress that fuels, among other things, capitalism. The Ojibway scholar Basil Johnston dramatically characterizes capitalism gone wrong by connecting it to the ancient character of the Weendigo (a mythical spirit in the shape of a man or woman who is the epitomization of greed):

> … the Weendigoes did not die out or disappear; they have only been assimilated and reincarnated as corporations, conglomerates and multinationals. They've even taken on new names, acquired polished manners, and renounced their cravings for human flesh in

> return for more refined viands. But their cupidity is no less insatiable that that of their ancestors.[11]

The spectre of demonic forces haunting the land rings altogether too true across North America, where the earth suffers our abuse, where those who are not white bear the scars of racism, where immigrants are demonized, and where women and people of the LGBTQ+ community have need to justify their place and their way of being in the world.

Across Turtle Island, we bear the scars of racism and capitalism in collusion: racism's birthplace was a dirty economy first funded by robbing First People of land, and then by commodifying African-Americans. Racism, then, is at the root of consumerism, which continues to serve oppression. Taiaiake Alfred proposes that consumerism is the new tool of assimilation.[12] Both the Indigenous of the land and immigrants new to it are made into the *imago emptoris*. Deloria proposes that liberation in the richest sense of the word requires a rejection of this worldview that is poisoning the planet:

> … we are freed and liberated once we realize the insanity and fantasy of the present manner of interpreting our experiences in the world. Liberation, in its most fundamental sense, requires a rejection of everything we have been taught and its replacement by only those things we have experienced as having values.[13]

With this quotation we enter a new conversation. The question is no longer how might liberation theology inform or even partner with Indigenous spiritualities and worldviews, but how might liberation theology be transformed by an encounter with this continent's primordial subaltern:

the land and those closest to it, the First Peoples who know Turtle Island as their Mother. Deloria has proposed that this land can be hospitable to religions not indigenous to this land if they adapt to it.[14] And so this chapter takes leave from Joerg Rieger's conviction that the First Peoples of this land might serve as our guide again, just as they were in the early histories of our time together.[15] In what follows, then, Indigenous insights will allow a moment of deep learning for practioners of liberation theology, no matter their religious conviction.

The methodology informing this paper is one whereby I engage a comparative theology to vivify liberation theology under the aegis of Indigenous insights. In so doing, I hope to propose some points to consider for religious practitioners who wish to engage this theology more faithfully in their context. This latter point is important in that one important learning I take from my Indigenous interlocutors is that religion is local. I have no interest in entertaining the possibility that what is offered here will land well in every locale. Liberation theologians will find inspiration and direction as they engage their local Indigenous communities. As they do so in their context, they will find that comparative theology allows here a deep learning by engaging another religious tradition.[16] And yet, in what follows, important cautions need to be noted. First, George Tinker has commended Christians not to "invade" aboriginal ceremonies.[17] This point has been taken up by Tracy Sayuki Tiemeier, who warns of the danger of "plundering riches of other religions" for Christianity.[18] In light of the colonial propensities of Christianity (as the birth place of liberation theology), the way forward is to be engaged with some degree of circumspection. The line that separates assimilation from respectful learning is thin, and the liberation theologian who engages the work and thought of their Indigenous partners needs to do so in a manner that respects both those partners who have no interest in their religion and those who do. The present work is an attempt to be cognizant of this thin line, recognizing that

Indigenous thinkers (both Christian and not) have called for a more respectful engagement with their spiritualities and worldviews in a way that allows religions not native to North America to undergo the task of decolonization and Indigenization. Such a task is not equivalent to making a religion into something other than it is, but to allow each religion to become what it needs to be *in situ*. This will involve change for local expressions of faith, first by allowing them to reclaim forgotten roots and resources, but also by generating new ideas that come out of the tension of the encounter with those who suffered Christianity's colonial designs. This tension is, John Thatamanil observes, generative.[19] This chapter will explore how decolonization and Indigenization via a comparative theology might serve liberation theology.

Of course, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to re-imagine liberation theology *in toto* under the aegis of Indigenous insights. The goal here is more modest. In the following pages I will revisit liberation theology's hermeneutic of "see, judge, act"[20] with a view to reforming this in a fashion faithful to Turtle Island. In turn, I will revisit each verb in light of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum, the Two Row Wampum and the Condolence Ceremony. In so doing, I will first invite liberation theologians to "see with all our relations." The verb "to judge" will then be parsed as respectful of both thought and feeling, even while the history of hermeneutics has to often reduced judgement to thought. The verb "act" will be exegeted with a view to peace, power and righteousness for the good of all.

Seeing with All My Relations

The land on which I live as a Settler is stolen.[21] This confession is a first step of decolonization in my context and informs this chapter in general and this section in particular. The land on which I work was deeded to the Haudenosaunee people of upper New York by the Crown in gratitude for their fidelity during wars in the USA. It was given to those "who have either lost their settlements within the Territory of the American States, or wish to retire from them to the British."[22] The Crown promised the Six Nations of the Grand River Nation six miles on each side of the Grand River from source to its egress into Lake Erie. The Haudenosaunee now reside on approximately 5 % of the land deeded them, with the other 95 % lost to them for a variety of reasons: failure of the government to hand over deeded lands, deceitful activities of Indian Agents who worked as wards of the Haudenosaunee, divergent understanding about the nature of contracts, etc. In the school where I work, we begin public events by acknowledging that we meet on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Neutral and Anishnaabe people. In so doing, we recognize that prior to the granting of the Haldimand Deed which established the Haldimand Tract, other First Nations were present on this land.

The Haudenosaunee who came to this territory were informed by the "Dish With One Spoon Treaty." With this treaty, the nations of the confederacy agreed to live in harmony and respect with one another. The Great Law of Peace, delivered by the Peacemaker in bringing together warring people, indicates the nature of the relationship.[23] This is encoded in a Wampum belt, a "script" picturing the message of the treaty using the image of one dish and one spoon on a kind of beaded belt. The dish represented one source of food, shared by all who also shared use of the one spoon:

> It will turn out well for us to do this: we will say, 'We promise to have only one dish among us; in it will be beaver tail and no knife will be there'... We will have one dish,

> which means that we will all have equal shares of the game roaming about in the hunting grounds and fields, and then everything will become peaceful among all of the people; and there will be no knife near our dish; which means that if there is a knife were there, someone might presently get cut, causing bloodshed, and this is troublesome, should it happen thus, and for this reason there should be no knife near our dish.[24]

This treaty was expansive in character and was extended to include not only the nations within the Haudenosaunee confederacy, but also the Mississauga and Anishnaabe people they met as they travelled around the Great Lakes. Later the treaty was extended to other nations – including all immigrants and settlers – who are "invited into this treaty of peace, friendship and respect."[25] At the core of the treaty is the commitment to live in harmony with one another. Yet it would be reductionistic to imagine that the treaty is only concerned with human community. In a panel discussion regarding the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, Rick Hill from the Six Nations of the Grand River Nation noted that the treaty carries with it the lessons that "we are all to share the benefits of nature, only take what you need, always leave some for others, [and] keep the dish clean."[26] At the same panel, Neil Patterson Jr. remarks that "this dish with one spoon, this wampum belt here is in many ways a representation of the word ecology. We think not only about the limits of that dish. We think about the relationships of the people sitting around that dish."[27]

The Dish with One Spoon Wampum is an invitation to understand that our relationships with one another are of a piece with our relationships with all creation. Indigenous communities across Turtle Island use the phrase "all my relations" to recall that humans are related to all reality and they are not the only sentient beings, nor the most important. And so Deloria speaks

of the role of animals in interceding for humans in dreams and visions.[28] Indeed animals are said to precede humans in order.[29] This radically different view of all of reality means that the non-human world does not exist for human pleasure, etc. Perhaps the most important re-orientation of Western values offered by an Indigenous worldview is found in the conviction that humans are not stewards of the land, but the land looks after us.[30] So, as we turn to consider the significance of the "see" of the liberationist see-judge-act hermeneutic, we want to ponder what it means to see with all my relations.

Andrew Dawson outlines the role of the see, judge, act method as the means by which base ecclesial communities discern God's will as they work toward a liberated future.[31] The method is intended to work as a tool "in overcoming the traditional chasm between the religion of the masses and their everyday experiences."[32] But what is this method more specifically? Simon C. Kim writes:

> The method of See, Judge, Act does exactly what it states. Those using this method are called upon to *see* the conditions of their surrounds and the injustices within it. After considering the situation at hand, we are asked to *judge* how God, through the scriptures and the Church is calling us to respond. Finally, after seeing and judging the events around us, we must *act* – deciding on an appropriate action that responds to the moral imperative of this method.[33]

In due course, we will consider the verbs judge and act. At this point the verb for our consideration is "See." To see with all my relations will be a perdurable challenge for those schooled in western thought since, according to Alfred, we are informed by a "superficial

monotheistic justifications for the unnatural and misunderstood place and purpose of human beings in the world, an emphatic refusal to look inward, and an aggressive denial of the value of nature."[34] We will now consider each of these three in turn: a problematic valuation of the human, a refusal to look inward, and a denial of the nature, imaging how seeing with all my relations enables the reversal of these.

Seeing with all my relations means that the injustices humans experience do not have an epistemological or ethical point of privilege over that of all of my relations. The destruction of some 100 to 1000 species per million that exist each year as a result of human self-obsession is as disastrous as the individual and communal tragedies that exist among the human community.[35] Nor can we prioritize our personal nor collective tragedies over the recent report identifying that humanity "has wiped out 60% of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles since 1970, leading the world's foremost experts to warn that the annihilation of wildlife is now an emergency that threatens civilisation."[36] This is not to minimize human pain suffered under oppression, nor to prioritize one tragedy over another. "All my relations" means that humans and the non-human world live in a kind of symbiosis that makes simple borders between the human and the not human problematic. For this reason, an Indigenization of the liberation hermeneutic that takes leave from the theme of "all my relations" will understanding the value of diversity. It will recall that the natural world, with its plethora of diversity (and in need of that diversity for the health of all) stands in stark contrast to the "one right way" paradigm operative in much of Christianity.[37] The first step in seeing with all my relations, then, will be learning to see with plurality: to see diversity as a gift, to see complexity as a marvel, and to look for and see wonder in corners of the world where we did not think to look. Of course, this way of seeing also holds forth the demand that we see that the consequences of injustice is diverse and complex as well. We see with all our

relations using both eyes: one looking to the wonder of the world in its diversity, and the other at how human greed has variously caused havoc on the earth, that pines for newness. This way of seeing with all my relations for the healing of both the oppressed and the oppressor will mean our tutelage by the poor, whom Sobrino notes as those most able help us to see.[38] Gutierrez, in more recent work, has noted our dependence on the First Peoples of the Americas, who will be our guides.[39] Liberation theology has made an important first step in decolonization and indigenization with this insight. The Indigenous will most certainly enable us to see with all our relations so that we are able to take leave of a perverse obsession with the human as special in the natural world.

Alfred interestingly connects this need to move beyond our fixation with *homo sapiens* to the capacity to look within. At first glance, this may well seem counter-intuitive. Our sense of self and other is guided by a zero-sum logic wherein my attention is subject to colonial rationality: I can attend to the others who are all my relations or I can obsess in self-attention. And yet, even in self-obsession there is an awareness of the not-I. Colonial logic makes the other necessary for the sake of privileging the self. So, for example, Robin Diangelo proposes that there was no concept of "race or a white race" in America until it was needed to justify slavery.[40] This accords with Spivak's observation that the "colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous."[41] This other is created by the self-obsessed erecting a fence of alienation that distances the other from the self. This alienating move is reversed by seeing with all my relations, whereby I come to see that looking within and looking out are not discontinuous activities. This is illustrated in the Hebrew Scriptures in the naming of the male as Adam and the woman as Eve, which mean in turn earth and life. To look inward with all my relations allows me to see that I *am* earth and life: I am *humus* vivified for a time, as is the tree, and bird sitting

upon its branch. I share this being vivified with all my relations because we our fundamental identity is in our being *created*. The task of liberation begins as I see with all of my relations that we are in solidarity: we are one with creation. This brings to the fore the third of the three themes raised by Alfred above: the danger of our obdurate refusal of the value of nature.

It is important to note that liberation theologians have strong voices from within their discipline advocating for the value of nature. It is not altogether surprising that some of the strongest of these voices come from women, whose position of marginality is often further complicated by intersectionality. Marilú Rojas Salazar, for instance, reflects on the gifts that a Latin American Feminist Theology of Liberation might bring to liberation theology in the key of an Indigenous perspective.[42] She reflects on how the contribution of women in the work of liberation has not been recognized and how women have been excluded from formal academic training. She summarizes her critique in the following:

> Despite the fact that theologians of liberation have affirmed that women are included in the concept of the "poor", the truth is that Latin American feminist theologians have grown tired of being always "included" in terms and concepts in which men have placed us, even if these men are theologians of liberation.[43]

This inclusion that is an exclusion is triple in character: being women, being poor and being Indigenous.[44] But behind this triple exclusion is the identification of the women, the poor, and the Indigenous with the earth. The earth and the woman/poor/Indigenous are devalued. In response, Salazar insists that a Latin American Theology of Liberation is a theology of ecojustice that is also ecofeminist in nature.[45] She observes the deep-seated patriarchy and parochialism in

too many expressions of liberation theology and so speaks of how "the separation between nature and culture became an interpretative key in the Western world to justify domination and submission."[46] This separation that Salazar identifies is as much a product of modern Western thought as it is of Christianity, and so Christians would do well to revisit their ancestral past in conversation with their Indigenous partners in order to separate the chaff of Western cultural imperialism from the kernel of wisdom found in the Jesus tradition that draws on the Hebrew prophets in envisioning a world of harmony.[47] The tonic needed to eradicate the hatred of the natural that has infected too much of Christianity is found in the realization that this separation of nature and culture is a ruse. The words culture, cultivation and cult all share the same root word (the Latin verb *colere* meaning "to care for") and so deep caring ties together our being with one another, with the earth, and with the Creator. This being together funds and advances seeing with all our relations. In the liberation theology hermeneutic, seeing leads to judging. What comes of judging when our seeing is with all our relations?

Judging, Thinking and Feeling

In what follows my treatment of the theme of judging will be informed by another important treaty in the territory in which I live: the Two Row Wampum, also known as *Kaswentha*.[48]

Kaswentha is a Wampum belt made of white and blue beads pieced together such that there are two rows of blue on a white background. The Wampum is said to date from 1613. The two rows represent two parallel rivers: the Haudenosaunee travel on one in a canoe, and the Dutch travel on the other on a ship. The message encoded in this is that the Dutch and the

Haudenosaunee will travel in their own vessels in their own way. This does not mean that there is no interaction between the two, but that the nature of the interaction is such that they travel together in mutual respect, reciprocity and renewal. Peace, friendship and respect are the marks of these "two distinct political entities" that share space: Parmenter describes the relationship as being "independent together."[49] Rick Monture notes that the beads of Wampum belts were said to become alive when talked to, which reflects the profound role they played and play in the communities bound to them: "it is considered a sacred and binding agreement."[50] This agreement is not inert:

> *Kaswentha* relations were not static – they evolved over time as ties between the Iroquois and the Dutch (and the latter's English and American successors) deepened and sociopolitical circumstances grew more complex – but they did exist.[51]

The presumption of the Two-Row is that Settlers and the Haudenosaunee exist in a nation to nation relationship. This is the form of justice in the Haldimand Tract, even if the Crown has regularly abdicated its responsibility and abandoned its commitment to understand First Nations as nations. This infidelity of the Crown does not undermine the fact that this agreement remains as binding. The history of this relationship, alas, is one in which colonization has resulted in swelling of one river to the degree that it spills over and engulfs the other. Because of colonization, the ship has drifted into the path of the canoe and marginalized it.

The story of *Kaswentha* tells the tale of the relationship between the Haudenosaunee and Settlers, but the metaphor travels well, and can be used to illume the fate of hermeneutics in a colonized epistemology. In sum, in this "judging" section I note that liberation theology, along

with too much of the hermeneutical tradition in the west, has collapsed judgement into thinking, to the detriment of intuition/feeling, even while the "father" of modern western hermeneutics, Friedrich Schleiermacher, famously addressed the role of feeling and intuition, as well as thought, in religious life. Schleiermacher was not interested in eradicating the role of thought, but simply saw thought and feeling as partners in the epistemological enterprise, a point missed by many of his later interlocutors. Rather like the ship's occlusion of the canoe, thought has eclipsed feeling with a logocentrism that robs itself of its very own capacity by either demonizing or romanticizing feeling.

Indigenous scholars have long been suspicious of Western epistemologies, and so their hesitancy regarding liberation theology is not altogether surprising given that the hermeneutic of see, judge, act leans heavily on the Western hermeneutical tradition. Deloria articulates his estimation of the issue when he writes:

> The emphasis on objective knowledge by Western peoples has meant the development of an attitude that sees reality as basically physical, the knowledge thereof basically mental or verbal, and the elimination of any middle ground between extremes. Thus religion has become a matter of the proper extension of doctrines, and non-Western religions have been judged on their development of a systematic moral and ethical code rather than the manner in which they conducted themselves.[52]

Deloria's critique might not hold for many post-colonial theorists and theologians who have little interest in "doctrine" as Deloria envisions it. However, it might be argued that "post-colonial," like "post-modern" are parasitic on what they reject. How might Indigenous content frame the

task of hermeneutics for liberation theologians so that it has Indigenous content? [53] Interestingly, some Indigenous theologians invite us to begin the journey by looking within the Christian tradition:

> Schleiermacher's approach to biblical understanding, featuring a reconstruction of the author's mental process, provides a way of introducing Indian cultural values into an understanding of Christian practices. … The basic issue of hermeneutics is how any people take their own experience as basis for understanding Christianity.[54]

A brief recollection of Schleiermacher's work on hermeneutics may be of aid here.[55] Schleiermacher, as an early modern thinker, was deeply influenced by Romanticism, which served him well in correcting the excesses of Enlightenment aridity. This, combined with his long and extended work in Plato (translating the dialogues into German for publication), and his earlier interest in the pietism of the Moravians were all significant influences as well. Schleiermacher was someone able to draw upon both analytic and synthetic capacities in each of his endeavors, all the while mindful of Pascal's adage that the heart has reasons of which reason knows nothing. We see this at work in his analysis of hermeneutics, the art and science of understanding. The following too-brief explanation of Schleiermacher's theory draws upon his lectures in hermeneutics.[56]

Schleiermacher notes that interpreting is both an art and a science, with one or the other coming to the fore in the to and fro of interpretation. One is neither ever wholly absent from the other. Hermeneuticians recognizes this as they look at a text, always looking for the whole in the part and the part in the whole. The hermeneutical task begins with distinguishing the use of a text

from the construction of a text. In the latter we can distinguish the grammatical and psychological/technical strategies used in constructing texts and needed for exegeting them. Regarding the grammatical, Schleiermacher suggests that readers of ancient texts need to do the hard work of better understanding a language, noting the trajectory of the development of the meaning of a word, etc. With the word "psychological" (sometimes he uses "technical") Schleiermacher references our need to attend to the life situation of the author and as a result of this, our intuitive capacity to understand an author. This is not a naked divinatory skill, but an awareness that with the hard work done in understanding the work's grammar, vocabulary, author and context comes an apprehension of the whole of the text by way of intuition. Intuition, then, apprehends what a narrow textual reading misses. The skilled reader is able by way of intuition to "to understand the utterance at first just as well and then better than its author."[57]

This capacity to intuit the whole is not only addressed in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. We also find it in his theology, wherein he identifies piety as an awareness of the feeling of being absolutely dependent on God.[58] Consequently we see that feeling, sometimes identified with intuition, has the critical role of not only helping us to understand a text but also of enabling us to understand the world beyond which we discern the divine Whence. Comparing Schleiermacher's hermeneutical reading of a text with the task of "reading" the world is felicitous in that the world too is a kind of text that has its own "texture," as it were.

Reading this textured world, like any other text, demands of the reader attention to grammatical/objective facts as well as the intuitive/subjective feelings that give us a sense of the whole that emerges as we engage particular phenomena. The art and science of interpretation alerts the reader to the need to attend to the subjective and objective, the whole and the part, the one and the all. It is interesting to note that it is this turn to the intuitive that has been most

criticized by later students of hermeneutics in the Western tradition. Indigenous people, however, are not at all uncomfortable with this attention to feeling and intuition. In fact, Andrea Smith criticizes the field of religious studies, claiming that the goal of objectivity also comes with a "colonializing discourse."[59] Such an objectivity fails to seriously consider subjective experience, which is critical for judgement.

Of course, it is true that liberation theologians will point to their conviction to attend to the lived experience of the poor in their hermeneutic, and this is true.[60] And yet this attention to lived experience is most clearly engaged in seeing, not judging. Boff identifies the task of judging as follows:

> Next comes the moment of judgement, in which an attempt is made to illuminate the practices observed in the first moment by examining them under the lens of revelation by means of a theological reflection.[61]

The language is rather clinical ("examining them under the lens"), and misses a moment of silence, which might be an opportunity for deep insight. This rush to a kind of technical exercise of "illuminating" and "examining" means that a mode of knowing is ignored that might be critically important for judgement. The elder Basil Johnston comments

> … it was this very mode of life, this simple way of meeting simple needs, that awakened in man and woman a consciousness that there were realities and presences in life other than the corporeal and the material. The spirit, the manitou, the mystery, were part of life and could not be separated from it.[62]

Knowing, for the Indigenous of this land, is not only about thinking about what we have seen, but also sensing what has not been seen but is no less real. Rupert Ross, who served in Canada's North for many years in the court system spoke of the phenomenon of "dancing with a ghost," whereby Indigenous people anticipate "what can only be glimpsed," a kind of innate capacity to apprehend something that he failed to see.[63]

Of course, the capacity to intuit what is not immediately apparent is not restricted to the First Peoples of Turtle Island. Yet they have lived a little closer to the land than Settlers who have lost the capacity to intuit, and so can be guides for us in learning anew that judgement also needs to be informed by what is not simply visible and rational. There is precedence for this in many religious traditions, and so understanding judging to be both feeling/intution and thinking is one way by which we can respond to the broader reading of the *Kaswentha* with which I began. Thinking and feeling/intuition are called to exist in respectful independence yet sharing a world in which their work together better informs the activity that is to usher from seeing with all my relations and judging with both thought and feeling.

Acting for Peace, Power, and Righteousness

The Haudenosaunee in the territory in which I live practice a Condolence Ceremony that has formed the way in which they interact with one another and with other peoples. It was known in one form or another by a variety of nations of the Great Lakes and woodlands area, and used both in moments in which sympathy was extended but also in times of diplomacy when peoples would meet at the edge of a settlement. In some iterations of the ceremony three sets of beads

were drawn out which symbolized the responsibilities due those visiting or those needing consolation: with one set of beads the eyes of the burdened person are dried of tears and cleansed of dust. With another set of beads, the throat and ears of the consoled are cleaned so that they would be able to hear words of comfort, and with yet another set of beads thorns were taken from the feet, so the person was ready to walk again. The symbols used varied depending on the circumstance.[64]

Taiaiake Alfred sees in the condolence ceremony a resource for addressing challenges facing Indigenous communities, identifying it as "a metaphorical framework for my own thoughts on the state of Native America and the crucial role of indigenous traditions in alleviating grief and discontent that permeate our existence."[65] In the book *Peace, Power, Righteousness* he offers wisdom for communities that find "self-government" and "tribal sovereignty" – accorded them by American and Canadian governments – as vacuous and a "Trojan horse" whereby colonial sensibilities hamper Indigenous nationhood.[66] The loss of the nation to nation status as per treaties, along with the many forms of violence suffered by First Peoples, have left Indigenous communities in a state of mourning. The condolence ceremony, with its pattern of three, heals by bringing consolation and empowerment to those suffering injustices. Alfred's *Peace, Power, Righteousness*, then, names the virtues empowering a renaissance of Indigenous communities as they reclaim their land, culture and nationhood.[67] In what follows, I will explore salient points of *Peace, Power, and Righteousness*, and imagine how liberation theology might experience its own liberation as it acts with the goal of justice for all.

It is intriguing to consider that "peace" is the first virtue listed. One might imagine that a people who have suffered unspeakable injustice and endured humiliations for the entertainment of those in power might well begin with the need for "righteousness" or justice. Alfred's opening

gambit is more measured and instructive in parsing the relationship between First Peoples and Settlers. Early in the book he responds to a quotation from Donald Fixico, who proposes that Anglo-Americans and the First Peoples of Turtle Island are "fundamentally different."

> I believe, on the contrary, that there is a real danger in believing that views are fixed (and that cultures don't change). Fixico's polarization of Indian and European values suggests he believes that white people are incapable of attaining the level of moral development that indigenous societies promote among members with respect to, for example, the land. Not only does this dichotomization go against the traditional belief in a universal rationality, but it offers a convenient excuse for those who support the state in its colonization of indigenous nations and exploitation of the earth.[68]

Alfred reminds all of the dangers of demonizing the oppressor. This is a point advanced by liberation theologians too, and it finds important support in the conviction that the liberation of the oppressed is liberation for the oppressor. But still, a somewhat different tenor is struck here by Alfred in that an important factor that drives his refusal to demonize the oppressor is that it can too easily lead to a fatalism that dismisses the oppressor of their capacity to change and so their responsibility to change. Indigenous people in North America have lived under oppression for a horrendous number of years, and so have learned well how colonial powers will find means to shirk their duty.[69] But because the oppressors share in rationality, for instance, the oppressed are able to hold them accountable but also meet them as human beings. There is no peace to be had with those who are demons.

Nor is there peace to be found in a cultural revival that utterly rejects all things Western and romanticizes or demonizes the past.[70] These are hard words to hear and not ones that easily translate into every situation of those who have been oppressed. Nonetheless, this advice comes from a people who have experienced the full assault of colonial powers at Wounded Knee, in the Trail of Tears, in the assault, sexual abuse and slaughter of Indigenous children in boarding and residential schools, and whose women's death are deemed to be beyond the pale of serious investigation.[71] And yet these who have suffered interminable horrors have learned that the tools of the master can be used against the master.[72] There is only peace when peace with the past and peace with the oppressor are ordered toward the flourishing of all creation. This righting of wrong, however, presumes power exists to effect flourishing for all.

From the outset, as we imagine what an Indigenous view of power has to say to a liberation theology, it is significant to note that Alfred asserts that "revolution in the classic sense … is contrary to the basic principles of traditional indigenous philosophies."[73] Justice is, instead, about balance. True power, which effects justice, is informed by the principle of harmony and is persuasive in form.[74] This harmony way is marked, in his estimation, by "the autonomy of the individual conscience, non-coercive authority, and the deep interconnection between human beings and the other elements of creation."[75] Monture notes that the Peacemaker established the Haudenosaunee Confederacy on the basis of peace, power, and righteousness, and so all three are ordered toward bringing together communities once at war.[76]

Alfred is not romantic in his understanding of power. He notes that in too many First Nations communities, for instance, women bear an inordinate responsibility for the well-being of the life of their community and might be seen to be powerful by many. But these same women suffer the effects of colonization in "domestic violence, abuse related to alcoholic dependency,

the stress of parenting without male partners, and a lack of intimate, stable relationships."[77] These concerns are echoed in the work of women doing liberation theology. [78] A power that aims at harmony starts by establishing balance in the roles played by all genders in the community, the home, and governance in its broader expressions. This harmony is informed by the theme of righteousness, or justice.

Alfred outlines the "four basic objectives" that are at the heart of his community's vision of righteousness. These include "structural reform," the "reintegration of Native languages," "economic self-sufficiency," and "nation to nation relations with the state."[79] One can see that these are continuous with the vision of the Peacemaker. He sought peace for the people and so established power among the confederacy by way of the teachings of the Longhouse to the end that the Haudenosaunee might experience healthy communities speaking their tongues and engaging in commerce with other nations in healthy independence. In the context of colonization, one that is of special concern is that of "reintegration of Native language."

Colonization in its various guises has used colonial languages as a fundamental tool in subjugating people. In the boarding and residential schools, Indigenous children were refused the opportunity to speak their language, with the stated intent of civilizing and Christianizing them.[80] For Indigenous people around the world, the loss of their language is also an assault on their spirituality, culture, etc. Decolonizing in the context of North America, then, commands of us the problematizing of English (or French in Quebec, or Spanish in Mexico) as normal. In the context of Turtle Island, doing righteousness means restoring linguistic diversity. Liberation theologians are called to consider how colonial language oppresses linguistic minorities. The use of English (and French, and Spanish) as a tool of oppression is perhaps the least acknowledged but most effective means by which colonization continues its reach. Indigenous peoples in the Americas

know this intimately, as do immigrants. To rob people of their mother tongue is to deny their authenticity as individuals and as a community. To have one's language derided is to have one's very being questioned. This has been and continues to be among the principle means by which people are colonized. Righteousness, then, demands language justice that honors linguistic diversity.

Conclusion

A liberation theology that wishes to see, judge and act under the tutelage of Indigenous insights will find these verbs qualified by land-based concerns. In the above, I proposed that in my context, this hermeneutic will advance the need to see with all of our relations. It will then judge in a fashion that has resurrected our capacity to pair thought and feeling/intuition attentive to the whole. Finally it will act in a fashion whereby peace refuses to demonize oppressors, using power that is balanced with harmony for the sake of a righteousness that knows that there is no justice without language of justice and justice for language.

However, it would be a mistake to imagine that a liberation theology that takes its cues from a land-based religion will shape its hermeneutic *in situ* such that it can be exported without further ado. In what has preceded, I have engaged the verbs see, judge, and act using treaties, teachings and ceremonies from the Haudenosaunee, on whose territory I live and work. Those who wish to explore the decolonization and Indigenization of liberation theology's hermeneutic in their locale will need to get to know the First People of their communities. There is not a "one size fits all" for the decolonization and Indigenization of liberation theology. In fact, any claim

that there is, is a lie that lies at the foundation of the invention that is colonization. As the oppressed well know, of course, something that is invented is no less real and so those who wish to shape liberation theology to the contours of their communities are deeply indebted to the First Peoples of Turtle Island, who will school those who desire to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk in good way with the Creator.

Endnotes

[1] "Turtle Island" references the creation story of many First Nations in North America. Cf. Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 1-29.
[2] "About the Commission," Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," accessed October 29, 2018, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=39.
[3] "Suzuki Foundation Report Says Ottawa Needs to Do More on First Nations Water Crisis," *CBC News, February 8, 2018*, accessed October 29, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/david-suzuki-foundation-first-nations-water-report-1.4525456."
[4] Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2005), 35.
[5] Robert Allen Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," in *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States*, ed. James Treat (London: Routledge, 1996), 94.
[6] Warrior, *Canaanites*, 95.
[7] Warrior, *Canaanites*, 98.
[8] Warrior, *Canaanites*, 101.
[9] Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion.* (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2016), 142.
[10] Deloria notes that the tendency of liberation theology to identify the oppressed as a "coalition of dissident minorities" serves to make it easy to "eliminate specific complaints of specific groups." Vine Deloria Jr., *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 100.
[11] Basil Johnston, *The Manitous : The Spiritual World of the Ojibway* (Book, 2001), 235.
[12] Alfred, *Wasáse*, 24.
[13] Deloria, *For This Land*, 101.
[14] Deloria Jr, Vine and Vine, *God Is Red*.
[15] Joerg Rieger, "God and Power, Prophets and Native Lands," in *Theology That Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God*, ed. Kathleen Ray Darby (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 66.
[16] Cf. John Thatamanil, "Eucharist Upstairs, Yoga Downstairs: On Multiple Religious Participation," in *Many Yet One?: Multiple Religious Belonging*, eds. Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar and Joseph Prabhakar Dayam (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 2016), 25.
[17] George E. Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2008), 141.
[18] Tracy Sayuki Tiemeier, "Comparative Theology as Theology of Liberation," in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, ed. Francis X. Clooney (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2010), 129.
[19] Thatamanil, "Eucharist," 20.
[20] Leonardo Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor*, ed. Robert R. Barr (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 20.
[21] Allen Jorgenson, "Empire, Eschatology and Stolen Land," *Dialog* 49, no. 2 (2010): 115–22.
[22] "The Haldimand Treaty of 1784," *Six Nations Lands and Resources*, accessed October 30, 2018, http://www.sixnations.ca/LandsResources/HaldProc.htm.
[23] Cf. Rick Monture, *We Share Our Matters Teionkwakhashion Tsi Niionkwariho:Ten: Two Centuries of Writing and Resistance at Six Nations of the Grand River* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 7-10.
[24] Quoted in the article "The Dish with One Spoon," *Indian Time*, accessed October 30, 2018, https://www.indiantime.net/story/2010/08/05/cultural-corner/the-dish-with-one-spoon/7510.html.
[25] Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "Narrating Canadian Political Science: History Revisited: Presidential Address to the Canadian Political Science Association Toronto, Ontario May 30, 2017," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 4 (2017): 895, https://doi.org/10.1017/S000842391700138X.
[26] Cf. "Hodinohso:ni Ecological Knowledge and the Dish with One Spoon Conversation in Cultural Fluency #2" *YouTube*, October 20, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5szQHeQ9FM.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Vine Deloria Jr. *The World We Used to Live In* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Pub., 2006), 106.

[29] Ann Marie B Bahr, "People of Place, Ethics of Earth: Indigenous Nations, Interfaith Dialogue, and Environmental Sustainability," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 50, no. 1 (2015): 75.
[30] Bahr, "People of Place," 76.
[31] Andrew Dawson, "The base ecclesial communities," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, ed. Christopher Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 117.
[32] Dawson, "The base ecclesial communities," 117.
[33] Simon C Kim, *An Immigration of Theology: Theology of Context as the Theological Method of Virgilio Elizondo and Gustavo Gutiérrez* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 168.
[34] Alfred, *Wasáse*, 102.
[35] "Species Extinction Happening 1,000 Times Faster Because of Humans?" *National Geographic*, May 30, 2014, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/05/140529-conservation-science-animals-species-endangered-extinction/?rptregcta=reg_free_np&rptregcampaign=2015012_invitation_ro_all#.
[36] "Humanity has wiped out 60% of animal populations since 1970, report finds," *The Guardian*, accessed October 30, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/30/humanity-wiped-out-animals-since-1970-major-report-finds.
[37] Alfred, *Wasáse*, 109.
[38] Jon Sobrino, *No Salvation Outside the Poor: Prophetic-Utopian Essays* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2008), 53.
[39] Gutierrez, "The Task and Content of Liberation Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, 31, 35.
[40] Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (Boston: Beacond Press, 2018), 91.
[41] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1994).
[42] Marilú Rojas Salazar, "Experiences and Reflections on a Latin American Feminist Theology of Liberation Using an Ecofeminist Key Towards an Indigenous Women's Perspective: Experiences and Reflections on a Latin American Feminist Theology of Liberation," *The Ecumenical Review* 62, no. 4 (December 2010): 411–22, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6623.2010.00081.x.
[43] Salazar, "Experience and Reflections" 413, 414.
[44] Salazar, "Experience and Reflections," 412.
[45] Salazar, "Experience and Reflections," 417.
[46] Salazar, "Experience and Reflections," 421.
[47] Cf. Randy S Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012).
[48] For what follows see Jon Parmenter, "The Meaning of Kaswentha and the Two Row Wampum Belt in Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) History: Can Indigenous Oral Tradition Be Reconciled with the Documentary Record?," *Journal of Early American History* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 82–109, https://doi.org/10.1163/18770703-00301005.
[49] Parmenter, "Kaswentha," 85.
[50] Monture, *We Share Our Matters*, 13, 14.
[51] Parmenter, "Kaswentha," 98.
[52] Vine Deloria Jr., *For This Land*,104.
[53] Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, Second Edition (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.
[54] Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George Tinker E, *A Native American Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 25.
[55] Interested readers might find the following resource especially helpful: Terrence N Tice, *Schleiermacher* (Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 2006).
[56] What follows draws upon the following: Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, ed. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 5-29.
[57] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, 23.
[58] The relationship between feeling and intuition in Schleiermacher's work is complicated but broadly construed, the way he uses the word "intuition" in his early work is picked up by latter use of "feeling," both of which point at the human capacity to grasp the whole, even if in a fractured way, and always via something concrete. Cf. Allen G Jorgenson, *The Appeal to Experience in the Christologies of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Rahner* (New York: P. Lang, 2007), 15-16.
[59] Andrea Smith, "Dismantling the Master's House with the Master's Tools," in *Hope Abundant Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 74.

[60] Cf. Christopher Rowland, "Introduction," in , *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, 1,2.
[61] Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor*.
[62] Johnston, *The Manitous : The Spiritual World of the Ojibway*, xviii.
[63] Rupert Ross, *Dancing with a Ghost: Exploring Aboriginal Reality* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006), 43.
[64] Cf. Teyowisonte (Thomas Deer), "Releasing the Burden: Haudenosaunee Concept of Condolence," *Warrior Society*, accessed Oct. 21, 2018, https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/tuscaroranationeyog/releasing-the-burden-haudenosaunee-concept-of-cond-t418.html.; William N Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 399, 400.; Bruce E Johansen, Barbara A Mann, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy).* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), 59.
[65] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 8.
[66] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 3.
[67] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 25.
[68] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 44.
[69] And so the temptation of the colonial power is to construct stereotypes that are finally only complex, contradictory and ambivalent (Homi Jehangir Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1993).
[70] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 52, 53.
[71] "Highway of Tears," *360 Video / The Current / CBC*, Oct. 17, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-gRYS3LXvA.
[72] Cf. Smith, "Dismantling the Master's House" in *Hope Abundant*, 75.
[73] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 77.
[74] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 12, 17, 66.
[75] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 84.
[76] Monture, "We Share our Matters," 7.
[77] Jo-Anne Fiske, quoted in Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 117.
[78] Cf. Atola Longkumer, "Not All Is Well in My Ancestors' Home: An Indigenous Theology of Internal Critique: Not All Is Well in My Ancestors' Home: An Indigenous Theology of Internal Critique," *The Ecumenical Review* 62, no. 4 (December 2010): 399–410, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6623.2010.00080.x."
[79] Alfred, "Peace, Power, Righteousness," 172.
[80] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools.* (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012).

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