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Ayahuasca's Religious Diaspora in the Wake of the Doctrine of Discovery

Abstract

'Ayahuasca' is a plant mixture with a variety of recipes and localized names native to South America. Often, the woody ayahuasca vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) is combined with *chacruna* leaf (*Psychotria viridis*) in a tea, inducing psychedelic effects among its users. While social usage varies among Indigenous Peoples of South America, during the twentieth century new religious movements in Brazil began employing the mixture as religious sacrament. Additionally, various centers for ayahuasca "healing" have emerged both inside and outside of the Amazon Rainforest, frequently with the aim of helping people addicted to other substances. As interest grew, ayahuasca use in South America attracted large numbers of tourists. Use of it also began a worldwide diaspora.

Due to the mixture's ability to produce intense effects from Dimethyltryptamine (DMT), a controlled substance in many countries, legal use of the tea varies even when the importation of the plants separately is not necessarily prohibited. Negotiating with various nations, religious groups such as the União do Vegetal (UDV) and Santo Daime have successfully been granted legal use of the mixture by appealing to state recognition of bona fide religious use as sacrament. Due to prohibitionist rhetoric surrounding "War on Drugs," the political and economic hegemony of the United States has influenced legal reception of ayahuasca globally. In the United States, arguments for legally protected use of ayahuasca emerged as appeals for religious freedom, which necessarily interact with rationales for the exemption of peyote used as sacrament by the Native American Church (NAC). Such exemptions are imbricated within a long history of oppressive and genocidal conditions faced by Indigenous Peoples since the Doctrine of Christian Discovery.

This dissertation examines the phenomenon of the ayahuasca diaspora in light of the long history of such doctrine, arguing that appeals to religious freedom and analogies to exempt status for Native use of peyote perpetuate a long history of colonialism inherently genocidal to Indigenous Peoples. While use of ayahuasca itself may not perpetuate such history, the politics of recognition in liberal democratic society employed to determine bona fide religious use evidences the continued institutionalized and legally instrumental impulses of eurochristian political theology, even in nations that present themselves as secular. Such an analysis of ayahuasca reveals deeply problematic tendencies affecting the recognition of religion in society, ongoing Indigenous struggles, drug policies, and drug treatment.

This project is based on the premise that in order to address both the problems and the potentials of the growing ayahuasca diaspora, we must attend to the longer history of Indigenous genocide and its continued presence with respect to regimes of power in the wake of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. Because my focus is on a longer historical attention to deep framing, this is not a study of the richly diverse ways ayahuasca is used by various groups. It is, rather, a contextualization based on an interdisciplinary, Critical Discourse Analysis of the emergence of ayahuasca as a global commodity and sacrament against the Doctrine of Discovery. Liberal politics of recognition and aspirations to personal spiritual growth through ecstatic experience are often underwritten by eurochristian deep frames. In the end, I argue that pleas for the state recognition and "exemption" of ayahuasca for religious use inadvertently perpetuate colonial forms harmful to Indigenous People through the politics of recognition.

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Ayahuasca's Religious Diaspora in the Wake of the Doctrine of Discovery

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology Joint PhD

Program

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Roger K. Green

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Advisor: Carl Raschke

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Chapter One: Introduction

Summary

This chapter lays out some methodological and terminological grounds for my approach to ayahuasca. I begin by situating the context in relation to the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, emphasizing its attempt to fill a gap in existing discourse on ayahuasca and distinguishing its subject matter from widespread literature emphasizing ayahuasca's therapeutic potential and ethnographic work on groups in South America. I argue that while such efforts are understandable, there are risks in trying to claim exceptional and legally exempt status of ayahuasca from prohibitionist rhetoric and Cold War contexts. I give a bird's eye look at my method, distinguishing some of my discursive moves in relation to political theology and theoretical calls for "becoming Indigenous." If the potential that ayahuasca may signal attention to Indigenous practices and approaches to healing in various forms, I argue one ought to contextualize its reception in relation to Indigenous Peoples' situations abroad. Therefore, I emphasize Indigenous voices from the north, who do not traditionally use ayahuasca but nevertheless have faced the multigenerational trauma of colonization. This supports my turn toward a longer history analyzing ayahuasca's diaspora in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery. I distinguish my approach from figures on globalization and

decolonization while noting my own eurochristianity and by my emphasis on Indigenous voices. Then I end with an account of participant observation in an ayahuasca ceremony in Switzerland to establish my ethos and articulate some of the current concerns attending ayahuasca discourse in diaspora.

Ayahuasca and the Doctrine of Christian Discovery

What follows is an analysis of ayahuasca discourse in its diasporic context, largely outside of South America and in light of a long history of eurochristian¹ colonialism. The central thesis I argue throughout this project is that pleas for the state recognition and “exemption” of ayahuasca for religious use inadvertently perpetuate colonial forms harmful to Indigenous People through the politics of recognition. I feel it necessary to begin with a disclaimer because so much existing material on ayahuasca comes either in the form of ethnographic or scientific studies, implicitly or explicitly arguing for the therapeutic benefits of ayahuasca. While many writers emphasize the fact that ayahuasca is no magical “cure all,” the overwhelming focus on its work as medicine in the rhetorical context of the War on Drugs often leaves writers and researchers in a situation where they must emphasize its potential benefits against prohibitionist policies. The cultural context for prohibited substances following the creation of international drug

¹ I adopt this term from historian of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions, Tink Tinker (wazhazhe, Osage). Tink Tinker, “What Are We Going to Do with White People?” *The New Polis*, December 17, 2019, <https://thenewpolis.com/2019/12/17/what-are-we-going-to-do-with-white-people-tink-tinker-wazhazhe-osage-nation/>.

scheduling in the late 1960s and early 1970s is a manifestation of political impulses expressive of rights-based liberalism, which emphasizes individuals and their ability to achieve their own “potential.” Advocates for ayahuasca use often frame their desire in terms of a right to flourish in terms of mental and spiritual health. A large body of written work on ayahuasca in such a context undoubtedly shapes potential users’ expectations and speaks more to ayahuasca in international contexts than to its home in the Amazon Rainforest.

Informed by interdisciplinary material, the aim of this study is quite different. It speaks to what I see as a gap in research on ayahuasca, particularly as it relates to the field of religious studies. It is also important to keep in mind that as I write there are multiple efforts to decriminalize psychedelic substances in general, spurring loads of debates on plant medicines. Arguments about sacred and religious use of plants are recurring in such contexts. My aim is to contextualize ayahuasca discourse within a longer history of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery because when we do so, we see the persistence of destructive colonial patterns at work, even in very well-intentioned legal and discursive material. In other words, I do not feel like mere changes in legislation and legal status does enough to draw attention to the deeper frames at work in discourse and thought.

In the late twentieth century, Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) alerted audiences affected by the amnesia induced from policies of Indian erasure to the continued presence of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. This Doctrine has for a long time framed both claims to the legitimacy of the United States government and the

development of Federal Indian Law. Native American scholars in the north have taken a key interest in such doctrine as they contest nationalist mythologies of colonial foundations:

Federal Indian law actually begins with a sleight-of-hand decision that proclaimed that the United States had special standing with respect to ownership of the land on which the Indigenous People lived. This nefarious concept was called the “Doctrine of Discovery.” Originating early in the European invasion of the Western hemisphere, this doctrine, as articulated by the Pope in the famous Bull *Inter Caetera*, by which he gave to Spain all lands hitherto discovered or to be discovered in the world. It was, as it turned out, the greatest real estate transaction in history.²

Deloria’s research has helped to open more in-depth and ongoing research on the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery, yet oftentimes Indigenous perspectives are conflated with a large body of postcolonial scholarship. While there may be some overlapping agendas, there is nothing ‘post’, about Indigenous Peoples with respect to colonization and secularization. They express continuities to modes of life preceding the advent of colonialism.

In *A Violent Evangelism*, Luis N. Rivera-Pagán notes that when Christopher Columbus baptized the island of Guanahani, which he christened ‘San Salvador,’ he combined the acts of “discovery” and “expropriation”:

To discover” and “to expropriate” became concurrent acts. Traditional historiography highlights what happened on October 12, 1492, as “discovery,” avoiding what was central to it. The encounter between Europeans and the inhabitants of the newfound lands was in reality an exercise of power.³

² Vine Deloria, Jr., “Conquest Masquerading as Law,” *Unlearning the Language of Conquest*, ed. Donald Trent Jacobs (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 96.

³ Luis N. Rivera, *A Violet Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 7.

It is important to emphasize the political-theological nature *motivating* this dramatic act. It is not, by some twentieth-century standard, that ‘religion’ was either an ‘ideology’ situated “behind” or “above” such an act, nor that ‘religion’ was “employed” as a tool of what Louis Althusser called the “ideological state apparatus.” Law, religion, and dramatic action fused within a eurochristian *poetics*, deeply framed in linguistic metaphor and expressed in ritualistic behavior. Motives in this case cannot only be attributed to one individual but rather expressed within a poetic structure which *makes* meaning as it appropriates. I argue that as we look at ayahuasca’s diaspora and rights-based arguments for the recognition of ayahuasca religions, we need to keep this longer history of “discovery” and “expropriation” in mind.

A great deal of my effort in the following work is in connecting disparate discursive trajectories – legal, historical, anthropological, linguistic, etc. While a lot has been said concerning various forms of ayahuasca use – religious or therapeutic – and a lot has also been said on the Doctrine of Discovery, the two discourses have yet to meet in any robust analysis, yet connections between the fifteenth century and the twenty-first century have been made. One article, by Rebecca M. Bratspies, does explicitly connect the current controversies over biodiversity to notions of “discovery,” including attempts to patent ayahuasca. Here we see transferences of ‘ayahuasca’ into ‘property’:

[The World Trade Organization’s Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement (TRIPS)] seems to have revived a modern version of the Las Casa [*sic*] – Sepulveda 1550 debate that had tremendous repercussions for whether or not the peoples of the New World would be treated as owning their land. These debates arose because the land claims that stemmed from the so-called “Age of Exploration” had a fatal flaw: the “newly-discovered” lands were already inhabited. Thus, a central question arose, who owned these lands, the European “discoverers” or the native inhabitants? In the rush to issue biotechnology patents

over the past few decades, and in the expansive interpretations the United States and other Western courts have given these patents, and most particularly in the TRIPS agreement effort to enshrine these standards globally, there is a very real danger of recreating the Discovery Doctrine with a “new world” of genetic resources and other forms of traditional knowledge.⁴

Bratspies correctly sees the correlation at work in deterritorialized instances, yet even in well-intentioned attempts to “recognize” Indigenous peoples, there is often a conflation between “drugs” and Indigenous cosmologies related to land and territory. Explicitly citing ayahuasca patent controversies, Bratspies remarks:

At its worst, TRIPS legitimizes the transfer of exclusive ownership and control of biological resources and traditional knowledge from indigenous innovators to western ones, with no recognition, reward or protection for the contributions of the indigenous innovators.⁵

In addition to the expropriation as a local resource, in the international context ayahuasca is imbricated within legal processes due to the mixture’s ability to allow human bodies to process Dimethyltryptamine, an internationally controlled “drug.” In this situation, the rhetoric of the “War on Drugs” – which is already framed within eurochristian legal discourse – relegates the use of “drugs” to moral crises about substance use without attending to the environmental conditions that make the use of “drugs” appealing and at times destructive to users.

Drug policy analysts repeatedly stress that prohibitionist attitudes do not work and that drug “problems” have less to do with substances themselves than they do with social

⁴ Rebecca M. Bratspies, “The New Discovery Doctrine: Some Thoughts on Property Rights and Traditional Knowledge,” *American Law Review* 31, no. 2 (2007): 333-334.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

conditions. As Gabor Maté writes, “The U.S. government aggressively promotes its view of drug addiction internationally and brings enormous pressure on other countries to fall in line with its own opinions.”⁶ We would do better to conceive “dependencies” within a context of historical and intergenerational trauma than focusing on addiction. Humans have used “drugs” since time immemorial, and substances deemed “immoral” and “illegal” in relation to Indigenous people in “North America” play on historically manipulative employment of substances – be they alcohol or methamphetamines – as tools for conquering people.

As researchers such as Carl Hart have argued, the vast majority of all “drug” users carry on normal lives: “eighty to ninety percent of all people who use illegal drugs don’t have a drug problem.”⁷ Laboratory experiments in the 1970s on rats in isolated situations fueled now outdated ideas of drug dependency without considering environmental conditions. Such studies were used to justify a rapid increase in prohibitionist drug policies and the drug war militarization in American foreign policy under Ronald Reagan. As Hart shows, when given minimal amounts of options, animals do not persistently ingest substances until they die. When given no other options, animals will self-administer drugs until they die. Hart’s studies of humans diagnosed with substance use disorder confirm that even when diagnosed as an addict, if people are given options,

⁶ Gabor Maté, *In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2008), 288.

⁷ TEDMED, “Carl Hart: Let’s Quit Abusing Drug Users,” 2014, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://www.tedmed.com/talks/show?id=309156>.

they will often choose to not take a drug. When we focus on the substances alone, on the “drugs,” we minimize the environmental conditions that make these substances enticing to people who feel like they have nowhere else to go.⁸ And that is exactly what public rhetoric, even claiming its basis on “scientific” fact from earlier studies, does.

In addition, because drug users are often stereotyped as “lowlifes” and “degenerates,” we ignore the fact that the great majority of us use consciousness-altering substances on a daily basis. In efforts to shed the negative image for use of prohibited substances, however, Americans have created a public image of a “spiritually aware” user. Rooted deeply in American exceptionalism, this moralizing narrative is deeply tied to conceptions of religious freedom, just as the idea of the “psychonaut” carries the historical weight of colonizing narratives. Celebrated authors of the “counterculture” such as William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, whose *Yagé Letters* did much to popularize ayahuasca, have helped to foster these traditions.

Along with such images, a hefty amount of recent research has emphasized ayahuasca’s therapeutic potential in relieving people of addiction to other substances. Thus, efforts have been made to distinguish ayahuasca’s medicinal potential against drugs like heroin and cocaine. Discourses on the “sacredness” of entheogens contributes to such perspectives as well. Perhaps unintentionally, these discourses inevitably foster a hierarchical perspective, where certain substances become the “tools” for healing spiritual growth over others. The result has been emergent discourse on training for

⁸ Carl Hart, *High Price* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014), 81.

therapists and the marketization of ayahuasca, sometimes called “pharmahuasca.” As psychedelics are domesticated into biopolitical regimes in the twenty-first century, the discourse carries on deeply entrenched ideas of spiritual discovery.

But there are other historical parallels at work here. The deterritorialized situation where land becomes ‘property’ corresponds to a loss of territorial connection for people who have few options for what any connection to land and emplacement. In a sense, there is a double displacement at work in the introduction of “drug” dependency for Indigenous Peoples that makes the introduction of methamphetamines, for example, a mere updating of the introduction of alcohol by colonizers to manipulate Natives as treaties were introduced. While recognized by the Justice Department as a problem particularly affecting Native American communities during the past decade, policies introduced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs reflect the larger international drug war efforts by the U.S. directed at South America.⁹

It is therefore important to contextualize the situation Native Americans face in the United States against the “spiritually aware” user to see how the Doctrine of Discovery remains an issue. In the U.S., treaty relationships with Native Americans had ended by the 1870s. In 1848, dealings with Indians shifted from the Department of War to the Department of the Interior. Importantly, this was the same year that saw the

⁹ United States Department of Justice, “Methamphetamine in Indian Country: An American Problem Uniquely Affecting Indian Country,” November, 2006, https://www.justice.gov/archive/tribal/docs/fv_tjs/session_1/session1_presentations/Meth_Overview.pdf.

signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo after the U.S. invasion of Mexico and annexation of Texas in 1845. These acts established the current southern border of the U.S. The department of the interior set up the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which took on a genocidal “civilizing” approach to Indians, whose sovereign status had been compromised by a legal decision that had advanced Indian Removal policies of the 1830s. “Sovereignty” for Natives in the north of Turtle Island became entirely subjugated to the 1823 *Johnson v. M’Intosh* decision, which officially imbricated what were separate sovereign nations under international law into a system of “domestic dependent” nations. In doing so, Justice John Marshall simultaneously integrated the Doctrine of Discovery with U.S. property law while also defining Native inhabitants as inherently unable to own property. Similarly, as Bratspies’ article shows, “traditional knowledge” has been deemed part of “public domain.” Non-Natives are habituated to see both Indigenous land and “spiritual” practices as sites for continued expropriation. Few Americans are aware of the fact that such deterritorialization is also inherently motivated by persistent eurochristian political-theological conceptions that saturate their daily worldviews. The persistence of the Doctrine of Discovery in law is thus only one, tangible way to grounds that persistent habitus.

Methodological Overview

Although I offer a detailed explanation of my method in chapter two, and in more nuanced ways throughout the course of this project, it is helpful to provide some initial descriptions. Broadly speaking, this project employs an analytic of eurochristian deep

framing, or Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs). The analytic term ‘eurochristian’ speaks to a social movement, not a ‘religion’, since conventional uses of the term ‘religion’ are already informed by eurochristian discursive hegemony based on *belief*. Deep frames, following the work of cognitive scientists like George Lakoff, are a matter of physical structures shaping our worldview, not a matter of what we choose to believe or disbelieve at any one time. I use the Doctrine of Discovery and its inclusion into *Johnson v. M’Intosh* (1823), which continues to be cited in legal cases today for depriving Indigenous Peoples of land, to evidence the transgenerational persistence of eurochristian deep framing. Legal discourse, however, is only one way to track articulations of this framing, which manifest in other forms of discourse.

I add Luis León’s term, *religious poetics*, to offer more interdisciplinary fluidity while simultaneously drawing attention to eurochristian social construction and its persistence in a society based on liberalism, which I conceive as an economic and political disposition that recognizes supposedly inherent and inalienable rights possessed by individuals. While much historical work has been done to focus on economic shifts with the rise of western liberalism, it has tended to be framed within an assumed narrative of secularization and “disenchantment.” My approach follows Luis N. Rivera-Pagán, who in a chapter on Pope Alexander VI’s (1492-1503) papal bulls of Discovery, notes that material interests of colonizers only made sense to them in terms of the spread of Christendom; thus, the theological necessity for evangelization and conversion of Natives was undisputed in the colonies, even when policies of governance and humane treatment

of Natives were debated.¹⁰ Regarding the first century of contact, Rivera-Pagán emphasizes, “*Every theological dispute about the New World and its inhabitants took on a political character and vice versa; every political disagreement over the relationship of Spain to the natives became a theological debate.*”¹¹ Similarly for my method, the legal frame cannot be separated from its theological component, nor is it a simple matter of religious “ideology” that could be separated from the quotidian political or social interactions: it is entirely political-theological. While Marxist theorists such as Louis Althusser, for example, saw ‘religion’ as one element of an ‘ideological state apparatus,’ I see that very apparatus (and in general, theories of *dispositifs*) as inherently eurochristian.

Philosophical and theoretical discourse in the European tradition often tacitly and seductively reiterates its own primacy at the expense of other worldviews, even to the point of denying that there is such a thing as a ‘worldview’. The recent explosion of discourse on ‘political-theology’, largely centered around Carl Schmitt’s thought, is a primary example. I read this discourse as an expression of eurochristian religious poetic *making*, evidencing what I term *eurochristian poetics of sacrifice*, tacitly accepting the erasure of Indigenous Peoples as inevitable.¹² In chapter two, I draw on Kenneth Burke’s

¹⁰ Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 24-25.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹² A vivid instance of the poetics of sacrifice appears with respect to León Potilla’s account of the execution of the Chontal Maya Cuauhtémoc. As relayed by Rivera-Pagán:

notion of dramatism to highlight language as symbolical action with very real effects on the world. Reading the discourse as poetic construction allows me to emphasize its ongoing effects through *rhetorical* performance. My aim is to highlight the performance more than any specific set of texts identifiable as a disciplined genre. My use of historical examples draws more on existing material than on, say, archival research. I am not trying to advance an as yet undiscovered or forgotten “gem” so much as I am trying to track a poetics of sacrifice that discursively accepts Indigenous erasure.

My emphasis on rhetorical performance aids in my analysis of policy initiatives such as the War on Drugs, decriminalization efforts, and my specific critique of initiatives seeking religious exemptions for ayahuasca in law. Seen within a longer history, eurochristian discourse is *motivated* by the eurochristian social movement’s own myopia and narcissism. Terms change, masking processes by which non-eurochristians have been sacrificed for Christian “civilization.” Thus, policies not overtly framed as religious in liberal society reveal eurochristian intentions through apparently normative, “secular” discourse and legal decisions. A focus on ayahuasca in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery highlights the persistence of eurochristian political theology even in so-called “secular” society.

If there is one thing useful about the recent explosion in discourse on political theology, it is its brazen display of its theoretical hold on what Schmitt called the new

The Spaniards are convinced that his subjection is fake and that he is planning an armed revolt. They decide, therefore to kill him. But first they take precautionary steps and baptize the Aztec monarch. In this way, the Christian sacrament is linked to the conquering violence. The body of the chief is killed while at the same time an attempt is made to redeem his soul. (Ibid., 207)

“nomos of the earth.”¹³ It has largely arisen in academic discourse with the end of the Cold War and the rise of various crises in liberal democracies. Rhetorically, the

¹³ In *Nomos of the Earth*, Schmitt argues that dissolutions of spatial notions of *nomos* became conflated with *thesmoi* (institutions), obscuring its original emphasis on land (75). Then, with a cursory glance at the opening lines of Homer’s *Odyssey* he points to a distinction between land and sea important to the development of, and changes in international law. Schmitt devotes much of his discourse on the “discovery” of the “new world” to analysis of Francisco de Vitoria’s work. He makes only a few passing remarks to Bartolomé de Las Casas, probably because he was not a jurist. Schmitt reads the development of the French Revolution as a return to “Caesarism” and a corruption of classical notions of empire. For him this would turn into twentieth-century nihilism. That nihilism was based partly on the idea that classical empires had a *katechon*, and in Christian terms this meant that protecting territory was tied into notions of staving off the end of the world. This association of Christian temporality aligned with the spatial protection through “just wars,” but all of this would change with so-called “discovery” of Turtle Island because sea warfare and divisions, such as those in the papal bulls of donation and discovery, would be different from land divisions, creating a new *nomos* that lasted from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. During that period, and largely because of sea warfare, the unifying concept of the *katechon* by which Christians recognize each other against infidels was blurred. Also blurred were distinctions between *hostes* – a known, friendly, or “Christian” opponent – an *inimici* – “an opponent with whom there is no friendship” (163). Debates about how to treat Indians evidenced such blurring. In the breakdown of the old *katechon* *nomos*, Schmitt sees international law as having emerged as a secular and neutral apparatus. In this way, he accepts a secularization narrative. He completely disregards any idea that Indians might have their own concepts of law and *nomos*, relegating their “destruction” to their utter lack of “scientific power” (132).

Any reader of Homer might question why Schmitt speculates on *noos / nomos* as a point of departure without any consideration of *xenia* (guest-friendship), a major theme in the *Odyssey*. More than that, in Schmitt’s own condescending gaze from a vertical height, he is not able to look at the sky until he writes of aerial warfare in the twenty-first century. While I am absolutely no Jungian, it is clear that in ancient cultures, the stars were by far more important for orientation (and navigation by boat!) than a simple dichotomy of land and sea. Whether it is Ouranos laying on top of Gaia, or the Sky People who brought ayahuasca, there appears a concept that the sky used to be “close” to the earth. How it got separated shifts among different groups of people. To me, Schmitt’s reading of the secularization process at times laments the “loss” of a “unifying” and ordered sense of Christendom. He sees in the development of “nihilism” and especially in emergent U.S. global hegemony a shift to the criminalization of opponents in warfare. Considering his own past as a Nazi anti-Semite and that the book was written just after the formation of the United Nations, along with the Convention on the

discourse of ‘political theology’ is about the viability of liberal democracy in the twenty-first century. Amid the discussion has been reflection on secularization narratives, which frame a debate about whether or not liberalism can continue to deliver its social organizing promises. At heart are discussions of sovereignty, which eurochristian discourse almost inevitably sees as singular. My method accepts that it has been useful to question liberalism’s focus on subjectivity, ‘self’, and narratives of Weberian disenchantment. Many avowedly Christian thinkers, however, have seen this situation as

Prevention of Genocide and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, his closing words are eerie: “Historically speaking, new amity lines are on the agenda. But it would be unfortunate if they were to be achieved only through new criminalizations” (322). The word ‘genocide’ does not appear in the book. Schmitt’s concept of secularization is self-serving more than it is factual. As his own powerful critique of American ascent to global power following the Monroe Doctrine attests, American foreign policy is rooted in what we now call “American exceptionalism.” Schmitt writes:

James Brown Scott, the American international law jurist, sees in the modern turn to a discriminatory concept of war a return to the Christian-theological doctrine of just war. But modern tendencies do not resurrect Christian doctrines. Rather, they are ideological phenomena attending the industrial-technical development of modern means of destruction. (321)

He laments that war has become “police action.” His view of secularization appears to follow Max Weber’s notion of disenchantment. Any work dealing with the issues Indigenous Peoples today face cannot take seriously such a secularization narrative. Religion has been the genocidal tool of eurochristians since first-contact. Although Schmitt points to the development of “civilization” as a term in the early nineteenth century to designate unity between France and the U.S. (286), I argue that it has deeper roots in eurochristian worldviews. Schmitt’s book should be read alongside Rivera-Pagán’s *A Violent Evangelism*, which gives much more of an account of Las Casas and a eurochristian legacy that cannot take the form of secularization narratives, whether they be Schmitt’s or congratulatory liberals’.

Carl Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth: in the International Law of the Jus Publicum European*, translated by G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, 2006).

an opportunity for the “return” of religion to public discourse as a moral conscience to crass marketization, just as some earlier “liberation” theology reacted to critical theorists and Schmitt.¹⁴ I do not share that view.

Amid recent political theological discourse has also been flurry of talking around the term ‘neoliberalism’.¹⁵ Although there are various ways of tracking the term, most frame the ‘neo’ in terms of a shift in economic policies during the early 1970s moving toward finance capitalism amid a “globalized world.” Flexibility in international investment accompanied earlier attempts at liberal policies of “development,” especially in South America. But as Eduardo Galeano’s *Open Veins of Latin America* was already arguing in 1973, aggressive expropriative and immoral practices have been economically devastating the region since so-called “discovery.” Ayahuasca’s diasporic emergence as a commodity for spiritual self-exploration is merely recent evidence of an expropriative “civilizing” mission, just as appeals to legal recognition of ayahuasca religions tacitly accept claims to governance based of eurochristian poetics evidenced in the Doctrine of Discovery.

¹⁴ I am particularly thinking of Johann Baptist Metz and Jürgen Moltmann’s interest in Schmitt and Walter Benjamin, and that influence on Gustavo Gutiérrez. See Annika Thiem, “Schmittian Shadows and Contemporary Theological-Political Constellations,” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 1-32.

¹⁵ Carl Raschke, “What is the New ‘Nomos of the Earth’? Reflections on the Later Carl Schmitt,” *Political Theology Today* September 3, 2016, <https://politicaltheology.com/what-is-the-new-nomos-of-the-earth-reflections-on-the-later-schmitt-carl-raschke/>.

My interdisciplinary discursive shifting is intended to prevent the calcification of my argument within appropriative eurochristian discourse. It is not meant to be capricious. Instead, it attempts to articulate the eurochristian religious poetics at work across multiple forms of expression. In doing so, I am trying to navigate a divide between text-based and “lived” religion. Attention to poetics focuses on what a discourse is made from while attention to rhetoric focuses on how that material is discursively performed to achieve certain results. Efforts seeking religious exemptions for ayahuasca are current but underinformed with relation to historical relationships between Indigenous People and the law. I am not claiming an “outsider” status or articulating *one* Indigenous perspective as if I had some emic cultural competence. My method focuses on a longer history to show how liberalism itself is a mask for eurochristendomination, accepting expropriation and genocide of Indigenous Peoples as inevitable.

Discourse on neoliberalism often sees a shift toward crass marketization as a shift from “classic” liberalism, which framed the accumulation of capital within the moral consciousness of a capitalist citizen who would presumably employ wealth to improve social conditions. As I attempt to show through attention to eurochristian religious poetics, this individual and liberalism itself is assumed to be Christian, just as religious “tolerance” largely developed through the Christian religious wars that raged throughout Europe after so-called “discovery” in the 1648 peace of Westphalia. In my view, “liberalism” is generally expressive as eurochristian poetics, and so is neoliberalism; thus, I read the entire fascination with ‘neoliberalism’ as a discursive mask to historically separate a “new” temporality obscuring the centuries-long extractive process Marx called

“primitive accumulation.” However, Glen Sean Coulthard (Yellow Knives Dene) argues in *Red Skin, White Masks* that Marxist thought was incorrect to situate such accumulation within one period, when the environmental conditions faced by Indigenous Peoples from the north to the south pole in the western hemisphere remain the target of expropriative violence.¹⁶ An analysis of ayahuasca’s diaspora must keep this longer historical context in mind. I have done so by moving back and forth between the north and south American continents, highlighting shared eurochristian framing amid different articulations by Protestants and Catholics. I give more explicit attention in chapter four to New England to emphasize the continuity of the Doctrine of Discovery amid antipapal Protestant attitudes, knowing full well that the phenomenon known as American exceptionalism and origin stories relating to Pilgrims and Puritans to be later expressions of national fantasy that nevertheless remain rhetorically powerful.

My method is largely processual, but it centers within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), affording me the possibility of relying on a variety of analytical tools from different disciplines. It attempts to be transparent with respect to my own social positioning as a eurochristian while really trying to attend to Indigenous critiques. I actively privilege such critiques as part of my method to show I am listening. This requires specific attention to Indigenous voices of Turtle Island among many others historically oppressed by eurochristian colonialism. For example, current writers in Indigenous Studies articulate quite different perspectives from scholars associated with

¹⁶ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 3.

postcolonialism. Postcolonial discourse has largely been about “liberation” from colonial control and cultural determination in a potentially more equitable world following the loss of European colonial grasps throughout the twentieth-century. While Indigenous writers may agree in diagnostic assessment of the horrors of colonialism, their discursive motivations may be quite different because at times many have very active engagements with localized cultural memories. While “recovery” is necessary due to the fact that no one has escaped the results of eurochristian colonialism, “recovery” alone does not attend to modes of Indigenous Survivance, a term employed by Gerald Vizenor (Anishnaabeg), which I read as evidencing Indigenous ICMs in contrast to eurochristian ones.

Postcolonial discourse often situates itself in relation to transnational, globalized economic contexts, as do theories of border thought. In one way, the postcolonial motivation is to disrupt nationalistic frames imposed by colonialism, speaking to collective identities. While such work is crucial, it cannot alone attend to specifically Indigenous issues, even when it actively aspires to do so. For example, as I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, Walter Mignolo’s attention to “decoloniality” as a disposition indicative of the conditions present throughout south America speaks to broader conditions than a runakuna *yachaq* in chapter four, who secretly decides to embrace the term *chamán* when outside of his *ayllu* (kinship network) at risk of his relatives believing he is destroying their traditions. Mignolo is trying to give us theoretical tools to address a current exigence while Indigenous groups are actively trying to presence their own remembering.

In contrast, Leanne Simpson's articulation of Nishnaabeg critical theory is Indigenous but necessarily not transplantable to Matsigenka People in the Amazon Rainforest. This does not mean that they share nothing. As writers like Tink Tinker and Barbara Mann tell us, we see deep Indigenous frames of balance, twinning, orientation with the night sky, the number four (as opposed to the eurochristian trinity) distinguishing some compatibility of worldviews persistent across Turtle Island and *Abya Yala*. But writers like Mignolo are too invested in saying how things are *now*, in articulating an "expert" assessment of global political and economic phenomena, which is an altogether different project than trying to find ways to explain how traditional ways of being inform one's daily actions. For my method, then, it is especially important to listen to Indigenous voices because even well-intentioned eurochristian writers often ignore them by situating themselves as *exceptional* theoretical protagonists. Ayahuasca discourse in diaspora often mimics such moves, implying ayahuasca's potential to make us exceptional, spiritually "advanced" or "healed" individuals.

Gravitation toward eurochristian discursive framing can happen even among some of the most celebrated critical theorists. For example, powerful assessments of "Gaia" occur in Bruno Latour's recent Gifford Lectures,¹⁷ which Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has fused with his own articulations of "Amerindian Perspectivism." On the one hand, Viveiros de Castro's descriptions of perspectivism and equivocation contribute greatly to our understanding of Indigenous deep framing and ICMs, celebrating the fact

¹⁷ Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime* (Medford, MA: Polity, 2017).

that Pachamama does not “speak Greek.” On the other, even Viveiros de Castro is capable of making claims that the environmental crises earthlings face today ought to be met with “lines of flight” by which we “become Indigenous.” He writes in collaboration with Déborah Danowski:

But it is perfectly possible – more than that, this is actually taking place – to experience a *becoming-indigenous*, local and global, particular as well general; a *ceaseless rebecoming-indigenous* that has taken hold of sizeable sectors of the Brazilian population in an entirely unexpected way.¹⁸

I can feel my Indigenous friends cringing while reading such words by one of the most recognized anthropologists today. When addressing a wide audience, Viveiros de Castro’s hopes are seduced in what appears here to be an account of the Same, into what I see as a discursive *Basileia tou theou*. I know that Viveiros de Castro means something arguably different, but when we couple it with the discursive claims to ayahuasca’s potential in diaspora, we see the power of decontextualization at work and the harm done to Indigenous Peoples. Thus, Danowski and Viveiros de Castro close their essay referring to Gilles Deleuze as a “younger brother” of the modernist Brazilian poet, Oswald de Andrade, who wrote a *Cannibalist Manifesto*¹⁹ instead of attending to anything actually Indigenous.

By methodically shifting discursive terminologies, my aim is to resist any attempt to “occupy” a given perspective, as well as to maintain attention to terminological framing itself. I do not believe I am “becoming Indigenous,” even if I am listening as

¹⁸ Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Ends of the World*, trans. Rodrigo Munes (Malden, MA: Polity, 2017), 122.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

hard as I can to Indigenous critiques of my social formation. As the chapters proceed, I will increasingly attempt to temper my account of ayahuasca discourse in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery with attention to Luis León's religious poetics, arguing that his approach can account for both processual and land-based forms of Survivance *absent* in ayahuasca discourse in diaspora through CDA.

As a method, CDA arose out of postcolonial contexts as an attempt to draw attention to regimes of power by attending to how those regimes produce discourse, which is then reified as normative channels for thought and action. As my work unfolds, I hope to show that rights-based claims to "recognize" ayahuasca religions for legal exemptions of "sacrament" carry on a long history of expropriation and erasure of Indigenous People characteristic of an ongoing eurochristian religious poetics of sacrifice. Undoubtedly, some activists may claim that religious exemptions of psychedelic substances are but one step towards decriminalizing and liberating people to use such substances. But Indigenous voices always seem to get lost in attempts to justify the "right" to an individual's spiritual "growth." Liberalism creates a politics of recognizing those rights and furthering an underwritten eurochristian civilizing mission. It is far from being judicially "neutral." Instead, it persists in being a tool for Indigenous erasure expressive of a eurochristian poetics of sacrifice, and attention to ayahuasca discourse in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery helps us to see it as such. Thus, appeals for ayahuasca religious exemptions authorized within liberal discursive and legal frames perpetuate hostility toward Indigenous Peoples even when they do not explicitly intend to do so.

Political Theology

I had originally sought to contextualize ayahuasca within the recent discourse of political theology, a conversation that I see as motivated by the role of religion in the public sphere in the twenty-first century, particularly as it navigates the question of liberal democratic efforts in an increasingly globalized context. While its particularly Christian identity emerged in the first five hundred years following the establishment of Christianity as a ‘religion’ separate from its Jewish roots,²⁰ the recent academic discourse has been especially concerned with the viability of liberal democracy as a political form of governance. Central to that discussion is a tension between religiosity and secular life, with particular concern for legal concepts. This followed the work of the conservative Catholic legal theorist, Carl Schmitt’s book, *Political Theology* (1922). During the 1930s, Schmitt became a vocal advocate for the anti-Semitism of the Third Reich, but Carl Schmitt’s poignant formulation is well-known within the discourse of political theology:

All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized religious concepts not only because of their historical development – in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver – but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts. The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology. Only by being aware of this analogy can we appreciate the manner in which the philosophical ideas of the state developed in the last centuries.²¹

²⁰ See Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008).

²¹ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006): 36.

Schmitt's description need not be "correct" to still have lasting import with regard to how people have interpreted secularization, and the concerns entrenched in American exceptionalism speak to the resonance and resurgence of interest in his work in the U.S. His ethnocentrism expresses itself with the word "significant" here. In his historical frame anything "significant" had to come from "religious." In the eurochristian frame, Indigenous People either "had no religion" or were "atavistic" and displayed only rudimentary or "primitive" forms which could not in and of themselves be "significant political concepts."

The resurgence of interest in Schmitt – not just as an author but what Michel Foucault called the "author function" – in the past fifty years has been intimately enmeshed with the global consideration of democracy's legitimacy following the collapse of Cold War frames of world power. In his recent history of American exceptionalism, Abram Van Engen tracks the meme of "the city on a hill" throughout political rhetoric tracing it back to John Winthrop's *Model of Christian Charity*, a homily largely forgotten but increasingly cited by every U.S. president since Kennedy. In Van Engen's words, American exceptionalism, "requires an unbroken lineage of commitment to God and liberty that cannot be sullied by others who happen to have lived and settled and sought their own ends in America."²² A myth is not a lie, nor is it innocent. Myths are important *because* they are not simply lies. As William Cavanaugh writes, "a story takes

²² Abram Van Engen, *City on a Hill: A History of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 132-33.

on the status of myth when it becomes unquestioned. It becomes very difficult to think outside the paradigm that the myth establishes and reflects because myth and reality become mutually reinforcing.”²³ Drawing on Linda Zerilli, Cavanaugh claims that myths cannot be defeated by merely pointing out their roots in “groundless belief,” which leads him to a genealogical – in the Nietzschean sense – examination of the ‘myth’ of religious violence because it “can only be undone by showing that it lacks the resources to solve the very problem that it identifies.”²⁴ Like Van Engen, Cavanaugh notes that discourse on religion has importantly arisen in global politics during and following the end of the Cold War. Whether writers see themselves as religious or not, most ayahuasca discourse in the U.S. is still inflected by these frames. Discourse on ayahuasca in the field of religious studies, outside of important sociological work done by writers such as Andrew Dawson, has been scant. When work is done, it usually focuses on aspects of ritual in groups deemed “new religious movements.” While such work is important, I want to focus on broader historical impulses that one might call the “rhetoric of religion” but that I would narrow to the religious poetics of eurochristianity.

I argue that it is necessary to understand ayahuasca, not just in the context of globalization and a changing world, but in an ongoing discussion about the relationship between conceptions of religion and secularity in that world. Discourse on political theology has treated ideas of post-secularity at length, but few ayahuasca researchers are

²³ William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

privity to such conversations. Combined with this are the rhetorical motivations driving U.S. aspirations to empire more clearly seen from a longer historical picture. Because ayahuasca diaspora occurs within the hegemonic “development” projects backed by the United States to fight communism in Latin America, it is also necessary to see both how Cold War framing continues to affect discourse on ayahuasca and how that very framing expresses the motivations of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Despite various attempts to maintain Cold War discursive frames in media and popular politics, including most recently investigations into Russia’s meddling in the electoral processes of the U.S., the resurgence of academic interest in Carl Schmitt also ought to be contextualized within the global politics of imposed liberal democracy following “world wars” of the twentieth century. In such discourse, while Schmitt represents a rightwing critique of liberalism, many influenced by his thought – including Walter Benjamin most notably – have expressed critiques of liberalism from a leftwing perspective. As I have explored at length elsewhere,²⁵ the nature of interest among U.S. scholars with respect to Schmitt has more to do with a deeper inquiry into the roots of Critical Theory as expressed by the Frankfurt School and its U.S. derivatives than it does a flirtation with a Nazi legal theorist. Though understandable in some ways, dogmatic liberals have still seen intellectual engagement with Schmitt as morally retrograde. Again, a rhetorical take on the author-function²⁶ in discourse ought to situate the

²⁵ Roger K. Green, *A Transatlantic Political Theology of Psychedelic Aesthetics* (New York: Palgrave, 2019).

²⁶ As Michel Foucault writes: “In our culture – undoubtedly in others as well – discourse was not originally a thing, or a product, or a possession, but an action situated

discursive tension between these two figures, who have in addition to being important to recent discussions of political theology, remain important to the discourse of liberation theology in Latin America during the Cold War.

In her *Critical Introduction to Religion in the Americas*, Michelle Gonzalez writes:

Liberation theology today must not perpetuate the forty-year-old writings of its founders. It needs to respond to contemporary issues in light of its original ethical-political critique. The new subjects of liberation theology include women, indigenous peoples, Afro-American peoples, and forgotten religious traditions.²⁷

At the same time, the context of the Cold War significantly affected some of the leadership of current ayahuasca religions. For example, Padrinho Alex Polari de Alverga of the Santo Daime church was imprisoned during the 1970s and early 1980s for being part of the leftist *Vanguarda Armada Revolucionária Palmares* (VAR) against the military junta that had, with the support of the C.I.A., enacted the 1964 *coup d'état*, ousting President João Goulart.²⁸ The dictatorship, which lasted into the mid 1980s, meant that new religious movements employing the use of ayahuasca had to tread very carefully for fear of repression by the state. Although generally considered leftist,

in a bipolar field of sacred and profane, lawful and unlawful, religious and blasphemous.” Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 124.

²⁷ Michelle Gonzales, *Critical Introduction to Religion in the Americas: Bridging the Liberation Theology and Religious Studies Divide* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 139.

²⁸ Santo Daime, “Padrinho Alex Polari de Alverga,” July 18, 2019, accessed February 23, 2020, <http://santodaime.nextohm.com/Hinarios/Alex%20Polari/>.

liberation theology in the 1960s was informed by Johann Baptiste Metz, who was in turn influenced by both Carl Schmitt and left-leaning Frankfurt School thinkers.

Internationally speaking, and especially in South America, increasingly rightwing nationalist impulses in recent years have undermined a wider liberal academic positioning in the U.S. underwritten by an attitude of “silence” with respect to right or “far-right” politics. This of course has erupted in recent years as anything but “silence.” Appealing to First Amendment rights to speech and religion, the rhetoric of religious persecution feeds into nationalism and aspirations to empire. Thus, as Roger Griffin notes with respect to European impulses, “No matter how liberal and un-Nazi this sounds on the surface, it is evident that illiberal, biologically racist ideas concerning the organic relationship between people and soil and notions of ethnic purity have been translated into the sanitized discourse of culture and identity.”²⁹ Such politics create difficulties for discussions of Indigenous perspectives, requiring articulations of worldview within deeply framed historical perspectives that avoid the co-optation of rights-based identity politics by far-right rhetoric.

With respect to discursive silence among academics, recent history shows that just because one might ignore such distasteful politics does not mean they are not there, much less the fact that they are appealing to people who employ them. Part of the appeal, as persistent persecution rhetorics stating the need to defend Christian “civilization” evidence, relies again on deeply-framed worldviews.

²⁹ Roger Griffin, “‘*Lingua Quarti Imperii*,’: The Euphemistic Tradition of the Extreme Right,” *Doublespeak: The Rhetoric of the Far Right Since 1945*, ed. Matthew Feldman (Stuttgart: Verlag, 2014), 51.

Moreover, assumptions that higher education in the U.S. is somehow inherently “progressively liberal” and “secular” have fed the rise of far-right, nationalistic impulses through neoliberal discourses of “recognition” and “protection” for the idea of Christianity and religion in general as identity-constructs without attention to intergenerational embedding of cognitive structures that create the architecture or poetics of those structures. Nor do I mean in the metaphor of “structures” here a reversion to essentializing ‘structuralism’ of the twentieth-century. Current academic conversations are laden with feelings about what is acceptable to say in terms of public discourse. My own position is that higher education in the U.S. is by and large far more status-quo than it presents itself rhetorically, and these nationalistic trends have precursors in the disruptive attempts at state “development” in South and Central America during the twentieth-century. Discourse on ‘ayahuasca’ is thus necessarily imbricated in this transnational drama, and attending to the issues requires a longer historical memory than often employed in the present discourse.

As I detail in chapter two, my approach to the subject employs a method called Critical Discourse Analysis. Part of doing so is an attempt to bracket common left-right binaries contextualizing a Cold War frame so that I may attend to perspectives marginalized by that transnational drama. My focus on Discourse Analysis, which is informed by the Actor Network Theories developed by Bruno Latour and others developed in the 1980s, will nevertheless refrain from making metaphysical claims as to whether or not we “remain” or have ever been “modern,” instead focusing on Indigenous

critics already broken from a hermeneutic circle around ideas of essentialism, culture, and hybridity.³⁰

Following critiques made by Indigenous scholars in the north, including critiques of liberal politics of recognition, I am attempting to articulate a position that does not buy into “left-right” political framing, which I see as inherently eurochristian despite debates between ‘the religious’ and ‘the secular’ within liberal discourse. This will inevitably conjure suspicions among readers who seek to position me within that frame, hence my disclaimer. To put it bluntly, discursive framing is itself part of the problem, especially in the global diaspora of ayahuasca outside of its South American contexts where discussions are refracted by a larger discourse on psychedelic drugs. While we might use updated “neoliberal” terminology, deeper motivations expressive of eurochristian political theology remain important beyond twentieth and twentieth-century attempts at “liberation.”

The more I wrote and researched this project, the more I came to largely eschew explicit discourse on political theology both for the sake of conciseness and clarity and also because I see it as inherently eurochristian. That does not, however, mean I am not in

³⁰ Latour’s classic, *We Have Never Been Modern*, analyzes the inefficacies and presumptions of the “modern constitution.” Actor Network Theories sees hard distinctions between subject and object-inside as mediated by various non-human hybrids irreducible to “nature” or society.” Nor is it a merely relativistic position. Latour importantly pushes us to account for non-human agents, yet while critical of coloniality’s arrogance, his gloss does not speak directly enough to Indigenous positions for my project, pushing too quickly toward the transnational: “there is an Ariadne’s thread that would allow us to pass with continuity from the local to the global, from the human to the non-human. It is the thread of networks of practices and instruments, of documents and translations.” Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 121.

my own way responding to the discussion of political theology. The most important discursive anchor here between ayahuasca discourse and ‘political theology’ is expressed in terms of the “exception,” which Schmitt associated with miracles. The problem here is that Indigenous perspectives are often themselves inevitably framed as “exceptional,” even while that impulse relegates such perspectives to inherently eurochristian frames. The result is that Indigeneity gets read as merely an identity construction, socially formed as a reaction to “modern” colonizers. While this is true to some extent, it again leaves out the idea of persistent and changing worldviews among Indigenous Peoples that predate European contact.

Caught in the discursive formations of this history, which romanticized an Indian “other,” ayahuasca is constantly presented as “miraculous” in its abilities, feeding longstanding notions about Indigenous Peoples. This miraculous quality saturates even the scientific literature on ayahuasca, which for complex historical reasons must often implicitly advocate for ayahuasca’s potential. The problem I face, therefore, arises as an attempt to break a deeply entrenched, eurochristian discursive frame. A dialectic between a perspective that seeks to push beyond notions of ‘culture’ for being expressive of the very colonialist ethnocentrism of those who produced the notion of ‘culture’ against impulses to employ the marketized identities recognized and deployed to protect ‘culture’ carries on a longer genocidal erasure of Indigenous Peoples. The dialectic foregrounds a drama rhetorically situated within and among eurochristians.

Might we then read ayahuasca discourse “outside” of a eurochristian context? Is it even possible? My answer is that it is not so much through a metaphor of pushing

“beyond” yet another boundary – spatial or cognitive – but rather again through a longer historical analysis and cognitive account of intergenerational eurochristian colonial impulses. It is easy enough to accept that colonization has been brutal and destructive, and that a certain idea of Christianity wed to empire was part of this rationalization. It is another thing to sit patiently with that history while trying to account for a phenomenon like the ayahuasca diaspora, wherein many users would position themselves as critical of and rejecting eurochristian colonization.

My attention to the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery will do some of this meditative contextual framing. With respect to Latin@ “theoethics,” Nestor Medina writes:

Translated into today’s reality, the borderscape—*la rajada abierta*—has remained intact and has even expanded, both ideologically and culturally. These are the effects of the Doctrine of Discovery! In the same way, we inhabit an ideological and sometimes very real terra nullius—nobody’s land—where we remain under the surveilling gaze of empire, at the risk of being made redundant and disposed.³¹

Just as we cannot simply ignore discursive political framing without simultaneously repositioning and re-inscribing ourselves within it, we cannot present it as a “new horizon” either. Instead, we need to listen to perspectives that have been excluded from such discourse while not assimilating them to a “furthering” of the discourse itself or mimetically trying to “become” other, which would merely be a reoccupation of colonial tactics.

³¹ Nestor Medina, “The Doctrine of Discovery, LatinXo Theoethics, and Human Rights,” *Journal of Hispanic / Latino Theology* 21: no. 2 (November 2019): 14-15.

The problem is metaphorically situated by what we expect discourse itself to do. This is where decolonizing takes place, which always simultaneously risks further adventures in narcissism of the “liberal self.” In other words, for this study I must bracket liberal discursive assumptions without relegating my own position to a “rightwing” pigeonhole in the heated political context of current academic discourse. Thus, I must keep ‘socially progressivist’ and ‘liberationist’ leanings at arm’s length as I attend to Indigenous theories that operate outside of a left-right binary. The undoing of this binary mode of being must also come without an impulse to “become other” or “become Indigenous.” Decolonization here is not a *recognition* – even a mere recognition of difference – nor a liberally “inclusive” and utopic capturing; instead, it is a humility-inducing cognition of the arrogance of eurochristian colonial formation underwriting liberalism itself, in both its rightwing and leftwing trajectories.

Not “Becoming Indian”

As Michael Taussig’s work has shown, the complex situation is entirely entrenched within colonial forms of racism that have profoundly shifted during the past seventy years. With respect to Colombia in the 1990s, he writes:

Suddenly Indians are “in.” Before they'd been people to poison with smallpox, drunks, etc. But due to the political mobilization in the central Andes, up high with the Paez and Guambianos – there were two Indian senators, a political movement, they were taking land back, they were proudly flaunting their language and modes of dress. Amazing. But the white people, the non-Indian city people, had suddenly flipped: they wanted to be Indians too. Everyone was fascinated by the Indians – who form perhaps one percent of the Colombian

population – “officially designated Indians,” that is – so the Indians became all the rage, as they did world-wide.³²

Especially for a non-Indian like myself, one of the risks of my project inevitably rests on a potential perpetuation of the situation Taussig describes. Again, this has pushed me towards a longer historical analysis of eurochristian framing.

As Tink Tinker (Wazhazhe, Osage) writes in *American Indian Liberation*, “White Amer-europeans must courageously own their own past – *without guilt* but with great intentionality – to change the present and the future.”³³ Humility without narcissistic re-entrenchment within a eurochristian guilt-oriented complex: that is the question. Discourse on psychedelics has long sought an expanded notion of “self,” even a disintegration of ego-driven modes of being. Yet what we have seen in the recent decades of psychedelic renaissance, which accompanies and informs the global diaspora of ayahuasca, has been the domestication of such modes within a liberal, eurochristian formation of ‘self’, whereby the “experienced” or “enchanted” ‘self’ entitles one to a kind of moral authority over conventional structures of governance and subjectivation.

I have largely explored this subject in my recent book, *A Transatlantic Political Theology of Psychedelic Aesthetics* (2019). To put it briefly, the rhetoric of psychedelic enchantment is framed within a perspective that the experience of such substances makes us “more human” by opening our senses of wonder. This context is almost always

³² Michael Taussig and Peter Lamborn Wilson, *Ayahuasca and Shamanism: Michael Taussig Interviewed by Peter Lamborn Wilson* (New York: Autonomedia, 2002).

³³ George E. “Tink” Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (New York: Orbis, 2008), 160.

supplemented through a rhetoric of “furthering,” as icons such as Ken Kesey’s “magic bus” signal. It is my sense that this “furthering” often does the work of forging a new colonial path and refracting our respective selves as inherently “pioneering.” And that furthering is also framed within a discourse of *experience* whereby one’s use of psychedelics puts them into a kind of exceptional space, especially with respect to the legal constraints put onto psychedelics globally in the early 1970s. This is the transnational cultural situation surrounding the diaspora of ayahuasca to the north.

A transnational, postcolonial discourse on “borderlands” theory has arisen in the past forty years, largely informed by Latin American intellectuals who suffered substantially from Cold War left-right political framing. Among them, Walter D. Mignolo has argued for a “new” cosmopolitan transnationalism incorporating border thinking as a way of confronting the “subalternization of knowledge” and overcoming “modern/colonial difference” through a balance with “local histories.” In arguing for a transnational perspective, and following Fernando Ortiz, Mignolo sees the development of the idea of culture within a Christianized economy developing in the Early Modern period and underwriting the development of modern capitalism. In this trajectory, the development of modern conceptions of race formed first as religious distinctions between Christians, Jews, Muslims, Indians. In his terms, this develops as the modern/colonial difference. Here, ‘culture’ as ‘race’ became part of a modern system of classification:

culture is precisely a key word of colonial discourses classifying the planet, particularly since the second wave of colonial expansion, according to sign system (language, food, dress, religion, etc.) and ethnicity (skin color, geographic locations). Culture became, from the eighteenth century until 1950 approximately,

a word between “nature” and “civilization.” Lately, culture has become the other end of capital and financial interests.³⁴

Mignolo looks at transculturation through semiotic analysis, critiquing Ortiz for reverting toward nationalism, thus pushing toward a more global perspective while simultaneously critiquing “global designs”:

Colonial semiosis attempted to identify particular moments of tension in the conflict between two local histories and knowledges, one responding to the movement forward of a global design that intended to impose itself and those local histories and knowledges that are forced to accommodate themselves to such new realities.³⁵

His conception of “border thinking” is thus a corrective to an asymmetrical relationship between “knower and known” that seeks less to explain “two sides” of the border but, following Emmanuel Levinas, “from its exteriority” – transcending “subject-object” relationships and what Mignolo identifies as “epistemology and hermeneutics.”³⁶

In erasing such distinctions, Mignolo also intends to move beyond *mestizaje* concepts of mixing and hybridity that he associates with the Early Modern identity construct of the *converso* – first identified religiously through “blood” and then hierarchically classified through creolization and eventually pseudo-scientific “blood quantum.”³⁷ Nationalist manifestos of the early twentieth-century, such as José

³⁴ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories / Global Designs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

Vasconcelos's "Cosmic Race" (1925) and Oswald De Andrade's "Cannibalist Manifesto" (1928), universalized and essentialized the racialized thinking reflective of a eurochristian deep framing while drawing on nineteenth-century notions of biological difference.

Particularly relevant to my project is Mignolo's identification of Christianity as a "global design." He writes:

Christianity became, with the expulsion of the Jews and Moors and the "discovery" of America, the first global design of the modern/colonial world system and, consequently, the anchor of Occidentalism and the coloniality of power drawing the external borders as the colonial difference, which became reconverted and resemantized in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the expansion of Britain and France to Asia and Africa. Global designs are the complement of universalism in the making of the modern/colonial world.³⁸

Noting that today the conception of universal history is impossible, Mignolo follows Antonio Gramsci in noting that projects of global design have maintained historical hegemony in managing the planet:

[The initial Christian] project changed hands and names several times, but the times and names are not buried in the past. In the contrary, they are all still alive in the present, even if the most visible is the propensity toward making the planet into a global market. However, it is not difficult to see that behind the market as the ultimate economic project that has become an end in itself, there is the Christian mission of the early modern (Renaissance) colonialism, the civilizing mission of the secularized modernity, and the development and modernization projects after World War II. Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on the market and consumption, is not just a question of economy but of a new form of civilization.³⁹

³⁸ Ibid., 21.

³⁹ Ibid.

This summary of the past five centuries is useful in seeing the Christian underwriting – or deep framing – of current forces often deemed as “secular” globalization, especially neoliberalism, which Mignolo identifies as a new transnational “civilizing project.”⁴⁰ Attention to border thinking then becomes a strategy for seeing the “cracks” in the project design that presents its mission as universal.

While his work remains important, my project both differs and builds from Mignolo’s in three specific ways. First of all, I disagree with the idea that, following Emmanuel Levinas, we can write from an “exterior” position. In my reading of Levinas, to come to an understanding of what Levinas calls “otherwise than being” is not to arrive at any sort of *position*, especially not one relegated to spatial or territorial metaphors of “beyond” or “furthering.” Mignolo is indeed careful enough to say as he employs Levinas to critique capitalist, linear conceptions of time in Immanuel Wallerstein’s work:

By exteriority I do not mean the outside but the space where tensions emerge once capitalism becomes the dominant economic system and eliminates all the possibilities of anything outside it, but not its exteriority. Wallerstein’s conceptualization of historical capitalism presupposes a totality without exteriority.⁴¹

Mignolo then proceeds to an analogy:

I would say that transmodernity and coloniality of power are to historical capitalism what Levinas’s philosophical reflections on being are to Heidegger’s being and time. The analogy is appropriate because of [Enrique] Dussel’s translation of Emmanuel Levinas’s exteriority to the colonial experience. The analogy is also relevant because of the parallels between the fracture in the narrative of Western civilization, between Greek and Jewish philosophical

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁴¹ Walter D. Mignolo, “The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101: no. 1 (Winter 2002), 75.

traditions, on the one hand, and the fracture between modernity and coloniality in the narrative of the modern/colonial world-system, on the other.⁴²

Following Dussel's philosophy of liberation, transmodernity often works on analogy.

However, as Dennis Beach has noted, Enrique Dussel's philosophy is both inspired by Levinas's critique of Martin Heidegger and critical of Levinas:

This limitation becomes most apparent, he says, when Mexican and Latin American students ('who belong to the third or even the fifth world') are introduced to Levinas's thought and ask, like Tolstoy, 'What then must we do?' Levinas, he contends, has no real answer to this question, at least not on the pragmatic, political plane.⁴³

In more recent work by Walter Mignolo, explicit references to Levinas have disappeared.

Yet, for example, without referencing Levinas, he and Catherine Walsh characterize "struggles, movements, and actions of people native to these [colonized] lands" as arising, "for the creation, and cultivation of modes of life, existence, being, and thought *otherwise*; that is, modes that confront, transgress, and undo modernity / coloniality's hold."⁴⁴ This "anti-stance" would imply all sorts of prescriptive notions I find incongruent with Levinas's ethics as first philosophy, which is an entirely different project. Mignolo recently advocates for a concept of decoloniality not to be confused with Cold War politics⁴⁵ but that speaks to the conditions of historic colonization:

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Dennis Beach, "History and the Other: Dussel's Challenge to Levinas," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 30: no. 3 (2004), 315-316.

⁴⁴ Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 222.

Decoloniality is an option called to intervene in (a) the system of disciplinary management of knowledge (all disciplines in the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences, as well as professional schools); (b) the system of beliefs (religions); and (c) the systems of ideas (liberalism, conservatism, and socialism).⁴⁶

He turns then to a decolonial praxis of “love” that is to be distinguished from Christian notions by “delinking” them from colonial matrices of power and “accepting that re-existence and building communalities of all kinds demands respects, listening, cooperation, and care.”⁴⁷ I am sympathetic to the ethical impulses Mignolo describes, but I do not think it is so easy. Rather, following Tinker’s attention to the necessity for eurochristians like myself to “own up” to history takes precedence over “building anything” new. Moreover, while perhaps an important theoretical conversation concerning Emmanuel Levinas might be useful, parsing the nuances here would distract me from attending to issues of deep framing and the broader attitudes by which eurochristians, as Taussig writes, seek to “become Indians.” I know Mignolo would resist such impulses as well, but it is clear that he is directing his words as transnational praxes and I would rather emphasize existing Indigenous thinkers before jumping to such forms of action.

Second, while I appreciate Mignolo’s historical schema and recognize the limitations we face as writers trying to cover vast amounts of history, it is important to note that conceptions of Judaism also develop within a particular modernity, as Leora

⁴⁶ Ibid., 223.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Batnitzky has argued.⁴⁸ Similarly, and more to the point regarding neoliberalism, Olivier Roy has articulated the reification of various forms of Protestant “fundamentalism” within various late nineteenth and twentieth variations of Islam, labeling the process of globalizing religion as deculturing and deterritorializing. As Roy writes:

In fact, secularization has worked: what we are witnessing today is the militant reformulation of religion in a secularized space that has given religion its formal autonomy and therefore the conditions for its expansion. Secularization and globalization have forced religions to break away from culture, to think of themselves as autonomous and to reconstruct themselves in a space that is no longer territorial and is therefore no longer subject to politics.⁴⁹

While I agree with much of Roy’s analysis, my focus on deep framing will emphasize that the very secularization he touts as having “worked” is expressive of the ongoing dominance of eurochristian framing. In my view, “post-secularity” tacitly accepts a kind of eurochristian triumphalism that must be approached not just through attention to the phenomenon known as American exceptionalism but to the deeper frames from which the impulse emerges. That framing situates Batnitzky’s study as well, yet despite the complexities of modernity and its development of ‘religion’ as an autonomous concept, it would be ridiculous to say that either Judaism or Indigenous Peoples simply “didn’t exist” until modern colonial conceptions identified them as such. Discourse is rhetorical in the sense that it is audience-driven, and over time it affects audiences who do not specifically attend to, read, or explicitly engage in discourse.

⁴⁸ See Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2011).

⁴⁹ Olivier Roy, *Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways*, trans. Ros Schwartz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

To prove my point, I will need to focus on a variety of discursive traditions, but as I am trained as a rhetorician in literary traditions, the reader will note my tendencies toward the language of poetics, even though I am not explicitly reading works of literature here. A focus on deep framing reveals to us, as I argue in chapter six for example, that Lockean notions of religion as belief perform a political-theological function premised on the success of eurochristian “civilization” itself. It is not so much a matter of secularization having “worked” or not so much as it is a question of identifying the persistent eurochristian motivations within the secularization narrative itself. The “global design” of eurochristianity continues to operate transnationally in transmodern liberationist thought of Dussel and Mignolo; thus, we see attention to the aesthetics of religion, the state, and glory, occupying continental thinkers such as Giorgio Agamben’s work on *Homo sacer*. Fascinating as such research is, it inadvertently frames discourse within “major religions” religions “of the book” without explicitly attending to issues affecting Indigenous Peoples. This is a soft critique of Mignolo, who would likely agree that such developments become the places for border thinking itself; but on the whole, a received discourse on “world religions” obfuscates the ongoing deterritorializing work of the Christian global design, even amid disavowals of coloniality among those who identify as Christians by faith.

My third departure from Mignolo is a contention with his identification of 1898 as a particular “turning point” as the U.S. took on aspirations to Empire. Importantly seeing the aspiration in a shift to racialized terms and extending from an earlier Christian imaginary, Mignolo writes:

“Purity of blood” was no longer measured in terms of religion but of the color of people’s skin, and began to be used to distinguish the Aryan “race” from other “races” and, more and more, to justify the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon “race” above all the rest . . . I submit that the turning point took place in 1898 when the U.S.-Spanish War was justified from the U.S. perspective, with reference to the superiority of the “white Anglo-Saxon race” whose destiny was to civilize the world . . . over the “white Catholic Christians and Latins,” a term introduced by the French intelligentsia and used at that time to trace the frontiers in Europe as well as in the Americas between Anglo-Saxons and Latins.⁵⁰

Mignolo is correct in noting the novelty of racialized distinctions shifting from earlier religious distinctions. However, as my analysis will show through attention to Indigenous theorists’ attention to the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, U.S. aspirations to empire exist from the start and are intimately tied to a historically longer sense of Anglo-Saxon racial imaginary traced admirably by Indigenous scholars such as Robert Williams, Jr. and Robert J. Miller. Specifically, the 1823 inclusion of the Doctrine of Discovery into the Supreme Court decision, *Johnson v. M’Intosh*, along with the Monroe Doctrine, anchor U.S. imperialism within the very forces that helped produce notions of Latin America as distinct from increasing U.S. hegemony and outright invasions such as the Mexican American War, following hot on the “trail of tears” in the spirit of Manifest Destiny. It is important to note the earlier transnational attempts by emergent Protestant missionaries following the American revolution. Following simultaneous efforts in Africa, Indian Removal in the U.S., Hawaii, and Singapore, Emily Conroy-Krutz has tracked Christian impulses toward empire well before the Republic was strong and during a time when few knew the “city on a hill” rhetoric attributed to John Winthrop and the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 31-32.

Puritans, by articulations of “Manifest Destiny,” and by later advocates of American exceptionalism:

Because of the perceived connections between conversion and civilization, missionaries and their supporters looked for the spread of Anglo-American power as a providential sign of where they ought to establish missions. Empire, as they understood it brought civilization along in its wake.⁵¹

Conroy-Krutz importantly notes that nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries intentionally avoided South America, associating it with the “Black Legend” as being “too wild” and unmanageable. In other words, the people and their Catholic overlords were not “yet” capable of becoming “civilized.” My broader historical take follows the “wake” of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery underwriting both Catholic and Protestant agendas.⁵²

Though subtle, my departure from Mignolo is significant; nor is it a mere quibbling over dates. Instead, it is a methodological and analytical turn more consciously toward Indigenous writers and theorists who are *not* following Emmanuel Levinas or Mignolo’s reading of him in attempting to write from a border thinking emphasizing an exterior position. I am undoubtedly shaped by European theoretical discourse, but I have tried to keep theorizing at bay in this work, which is much more of an interdisciplinary

⁵¹ Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 15.

⁵² I realized after officially changing the title of my dissertation that it may echo Christina Sharpe’s recent book on African American ontologies. Although I admire her book and there is some crossover in interest, her use of the “wake” metaphor signaling slave ships is specific to her own work. Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Duke University Press, 2016).

historical meditation. While I mean this as no rejection of border thinking as an analytical project, it is clear by the end of Mignolo's *Local Histories / Global Designs* that his semiotic analysis leads to a complex engagement with poststructuralism where Mignolo must distinguish his own concept of decolonization from deconstruction and postcolonialism, stressing a transdisciplinary method.⁵³ He writes, "Decolonization should be thought of as complimentary to deconstruction and border thinking, complementary to the 'double séance' within the experience and sensibilities of the coloniality of power."⁵⁴ In chapter two, I detail my methodological use of Critical Discourse Analysis through a referencing of Kenneth Burke's dramatisic approach to rhetorical motivation as a way of distinguishing my work from semiotic approaches which remain important. This allows my approach to attend to the demands of Indigenous thinkers without merely perpetuating eurochristian discourse.

The term 'eurochristian' that I employ follows the thought of Tink Tinker (wazhazhe udsethe, Osage Nation). Tinker argues for the term precisely to overcome the racialized distinctions Mignolo accurately points to as informing twentieth-century extensions of the Christian global design. In his essay, "What are We Going to Do with White People?" Tinker writes:

As we strive for greater precision in referencing "White people," there seem to be three things these invasive Others generally hold in common: 1) their attachment to or historical derivation from one or another european denominational construct of Christianity; 2) their derivation as invaders from one or another european countries; where 3) they were deeply embedded in culture that was shaped by the

⁵³ Ibid., 324.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 326.

customary and habitual thinking and acting of all its inhabitants over time. Thus, the social whole was indelibly marked by a millennium or more of the development of European Christianity and its concomitant, inherently Christian, socio-political thought and action, something that continues in their development of a “new” European society in North America.

So, proposing to use EuroChristian as that more accurate descriptor captures not only present cultural realities but ties the reality back to its historical roots. In making this move, I am determinedly not making a “religious” claim per se. Nor am I interested in rehashing the oversimplified Weberian doctrinal identification of Puritan ethics with capitalism.⁵⁵

The common mistake that people make when I employ Tinker’s term is a confusion with parochial concepts of ‘essentialism’. Despite the fact that Indigenous identity is partly a product of the global expansion of EuroChristianity, which includes capitalism and work such as the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Peoples’ resistance to defining “Indigenous Peoples,” Indigenous critical theorists such as Jodi Byrd have pointed out the ongoing necessity for a definition. Also, the distinction of being Osage for Tinker would precede the transnational category of Indigeneity.

In *The Transit of Empire*, Byrd cites Jeff Corntassel (Cherokee) and Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk):

Indigeness is an identity constructed, shaped, and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centers of empire. It is the oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that

⁵⁵ Tink Tinker, “What Are We Going to Do with White People?” *The New Polis*, December 17, 2019, <https://thenewpolis.com/2019/12/17/what-are-we-going-to-do-with-white-people-tink-tinker-wazhazhe-osage-nation/>.

fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples in the world.⁵⁶

Byrd also argues that “U.S. cultural and political preoccupations with Indianness and the reproduction of Indianness serve to facilitate, justify, and maintain Anglo-American hegemonic mastery over the significations of justice, democracy, law, and terror”⁵⁷ at least partly because the root of such hegemonic claims to power relies on the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples’ lands.

Rather than taking the route of border thinking, the Indigenous thinkers I follow emphasize persistent forms of Indigenous *worldviews*, which I approach through a rhetorical analysis of deep framing, emphasizing continuity rather than attempting an exterior position. Mark Freeland (Sault St. Marie Anishinabek) defines ‘worldview’:

as an interrelated set of cultural logics that fundamentally orient us to space (land), time, the rest of life and provides a prescriptive methodology for how to relate to that life. This definition is designed to provide a corrective to the lack of consistent use of the term. Worldview as a concept is often used but rarely defined. This lack of precision undermines the ability of the term to communicate cultural difference at a deep level. Since there is so much misinformation and misunderstanding to Indigenous relationships to land, I privilege a definition of worldview that can communicate those fundamental relationships to time and space.⁵⁸

I Follow Freeland Tinker, and Steven Newcomb’s (Shawnee / Lenape) work on deep framing with respect to worldview. I do so precisely to sidestep neoliberal civilizational

⁵⁶ Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxix.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xx.

⁵⁸ Mark Freeland, *Aazheyaadizi: Worldview, Language and the Logics of Decolonization*, Manuscript PDF (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2021).

framing and the familiar political agonisms associated with it, such as left-right binaries. I also do so as a critique of discourse in broader psychedelic studies that would too readily situate psychedelic experiences such as ayahuasca use in a universalizing transcultural frame that easily erases the ongoing effects of colonial history. The universalizing tendency embedded in the Christian global design project demands that I recursively articulate Tinker's term, eurochristian, for my readers as an interruption of our habitus to such hegemonic and often unconscious impulses, and I should remind my readers that most people excited by the various potential benefits of ayahuasca use are not often reading thinkers like Mignolo, Tinker, Byrd, Newcomb, or Freeland.

In the left-right binary of conventional politics, to criticize this narrative of "furthering," as I have said, risks situating one's self as conservative. Discursive frames from Critical Legal Studies and Critical Race studies, on the other hand, get read as "far left." There is little room in the arrogance of liberal progressivism for conservation efforts attending to Indigenous issues because they are read as inherently "traditional." As I have said, the left-right dialect sustains the earlier rhetorical motivations for Indigenous erasure. When liberal efforts do take conservationist stances with respect to the environment, they often risk expanding a paternalism rooted in earlier colonial forms rather than listening to what Indigenous People have to say about land conservation. This same arrogant impulse oftentimes makes it very difficult to think critically when it comes to ayahuasca.

It is within this attention to worldview and eurochristian deep framing that we ought to situate current discourse on drugs. Drug scheduling and the so-called War on

Drugs have necessitated a widespread impulse within both ayahuasca discourse and broader psychedelic discourse to advocate for the potentially beneficial effects that these substances may have. At the same time, increasing coverage in popular media have noted, including a recent feature in *The New Yorker*, there is an increasing “trendiness” of ayahuasca use in the United States.⁵⁹ In its diasporic context, it is nearly impossible to dissociate ayahuasca discourse from countercultural traditions emergent during the 1960s. Whether “serious” researchers like it or not, such popular lore affects what researchers have long called “set” and “setting” with respect to substance-induced “altered states.” What this means is that the cultural place of ayahuasca within discourse on psychedelics and psychedelia already informs how people experience or expect to experience ayahuasca. As I have alluded, this is largely presented in frames of “healing,” even healing from the violence inherent in Western civilization. In addition to this cultural frame, however, we also have to attend to *legal* discourse.

Legal Discourse

In legal contexts, ayahuasca has emerged as a religious “exception” following the 2006 Supreme Court case, *Gonzales v. O Centro Espírita Beneficente União do Vegetal* (UDV). This decision, in many ways, contrasts with countercultural impulses toward liberalized secularism by emphasizing the exceptional place of ayahuasca as religious

⁵⁹ Ariel Levy, “The Drug of Choice for the Age of Kale: How ayahuasca, an ancient Amazonian hallucinogenic brew, became the latest trend in Brooklyn and Silicon Valley,” *The New Yorker*, September 5, 2016, accessed January 19, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/09/12/the-ayahuasca-boom-in-the-u-s>.

sacrament. Strictly speaking, however, the case does not give *exempt* status for the use of “hoasca.” It rather demands a compromise between the UDV and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to find common ground for importation and controlled distribution among members in the U.S.

As UDV spokesperson, Jeffrey Bronfman, has said, these compromises are similar to the regulations of controlled substances for pharmacists, the difference being that the UDV emphasizes no medical therapeutic use for their sacrament. According to the church, while one’s health may benefit from lifestyle changes and use of ayahuasca, such benefits cannot be separated from the ethical and spiritual dimensions for users.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, in order for arguments concerning the use of ayahuasca as sacrament to exist in the United States, references are inevitably made to the Native American Church’s use of peyote, which does indeed have exempt status. Thus, Bronfman and others who seek use of controlled substances point to the possibility of free speech and regulation of religious exercises. When they look at exemptions of the Native American Church (NAC), they see exempt status that does not have to conform to any of the DEA’s regulatory codes. This rights-based approach is well-intentioned but largely ignorant of the larger historical situation surrounding Native American legal exemptions for peyote use.

⁶⁰ Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), “Federal Government Licensing of Ayahuasca Use and Personal and Religious Freedom – Jeffrey Bronfman,” *You Tube*, July 24, 2013, accessed February 6, 2020, https://youtu.be/JfdeUb_4kgw.

From the UDV's perspective (among others), the "special treatment" given to the NAC opens up First Amendment issues. At the 2013 Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) conference, Bronfman gave a paper addressing how the 2006 Supreme Court decision "opened the door" for later civil rights gains by religious groups. While the UDV accepted a compromise with the DEA, he states, "The fact that the government appears to be treating one religion that uses a controlled substance in its ceremonies, the Native American Church, differently from another religion that uses a controlled substance in its ceremonies, the UDV, has not been judicially resolved..."⁶¹ Framed as a First Amendment issue, the statement ignores the issues of sovereignty for Native Americans by appealing to the rhetoric of "equal protection under the law."

While I address First Amendment issues in more detail in chapter six, from the outset of this project I want to draw attention to the ways the UDV's reliance on equal protection as citizens of the U.S. conflict with Indigenous perspectives. Perspectives such as the UDV's ignore the ongoing historical inequities that Native Americans face and the long history of inequitable legal treatment they have faced in dealing with the U.S. government as the incorporation of the Doctrine of Discovery within U.S. law and John Marshall's subsequent rulings relegated Indian sovereignty to "domestic dependent" status altogether different than the "equal rights" approaches made by advocates for ayahuasca religions. It is my goal in this study to draw attention to the ways eurochristian deep framing informs and expresses itself through legal systems that

⁶¹ Ibid.

perpetuate the erasure of Indigenous peoples even while appealing to civil rights progress and religious freedom.

Historic social inequities surround the issue. When we consider the users of ayahuasca in these contexts as largely middle class and white, following Andrew Dawson's parallel studies of the Santo Daime and UDV churches in Brazil, the legal context in the U.S. is also entrenched within a racialized discourse regarding Native American practices. Appeals to "colorblind" or attitudes of "post-racism" minimize the deeper historical situations informing the problem. For this reason, in what follows I stress a much longer history, admittedly difficult to conceptualize. As important collections such as Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Henrik Jungaberte's *The Internationalization of Ayahuasca* evidence, the situation also changes from nation to nation. Yet especially across Europe and North America, ayahuasca's diaspora contends with various articulations of a eurochristian attitude deeply entrenched in eurochristian political theology. Most notable here is a focus on the 'self' in terms of healing and spiritual growth.

Liberal democratic, rights-based culture, privileges self-experience through a politics of recognition. When it comes to use of psychedelics or entheogens, we quickly come up against definitions of 'religion' and regulated 'secular' uses of controlled substances. These are, in other words, *rhetorical* concerns; and the concerns of those long protected by such a culture necessarily differ from those who have been marginalized and forced to assimilate to its "civilizing" procedures or risk death.

This is not to say that a whole host of issues outside of the issue of Indigenous erasure do not apply to the diaspora of ayahuasca outside of South America. These are much-discussed issues, especially among communities seeking the therapeutic use of ayahuasca and ethical conduct between professionals and clients or patients. The issues are important to address partly because they currently take up so much discursive space that they leave little room for addressing the longer historical issues at play. They have little or nothing to do with Indigenous uses of ayahuasca while simultaneously remaining appealing due to exoticized and romanticized notions of “traditional” knowledge. From both discursive directions, again, there is an erasure of Indigeneity.

In order to demonstrate some of these issues and do away with reader concerns about me “experiences” from the outset, I will briefly narrate one ayahuasca “experience” I had in Switzerland while researching this topic. In doing so, I intend to thematize some of the current concerns in the broader ayahuasca community that remain important even if they oftentimes exceed my broader historical study. I also situate myself as a eurochristian who is not trying to “become Indigenous.” As my argument develops, it will become clear why I am initially hesitant share my own “experiences” with ayahuasca, yet I have decided to do so in order to address reader concerns over my ethos. Ethnography is not my central methodology for this project, yet my brief excursion into participant observation here will help contextualize ayahuasca’s place in a global design.

One reason I am relating an experience from Switzerland is because the legal situation there has been flexible enough that I could do so and write about it without getting myself or anyone else in legal trouble in the U.S. I also choose here to write

about a place in diaspora rather than positioning myself in the complexities of Amazonian anthropology and drug tourism, which has all sorts of ethical implications for Indigenous Peoples there. Again, ethnography and participant observation are not my main modes of academic inquiry, and trip narratives quickly get as uninteresting as someone telling you longwinded versions of their dreams. Tons of existing writing, such as Michael Pollan's recent *How to Change Your Mind*, participate in the experience-based culture of wonder and potential health benefits for psychedelic use. Less popular and more directly related to ayahuasca, Richard Doyle's wonderful rhetorical study of trip narratives, *Darwin's Pharmacy*, is an excellent resource for an angle I will not be taking in this study. Similarly, Luis Eduardo Luna and Steven F. White's *Ayahuasca Reader* performs an important "anthropoliterary" take on the subject that I will not be able to adequately address in my study. As I proceed now to explain my "experience" in all of the ethical implications of its expression, I invite readers to consider the privileges a eurochristian like myself displays in even being able to have such experiences. My concerns over such issues were part of both the set and setting of my research. I have changed the names of participants, all of whom were informed of my intention to write and publish, and I will not mention the name of the group for reasons of anonymity.

An Ayahuasca Ceremony in Switzerland, 2017

High in the mountains south of Zurich is a youth camp facility with bunk rooms and large community spaces. The group putting on the ayahuasca sessions has rented it for the weekend. I've caught a ride from the city with Jan, a German man who has a car.

Legal practices in Germany made ayahuasca use riskier, and there had been a recent police raid in the middle of the night during a session. I cannot tell you how potentially traumatic a drug bust in the middle of an ayahuasca session can be. It speaks to a major source of ignorance among prohibitionist law enforcement policies concerning the substance and practices. But my story does not begin with my arrival at the camp.

I meet the driver, rather fittingly, outside of a McDonald's in Zurich on a very hot Thursday afternoon in June. I've flown in the night before to address some of the jet lag a long journey from Denver through London induces. I have resisted the impulse to enjoy good European beer as part of a bland vegetarian diet helpful to prepare for taking ayahuasca. I'm annoyed, however, because when I had initially booked an ayahuasca session through a local group's Facebook page, they had advertised Zurich as the place. This was the first of multiple signals of a lack of preparation by the group leading the ceremonies. When the group revealed the actual location to be seventy-five miles South of the city, inaccessible by public transportation, I was at a loss. I had already paid the group about four hundred euros for two nights, a hefty sum by South American standards, but when one considers the cost two nights of hotels in Zurich, not entirely unreasonable. I spent the plane flight with emails out to the leaders of the group trying to find transportation to the camp. I am not the only one in this position, I come to find, as I meet Kelly, a South African woman who had flown in from the United Arab Emirates. More flustered than I was, and laden with baggage, she's used to better service. We work to pack everything into Jan's car.

Kelly, a white, South African, professional businesswoman in her late forties informs us in during the car ride that she recently heard about ayahuasca from a friend she does yoga with in the U.A.E. She also explains that where she works and lives, she is used to absolutely professional service-industry standards. She knows very little about ayahuasca other than it's supposed to be a remarkable experience. Highly illegal in the U.A.E., she has decided to incorporate the ayahuasca session during a business trip to Switzerland. Jan laments the legal issues surrounding ayahuasca in Germany, but he says this is a relatively easy problem to solve by driving to neighboring Switzerland. He's attended a few ceremonies with this group on long weekends, usually consisting of three-night sessions from Thursday to Sunday and had mind-opening experiences. He's planning on staying the whole time, but both Kelly and I are due back in the city Saturday night. We're already worried about how we're going to get there.

The drive is gorgeous and green. The temperature becomes more reasonable as we climb into the mountains on two-lane roads, winding through picturesque landscapes of inactive gondolas. As we arrive, we're welcomed by a young Spanish man in his early twenties named Jeremiah. The company offering retreats is based out of Spain but runs sessions throughout Europe. Kelly is especially concerned about getting back to the city in time for other obligations on Saturday. Jeremiah assures us he will find a way to get us back. We unload our luggage and take it into the camp facilities. Kelly is less than enthusiastic about the conditions and complains about cost. We've been told to bring our own bedding. I take my bag to a room full of bunkbeds and am quite pleased. I wait for a prescreening intake session with Jeremiah.

It's common procedure for potential ayahuasca consumers to go through prescreening interviews to determine in advance if they are on certain medications. The UDV does this as well. Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) commonly prescribed by western physicians have contraindications with ayahuasca. There is also a concern about group personality make-up. Because ayahuasca sessions in diaspora *outside* of explicitly religious communities often occur among groups of strangers, it is important to consider how various users' temperaments might interact with each other and their history of experiences with psychedelics or other "drugs." Some ayahuasca researchers are concerned about ayahuasca religious groups precisely because they do not always have protocols for professional accountability. Clearly, for example, Kelly is a novice, a little high-strung and anxious. She will require a more watchful eye than Jan, who is already familiar with procedures and effects of ayahuasca.

During my intake, I inform Jeremiah that I have been reading about ayahuasca for a few years, that I am an academic, and that I had already written one dissertation on issues related to psychedelics. I explain I'm working on a current dissertation regarding ayahuasca in diaspora and ayahuasca religions. I casually refer to myself as a "nerd" who writes stuff that most people do not want to read. Jeremiah comments that this is a bit self-critical of me to say: "Why would you put yourself down like that? Why wouldn't other people want to read your work? I find it fascinating." At forty years old, I find Jeremiah's posturing as a self-help psychologist from a rather blissed-out attitude a bit arrogant. It is an attitude familiar to me both from studying psychedelics and also because I have recently spent time taking Vedic studies courses and learning the sing

bhajans from a yoga community in Denver that follows Sai Baba of Shirdi. The disposition is rather “New Agey” but well-intentioned and certainly extends beyond ayahuasca healing groups, who would likely find my language here to be judgmental and perhaps academically elitist.

After initial intake, we move to group integration. We’re introduced to Gloria, a Spanish woman, who will be facilitating the dispersal of the ayahuasca “medicine” along with Jeremiah. Some ground rules have to be set. First of all, we are not allowed to bring cell phones into the ceremony or contact others while under the influence of ayahuasca. We’ve provided emergency contact information, and we’re told because of the psychological insights people often have while using ayahuasca we might be compelled to reach out to loved ones who might be concerned by our states of mind. We’re also told that for our own safety we will not be able to leave the building throughout the night and that we must use the bathroom facilities on the main floor when we need to purge our bowels or throw-up. We’re provided with vomit bags to have at our side in case of emergencies and directed to a wastebasket for disposing our purges. We’re directed to bring mattresses from our bunk rooms, to dress comfortably, and to bring our own bedding. We won’t be allowed to return to the bunkrooms to retrieve anything during the session, which will begin around 10:00pm and last eight to ten hours.

We then go around the room to each explain our personal intentions for being there. We’re specifically encouraged to say what we want to have healed. As an experienced researcher of psychedelics and psychedelic therapies, I immediately detect both a Freudian-influenced ego psychology at work in the framing of set and setting. A

“set” regards the mental and physical dispositions one brings to a session and the “setting” involves the environmental conditions in which one ingests a substance. I am struck by the therapeutic model as a frame for a collective experience. We’re expected to have a personal problem or condition from which we want to be healed. Yet Jeremiah and Gloria by their own admission have only been using ayahuasca for a few years. They have no credentials as therapists and from what I can determine absolutely no familiarity with academic research on ayahuasca. They are enthusiasts who, having had brief experiences in ayahuasca retreats of South America, felt compelled to become “shamanic” healers themselves to open up people’s minds to the possibilities of the ayahuasca medicine. I think of the time and dedication it takes to get academic degrees, of the lifelong studies of various Indigenous groups in South America about whom I’ve read, and the early psychedelic models of folks like Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert, Ralph Metzner, and the League of Spiritual Discovery who in the 1960s embarked on explorations for the spiritually enlightening potential for psychedelic use. Like the yoga group with whom I did the Vedic studies course, the youthful facilitators here have not heard of Ram Dass and are thus unaware of how they may be retreading the ground of earlier psychonauts.

There are eight of us in the room. We go around the room explaining our various reasons for being there. I’ll recount six that I remember clearly. I’m struck by the variety of reasons. Hans, a German man in his mid-fifties, has gone through a horrible break-up. He tells us candidly that he has been involved intensely in a Bondage & Discipline, Sado-masochistic (BDSM) relationship with a woman half his age as his

dominatrix. He had quit his job and relocated cities to be her submissive only to find that she had other lovers and harshly rejected him. Jobless and in a city with no friends, he doesn't know what to do and has turned to ayahuasca as a kind of self-recovery.

Celia, an eastern European woman in her mid-sixties, is rail thin. She explains that she has in the past year won a battle with cancer, yet despite the fact that her chemotherapy had ended long ago and she's been declared cancer free, she cannot put on any weight. The doctors tell her there's nothing physically wrong with her. She's at a loss and has heard of ayahuasca and wonders if she might gain some insight for why she cannot put on weight. I'm immediately struck by Celia's sincerity and clear suffering. I'm also struck because while I've read plenty of research about ayahuasca's potential to help substance abuse users, I've never encountered someone in her condition. I'm struck by her bravery and openness to the possibilities of ayahuasca. Next to Celia is Kelly, who reiterates what she told Jan and I in the car and expresses she's worried about throwing up.

Andrin is a Swiss man in his late fifties. He's got a long white beard and has the air of a sincerely inquiring, aging hippie. Philosophical in his disposition, though modest, he's used psychedelics over the years for insights Aldous Huxley would approve – moderate, tempered self-reflection. This is his first ayahuasca experience and he's mostly curious about the experience itself. He lives nearby and, as we become friends throughout our few days together, explains to me in detail about Swiss hospitality. By the time I leave the retreat Andrin insists that I can come visit him whenever I want for as long as I want if and when I come back to Switzerland. Should he find out that I visited

Switzerland and did not look him up, he would be personally offended. I'm drawn Andrin because, like me, he doesn't have a specific ailment and so does not fit into either the therapeutic or religious frames of ayahuasca healing, and the term "recreational" seems inadequate for the contemplative nature of the inquiry. Perhaps this pejoration is the result of prohibitionist drug laws, since we know that humans have always used intoxicants of various kinds. Classic texts such as Hofmann and Schultes' *Plants of the Gods* have long stressed this point. Andrin is familiar with writers such as Aldous Huxley, Henri Michaux, and Terence McKenna yet rather unfamiliar with Indigenous issues. He's not an academic, but he's intellectually engaged and interested in my previous academic work. I'm interested in people who have cultural knowledge of psychedelics as they exploded during the 1960s and 1970s and this surely makes me feel closer to him. Andrin's measured curiosity also removes him from the category of committed 'psychonauts' and a particular disposition toward "heroic doses," which I find inherently masculinist and unappealing.

When it comes to my intention, I reiterate to the group some of what I've told Jeremiah already. I'm asked why I've traveled all the way to Europe to do ayahuasca. This leads me to conclude that the severity of drug laws in the U.S. are little-known in Europe. I explain that it's partly because I don't want to implicate myself or others in the U.S. in illegal activities. I explain that as an academic I have come for research purposes so that I may write with impunity and that anything I record will be anonymous. I do not explain that as a student I have long been conflicted about my engagement with ayahuasca because of an argument between two of my mentors. Tink Tinker (wazhazhe,

Osage), my Native American mentor (now retired) sees eurochristian engagement with ayahuasca as inherently part of a genocidal process playing out a five-hundred-year colonial drama. Luis León, my Chicano dissertation director (since deceased) has advised me to go to the Amazon and study under an *ayahuascero*, *curandero*, or Amazonian “shaman.” These two conflicting perspectives inform my work to this day and perhaps provide some more background for why I push away from Mignolo’s border thinking and toward Indigenous theories. I do explain to the folks at the retreat that what I’m doing is what academics call participant observation. I don’t want to taint others’ oncoming experiences with my academic ethical concerns, yet because I’ve chosen Europe as a compromise between my professors’ respective views that choice informs the “set” I am bringing to this setting. I do explain that I want to see how the diaspora of ayahuasca is playing out in Europe, the birthplace of my ancestors. While DNA reports are complexly problematic for Native Americans, I have had my own DNA analyzed through 23andme: genetically, I am 96.7% European, 1.8% Native American, 0.2% Asian, and 0.5% sub-Saharan African. Genetics have little to nothing to do with culture, but in my family’s lore – common among white Americans like myself – we have “Native American” ancestry.

Eurochristian Americans have long bought into such fantasies to legitimate their “claim” to presence on Turtle Island. Culturally speaking, this is an absolute fiction. It has nothing to do with claims to Native American ancestry or traditions. I am, in other words, very “white” – both genetically and culturally. While I place little stock in DNA results with respect to identity, I like to tell my relatives who insist on the well-known

“Cherokee grandmother” myth that they’re wrong flat out. The mitochondrial piece of DNA in my lineage is from a woman before 1820, well before the national tragedy of the Trail of Tears informing such lore. I’m well aware that gender inequality and intermarrying of European men and Native women has long been embedded with access to land and power. My genetic and cultural presence in the U.S. is as a colonizer, through and through. As Tinker writes:

DNA results are merely a more pseudo-empirical-hard-scientific game-playing example of New Age past-lives claims. DNA result can never determine whether or not one is an active participant in one or another community and has nothing to do with culture or worldview. DNA, for instance, does not make one American Indian or African or Irish. Moreover, culture and worldview are never measured in terms of gradation—typical of the DNA small percentages reported for applicants.⁶²

Everything I know about Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island is either purely academic, refracted through racist media representations, or through my interactions with Indigenous academic colleagues and friends at the Four Winds American Indian Council in Denver. Genetics only help to give a sense of sobriety to whatever claims my people have in their continued occupation of Native lands as they generally minimize and forget a violent history. If sensitivity to Indigenous issues is little acknowledged in the U.S., it is generally even less-so in Europe, at least outside of academic circles.

Next to me is Mateo, a Spanish man who, like Jan, is an experienced ayahuasca user. Both of them have attended multiple retreats. Both of them say that their experiences with ayahuasca have helped them work on issues with their fathers. They

⁶² Tink Tinker, “What Are We Going to Do with White People?” *The New Polis* December 17, 2019, <https://thenewpolis.com/2019/12/17/what-are-we-going-to-do-with-white-people-tink-tinker-wazhazhe-osage-nation/>.

express their attitudes in familiar Freudian terms, though they do not use Freud's name. They see their fathers as overbearing controllers of their respective nuclear families. They see themselves as sensitive and intuitive against a domineering, patriarchal masculinity. Neither go into specifics, but I'm immediately struck by the nuclear family's presence in the sets they bring to this setting. Freud lurks in these cultural descriptions whether or not he is treated as medically relevant today. These are the folks with whom I'm about to use ayahuasca.

Around 10:00pm the ceremony begins. One by one we're called up to have *rapé* (a tobacco-based snuff) blown into our noses through a two-pronged pipe designed to shoot the substance up our noses. We're told that this helps to facilitate a connection between the left and right hemispheres of our brains. It is mild and for me does not stimulate any reaction beyond the unpleasantness of having a powder blown up my nose by a stranger. Then, one by one, we're summoned to the front of the room to take a few ounces – maybe a large shot glass – worth of ayahuasca. I've been well-prepared through various literature about the “disgusting” taste of the tea. I find the liquid a little thicker in texture than most teas. I find it “earthy” but surprisingly less hard to swallow than a straight shot of Fernet, an Italian digestif. It has a hint of Worcester sauce to it, but the brown substance is texturally thicker than a glass of milk. Having read early anthropological literature such as Richard Spruce, I am surprised. Spruce wrote of a

November 1852 invitation to a local “*Dabocuri* or Feast of Gifts”⁶³ at the village of Panuré in the northwest Amazon:

I had gone with the full intention of experimenting the [*Banisteriopsis*] caapi on myself, but I had scarcely dispatched one cup of the nauseous beverage, which is but half a dose, when the ruler of the feast – desirous, apparently, that I should taste all of his delicacies at once – came up with a woman bearing a large calabash of caxirí (mandioca-beer), of which I must needs take a copious draught, and as I knew the mode of its preparation, it was gulped down with secret loathing. Scarcely had I accomplished this feat when a large cigar, 2 feet long and as thick as the wrist, was put lighted into my hand, and etiquette demanded that I should take a few whiffs of it – *I*, who had never in my life smoked a cigar or a pipe of tobacco. Above all this, I must drink a large cup of palm-wine, and it will readily be understood that effect of such a complex dose was a strong inclination to vomit, which was only overcome by lying down in a hammock and drinking a cup of coffee which the friend who accompanied me had taken the precaution to prepare beforehand.⁶⁴

I return to a bench near my mattress to let gravity aid in the entry of the substance to my digestive system. I feel no need to vomit.

About forty-five minutes later – there are no clocks so it’s hard to tell – we’re asked if we want another dose. Other folks in the room, including Mateo to my left, have begun to wretch. I have felt no effects, so I approach for another dose. I quietly tell Gloria and Jeremiah that I’m not feeling anything. I watch as even folks who I have seen wretch and vomit go up for second doses too. As I return to my mattress after a second dose, I lay down and start to experience a blue haze with which I am familiar from the letters of William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg in the *Yagé Letters* and Taussig glosses

⁶³ Richard Spruce, *Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes Volume 2* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 416.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 420.

in *What Color is the Sacred?*⁶⁵ This quickly gets more intense. I begin to feel nauseous, and the more nauseous I feel the more I worry, “when am I going to throw up?”

From previous psychedelic experiences, I realize that the worry itself is going to potentially block the information the substance has to offer, so in a kind of personal prayer, I say to the substance, “I accept you into my body to do what you will.” This way I no longer need to worry about if and when I will puke. I settle back and let the situation overcome me.

Richard Doyle has written eloquently of the aspects of what he calls the “ecodelic experience” highlighting:

the nature of perception itself as a nonlinear and highly distributed system not “ownable” by a self and navigable only through its practiced but always irreducible dissolution, the sometimes shattering detachment from “distinctness” before which a sense of interior and exterior dissolves in awareness and awe. This awareness of interconnection occurs in and with what Vernadsky dubbed the “noosphere” – the aware and conscious layer of the earth’s ecosystem and, perhaps, feeds back onto our ecosystems as we become conscious with them.⁶⁶

Doyle notes a “continual disavowal of language *in language* as a site for ecodelic analysis.”⁶⁷ The rhetorical term *praeteritio* or apophasis addresses these more nuanced attempts to accomplish the doubling indicative of an audience’s awareness amid an “inability to narrate its own conditions of emergence,” correcting the implicitly colonialist “solo consciousness” implicit in “a larger debt psychonauts and psychedelics

⁶⁵ Michael Taussig, *What Color is the Sacred?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 62-63.

⁶⁶ Richard Doyle, *Darwin’s Pharmacy: Sex, Plants, and the Evolution of the Noosphere* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 11.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

owe to rhetoric of ‘exploration’,”⁶⁸ while also noting that Huxley appears to set language up to fail while intimating ways of thinking consciousness otherwise than an “expansion” and “reduction” binary.⁶⁹

Anyone trying to explain the situation necessarily deals in metaphorical references, yet we should be aware following the work on linguistic framing of cognitive linguists such as George Lakoff that language is itself necessarily metaphorical yet nevertheless produces *physical* paths in our brains. Benny Shanon’s classic, *Antipodes of the Mind*, articulates the tendency for the symbolic to become literal, or real in ayahuasca experiences.⁷⁰ He notes that “[e]xperiences of self-death and subsequent rebirth and salvation are also encountered. Often, these experiences have a great impact on drinkers and they may lead to radical personal transformations.”⁷¹ I have a significant amount of fear as the onset of the experience occurs. At one point, Mateo, who is writhing next to me in his sleeping bag, turns into a large black snake. Moving coils of skin reflect the dim lighting of the room, and I want to turn away. Again, I remind myself that running from fear during a psychedelic experience is a bad idea. Instead, I force my quivering

⁶⁸ Ibid., 93.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁰ Benny Shanon, *Antipodes of the Mind: Charting the Phenomenology of the Ayahuasca Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 73.

⁷¹ Ibid., 63.

self to look toward him. The light bouncing off of the scales begins to swirl in rainbow colors.

Jonathan Miller Weisberger's ethnographic work in *Rainforest Medicine* notes a Secoya's association with an ayahuasca origin story of coming into contact with "multicolored people."

According to the elders, yagé has come into human use in many different ways, because there are various types of yagé that over the ages have squeezed through, or somehow passed through, from the unchanging immortal realms to the physical realms bound by constant changes.⁷²

In context, the yagé is associated with transformations. It was gifted by ancient beings before ascending to the stars but because only a woman was able to receive the gift, women, like snakes who shed their skin, are more capable of change and rebirth because of their menstrual cycles.⁷³

For me, the oncoming blue haze feels profoundly galactic, like you are traveling through space. The best cultural example I can compare this to is the images of the TARDIS in the recent television series, *Dr. Who*. It's slower than the images of transitions to light speed or warp speed in *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*. There's a feeling of being on a "path" but less linear and direct, as Doyle suggests. Eventually, I "arrive" at a place. It feels like a jungle, full of life but immensely tranquil. I hear and feel a complex symphony or interplay of *life*. I'm near a trickling waterfall of a stream into a pool of

⁷² Jonathan Miller Weisberger, *Rainforest Medicine Preserving Indigenous Science and Biodiversity in the Upper Amazon* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2013), 80.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 77.

water. I'm surrounded by vegetation, trees I cannot name. There's a pink glow to the surroundings that feel humid, warm, and "womblike" – like some invisible "walls" are containing the frame of all I "see." It's undeniably comforting. All through this, I simultaneously know I'm in a room with other people. Despite the feeling of transport, I am conscious of my body on a mattress in a room. I'm simultaneously in this other, jungle-like place. In this place, I hear birds, trickling water, and bugs chirping collectively...I've never been here physically but I have a sense of *home*, a sense of utter safety. Perhaps this is the kind of thing experiments in "remote-viewing" by the C.I.A. sought to address in the mid 1970s,⁷⁴ though I am aware through conversations with Taita Isaias Muñoz Macanilla, a Colombian *ayahuascero*, that using ayahuasca in a city is nothing like using it in the jungle.⁷⁵

Music has been playing throughout the session. Gloria has put on a soundtrack not dissimilar to yoga studio mixes of ambient music with steady beats. I hear the music less as texture than as a vehicle of transport. Despite my musical background, I don't really analyze the music so much as I *feel* it. In this vegetally surrounded "cove," I begin to discern an entity, a being that I will here call 'ayahuasca'. This being is "other-worldly" in a way yet profoundly present, and who am I to say it is not "of this world"?

⁷⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Summary of Known Remote-Viewing Experiments," November 4, 2016, accessed February 9, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp96-00787r000500250015-6>.

⁷⁵ Macanilla and I were both presenters for a 2016 conference put on by The Society of Indigenous and Ancestral Wisdom and Healing, <http://shamanismconference.org/presenter-highlights-2016/>.

The being is entirely “alien.” I come to understand why so many westerners gender ayahuasca as feminine because of the drippy pink and “womblike” quality of the atmosphere. It’s dense and humid, yet I cannot say that the being I encounter as ‘ayahuasca’ is “feminine.” ‘Queer’ is a better term in the sense of a resistance to categorization. The being I encounter is not human, for sure. I encounter many others too, though ‘ayahuasca’ is central. They look at me with a kind of curiosity. They look at me with a kind of inquisitiveness. It’s like meeting somebody that sees you in all of your simultaneity, from every possible angle at the same time. It’s not that I feel “loved” but I do feel “seen” in a striking way I have never been able to comprehend before. It’s accepting and because of that there’s an element of care, but I would not characterize it as “love.” It’s more like a feeling that I’m a wounded animal and this ‘ayahuasca’ being has a disposition like “how did you get yourself into this mess?” It’s a curiosity I feel from this being who sees more of me than anyone I’ve ever known sees me. Coming from a culture of people who often feel tremendous amounts of isolation, I can easily see how this could feel profoundly therapeutic.

Beyond ‘ayahuasca’ as a being, who seems a bit like a surgeon, are multitudes of local entities called upon by ‘ayahuasca’ to “work” on my body. Thousands of tiny green, yet metallic, insects similar to grasshoppers start crawling up my legs. It’s not scary anymore. I somehow know they’ve been called to “work on me.” While in no way had I expressed this in my “intention” before the ceremony, I had been recovering from knee surgery on my right knee. Due to years of overcompensation, I had developed sciatica in my left hip. It was painful and showed no external physical effects, so it was

easy for people to say, “It’s all in your head.” It wasn’t. It’s now 2020 and I no longer have sciatica, though I do still feel aches in my left hip socket. The incapacitating nerve pain disappeared after that night and to date has not returned. It’s a mystery never intended by an intention to “ayahuasca healing.”

As the machine-like beings are “fixing me,” my mind wanders through past relationships, lovers who have hurt me. I find myself thinking lovingly of my girlfriend in Denver who is taking care of my dog while I’m away. They feel close. They’re my family. I also have very clear philosophical ruminations. For a long time, I had worked on the difficult ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, whose “ethics as first philosophy” had been a life-long countering to his teacher, Martin Heidegger’s, angst-ridden conception of being-toward death. Many people encounter ayahuasca as a sense of “death and rebirth,” and much broader work in psychedelic studies has emphasized the ability for these substances to help in cases of trauma and palliative care. It makes perfect sense as I contemplate the nature of being and time. I’ve long been swayed by Levinas’s argument that before we can talk about what it means to be or to exist, we’re always already bound in an ethical relationship, even pre-linguistically. Without rehashing the complexities of that philosophical discussion here, my awareness in the moment centers on the idea of *care*, something Heidegger sees in terms of a being that knows it will one day no longer exist, that anticipates that unknown end, which frames the “thrown-ness” of being. Care is something different here, as is relation to both human and non-human entities. This informs some of my disagreement with Mignolo’s take on Levinas. I could stay here forever, but I think of my dog and my girlfriend

missing me and I want to see them again. The music is pulsing, a sense of moving through space returns.

The next morning I'm in awe of my experience. As the effects of ayahuasca subside, my nausea returns and early in the morning I go to the restroom and eject vomit and excrement simultaneously. It's disgusting, but I feel better quickly. I return to my mattress to rest. In the early dawn hours, as the sun is coming up, I'm allowed to wander outside in the mountain air. Anyone who has ever loved and lost a dog can likely sympathize with the compassion and love you feel when you walk down the street and meet someone else's furry companion. After taking ayahuasca, I feel this way toward all plants and vegetal life. The feeling lasts for months and is part of what some call the "ayahuasca glow." The morning is peaceful and quiet, and though I had a remarkably profound experience, I'm already scared about a second night. I feel like I have so much to process and was given so much that I don't really want to "bother" the ayahuasca entity again. Doing so seems a bit selfish.

As late morning turns into afternoon, I've wandered back to the retreat house. Light food has been provided - nuts, bananas, and replenishing liquids. I shower and mingle briefly with other folks. I don't feel especially tired. We don't talk in detail about our experiences but there's a shared sense of comradery among us. Guests begin arriving. It is Friday, and we quickly see that tonight's going to be a much larger group. In fact, it grows by about ten people, and we have a new facilitator as well.

As soon as Sergio arrives, it is apparent that he's well-known. There's lots of hugging and excitement. Mateo, Jan, Jeremiah, and Gloria know him already. Another

Spanish man, he's the closest thing to an "elder" in this small community. As we learn later, he's spent more significant amounts of time in South America studying shamanism. Well into his fifties, he's nevertheless youthful, exuberant, and beaming. Others arrive as well. Among them are two men in their thirties, Stephanos and Jürgen. It's unclear to me, but they seem like a couple. In any case, they quickly approach me after initial introductions to tell me that when they arrived, they both saw flickering lights above my head and wanted to know if I was aware. I am not. Stephanos and Jürgen are self-proclaimed psychonauts who have lots of experience with different psychedelic substances. Among the other new arrivals are Kristina, a German woman in her mid-twenties and Lukas, also in his twenties. Lukas describes himself as ready to have his mind blown. Both of them are new to ayahuasca.

Reintegration and introductions occur simultaneously after the newcomers have gone through initial screening. Reintegration means discussing some of the previous night's experiences. I ask Mateo if he was aware of turning into a snake, since that was part of my experience. He isn't. Instead, he talks about great insights he's had about his relationship with his father. The idea that ayahuasca is like getting twenty years of therapy in one night definitely applies here.

Most interesting, and troubling to me, are the experiences of Kelly and Celia. Both of them say they experienced nothing, even after two doses. Kelly is especially distraught and disappointed as she explains that she spent the entire night worrying about throwing up. Celia expresses the same but in a calmer manner. The facilitators then begin to explain to these women that part of the ayahuasca experience demands

surrendering their ego-driven desires and opening up to the experience itself. I'm annoyed by this advice, finding it both smug and disrespectful. To me, it's clear that Kelly is high strung, so blaming her for not feeling ayahuasca's effects seems off-base. I'm even more incensed with respect to Celia. It seems offensive to me that people in their twenties with no professional therapeutic training are acting as spiritual guides. Telling a woman in her sixties who has survived a life-threatening illness that she needs to "surrender her ego" and be open to new experiences seems really disrespectful to me.

It's partially in reaction to this air of superiority I perceive among the facilitators that I formulate my intentions for the second night of ceremony. When asked my goals, I again explain my position as a researcher and academic, but I add that part of wanting to use ayahuasca in Europe is because I want to meet my ancestors. I make this claim thinking of my Indigenous colleagues from Turtle Island. Some of my Indian friends in the Denver area use the Lakota term, *wanagi*, to refer to ancestor-relations, which does not necessarily mean all *wanagi* are ancestors. The term, roughly congruent with Indigenous cosmologies from South America, is intimately tied to the stars and the Milky Way. For example, *wanagiwachipi* is a term for 'aurora borealis', *wanagi tacaku* is a term for 'Milky Way', and *wanagiyata* gets translated as 'spiritland'. I'm not a Lakota speaker. I'm drawing on translations from an online Lakota translation website, [code-it.com](http://www.code-it.com), which draws on several Lakota-English dictionaries.⁷⁶ My Indian colleagues associated with Four Winds American Indian Council in Denver will at times refer to

⁷⁶ "Lakota Speakster Translation," *code-it.com*, accessed February 11, 2020, http://www.code-it.com/Lakota_Speak/translation.htm.

non-Natives like myself as “relations” as easily as they refer to animals as relatives. More often they will use terms such as “friends” or “allies,” especially when engaging with political demonstrations. It’s part of a spirit of generosity. The concept of ‘ancestor’, however, is *not* used in relation to non-Natives like myself. Here, I’m mostly thinking of terminology of elders in the community such as Tink Tinker (wazhazhe, Osage), Glenn Morris (Shawnee) and Robert Cross (Lakota). Non-Natives at times have a tendency to co-opt Native terms for their own use. That is not my intention here. Rather, my observation has to do with the linguistic cognate, *wanagi*. In coyly expressing my intention to contact my ancestors by using ayahuasca in Europe, by far the place of the majority of my genetic ancestry, I’m signaling my eurochristian roots while also subtly inquiring how the local Europeans will react.

Sergio does not disappoint me. He tells me rather authoritatively that ayahuasca is *not* for talking to ancestors. Yet multiple groups in the Amazon regard ayahuasca as directly related to ancestor-relations. Glenn Shepard has noted rock art in Colombia depicting beings gifting ayahuasca to humans is being destroyed by Protestant missionaries.⁷⁷ Sergio says what I want is *toé* (*Brugmansia*). Highly toxic, *toé* has recently been featured by *Vice Media* as being “in the hands of shithead pseudo shamans” attempting “to cash in on the South American drug tourism boom” in place of ayahuasca.⁷⁸ Despite complaints on *Vice* media, I have nothing particular against *toé*,

⁷⁷ Glenn H. Shepard, Twitter Post, May 6, 2020, 12:32pm, <https://twitter.com/TweetTropiques/status/1258097670188601344?s=20>.

⁷⁸ Brian Anderson, “Toé, the ‘Witchcraft Plant’ That’s Spoiling Ayahuasca Tourism,” *Vice Media* February 19, 2013, accessed February 11, 2020,

though I understand ethical concerns of duping tourists. Sergio says he has some and invites me and others to use it Saturday. Stephanos and Jürgen perk up. Sergio says *toé* will take me to a deathspace where I'm more likely to meet ancestors. My Indian friends back home have told me stories about meeting their South American relatives in the north in ceremony (*not* using ayahuasca) and seeing multiple *wanagi* surrounding them. I've never attended and do not intend to participate in any Indian ceremony unless explicitly invited, not by an individual but by an entire community. I do contemplate taking Sergio up on his offer, though. No one else present seems concerned with questions about ancestors, which is unsurprising.

Stephanos relays that he's been to South America several times and counts his ayahuasca trips at around ninety-five times. Jürgen has done it a lot too, though less experienced than Stephanos. Of the new folks, Lukas very much stands out. He is gregarious and athletic, ready to take "heroic" doses even though he's new to the substance. I find him off-putting for these reasons and wonder what the group's parameters really are for screening folks. This becomes more apparent as the evening moves on. It is much more of a party atmosphere than the previous night, undoubtedly because this small community has forged friendships among past participants. They're happy to see one another and eager to catch up on lives between their sessions which are separated by about a month, paralleling larger monthly ceremonies by Brazilian ayahuasca churches. I don't feel left out. I get to know Andrin a bit better as we move

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/xd43ea/to-the-witchcraft-plant-thats-spoiling-ayahuasca-tourism.

toward the evening's ceremony. I do, however, develop some concern about the balance between ceremony and socializing. This, I know from reading, is something South American users find problematic about ayahuasca in diaspora. Due to the legal constraints and the necessity of importing ayahuasca, people coming to ceremonies spend less of their daily lives together. This undoubtedly makes for a different experience, which Jan Weinhold, a member of Heidelberg University-based ritual dynamics research group from its Institute of Medical Psychology has discussed.⁷⁹ Even with some awareness of my own predispositions, which may surely present me as stodgy, academic, and perhaps elitist; when I think of the group as a whole – of the folks like Celia from the night before – I am concerned about the facilitators' ability to attend to the range of personalities present.

Who am I to be judging this? Compared to others present I have remarkably few “experiences” under my belt, ayahuasca or otherwise. As one who has researched the cultural and “cultic milieu,” to use Colin Campbell's term, surrounding psychedelics in culture and politics, I am far from describing myself as a “psychonaut.” Is my role as a participant observer too informed by an already Eurocentric posture of “detachment” – as if I could ever reach some sort of “neutral” perspective? I know better than that and can only defer to other researchers' experiences here. What I am signaling in terms of my concerns, however, is informed by larger concerns among ayahuasca researchers and

⁷⁹ MAPS, “Santo Daime in Europe: Ritual Transfer and Cultural Translations - Jan Weinhold,” *You Tube*, August 14, 2013, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpVPopjIn78>.

Indigenous groups about the commodification and even unregulated use of ayahuasca both in South America and abroad. The great majority of these concerns, as we will see, have lately centered around the sexual exploitation of women by “shamans.”

At the same time, groups such as the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) have been painstakingly proceeding through clinical trials for therapeutic use of MDMA, which includes efforts such as the Zendo Project to assist festival-goers having bad psychedelic experiences and training for what will become licensed therapists. Although these efforts are laudable and speak to truly well-intentioned efforts tied into fighting the Drug War and prohibitionist drug policies, the issues are complex within existing psychedelic communities. Some of these issues exploded in discussion at the 2019 Horizons psychedelic conference in New York, for example. While many therapists have used psychedelics illegally to treat people for years, other medical professionals have steered clear of the field for fear of losing their licenses. This has created a gap in the field where conscientious therapists with lots of experience are unable to be professionally recognized even as new programs for licensure emerge. On top of that, therapists who have used plant-based substances find themselves competing with entrepreneurial efforts by pharmaceutical companies with the financial backing to go through rigorous trials to create and eventually distribute substances in pill form where dosages can be precisely measured. All the time, conscientious therapists have had to compete with black market drugs and novice-led groups like the one in Switzerland. Then in cases such as peyote, which faces overharvesting, synthetic production may help reduce environmental destruction. Much of these controversies

exceed the scope of my project, but the contemporary situation must be remarked on here.

As the Friday night ceremony begins, Sergio takes the leadership role. He has multiple ritual objects he's brought from his travels in South America, such as sound-making rattles. He does not sing any Icaros, the songs associated with ayahuasceros from the Amazon, however. At first, the music is similar to the night before, played from an iPhone or iPod mix, mellow yet beat-driven. We take our turns ingesting the ayahuasca. I return to my mattress. It comes on much sooner than the previous night, and I return rather quickly to a state I was in toward the end of the night before. I'm overwhelmed by beauty, by colors, and by the feeling of flying through outer space. I don't encounter the central 'ayahuasca' being but I'm deeply entranced and feeling tremendously grateful. But as the night moves on, various disruptions occur from across the room. Conversations occur among facilitators and at one point I notice they're partaking in the ayahuasca as well. It's not at all uncommon for ayahuasceros to take ayahuasca along with their clients, and in some traditional contexts the "shaman" is often the only one who takes the drink – something western experience-seekers would likely find unappealing.

At one point, across the room an argument breaks out. Lukas has decided that he wants to play music from his phone (which we're not supposed to have in the room). He's arguing with Gloria. Sergio and some friends have left the room. She eventually gives in to Lukas's demands, and he plays club music, turning up the volume quite a bit.

Meanwhile, people are in various states of throwing up, writhing, getting up to use the toilet, or laying down peacefully. Hans, I notice, is sobbing uncontrollably.

By the time second doses are being offered, I've decided that the confusion will likely be too much for me. I continue to ride out what turns out to be another beautiful experience, though far from the intensity of the night before. The situation at the front of the room continues to be more social. Marijuana and cigarettes are being smoked, a lot of conversation, and control of the music is being swapped. The music is way less ambient, lots of reggae. People are dancing and there's a lot of coming and going. Despite the interruptions, I continue feeling elated and grateful for my experience. As we enter the hours of the morning, I've been laying in my corner passively observing things. I notice that Hans is having what appears to be a really hard time. I meet him on the way back from a trip to the toilet. He's really upset, and so I sit down with him to lend him an ear and some attention. I don't see any facilitators around but there's dancing going on near the music speaker.

Hans begins by asking me if I've ever read Nietzsche. I tell him I have. He says he hasn't really read much but he's been reading a book based on some of Nietzsche's ideas. The central point is that men have given up too much of their power to women. Men have become weak, he says. This has been a centuries-long process and now they're so weak that they have become truly pathetic creatures, conditioned out of knowing their own strength. This, according to Hans, is exactly what has happened to him. But he says it's also indicative of the larger German situation. Political leadership has been handed to women such as Angela Merkel who let in too many outsiders,

destroying the culture. But he himself doesn't go in for politics so much as he's concerned with the erosion of masculinity.

Hans's ayahuasca experience has confirmed just how pathetic and weak he is. He got involved with a domineering woman who ruined his life. He's become a victim of her power. He tells me in more detail about meeting this younger woman, feeling a deep connection through sex and their BDSM relationship, of falling in love and moving to a new city. He had felt pathetic before, but the relationship had empowered him, making him feel he'd found a balance between his sensitivity and his desire to be dominated. But it was all for nothing after he'd moved. She had other lovers and became increasingly disinterested, even hostile to him, eventually telling him how pathetic he was and saying she never wanted to see him again. It was in the aftermath of the relationship that he began drawn to reading about the erosion of masculinity. Nietzsche seemed right to him: men have lost their will to power, but it's a social deception, and they need to reclaim their power. I gently tell him that I am suspicious of books that reformulate philosopher's perspectives as direct social critique, let alone prescriptions for certain types of behavior, and that at least in my experience Nietzsche's ideas had been interpreted and employed for some pretty horrific things in the twentieth century. Hans doesn't want to go there with me, though. He cycles back into how ashamed he is and the unbearable humiliation. Despite his flirtations with nationalist and masculinist ideas, Hans strikes me as a very sensitive person. He tells me he writes poetry and asks if he can read some to me. I indulge him, though he's having to translate into English because I don't speak German. I spend the dawn hours keeping him calm. I'm not terribly

annoyed at this since I've come to Europe to give remarks at a conference concerning the rise of rightwing nationalism a few days later in Vienna. Hans is unknowingly giving me some insight into popular culture ideas surrounding the European situation. However, I do realize that I'm in no way trained to do the kind of therapeutic work I think he needs, nor do I think any of the facilitators here are either. It gives me a healthy respect for the efforts of the folks at MAPS and the Zendo project.

As the sun begins to rise, Hans has calmed down greatly and is very appreciative of our time together. I step outside as the day brightens. From off in a group of trees I see that a party had formed around Sergio and some others who had stepped out to be in nature and sleep out in the mountain air. This of course was against all of the safety rules and agreements participants had signed. After a thoughtful stroll, I'm beginning to wonder how I'm going to get back to Zurich for an early evening flight to Vienna. Arriving back at the lodge, I meet Kelly, who's nervous as well. She needs to be back to the city sooner than I do. She's trying to find Jeremiah who promised to figure a way back. Eventually, Sergio appears from the woods. Back in the main room he's about to give *toé* to those who want it. Stephanos and Jürgen are first in line. I politely decline, even though I know the duration of the experience in clock time is short. I feel like having places to be and not knowing how I'm going to get there isn't the best way into such an experience, and at this point I don't really trust the facilitators. Instead, I go shower and pack my belongings to be prepared to leave.

I'm rather thankful to Kelly, who keeps hounding Jeremiah about getting back to the city. Apparently, no one with a car is planning on leaving today, which is what he

was banking on. My phone gets no reception out in these mountains. Eventually, Jeremiah and the facilitators have found a way back for us. It will require him driving us down the mountain to a rural bus stop. The bus will take us to a small town with a train station. We can take a train that connects with another train that will get us into the city. Jeremiah is less than pleased to be taking us, it seems, but he remains pleasant enough and even waits long enough to make sure our bus comes. He doublechecks our information for a WhatsApp group chat to keep in touch with our group and hear about upcoming events and then hugs us goodbye. On the bus, Kelly is absolutely furious.

I sympathize with Kelly the best I can, thinking of far more sketchy situations she could have encountered from my readings on South American contexts. I imagine some folks would laugh at this situation while others would be horrified by the lack of professionalism. Religious practitioners are likely to be especially angered by such accounts because they work hard to have more controlled sessions. Advocates of ayahuasca may even be annoyed at me that this situation is opening my project, worrying that my account might fuel prohibitionist and regulatory inclinations. Certainly, Indigenous users of ayahuasca would see my example as exactly part of the problem with the decontextualized and globalized use of ayahuasca. As I listen to Kelly's complaints – apparently her second night was no better than the first, just a lot of nausea – I also inform her that questionable practices are very much debated among ayahuasca researchers. The group facilitating our session, I would later find, has been denounced by researchers advocating for more professional use.

It is not my concern here to denounce specific groups, religious or otherwise, who use ayahuasca. My interest, rather, is to see the global diaspora of ayahuasca in the context of a global design, to use Mignolo's term. But as my shift away from Mignolo's focus on border thinking by attending more closely to Indigenous theorists attests, I want to situate a much longer history than any of the folks in Switzerland were aware of. At the same time, by using this experience as exemplary of one form of ayahuasca use in diaspora, it would be difficult to apply the concept of border thinking to these users, let alone to my own use of it. There is a wide spectrum of existing material regarding authenticity and cultural appropriation of ayahuasca, along with an aura surrounding its "sacredness." For me, I was completely in awe and trembling at the profundity of my experience. Even though the experience I have relayed was rather tame in comparison to many existing accounts, I was afraid going in and keep a respectful amount of fear today. It is not really "fun," though I have characterized this particular experience of mine as rather beautiful. Kelly's experience was altogether different and entirely unpleasant. She was mad at the facilitators and mad at her Australian yoga friend who had suggested she try it. She wanted her money back and felt entirely ripped off. She found the setting and accommodations disgusting. Beyond the inconvenience for travelers, I found the Swiss lodge entirely comfortable.

As many ayahuasca researchers are well aware, the authenticity debates are fraught with problematic thinking regarding an aura of "sacredness" surrounding ayahuasca. We don't tend to see maize, chocolate, tomatoes, potatoes, or tobacco as "sacred," yet these "new world" plants were not only traditionally and respectfully

regarded by Indigenous Peoples, as global commodities they enriched and literally came to feed much of the global population. Why do we think of “Swiss chocolate” or “Irish potatoes” or “Italian” pasta sauces with little to no memory of Indigenous cultivation of these plants? Maize and tobacco are highly esteemed and widely cultivated across the two “American” continents that Native Americans refer to as Turtle Island. Rubber booms fueled war machines creating boom and bust economies in South America during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Coca has been used traditionally by Indigenous Peoples for millennia without producing cocaine and crack addiction. Ayahuasca is merely a fairly recent plant-based substance turned into a global commodity. As Eduardo Galeano writes, “The more a product is desired by the world market, the greater the misery it brings to the Latin American peoples whose sacrifice creates it.”⁸⁰ Ayahuasca in diaspora thus becomes a signifier for the contemporary example of global extractions that are centuries old. But interestingly, it becomes especially controversial as it gets involved with ideas of the sacred and religion during the playing out of the Christian global design as it manifests in the twentieth century into the so-called War on Drugs.

To wrap up my narrative, the train rides with Kelly back to Zurich clearly showed that Hans wasn’t alone in his thoughts about the erosion of masculinity. A friendly-seeming man in his seventies sat down with Kelly and I and after exchanging initial pleasantries launched into an uncannily similar list of complaints. Europe had lost its

⁸⁰ Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 61.

power because women had become professionals and ruined everything. Again this “feminization” was linked to an influx of Muslim refugees. Kelly had no problem telling him she thought he was full of crap. He got off at the next stop with a nod. Kelly eventually departed too. I went on to the airport and flew to Vienna where I would hear several academic papers on the rise of the far right in Europe. I also ended up playing a set of music for a discussion on art at a newly renovated hotel run by Christians for Muslim refugees in Venna. Happy to be part of an event for a good cause, I interestingly met an American woman, Anna. It turns out Anna had recently done ayahuasca with the same group I had just been with in Switzerland. Not only that, she had recently been dating Jeremiah.

Our conversation took place over wine and after I and others had performed in the café area of the building being renovated. Volunteer and refugee workers attended, as did one or the local Christian Pastors curating the space, Julia. Anna had asked me about my doctoral research and got really excited to hear it dealt with ayahuasca, since she had recently used it. As the conversation continued, Julia became more and more visibly uncomfortable. Apparently, Anna’s recent use of ayahuasca was a sore subject between them. I quickly sensed a prohibitionist, anti-drug attitude from Julia. This attitude is not uncommon for Protestant Christians, yet I could not help offering some scholarly context on the matter. Humans have used mind-altering substances since prerecorded history. Some scholars go so far as to say that early humans encounters with mind-altering plants

form the basic building blocks of “shamanism” and eventually “religion.”⁸¹ The soma rituals of the *Rig Veda* clearly allude to ritual use of mind-altering substances. Without going into a large body of speculative material regarding psychedelic influences on Mithraism and Christianity, my point to Julia and Anna was simply that consciousness-altering substances are frequently used and have a longer precedent than prohibitionist attitudes of contemporary Christians, especially those sitting around drinking wine together in a coffeeshop. Julia excused herself from our conversation, but Anna went on to tell me all about her ayahuasca experience, including the fact that while tripping she initiated sexual contact with her facilitator, Jeremiah.

Anna made it very clear to me that she made the first move willingly, but as many ayahuasca researchers know, this has not been the case for many women who have received unwanted sexual attention from ayahuasceros, “shamans,” and “healers.” Nor does Anna’s initiation of contact excuse the active reciprocation by any therapeutic professional during a session. In recent years, researchers from *chacrana.net* and the California Institute of Integral Studies have developed the “Ayahuasca Community Guide for the Awareness of Sexual Abuse” to address numerous cases in the news media of women being sexually assaulted during ayahuasca retreats.⁸² For better or worse, as

⁸¹ See for one example, Neil Price, *Archaeology of Shamanism* (New York: Routledge: 2001).

⁸² “Ayahuasca Community Guide for the Awareness of Sexual Abuse,” November 19, 2018, accessed February 23, 2020, <https://chacrana.net/community/ayahuasca-community-guide-for-the-awareness-of-sexual-abuse/>.

Anna informed me, she and Jeremiah had been carrying on dating remotely for a few months, and she was even doing some marketing work for the group.

A year later, however, when I ran into Anna at the American Academy of Religions conference in Denver, Colorado she told me that things had ended badly with Jeremiah. Moreover, when she decided to move on from helping out with the ayahuasca group, she had received threatening messages from members. Sexism is unfortunately part of the world we live in, and the formation of intimate relationships can occur in all sorts of organizations. Yet clearly there are heightened ethical factors surrounding such relationships in care-giving situations within any organization. The climate around these issues has had a marked presence among ayahuasca researchers in recent years and for that reason bear mentioning, though specific coverage exceeds the historical scope of the study.

Gender and sexual-orientation-related issues are also an important topic, especially as some of the recognized ayahuasca religions present. Recognized ayahuasca religions such as the UDV church often take conservative Christian stances on issues such as homosexuality (though views may be more liberal according to different locales). They also separate their congregations by gender and dress codes. The issue is a hot topic outside of religious groups as well. Shelby Hartman recently interviewed Jacques Mabit, a well-known ayahuasca researcher, therapist, and founder of, Takiwasi, an ayahuasca healing center in Tarapato, Peru in 1992. During the interview, Mabit critiqued an upcoming Queering Psychedelics conference in San Francisco put on by Beatriz Caiuby Labate, anthropologist and Executive of Director of the Chacruna

Institute for Psychedelic Plant Medicines, who is easily the most recognizable name in research on ayahuasca. In the interview, Mabit tells Hartman:

To begin with, it is striking that, on the one hand, the issue of sexuality is defined from the perspective of queer theory, which denounces any form of “pathologizing” of sexual conduct and, on the other, appeals to a “medicine” to explore the topic. Ayahuasca is an ancestral medicine and its practitioners are curers, “medics,” as they call themselves, which would suggest there is “something” to “cure” or “heal” in people who “suffer” from these behaviors. I don’t think this is the approach of the [conference] organizers.⁸³

The tensions between Hartman, Mabit, and the conference organizers are indicative of some of the importantly nuanced conversations surrounding ayahuasca in diaspora, including the ways appeals to Indigenous use operate within discourse.

In the summer of 2019, I was fortunate enough to attend the first Queering Psychedelics conference, where Mabit’s comments were understandably a tense topic. Mabit’s critique was that in celebrating the queerness of psychedelics, the conference organizers have decontextualized ayahuasca as a traditional medicine. He strangely critiques queer theory for resisting any pathologizing of homosexuality, yet professional psychologists and the Diagnostic Statistical manual have depathologized homosexuality since 1973. Mabit speaks of ayahuasca as “ancestral medicine,” yet ayahuasca researchers know well that among Indigenous groups of South America ayahuasca is

⁸³ Shelby Hartman, “Interview with Dr. Jacques Mabit: A Criticism to Queering Psychedelics, Queer Theory and Reflections on the Nature of Homosexuality,” *Núcleo de Estudos Interdisciplinares sobre Psicoativos*, April 14, 2019, accessed February 23, 2020, http://neip.info/novo/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Hartman_Jacques_Mabit_Interview_Queering_Psychedelics.pdf

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often used for hunting, sorcery or “shamanic warfare,” and even recreation.⁸⁴ Mabit is undoubtedly critiquing what he sees as a more liberal culture, yet researchers such as Clancy Cavnar have done studies indicating ayahuasca’s positive effects among the LGBTQIA community.⁸⁵ Here ayahuasca discourse and controversies reflect currently widespread discussions of gender and sexuality in transnational contexts, yet we need critical attention to the ways Indigenous practices are used to rhetorically support or criticize emergent ones. During her opening remarks at the Queering Psychedelics conference, Bia Labate self-identified as being queer while addressing and correcting some of the criticisms made by Mabit.⁸⁶ She was followed by an Indigenous speaker, Kanyon Sayer-Roods, who identified herself as offering a “two-spirit” perspective and being from “the Indian Canyon band of Mutsun-Ohlone peoples and [...] a spokesperson for the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone people, the lineal descendants of Yelamu (now San Francisco), the original people before contact.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴ See, for one example, *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia*, edited by Neil L. Whitehead and Robin Wright (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁸⁵ See Clancy Cavnar, “Ayahuasca’s Influence on Gay Identity,” *The Expanding World Ayahuasca Diaspora*, ed. by Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (New York: Routledge, 2018), 114-136.

⁸⁶ Bia Labate, “Queering Psychedelics Opening Remarks,” *You Tube*, July 8, 2019, accessed February 23, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mca2MJyNCRI>.

⁸⁷ “Queering Psychedelics 2019,” *Brava Theatre*, June 1, 2019, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://www.brava.org/all-events/2019/6/1/queering-psychedelics-2019>.

While Mabit had criticized the lack of Indigenous presence, the organizers had sought to have local Indigenous presence to open their conference. It is true that the traditional peoples inhabiting the bay area were not using ayahuasca, which is from the southern continent. At the same time, the acknowledgement of local peoples remains important to Indigenous politics, just as the identification of “two-spirit” by Sayers-Roods importantly brings up issues of Indigenous gendering that precede and exceed political discussions of LGBTQIA rights in liberal democratic culture.⁸⁸ While not central to my study here, this brief account ought to signal that dealing with ayahuasca use in diaspora and attending to Indigenous issues far exceeds any oversimplified discourse of cultural appropriation.

Conclusion

The issues surrounding ayahuasca in its international diaspora are vast and by no means a one-way move from Amazonian contexts to the globalized world. Many of the concerns present are reflective of broader liberal culture. I have signaled various ethical and professional considerations with my participant observation, because I find these issues to be relevant and important. As a poignant example, the Monday night after the weekend ceremony, the Whatsapp group community received a video selfie of Lukas

⁸⁸ For a helpful historical account in the north of Turtle Island, see Tink Tinker, “Osage Kettle Carriers – Marmitons, Scullery Boys, Deviants And Gender Choices,” *The New Polis*, July 24, 2019, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://thenewpolis.com/2019/07/24/osage-kettle-carriers-marmitons-scullery-boys-deviants-and-gender-choices-tink-tinker-wazhazhe-osage-nation/>.

dancing at a discotheque with the caption, “Lukas the Nazi pedophile is back in town!” Apparently, his ayahuasca experience had “liberated” his constraints around social morals. Sergio responded, horrified, and threatened to leave the group chat, which up until then had been blissed-out messages. I was not around for Lukas’s reintegration, but like Hans, the psychic baggage around gender performance and sexuality clearly remained an issue. Ayahuasca is no cure for political attitudes I deem morally repugnant. As one of my Indian friends in Denver told me, once while giving ceremony, a young Native man attended claiming he was possessed by an “evil” spirit. My friend had to tell him, “We don’t have those. Wanagi do not distinguish between good and evil.” The young man had been, as many are, colonized by eurochristian concepts. We know well that various distinctions of good and evil, of “higher beings” show up in formal ayahuasca religions, just as Afro-Brazilian manifestations display complex arrays of spiritual beings. The impulse to focus on ayahuasca’s therapeutic and medicinal potential must question the longer historical framing at work here, otherwise we risk being pulled into the kind of “beyond good and evil” impulses presented, albeit in different ways, in Lukas and Hans, both of whom were reacting to violent histories in eurochristian contexts. Using ayahuasca by itself does not make someone “good,” or “spiritually advanced,” or “liberated.” Deeply framed social and discursive contexts matter.

The main focus of the rest of this study will be to consider ayahuasca in relation to the eurochristian global design. As I have said, my intention is to particularly consider Indigenous thinkers and the ways Indigenous peoples may be affected by the emergence of ayahuasca in a global context. Following Tinker, my use of the term ‘eurochristian’ is

meant to push away from the racialized conceptions that Mignolo had addressed with regard to the twentieth-century while maintaining a historical context that does not lend itself to border thinking analyses. To do so, I will situate a much longer legal and political history oriented around the eurochristian Doctrine of Discovery. In following such thinkers, I intentionally focus on notions of deep framing through rhetorical theory and discourse analysis, as I will detail in the following chapter.

Chapter Two

Rhetoric, Framing, and Critical Discourse Analysis

Summary

I ended my introductory chapter contextualizing a personal experience with ayahuasca in a European ceremony in order to highlight some of the contemporary themes in ayahuasca discourse in a transnational setting. I felt such an explanation was necessary to establish my ethos, but of course my main goal throughout this project is to contextualize ayahuasca in diaspora within a longer history while attending to Indigenous writers' critiques of eurochristian colonialism. In this chapter, I dig deeper into methodological approaches to Critical Discourse analysis in an interdisciplinary way. In part, this approach is an attempt to establish a buffer between my own social forming and Indigenous critiques. There is no one single "angle," however. A process of recursion is necessary to breakdown details because people generally accept that colonialism was violent but are less able to see the persistent patterns. I must reassert that for Indigenous Peoples, the violence of colonization is by no means a thing of the past. There is nothing 'postcolonial' about Indigenous Peoples lives no matter how critical theories have developed in liberal discursive trajectories. The emergence of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) itself grew out postcolonial critical theory, so this chapter contextualizes

my method with respect to largely current rhetorical concerns around ayahuasca, Indigeneity, colonialism. Its aim is to be as transparent as possible about my own thought processes as I connect several disciplinary approaches. In this chapter, I clarify my analytical method, particularly with respect to discourse concerning the origins and diaspora of ayahuasca throughout South America, discourse which inevitably negotiates with eurochristian framing when translated into international contexts. I particularly argue that the term ‘eurochristian’ aids in resituating and analyzing ayahuasca discourse within a longer history.

My attention to eurochristian social and legal framing, as I stated in the introductory chapter, requires attention to a much longer history than previous studies of the ayahuasca diaspora have addressed. In current discourse, my critical approach risks being misread as simply an admonishment of the appropriation of ayahuasca by non-Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, my argument will appear to contradict well-intentioned efforts at destigmatizing ayahuasca’s characterization as a “drug.” For transparency, let me be clear from the outset that I am not against any practices engaging in the ethical use of ayahuasca, whether groups deem themselves religious or not. Rather, I am against the alignment with state-based forms of colonial recognition to “allow” such practices and the antecedent versions of expropriation informing those politics of recognition. I am hopeful that attention to ayahuasca might help shed light on the persistence of eurochristian framing because it is widely associated with Indigeneity; but that does not mean I have the authority to say who ought to use it or in what context. Humans use and have used “drugs” throughout their existence for a wide range of purposes from

recreational to sacramental, but when we start making claims about the exceptional qualities of certain substances within social, legal, and political we gain some insight into how power works intergenerationally.

In U.S. public discourses, people often use the term ‘colonization’ in the past tense, but for Indigenous Peoples the effects of colonization are ongoing. Some may even consider the American Revolution as a postcolonial move, but it is rather obvious that U.S. hegemony in the western hemisphere has moved well beyond the establishment of a republic – no matter how nationalism and exceptionalism manifest. As Lauren Berlant writes, “There is no one logic to a national form but, rather, simultaneously “literal” and “metaphorical” meanings, stated and unstated.”⁸⁹ The fates of the continents now known as “the Americas” have shared not one specific national form but a eurochristian social framing throughout modernity. Ayahuasca discourse in diaspora inevitably participates in this longer historical context.

The Amazonian contexts from which ayahuasca emerges are daily filled with violence, genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and environmental catastrophes brought on by eurochristian colonial forms and persistent expropriation in the form of capitalist greed. As ayahuasca use spreads globally, its users inevitably engage with flawed systems of prohibition brought on by a Drug War instigated by the United States throughout the twentieth-century. During that period, Drug War rhetoric created moral panics as a ruse for military and economic control, and the fallout of such rhetoric persists in ongoing

⁸⁹ Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 5.

foreign policies. Aspirations for creating an exceptional status for ayahuasca in the midst of Drug War politics, while well-intended, tacitly accept the Drug War rhetoric's false claims to legitimacy while participating in earlier eurochristian social formations. That "legitimacy" sought is thus imbricated within the drama of eurochristian colonial forms and racist policies outlined in the fifteenth-century papal bulls of discovery collectively known as the Doctrine of Christian Discovery.

Despite the iteration of Cold War context in which the ayahuasca diaspora began to flourish, readers should not understand my comments about capitalism as nostalgically "leftist" or "communist." American media continue tacit use of Cold War political frames with references to the "Pink Tide" among Amazonian nations in the early twenty-first century, often without much critical thought among north American publics. Therefore, it is important to situate the discursive framing here in earlier political rhetoric and foreign policies. My discursive tactic speaks not only to the past but to an attempt to understand the present intentionally where such political identity-formations fail. Instead of a left-right binary arising out of eighteenth-century politics, my method privileges Indigenous perspectives that see Marxism and the dialectical annihilating synthesis between capitalism and communism as a drama that itself masks the erasure of Indigenous Peoples.⁹⁰ Readers unfamiliar with such a perspective might consider the

⁹⁰ The reader will note the implicit references to Hegel here. Despite recent work by Susan Buck-Morss arguing that Hegel's master-slave dialectic stems from his meditations on the Haitian revolution, as well as admirable work by C.L.R. James (*The Black Jacobins*, 1938) and Carolyn E. Fick (*The Making of Haiti*, 1990), I still think the comments Means made in his 1980 address remain pertinent for Indigenous perspectives, which should not be subsumed within postcolonial discourse. David Scott's close reading of editorial changes James made in various editions of *The Black Jacobins* details

words of Russell Means (Lakota) forty years ago: “every revolution in European history has served to reinforce Europe’s tendencies and abilities to export destruction to other peoples, other cultures and the environment itself.”⁹¹ Conceptually here, “liberation” is itself an idea existing within a particularly eurochristian frame of “liberalism” premised on an anthropology of rights-bearing individuals.

Because the United States embraced eurochristian colonialism and its political hegemony with respect to South America, in order to understand what is at stake in ayahuasca’s introduction to the north, it is crucial that this study articulate an account of the United States’ foundational embracement of eurochristian colonial forms consciously grounded the nation’s claims for a right to govern Turtle Island. Such claims to governmental legitimacy are found within the legal fiction of the Doctrine of Discovery, which was used to establish colonial governments in both the northern and southern continents. Clarifying the situation requires both a larger historical perspective as well as the *motivations* of discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis

the shifting discursive motivations behind postcolonial studies as a project. This reinforces my use of CDA to avoid universalizing discursive traps. See David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of the Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁹¹ Russell Means, “For the World to Live. ‘Europe’ Must Die,” *archive.org* July 1980, accessed November 30, 2019, https://archive.org/stream/ForAmericaToLiveEuropeMustDie/foramericatolive_read_djvu.txt.

My method throughout this study is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

As Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer write:

CDA can be defined as being fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse).⁹²

CDA is especially useful in transnational contexts because it avoids the trappings of any attempt at a “universal history” of ayahuasca by weaving together various historical and multidisciplinary threads into a genealogical tapestry. CDA emphasizes “a study of the relations between discourse, power, dominance, social inequality and the position of the discourse analyst in such social relationships.”⁹³ Thus stated, my use of CDA allows some flexibility in dealing with interdisciplinary and transnational connections. From a CDA perspective, we can build an account of historical inequity with respect to Indigenous Peoples that contextualizes the *drama* of the ayahuasca diaspora.

A *dramatic* approach to discourse focuses on the results of symbolic actions. Pointing out discursive *motives* means attending to a level of intention that transcends any individual diabolical or beneficent actors. For example, the motivation to advocate for ayahuasca’s therapeutic potential may be laudable, but the discursive situation in which such advocacy efforts operate are already framed by nefarious regulatory regimes

⁹² Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, “Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology,” *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. Edited by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage Publications, 2009), 10.

⁹³ Teun A. van Dijk, “Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 2 (1993), 249.

with their own motives. In this context, a discursive ‘motive’ is not assignable to a distinct actor.

Reactionary rhetorics reinforce existing frames. Attention to a longer history helps to assess the various ‘terministic screens’ fluctuating around ayahuasca in diaspora. In *Rhetoric of Religion and Language as Symbolic Action*, Kenneth Burke describes terministic screens with respect to “logology,” or the study of words and language in its symbolic actions:

“Logology” would be a purely empirical study of symbolic action. Not being a theologian, I would have no grounds to discuss the truth or falsity of theological doctrines as such. But I do feel entitled to discuss them with regard to their nature merely as language. And it is my claim that the injunction, “Believe, that you may understand,” has a fundamental application to the purely secular problem of “terministic screens.”

The “logological,” or “terministic” counterpart of “Believe” in the formula would be: *Pick some particular nomenclature, some one terministic screen.* And for “That you may understand,” the counterpart would be: *“That you may proceed to track down the kinds of observation implicit in the terminology you have chosen, whether your choice of terms was deliberate or spontaneous.”*⁹⁴

By “motivation,” I mean to accent what Burke identifies as “the kinds of observation implicit in the terminology.” While Burke himself is very much writing in a eurochristian context, his thought here helps me to articulate my own use of the term ‘eurochristian’.

The term ‘eurochristian’ is its own terministic screen, one that I argue aids in resituating and analyzing ayahuasca discourse within a longer history. As Tinker writes in reference to European colonizers of the Americas:

⁹⁴ Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 47.

the social whole was indelibly marked by a millennium or more of the development of European Christianity and its concomitant, inherently Christian, socio-political thought and action, something that continues in their development of a “new” European society in North America. So, proposing to use Euro-Christian as that more accurate descriptor captures not only present cultural realities but ties the reality back to its historical roots. In making this move, I am determinedly not making a “religious” claim per se. Nor am I interested in rehashing the oversimplified Weberian doctrinal identification of Puritan ethics with capitalism. Rather, I propose Euro-Christian as a deeper cultural-sociological designation—even when a particular Euro-Christian person may identify as post-Christian or non-religious; or may have converted to Hinduism or Buddhism or even to atheism. I am naming a cultural whole that is indeed deeply rooted in a religious tradition, even as postmodernist claims are made for secular humanism.⁹⁵

Implicit in Tinker’s language, Indigenous resistance to erasure demands an intergenerational account of Euro-Christian occupation and invasion. It is not an account of a “Christian” identity as a reaction formation (i.e., a Protestant is a reaction formation to Catholic policies during the sixteenth century and is implicitly Christian). Nor is the use of ‘Euro-Christian’ merely an account of “white privilege.” It is not about “identity” in the sense of a choice or “ideology.” It is, rather, an account of the motivational persistence underwriting that privilege within a socio-religious frame, even if the hallowed language of that very frame has become opaque or forgotten. As a terministic screen, ‘Euro-Christian’ identifies a discursive frame with its own motivations.

CDA understands framing with respect to George Lakoff’s work on linguistic cognition. Lakoff writes:

Frames are among the cognitive structures we think with. For example, when you read a murder mystery, there is a typical frame with various types of characters:

⁹⁵ Tink Tinker (wazhazhe, Osage), “What Are We Going to Do with White People?” *The New Polis*, December 17, 2019, accessed January 2, 2020. <https://thenewpolis.com/2019/12/17/what-are-we-going-to-do-with-white-people-tink-tinker-wazhazhe-osage-nation/>.

the murderer, victim or victims, possible accomplices, suspects, a motive, a murder weapon, a detective, clues. And there is a scenario in which the murderer murders the victim and is later caught by the detective.⁹⁶

Scholarship on framing critiques theories of mind relating to René Descartes and became a source of controversy with Steven Pinker. As Lakoff writes, “The brain gives rise to thought in the form of conceptual frames, image-schemas, prototypes, conceptual metaphors, and conceptual blends.”⁹⁷ In Lakoff’s thought, we have both surface and deep framing structures, but surface frames make little sense without deep ones.

My use of the term ‘eurochristianity’ follows Indigenous scholars such as Tink Tinker and Steven T. Newcomb (Shawnee / Lenape), who both cite Lakoff’s influence on Critical Legal Studies (and Critical Race Theory). Tinker and Newcomb point to what Lakoff calls *deep framing* in order to articulate notions of worldview. Both Tinker and Newcomb also attach their work on framing to analyses of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. My attention to this is methodologically rooted within CDA precisely because I am not an Indigenous person, yet I find myself having to write for audiences deprived of a rich education in Indigenous thought that would give lie to the oversimplification of notions like “traditional” when temporalized within a eurochristian dramatic frame.

⁹⁶ George Lakoff, *The Political Mind: Why You Can’t Understand 21st-Century American politics with an 18th-Century Brain* (New York: Viking, 2008), 22.

⁹⁷ George Lakoff, “A response to Steven Pinker Defending Freedom,” *newsframes.wordpress.com*, February 24, 2016, accessed November 30, 2019, <https://newsframes.wordpress.com/lakoff-responds-to-pinker/>.

Emerging in the 1990s, “CDA understands discourses as relatively stable uses of language serving the organization and structuring of social life.”⁹⁸ At the same time, from a perspective based on twenty-first century rhetorical analysis, we do not understand rhetoric as an activity based on the persuasion of individuated subjects – identity-based reaction formations – but rather on *contextual proximities*. My study of *the rhetoric of ayahuasca in diaspora in the wake of the eurochristian Doctrine of Discovery* through CDA allows me to draw attention to the persistent expropriative logic of ‘discovery’ in the ayahuasca diaspora.

Let me be clear of what I mean when I say, “the rhetoric of.” A rhetorical situation, in its most basic sense, is audience-driven. Discourse is inherently audience-driven. In Burke’s terms, it is *dramatistic* because it is performative and hortatory. Similarly, Lakoff’s work draws on Erving Goffman’s *Frame Analysis*, which opens with attention to a “situation”: “it is obvious that in most ‘situations’ many things are happening simultaneously – things that are likely to have begun at different moments and may terminate dissynchronistically.”⁹⁹ Drawing on Burke’s dramatistic thought allows me to more directly attend to the underlying motivations of discourse itself. In a classic essay, “The Rhetorical Situation” (1968), Lloyd Bitzer emphasized the concept of *exigence* or situational need, which brings about the necessary “call” for symbolic action:

⁹⁸ Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, “Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology,” *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, 2nd ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2009): 6.

⁹⁹ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974), 9.

Let us regard rhetorical situation as a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance; this invited utterance participates naturally in the situation, is in many instances necessary to the completion of situational activity, and by means of its participation with situation obtains its meaning and its rhetorical character.¹⁰⁰

Discursive motivation partially lies in exigence or “the call to speak.”

Later rhetoricians have critiqued Bitzer as being too rigid in his definition of subject (rhetor) and too passive in his assumption of audience in his work.¹⁰¹ For example, in 1989 Barbara Biesecker drew on poststructuralist semiotics as she lamented conceptions of the rhetorical situation too rigidly assuming a fixed, pre-existing audience of “subjects” rather than being attentive to the ways discourse itself invents subject positions:

Clearly, the traditional concept of the rhetorical situation forces theorists and critics to appeal to a logic that transcends the rhetorical situation itself in order to explain the prior constitution of the subjects participating or implicated in the event. If the identities of the audience are not constituted in and by the rhetorical event, then some retreat to an essentialist theory of the subject is inevitable. Ultimately, this commits us to a limited conception of the subject and, in sum, to a reductive understanding of the rhetorical situation.¹⁰²

Biesecker uses Jacques Derrida’s term, ‘*différance*’, echoing what Burke had already noted – namely, that terministic screens do a kind of active limiting as they frame the possibilities for dramatic action. The boundaries distinguishing difference are heuristic

¹⁰⁰ Lloyd Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1, no. 1 (January 1968): 4-5.

¹⁰¹ This was more generally the critique of neo-Aristotelian discourse informing figures such as Burke.

¹⁰² Barbara Biesecker, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from Within the Thematic of *Différance*,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 22, no. 2 (1989): 110.

and porous. A ‘screen’ is more porous than a frame, however, and in combining Burke’s notion with Newcomb and Tinker’s reliance on Lakoff and deep framing, I am trying to attend to transgenerational motivations embedded in discourse itself.

Burke emphasizes “dramatistic” as opposed to “scientific” approaches to language that rely on definition. This speaks to the emphasis on the *action* of the symbolic but also the implicit motives for that action. His logological focus is more textual than semiotic in its analysis, which is helpful when considering discourse on ayahuasca (or ‘psychedelics’, or ‘entheogens’) because part of the motivations of this discourse inevitably point to “experience” with such substances. ‘Experience’ here is implicitly framed within an anthropology of liberalism (i.e., rights-bearing individuals seeking the recognition of rights to certain practices).

While Biesecker’s critiques may give one a more nuanced perspective concerning the inner workings of symbolic action without resorting to transcendent and “essentialized” notions of subjectivity, it is also clear that discourse in the metaphorical structure ‘War on Drugs’ rhetorically positions a zero-sum game between “drugs” as enemies and the “allied forces” against them. This illustrates a bellicose, friend-enemy distinction in eurochristian international law and politics present since Augustine of Hippo’s formulation of “just wars.” John Langan notes a kind of agnosticism present in Augustine’s deference to God’s authority for just war:

This level of agnosticism about human values and of abandonment to divine providence takes the whole task of making moral decisions about war out of the hands of individual moral agents in two ways. First, because it questions our ability to judge what is really for our good, it leaves us fundamentally passive in the face of the workings of divine providence. Second, it turns the question of

determining the justice of war and the right use of violence into a search for an appropriate authorization.¹⁰³

Important here is the forward-moving temporality explicit in the eurochristian deep-framing that aligns human destiny with God's will, foresight in the sense of "providence" without the connotations of robbing the divine in the Greek term, 'Prometheus.' We hear this in everyday language in phrases like "God has a plan." Do the *wanagi* of the Lakota "have a plan"? Do the "multicolored people" of the Secoya "have a plan"? As my local Indian friends have told me Native folks at times come to ceremony expressing eurochristian frames (i.e., "I'm possessed by an evil spirit) and have to be reminded of deeper Indigenous ways of being beneath the imposed cosmologies of eurochristendomination.

Drawing on Lakoff's work, Steven Newcomb (Shawnee / Lenape) has articulated frames within the eurochristian adherence to justice war policies as part of an Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM). Important to Lakoff's work is that such cognitive models are not merely retellings of historical genealogy, nor are they simply "metaphors." They are metaphorical, but they also construct the very real neural pathways by which people come to see "reality" or "worldview." In other words, ICMs are both metaphorical and entirely physical. It is not a mere matter of representation; hence, I keep semiotic analysis informing "poststructuralism" and "postcolonialism" at arm's length to allow for more discursive attention to Indigenous thinkers like Newcomb who are not writing from a postcolonial perspective (though they are familiar with such discourse).

¹⁰³ John Langan, "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 12, no. 1 (Spring, 1984): 23.

Politics present another issue. Left-right political binaries present a frame that works similarly to create a dramatic situation constituting performative subjects. These frames limit the possibilities of what can be *said* at a given time, so advocates of ayahuasca who seek exceptional status within that very frame simultaneously reinforce a fictional legitimacy. As Tinker's implicit intergenerational focus implies, eurochristians perform a kind of anamnesis through the dramatic discourse.¹⁰⁴ One might call this, following Burke, a *poetics of sacrifice* in the sense that it replays the passion situating eurochristian subjectivity while erasing, "sacrificing," or assimilating Indigenous "others." Appeals to eurochristian "civilization" are in this instance a way of affirming the annihilation present in the poetics of eurochristian sacrifice, just as the compulsion to evangelize actively performs the poetics repetitively over generations. Discourse in this sense is inherently ritualistic and habitual, and it is here that we should contextualize the longer history of the so-called War on Drugs within its eurochristian frame.

In such a frame, prohibitionist drug policies create competition between "traditional" and officially "recognized" medical modalities. As Kevin Feeney and Beatriz Caiuby Labate write with respect to South American contexts for Indigenous Peoples:

Despite the promise of the drug conventions that communities which give up traditional therapeutic uses of psychoactive plants will have access to "real" medicine, many of these communities must choose either to continue their use of traditional medicines in the face of global prohibition and become criminals, or

¹⁰⁴ I use the term 'anamnesis' both in its Greek sense of remembering a forgotten past as well as its specifically Christian liturgical sense with respect to the Eucharist.

forego these practices and rely upon what little “modern” medicine and medical care is available.¹⁰⁵

Here, the double-bind enacts an erasure of knowledge on the one hand while creating a situation of dependence on the other. Indigenous practices must be sacrificed in order to gain access to the modalities of healing presented by eurochristian or “western” healthcare, even when doing so does not assure actual access to care. When ayahuasca advocates play along with the rules of the Drug War terministic screens, they simultaneously reinforce a eurochristian frame of sacrifice detrimental to Indigenous communities.

Contextualizing the Emergence of the Drug War

In the U.S., prohibitionist drug policies spread globally during the twentieth century, largely through U.S. influence following the 1914 *Harrison Narcotics Tax Act*, which sought regulation for coca and opium. The efforts arose from the Episcopal Missionary, Charles Henry Brent’s work in the Philippines, so it is important to contextualize the missionary efforts in relation to aspirations to empire enacted in U.S. policies. Brent’s work was derived from Social Gospel movements of the late nineteenth century. As Eva Herschinger summarizes:

US acquisition of the Philippines in 1898 and a growing moral panic over drug use within the United States around the same time fueled a specific view on opium and its trade. Drugs that had been consumed by inner circles of society –

¹⁰⁵ Kevin Feeney and Beatriz Caiuby Labate, “The Expansion of Brazilian Ayahuasca Religions,” *Prohibition, Religious Freedom, and Human Rights: Regulating Traditional Drug Use*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (Berlin: Springer, 2014), 127.

lemonade and alcoholic beverages or sprays contained constituents of the coca bush; white women calmed their nerves (or relieved their depression) with opiates; doctors or pharmacists used the morphine meant for subscription – became more and more associated with outsiders. This association was intermingled with explicit racial discrimination at the turn of the twentieth century and mixed up with moral judgments and political opportunism: Chinese immigrants smoke opium to incite white women; Blacks in the South consume cocaine to resist and attack white society; Mexicans smoke marijuana and become violent and so forth.¹⁰⁶

The discursive situation assembles a “just war” demanding actions to “protect and defend” civilization. As Herschinger continues:

To locate articulations constructing an antagonistic Other in the international discourse on drugs is a rather easy task. Building from the outset on a seldom questioned illegality of drugs, the discourse is abundant of articulations constituting drugs, the internationally organized drug dealers or the individual drug dealer as antagonistic Other. Drugs as the antagonistic Other are the *common* enemy, the global threat.¹⁰⁷

Later in the century, these policies produced the taxonomic drug scheduling that isolates and reduces ayahuasca to restricted chemical compounds.

Today, despite a growing use of ayahuasca globally, as well as perceptions of a wane in Drug War policies, the United States Drug Enforcement Agency’s (DEA) 2019 drug and chemical evaluation lists ayahuasca as being an illegal substance for containing N,N Dimethyltryptamine (DMT): “DMT has no approved medical use in the United States but can be used by researchers under a Schedule I research registration that

¹⁰⁶ Eva Herschinger, *Constructing Global Enemies: Hegemony and Identity in International Terrorism and Drug Prohibition* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 62.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

requires approval from both DEA and the Food and Drug Administration.”¹⁰⁸ At the same time, the DEA recognizes:

The history of human experience with DMT probably goes back several hundred years since DMT usage is associated with a number of religious practices and rituals. As a naturally occurring substance in many species of plants, DMT is present in a number of South American snuffs and brewed concoctions, like Ayahuasca. In addition, DMT can be produced synthetically. The original synthesis was conducted by a British chemist, Richard Manske, in 1931.

The arrogance and disregard for historical human behavior is quite clear here. State power trumps “religious” use of “drugs.” Religious “exemptions” in the U.S. are based on the racialized construction of “Indians” for the use of peyote by the Native American Church, but advocates for ayahuasca use appeals to rights-based discourse on “religious freedom.” Moreover, it is important to note that despite efforts to perceive a waning of the Drug War and optimism for decriminalization or legalization of substances, the law remains clear with respect to its continued prohibitionist stance.

In contrast to the DEA’s categorization, loads of current research points to the ill-conceived nature of placing ayahuasca on drug scheduling lists, usually citing its sacred or therapeutic (or simultaneously both) uses. For example, Mark G. Blainey characterizes diasporic use of ayahuasca against the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances:

Despite this ban, some European and North American citizens have adopted sacred (i.e., non-recreational) uses of these same substances, a custom previously limited to non-Western aboriginal traditions. These devotees reject the terms “hallucinogen” (which implies that the substance generates delusions) and

¹⁰⁸ “N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT),” United States Drug Enforcement Administration, July 2019, accessed November 28, 2019, https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_chem_info/dmt.pdf.

“psychedelic” (reminiscent of hedonistic use during the 1960s). Instead, they prefer the terms *entheogen* or *sacred plant*.¹⁰⁹

Blainey’s ethnographic work tracks various groups’ attributions of sacred status and therapeutic effects to various plants while also noting that “[c]urrent legislation tends to avoid the acknowledgement of different sets and settings concerning entheogen use.”¹¹⁰ Blainey suggests the use of the term ‘*suiscope*’ (literally, “to look at oneself”) to address ayahuasca’s beneficial properties. His suggestion is but one example of the language in constant flux around ‘ayahuasca’ (*yagé*, *liana*, *jagube*, etc.) in order to distance prejudiced views about “drugs,” but the language framing around legal status carries with it European-derived notions about religion and secular governance.

At the same time, Blainey’s descriptions are inherently self-oriented. Despite Blainey’s claim that Santo Daime and other ayahuasca religions at times reject the term “psychedelic” because of its associations with the 1960s, he himself points to the language of “set and setting” carried over from psychedelic therapies of the period. The ‘mind-manifesting’ frame implied in the term ‘psychedelic’ carries a ‘self-oriented’ frame, just as the notions of ‘set’ and ‘setting’ do; yet the impulse to disavow the term ‘psychedelic’ reacts to the countercultural emplacement of ‘drugs’. Such intentional disavowals and amnesia aid in the generative efforts of establishing new religious

¹⁰⁹ Marc G. Blainey, “Forbidden Therapies: Santo Daime, Ayahuasca, and the Prohibition of Entheogens in Western Society,” *The Journal of Health and Religion* 54 (2015): 288, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10943-014-9826-2>.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 290.

movements while implying that ‘sacred’ substances be thought of differently than mere ‘drugs’.

The idea of ‘the sacred’ here is static and transcendent, operating as a kind of timeless value. This is a kind of linguistic amelioration poeticized within a vertical hierarchy where ‘sacred’ (set apart) substances receive special treatment or exemptions. When applied to Indigenous Peoples, it perpetuates appeals to “ancient” and “timeless” figurations of existing People who have difficulty advocating for themselves precisely because they have been “spiritualized” through a drama based on the poetics of sacrifice. They have been “made sacred.” Simultaneously, built into the discourse on ayahuasca are reactions to prohibitionist policies even amid different localized terms for the plants involved in recipes for ‘ayahuasca’.

Commerce and legal status also persist in affecting local populations using ayahuasca, as well as harvesting practices for the *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine from which the Quechua word ‘ayahuasca’ (often translated as ‘vine of death’ or ‘vine of the “soul”’) is derived.¹¹¹ The discourse reflects this with respect to questions of authenticity and cultural appropriation. Commercialization of ayahuasca produces mono-dimensional effect in the process of commodification that decontextualizes the plant from its natural environment and its localized relationships to other plants. Some see this as a long process; others see it as recently aggressive with respect to globalization in the second half of the twentieth-century.

¹¹¹ Right away we are dealing with translation problems with theologically-laden terms like “soul” and culturally distinct notions of “death.”

This has produced ecologically-inflected discourse concerning the over-harvesting of ayahuasca.¹¹² In a recent doctoral dissertation, Michael Coe has analyzed ayahuasca harvests and over-harvesting risks among the Shipibo-Konibo people of Peru using a cultural keystone species model¹¹³ for the vine.¹¹⁴ Importantly, the tea known as ‘ayahuasca’ that the DEA refers to is usually mixed with other plants such as *chacrana* (*Psychotria viridis*) to produce an experience of the synthesizing of large amounts of DMT. Thus, the individual plants can be purchased legally at the moment in many places, but the mixing and ingesting is where the illegal activity is situated, literally in the process of intentional consumption. This brings up complex philosophical and juridical discussions related to cognitive liberty, which I address at length in chapter six. Important here, however, is an attempt to find a way of accounting for the various discursive *motivations* surrounding ayahuasca in diaspora and the regulations imposed from colonizing regimes.

Some Indigenous groups have advocated for protection of their use and cultural heritage against foreign commercial exploitation. As The Union of Traditional Yagé

¹¹² Kerry Moran, “Is Ayahuasca Really Disappearing?” *Chacrana*, October 2, 2017, accessed November 30, 2019, <https://chacrana.net/ayahuasca-really-desappearing/>.

¹¹³ Ann Garibaldi and Nancy Turner, “Concept of Ecological Keystone Species,” *Ecology and Society* 9, no. 3 (2004), accessed November 30, 2019, <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss3/art1/>.

¹¹⁴ Michael Coe, *Theories and Major Hypotheses in Ethnobotany: Cultural Keystone Species, Utilitarian Redundancy, Ethnobotany of the Shipibo-Konibo, and Effects of Harvest on Ayahuasca* (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2019), <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/63150>.

Medics of the Colombian Amazon (UMIYAC), an Indigenous organization representing Siona, Cofán, Inga, Kamentsá, and Coreguaje spiritual authorities recently declare:

There are also non-indigenous people who, without possessing the knowledge of ancestral yagé medicine, appropriate and abuse our practices by organizing ceremonies, spiritual retreats, ayahuasca tourism and shamanism schools. It is a commercial use, consumption, manipulation and appropriation of our medicinal traditions, our knowledge and our image. These practices violate the sacredness of our worldviews, offend our spiritual authorities and go against the international conventions and treaties that protect the intangible, medicinal, spiritual and cultural heritage of indigenous peoples (i.e., 1991 Colombian Constitution, Conventions 169 / ILO, 1989 and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* 2007, among others).¹¹⁵

Here the invocation of the 2007 United Nation's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) puts the discourse into a global context. Like the cultural keystone model mentioned above, such efforts actively attempt to posit a new framework for understanding the needs and concerns of Indigenous Peoples. 'Ayahuasca' here becomes a vehicle for cultural determination and Indigenous survivance.

Appeals to recognition in international law for Indigenous Peoples at times arise from a perspective that sees the State as inherently detrimental to those Peoples' religious freedom and the environment. At other times, representations of 'Indigeneity' inform the national phantasies of post-independence states throughout the Americas. For example, Carlos Irigaray, *et al.* present an approach where "the expression *buen vivir* (or *sumac kawsay* in Quechua) can be translated as complete wellness and corresponds to a

¹¹⁵ The Union of traditional Yagé Medics of the Colombian Amazon (UMIYAC), "Declaration from the Spiritual Authorities, Representatives and Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Region," *Chacrana*, November 14, 2019, accessed November 28, 2019, <https://chacrana.net/declaration-from-the-spiritual-authorities-representatives-and-indigenous-organizations-of-the-amazon-region/>.

principle of the Inca Empire [*sic*], under which the state, including government and people, should promote the conditions for everyone to live well.”¹¹⁶ Both Ecuador and Bolivia recognize the concept in their constitutions, which also understand ‘Nature’ in the sense of an active entity –“Mother Nature” – aligned with the mythical entity known as Pachamama. As Catherine Walsh notes:

Together, Pachamama and buen vivir are concrete examples of an interculturalized, interculturalizing, and intersubjecting constitutionalism that, for the first time in Ecuador and the world, endeavors to think with ancestral millennial cultures and their cosmo-existential and life-based philosophies and principles that can govern society. This thinking with is part of the processes and path of decoloniality and decolonization.¹¹⁷

Ayahuasca as an entity thus often occupies the liminality between Nature’s persistence, living and ancient Indigenous memory, new state forms, and nationalisms. Through the emergence of national phantasy appealing to Indigenous practices and concepts, Indigenous Peoples become absorbed into universalized notions of citizenship.

These processes generate multiple forms of contrasting interpretations – what Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has called ‘equivocation’ – and are indicative of what Luis D. León has called “religious poetics,” where the *making* of religion is itself imbricated within institutional settings:

In short, what I mean by “religion” is often (re)produced, but not limited to, institutional settings, rigorously defined and explicitly stated “religious

¹¹⁶ Carlos Teodoro J. H. Irigaray, Pierre Girard, Maíra Irigaray, and Carolina Joana Da Silva, “*Ayahuasca* and *Sumak Kawsay*: Challenges to the Implementation of the Principle of “*Buen Vivir*,” Religious Freedom, and Cultural Heritage Protection,” *Anthropology of Consciousness* vol. 27: 2 (2016): 207.

¹¹⁷ Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham: Duke, 2018): 65.

movements,” or even ancient traditions that have been thought of as “great” or not so great. I also mean the emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, imaginative, real, dogmatic, ambiguous, semiotic, mystical, mundane, order, and disordered stuff that emerges when humans try to make sense – make history – out of the fantastic forces of their world, of their unchosen conditions.¹¹⁸

With respect to ayahuasca and *buen vivir*, Irigaray *et al.* are explicit about its potential:

Although the religious use of hoasca is still restricted to small groups of people, one cannot ignore its potential effects in the realization of *buen vivir*, insofar as it provides these groups a deep knowledge of oneself, a sense of purpose, and a growth in the feeling of union, that are the basis of complete *wellness*.¹¹⁹

The authors then immediately follow with comparisons to Hindu concepts and hoasca’s international potential: “the realization of the principle of *buen vivir*, that it could orient the actions of the public authorities and of the collective, opens a new perspective for overcoming the crisis of civilization and the risk of repeating the collapse of once thriving societies.”¹²⁰ The universalizing impulse reflects the eurochristian dramatic frame as ayahuasca discourse enters the globalized setting.

Yet as ayahuasca use spreads globally, the international rights-based context induces a deep irony because The United Nations also has a vexed history of supporting prohibitionist conventions on controlled substances in the U.S.-led War on Drugs. Like the U.S. law, which clearly acknowledges ancestral use of certain substances while

¹¹⁸ Luis D. León, *La Llorona’s Children: Religion, Life, and Death in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004), 17.

¹¹⁹ Carlos Teodoro J. H. Irigaray, Pierre Girard, Maíra Irigaray, and Carolina Joana Da Silva, “*Ayahuasca* and *Sumak Kawsay*: Challenges to the Implementation of the Principle of “*Buen Vivir*,” Religious Freedom, and Cultural Heritage Protection,” *Anthropology of Consciousness* vol. 27: 2 (2016): 222.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

making the substance illicit, the hypocrisy of attending to “Human Rights” or “Indigenous Rights” while supporting prohibitionist policies is palpable.

The scenario persists as well in tension between the United States and the United Nations. While reluctant at first to sign on to *The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), the United States did eventually sign it in 2012. Yet it did so even while simultaneously maintaining a violent colonial stance toward Indigenous Peoples in the territory it occupies. Such violence is evidenced by its use of force against Indigenous-led protests in 2016 against the Dakota Access Pipeline, which necessitates an *anticolonial* perspective in my work, rather than a postcolonial perspective. Again, there is nothing “post” about the colonization Indigenous Peoples face on Turtle Island.

Therefore, it is important to follow Indigenous writers whose work has begun the long struggle of writing Native Americans back into history, such as Jace Weaver’s (Cherokee) *The Red Atlantic* and Nick Estes’ (Lower Brule Sioux) *Our History is the Future*. These works help to contextualize a persistent, long historical struggle of Native American survivance against State violence that has been written out of official histories, even if they are not explicitly concerned with ayahuasca. In other words, especially with respect to ayahuasca’s expanding use in the north, we must also attend to the ways U.S. law has engaged with the question of Native religiosities in the midst of historical erasure.

In 2006, the United States Supreme Court allowed a religious “exemption” for the use of ayahuasca by the Brazilian-based União do Vegetal (UDV) church. As I explained

in the previous chapter, this is not a true “exemption” but rather a compromise between the DEA and the UDV for regulated importation and distribution among members. Yet by far the discursive impulse among advocates for ayahuasca and other psychedelic substances has appealed to either “sacred” or some other “exceptional” status for use. Here general U.S. law often becomes conflated with an entirely separate legal jurisdiction based on Federal Indian Law, which does indeed allow for the exemption of peyote usage for Indians. Federal Indian Law directly links to John Marshall’s 1823 imbrication of the Doctrine of Discovery into U.S. Supreme Court precedents in *Johnson v. M’Intosh*.

Unfortunately, despite the rhetorical gains of UNDRIP on the international stage, it is not legally binding for the U.S., which is why it can go on dominating Indigenous People with legal impunity on the international stage. As Ernst Halbmayer points out, in contrast to the widely popular UNDRIP, the less-discussed and actually legally binding *International Labour Organization’s Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*, signed by most South and Central American governments, has seen little ratification elsewhere.¹²¹ This does not mean that governments in these places are much better in their treatment of actual Indigenous Peoples, but they have had to acknowledge a persistent presence in ways that the broader culture and psychedelic advocacy rhetoric in the U.S. tends to ignore. Ayahuasca use is generally legal throughout the region, though specific groups have at times had to fight for it. The diaspora of ayahuasca amid such

¹²¹ Ernst Halbmayer, ed., *Indigenous Modernities in South America* (Herfordshire, UK: Sean Kingston, 2018): 18.

asymmetrical power relationships warrants my attempt to make sense of the various discursive motivations surrounding ayahuasca.

One of the first things we need to acknowledge about ayahuasca in diaspora, then, is its presence in places that *do not* have a large Indigenous presence in public knowledge while simultaneously acknowledging the ways eurochristian discourses are premised on Indigenous erasure. Most people in the United States receive little education throughout their lives regarding Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, and what they do receive is often troublingly skewed by eurochristian perspectives. This again necessitates a heightened attention to discourse itself.

As I have said, my positioning will inevitably seem counterintuitive to research on ayahuasca healing practices advocating for the employment of ayahuasca to treat people with substance abuse issues. In such research, as Blainey's article above exemplifies, ayahuasca's therapeutic potential establishes a desire among its advocates to treat it differently than other so-called "drugs." Religious groups, who often support medical research here, also call for similarly exceptional regard with respect to ayahuasca. A discursively motivational "potential" for ayahuasca in diaspora by far underwrites the bulk of scientific articles published on ayahuasca. I do not disagree in whole with the idea of such potential. On the other hand, I want to emphasize the ethical problems associated with the long history of colonial violence, exploitation, and occupation of Indigenous lands, plants, animals, and natural resources. This is a currently under-discussed perspective within ayahuasca research.

The Drug War Game and Ayahuasca's "Origins"

"Playing along" with Drug War rhetoric has meant that scholars, lawyers, and ayahuasca users often have to advocate for ayahuasca against an international drug control system deeply influenced by the political and economic hegemony of the United States. While I again understand and support such efforts of advocacy, this study positions discourse around ayahuasca in diaspora within a longer history of colonization and exploitation of people and natural resources in the Americas. This means discussing forces that exceed the substances and figurations referred to as 'ayahuasca.' In becoming commodified, ayahuasca can signal earlier forms of violent exploitation such as mining, oil, and rubber tapping, all of which are expressive of what Michael Taussig has tracked as the mimetic "magic" of commodity-fetishism.

As Taussig's work has emphasized, the *drama* of the commodity fetish is itself a European-derived import to the "new world" and as such often obscures more localized efforts for Native survivance, though of course we see hybridized practices within the economics of the African slave trade. Again, the drama and the resulting hybridity is the playing-out of something imported. This in no way means that various economies and hybridized practices did not already exist at the time of European contact; it simply characterizes a motivational drama particular to European hegemony and the ways it dealt with the surprising existence of other humans in a "new world." When we buy into an exceptional perspective with respect to ayahuasca, we risk obfuscating how an entire history of exploitation works, and for this reason the plant-derived rubber that brought so much colonization to the Amazon lurks in the prehistory of ayahuasca. We do a

disservice to the environment and ourselves when we treat, for example, rubber as something mundane while treating ayahuasca as something sacred. Similarly, we risk Indigenous erasure when we conceive ayahuasca as ‘sacred’ and cocaine as ‘profane’.

At the same time, it is necessary to be attentive to the decontextualizing work that commodification accomplishes with respect to Indigenous modes of practice. The transnational nature of ayahuasca’s diaspora necessitates that my emphasis on discourse both compliment and be in tension with disciplinary discussions such as anthropology, which are concerned with emic understandings and ways of being among local groups. The transnational frame mirrors the secularized process that Burke saw with respect to language in its secularized, logological form as opposed to a theological one. Here, when we say that language points to a kind of transcendence, it is not a reflection of a pre-existing “system,” although one must, as Michel Foucault’s work insisted, be attentive the performative and “disciplining” habits that arise and become to greater and lesser extents rigid over time. The poetic structures are hortatory, transcendent, and physical simultaneously. They are motivated.

Issues of cultural “authenticity” permeate the motivations surrounding ayahuasca discourse, but the hybridity around its diaspora already appears within the context of the drama of colonization. There are, for example, ongoing scholarly debates concerning how long Indigenous Peoples have used ayahuasca. At certain times, entrepreneurs have also attempted to patent ayahuasca.¹²² Such debates are quickly inflected by various

¹²² Center for International Environmental Law, “Protecting Traditional Knowledge: Ayahuasca Patent Dispute,” accessed December 28, 2019, <https://www.ciel.org/project-update/protecting-traditional-knowledge-ayahuasca/>.

positions of advocacy seeking protection for Indigenous populations, notions of authenticity, and efforts at cognitive liberty with respect to the use of psychoactive substances. For instance, the June 2019 issue of *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* announced the findings of anthropologist, Melanie Miller, *et al.*, who analyzed artifacts from a thousand-year-old ritual bundle in Bolivia. As they report:

The cooccurrence of harmine, found in yage (*Banisteriopsis caapi*), and dimethyltryptamine, found in vilca and chacruna (*Psychotria viridis*), suggests that multiple plants may have been used to make ayahuasca, which can induce hallucinogenic trips; the plants may have been consumed as a composite snuff or brewed into a potent beverage. The finding hints at ayahuasca consumption during shamanic rituals as old as 1,000 years.¹²³

Despite the prestigious publication, actually proving that the substances found indeed point to ayahuasca is debatable.

In an attempt to debunk multiple claims for ancient use, Giorgio Samorini recently published an article on *chacruna.net* – a media outlet supporting popular dissemination of plant medicine research directed by Brazilian anthropologist, Beatriz Caiuby Labate – Samorini’s “Fake News About Ayahuasca’s Antiquity” pokes holes in several theories.¹²⁴ Steve Beyer sums up some of the motivations at work here:

Why such extraordinary claims for which support is so thin? I think there are two reasons. The first is that, in an attempt to legitimate ayahuasca use, its proponents

¹²³ P.N., “Chemical Hints of Ayahuasca Use in Pre-Columbian Shamanic Rituals,” *PNAS* 116, no. 23 (June 4, 2019): 11079, <https://doi.org/10.1073/iti2319116>.

¹²⁴ Giorgio Samorini, “Fake News About Ayahuasca’s Antiquity,” *Chacruna*, November 5, 2019, accessed November 28, 2019, <https://chacruna.net/fake-news-about-ayahuascas-archeological-antiquity/>.

invoke the culturally resonant trope of a millennia-old indigenous wisdom. The second is the odd affectation of European colonialism that indigenous people are without history—that, unlike Europeans, they are unchanging in their isolation and innocence. It then follows that the practices of present-day indigenous peoples must reproduce the practices of thousands of years ago. Both reasons, I believe, malign the creativity, adaptability, and ingenuity of indigenous cultures.¹²⁵

Amid these debates, I tend to follow a chapter by Peter Gow frequently cited among ayahuasca researchers. Gow argues:

ayahuasca shamanism has been evolving in urban contexts over the past three hundred years, and that it has been exported from these towns to isolated tribal people to become the dominant form of shamanic curing practice in the region. It evolved as a response to the specific colonial history of western Amazonia and is absent precisely from those few indigenous peoples who were buffered from the processes of colonial transformation, caused by the spread of the rubber industry in the region.¹²⁶

Regardless of the ancient uses of consciousness-altering substances in the region, the drama of ayahuasca is bound up within the displacements and constrictions of Indigenous peoples – even the concept of ‘Indigeneity’ itself – to eurochristian-dominated “modernity.”

Echoing Gow, Esther Jean Langdon and Isabel Santana de Rose, who track the Guarani people of Brazil’s appropriation of ayahuasca “shamanism” in the twentieth century, argue:

¹²⁵ Steve Beyer’s, “On the Origins of Ayahuasca,” *Singingtotheplants.com*, April 25, 2012, accessed November 28, 2019, <https://www.singingtotheplants.com/2012/04/on-origins-of-ayahuasca/>.

¹²⁶ Peter Gow, “River People: Shamanism and History in Western Amazonia,” *Shamanism, History, & the State*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Caroline Humphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 91.

the shamanism that has emerged out of this particular historical and political context is more adequately comprehended as a dialogical category resulting from the interaction between actors with different origins, discourses, and interests, and not as a historically and politically disembedded philosophy, logic, or spiritual consciousness.¹²⁷

As they note, the Guarani people have formed networks with international groups such as Sacred Fire of Itzachilatlan as well as local branches of Santo Daime, a well-known Brazilian ayahuasca religion. As Andrew Dawson has noted with reference to the founder of Santo Daime:

Irineu Serra [the religion's founder] is the 'Imperial Chief' whose 'soldiers' are led by 'commandments' and organized into 'battalions' regimented according to sex, age, and marital status. As if to underline further the military motif, members of Santo Daime who have consumed ayahuasca a number of times receive a uniform (*fardado*) to wear to official rituals.¹²⁸

The military metaphors, as Dawson says, are a phenomenon among all recognized Brazilian ayahuasca religions. The religious rhetoric invokes hierarchical frames reflective of a eurochristian worldview, although ayahuasca is frequently used by Indigenous groups for purposes of competitive sorcery.

Under colonization, pan-Indigenous identities also emerged in response to a common colonizing enemy who in turn racialized them and classified them within a hierarchical cosmology that also temporalized Indigenous People as belonging to a static and transcendent place "outside of history." "Shamanism" was an ongoing term of

¹²⁷ Esther Jean Langdon and Isabel Santana de Rose, "(Neo) Shamanic Dialogues: Encounters between the Guarani and Ayahuasca," *Novo Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 15, no. 4 (May 2012): 37.

¹²⁸ Andrew Dawson, *New Era – New Religions: Religious Transformation in Contemporary Brazil* (London: Routledge, 2017), 73-74.

universal “Othering” used transnationally as a generic descriptor. This developed from a eurochristian religious poetics that superimposed theories of temporal, “civilizing” development onto an increasingly racialized conception of world history. The same impulse contributed to the view that “shamanism” exhibits generic access to trans-historic yet archaic “techniques of ecstasy,” to invoke Mircea Eliade’s term. As Dawson writes: “comparisons between Santo Daime and shamanism, both within and without the movement, should be set against the backdrop of debates and controversies surrounding the ritual consumption of ayahuasca.”¹²⁹ Hence again, my methodical turn toward discourse analysis.

Following Michel Foucault, Ernst Halbmayer has situated some impulses among pan-Indigenous movements as “counter-modernities”:

From the double nature of modernity as opposed to and encompassing counter-modernity it follows that nationalism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and violence are not really constitutive parts of an expanding modernity. They instead become, in a questionable detachment and externalizing projection, a counter-modern reaction to modernity produced by modernity itself. Consequently, an idealized modernity is emerging based on rationality and magically purified from violence, destructive wars and dictatorships. The dark side of enlightenment and the violence of modernity over large parts of the world is blurred and remains definitely obscured by a questionable detachment to purified modernity.¹³⁰

While Halbmayer notes the emergence of reactive pan-Indigenous movements during the mid-twentieth century, situating such a conception of Indigeneity only within a eurochristian conception of cultural “othering,” by which eurochristians began to

¹²⁹ Ibid., 97.

¹³⁰ Ernst Halbmayer, ed., *Indigenous Modernities in South America* (Herfordshire, UK: Sean Kingston, 2018), 10-11.

distinguish themselves from “primitive” others, reduces Indigenous Peoples to mere “traditionalist” reaction formations that reinforce an already eurochristian frame. Relying on “pure” conceptions of modernity, moreover, aligns Indigeneity with the same “counter-modern” impulses that produce extreme forms of identity-insulating, rightwing impulses.¹³¹

Reducing Indigeneity to an identity-construction is, however, only a way of furthering the erasure of Indigenous Peoples. As Russell Means says,

We [Indigenous Peoples] are resisting being turned into a national sacrifice area. We are resisting being turned into a national sacrifice people. The costs of this industrial process are not acceptable to us. It is genocide to dig uranium here and drain the water table – no more, no less.¹³²

The use of the language of sacrifice here points directly to a eurochristian dramatic frame. In order to understand Indigenous notions of tradition, one must break away from

¹³¹ Traditionalist tendencies, as I have explored in *A Transatlantic Political Theology of Psychedelic Aesthetics*, are inherently rightwing. However, we should also note that twentieth-century articulations of “indigenous nationalism,” even when framed from leftist perspectives, reveal a collusion with such rightwing essentialism. It is for this reason that we need to bracket indigenous movements from the revolutionary impulses of European thought such as Marxism, even though it is clear that at times a blurring of concepts occurs. For example, Marxism has long had a more capacious sense of humanity than Anglo-capitalism, which enticed people who were racially marginalized. But, as many African Americans in the U.S. experienced, it was all too easy for the international project to write off the concerns of African Americans during the war years. This opened an opportunity for liberals during the postwar years to vie for African American support in the emergent Cold War, staging the drama of Civil Rights rhetoric which, like international human rights rhetoric, always seems to be more about national security than doing something morally correct.

¹³² Russell Means, “For the World to Live. ‘Europe’ Must Die,” *archive.org*, July 1980, accessed November 30, 2019, https://archive.org/stream/ForAmericaToLiveEuropeMustDie/foramericatolive_read_djvu.txt.

oversimplified eurochristian notions of identity, based on binaries of race and linear temporality, such as “traditional versus modern.” At the same time, one must also acknowledge that the racialized assemblages produced over several centuries persist in affecting people’s lives, despite their very socially-constructed nature. To understand this is in no way to “become Indigenous.” Rather, it is to understand that the rhetorical situation and rhetoric itself deals with contextual proximities.

Nick Turnbull, for example, understands a negotiation of distance at the heart of rhetoric as producing contextual proximities. There are certainly echoes of Biesecker’s reliance on *différance* here. He explains:

Why define rhetoric as the negotiation of distance, rather than in terms of persuasion, or some other familiar definition? The main reason is that it does not presume persuasion is the object of rhetorical engagement, but rather the performance of social distancing, which is more general and encompasses persuasion as well. In many cases, persuasion is not the aim of discourse at all, but rather the mitigation of the possibility of conflict.¹³³

Twenty-first century notions of “rhetoric” do not conform to classic notions such as the Aristotelean “art of persuasion,” which is why an emphasis on framing remains essential to CDA and why an emphasis on deep framing focuses on intergenerational transference of religious poetics rather than “identity constructions.”

As Halbmayer notes, Indigenous modernities “emerge out of their relationship with colonial, national and global processes.”¹³⁴ He goes on to say:

¹³³ Nick Turnbull, “Political Rhetoric and Its Relationship to Context: A New Theory of the Rhetorical Situation, The Rhetorical and the Political, *Critical Discourse Studies*, 14, no. 2 (2017) 123, DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2016.1268186.

¹³⁴ Ernst Halbmayer, ed., *Indigenous Modernities in South America* (Herfordshire, UK: Sean Kingston, 2018), 17.

contemporary indigenous modes of existence may neither be adequately understood by focusing on change, assimilation and destruction, as in modernization theory, nor by focusing merely on the continuity of indigenous cultural forms and practices and the indigenization of modernity.¹³⁵

Moreover, as I have said, the notion of ‘Indigenous Peoples’ becomes quickly convoluted through both negotiations with nation states by individual groups and nation states like Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, and Bolivia that embrace collectively Indigenous national imaginaries even while existing Indigenous populations continue to be expropriated.¹³⁶

What becomes a central issue from a CDA perspective is the massive decontextualization at work, and this happens both with Indigenous Peoples and ayahuasca simultaneously as part of the same process.

It is helpful to add to this the twenty-first century notion of *context collapse*, as defined by anthropologist Michael Wesch with respect to new media:

an infinite number of contexts collapsing upon one another into that single moment of recording. The images, actions, and words captured by the lens at any moment can be transported to anywhere on the planet and preserved (the performer must assume) for all time. The little glass lens becomes the gateway to a blackhole sucking all of time and space – virtually all possible contexts – in upon itself.¹³⁷

Wesch’s “little glass lens” is a particular reference to cameras on our computer screens that decontextualize our rhetorical efforts in a digital and increasingly globalized world.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 19.

¹³⁷ Michael Wesch, “Context Collapse,” *Digital Ethnography* July 31, 2008, <http://mediatedcultures.net/youtube/context-collapse/>.

Contrasting the globalizing discursive moves deterritorialized by electronic mediums, Indigenous writers such as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) have noted the disorienting tendencies that emerge within powerful Indigenous activist movements such as Idle No More in Canada, where the decontextualization of movement leadership in online environments reduces the roles that Indigenous Peoples in marginalized communities with little access to internet technology can have in any decision-making processes.¹³⁸ Thematically, ayahuasca's diaspora signals this same context collapse while also warranting ethical scrutiny with respect to how more marginalized populations fair at the local level. Matthew Conrad has expressed the issues in relation to the internet's role in the ayahuasca diaspora: "The ability to influence or even control production, both discursively and through the promotion and dissemination of commodities, is a powerful force re-embedding ayahuasca and associated cultural structures within neoliberal power relations."¹³⁹ This is particularly relevant during the 2020 Corona Virus crisis, where ayahuasca group sessions experiment electronically. We are thus likely to see increasing arguments about ayahuasca rituals and authenticity parallel to Aisha Beliso-De Jesús's important work on Santéria and the internet.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 220-226.

¹³⁹ Matthew Conrad, "The Global Expansion of Ayahuasca through the Internet," *The Expanding World Ayahuasca Diaspora: Appropriation, Integration and Legislation*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (New York: Routledge, 2018), 111.

¹⁴⁰ Aisha Beliso-De Jesús explores this through transnational impulses with respect to *Santería*. Aisha Beliso-De Jesús, *Electric Santería: Sexual Assemblages of Transnational Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

Arguments about authenticity and origins of “sacred” or traditional use can often obscure the concerns of Indigenous Peoples.

A Deep Framing Approach

Corresponding to these concerns about authenticity, at times some Indigenous colleagues of mine have rightfully had reservations about my project because, first, they are so used to eurochristians like myself being interested in ayahuasca for their own personal “spiritual” explorations and second, because ayahuasca is not a “medicine” local to the North. For them, even engaging in the discussion risks decontextualization. It is thus a discursive risk I undertake in trying to write about the issue to begin with, but I have ultimately chosen a stance advocating more critical awareness with respect to the longer history of eurochristenDOMination as an ethically necessary task. The DOM here refers to Steven Newcomb’s *Pagans in the Promised Land*, where he analyzes linguistic frames such as the vertical notion of the Latin notion of ‘the dominate’:

A key point here is that the categories and concepts of federal Indian law, including such concepts as discovery, dominion, domestic dependent nation, tribe, and so forth, are cultural and cognitive products of the dominating society. These terms are evidence of the various ways that the society of the United States has employed the human imagination to interact with the original indigenous peoples of this hemisphere in a dominating and subjugating manner.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008), 18.

Echoing this analytical approach, Tink Tinker explicitly addresses the “up-down image schema” imposed upon Indian Peoples through colonization – the same up-down schema that Newcomb attributes to the Doctrine of Discovery. As Tinker writes:

Here, I am not simply objecting to the language of god and creator as language embedded in a european worldview or christian ideology. It is much more crucial to notice that imposing these religious metaphors of a hierarchical divine as an overlay on Indian cultures irredeemably distorts Native culture and destroys the intricacies and the beauty, that is, the coherence of the Native worldview. An up-down linguistic cognitive image schema functions to structure the social whole around vertical hierarchies of power and authority.¹⁴²

As Tinker argues, an Indigenous worldview is relational, emphasizing locality and balance as essential to Indigenous Peoples:

By local and cosmic we mean to say that Indian folk experience their own place at the center of a cosmic whole, but that their experience of the cosmos is not an experience they would be in any way tempted to impose on other peoples who experience the cosmos in other local places. To that extent, Indian communities were never evangelical or proselytizing.¹⁴³

But the sad fact is that, through displacement, many Indigenous Peoples and practices have been decontextualized from their embeddedness within local environments. When people confuse identity with worldview, they erase the possibility of an account of deep framing. Similarly, when people point to mere biological essentialism of DNA tests to claim “heritage,” they draw on social imaginaries while supporting that with inherently

¹⁴² George E. “Tink” Tinker, “Why I Do Not Believe in a Creator God,” *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*, ed. Steve Heinrichs (Waterloo, CA: Herald Press, 2013), 169.

¹⁴³ George E. “Tink” Tinker, “The Irrelevance of euro-christian Dichotomies for Indigenous Peoples: Beyond Nonviolence to a Vision of Cosmic Balance,” *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, ed. Irfan A. Omar and Michael Duffey (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 207.

racist pseudoscience. Indeed, important recent work has been done related to the transmission of intergenerational trauma at the genetic level for Holocaust survivors and their children,¹⁴⁴ but this research is emergent and a far cry from using 23andme to determine and claim “heritage.” Surface-framed approaches to identity participate in the terministic screening of coloniality, where Indigenous People are often seen merely as a reactive identity-construct reifying colonial modernity.

Ayahuasca research, even when well-intentioned, has often been framed by, and contributed to, such terministic screens. Bernd Brabec de Mori notes that academic authors such as Jeremy Narby, along with countercultural intellectuals such as Terence McKenna – who have done much to popularize ayahuasca – nevertheless rely on outdated notions of uninterrupted, pre-historic traditional knowledge from nineteenth-century anthropology:

Narby is not the only author writing about age-old ayahuasca traditions. In the ayahuasca-related literature one commonly finds statements like “ayahuasca is a sacred drink used for millennia by numerous indigenous groups” (Luna & White, 2000, on the book’s back). In some cases, one can distinguish between analytical and somehow – maybe unconsciously – idealized statements. For example, McKenna (1999) first analyzes: “about all that can be stated with certainty is that it [ayahuasca] was already spread among numerous indigenous tribes throughout the Amazon basin by the time ayahuasca came to the attention of Western ethnographers in the mid-nineteenth century” (p. 189). However, later in the same paper he states that “the lessons we have acquired from it [the association of ayahuasca with the human species], in the course of millennia of coevolution, may have profound implications for what it is to be human” (McKenna, 1999, p. 207). Unfortunately, there is still no evidence found to back up the assumption that ayahuasca has been used since pre-Columbian times. The often quoted “archeological evidence” by Naranjo (1986) exclusively shows that people in the

¹⁴⁴ Rachel Yehuda, Nikolaos P. Daskalakis, Linda M. Bierer, Heather N. Bader, Torsten Klengel, Florian Holsboer, and Elisabeth B. Binder, “Holocaust Exposure Induced Intergenerational Effects on FKBP5 Methylation,” *Biological Psychiatry* 80 (September 1, 2016), 372–380.

Ecuadorian rainforests produced small ceramic vessels since about 2400 B.C., but there is no valid indication of ayahuasca use (see also McKenna, 1999, p. 190; Bianchi, 2005, p. 319).¹⁴⁵

Published during the period when entrepreneurs had tried to patent ayahuasca, Narby's *Cosmic Serpent* presents itself as an attempt to translate Ashaninca practices of Amazonian shamanism for the largely deaf ears of Western biomolecular science. He argues that Amazonian shamanism offers an alternative source of biomolecular knowledge, and the book is presented as a practical strategy in the face of five hundred years of inequity:

I believe it is in the interest of Amazonia's indigenous people that their knowledge be understood in Western terms, because the world is currently governed by Western values and institutions. For instance, it was not until Western countries realized that it was in their own interest to protect tropical forests that it became possible to find the funds to demarcate the territories of the indigenous people living there. Prior to that, most territorial claims, formulated in terms of the indigenous people's own interests, led to nothing.¹⁴⁶

The intentions are laudable in the context, yet Brabec de Mori argues that the persistence of motivational impulses to ascribe ancient use of ayahuasca throughout the Amazon are detrimental to Indigenous Peoples living there. Following Gow and basing his ethnohistory of the Amazonian diaspora on ethnomusicological analyses of *icaros*, or ayahuasca songs, Brabec de Mori locates structural similarities among ayahuasca songs that reveal them to be recent imports to more localized groups.

¹⁴⁵ Bernd Brabec de Mori, "Tracing Hallucinations: Contributing to a Critical Ethnohistory of Ayahuasca Usage in the Peruvian Amazon," *The Internationalization of Ayahuasca*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Henrik Jungaberle (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011), 23-24.

¹⁴⁶ Jeremy Narby, *The Cosmic Serpent* (New York: Penguin, 1998), 148.

The breaking and ignoring of Indigenous relations is part of a genocidal process, which I argue is embedded in a eurochristian poetics of sacrifice and erasure. One of the most powerful tools for recent eradication and displacement of Indigenous Peoples has been the rhetoric of the War on Drugs, itself embedded in the same eurochristian framing that produced the static and transcendent “shamanic other.” This fiction was never truly a matter of “recognition,” since it was always a kind of projected fantasy structure that has been repeatedly re-cognized (in Marshall McLuhan’s sense) within eurochristian communities. To name this fiction is not, however, to say that non-eurochristian ways of being simply do not “exist” or only exist within a poetics of modernity that names ‘Indigeneity’ as such; rather, it is a way of attending to the fact that the purpose of the fiction has been to strategically *erase* Indigenous peoples. The purpose of the *poetics* of eurochristian modernity, as Russell Means intuitively identifies with his identification of *revolution* as embedded within eurochristian sacrificial thought above, is the process of erasure itself.

Again, this speaks to the *dramatism* Burke had noted with respect to terministic screens and the *motivations* underlying them. I believe these motivations are inherently genocidal to Indigenous Peoples, even if we admit that the very conception of Indigeneity is a reaction-formation to European modernity. Moreover, erasure produces amnesia as its product, so that those who have not thought much about the problem or engaged with longer histories relegate the construct of ‘genocide’ to *intent-based* language of eurochristian legal prosecutions, as if the only way to address it were to catch an evil overlord red-handed. But part of my point is the fact that the framing already inherits and reproduces the poetics of erasure, so when eurochristians make the common defense

move that puts themselves into an exceptional state merely because they deny *intent*, that thought-gesture is a historically-induced reaction formation to produce erasure itself. Nor does my location within such poetic framing “absolve” those who have inherited such a worldview.¹⁴⁷

Indigenous perspectives help to situate the poetics of sacrifice at work in a eurochristian worldview. As Tinker writes:

As the interest of the old mediterranean cults shifted away from communal well-being, the so-called mystery religions introduced a newly developing concern for individual salvation. It is this shift that eventually won the heart of greco-roman Christianity.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ I partly know this because I have done and do it myself. It is not my own *intention* to do this. In fact, I *intend* something altogether different. It is the staging and blocking of a eurochristian director at work whose name may be Jesus or God himself. Signaling my *lack* of intention points to the fact that I am in relation with Indigenous Peoples *despite whether or not I intend*. Being in relation does not mean *becoming*, nor does it mean being “called into being,” to being “awoken” to the structure of an ethical relationship, as in the Hebrew articulation of *hineini* – or rather, if such a call existed it would only itself signal a prior relationship.

Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis* gives a classic account of the linguistic depth and interiorizing of this Hebrew term, particularly in contrast to the externalized nature of Homeric writing. Often translated as ‘Here I Am’, Auerbach also notes it can also mean ‘Behold’. Emmanuel Levinas has written much on the ethical implications of the “call/face” to – and the interruption of – sacrifice in this ancient story. For him in ways that precede language. This is not the place the kind of detailed analysis necessary for Levinas’s conception of metaphysics and ethics – but I mention this to note that there is indeed subtlety within European traditions paralleling my use of Kenneth Burke’s *dramatism* in this chapter. That subtle place might be a place of comparison with what my Indigenous friends mean when they say a phrase like “all our relations.” A good parallel to the subtleties around European concepts of language and metaphysics while reflecting different political positions appears in an account of a famous encounter between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger at Davos, Swizerland in 1929: Michael Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, Heidegger* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 2000).

¹⁴⁸ George E. “Tink” Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*, (New York: Orbis, 2008), 77.

He then goes on to state:

The synoptic gospels' metaphoric paradigm for the good, the goal of all life, the *basileia tou theou* (the so-translated kingdom of God) is consistently interpreted in individualistic terms. The *basileia*, we are told, has to do with the individual's relationship with God or with the individual's call to decision. Any communitarian notion of it being many people together, or all peoples, or all of creation, is little mentioned.¹⁴⁹

Indigenous peoples in the north consistently perform an alternate, non-sacrificial worldview in the frequently repeated phrase, "All Our Relations."

Thinking in terms of an "All Our Relations" is very hard for a eurochristian like myself to understand, because it is not so much a kind of *hypostasis* or *understanding*, if what we mean by that is a supportive frame underscoring eurochristian existence.

Moreover, even if I conceptually recognize, say, the positive environmental implications for an "All Our Relations" deep framing, it is a worthy intellectual consideration but not part of an intergenerational fabric of my, or any other eurochristian's being. The "authorship" or "composed underscoring" in my eurochristian tradition is indeed, however, part of the historical inheritance of my deep framing. I know well that the "book of Nature" is an early modern notion, as is the conception of God as author, and Nature's being full of "secrets" I can "discover"; but I also think what Indigenous people mean by "All Our Relations" is not a matter of the face of God or God's backparts.

Without digressing into a theological argument here, the point I am making is that Indigenous People are constantly conscripted within the eurochristian dramatic scheme;

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

indeed, even pan-Indigenous concepts like Indigeneity itself in the ways most people *name it* participate in this drama. Despite the conscription, a deep framing persists intergenerationally. As Burke has argued, it is not a question of *naming* or doing theology but a matter of looking at the ways dramatism and terministic screens manifest a kind of structured transcendence. Burke's use of the term 'transcendence' here importantly operates on the hither-side of notion transcendence borne of theology and rather speaks to the symbolic acting that language in performance does and the meaningful web of associations manifesting from language itself.

The deception of the eurochristian frame is its inability to see something "Other" to itself due to its universalizing tendencies. Just because the cultural "other," which is produced by a eurochristian drama, is itself its own construction does not mean that "another," outside of that process of construction, cannot exist. Nor does it mean that in stating this rather obvious logical fact that I have merely created an "essentialized" category for my use of terms like 'Indigenous', which I capitalize as a reminder of the inattention paid to Indigenous People's need for survivance. The process I am calling attention to here begins through the relegation of the culturally "other" to the eurochristian *sacrificial* frame, where an "other" is produced precisely to be sacrificed. Thus, this introduction into terministic screens or eurochristian poetics is a kind of name game various distinct Indigenous Peoples are conscripted to play, and the name game itself masks the erasure of actual people in a way that situates them as ready for sacrifice on the altar of modern progress, or else it mystifies them into a quasi-non-existence while eurochristian terminology becomes a mere cipher by which romanticizing about

“wildness” are projected. In that situation, it does not matter how much the “other” is revered or not, because the very process of cognition has already relegated the “other” to a violently decontextualized representation wherein the “other” becomes merely one among many instances of “symbolic action.”

Certainly, we ought to be a bit suspicious of Kenneth Burke’s notion of dramatism as its own terministic screen, because it risks the relegation of the “other” to a kind of western tragic-drama based on notions of sacrifice evidenced by a scholarly lineage on the notions of sacrifice, performance, and liminality. Still, the notion of dramatism is helpful in understanding that if the frame demands the sacrifice, it must produce the sacrificial. It is in this sense that I see *motivational* structures at work within a deep frame like ‘eurochristian’ that exceed an individual’s intentions. Burke importantly thematized the poetics of sacrifice integral to the eurochristian tradition of which I write. That ought to give pause to critics who may relegate the concept of eurochristianity to a kind of “reverse discrimination,” which is itself another mask for erasure that privileges notions of the *potential* for a “universalized” and “hybrid” notion of “spirituality” amnesiac of historical oppression.¹⁵⁰

Because the eurochristian phantasy structure persists in iterations today that may sometimes seem innocuous, if even out of mere habit, the genocidal impulse in *erasure* persists as well. This opens writers like myself to charges of hyperbolism or “moral purity”; but from an account of deep framing, these are well-worn cognitive paths that are

¹⁵⁰ For example, uncritical discourse on “shamanism.”

ready-made to write a perspective like mine off. For example, because I am a eurochristian myself, how can I not be simply attempting to preserve my own career advancement in writing a piece like this? How is this not a kind of moral posturing surreptitiously designed to benefit myself, to advertise my own exemption from historical genocide by “heroically” advocating for those “less fortunate” than myself?

Implied in such questions are conflicting identity claims under a liberal politics of recognition that perpetuate erasure by pulling the rug out from under any possibility of critique. Critique becomes quixotic, a parody that, by definition, reads the entire situation as a farce. Tragedy remains relegated to a eurochristian metaphysics. This impulse occurs even in excellent postcolonial works such as David Scott’s *Conscripts of Modernity*,¹⁵¹ which for all their brilliant analysis of postcolonial conditions, merely re-inscribe a theoretical attention to Greek tragedy with its sacrificial framework and a whole discourse of sacrifice and scapegoating that has been superimposed onto Indigenous Peoples for centuries; just as eurochristians simultaneously formulate their self-serving narratives of “development.” We certainly need to understand this framework of sacrifice while simultaneously not being seduced into a reiteration of it because that would perpetuate erasure.

The global exigence demands an interdisciplinary approach to ayahuasca in the context of this erasure because the rhetoric of the War on Drugs has been so brutal. In order to even write a sentence like that, however, I risk re-inscribing a narcissistic version

¹⁵¹ Indeed, my own use of the word “conscript” is indebted to Scott’s book.

to a notion of the Anthropocene. On the one hand, a concept like the Anthropocene rightly addresses the human-created impact on the environment. On the other hand, it is a terministic screen that risks reproducing an exceptionalist and androcentric frame cultivated by eurochristian thought. Historically, the figure of the “shaman” has been produced precisely to signify an overcoming of the divide between the human and the nonhuman. Yet in the eurochristian schema, because “Nature” is always already merely an externalized product of creation,¹⁵² the universalized notion of the “shaman” really occupies a placeholder for a kind of nostalgia produced by eurochristianity to begin with while simultaneously offering a kind of “hope” that paradoxically unites the exceptional human and “Nature,” and – implicitly, “God” as creator. It is thus the ultimate manifestation of primordial power, so there is no wonder why so many “westerners” pursue such a status by becoming shamans themselves, but *that* pursuit has little to do with the various groups that make up ‘Indigeneity’, except that belief only in a eurochristian-formed Indigeneity simultaneously perpetuates the erasure of Indigenous Peoples.

When we imagine “shamanisms” that present “alternative” modes relying on “non-ordinary” or “ecstatic states,” we are often merely preserving the frame of eurochristianity. To take one easy example: how do we determine an “ordinary” from a “non-ordinary” state? What is “ordinary” in a state of context-collapse? The “non-

¹⁵² Again, for a more subtle discussion on post-Kantian philosophical approaches, including to what extent Nature exists outside of logical thought, see David Friedman’s *Parting of the Waves*.

ordinary” and “ecstatic” often operate under a hoary aesthetic hegemony, even when it builds upon supposedly sound anthropological sources.

Nationalist and transnational discourses dramatize this process. With respect to transnational movements in Mexico and Peru, Jacques Gallinier and Antoinette Molinié invoke the term “Neo-Indian”:

A new symptom is that the anthropologists’ writings are now the first to be plundered, especially for what they reveal about the meanders of indigenous “cosmovisions.” This is fertile ground in which neo-Indian commentaries flourish. They show no interest in studies devoted to economic, political or kinship issues, and even less interest, obviously, in “syncretism.” What counts are pre-Hispanic representations of the cosmos, anatomy, and physiology. This predatory attitude arises from the idea of an unbroken continuity between the distant past and the present, ignoring the vicissitudes of the Conquest and the ensuing colonization.¹⁵³

Here the authors distinguish neo-Indians from “Indians in peasant communities” by defining “neo-Indians” not as a class but as “action groups with an ideology of variable geometry, updated through rituals and a multitude of cultural media.”¹⁵⁴ As they say, “A neo-Indian particularity is that its ideology follows a dual movement: rootedness in the local, and the continental projection of a transnational ideology.”¹⁵⁵ But the hierarchy involved in assigning “peasant” status persists.

They further note:

It would be wrong to consider neo-Indian movements as merely imitations of the North American or European New Age, with slightly different decorative

¹⁵³ Jacques Gallinier and Antoinette Molinié, *The Neo-Indians* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2013), 213-214.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

symbolism. They are one of the avatars of a long series of interactions between the two continents that can be traced back to art and literature.¹⁵⁶

Aesthetic hegemony remains one of the mechanisms of eurochristian domination, even when such movements actively situate an identity that espouses itself to be an alternative to that. It would seem that the “neo-Indian” category here adequately expresses Turnball’s articulation of rhetoric as a negotiation of distance or contextual proximities. This is true within an actively constructed positioning within context-collapse, but if we recall Biesecker’s critique of Bitzer’s over-reliance on a static conception of audience, we see a parallel move with the so-called “neo-Indian” whose subjectivity is engaged with reaction-formations embedded within the discourse of the anthropologists’ “official” depiction of pre-Hispanic culture. The “neo-Indian” here is a kind of rhetor, but we ought not buy into the aesthetic schema wherein this Indian rhetor is integrated as either tragic hero or farcical parody.

According to a conventional binary thinking, we might suppose that the “non-neo-Indian” is somehow the philosopher in contrast to the rhetor (neo-Indian), exhibiting a kind of pure being in contrast to the being that “knows itself” as performance. Such a binary reproduces a threshold between being and performance typical of the eurochristian imaginary’s fetishization of the fetish, the poetics of sacrifice, which is itself the embodied performance of alienation itself. If embodiment in this respect is the dramatic, iterating dissemination of alienation, what kind of erasure is instanced perpetually in this being itself?

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 216.

The erasure is one embodied within the dialectic itself and Hegelian *Aufhebung* and its broader cultural reception.¹⁵⁷ In other words, the eurochristian conception of being is itself premised on erasure in the uptake of a dialectical synthesis deeply rooted within western thought. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno describe much of this process in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, but they see marginalized others as “becoming Jews” in their articulation of the deep-seated anti-Semitism pervading Enlightenment thought. Whether or not they have accurately “read” Hegel, they point to a socio-cultural situation saturated with the poetics of sacrifice. In this drama, one does not get to become “human” unless one has become alienated, and unless accompanying that alienation there is a category of “transcendence” which becomes itself a place-holder for the alienated being. This is entirely different than an “All Our Relations” frame.

It may very well be that eurochristian conceptions of “God” occupy the instance of the eurochristian, static-transcendent being, but ironically within that schema, it is the “other” who gets “spiritualized” by being named as static and transcendent and thus worthy of sacrifice. The schema’s self-preservation is upheld by its willingness to sanctify that which it massacres. I again admit that some critics will see this characterization as inherently (post)structural in the fact that I ascribe a kind of agency to a transhistorical and transgenerational rhetorical motivation that exceeds intention. In

¹⁵⁷ This is an admittedly larger discussion than I am willing to take on here. The reader should refer to my analyses of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in a series of posts on *The New Polis* (www.thenewpolis.com) during 2019. As I argue there, Adorno and Horkheimer rely on Enlightenment as a particularly *literary* construction. They also capably articulate the Indigenous genocide belongs to the process of enlightenment before the Shoah.

such a case, am I not simply *denying* a kind of agency that I contradictorily wish to invoke among my readers? In philosophical terms, am I not simply reinstating a kind of metaphysical description? Reverting to essentialism?

My answer to these questions is that they themselves rely upon metaphysical assumptions inherent within eurochristianity that underwrite our contemporary assumptions about individuals' rights. It is at this point that I need to reinvoke a claim I made earlier; namely, that the argument I am making consciously operates outside of a "left-right" political binary that privileges Indigenous perspectives. My critique of a liberal, rights-based paradigm risks being misconstrued either from an extremely left or an extremely right perspective even while it clearly rejects a centrist status quo. That is part of the point. The left-right regime is part of a process of erasure untenable for the future of the world. This is why I privilege Indigenous perspectives while resisting eurochristian impulses to romanticize or "become" Indigenous.

The Politics of Erasure

As my reference to Horkheimer and Adorno alludes, we cannot remove the structural violence toward Indigenous Peoples from the embedded and inherently genocidal eurochristian impulse. The impulse is a zero-sum game. It can only care for Natives within a framework by which they have converted and accepted eurochristian ways of being that extend beyond a belief in "God" or "Christ." In its own narcissism, it mistakes "care" for its own genocidal motivation to incorporate all others into its own schema, which it perceives as "mystery." Because it perceives this as "mystery," the

mystification acts an excuse to license genocide by obfuscating the intention of care and erasure within a paradigm in which care itself performs as erasure. This is a dramatic impulse that aesthetically persists and disciplines eurochristian modes of being that exceed individual intentions. In claiming such a reality this is not a projection of a universalized metaphysics, nor is it a call for Mignolo's border thinking. Rather, it is a description of a poeticized drama that very powerfully has reiterated its own hegemony in a way that makes it appear as natural. The evidencing of the persistence of this drama particularly appears on an international stage saturated by Drug War rhetoric.

Dawn Paley's *Drug War Capitalism*, for example, has taken a transnational approach to Drug War rhetoric, which she sees as a mask for continued colonization and removal of local populations in South and Central America to advance the opportunities for foreign investment and the spread of capitalism. In this situation, ayahuasca ought not be separated from other natural resources that have been commoditized, such as rubber, oil, and land for agribusiness. What often discursively sets ayahuasca apart from other commodities is its use in religious, spiritual, and healing contexts. However, one need not reflect long on traditional contexts for coffee, tobacco, and chocolate to see that the global consumption of substances autochthonous to the Americas are easily decontextualized through commerce.

While moral panics developed around such substances, they are now largely considered mundane. Tobacco and coffee were perceived with suspicion during the early formations of their commodification as substances, yet if we were to ascribe a kind of agency to these substances historically, to see them outside of an androcentric

perspective, we would quickly realize their roles with respect to world economics. Through its association with sacrament, healing, and Indigenous ways of being, ayahuasca has kept an “exotic” aura feeding what Taussig might call the “magic” of commodity fetishism. Feeding this process in the context of the Drug War, ayahuasca has also been stigmatized because of its classification as a Schedule I substance under the treaty signed after the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1971 during the global expansion of the U.S.-led War on Drugs. Despite impulses to exempt ayahuasca from that rhetoric, I propose that we confront the farce of Drug War rhetoric as embedded within a colonizing impulse that risks a tremendous amount of harm.

Carmen Boullosa and Mike Wallace have noted that U.S. policy influence through Drug War rhetoric creates real drug wars in countries south of the border between the United States and Mexico. In Mexico alone: “Since 2000, more than one hundred thousand [people] have been killed. Mass graves? Tens of thousands have been disappeared, many likely moldering in such pits. Horrific executions? Roughly two thousand of the hundred thousand suffered death by decapitation.”¹⁵⁸ These conditions are framed by a poetics of sacrifice.

Conventional wisdom would ask: What does the drug war in Mexico have to do with ayahuasca, which is certainly not part of this trafficking? In fact, covering the desire to see ayahuasca as an exception to this state of affairs, Evgenia Fotiou, among other

¹⁵⁸ Carmen Boullosa and Mike Wallace, *A Narco History: How the United States and Mexico Jointly Created the Mexican Drug War* (New York: OR Books, 2015), xxv.

ayahuasca researchers, has eloquently noted the need to move *away* from discussions of “drugs” in relation to ayahuasca:

I argue that this phenomenon should be looked at in the context of a new paradigm, or rather a shift in the discourse about plant hallucinogens, a discourse that tackles them as sacraments, in sharp contrast to chemical drugs. Ritual in this context is instrumental but not as something that maintains social structure; rather it fosters self transformation while at the same time challenging the participants’ very cultural constructs and basic assumptions about the world.¹⁵⁹

As I have repeatedly stated, I am sympathetic to such arguments, but my focus will be different because I see the rhetoric of the War on Drugs and the brutal conditions it continues to make as a carryover from a much older colonizing tendency.

Removing ayahuasca conceptually from material conditions affecting Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon, even with the intention to protect those very groups through “legitimate” ayahuasca use in diaspora, risks contributing to a destructive decontextualizing impulse. That said, I want to take Fotiou very seriously for her emphasis on discourse in relation to “sacraments.” She keenly notes that the process of becoming sacramental relies less on maintaining a communal social structure and more on fostering “self-transformation.” The paradox here is embedded within a liberal conception of self, what Charles Taylor has termed the “buffered self,” and ayahuasca’s potential to help one transform “cultural constructs and basic assumptions about the world.”¹⁶⁰ This kind of self-transformation is discursively rooted within a larger

¹⁵⁹ Evgenia Fotiou, *From Medicine Men to Day Trippers: Shamanic Tourism in Iquitos, Peru*, (Doctoral Dissertation. University of Wisconsin, Madison 2010).

¹⁶⁰ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 27.

discourse on psychedelics emphasizing transpersonal and, at times, transcultural aspects of psychedelic experiences. Even the conditions modeled as “set and setting” in psychedelic discourse should be situated historically within the eurochristian frames in which the theories emerge.

Conclusion

The eurochristian deep framing expresses itself both in the individuating impulse to emphasize “experience” as well as the universalizing impulse to ascribe transcultural qualities to the experience. As ayahuasca moves in diaspora, it risks accomplishing the implicit task of erasure of Indigenous Peoples already deeply framed within eurochristianity, even when eurochristians intend nothing of the sort. In order to understand this frame, we must attend to a longer colonial history. I concisely describe my methodological outcomes here, based on my use of CDA:

- 1) Consciously resists all eurochristian colonial forms because they are implicitly genocidal with intent to destroy Indigenous Peoples. This includes all attempts at evangelism, “spiritual” education, and conversion.
- 2) Is anticolonial, not postcolonial, because Indigenous Peoples remain colonized. Genocide is not a thing of the past, nor are Indigenous People of the past. They face and must resist genocidal conditions every second of every day.
- 3) Is deeply historical but does not see time as linear or “progressive” and especially draws on pre-contact time, seeing five hundred and thirty years as not very long, and employing genealogical strategies when useful. Non-Indigenous scholars in

particular need to adopt a perspective that cultural forms and ways of being persist from before contact with Europeans, yet all life fluctuates with the conditions it faces. It is absurd to believe cultures remain so static that they become transcendently fixed. Tradition and change can coexist, and both intergenerational knowledge and trauma is passed on. Thus,

- 4) Claims that discrete cultural identities persist against pedantic charges of “essentialism” or “virtue signaling,” arguing for the recognition of difference among non-native peoples when it comes to thinking about indigeneity.

Taken together, I believe that these perspectival conditions will help us better to analyze what is at stake in ayahuasca’s diaspora. In the following chapter, I address more of the longer history underwriting my view.

Chapter Three

The Doctrine of Discovery and the Long History of eurochristian Framing

Summary

This chapter begins with contemporary examples of ayahuasca use, discussing first concerns related to Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon, following Bernd Brabec de Mori. I then suggest that Luis León's conception of religious poetics is useful in analyzing ayahuasca's move to the north because it helps us attend to more nuanced relationships between notions of synchronicity and hybridity. As a contrast for ayahuasca use in the U.S., I tell an anecdote concerning a local Denver woman who spoke to me of using ayahuasca. Then I articulate how the economic and legal situations promoting liberal politics of recognition aid in Indigenous erasure. This underwrites the necessity for attention to longer history of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery and eurochristian framing, articulating what I see as a eurochristian poetics of sacrifice. After some attention to the longer history, I turn again to deep framing as articulated by Tinker and Newcomb. I then read *The Charter of New England* emphasizing its acceptance of the Doctrine of Discovery while tracing emergent racial stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples against well-known historical facts of the period. I argue that the eurochristian

framing becomes reoccupied through the more secular notion of liberalism. I conclude by bringing this historical material into more contemporary contexts surrounding ayahuasca's diaspora.

Ayahuasca, Rhetoric, and an Amazonian Context

With respect to Indigenous peoples in South America today, Bernd Brabec de Mori makes clear that the issues ayahuasca faces both at home and abroad are largely *rhetorical* in nature. Concerning the necessity to think historically of ayahuasca and address “tall tales,” he claims that an ethnohistorical perspective allows us to see continuity among Indigenous groups, such as the Yagua, who have no problem integrating new technologies into their practices against the static image of Indigeneity as being “of the past” that supports ongoing colonizing frames:

Another reason, however, seems to be the seductive image of being able to glimpse into a phenomenon which allows us to understand certain processes but which is also framed in the West as drug abuse, so that we feel the urge to “justify” it vis-à-vis the rest of the West. It makes a difference indeed whether we report to the public that we are investigating a hallucinogenic drug that was spread relatively recently through Catholic missions and by rainforest mestizos, or whether we report that we are researching a traditional remedy that has been used by forest Indians for at least five thousand years. The crucial point, I fear, is not what anthropologists and ethnohistorians think about the issue, but rather the opinion held by the public, the drug and biopiracy policy, and in the end, even by some research funders.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Bernd Brabec de Mori, “Tracing Hallucinations: Contributing to a Critical Ethnohistory of Ayahuasca Usage in the Peruvian Amazon,” *The Internationalization of Ayahuasca*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Henrik Jungaberle (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011), 27.

Brabec de Mori here implies the importance of the rhetorical situation amid multiple contexts and audiences in the global diaspora of ayahuasca.

Brabec de Mori is explicitly addressing entrenched discursive phantasies which situate Indigenous Peoples as occupying a kind of timeless and “uninterrupted” connection to an ancient past through their traditions. He includes an important qualifier in his argument for a focus on the recent spread of ayahuasca in Amazonian contexts:

One may criticize that I am skipping the indigenous point of view on the phenomenon, despite many indigenous practitioners who refer to pre-Columbian roots of ayahuasca use. I do so consciously because it [is] a known issue in anthropology that creation myths refer to the present rather than to the “history” as understood by the West...¹⁶²

He goes on to state:

I actually do represent the opinion held by indigenous people who do not engage in the commerce around ayahuasca. After some years of systematic research in the Ucayali area (on topics not specifically connected to ayahuasca use, mainly musical and other artistic practices) it became clear to me that the majority of locals does [*sic*] not consider ayahuasca as something necessary besides its function in attracting tourists, researchers, and development projects in present days.¹⁶³

Ayahuasca use among Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon is not “universal” among Amazonian Indigenous Peoples, yet people in the region who do not use ayahuasca realize its appeal to foreigners. In diasporic discourse, which condenses a variety of practices into a singular, fetishized concept of ‘Ayahuasca’, the substance takes on a saturation or cathexis of discursive energies. It is not merely a process of translation but

¹⁶² Ibid., 26.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

rather an instance of poetic *making*, or what Luis D. León has called “religious poetics” with respect to borderlands theories.

Luis León’s concept of religious poetics potentially aids the study of ayahuasca and ayahuasca religions in diaspora, where scholars too often employ the term “syncretic” without attention to the historical inequities involved in such mixing. If rhetoric is about the audience-driven choices made in discourse, poetics stresses the process of making the deliverable discourse. In the opening chapters of *La Llorona’s Children*, León does much to trace the historical emergence of *mestizaje* and borderlands conceptions, yet he stresses the poetics at work in concert with such history. For León, religious poetics emphasizes not just making something new but a *recovery* project situated in Indigenous practices such as Aztecan concepts of *flor y canto* and *neplantism* or “in-betweenness.” He writes:

central to the following is the return of *poesis* as a viable method not only to study and understand the way people attempt to make sense of themselves, others, and religion, but also to do, make and achieve *religion* itself. Rather than constructing a genealogy of borderlands poetics as a “return” after an absence, [...] I construct it as an instance of the Nietzschean eternal return.¹⁶⁴

Embedded in León’s conception of living and dying in borderlands spaces is the necropolitics of colonial efforts framing the self-formations subjectivating *mestizaje* concepts necessary to understand how ayahuasca and ayahuasca religiosities are imbricated in the drama of ongoing colonization. While León’s work is not based on

¹⁶⁴ Luis D. León, *La Llorona’s Children: Religion, Life, and Death in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004), 17.

South American contexts, it remains helpful for describing the phenomena underwriting ayahuasca religions in diaspora in the north. In relying on Nietzsche, León attempts to emphasize something more persistent, not just in a specific cultural practice that may underwrite or remain after a colonizing presence, such as the Aztec goddess Tonantzin “beneath” or “behind” *La Virgen de Guadalupe* as a kind of palimpsest, but the return of *forces* that humans must contend with to make religion. In doing this, he builds on hybrid formations present in Aztec culture before European contact, as well as, in David Carrasco’s terms, the “Jaguar Christians” who came after.¹⁶⁵

Toward the end of *La Llorona’s Children*, León characterizes Mircea Eliade’s mythological reading of Hegel as “perhaps romanticizing” the eternal return. Then he writes, “Nietzsche theorized the relentless and ironic return of all things in endless cycles of change and stability – including religion, debunking the Christian myth of forward progress and advance.”¹⁶⁶ León is trying to better capture a sense of *movement* outside of a linear trajectory toward a *Parousia*. In many ways his perspective compliments Walter Mignolo’s (see chapter 1) in terms of transnationalism, yet his work is much more geographically local in terms of migration cycles from Mexico to the southwestern U.S. following Tonantzin/La Llorona/Virgin worship. This aspect of his work is further evidenced in his later book, *The Political Spirituality of Cesar Chavez*. In localizing

¹⁶⁵ See León, *Ibid.*, 31 and David Carrasco, “Jaguar Christians in the Contact Zone,” *Enigmatic Powers: Syncretism with African and Indigenous Peoples’ Religions Among Latinos*, ed. Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo & Andres I. Perez y Mena (New Brunswick, NJ: Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, 1995), 69-80.

¹⁶⁶ Luis D. León, *La Llorona’s Children: Religion, Life, and Death in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004), 260.

interactions with land through the concerns of seasonal migration, León stresses not so much the carnivalesque nature of ceremonies but the daily and processual, material work of land labor through migratory and trade networks that precede European contact yet persist today. In this sense, his work is closer to Indigenous thinkers like Tink Tinker than to fellow Latino writers such as Mignolo, expressing the depth of character understood as Chicano in the southwestern U.S. Focusing on pattern of *flor y canto* and *neplantism*, León resists the *temporalizing* of genocide in a eurochristian poetics of sacrifice that “justifies” the erasure of Indigenous Peoples through a *rationalized* and *spiritualizing* process of transcendence. While much discourse on ayahuasca religions still employs the term, ‘synchronous’, León’s work stresses ‘hybridity’, yet even that distinction is not enough to address the more localized patterns of movement in León’s work.

Writers on the cultural history of ‘drugs’ frequently cite Friedrich Nietzsche’s call in *The Gay Science*: “Who will narrate to us the whole history of narcotica? – It is almost the history of “culture” of our so-called higher culture.”¹⁶⁷ While I believe León’s idea of religious poetics is important for understanding nuanced CDA approaches to ayahuasca diaspora in the U.S., it is also important to contextualize religious poetics with the work of Brabec de Mori and other anthropologists’ view of myths as responding to presents rather than origins. This again shifts away from Jungian and Spiritist notions (both

¹⁶⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 142.

eurochristian) of synchronicity and myth that inform expressions of *mestiz@* and “new age” ayahuasca use.

It is clear, however, as Brabec de Mori notes, that appealing to ancient origins carries a certain rhetorical weight in eurochristian contexts, where Indigenous Peoples must advocate for their cultural self-determination, traditional practices, land, and very existence. Nietzsche’s post-romantic rants against “so-called higher culture” and “civilization” importantly exist within eurochristian discourse itself, just as Spiritist emphases on reincarnation throughout Latin America emerge from eurochristian rather than Indigenous practices. As I have covered in previous chapters, Indigenous thinkers such as Tink Tinker and Steven Newcomb have addressed this issue with attention to deep-framing and Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs). Tinker rejects eurochristian notions of ‘religion’ for characterizing Native traditions. From his perspective, attention to hybridity alone is not enough.

In this chapter, I attempt to build on such thought by describing a longer history with respect to eurochristian framing. According to the methodological schema, my first principle is as follows: “It consciously resists all eurochristian colonial forms because they are implicitly genocidal with intent to destroy Indigenous Peoples. This includes all attempts at evangelism, “spiritual” education, and conversion.” Drawing on Indigenous thinkers’ critiques of the Doctrine of Discovery, my intention is to articulate the religious poetics at work in eurochristian framing. In this sense, while I am inspired and indebted to the work of Brabec de Mori and León for developing a way to analyze the diasporic issues surrounding ayahuasca as it moves north, I am also articulating the persistence of

eurochristian religious poetics to draw attention to the vastness of its influence – political, theological, and legal. From such an analysis, which may not seem at first to have much to do with ayahuasca directly, my hope is that we will have a better way to both see the ongoing discursive motivations at work and from there to intervene accordingly when necessary.

In this instance, we do well to attend to the words of Stuart Hall as he reflected in his later years on the project of Cultural Studies with respect to its “linguistic turn”:

There’s always something decentered about the medium of culture, about language, textuality, and signification, which always escapes and evades the attempt to link it, directly and immediately, with other structures. And yet, at the same time, the shadow, the imprint, the trace, of those other formations, of the intertextuality of texts in their institutional positions, of texts as sources of power, of textuality as a site of representation and resistance, all of those questions can never be erased from Cultural Studies.¹⁶⁸

Hall asks us to live in the space of tension between textuality and “the world,” where situations demand interventions: “culture will always work through its textualities – and at the same time that textuality is never enough.”¹⁶⁹

In current ayahuasca discourse, many people, perhaps following the impulse to “justification” that Brabec de Mori describes above, attempt to separate ayahuasca and psychedelics in general from other schedule one substances. In doing so, they cite the substances’ potentially spiritually-enhancing qualities to defend their exceptional use. However, once we take a serious look at a longer colonial history, we see that such

¹⁶⁸ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies,” *Essential Essays*, Vol. 1, ed. David Morley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 82. 71-99.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

claims to spiritual enhancement are not nearly as innocent or liberating as they may seem, even when they are couched within enduring values such as “religious freedom.” I want to ask us to be more critical concerning what underwrites our desire for spiritual discoveries. In what follows, I explore that underwriting through historical work related to eurochristian deep framing, but first let me begin with a quick narrative to illustrate how the lines of the between “religious” and “secular” with respect to legal status of a substance like ayahuasca hurts contemporary Indigenous Peoples *right now*. Things get especially blurry in circumstances where ayahuasca is not necessarily presented as religious sacrament but more broadly “spiritually” or life-enhancing. Let me turn now to current examples relating to ayahuasca discourse in diaspora local to Denver, Colorado, where I live. I will then I delve into a much longer history of eurochristian framing to situate the discourse in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Ayahuasca use in the U.S.

I offer an anecdotal example. One day, I was working on my research and writing at a local café near where I live, in Denver, Colorado. Spying one of my books on ayahuasca, the server offered to me that she had done ayahuasca “last year” (2018).

“Where?” I asked.

“Oh, up in Estes Park. They brought in a Colombian shaman, but I had to join the Native American Church so I could legally do it.”

“I’m familiar with the group,” I said, and we exchanged a brief conversation about her experience, which she found to be life-changing, especially with respect to her

relationship with her mother. People often use the analogy that using ayahuasca is like receiving twenty years of therapy in one night. When I asked how much it cost, she said between five and six hundred dollars, “But it was totally worth it.”

Prices have risen since. According to the website of the group who organized my server’s ceremony, the Origen Sagrada (Sacred Medicine) website now advertises ceremonies in Castle Rock, Colorado between Denver and Colorado Springs. Weekend ceremonies are booking at \$900 a person, while midweek sessions go for between \$650 and \$700 for the typical three-night ceremony.¹⁷⁰ Although these prices are astronomical in comparison to Amazonian contexts, the analogy to receiving therapy in U.S. contexts is useful if one considers the cost mental health service, which is often not covered by insurance. A long weekend “experience” may be much more appealing than committing to hourly sessions with a therapist for three-to-six months (depending on the therapist’s fees). That said, mental health is surely not the only reason people seek out ayahuasca experiences. Humans throughout history have always been drawn to “mind-altering” experiences. But these various rationales motivating ayahuasca use often obscure the contexts of ongoing colonization that Native Americans face locally. In an Indigenous context, ayahuasca and its appeal potentially aids in a long history of colonizing efforts. Liberal individuals’ needs for healing and self-discovery thus come at the expense of attention to local Indigenous People’s concerns.

¹⁷⁰ “United States and Worldwide Retreats,” *Origen Sagrada*, accessed November 30, 2019, <https://origensagrada.com/all-events/>.

With respect to Origen Sagrada, the phenomenon of selling membership cards to the Native American Church dilutes the ability for Indigenous Peoples to be recognized as culturally distinct and sovereign nations, even while such open membership works progressively against outdated laws of blood quantum based on racist nineteenth century pseudo-science. Here as elsewhere, the contradictory aspects of a legal system based on a liberal politics of recognition actually work to further erase Indigenous Peoples in the United States while maintaining a eurochristian-derived belief in religious freedom. None of these mechanisms for recognition acknowledge any ability for a localized Indigenous group to decide for itself who belongs, since identification becomes a matter of external recognition through registration cards, etc. Attached to notions of spirituality, this is part what León means by religious poetics. Thus, through that poetic process, Indigenous Peoples are discursively erased by a politics of recognition even while decontextualized commodities such as ayahuasca maintain an aura of Indigeneity within eurochristian romanticizing of “otherness.” Paralleling the economic access to ayahuasca ceremonies and treatments, the healing and spiritual growth of eurochristians becomes socially prioritized as Indigenous concerns are either erased or co-opted in terms of identity and “spirituality” or notions of “sacred medicine.”

In contrast to groups like Origen Sagrada, who promote the buying of Indigenous stature to ensure legality of their ceremonies, when “official” ayahuasca religions are successfully recognized by liberal legal systems, it is largely because their Christian-derived theologies are familiar enough for courts to indicate “serious” religious practice. Indeed, hybridity with Christianity was part of a rhetorical factor for getting the Native

American Church recognized during a period when Indigenous “religious” practices were outlawed. In recent years, rhetorical advocacy for use of the “entheogen”¹⁷¹ ayahuasca as sacrament have been steeped in references to legal permissions for peyotism of the Native American Church. Because U.S. laws “protecting” peyotists rely on hoary definitions of Native American ethnicity meant to *limit and ultimately eradicate* the use of peyote, when theologically-Christian ayahuasca religions are accepted without requiring such identity-based restrictions for membership, it effectively compounds the constraints put on Natives in the U.S. Peyote was banned initially by the Spanish Inquisition in 1620, Indians were not covered under it, so the rule was meant to keep Christianized Indians, mestizos, and eurochristians from using it.¹⁷² As an early restricted substance associated with Indigenous Peoples, it serves a special place in contextualizing the history of ayahuasca’s reception in the north.

Elizabeth Povinelli writes with respect to the U.S. Courts’ recognition of União do Vegetal (UDV) in 2006:

For instance, at the moment that the Supreme Court upheld the Circuit Court of Appeals’ exemption [for an ayahuasca religion], the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was removing all references to the ‘Native American Church’ in its regulatory guidelines and replacing it with reference to members of federally recognized tribes. This change aligns the enforcement regulations of the DEA with the actual language of the [American Indian Religious Freedom Restoration

¹⁷¹ The mono-theological concept implied by this neologism meaning “God-infused substance,” coined in the late 1970s, demonstrates the Christian and European universalizing cognitive frames that persist in attempts to recognize ayahuasca religions.

¹⁷² Alexander Dawson, *The Peyote Affect: From the Inquisition to the War on Drugs* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018): 2.

Act] AIRFRA,¹⁷³ which does not recognize members of the Native American Church, but recognizes Native Americans. So we have a decision that exempts members of the UDV on the basis of an analogy with members of the NAC, even as the DEA is refusing to recognize the equality of rights among all members of the NAC.¹⁷⁴

In other words, the general religious exemption for the psychedelic substance *par excellence* in the U.S. did not hold as AIRFA moved toward ethno-national definitions legitimating indigeneity, a clear politics of recognition.

Dawson notes that the indeterminate status of peyote in Mexico following its independence and rejection of the Inquisition was combined with Ignacio Sendajos's use of it to treat cholera during the 1830s. The eurochristian disposition inherent in the Inquisition's rules continue to underwrite peyote's status with respect to Native Americans under the colonial rule of the United States:

These claims about the inauthentic use of peyote by non-Indians underpin the curious place that peyote now occupies within the Mexican and US legal systems. Despite reams of scientific evidence attesting to its relative harmlessness, peyote is today illegal (a Schedule I drug in the US), classified as without therapeutic value, and subject to a high potential for abuse. That is, it is illegal unless one is a member of the Native American Church in the US (members must also have one-quarter Indian blood) and members of groups with a history of traditional use in Mexico (the most notable being the group historically known as the Huichols).¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Povinelli seems to be signaling the adaptations to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) after the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was a response to decisions about peyote in *Employment Division v. Smith*. I address this in more detail in chapter six.

¹⁷⁴ Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "The Brackets of Recognition: Recognition, Espionage, Camouflage," *Democracy in Crisis: Violence, Alterity, Community*, ed. Stella Gaon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 126.

¹⁷⁵ Alexander Dawson, *The Peyote Affect: From the Inquisition to the War on Drugs* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 4.

Dawson laments the racist hypocrisy preventing non-Indians from legally using peyote, yet Povinelli shows how Native Americans are caught in a crossfire of legal forms of recognition. Outside of arguments for religiously exempt status for ayahuasca in the north, which draw on the exempt status for peyote use among Native American Church members, a growing multitude of New Age¹⁷⁶ rhetoric similarly capitalizes on universalizing references to Indigenous practices while being steeped in western liberalism's fixation on the experience of the individual, liberal subject in a rights-based tradition.

Making things more complex, in 2016 the National Council of Native American Churches rejected attempts by groups claiming to be part of the Native American Church who use ayahuasca or other entheogens.¹⁷⁷ So, while the state regulations require people to “prove” their Indigenous status before the law on one front, Indigenous Peoples constantly battle appropriative rhetorics of “Indigenous spiritualities and traditions” employed by New Age seekers and fringe branches of the Native American Church on another front.

¹⁷⁶ I follow Wouter J. Hanegraaff's definition of New Age here, but I would qualify all of this as a description of subjectivation within the disciplining regime of liberalism. See below for a full account of Hanegraaff's lengthy definition.

¹⁷⁷ National Council of Native American Churches, “Statement of the National Council of Native American Churches Concerning the Proliferation of Organizations Appropriating the “Native American Church” Name with No Ties to the Indigenous Worship of the Holy Sacrament Peyote,” *Native American Rights Fund*, February 26, 2016, http://www.narf.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ncnac_statement.pdf.

While one might sympathize with cynicism among Native Americans with respect to the politics of recognition controlling who may be a member of the Native American Church, there are also more complex identity issues at stake. For example, the Oklevueha branch of the Native American Church advertises membership for a fee on their website:

WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER OF
OKLEVUEHA NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

Oklevueha Native American Church Card Offerings

- 1) Oklevueha NAC Membership Card (lifetime membership), (\$200.00)
- 2) Oklevueha Federally Recognized Tribal and/or ONAC Independent Branch Card (lifetime membership), (\$30.00)
- 3) Oklevueha NAC Membership Military Service/Veteran Card (lifetime membership), (\$20.00)

Associate Membership – For Those Who Are Joining for a short time (one year) in order to make connections with branches and other members or participate in or assist us in our work sustaining and defending Native American Culture, Ceremonies and Medicines.¹⁷⁸

If on the one hand, one needs to prove Indigenous status to use peyote or ayahuasca in a politics of recognition entrenched in centuries-long projects of wiping out – by violence or assimilation – all traces of Indigeneity; while, on the other hand, the status of Indigeneity and right to use peyote or ayahuasca can merely be bought and sold for a lifetime membership of \$200, there is a process of systemic erosion of Indigenous status

¹⁷⁸ “Why Becoming a Member of the Oklevueha Church will Benefit You,” *nativeamericanchurches.org*, accessed March 14, 2020, <https://nativeamericanchurches.org/joining-oklevueha-why-and-how/>.

from multiple directions at once with the same end result: cultural genocide due to a terminating erosion of an already problematic Federal Indian Law rooted in John Marshall's adoption of the Doctrine of Discovery into U.S. law and Indian policy.

In 2016, a controversy arose over an Oklevueha-associated group in Washington state named Ayahuasca Healings. The leaders of Ayahuasca Healings claim to be of the Oklevueha Native American Church, yet the older Native American Church denies such status. In late 2015, Ayahuasca Healings proclaimed itself as the first legal and "public" ayahuasca retreat in the U.S., and the established community of ayahuasca researchers and activists who have regularly published and worked to construct ethics-based practices related to therapeutic use of ayahuasca. The retreat organizers used large-scale internet marketing to promote their center and invited "donations" between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per session.¹⁷⁹ This produced both skepticism and concern from well-known ayahuasca activists and researchers such as Beatriz Caiuby Labate, Gayle Highpine, and Rick Doblin from the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS).

Particular attention was focused on co-founder of Ayahuasca Healings, Trinity de Guzman, in both online media and forums concerned with cults and New Age frauds.¹⁸⁰ As Ocean Malandra writes, "for de Guzman, money making marketing

¹⁷⁹ Ocean Melandra, "A Closer Look at that 'First Ayahuasca Church in America' Story," *reset.me*, February 1, 2016: <https://reset.me/story/first-legal-ayahuasca-church/>.

¹⁸⁰ liminal (), "Trinity de Guzman – Ayahuasca Healings (WA, USA)," *Cult Education Institute* January 25, 2016, <https://forum.culteducation.com/read.php?12,131244,131244>.

strategies and spirituality seem to be one and the same.”¹⁸¹ Guzman and his associates were banking on a widespread deregulation of ayahuasca in the United States based on the 2006 success of the UDV church in New Mexico. Like many South American ayahuasca enthusiasts, Ayahuasca Healings presents itself as part of a global movement, and while it uses some of the same language of many psychedelic enthusiasts and Burning Man attendees of a “global tribe,” the unabashed use of internet marketing by Ayahuasca Healings members have created concerns even among psychedelic users concerned with safety and integrity of spiritual practices.¹⁸²

Ethical concerns about mixing business practices and spirituality appear to partly align with concerns about neoliberal free global markets. As I have argued elsewhere,¹⁸³ sociologists of religion such as William Bainbridge and Rodney Stark, who use a cost-benefit analysis to assess new religious movements,¹⁸⁴ are unhelpful for assessing ayahuasca movements because of the difficulty in dealing historically with the concept of

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² This globalizing perspective is clearly evident in Trinity de Guzman’s interview with Lorna Liana, host of the Entheonation website and podcast. See Lorna Liana, “Ayahuasca Healings Controversy – Hard Questions Answered | Trinity de Guzman,” *entheonation.com*, <https://entheonation.com/trinity-de-guzman-ayahuasca-controversy/>.

¹⁸³ Roger K. Green, “Perennialism and Primitivism in Psychedelic Religions,” *esthesis*, March 17, 2017, <http://esthesis.org/perennialism-and-primitivism-in-psychedelic-religions-roger-green/>.

¹⁸⁴ See William Bainbridge and Rodney Stark, “Cult Formation: Three Compatible Models,” *Cults and New Religious Movements: A Reader*, ed. Lorne L. Dawson (Malden, MA 2003), 59-70.

‘shamanism’. In Bainbridge and Stark’s work on new religious movements, their use of “shamanism” retains hoary language concerning religious “primitivism.”¹⁸⁵ A more complex analysis of economic factors than one based on cost benefit is necessary.

With respect to shamanism, the liberal tradition opens up a host of historical problems because the term specifically derives from Siberian groups, was for a long time used pejoratively by eurochristian researchers who universalized it and later repackaged it as Romantic nostalgia for “archaic revivals.” For example, Philip Goodchild, in contrast, has written eloquently of the theology of money particularly in its relationship to emergent liberalism in England: “Economic globalization is the universalization of this religion through its drive for growth and power, its progressive colonization of all dimensions of life, and its commitment to growing debt.”¹⁸⁶ Shamanism in its universalized and commoditized form, along with “ayahuasca shamanism,” are often themselves reflections of the process of globalization rather than its archaic “predecessor.”

Because such perspectives are integral to non-Indigenous interest in ayahuasca and ayahuasca new religious movements, I will draw for clarity upon Wouter J.

Hanegraaff’s lengthy definition of New Age:

All New Age religion is characterized by the fact that it expresses its criticism of modern western culture by presenting alternatives derived from a secularized

¹⁸⁵ Roger K. Green, “Perennialism and Primitivism in Psychedelic Religions,” *esthesis*, March 17, 2017, <https://esthesis.org/perennialism-and-primitivism-in-psychedelic-religions-roger-green/>.

¹⁸⁶ Philip Goodchild, *Theology of Money* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 14.

esotericism. It adopts from traditional esotericism an emphasis on the primacy of personal religious experience and on this-worldly types of holism (as alternatives to dualism and reductionism), but generally reinterprets esoteric tenets from secularized perspectives. Since the new elements of “causality,” the study of religions, evolutionism, and psychology are fundamental components, New Age religion cannot be characterized as a return to a pre-Enlightenment worldviews but is to be seen as a qualitatively new syncretism of esoteric and secular elements. Paradoxically, New Age criticism of modern western culture is expressed to a considerable extent on the premises of that same culture . . . The New Age movement is characterized by a popular western culture criticism expressed in terms of a secularized esotericism.¹⁸⁷

Here Hanegraaff echoes sentiments that I cited in Halbmayer earlier. Because New Age perspectives are already critical of “modern western culture,” they can have a hard time seeing how they themselves participate in the historical and genealogical aspects of it, because their very comportment is toward a rejection of the “modern attitude.” In other words, New Age rejection of modernity favors a view of traditionalism that is itself derived from the “modern attitude’s” claims to disenchantment, a kind of “re-enchantment,” if you will. Neo-shamanism has its genesis in this perspective, but we should nevertheless contextualize this within a eurochristian discursive framing.

Oscar Calavia Saéz writes in his foreword to *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond*: “One might argue that ayahuasca has put Amazonian subjects into direct contact not with global society as a whole but rather with a very specific segment of it: namely, orphaned citizens of transcendence nostalgic for the enchantment of the

¹⁸⁷ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 520-521.

world.”¹⁸⁸ Moreover, Saéz writes, “The authenticity of ayahuasca asserts itself . . . by its very modernity. Indigenous people must suffer from a hopelessly exotic view of themselves if they limit their use of ayahuasca to relations with animal spirits and masters of game animals.”¹⁸⁹ This “view” is performed within the frame of eurochristian religious poetics.

As anthropologists have shown, ayahuasca use among Native Amazonians is extremely diverse. Both research and tourism tend to condense it into a single “entheogenic” substance, despite a variety of recipes and cultural contexts among various Indigenous groups. I believe this is largely due to the frames in which liberal subjects seek to have exotic experiences that “deculture” or deterritorialize” the individual “ego,” or what Charles Taylor has called “the buffered self,”¹⁹⁰ which is a notion indebted to Foucault’s longer genealogy of Christianized internal conscience. As addressed in chapter two, both Peter Gow¹⁹¹ and Michael Taussig¹⁹² have argued that the use and

¹⁸⁸ Oscar Calavia Saéz, “Foreword: Authentic Ayahuasca,” *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate & Clancy Cavnar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): xxv.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 27.

¹⁹¹ Peter Gow, “River People: Shamanism and History in Western Amazonia,” *Shamanism, History, & the State*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Caroline Humphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 90-114.

¹⁹² Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1987.

spread of psychedelic ayahuasca brews, especially in ritualized uses, is more precisely linked to the drama of colonialism. Gow notes that although ayahuasca was used for long periods of time among some indigenous groups, it was not until the advent of European missionaries, who enslaved Indigenous People and trekked through the Amazon in search for gold, that ayahuasca use spread widely among Indigenous groups in the Amazon. Even among different Indigenous groups who have used ayahuasca traditionally, as Glenn Shepard notes, not all mix it with chacruna leaves, which allows for higher amounts of DMT to enter the brain and thus induce powerful and long-lasting psychedelic episodes.¹⁹³

All of this said, there is undeniably widespread evidence for the ritual use of multiple psychoactive substances across pre-Columbian Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island, with tobacco likely being the most widespread, despite the relative recent diaspora of ayahuasca.¹⁹⁴ As Brabec de Mori and Samorini (in chapter two) have shown, this historical fact can lead to speculative jumps by well-intentioned advocates for ayahuasca against prohibitionist drug war rhetoric. It is not controversial, in a pre-European-contact context to associate the use of various plant-based substances that might be referred to as “consciousness altering” in daily practices, but when we start using the imported term ‘religion’ and impulses toward ‘religious freedom’, things get complicated quickly.

¹⁹³ Glenn H. Shepard, Jr. “Will the Real Shaman Please Stand Up?” *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate & Clancy Cavnar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁹⁴ See Wilbert, Johannes Wilbert, *Tobacco and Shamanism in South America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

When liberal democratic subjects seek out ayahuasca, they are generally seeking an individual *experience* encultured within the perspective of Western subjectivity, again what Charles Taylor has called “the buffered self,” or at least the idea that this self can be expanded and the ego dissolved. Even when drinking ayahuasca in groups, healing therapies stress “dissolving” and “reintegrating” the ego. This conception is derived from earlier writers, and most notably Aldous Huxley’s theories concerning psychedelics.¹⁹⁵ The intentionality of the experience-seeking person affects what researchers have called the “set and setting” of a psychedelic experience. As the term ‘psychedelic’ (first coined in a letter to Aldous Huxley by Humphry Osmond) suggests, a “mind-manifesting” experience implies a kind of “hidden” interiority or unconscious made manifest through a catalyzing agent or ‘entheogen,’ which was a neologism coined in the late 1970s by researchers compelled by liberal, archaic revival rhetoric for ancient and “universal” uses of psychoactive substances in human populations around the world.

The term ‘entheogen’ similarly implies a Western, theocentric metaphysics as a “god-infused” substance. It also rhetorically condenses ‘Ayahuasca’ into a singular and ‘universalizable’ substance and experience. The discussion of psychedelics broadly reflects its own entrenchment in eurochristian deep framing when it promotes universalistic and culture-transcending notions of experience, even when referred to in terms of strictly biological references. Such work, like Nietzsche’s comments on the

¹⁹⁵ I explore this in greater detail in Roger K. Green *A Transatlantic Political Theology of Psychedelic Aesthetics: Enchanted Citizens* (Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019).

“almost the entire history” of narcotics and civilization, exists within and perpetuates a eurochristian sacrificial religious poetics and tragedy, as Jacques Derrida’s famous work on the *pharmakon* attest. In his eloquent coverage of the poststructural turn with respect to such issues, drug historian Dave Boothroyd quips, following, Nietzsche: “The ‘almost’ [indicates] that it is almost literally true that history is on drugs.”¹⁹⁶ But following Indigenous articulations of deep framing to articulate eurochristian religious poetics in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery, we can certainly see delusions of grandeur at work. I turn now toward that longer history.

The Longer History and the Doctrine of Discovery

Even before European contact with the so-called “new world,” emergent international law in Europe was inherently eurochristian-based. Although the historical fact is – and has long been known – that European contact with Indigenous Peoples began around 1000 CE with Vikings, most Americans today will still point to Columbus.¹⁹⁷ This merely points to the power of the eurochristian narrative of ‘Discovery’ in its legal fiction to legitimate rule. It is one thing to understand the nuances of various historical contexts; it is another to recognize the broader persistence of the eurochristian poetics of sacrifice. It also speaks to concerns among Native

¹⁹⁶ Dave Boothroyd, *Culture on Drugs: Narco-Cultural Studies of High Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 45.

¹⁹⁷ Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 16.

Americans for removing civic religion in the U.S. celebrating Columbus, not only because he “discovered” nothing, but because he imported the Doctrine of Discovery which later became imbricated in U.S. law and Federal Indian policy. Part of the importance of a longer history Indigenous of perspectives is to draw attention away from national fantasies that would “naturalize” mythic origins of the United States of America.

The Doctrine of Discovery also evidences a coherent early example of eurochristian deep framing, but even this should be contextualized within a long developmental process. As Robert Miller *et al.* write:

Scholars have traced the Doctrine as far back as the fifth century AD when, they argue, the Roman Catholic Church and various popes began establishing the idea of a worldwide papal jurisdiction that placed responsibility on the Church to work for a universal Christian commonwealth. This papal responsibility, and especially the Crusades to recover the Holy Lands in 1096-1271, led to the idea of justified holy wars by Christians to enforce the Church’s vision of truth onto all peoples.¹⁹⁸

Robert A. Williams Jr. begins *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought* with an anecdote imagining the mindset of Friar John of Plano Carpini, a pupil of Francis of Assisi and emissary of Pope Innocent IV to witness the 1246 coronation of Guyak Kahn (grandson to Genghis) as emperor of the Mongols, the greatest empire the world had ever known in its time. Friar John carried two letters, the first of which set out in detail to explain how Saint Peter had set up Christ’s church and left Innocent in charge, through succession, of the admittance of all human souls to heaven. The second warned the Kahn against expanding his empire into Christendom, chastising him for ignoring “natural

¹⁹⁸ Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg, *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 9.

laws,” and warning of God’s wrath. As Williams writes, the aspirations to conquest and religious superiority are thoroughly present in the late-medieval pope’s mind, as is the ethnocentric concept of ‘the West’ in appealing to its emergent system of international law. Williams argues that “law, regarded by the West as its most respected and cherished instrument of civilization, was also the West’s most vital and effective instrument of empire during its genocidal conquest and colonization of non-Western peoples of the New World, the American Indians.”¹⁹⁹ Legal thought evidences conceptual continuity.

Resonating with Williams’s legal history, Christian theologian Willie James Jennings identifies what he calls the ‘Christian Imagination’, an operation informing the outset of the African slave trade in the 1430s with a theological justification for eurochristian superiority and emergent notions of civilization built on a modern nostalgia for the Roman Empire. With respect to the next five hundred years, Jennings says:

Christianity will assimilate this pattern of displacement. Not just slave bodies but *displaced* slave bodies, will come to represent a natural state. From this position they will be relocated into Christian identity. The backdrop of their existence will be, from this moment, the market.²⁰⁰

Jennings particularly describes this eurochristian attitude as central to the constructions of modern notions of race that inform inequitable treatment of Indigenous Peoples as well.

Beyond law alone, Robert Williams traces aspirations of Christian universalism to the early church and Paul’s articulation of the *corpus mysticum Christi*, yet hierarchically

¹⁹⁹ Robert A. Williams, Jr. *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 6.

²⁰⁰ Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2011): 22.

directed by the pope.²⁰¹ This hierarchy, as mentioned in my previous chapter, has been analyzed by Indigenous scholars Tink Tinker and Steven Newcomb as signaling a eurochristian worldview distinctly different than the deep framing among Indigenous Peoples, especially before contact with Europeans but nevertheless intergenerationally present despite colonial genocide. What had changed between the fifth century and Pope Innocent IV's day, according to Williams, was an emergent and Aquinas-inspired humanism that allowed Innocent to believe that "infidels *shared* in a Eurocentrically understood universalized reason," and because they *shared* this universally human trait, the pope could justify sending armies against pagans who "erred" in their thinking.²⁰² This point is important because after contact with Indigenous American Peoples, debates about their humanity arose, prompting Spanish theologians of the Salamanca School such as Francisco de Vitoria. But, as Robert Miller, *et al.* explain, the argument that Indigenous People were indeed human was loaded with respect to emergent international law.

Anthony Pagden's *The Fall of Natural Man* gives a detailed account of Thomist readings of Aristotle and a shift toward faculty psychology. He also covers the famous fifteenth century debates about Indians' humanity and the Valladolid controversy between Juan Gilnés de Sepúlveda and Bartholomé de Las Casas, who followed Francisco de Vitoria's thought. What emerges from Pagden's careful analysis is how, in

²⁰¹ Robert A. Williams, Jr. *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990): 15.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 49.

deciding that Indians were indeed human, the eurochristians had internalized a faculty psychology that moved Aristotle's descriptions of the "natural" slave mentality of the "barbarian" in his *Politics* to the "childlike" mentality of those "uncivilized" men deemed rationally "capable" of "natural religion" but in need of Christian domination for their "salvation." Thus, we can see that the conqueror mentality was not only one of mere violent and subjugating force but also one carefully refined through the tradition of eurochristianity that channeled that violence to serve its own ends:

The effect of Vitoria's arguments was to render the natural slave theory unacceptable while still retaining the original framework of Aristotle's psychology. The suggestion that the Indian was a child was not a novel one. It echoed the unreflective opinions of countless colonists and missionaries who had come face to face with real Indians . . . By couching his argument in terms of Aristotle's bipartite psychology he had explained just what it had meant to be a child, and by doing so he had opened the way to an historical and evolutionary account of the Amerindian world...²⁰³

As Pagden notes, this "evolutionary" view would change again during the Romantic period, after Hugo Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf developed theories of "minimal morality" and Adam Smith had developed his "four stages" of development that would come to inform approaches to the "world religions" and nineteenth-century anthropology. That "universalized" view, which attempted through historicism to place all human development into "stages" could then be superimposed onto various peoples and regions of the world "scientifically."

²⁰³ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 106.

Implicitly, however, the persistence of a eurochristian worldview concerning Christendom informed the civilizing desire and increasingly “evolutionary” trajectory. As Pagden summarizes: “In time, Indians and all other ‘barbarians’ will become ‘civilised’ beings, just as the Europeans climbed up from barbarous beginnings via Greece and Rome until finally they reached the condition of the Christian *homo renatus*”: the “reborn” human.²⁰⁴ This historical trajectory and “evolution” is put forth as an *ascension* situated on a *rebirth*; thus, *civilization* was implicitly Christian, carrying with it, its own pagan history from which it had *risen*. This is the drama of sacrifice within the terministic screens of eurochristian thought, and the symbolic actions that emerge from the drama *naturalizes the genocide of Indigenous Peoples*.

As I have argued, ‘eurochristian’ is an analytic term addressing deep cognitive framing, expressive of a social movement and *not* a religion, yet it remains important to see how the concept of ‘religion’ is itself expressive of that same eurochristian perspective. Scholars of late antiquity such as Jeremy Schott have noted that the concept of ‘religion’ emerges as early Christians sought to consciously distinguish themselves from Jews as Roman citizens under the sign of the “cross empire,” from which the idea of Christendom, literally Christian *domatio*, or domination, would emerge. Schott argues “for a consideration of pagan polemics and Christian apologetics not simply as sites of ‘religious conflict’ or the production of ‘self-definition’ but also as both *constituted by*

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 141.

and *constitutive* of Roman imperialism.”²⁰⁵ With respect to South America, Schott argues, citing Bartolomé de las Casas:

The identification of the indigenous peoples of the Americas as “new gentiles” authorized the militant, often violent, extirpation, of traditional religions as “idolatry.” Certain colonialists, such as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda went so far as to deny that natives possessed the capacity for natural religion at all; as such, they were subhuman and could be exploited as slaves. At the same time, however, others located the native cultures along a spectrum of “civilization.”²⁰⁶

Following Williams and Pagden in their articulations of Aquinas-influenced humanism, we can emphasize that Sepúlveda’s anthropological assessment was simultaneously a legalistic one expressive of eurochristian religious poetics.²⁰⁷

Queen Isabella of Spain was appalled at Christopher Columbus’s treatment of Natives as potential slaves. His initiation of the transatlantic slave trade on his first voyage depended on dehumanization, even as he marveled at the Taino people’s livelihood. With clear intent,²⁰⁸ Columbus baptized the island through a eurochristian

²⁰⁵ Schott, Jeremy. *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 166.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ “Aquinas’s ‘ontological divinized natural law’ had the effect of liberating the humanity of man from any Christological base. For the Thomists, *all* men, whether Christian or not, were human. The notion of *humanitas*, a category which bestowed upon man what Walter Ullman has called ‘a fruitful autonomous, self-sufficient and independent character,’ covered both Christian *homo renatus* and the non-Christian *homo naturalis*. The presence of natural law in all men meant in effect that there must exist a community of all men.” Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 63.

²⁰⁸ Even admirers of Columbus admit as much. Regarding an exploitative taxation system demanding tribute in gold from Natives not already enslaved, Morison writes, “Whoever thought up this ghastly system, Columbus was responsible for it, as the only means of producing gold for export.” In addition:

ritual, penetrating the land with a sword as he erased the Lucayan name, Guanahani, and replaced it with San Salvador. This act was in direct accordance with a papal bull from 1455 named *Romanus Pontifex*, which had to do with Portugal's emergent slave trade off the coast of West Africa. I have emphasized in bold the language that would be carried over into contexts across the Atlantic:

. . . We [therefore] weighing all and singular the premises with due meditation, and noting that since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso -- **to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit** -- by having secured the said faculty, the said King Alfonso, or, by his authority, the aforesaid infante, justly and lawfully has acquired and possessed, and doth possess, these islands, lands, harbors, and seas, and they do of right belong and pertain to the said King Alfonso and his successors.²⁰⁹

Those who fled to the mountains were hunted with hounds, and those who escaped, starvation and disease took toll, whilst thousands of the poor creatures in desperation took cassava poison to end their miseries. So the policy and acts for which he alone was responsible began the depopulation of the terrestrial paradise that was Hispaniola in 1492. Of the original natives, estimated by a modern ethnologist at 300,000 in number, one third were killed off between 1494 and 1496. By 1508 an enumeration showed only 60,000 alive. Four years later that number was reduced by two-thirds; and in 1548 Oviedo doubted whether 500 indians remained. Today the blood of the Tainos only exists mingled with the more docile and laborious African Negroes who were imported to do the work that they could not and would not perform.

Samuel Eliot Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus* (Boston: Little Brown, 1942), 491 & 493.

²⁰⁹ "The Bull *Romanus Pontifex*," *doctrineofdiscovery.org*, July 23, 2018, accessed January 3, 2020, <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/the-bull-romanus-pontifex-nicholas-v/>.

Romanus Pontifex drew on a long eurochristian history, including the 1452 *Dum Diversas*, which granted Portugal's claims to West African slavery in exchange for support against Ottoman Turks. But technically, once Columbus baptized the island, its inhabitants became subjects of the Spanish Crown. It did not make the inhabitants Christian, but we also know that the six captured Indigenous People Columbus took back to Spain were immediately themselves baptized and given new names.²¹⁰ The poetics of sacrifice here blend together older, Augustinian just war theory and the poetics of rebirth emergent in the early modern period.

Knowing that part of his own income depended on tradeable goods, but finding little gold, Columbus took prisoners and wrote to the Crown what good slaves the Indians would make.²¹¹ The admiral wrote on October 14, 1492:

as your majesties will discover from seven whom I caused to be taken and brought aboard so that they may learn our language and return. However, should your Highness command it all the inhabitants could be taken away to Castile or held as slaves on the island, for with fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we wish.²¹²

²¹⁰ Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 46.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

²¹² Christopher Columbus, *The Four Voyages*, edited and translated by J. M. Cohen (New York: Penguin, 1969), 58.

Bartolomé de Las Casas writes of the admiral's flagrant disregard for the Queen's wishes in this passage.²¹³ The Indigenous People presumably had the same rights as any other Spanish subjects – so long as they were *human* and thus possessed “natural rights.”

In the in papal bulls of donation after Columbus's “discovery,” *Inter caetera* (1493) and the *Treaty of Tordesillas* (1494), the Doctrine of Discovery updated the bulls from the 1450s providing for Spanish and Portuguese claims in the “new world.” The idea of natural rights was incongruent with slavery, and this was especially the view of Franciscans.

In 1510, the Council of Castile wrote the *Requerimiento*, which was to be read to all Indians upon contact. Despite its attempts to avoid slavery by asking them to willfully submit to their new authority and *convert* to Christianity, the final warning in its last paragraph clearly echoes the languages of the earlier bulls:

But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us.²¹⁴

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹⁴ “Requerimiento 1510,” *nationalhumanitiescenter.org*, accessed February 23, 2020, <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/contact/text7/requirement.pdf>

Refusing the *Requerimiento* was in itself grounds for a “just war” against the refusers.

As Miller *et al.* write:

Many conquistadores must have worried that this preposterous document would actually convince Indigenous peoples to change religions and accept Spanish rule and prevent the explorers from gaining conquests and riches because they took to reading the document aloud in the night to the trees or they read it to the land from their ships. They considered this adequate notice to the natives of the points in the *Requerimiento*. So much for legal formalism and the free will and natural law rights of New World Indigenous peoples.²¹⁵

Miller *et al.*'s bitter last sentence is understandable here, but perhaps that bitterness also reflects too much optimism for the very category of “natural rights,” which develops within a eurochristian frame. The same authors note that in Vitoria's lectures in the 1530s, Vitoria strengthened Spain's claims to empire by declaring that Indians “possessed natural rights as free and rational subjects” and moved away from legitimacy based on the papal bulls of donation while at the same time grounding a theory of international law based on “natural rights” and “universal obligations of a Eurocentrically constructed natural law.”²¹⁶ The result for Indigenous Peoples was essentially the same as with the *Requerimiento*: resisting infidels would in turn require Spain to “protect the faith” by waging “just war.”

In *Marvelous Possessions*, Stephen Greenblatt notes:

A strange blend of ritual, cynicism, legal fiction, and perverse idealism, the *Requerimiento* contains at its core the conviction that there is no serious language barrier between the Indians and the Europeans. And to a thoughtful and informed

²¹⁵ Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg, *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

observer like [Bartolomé de] Las Casas, the dangerous absurdity of this conviction was fully apparent: Las Casas writes that he doesn't know "whether to laugh or cry" at the *Requerimiento*.²¹⁷

Within the context of a rather recently conceived notion of universal "natural rights," which understands humans as having a certain capacity for reason, the absurdity makes a bit more sense; but as Las Casas and others *knew* at the time, the *Requerimiento* was merely another ritualized instance of possession. Importantly, however, Schott's passage above directs us to another innovation within early modern eurochristian thought: the *developmental* spectrum of human capacity would come to be the emergent reason for the conception of "natural religion" that would inform later theories of "religious experience" as *internal*, yet simultaneously "universalizing," as would later become evident in John Locke's sense of "natural rights." Within this eurochristian "developmental" scheme, Indigenous Peoples who did not understand the *Requerimiento* merely displayed their "inferior" status.

The emergence of "natural rights," even when influenced by humanistic rationalism that would later come to critique the church, was part of a now-familiar tendency among eurochristians to project their own desires upon a non-believing "Other" so that even resistance to the faith would signify faith's very truth. As Greenblatt notes with respect to audiences for Shakespeare's *The Tempest*:

as the very name Indian suggests, even the sliver of otherness is not accessible to direct apprehension; the viewers carry with them to the exhibits, as to the lands from which these exhibits have been seized, a powerful set of mediating

²¹⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 98.

conceptions by which they assimilate exotic representations to their own culture.²¹⁸

And through a complex imperial religious poetics, this projection would be deemed “love” (agape) in the Christian tradition, a love that would be so radical that it could overcome all difference and instantiate sameness, at least among “humans” with rational capacity.²¹⁹ This marveling, as Greenblatt articulates, rests on a particular *witnessing*, “a witnessing understood as a significant and representative form of seeing” connected to *belief*.²²⁰

While I articulate in detail how this informs the *experience-driven* motivations for ayahuasca ingestion among eurochristians in chapter five, here it is necessary to emphasize that it was this conception of natural rights, shifting away from papal bulls of donation that would inform Protestant notions of international law while simultaneously remaining consistent with eurochristian attitudes presented in the bulls. This is essential

²¹⁸ Ibid., 122.

²¹⁹ To take a current example, this the same construct of “love” as professed by evangelical Christians involved deeply with the U.S. government was recently covered by the Netflix documentary, *The Family*, which tracks the influence of largely white, male evangelicals in U.S. foreign policy over the past sixty years. What is especially radical in this “love’s” current articulation is its blind acceptance to the will-to-power and empire in its belief that success itself evidences election, despite all claims by Protestants to have broken with Catholicism. Some have called this a prosperity gospel. Others might associate it with post-Reformation notions of election and what Max Weber would identify as the “Protestant ethic.” But I want to say that, genealogically, the concept persists in underwriting Christendom, just as the ‘d-o-m’ at the end of ‘Christendom’ signals a *legal* conception of domination. Jesse Moss, dir., *The Family*, Netflix (2019), <https://www.netflix.com/title/80063867>.

²²⁰ Ibid.

for understanding how the Doctrine of Discovery continued to lay the groundwork for “legitimate invasion” in the English colonies, why it remains foundational law in the United States today, and why it remains present within seemingly secular notions of liberalism. The textual threads woven into the fabric of such legal casuistry draw on cognitive models and associations expressive of eurochristian religious poetics.

This point is essential because, as legal scholars have noted, when Supreme Court Justice John Marshall incorporated the Doctrine of Discovery in 1823, denying Indian titles to land in the United States, he misconstrued existing international law – likely to serve more immediate purposes. At the same time, he could align self-serving decisions with a Christian sense of moral purpose. As Ali Friedberg writes, “in *Johnson*, Marshall disregarded the principles announced by Vitoria, and applied the Doctrine of Discovery as if the Indians were ‘nobody.’”²²¹ The legal term here was *terra nullius*:

The United States, on the other hand, in the 19th century, at the dawn of the "manifest destiny" era, was guided by practical, utilitarian concerns for the acquisition of land. Although Marshall superficially attempted to interpret Spanish law and the Law of Nations, Marshall's holding in *Johnson* clearly signified a departure from international precedent and its humanistic foundations. This departure was so influential, that it contributed to the omission of Indian rights from international legal discourse.²²²

Johnson’s ruling would later contribute to a separate legal system known as Federal Indian law.

²²¹ Ali Friedberg, “Reconsidering the Doctrine of Discovery: Spanish Land Acquisition in Mexico (1521-1821),” *Wisconsin International Law Journal* 17, no. 1 (1999): 106.

²²² *Ibid.*, 108.

Particular articulations, interpretations, and applications of Discovery Doctrine in varied among European powers, yet in aggregate they construct a rich tapestry of sense.

Some of the subtleties are useful to note. Resonating with Greenblatt, for example,

Patricia Seed writes:

European colonialists imagined the object of their ambitions as the re-creation of a Roman or a Christian empire, an empire of broad political power extended over multiple linguistic and cultural groups. They imagined universal Christianity or Roman rule rather than that of a particular nation guided the symbolic allegiances of colonialism.²²³

Seed also notes that the material circumstances informing the Europeans' very presence across the Atlantic means that "Beneath the symbolic allegiances to Christianity and Rome were far more complex, heteroglot cultural constructions."²²⁴ Seed's attention to subtlety need not conflict with the analytic of eurochristian framing in contrast to Indigenous deep framing, however, because *Homo renatus* underwrites the more localized aspirations to empire. In this analysis, the manifestations of collective desire maintain a logology symbolically acted through the use of terministic screens such as the liturgical "baptism" of lands and the following conversion and renaming of Native inhabitants.

The necessity for the analytic lies in seeing a greater continuity in eurochristian deep framing than common narratives tell, highlighting a process of genocidal erasure with respect to Indigenous Peoples. First the land was converted into the dominion of

²²³ Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World: 1492-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 186.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

Christendom, then the deterritorialized peoples were to be spiritually converted and given new names. The genocidal element is integral to the baptismal ceremony itself.²²⁵ For example, the national phantasies during the emergent Romantic era are themselves aesthetic condensations of aspirations to empire among the colonizers, whether they be a new Jerusalem, Rome, or an Anglo-Saxon England that had shirked its “Norman yoke.”

As Robert A. Williams Jr. writes:

In constructing their discourses of resistance to British power in America, radical colonists appropriated themes and concepts from an eclectic array of sources. The Enlightenment-era discourses of natural law and rights; the British Constitution; the mythology of a purer Saxon-inspired legal and political order in the New World freed from the yoke of Norman-derived feudal tyranny; and especially the common-sense view of property as acquired by labor and governments as established to protect property found in the texts of John Locke – these are the most frequently raided discursive formations.²²⁶

Colonists in New England manifested this phantasy through notions of race, whereby they were the “true Saxons” who had “pioneered” England, which under Norman and papal control had grown weak. They did not, however, see themselves as “anti-Christian” even in their rejection of the “Norman yoke.” Nor did the “founding fathers” of the United States see any contradiction between their newly formed republic and their aspirations to eurochristian empire. As Pagden writes:

Mere size, as Alexander Hamilton pointed out in 1788, was no impediment to true republican government, so long as the various parts of the state constituted “an

²²⁵ It is out of the scope of this project to trace this history back to the beginnings of Christianity, but I would note that Augustinian doctrines of sin are probably of more importance than John and the Essenes in the desert because Jewish notions of sin and cleanliness differed from later Christian one’s. Pauline universalism might be another matter.

²²⁶ Robert A. Williams, Jr., *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourse of Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 228-229.

association of states or confederacy.” Nor, as Hamilton stressed on more than one occasion, was the fact of its republican constitution any reason for preventing the United States from becoming a true empire, “able to dedicate the terms of the connection between the old world and the new.”²²⁷

As I shall argue, liberalism and ideas of “religious freedom” enshrined in the early United States carry on the eurochristian frame as a social movement, even when it is not overtly religious particularly through an individual, yet spiritualized, notion of experience. It is that dedication to an experience, licensed and textured by eurochristian religiosity, that informs the majority of ayahuasca consumers and claims to its “marvelous” potential, as well as the miraculous exceptionalism involved. The deeper history remains pertinent, however, because that experience occurs at the expense of Indigenous Peoples.

Religion as a Concept

‘Religion’ is itself a eurochristian concept and thus binds us to that frame when we use it to locate other “faith identities.” This is difficult for eurochristians who see themselves as “secular” to understand today, and that speaks to the depth of eurochristian framing itself. Religious studies scholars of both ancient and modern times have said as much in recent years. For example, Jeremy Schott and Daniel Boyarin note the narrowed use of *religio* as arising with a Christian identity in Rome that distinguished itself from its Jewish roots.²²⁸ David Chidester, Tomoko Masuzawa, and Brent Nongbri have all

²²⁷ Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France c. 1500 – c. 1800* (Yale: New Haven, 1995), 16.

²²⁸ Jeremy Schott and Daniel Boyarin have taken the analysis of ‘religion’ in the context of Empire to their analyses of early Christianity’s attempts to separate itself from

examined the modern invention of religion as being wrapped up in the drama of Christian colonization. Chidester writes: “in the history of religions, the great divide between natural, savage, or primitive religions and civil religions was the basic principle of

Judaism. Citing Lactantius, Schott writes, “*religio* marks sets of theological propositions and is theoretically identifiable transhistorically among all peoples” and therefore “we should locate the ethnological and historical rhetorics of Christian apologetics in the political context of (Roman) imperialism” (167). Daniel Boyarin argues in *Borderlines* that “a significant amount of heresiology, if not its proximate cause, was to define Christian identity – not only to produce the Christian as neither Jew nor Greek but also to construct the whatness of what Christianity would be, not finally a third race or *genos* but something entirely new, a religion” (4). He goes on:

While Christianity finally configures Judaism as a different religion Judaism itself, I suggest, at the end of the day refuses that call, so that seen from that perspective the difference between Christianity and Judaism is not so much a difference between two religions as a difference between a religion and an entity that refuses to be one. (7-8)

Boyarin usefully points to the aspect of *performative recognition* in religion:

In the end, it is not the case that Christianity and Judaism are two separate or different religions, but that they are two different kinds of things altogether. From the point of view of the Church’s category foundation, Judaism and Christianity (and Hinduism later on) are examples of the categories of *religions*, one a bad example and the other a very good one, indeed the only prototype. But from the point of view of the Rabbis’ categorization, Christianity is a religion and Judaism is not. (13)

Early Christianity set itself up as categorical prototype by which other “religions” could be named and compared, much like the ethnocentrism that underwrote Aristotle’s sense of Greek superiority. This was exacerbated by Enlightenment conceptions of “Natural” religion in thinkers such as David Hume and Charles de Brosses. Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008); Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

classification.”²²⁹ Masuzawa argues with respect to the nineteenth-century that ‘religion’ was:

endowed with all the weight and moral cathexis that was once proper to liberal Protestant theology. This load of ideational energy has now been dislodged from that original site and transferred to ‘religion itself,’ now that the very theology has run up against the wall of its own undeniable history.²³⁰

Brent Nongbri notes, “the idea of religion is not as natural or as universal as it is often assumed to be. Religion has a history. It was born out of a mix of Christian disputes about truth, European colonial exploits, and the formation of nation-states.”²³¹ In particular, as Chidester details in *Empire of Religion*, Christian colonizers in Africa and the Americas initially described the native inhabitants as having no religion and only later come to recognize their practices as “something like religion.” The World Religions model, which grew out of an ethnocentric notion of “rationalism” that assumed Christianity to be the most “evolved” religion, came to designate and locate other “faiths” from a pretension to eurochristian, “civilized” space. Space became “neutral” while justifying displacement and removal of Indigenous Peoples as land became “property.”

In contrast, Tink Tinker has repeatedly argued that Indigenous Peoples traditionally had no concept of ‘religion.’ Whether overtly Catholic, Protestant, or expressed as “natural religion,” European conceptions of ‘religion’ tend to be

²²⁹ David Chidester, *Empire of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 305.

²³⁰ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 320.

²³¹ Brent Nongbri. *Before Religion: History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale, 2013), 154.

metaphorically hierarchical, and when we loosely apply the term, as frequently occurs in anthropological writing and museums, we inadvertently perpetuate a eurochristian frame. In fact, I expect that some of my readers will find difficulty in conceiving that power could move in ways that are not “top-down.”

As Eduardo Kohn has mentioned with respect to our being colonized by ways of thinking about relationality:

We can only imagine the ways in which selves and thoughts might form associations through our assumptions about the forms of associations that structure human language. And then, in ways that go unnoticed, we project these assumptions onto nonhumans. Without realizing it we attribute to nonhumans properties that are our own, and then, to compound this, we narcissistically ask them to provide us with corrective reflections of ourselves.²³²

Kohn’s description accurately describes eurochristian cognition, and though he is writing this in order to understand “how forests think,” his book relies heavily on linguistic analyses of Quechua and resounds with the *inhumane* treatment of Indigenous Peoples despite the eurochristian “decision” that they were indeed humans with “natural rights,” which are not “natural” but rather *alienated* through a conceptualizing eurochristian legalistic process.

Kohn’s remarks also point directly to Kenneth Burke’s notions about logology and terministic screens, though he is clearly more directly engaged with Charles Sanders Peirce’s early semiotics. As I have traced, the development of “natural rights” within the eurochristian frame becomes expressive of a pregnant future invested with eurochristian deep framing rooted in notions of sacrifice. Part of this, as Tinker writes in “Why I Do

²³² Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 21.

Not Believe in a Creator God,” involves an up-down linguistic cognitive image schema [which] functions to structure the social whole around vertical hierarchies of power and authority.’²³³ His point is that in contrast to eurochristian frames, Indigenous deep frames do not have this hierarchy and so even if we could speak of “something like religion” the very analogy would be flawed due to the concept of ‘religion’ in the deep frame of eurochristian thought.²³⁴ The cognitive process of analogy is itself part of the mechanism for the persistence of intergenerational eurochristian religious poetics.

Tinker’s thinking is echoed by non-Native historians as well. In other words, he is not simply being “essentialist.” Oftentimes, as Linford Fisher’s *The Indian Great Awakening* attests, Natives in “North America” embraced forms of Christianity as a practical strategy to rid themselves of white missionary attempts to convert them. But strangely, like their counterparts in South America, New England eurochristians were consistently doubtful that their missionary work had been effective with Natives.

The eurochristian poetics of sacrifice instill the need to be saved and to save, and as we know from the religious wars taking place in Europe at the time, the theological question of whether or not one had achieved “grace” was central to the disciplining of

²³³ George E. “Tink” Tinker, “Why I Do Not Believe in a Creator God,” *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*, ed. Steve Heinrichs (Waterloo: Herald Press, 2013), 169.

²³⁴ I often ponder this with respect to so-called “Andean Religion” or Mayan, Egyptian, Hebrew, and Aztec traditions which clearly predate Christianity. The necessity for being critical of the assumptions in the term ‘religion’ are especially critical if we are trying to transfer concepts of sacrifice, for example. What remains, for example, in Hebrew the notion of “drawing near” (*karev*) and Christian notion of “setting aside” (sacred)? Following Chidester’s remarks in *Empire of Religion*, it seems we’re stuck with the term. All the more reason to have this history more present in our minds.

modern subjectivity. The *work* done in the face of one's ambivalence about being saved carries with it a twofold mechanism with relation to sacrificial erasure. On the one hand, if one feels truly "saved," one has achieved the moral superiority, the alignment with God's will to perpetuate the just war as Augustine saw it. On the other hand, ambivalence about whether or not one was truly saved would inspire the self-insulated disciplining of internal conscience while manifesting in the group-insulation practices that would inspire modern notions of citizenship. This tension underscored the 1608 decisions by Sir Edward Coke in *Calvin's Case*, which had wrestled with questions of English subject status in respect to Scots. Coke's decisions would be transplanted to the colonies and transformed into *jus soli*, or "law of the soil," which would grant Americans citizenship status by birth even as it denied Indians full citizenship. The tension in England was of course underwritten by the politics of establishing freedom from papal rule even while legal apparatuses and decisions were referring to international law. The mechanism at work informed, and was reified, in the emergent racialized psychology that would distinguish eurochristians from Indians. Essential here is that emergent notions of citizenship and rights "by soil" were entirely entwined with one's recognized status as a Christian. At the local level, the "othering" of Indians fused with "just war" framing in order to justify eurochristians rights to take land and wage war on Indigenous Peoples.

The idea of the "backsliding" convert or the "irrational savage" (who was incapable of maintaining converted status) persisted across both continents. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro writes that for eurochristians the "defining feature of the [sixteenth century] Amerindian character" in South America was based on a stereotype of

inconstancy: “the half-converted Indian who, at the first opportunity sends God, the hoe, and clothing to the devil, happily returning to the jungle, prisoner of an incurable atavism.”²³⁵ Viveiros de Castro believes much of the stereotype stems from the Tupian people of Brazil and cites a Jesuit of the period (Nóbrega) complaining:

These heathens are not like the heathens surrounding the early Church, who would either quickly mistreat or kill anyone who preached against their idols, or believe in the Gospel, thereby preparing themselves to die for Christ. For since these heathens have no idols for which they die, they believe everything that is said to them. The only difficulty lies in taking away all of their bad habits...which requires extended stay among them...and that we live with them and raise their children, from the time they are small, in doctrine and good habits.²³⁶

In this model, conversion was predicated on a prior civilizing and the fact that Indians only “half-converted” reaffirmed their “inconstant” status and lack of full rationality. More than the fact that the passage reveals a clear genocidal intent to indoctrinate children and erase “bad habits,” there is a marked commitment early on to a multigenerational process of extirpating Indigenous ways. Conversions were to be repeated.

As Kenneth Mills has painstakingly detailed in his review of colonial Inquisition records regarding extirpation (genocide) of Andean practices in the seventeenth and

²³⁵ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul: The Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16th-Century Brazil*, trans. Gregory Duff Morton (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2011), 5.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

eighteenth centuries, Indigenous cultural resistance is remarkably dynamic amid the most horrible of conditions:

One cannot explain satisfactorily Andean religious [*sic*] endurance simply by invoking such things as the Andean people's remarkable determination or the strength of their reciprocal relationships with their ancestors, as important as such things were. Recognizably Andean religious patterns retained their significance because they changed. In many parts of the mid-colonial Arch-diocese of Lima, Andean religious survival was as much about a dynamic. And gradual emergence as about a more basic persistence.²³⁷

That said, the colonizers commented frequently on the “backsliding” among Natives, generation after generation while still holding to a very clear intention of what they wanted and a European cultural hierarchy. Such backsliding into “pagan ways” was thus used to justify brutal subjugation over generations.

Yet the colonizers were also capable of a slow change. In mid seventeenth-century Peru:

In the Archdiocese of Lima, the Indian who was viewed as a pagan or an idolator, and whose errors derived from complete ignorance of the Christian truth, had for the most part become a distant figure of an early colonial past. This Indian's replacement, both in reality and especially in the minds of many Spanish Christians, was a “new Christian” – an American *converso* – a baptized and at least superficially instructed convert of whom certain things could now be expected.²³⁸

The “converso” here enacts a subaltern mimesis of *Homo renatus*. As the Indians lost claims to innocence, their punishments for revealing persistent “pagan idolatry” become harsher: “Witchcraft, along with demonology, had become something of a science in its

²³⁷ Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640-1750* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

own right, and thus offered Hispanic churchmen plenty of convenient points of reference and authority.”²³⁹ “Devil-worshipping” sorcerers were blamed for the persistence of “pagan idolatry” particularly in rural areas because Spanish colonizing techniques had focused initially on the “upper class” leaders among Inkas, assuming in true eurochristian fashion that conversion among “leaders” would “trickle down” to the masses.’²⁴⁰ So, in multiple evangelical waves, often following revivals or “awakenings,” eurochristians went off again to spread gospel to “heathens.” This kind of missionary work continues on a global scale today, and the development of ayahuasca religions carries on the eurochristian tradition. It remains essential with respect to the northern diaspora of ayahuasca, however, to keep in mind the longer history of eurochristian religious poetics in colonial era preceding the formation of the United States.

New England’s Importation of Discovery Doctrine

With respect to New England, where Protestants were not very committed to missionary work early on, Tink Tinker has written of John Eliot’s work which began almost sixty years after contact. In 1605, George Weymouth repeated Columbus’s tactic upon first contact of luring Indians onto his ship and then capturing them to take back to England, where crowds gathered in wonder.²⁴¹ Thus, people were coming from England

²³⁹ Ibid., 113.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 95.

²⁴¹ Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 57.

already with apocryphal stories they had told themselves about “savage Indians.”²⁴² Coll Thrush documents multiple instances of Indians visiting England during these years, including a political delegation with Matoaka (Powhatan), known popularly as “Pocahontas,” who attended performances alongside English royalty for Shakespeare’s *The Twelfth Night*²⁴³ and *The Tempest*. Tinker also notes that missionary efforts in New England had other discursive motivations in mind. This had to do with raising the colony’s “public image” for monetary contributions back in England.²⁴⁴

In the colonies, Indian practices deemed “religious” were to be punished by death following an anti-blasphemy law passed in 1644 after Indians heckled and laughed at Eliot’s attempts to evangelize them.²⁴⁵ Jace Weaver and Paula Gunn Allen explain that Matoaka was christened “Lady Rebecca” as a public display of England’s “civilizing” influence. She also attended a showing of *The Tempest*, which was partly based on a shipwreck involving her husband which had become popular news in England. Apparently, James I was even angry at her husband, John Rolfe, for marrying a “princess” above his station, fearing “Rolfe might assert some future claim on his

²⁴² George E. “Tink” Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 23.

²⁴³ Coll Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 53.

²⁴⁴ George E. “Tink” Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 28.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

Virginia Colony for having married royalty.”²⁴⁶ These very real encounters did little to curb the eurochristian phantasy with respect to the “savage Indian.”

Articulating the power of deep and surface structures, Tinker specifically writes:

Moreover, even as the initial deep structures of the native peoples began to be transformed by the new missionary surface structure, no one should be so naïve today as to assume that the transformation resulted so quickly in the adoption of Puritan English deep structure, either at the linguistic or psychological level.²⁴⁷

Indeed, even if we were to ask just how long a deep structure lasts against an all-out assault on one’s culture, surely the more significant overwriting deep structure would be the experience of trauma itself. As Tinker writes, “it was problematic because the English structured reality in ways that made it difficult for the missionaries to have any clarity at all about the Indian conceptual world and finally made it difficult for them to contemplate genuinely across barriers so severe.”²⁴⁸ The result was genocidal, even if missionaries were well-intentioned.

Mimetic importations of eurochristian religious poetics also incorporated ideas of Indian “savagery” to re-enact the Christianization of pagan peoples of Europe through rituals of “playing Indian.” With respect to “New England,” Philip Deloria has eloquently articulated the politics of Indigenous-identity-appropriation. In May-Day carnivals that brought performances of class reversals to Turtle Island, “white [settler] Indians” came to signify their “natural” Americanness by forming “St. Tammany”

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 149.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 34.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 39.

societies, supposedly in reverence to “Tammenend, a Delaware leader who had granted William Penn access to the river and woods.”²⁴⁹ On May Day, “King Tammany” was burned by white colonizers dressed as Indians: “The rituals worked in countervailing ways. Tammany’s death was a metaphor for the ‘disappearance’ of Indian people from the land, the destruction of the old cycle, the dawning of another era in which successor Americans would enjoy their new world.”²⁵⁰ Sacrificial poetics are undeniable here. The romance of the dying or “extinct” Indian today must be constantly rejected by Indigenous People against centuries of “playing Indian” and entitled cultural appropriation presented as “tribute.”

All of this fed into what Herman Melville called the “metaphysics of Indian-hating.” In a book with a title based on that phrase, Richard Drinnon follows the trials of English lawyer and colonizer, Thomas Morton, with respect to his tensions among Puritans in “New England.” The title of Morton’s *New English Canaan* (1637) appropriately evidences Steven Newcomb’s emphases on the eurochristian religious poetics in *Pagans in the Promised Land*. Drinnon exposes the ambivalences between land and citizenship at work in Morton’s book:

Who were the real “uild people”? The Indians? They were at home in the land, treated Morton and other planters hospitably, shared what they had (as in “Platoes Commonwealth”), danced as a form of communal art, and derived other innocent delights from living in their bodies. Or the Saints? They hated the land, had already massacred some of the inhabitants, defaced their graves and otherwise abused their hospitality, clutched avariciously at property and things, forbade

²⁴⁹ Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 13.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

dancing, and generally denied the pleasure of their bodies. Even the careless reader could not miss Morton's answer: "I have found the Massachusetts Indian[s] more full of humanity than [*sic*] the Christians; and have had much better quarter with them; yet I observed not their humors, but they mine." He perceived at its inception the stereotype of the treacherous savage and rejected it out of hand.²⁵¹

Morton's efforts at establishing the colony of Merry Mount have been recounted in literary retellings from Nathaniel Hawthorne to Robert Lowell, which emphasize May Day celebrations imported from his part of England. The dances encouraged marriage-alliances between English men and Native women – a colonizing tactic used in South America – though perhaps celebrated in Drinnon's passage as a form of "free love." To avoid such a connotation, which feeds into the complex of "playing Indian" and the importation of humanist-inspired classicism, which celebrated Roman paganism at the May Day celebrations without contradicting one's Christianity, one must emphasize the role of land and rights to it.

Native women were the political leaders, and alliances with them granted some local currency, even if the Crown and later American government would claim under the importation of the Doctrine of Discovery that Indians could not hold title to land or sell it to colonizers. Suffice it to say that it is less easy for Indians to become Christians, even after multiple waves of missionary conquests, than it is for eurochristians to "play Indian" to grant themselves an idea of their natural right to the soil. Morton, like Bartolomé de las Casas, was more a humanitarian than the Puritans, yet he was a eurochristian civilizer

²⁵¹ Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 19.

nonetheless and a proto-liberal who evidences the eurochristian religious poetic “glue” underwriting Christianity and emergent liberalism.

With respect to the “Great Awakening” almost a century later, Linford Fisher writes: “Despite an emerging culture of Indian Separatism in many Native communities after 1750, colonial ministers and missionaries were convinced the Awakening had failed and attempted to continue in their efforts to evangelize the same Native groups.”²⁵² In an echo of Tinker’s essay on the irrelevance of European concepts of religion with respect to Native Americans, Fisher writes:

At the most basic level, Native Americans did not separate out something called “religion,” nor did they have ideas about the world that might resemble a creed or systematized belief system – or any other religious convention like written scriptures that contemporaries might have identified with European religions. Native religions were virtually synonymous with culture.²⁵³

While I generally agree with this statement, I refer back to Tinker to highlight that merely replacing ‘religion’ with ‘culture’ does not really work either. “Culture” and “cultivation” play into the same up-down image schema that Tinker and Newcomb point out.

“Culture” and Framing

²⁵² Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 10.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 16.

With respect to South American contexts, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro is likewise suspicious of the use of culture, which can act as a reoccupation of earlier theological structures:

For we, moderns and anthropologists, tend to conceive of culture in a theological mode, as a “system of beliefs” to which individuals adhere, so to speak, religiously. The anthropological reduction of Christianity, such a decisive enterprise for the constitution of our discipline, could not help but impregnate the culture concept with the values it hoped to grasp. “Religion as a cultural system” presupposes an idea of culture as a religious system.²⁵⁴

He notes that the “bad habits” the Jesuits saw in the Tupinambá in terms of culture. “the Jesuits saw “culture” as the hard core of the elusive indigenous being.”²⁵⁵ Reading from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, we can see such symbolic cathexis with more flexibility as enacting the drama of symbolic action. Within a eurochristian deep framing structure, reading Indians as “lower,” “backward,” “inconstant,” etc. this reinforces a “Christian is up / Civilized is up,” mentality, which Tinker and Newcomb emphasize is indicative of vertical notions of eurochristian domination.

Here Newcomb and Tinker are relying in part on George Lakoff’s articulation of Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) within eurochristian thought and expressed by the Doctrine of Discovery, which justifies claiming any lands not occupied by a Christian prince for Christendom. In contrast to notions of “essentialist” stereotyping, ICMs are cognitive structures reinforced by neural pathways from the time we are infants. These

²⁵⁴ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul: The Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16th-Century Brazil*, trans. Gregory Duff Moreton (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2011): 12.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

neuropathways are not merely “symbolic”; rather, they structure out mental organization of reality. As Charles Fillmore wrote in an influential essay on the subject:

The concept of frame does not depend on language, but as applied to language processing the notion figures in the following way. Particular words or speech formulas, or particular grammatical choices, are associated in memory with particular frames, in such a way that exposure to the linguistic form in an appropriate context activates in the perceiver’s mind the particular frame – activation of the frame, by turn, enhancing access to the other linguistic material that is associated with the same frame.²⁵⁶

George Lakoff’s later cognitive science emphasizes that such framing is *physically* constituted through neural binding.²⁵⁷ Indigenous theorists like Tinker and Newcomb have built on this work while emphasizing the *intergenerational* work of deep framing.

In current therapeutic research, Katie Schultz, Karina L. Walters, Ramona Beltran, Sandy Stroud, and Michelle Johnson-Jennings have produced research on community-based research among Native women going through a process of reconnecting with their bodies through wilderness experience programming such as re-walking the Trail of Tears helped them deal with intergenerational trauma.²⁵⁸ Even through centuries of living oppressed by eurochristian dominant framing, the trauma Indigenous Peoples face is more central than the imposed surface frames. Such programs

²⁵⁶ Charles Fillmore, “Frame Semantics and the Nature of Language,” *Origins and the Evolution of Language*, ed. Steven R. Harnad, Horst D. Strecklis, and Jane Lancaster (New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 280, 1976), 25.

²⁵⁷ George Lakoff, *The Political Mind: Why You Can’t Understand 21st-Century American Politics with an 18th-Century Brain* (New York: Viking, 2008): 25-26.

²⁵⁸ Katie Schultz, Karina L. Walters, Ramona Beltran, Sandy Stroud, and Michelle Johnson-Jennings, “‘I’m stronger than I thought’”: Native Women Reconnecting to Body, Health, and Place,” *Health & Place* 40, (July 2016): 21-28.

currently exist outside of western medicine models, nor would they work the same for non-native people, but I am using a similar idea by attending to the intergenerational domination of a eurochristian deep framing that is for many “naturalized” and unconscious. New Age liberals, in their universalized and non-denominational approach to “spirituality,” continue to “play Indian” even as they rightfully seek ways out of the trappings of “official” or “organized” religion. But it is hard to see this without attending to the longer history of eurochristian religious poetics.

Many well-intentioned ayahuasca and enthusiasts also point to the potential benefit of psychedelics to undo some of our framing structures, but if undoing the domination structure is not actively addressed, one risks further cementing it even while one is having an “ecstatic” or “spiritual” experience or even doing “twenty years of therapy in one night.” Similarly, although Alexander Dawson is correct to call out the inherent racism preventing non-Indigenous use of peyote, an emphasis on the rights for “white shamans” to use entheogenic substances does little to attend to the ongoing transgenerational trauma faced by Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, it does little to address the ongoing ritualized mimetic performances of “playing Indian.”

Attending to the legal framing and embedded nature of the Doctrine of Discovery here, I am trying to signal to eurochristians how their own deep framing inadvertently persists in an ongoing genocidal erasure of Indigenous Peoples. If ayahuasca is indeed potentially healing, its rising presence in public discourse gives us an opportunity to address the deep framing of the perpetrator-conditioning within eurochristian intergenerational framing. While plenty of works maintain skeptical accounts of

“Western seekers” critical of “New Age” practices, few situate such performances within the well-worn performative traditions of sacrificial eurochristian poetics.

Transnationally, the Doctrine of Discovery remains a crucial discursive anchor. Due to its eurochristian framing, the Doctrine of Discovery could only see West Africans and Indians as Muslims (Saracens) or pagans, i.e., non-christians in its zero-sum approach to expanding universal Christendom. The vertical scheme of power plays out in several ways. Steven Newcomb writes:

The ICM of the Conqueror posits a central figure, such as a king, monarch, or pope, who is considered to come from or be derived from a divine source. The presumption of the conqueror’s divinity leads to the additional presumption that the conqueror has “divine right” to exert control or force, which is understood as being UP, as reflected in the metaphor POWER IS UP. Conversely, those peoples whom the conqueror has subjected to his control are conceptualized as being DOWN in relation to the conqueror, as reflected in the metaphor LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN. Furthermore, the conqueror is presumed to have the divine right not just to rule, but also to spread or expand his reign or domination outward by expanding his rule to “new” lands by means of war or force of arms. This conception is found in the term *imperium*, or “a dominium, state, or sovereignty that would expand in population and territory, and increase in strength and power.” In order to find or “discover” additional lands that the conqueror can subdue, he must send representatives forth to search out, discover, and find *new* lands to conquer and subdue.²⁵⁹

Western “civilization” and “culture” invoke the vertical dynamics of “growing up” and play very harmoniously into infantilizing images of Natives as “children,” and in turn of eurochristian children being placed in a what Thomas Hobbes referred to as a “state of nature” or “state of war.”

²⁵⁹ Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Discovery* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2008), 24.

Thomas Hobbes's sentiments are well-known among political scientists, but here it needs to be seen in the context of how it evidences eurochristian deep framing:

It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time nor condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world. But there are many places where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of *America* (except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural lust) have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner that I said before.²⁶⁰

When political scientists and liberal legal theorists such as John Rawls claim that the state of nature is merely a legal fiction by which we might use a "veil of ignorance" as a heuristic for achieving a static and transcendent notion of justice, they ignore the comparisons Hobbes employs with respect to the Indigenous Peoples across the Atlantic Ocean. Hobbes was well aware of the eurochristian tradition and its re-articulation of Aristotle, and he mentions as much in his opening pages on sense.²⁶¹

As we have seen through Pagden's work, by the of the Valladolid debates, a eurochristian reinterpretation of Aristotelean theories of civilizational "development" were emerging through an internalized psychology. It is necessary to contextualize this eurochristian discussion of civilization's origins within the so-called "discovery" of a "new world," which necessitated an entirely different conception of world history. Within this "developmental" context, modern versions of race began to emerge. As David Roediger writes:

²⁶⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, IL: Hackett, 1994): 77.

²⁶¹ He explicitly addresses this in the opening chapters of *Leviathan*.

The term white arose as a designation for European explorers, traders and settlers who came into contact with Africans and indigenous people of the Americas. As such it appeared even before permanent British settlement in North America. Its early usages in America served as much to distinguish European settlers from Native Americans as to distinguish Africans from Europeans. Thus, the prehistory of the white worker begins in the settlers' images of Native Americans.²⁶²

Just as Willie James Jennings has noted with respect to the emergence of the African slave trade, the emergence of modern conceptions of race were theologically grounded for eurochristians. Race is part of the eurochristian drama and its terministic screens develop around race to perpetuate eurochristian deep framing.

Race worked within what Newcomb identifies above as the “conqueror” ICM. Earlier conceptions of “race” meant something more like a “nation” of people (not a nation-state yet), and we can see perhaps some of the notions of racial superiority particularly in relation to Protestant countries' employment of the Doctrine of Discovery.

As Miller *et al.* write:

England and France, for example, no doubt developed these additional elements of Discovery because they could not rely on papal grants to trump the rights of native inhabitants to their lands in the New World. Consequently, England and France relied on two new Discovery factors: first, land was available for their claims if other European countries were not in actual occupancy and possession when English or French explorers arrived, and second, land was available for taking from Indigenous peoples even if they were currently occupying and using the land if it was considered legally vacant, empty, or *terra nullius*.²⁶³

²⁶² David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 2007), 21.

²⁶³ Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg, *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 21-22.

In this context, when we consider Thomas Hobbes's theory of the "state of nature" within the eurochristian notions of "development" being superimposed onto the "natural rights" of Indigenous Peoples, we clearly see that the notion of civilization fits perfectly within the eurochristian drama, melding verticality the cultivation and the conqueror ICMs.

I should emphasize that this is not merely casuistry, though certainly such intentional manipulation occurred. It is not only a matter of oppressors simply cherry-picking biblical passages to support the institution of slavery. What underwrote the arrogance is an intergenerational eurochristian framing that would naturalize for them that Indigenous Peoples were "lower" than them. Similarly, as the phenomenon of "liberalism" emerged in an increasing focus on a rights-bearing individual, it was simultaneously combined with a notion of civilized cultivation that revealed a supposedly "natural" superiority of the eurochristian over Indigenous Peoples. We see, however, a seamless blend between inherited eurochristian framing and outright intentional manipulation of the law when it comes to the colonization of Turtle Island that became "New England."

The Doctrine of Discovery and the New England Charter

The eurochristian phantasy structure of the Doctrine of Discovery is built directly into the fabric of the 1620 *Charter of New England*, a deal brokered with King James of England for the joint stock company known as the Council for New England.²⁶⁴ It is

²⁶⁴ The document is dated November 3, 1620. The Mayflower had set sail September 6, 1620 for the Virginia colony but landed at Cape Cod instead. The agreement that came to be known as the *Mayflower Compact* (November 11, 1620)

important to note James's own Protestantism, as well as the general fears among English nobility before his ascension to the throne that he might revert back to the religion of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, who was Catholic. The support of establishing Protestant colonies was thus intimately tied to the maintenance of England's body politic.

Nevertheless, on the open seas and in the "new world," international law remained very much within the conception of the Doctrine of Discovery and the "natural rights" expressed soon afterward. In this more competitive sphere outside of papal bulls of donation, fierce competition developed. "New England" was thus intentionally designed to prohibit the success of a "New Netherlands" or "New Denmark." Again, I have placed in bold direct references in the *Charter of New England* to the Doctrine of Discovery:

And for asmuch as We have been certainly given to understand by divers of our good Subjects, that have for these many Years past frequented those Coasts and Territoryes, between the Degrees of Fourty and Fourty-Eight, **that there is noe other the Subjects of any Christian King or State, by any Authority from their Soveraignes, Lords, or Princes, actually in Possession of any of the said Lands or Precincts, whereby any Right, Claim, Interest, or Title, may, might, or ought by that Meanes accrue, belong, or appertaine unto them, or any of them.**²⁶⁵

agreed to remain loyal subjects of James I and to based their society on Christian faith. It would take more hold in subsequent years with the arrival of the Puritans.

²⁶⁵ *The Charter of New England: 1620*, Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed November 28, 2019. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass01.asp. Source: *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America*, Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906 by Francis Newton Thorpe Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909.

The Doctrine of Discovery granted the right for subjects of any Christian Prince to claim for Christendom. This was a transnational articulation of eurochristian religious poetics that transcended the various Protestant fractures and even the notion of the Sovereign.

Sovereignty, in this conception, is entirely eurochristian. Absent a Christian sovereign, under international law the land was deemed *terra nullius*, or “nobody’s land.”

And also for that We have been further given certainly to knowe, that within these late Yeares there hath by God's Visitation reigned **a wonderfull Plague, together with many horrible Slaughters, and Murthers, committed amongst the Sauages and brutish People there, heertofore inhabiting, in a Manner to the utter Destruction, Deuastacion, and Depopulacion of that whole Territorye, so that there is not left for many Leagues together in a Manner, any that doe claime or challenge any Kind of Interests therein, nor any other Superiour Lord or Souveraigne to make Claime "hereunto, whereby We in our Judgment are persuaded and satisfied that the appointed Time is come in which Almighty God in his great Goodness and Bountie towards Us and our People, hath thought fitt and determined, that those large and goodly Territoryes, deserted as it were by their naturall Inhabitants, should be possessed and enjoyed by such of our Subjects and People as heertofore have and hereafter shall by his Mercie and Favour, and by his Powerfull Arme, be directed and conducted thither.**²⁶⁶

People who want to minimize the genocide of Indigenous Peoples often make the claim that disease did much of the killing, as if that somehow counterbalances the atrocities of direct, physical violence and enslavement to depopulate lands occupied by Indigenous Peoples. In this passage we see that, building on the claims to territories unclaimed by a Christian sovereign, the colonizers imagined in a foreshadowing of Manifest Destiny that God was intentionally clearing the path for colonization by wreaking a plague upon the “savages.”

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

In the passage, Indigenous People are depicted as “brutish” “murderers” who, fighting amongst one another, are represented as having killed each other off. Historian Francis Jennings notes that as early as 1588, speculators of colonization noticed that Natives began to “die very fast” after contact with English people.²⁶⁷ Death of Indigenous People by disease in the eurochristian ICM was interpreted as God clearing the land for them. If they were to do some killing too, this would be in accordance with their theological worldview. Thus, even claims that disease accounted for much of the body count among Indigenous People demonstrates the *drama of sacrifice* so embedded within eurochristian frames. Indigenous People in this view were being sacrificed by God and eurochristians alike, and such thinking is directly in line with the providential locus of Augustine’s theory of “just war.”

In concert with Patricia Seed’s attention to varying interpretations among emergent European nations of the Doctrine of Discovery, Francis Jennings also notes that the word “savage” went through linguistic pejoration among English colonizers in particular, who “never adopted the conception of the Noble Savage”: “The word *savage* thus underwent considerable alteration of meaning as different colonists pursued their varied ends. One aspect of the term remained constant, however: the savage was always inferior to civilized men.”²⁶⁸ At least part of the rhetoric of savagery in its expression of the eurochristian drama of sacrifice is a complete denial that Indigenous diets were far

²⁶⁷ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 23.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

more based on the careful cultivation of plants. Denying the “savages” farming abilities helped to vilify them, even as colonizers moved into desolated towns, took over existing crops, and gradually forced remaining Natives to be more reliant on hunting and fishing for subsistence.²⁶⁹

As Jace Weaver (among others) notes, “In the pre-Columbian Western Hemisphere, tobacco was found from the subarctic region to southern South America.”²⁷⁰ Chocolate, maize, coffee, tomatoes, hot peppers, and potatoes known today in various regionally-defined cuisines are, like tobacco, impossible to conceive without longstanding Indigenous agricultural practices. The eurochristian schema’s denial and erasure of this most basic fact is structurally part of a genocidal fabrication.²⁷¹ Weaver also notes a Portuguese ax radio carbon dated c. 1500-1530 buried in a Wendat village near present day Toronto and surfacing in 2011 reveals well-established Indigenous trade networks were available more than a century before the Wendat people were in contact with Europeans.²⁷² Marcy Norton notes: “The earliest archaeological evidence for the human use of tobacco are seeds from Peru that date from 2500-1800 BCE, and, more indirectly tubular stone pipes from eastern north America that date as early as 2000

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 63.

²⁷⁰ Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 27.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 27.

²⁷² Ibid., 56.

BCE,” while non-cultivated use is speculated as being at least 8,000 years old.²⁷³ Almost no first-year student at the university where I teach has heard any of this, nor have many of my faculty colleagues. Instead, like the state legislators that refuse to listen to Indigenous People when they call for an end the Columbus Day celebrations, they exhibit a eurochristian foundation narrative that starts in New England and slowly moves west. That is their orientational framing and reality, and many times they resist having it challenged. In other words, it is not a matter of just teaching people that colonialism and racism and slavery were morally wrong; rather, it is about attending to the persistent eurochristian framing.

Looking closely at the founding of New England, we have seen a clear eurochristian transfer of ideas stemming from the Doctrine of Discovery. Francis Jennings points to the lawyer, Richard Hakluyt’s clearly stated intentions for the Virginia colony in 1585: “The ends of this voyage are these: 1, to plant the Christian religion; 2, To trafficke; 3, To conquer; Or, to doe all three.”²⁷⁴ The intent to vilify the “savage” was directly part of a propaganda strategy to portray them as incapable of cultivating land while moving into their villages and depriving them of their food sources. But we also risk minimizing it when we only characterize it as “propaganda.” The truth is that these

²⁷³ Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 4.

²⁷⁴ E.G.R. Taylor, ed. “Ralph Lane to R. Hakluyt, lawyer, September 3, 1585,” *Writings of the Two Richard Hakluyts, Volume I-II* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 31 & 214, quoted in Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 76.

attempts at vilification even when very intentional participated in a feedback loop with the underlying eurochristian ICM.

What is especially telling about the passages from *The Charter of New England* above is the obvious recognition of people living there, while at the same time declaring that God himself had reduced them. Clearly, English speculators had already noticed the decline of populations after contact and this could also be tied into religious rhetoric for their right to occupy the territory. Notice also that, much like Christopher Columbus, the English colonizers denied that the Natives could be “Subjects and People.” Remember that Queen Isabella had been angry at Columbus for his ill-treatment of her new “subjects,” but his dehumanization of the Natives was employed to justify the human trafficking of slavery to make money when he did not find the gold he desired. The English colonizers were doing much of the same as they sold severely reduced populations of Indigenous Peoples into slavery in order to clear the land. The rhetoric of “savagery” was employed as a device to begin clearing more powerful Natives as the colonizers encroached inland.

Although I am working with a different conception of genocide than the United Nations 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, it remains worth noting that *The New England Charter* and early speculators like Hakluyt clearly display an *intent* to genocide, including seeking and receiving government sponsorship to do so.²⁷⁵ King James I writes:

²⁷⁵ My conception of genocide, as I detail in chapter four, is processual rather than event-based, which allows me to account for intergenerational instances.

In Contemplacion and serious Consideracion whereof, Wee have thought it fitt according to our Kingly Duty, soe much as in Us lyeth, to second and followe God's sacred Will, rendering reverend Thanks to his Divine Majestie for his gracious favour in laying open and revealing the same unto us, before any other Christian Prince or State, by which Meanes without Offence, and as We trust to his Glory, Wee may with Boldness goe on to the settling of soe hopefull a Work, which tendeth **to the reducing and Conversion of such Sauages as remaine wandering in Desolacion and Distress, to Civil Societie and Christian Religion, to the Inlargement of our own Dominions, and the Aduancement of the Fortunes of such of our good Subjects as shall willingly intresse themselves in the said Employment, to whom We cannot but give singular Commendations for their soe worthy Intention and Enterprize;**²⁷⁶

Here the language of “reduction” again echoes fifteenth century papal bulls. Jennings, however, in agreement with Tinker and Fisher, notes that actual conversions were rare.²⁷⁷

Moreover, during this period the rhetoric of conversion and “civilizing” the “savages” had more to do with appealing to monetary support among English churchgoers for the support of the new English companies who desired to profit from colonization. Commerce and profit, the “advancement of fortunes,” were also tied to the early conception of “liberty.”

Wee therefore, of our especiall Grace, mere Motion, and certaine Knowledge, by the Aduice of the Lords and others of our Priuy Councell have for Us, our Heysr and Successors, graunted, ordained, and established, and in and by these Presents, Do for Us, our Heirs and Successors, grant, ordaine and establish, that all that Circuit, Continent, Precincts, and Limitts in America, lying and being in Breadth from Fourty Degrees of Northerly Latitude, from the Equinoctiall Line, to Fourty-eight Degrees of the said Northerly Latitude, and in length by all the Breadth

²⁷⁶ *The Charter of New England: 1620*, Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed November 28, 2019. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass01.asp. Source: *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America*, Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906 by Francis Newton Thorpe Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909.

²⁷⁷ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 251.

aforesaid throughout the Maine Land, from Sea to Sea, with all the Seas, Rivers, Islands, Creekes, Inletts, Ports, and Havens, within the Degrees, Precincts and Limitts of the said Latitude and Longitude, shall be the Limitts; and Bounds, and Precints of the second Collony: **And to the End that the said Territoryes may forever hereafter be more particularly and certainly known and distinguished, our Will and Pleasure is, that the same shall from henceforth be nominated, termed, and called by the Name of New-England, in America; and by that Name of New-England in America, the said Circuit, Precinct, Limitt, Continent, Islands, and Places in America, aforesaid, We do by these Presents, for Us, our Heyrs and Successors, name, call, erect, found and establish, and by that Name to have Continuance for ever.**²⁷⁸

Here we once again have the baptismal renaming of the land within an eurochristian sovereignty.

While I will not belabor a close reading of the entire text of *The New England Charter* here, it is helpful to note the language at the end of the document granting the charter:

And lastly, because the principall Effect which we can desire or expect of this Action, is **the Conversion and Reduction of the People in those Parts unto the true Worship of God and Christian Religion, in which Respect, Wee would be loath that any Person should be permitted to pass that Wee suspected to affect the Superstition of the Chh of Rome**, Wee do hereby declare that it is our Will and Pleasure that none be permitted to pass, in any Voyage from time to time to be made into the said Country, but such as shall first have taken the Oathe of Supremacy; for which Purpose, Wee do by these Presents give full Power and Authority to the President of the said Councill, to tender and exhibit the said Oath to all such Persons as shall at any time be sent and imployed in the said Voyage.

[. . .]

²⁷⁸ *The Charter of New England: 1620*, Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed November 28, 2019. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass01.asp. Source: *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America*, Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906 by Francis Newton Thorpe Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909.

And Wee also do by these Presents, ratifye and confirm unto the said **Council and their Successors, all Priveliges, Franchises, Liberties, Immunities granted in our said former Letters-patents**, and not in these our Letters-patents revoked, altered, changed or abridged, altho' Expressed, Mentioned, &c.²⁷⁹

“Liberty” here is tied to religious freedom insofar as it is Protestant and uses Protestant governance to deny any “Superstition” tied to the “Church of Rome.” Such charters granting colonizing rights to English companies reveal the eurochristian religious poetics at work well before the 1694 establishment of the Bank of England, following the Glorious Revolution.

The Reoccupation of eurochristian Framing in Liberalism

When we think of the Protestant political-theological underwriting of the United States, we need to look at early charters rather than simply pointing to Puritan religiosity. The same legal regard through reference to the Doctrine of Discovery was employed by Thomas Jefferson during the nation’s founding and expansion westward with the Louisiana Purchase almost two centuries later, well before Marshall’s 1823 ruling in *Johns v. M’Intosh*, as Robert J. Miller has traced. Jefferson inherited this eurochristian tradition, no matter how radical he may have been as a Deist and Enlightenment-oriented interpreter of scriptures. In a chapter six, when I discuss religious liberty in the United States with respect to recognizing ayahuasca religions, it will be important to reflect back on this material to exemplify the persistent eurochristian religious poetics at work in the Court and the nation’s inherent eurochristian political theology.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

What about sectarian differences? In noting the theological differences between Catholics and Protestants when it came to early evangelizing efforts, Jennings points to the structural elitism preferred by early English colonizers. As he writes:

The Protestants produced no missionary martyrs, though some Protestant clergymen died violently along with laymen during Indian wars. Seventeenth-century Protestant ministers stuck close to their colonial settlements, venturing forth only when a special congregation had been collected to listen to a sermon. This seems odd when one considers the evangelical missionizing fervor that Protestantism would take on in later centuries, but the data are there.²⁸⁰

Much has been made of differing attitudes between Catholics and Protestants with respect to their treatment of Indigenous Peoples. During the early nineteenth-century, Protestant missionary organizations in the United States began their “civilizing” empire building with The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions who sent more than eighty missionaries to Hawaii between 1820 and 1848.²⁸¹ Emily Conroy-Krutz’s history of nineteenth-century U.S. Protestant foreign missionary societies notes that a “hierarchy of civilization” was essential to christian imperialism: “It was precisely because this hierarchy existed and because it was possible to move up toward civilization and Christianity that the mission movement existed.”²⁸² Here again we see the up-down ICM Tinker and Newcomb point to as part of deep framing.

²⁸⁰ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 56-57.

²⁸¹ Amy Tikkanen and The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, November 28, 2016, accessed January 6, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/American-Board-of-Commissioners-for-Foreign-Missions>.

²⁸² Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 50.

Civilizing education had become infused with a liberal education model that owed much to the eurochristian frame of human “development.” Developing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the liberal education system was advanced by classic liberal theorists from John Locke to Jean Jacques Rousseau famously ghettoizes children to the “state of nature” where children are encouraged to be “savage” up to about the age of eighteen, after which in Rousseau’s Romantic schema they are “corrupted” by civilization.²⁸³ This trope persists in the colonization of children through children’s literature today,²⁸⁴ but even the Romantic schema carries with it the neutrally capacious space of ‘natural religion.’ As the child grows up, the “savage” inside is annihilated by civilization, and the eurochristian scheme sees this as entirely natural even if one’s “innocence” is lost. The concept is amnesiac with respect to the fact that the “savage” is the product of the eurochristian frame; thus, implicitly growing up, becoming a citizen, and becoming “civilized” is inherently eurochristian formation.

What had indeed been “naturalized” for Rousseau was the “evolutionary” stages of civilization theory that relativized historical placement, to which Pagden pointed with respect to Adam Smith, whose “invisible hand” was yet another articulation of this “naturalization” that was by no means “natural.” Rousseau and the contract theorists in

²⁸³ See Jean Jacques Rousseau’s 1762 *Emile, or a Treatise on Education* in particular.

²⁸⁴ For a good discussion of the persistent colonization of children, see Perry Nodelman, *The Hidden Adult* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2008). See also, David Rudd, *Reading the Child in Children’s Literature: An Heretical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

emerging liberal discourse were aware that somehow “modern man” (the citizen) had become “alienated” from a “state of nature.” Situating the liberal child in a *simulated* natural environment where they are protected by the invisible hand of an “unseen” tutor, as attested in *Emile, or On Education* was no more “real” than Ralph Waldo Emerson’s transparent eyeball, a formation of the static-transcendence emerging out of eurochristian thought. This static-transcendence inverts the “natural” through an interiorizing process whereby “rationality” or “Reason” becomes a virtualized and transcendent space. At first this static transcendence seems to contradict the developmental aspects of natural rights thinking, but when coupled with the vertical power schema and Conqueror ICM we are able to see providential eurochristian frames that very much underwrite liberalism.

Of course, during the early nineteenth-century Hegel painstakingly tried to synthesize all of this with the coming of “the scientific” age in *Phenomenology of Spirit* with its own “upward” metaphor of *Aufhebung* or “enlightenment.” In the eurochristian tradition, the dialectic itself enacts the qualities of erasure that inform the masking and amnesiac characteristics of liberalism. I tend to think of this as liberalism’s “reset button,” a mechanistic metaphor for the rebirthing of *Homo renatus*. In the words of Frederick Jackson Turner’s essay on the so-called “closing of the frontier,” “This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the

forces dominating American character.”²⁸⁵ Even in its presumably secular form, the colonial ideology expresses its eurochristian framing.

In *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lisa Lowe details how the emergence of liberalism was bound to the economic developments of capitalism. She argues that we need to read even the abolitionist movement, which overtly framed its discourse within Christian morality, as simultaneously and more powerfully driven by colonizing efforts that did not disappear with emancipation. This work is important for my situating liberalism within a eurochristian deep frame. Regarding the liberalism of John Stuart Mill, she writes:

By “liberty,” Mill did not mean the narrower ideas of individual right or free will, but rather “liberty” was the overarching principle that both defined political sovereignty in liberal society, and which authorized the differentiated power of government over “backward” peoples. Mill stated [in *On Liberty*] that this doctrine is only meant to apply to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children.... We may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered in its nonage.²⁸⁶

Mill’s notion of liberty is itself considered “sovereign,” but that notion of sovereignty only makes sense in the “uplifting” metaphorical procedures within the deep framing of eurochristian metaphysics. This has nothing to do with whether or not Hegel was really interacting with the empiricist philosophies of English utilitarianism or whether Bentham

²⁸⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” Paper read during the World Columbian Exposition, Chicago, July 12, 1893, *nationalhumanitiescenter.org*, accessed January 6, 2020, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/empire/text1/turner.pdf>

²⁸⁶ Lisa Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 112.

and Mill were engaging with continental thought. In the transnational context, the eurochristian religious poetics constructs a frame for each lineage, just as Nietzsche would synthesize the two traditions to develop his genealogy of morals in the late nineteenth-century.

In contrast to genealogical tracing, Tink Tinker insists that deep frames persist for Indigenous Peoples as well. Like eurochristian framing, which may change shape into seemingly secular notions of liberalism, ways of being “Indian” persist beneath the nominal cypher “Indian” itself that have nothing to do with the colonizing definitions such as blood quantum. Thus, many Native Americans use the term ‘Indian’ and ‘Indian Country’, tacitly accepting a cypher that protects more accurate names from the converting tendencies of eurochristian framing.

With respect to southern contexts, as Kenneth Mills and Marisol de la Cadena detail, the vertical class stratification in South and Central America has often situated terms such as ‘*indio*’, ‘*campesino*’, and ‘*caboclo*’, with a sense of being the “lowest of the low,” at times motivating people from these groups to cast-off such designations whenever necessary. This is part of the genocidal mechanism at work in converting “Indian” into Christians. The more gradated articulations of lineage in South American (Catholic) contexts merely provided a more nuanced hierarchy than the direct methods of the more Protestant-derived north, which might be translated through two-fold motivation: “Assimilate or die” + “Assimilate *and* die” – the reduction to a contrast between “bare life” and “qualified life”: either way, eurochristian religious poetics wins.

In Christianity's inheritance and translation of Aristotle's "natural slavery" into the interiority of a neutral "capacity for reason," constitutive of "natural man" who becomes a counterbalance to European religious wars among Christians, and amid its complimenting historicism underwriting claims to "world history," we see the emergent dialectic that would become core to Hegel's *Aufhebung* or Enlightenment, which so powerfully retold the narrative of Western civilization for eurochristians during the nineteenth century. This conception is: it is only in the *synthesizing* process of upliftment by which the man of "nature" (bare life) and the automaton that is the "citizen" (qualified life) could *rise up, new born* in an imitation of Christ to become truly "enlightened." The sacrificial poetics of eurochristian framing here work from the appropriately named "cross-purposes" to destroy all others.

To know this process was to know implicitly and explicitly that Indigenous people must die – or convert, which amounts to the same thing – through assimilation. Within the "enlightenment" terministic screens of "evolution," the "born-again" death / rebirth conception could become part of the Romantic narrative that gives praise to the bravery of the now defeated "noble savage." Thus, following John Stuart Mill's concept of the "nonage" of the colonial Other – whether Asian "coolie," African slave now "emancipated," or "Indian" – the more savage the "savage" was, the greater was the triumph of implicitly eurochristian civilization. But within the genealogy of that Romanticizing process, which is certainly capable of honoring the "heroism" of the defeated enemy, is the intergenerational eurochristian logic of the "just war." In such a

frame, the enemy's resistance to "true faith" is what in turn justifies the conquest itself in eurochristian logic.

It is in just this logological drama of a specialized liberal category of the "human" that fuels Alexander Weheliye's analysis in his attention to the "enfleshment" of *habeas viscus*, all of that organic material left aside by the individuated *habeas corpus*.

Resonating with Willie Jennings' articulation of the 'Christian imagination's' displacement of bodies, Weheliye writes:

The conjoining of flesh and habeas corpus in the compound *habeas viscus* brings into view an articulated assemblage of the human (viscus/flesh) borne of political violence, while at the same time not losing sight of the ways the law pugnaciously adjudicates who is deserving of personhood and who is not (habeas).²⁸⁷

While Weheliye, drawing on black feminist scholars such as Sylvia Wynter and Hortense Spillers, discusses the transgenerational scars that signify the "hieroglyphics of the flesh," in an Indigenous American context we might think of the rotting flesh of the buffalo genocide²⁸⁸ on the Great Plains of Turtle Island during the nineteenth-century who were killed intentionally to deprive "Indians" of their food supply and cease a "nomadic" life that was the result of the colonization of the east. For plains people, that the buffalo were – and continue to be – seen as relatives has no place in the playing out of eurochristian

²⁸⁷ Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 11.

²⁸⁸ Nick Estes details this covering the strategic establishment of Fort Laramie to keep "peace" between Indians and the waves of settlers following the Mormon exodus and the California gold rush. See Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (New York: Verso, 2019), 93-94.

civilization genocidal actions highlights the fact that they have deep frames of their own that are not eurochristian.

Entirely androcentric in their missionary efforts, eurochristians have *no conception* of what environmental balance might mean, despite more recent eurochristian feminists and eco-critics. Thus, with respect to even current liberal Christian theologies, such as the process-oriented theology of Catherine Keller’s *Political Theology of the Earth* (2018), which presents a reading of “weak messianism” as a corrective to harm to the environment during the Anthropocene, or Kathryn Tanner’s *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (2019), which attempts to counter global capitalist greed with more conscientiously (Christian) modes of being, the persistence of a hierarchical, “stewardship” model for humans reaches back to the kind of framing eurochristians have in Newcomb’s articulation of the Conqueror ICM.²⁸⁹

Conclusion

As I began arguing in chapter two, the political hegemony of the United States, which inherited its colonizing position from and in response to the decay of European powers,²⁹⁰ created the War on Drugs in the twentieth-century simultaneous to the emergence of ayahuasca religions and the international knowledge of ayahuasca outside

²⁸⁹ Roger K. Green, “Amorous Agonism and the Allergy to Difference,” *The New Polis*, April 29, 2019, <https://thenewpolis.com/2019/04/29/amorous-agonism-and-the-allergy-to-difference-roger-green/>.

²⁹⁰ Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008).

of South America during the twentieth century. The War on Drugs is a rhetorical mechanism of intentional political destabilization in South America that maintains a eurochristian colonizing aspiration present in the U.S. since before the nation's founding but most articulated in two governmental positions in 1823. During that year, the emergence of Monroe Doctrine paralleled the U.S. Supreme Court's official employment of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery to deprive Indigenous People of land to make way for westward expansion. As a foreign policy initiative, the Monroe Doctrine effectively positioned the U.S. as "protector" of South America, whether or not newly independent continents asked for that protection. Any attack on South America under the Monroe Doctrine would be regarded by the United States as an act of war against itself.

As Peter H. Smith details in *The Talons of the Eagle*, the Monroe Doctrine signaled the beginning of a long relationship of the U.S. coveting South America. Rather than being thankful, South American leaders were rightfully suspicious as early as the 1820s. Smith writes, "Condemnation of the Monroe Doctrine went hand in hand with celebration of the European connection"; thus:

A frequent corollary of this general position stressed the importance of Latin America's cultural, social, and intellectual connections with Europe rather than the United States. During the nineteenth century the quest for self-identity meant not *indigenismo*, a movement that would emerge later in the twentieth century, but appreciation of European ancestries. In practice this pattern took two forms: *Hispanidad*, or glorification of all things Spanish, and unabashed Francophilia.²⁹¹

So, eurochristian framing was still at work even as the newly minted conception of "Latin America" emerged with the Bolivarian dream and suspicions about U.S. involvement in

²⁹¹ Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, The United States, and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 71.

the region. What kind of aspirations to empire accompanied such a foreign policy decision? The older Christian Doctrine of Discovery that Justice Marshall wove into in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* had been employed – though in different ways – by the colonizers of South America since the outset of the invasion of the Americas by Europeans. Moreover, the development of liberalism, while often framed within a narrative of secularization, maintains eurochristian religious poetics. While I have countered the idea of ‘religion’ with the intergenerational focus of thinkers like Tinker and Newcomb, Luis León’s articulation of the making of religious poetics helps us to see the *process* at work. Thus, an account of the process of religious hybridity and the emergence of mestizaje and borderlands concepts remain important. Yet in the making of religion we must see the underwritten eurochristian poetics of sacrifice. The eurochristian analytic thus helps us to think in terms of transnational concerns while also attending to a longer history.

It is specifically within the context of a transnational diaspora of ayahuasca that we must bear this shared history in mind. In other words, the diaspora of ayahuasca demands not only that we think in terms of “global capitalism” but in the eurochristian framing drama of sacrifice and its terministic screens. It is doubly ironic that groups today seek religious recognition from the United States in order to legitimate their use of ayahuasca as sacrament through special exemptions.

As writers such as Johann Hari have tracked with respect to Harry J. Anslinger’s work as the first commissioner for the Federal Narcotics Bureau, U.S. political hegemony

in the wake of the Second World War spread the criminalization of “drugs” globally.²⁹² This was essentially an expansion of the Monroe Doctrine that resulted in international efforts to control global trade in a way that benefited the United States’ ascent to world economic hegemony. Drug War rhetoric occupies the casuistry of the Augustinian “just war” thesis, which legitimates the invasion lands where inhabitants resist Christ’s message. U.S. influence at the newly created United Nations helped to create a series of prohibitionist-framed conventions that are now very much in question under the banner of “global security.” These conventions accompanied an emergence of Law and Order rhetoric as a political backlash against global civil rights protests during the 1960s, setting the stage for major human rights abuses throughout the world under the justification of combating “drugs.”

The sheer power for these legal adherences to the Doctrine of Discovery in various forms to persist across such bloody wars speaks to the embedded nature of deep framing. The framing attitude persists within the founding concepts of U.S. legitimacy by which the U.S. *consciously* adopted a European and Christian argument legitimating its right to rule and its interactions with Natives, just as more Catholic-affiliated nations employed the same legal rhetoric in the Caribbean, South, and Central America. Continued reliance on the Doctrine of Discovery among colonizers of both North and South America provides a common frame from which to understand the continued diaspora of ayahuasca transnationally. Often unconsciously, the ICMs structure common

²⁹² Johann Hari, *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

individuals' language regarding these issues. Until the Pope and the respective nation-states actively disavow and make reparations for their centuries-long reliance on this Doctrine, there is no such thing as what people commonly call "the secular" (meaning religion-free rule) among the inhabitants of Turtle Island. Colonization persists for Native Peoples, there is nothing "postcolonial" about their situations so long as the Doctrine of Discovery legally frames the legitimacy of governmental authority. Even in more "secular" rhetorical frames such as the War on Drugs, the persistence of colonizing power remains eurochristian. Indeed, the very concept of 'religion' is itself eurochristian.

Ayahuasca's diaspora in South America over the past few centuries merely reflects the process of colonization. Conscripted to expeditions of "discovery," Indigenous Peoples came into direct contact with one another as slaves to eurochristians. Practices such as the ingestion of ayahuasca and its brewing appear to have been disseminated through this process, even though the use of various psychoactive substances appears to have been widespread throughout the Americas before European contact. This point is essential because we ought not confuse any critique of the conditions for the ayahuasca diaspora with absurd claims about the "authenticity" of its use among Indigenous Peoples.

Following Peter Gow and Bernd Brabec de Mori, the relatively recent adoption of ayahuasca drinking among various Indigenous groups says nothing about Indigeneity itself. The drinking itself was considered "disgusting" from the earliest European missionary sources. Gow notes the reflection of Catholic mass in ayahuasca ceremonies, and Brabec de Mori refers to various instances of what he calls "Christian

camouflage.”²⁹³ The English Botanist, Richard Spruce, who in the 1850s gave us the Latinized name for ayahuasca, *Banisteriopsis caapi*,²⁹⁴ writes:

Caapi is used by all the nations on the river Uaupés, some of whom speak different languages *in toto* from each other, and have besides (in other respects) widely different customs. But on the Rio Negro [further east], if it has ever been used, it has fallen into disuse; nor did I find it anywhere among the nations of the true Carib stock, such as the Barrés, Banihaus, Mandauacas, etc., with the solitary exception of the Tarianas, who have intruded a little way within the river Uaupés, and have probably learnt to use caapi from their Tucáno neighbours.²⁹⁵

Spruce cites various uses such as chewing bark and drinking it. He first heard the term from Zaparos “in the language of the Incas [Quechua], Aya-huasca, *i.e.* Dead Man’s vine.”²⁹⁶ He notes its use “by the medicine-man, when called upon to adjudicate in a dispute or quarrel – to give the proper answer to an embassy – to discover the plans of an enemy – to tell if strangers are coming – to ascertain if wives are unfaithful – in the case of a sick man to tell who has bewitched him, etc.”²⁹⁷ He notes that everywhere he goes he only sees post-pubescent men using it; women are not allowed. The point on gender relates especially to present-day controversies around sexual abuse and harassment of women, as ayahuasca enters liberal, western legal frames.

²⁹³ Bernd Brabec de Mori, “Tracing Hallucinations: Contributing to a Critical Ethnohistory of Ayahuasca Usage in the Peruvian Amazon,” *The Internationalization of Ayahuasca*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Henrik Jungaberle (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011), 28-29.

²⁹⁴ Richard Spruce, *Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes Volume 2* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 421.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 423.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 424.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Those frames work within a rights-based discourse premised on notions of personhood: Alexander Weheliye notably points to a distinction between slaves and Indians that Justice Taney made in in the Dread Scott decision: “legal personhood is available to indigenous subjects only if the Indian can be killed – either literally or figuratively – in order to save the man.” This of course draws on the blatantly genocidal nineteenth century advertisement for forced boarding schools: “Kill the Indian, save the man.” Moreover, Weheliye notes:

Modern concentration camps were initially constructed in the 1830s in the southeastern United States as part of the campaign for “Indian Removal” to detain 22,000 Cherokee (Gunter’s Landing, Ross’s Landing, and Fort Cass), and later during the Dakota War of 1862 a camp was constructed on Pike Island near Fort Snelling, Minnesota, in which 1,700 Dakota were interned.²⁹⁸

James Q. Whitman’s *Hitler’s American Model* also details the admiration that the legal theorists of the Third Reich had for the United States’ development of Indian reservations, and the fact that virtually no treaties signed with Natives have been upheld by the U.S. government speaks to a multigenerational plan of expected erasure and lack of regard for sovereign nations.²⁹⁹ We should read the diaspora of ayahuasca in its colonial context against the background of the dramatic playing out of eurochristian dispositions that persist through the development of economic liberalism. American exceptionalism has long sought to situate itself as evidencing a kind of moral superiority inherited from eurochristian framing, but a longer historical view sees a connection

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 36.

²⁹⁹ I mention Whitman explicitly because many people don’t believe Native scholars who have claimed the same thing. I expect most of my readers are “white” and more likely to respect a “white” source, which, by the way, is racist.

between such exceptionalism and the genocidal conditions in Europe during the Second World War. To articulate this more carefully, I will focus explicitly on the concept of genocide in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Genocide in the Context of Discovery Doctrine

Summary

In chapter three, I focused on the Doctrine of Discovery as a legal foundation for underwriting a eurochristian poetics of sacrifice through Indigenous erasure. I also argued that liberalism and its politics of recognition is an outgrowth of the eurochristian framing, such that it persists in preserving it even as it avows secularism. This step is crucial for addressing notions of temporal progress “toward secularity” and away from “religion.” Thinking that “our society” is now “beyond” religion or appeals to separation between church and state obscure the ongoing persistence of the Doctrine of Discovery in Law. In this chapter, I trace genocidal impulses toward Indigenous Peoples through a view of eurochristian religious poetics that highlights similarities across the two continents over time so as to describe the international situation for ayahuasca’s diaspora. I trace the historiography of genocide discourse and then connect back to the central claim that I made in chapter one; namely, that we ought not seek an exceptional status for ayahuasca in law based on appeals to its spiritual or religious-enhancing potential. If people only advocate for ayahuasca as part of a liberalizing process where it is awarded “exceptional” status, they inadvertently perpetuate this legacy. Following Indigenous

writers, I argue for a *processual* account of genocide, rather than one based on events. I then contextualize transnational religious and political expressions of eurochristian religious poetics informing the Drug War and ayahuasca religious discourse in contemporary times. I conclude by suggesting the use of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's nuanced view of 'equivocation' for maintaining proximal distance in discursive rhetoric on ayahuasca and other issues impacting Indigenous Peoples.

Native American Genocide

In the international diaspora, ayahuasca religions and arguments for their exemptions give us a *vehicle* to articulate the *tenor* of eurochristian the poetics of sacrifice. The colonization process has been fueling the genocide of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island for more than five hundred years. As a still-operating legal foundation for the right to govern lands and peoples in Turtle Island, The Doctrine of Discovery's persistence within law underwrites the motivation for continued genocide by carrying on a deep eurochristian framing, yet liberal secularization narratives and historical erasure make the Doctrine of Discovery appear as something from the distant past rather than a mechanism currently employed. The tension between arguments for religious exemptions for ayahuasca use and the ongoing struggles Indigenous Peoples face reveals the conceptual power the Doctrine of Discovery continues to hold.

Discourse on genocide arose in the mid twentieth-century, largely in response to the atrocities of the Second World War in Europe. Steve Talbot has explicitly connected American Indian genocide to articulations of religion under the United Nations Genocide

Convention, detailing the proscription of Native American religious practices by the United States government since its inception in efforts to “civilize” Indians. While concentrated in the forced assimilation period from 1871 to 1935, when Christian religion was the only religion allowed on reservations, Talbot points out the well-intentioned, though limited, Indian Reorganization Act and the efforts of John Collier, then Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Talbot notes the equally well-intended, yet toothless nature of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978). Summarizing the Act, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association notes that it is primarily a policy statement. Moreover:

The intent of AIRFA has been interpreted as ensuring that Native Americans obtain First Amendment protection, but not to grant Native Americans rights in excess of the First Amendment. Because such sites may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register, any effects that may occur, as a result of providing access to them, may trigger Section 106 review under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). As a related law, the NHPA greatly strengthens the requirements for Federal agencies to ensure that tribal values are taken into account. Tribes are given greater control over patrimonial objects and are allowed to establish their own culturally-specific criteria of significance.³⁰⁰

While I explore First Amendment issues in detail in chapter six, here I want to highlight the connection to historical preservation. Because the broader American public is not well-educated with respect to Native American history, ayahuasca enthusiasts who point to Indigenous traditions often misconstrue the use of an expropriated substance with a “sacred” practice, ignoring connections to land that are of primary importance to

³⁰⁰ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, “American Indian Religious Freedom Act,” accessed March 21, 2020, <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/Documents/OceanLawSearch/Summary%20of%20Law%20-%20American%20Indian%20Religious%20Freedom%20Act.pdf>.

Indigenous groups. For this very reason, I have chosen a longer historical analysis, linking expropriation to the Doctrine of Discovery. Talbot notes that the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth in 1992 directly linked the unique suppression of Indian practices to the Doctrine of Discovery.³⁰¹ As the ayahuasca diaspora expands increasingly north on Turtle Island, it is necessary to frame its reception within the concerns of Indigenous Peoples there to see how claims for religious recognition participate in the eurochristian poetics.

Talbot notes the difficulty Native Americans have with framing their practices in terms of ‘religion’, and the fact that even well-intentioned defenders of traditional practices in terms of religious freedom often miss the point that traditional practices deemed religious such as the Sun Dance cannot be separated out from daily life, politics, and relationships to land: “Collier's reform administration failed to take into account that traditional, non-Christian religions and Native political systems of self-government are inseparably linked.”³⁰² As covered in chapter three, ‘religion’ is a terministic screen operating within eurochristian religious poetics. It is highly motivated. As a term adopted from a lingua franca between Natives and eurochristians, ‘religion’ enacts, as I will argue following Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, a process of equivocation where the same word holds different meanings for different groups using it. The too-fixed meaning

³⁰¹ Steve Talbot, “Spiritual Genocide: The Denial of American Indian Religious Freedom, from Conquest to 1934,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 21, no. 2 (2006): 33.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 26.

within a dominant eurochristian poetics has often underwritten genocidal intent with respect to Indigenous Peoples.

As a poignant example of genocidal intent within the eurochristian “civilizing” motivation, Talbot points to an 1880 letter from the B.I.A.’s head ethnologist, John Wesley Powell, to Senator Henry Teller:

First, the government should shatter the Indian’s attachment to his sacred homeland: when an Indian clan or tribe gives up its land it not only surrenders its home as understood by civilized people but its Gods are abandoned and all its religion connected therewith, and connection with the worship of ancestors buried in the soil: that is everything most sacred to Indian society is yielded up.³⁰³

The U.S. government had stopped making treaties with Native American groups in 1871, treating them under the legal fallout of John Marshall’s incorporation of the Doctrine of Discovery into U.S. law in *Johnson v. M’Intosh* (1823). By *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), Marshall ceased to regard tribes as foreign nations, naming them “domestic dependent nations.”³⁰⁴ Having moved from the Department of War to the Department of Interior in 1848, Indian relations with the U.S. already embodied previous removal policies. While far from being a lone voice expressing such attitudes, Powell’s ethnological knowledge in the direct employ of the U.S. government speaks for itself in terms of genocidal intent at official levels of government. But we should also ask: what made such blatant hatred publicly acceptable among American officials?

³⁰³ Ibid., 12.

³⁰⁴ William C. Canby, Jr., *American Indian Law in a Nutshell* (St. Paul, MN: West Academic Publishing, 1981), 17.

The “progressive” attitudes of the era saw assimilation and integration into Anglo-formed culture as a process of “civilization” that is encapsulated in Captain Richard H. Pratt’s famous phrase, “Kill the Indian, save the man.” Anthony G. Hall summarizes:

In the opinion of those charged to impose the ideals of US civilization on their Indian wards, the system of land tenure on collectively held reservations only confirmed and entrenched Aboriginal predispositions to favour the bonds of community over the aggrandizement of the individual, the ethos of sharing over the mores of private ownership and personal acquisition, the values of cooperation over those of competition, and the rhythms of transformation in nature over the more mechanical measurement of time as calculated by the clock.³⁰⁵

The legal result of such attitudes was *The General Allotment Act* or *Dawes Severalty Act* (1887), which offered a “pathway to citizenship” by encouraging individual Indians to sell their portion of a reservation to the federal government as a real estate trust which would subject them to both the “benefits” of US citizenship and taxation. As Hall notes, the policies were updated in 1951 under Concurrent Resolution 108, which enacted termination policy, meant to bring an end to all treaty relations with Indians before 1871.³⁰⁶ This was followed, however, by a “test case” in *Tee Hit-Ton Indians v. The United States* (1955), which drew directly on Discovery Doctrine in *Johnson v. M’Intosh* (1823) to claim that rather than treaty relationships, “every American schoolboy knows that the savage tribes of this continent were deprived of their ancestral ranges by

³⁰⁵ Anthony G. Hall, *Earth into Property: Colonization, Decolonization, and Capitalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), 466.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 467.

force.”³⁰⁷ This case paved the way to the addition of Alaska as a state in 1959 as a precedent for dealing with any tribal issues in the territory. In Steven Newcomb’s analysis of ICMs, *Tee Hit-Ton* evidences a combination of the Conqueror model being transferred into a Chosen People-Promised Land model.³⁰⁸

Along with Newcomb, Joseph J. Heath has followed legal use of the Doctrine of Discovery into recent years.³⁰⁹ Both take the stand that convincing the Vatican to revoke the papal bulls of Discovery as an international signal for moral and legal change. From there, writes Heath, “we can then move on to building pressure on the United State [*sic*] government and institutions to admit that this racist doctrine has no place in a true democracy.”³¹⁰ Hall contextualizes the United States’ decisions for termination policies and *Tee Hit-Ton* as a reaction to the Nuremburg Trials a decade earlier, noting the appointment of Dillon S. Myer, former overseer of the Japanese internment camps, as head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1950, replacing John Collier:

The stark contrast between the positions of US jurists in 1945 and 1955 speaks suggestively of the changing currents of opinion after the Second World War. The difference between the two legal interpretations illustrates the dramatic nature of the turn away from the principles of the Atlantic Charter, the UN Charter, and

³⁰⁷ Quoted in Hall, 467.

³⁰⁸ Steven T Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2008), 120.

³⁰⁹ Joseph J. Heath, “The Doctrine of Discovery: Its Fundamental Performance in United States Indian Law and the Need for Its Repudiation and Removal,” *Albany Government Law Review* 10 (2017): 112-156.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

the Nuremburg Trials to an era when the zealous extremism of the Cold War permeated many institutions, including the echelons of the US judiciary.³¹¹

Hall also notes the international impact of *Tee Hit-Ton*, “in the sense that it signaled the importance afforded even by judges to raw military power in determining the relationship of the capitalist superpower with weaker peoples and polities.”³¹² Along with these moves to evidence U.S. power, termination policy was an attempt to avoid charges of genocide in the international arena.

Processual Genocide

With respect to the genocide of Indigenous Peoples, I argue that we need to move beyond ways the term ‘genocide’ has been diluted with respect to ineffective international law at the United Nations and be ever attentive to the processual phenomenon of erasure. While Talbot, like Newcomb and Heath, turns toward international contexts in relaying the ongoing fusion of eurochristian poetics and law, he realizes this is a rhetorical move. Advocating for a revision of the Genocide Convention, he himself notes in 2006: “Realistically speaking, this may be an impractical task at present, because the United Nations is currently dominated by the United States and its political allies, nation-states that have been hostile to granting rights to the Native

³¹¹ Anthony G. Hall, *Earth into Property: Colonization, Decolonization, and Capitalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), 468.

³¹² Ibid.

populations within their borders.”³¹³ That the same year, the UDV Church had success with the U.S. Supreme Court for the sacramentally-privileged use of ayahuasca.

Both the national and international situations here point to Luis León’s conception of religious poetics, but the analytic use of ‘eurochristian’ as a terministic screen helps us to give an account of the deeper Idealized Cognitive Models at work. Erasure narratives influenced by romanticized notions of the “disappearing Indian” often arise in misconceptions about “how life was” in the past. For this reason, Indigenous writers are often accused of trying to “rewrite” history, as are those who seek acknowledgment for past genocides under the twentieth-century legal conception of the crime. As Elazar Barkan reminds us:

The devastation of indigenous peoples was always evident to colonists. Europeans on the frontier developed the trope of the vanishing natives, which remains a fundamental frame for our understanding of the relationship between progress and the old. ‘Vanishing’ is a romantic notion.³¹⁴

Following David Stannard and Ward Churchill, Barkan notes: “It is generally accepted that over time the indigenous populations [in the Americas] declined by more than 95, even 98 percent at its lowest point.”³¹⁵ As Stannard himself writes, “Once the natives have thus been banished from collective memory, at least as people of numerical and

³¹³ Steve Talbot, “Spiritual Genocide: The Denial of American Indian Religious Freedom, from Conquest to 1934,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 21, no. 2 (2006): 34.

³¹⁴ Elazar Barkan, “Genocides of Indigenous Peoples,” *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 119.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

cultural consequence, the settler group's moral and intellectual right to conquest is claimed to be established without question."³¹⁶ Stannard's book remains one of the most detailed and sourced accounts of the decimation of Indigenous populations through war, disease, and conditions imposed to eradicate Indigenous Peoples or subject them to slavery. A CDA emphasis on eurochristian religious poetics reminds us, however, that it is not just a matter of terminology. It is, rather, a matter of ICMs underwriting the drama unfolding from language's symbolic actions. Religious poetics are motivated.

The situation of temporal erasure persists today in the daily speech habits of eurochristians. For example, I recently watched a now-dated television series titled *Religions of The World* (1998) narrated by Ben Kingsley.³¹⁷ I am constantly intrigued by cultural products like this, which attempt to succinctly package complex information for the popular consumer. Although I was unsurprised when I saw it, I was nevertheless dismayed at the narrator's constant use of the past tense during the episode on "Native American Spirituality." This is clearly incongruent with the Indigenous People interviewed on the episode itself, who state point blankly that traditional practices still persist in their communities. These interviews are interspersed with academic anthropological knowledge that presumes to present a kind of "official" knowledge about

³¹⁶ David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 14.

³¹⁷ *Religions of the World*, episode 12, directed by "Native American Spirituality," Stephen Kopels and Michael D'Anna, aired September 7, 2004, PBS, <https://shop.pbs.org/religions-of-the-world-dvd-6pk/product/RELW400>.

various groups, but it is doing the present-day version of John Wesley Powell's statements above by relegating Indigenous People to a distant past.

This use of the past tense also constantly occurs regularly when I teach undergraduates about Indigenous issues or when I go to the Colorado State Capitol alongside American Indian Movement colleagues to support anti-Columbus Day legislation.³¹⁸ After years of failed attempts to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day, in 2020 local Indigenous activists joined with Italian American organizations to replace the holiday with Francis Xavier Cabrini Day.³¹⁹ The regular rhetorical violence I saw inflicted on local Indigenous Peoples over years of testimony underscores the ethical nature of my approach. If it seems far away from ayahuasca discourse and efforts to deregulate prohibitionist drug policies or recognize religious groups, it speaks to how out of touch ayahuasca discourse in diaspora is with local Native concerns. All the more likely, then, that when images of Indigenous Peoples or appeals to laws regarding peyote use are rhetorically invoked for "religious freedom," violence through law and policy will be perpetuated. "Cabrini Day," evidences ongoing rhetorical

³¹⁸ This article cites part of my 2017 testimony, but notice how the first comment on the articles blames a lack of priorities. Indeed lawmakers themselves who are unreceptive to these efforts – both Republican and Democrat – complain that their constituents think changing the Holiday is a "waste of time" Luke Perkins, "Measure to Replace Columbus Day Advances," *Durango Herald*, April 26, 2017, accessed January 7, 2020, <https://durangoherald.com/articles/153859>.

³¹⁹ Saja Hindi, "Columbus Day No Longer a State Holiday in Colorado," *denverpost.com*, March 20, 2020, accessed March 21, 2020, <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/03/20/colorado-columbus-day-cabrini/?fbclid=IwAR39FGcyuOJMVFFXmKKnDu8vdtlFcIN5UcNkX-8hfw79Y-49hvJEeQSSyTM>.

violence through a compromise on the part of the Indigenous People in Colorado, but the bill's success speaks to the persistent sway of eurochristian "civilizational" framing in liberal democratic political and legal contexts, as well as the publics such institutions serve. Compromise after compromise in the face of genocidal policies and seemingly all-consuming eurochristian dominance does not, however, mean that Indigenous practices and worldviews no longer exist.

Against the long history of eurochristian religious poetics, Gerald Vizenor (Anishnaabe) has coined the term 'survivance.' Vizenor writes, "Survivance is an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry."³²⁰ Although Vizenor developed the term to articulate aesthetic conceptions, particularly in literary work, I view 'Survivance' as also describing an Indigenous ICM. Vizenor specifically contrasts this with monotheism, which "takes the risk out of nature and natural reason and promotes absence, dominance, sacrifice, and victimry."³²¹ If read as merely a postmodern concept related in part to poststructuralism, 'Survivance' can too easily be associated with Jacques Derrida's descriptions of *différance*; yet Survivance for Indigenous Peoples is not the ghostly specter or "trace" of something now dead or even an excess of signification.

³²⁰ Gerald Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance," *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 11.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

Survivance and León's religious poetics are more *motivated* than a sense that "deconstruction *happens*."³²² It is not deconstruction, though a concept of slippage inspired by deconstruction may help one arrive at an appreciation for Native Survivance. It may be, as León articulates, more akin to the constant in-betweenness in Nahuatl conceptions of *neplanta* and the duality of dissonance that produces *difrasismo*, which "described the philosophical quest for explanation, religious poetics, but was used also as a metaphor for poetry or poem" (*flor y canto*).³²³ *Difrasismo* names a process of metaphorical formation between different words to form a metaphorical unit common to Mesoamerican cultures. Aztec religious poetics are processual and motivated by ICMs. León is after something un-deconstruct-able, though I hate to conflate such terminology with Jacques Derrida's more transcendent claim that justice, if it exists, is what cannot be deconstructed or that "[d]econstruction is justice."³²⁴ Derridean thought risks pulling us back into euroformation through his focus on mystical origins at the expense of Indigenous contexts by universalizing what cannot be deconstructed.

The un-deconstructable in León's sense, by contrast, is precisely the Indigenous deep framing that persists even beneath *mestizaje* consciousness, and it is not adequately

³²² As well as the often-misconstrued sense that "a deconstruction" is something performed as a critical technique.

³²³ Luis D. León, *La Llorona's Children: Religion, Life, and Death in the U.S. Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 30.

³²⁴ See Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: the 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson (New York: Routledge, 1992), 15.

accounted for by Walter Mignolo's powerful descriptions of decoloniality. As the metaphorical image of 'La Llorona's Children' conjures, these are generations who are already "dead," drowned by the weeping woman who was effectively raped, used as a translator, and discarded by the colonizer. The death-space of León's account of the rise of mestizaje consciousness is here one of Survivance. As detailed in chapters one and two, I have intentionally steered away from semiotic analyses in the poststructural tradition, though certainly articulations such as Derrida's "Force of Law" (1992) and, later, Carl Raschke's political-theological analysis in *Force of God* (2015) remain relevant. Derrida himself says, regarding the conjuncture between philosophy, literary studies, and critical legal studies – which is also a point of intersection between Lakoff, CDA, and Newcomb:

It is certainly not by chance that this conjunction has developed in such an interesting way in this country; this is another problem— urgent and compelling—that I must leave aside for lack of time. There are no doubt profound and complicated reasons of global dimensions, I mean geo-political and not merely domestic, for the fact that this development should be first and foremost North American.³²⁵

While influenced by these thinkers, I have complimented genealogical and deconstructive accounts in Nietzsche's tradition with Indigenous writers who emphasize ICMs to show the persistence and processual nature of ongoing genocide.

The Indigenous *motivated* ICM of Survivance is exactly what is lacking in 'New Age,' 'post-race,' or generally "whitely" concepts of hybridity that merely "mix" traditions within a cauldron-like frame of historical privilege as if it were a "melting pot."

³²⁵ Ibid.

Appeals to “health” or “Sacred Medicine” with respect to ayahuasca or peyote obscures the fact that Indigenous Peoples still have to *fight* and *struggle*, yet in public contexts when Indians raise their voices, they draw attention to the hoary image of “uncivilized savage.” While there is surely an ethical impulse to drawing attention to the injustice of genocide, if that conception is itself merely static and transcendent it risks the erasure, or at least the non-acknowledgment, of Indigenous ICMs. With respect to emergent ayahuasca use in the U.S., for example, I have noted that, compelled to exercise one’s “religious freedom,” one can essentially buy his or her way into the Oklevueha “branch” of the Native American Church and become a “card-carrying Native American.”³²⁶ My impulse here is to consciously make room for the Indigenous ICMs which persist in contrast to the dominant eurochristian frame, and this means that discrete Indigenous worldviews and practices which are *not* eurochristian need to be maintained despite the dominant milieu, though not through a liberal politics of recognition.

Even when attempting to be conscientious, liberal eurochristians will often express themselves in terms of what “we” “did” to them. This metonymic substitution insulates eurochristians as a composite entity while simultaneously temporally distancing themselves from a violent history, evidencing Nick Turnbull’s focus on rhetoric as a “negotiation of distance.”³²⁷ While such a relationship need not be framed in terms of

³²⁶ “Welcome to Our Indigenous Native Spiritual Heritage.” Oklevueha Native American Church. <https://nativeamericanchurches.org/membership-card-signup/>.

³²⁷ Nick Turnbull, “Political Rhetoric and Its Relationship to Context: A New Theory of the Rhetorical Situation, The Rhetorical and the Political, *Critical Discourse Studies* 14, no. 2 (2017): 123, DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2016.1268186.

“us” and “them” the “us versus them” attitude is dominant in eurochristian religious poetics through what Newcomb identifies as the Chosen People-Promised Land ICM. I see it day in and day out among most of my fellow eurochristians. It is more than about the “facts” of history; it is *rhetorical* act of identification and communication, even if largely unconscious, with undoubted ethical implications. The linguistic inclination to treat Indigenous Peoples and the issues important to them as something of “the past” – and thus low in political priority – is itself evidence of ongoing tendencies toward deeply framed eurochristian tendencies toward erasure.

Erasure becomes aestheticized through colonialist romance narratives and nation state mythologizing. Criticizing exception narratives, what Newcomb calls the Chosen People ICM, Mark Rifkin writes in *Beyond Settler Time*:

U.S. settler colonialism produces its own temporal formation, with its own particular ways of apprehending time, and the state’s policies, mappings, and imperatives generate the frame of reference (such as plotting events with respect to their place in national history and seeing change in terms of American progress).³²⁸

In multiple discursive layers, the emanations of progress narratives situate readings, especially within legal and academic writing. The ethical implications of addressing Indigenous issues are quickly conflated with the temporal politics of liberalism, and within those politics which situate individuals, metaphors of left-right or liberal-conservative work together to continue a colonizing project to erase Indigenous peoples. So, once again, I need to distinguish my analysis not only from the “progressive”

³²⁸ Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 2.

narratives housed within the homestead of settler colonialism but from the assumption that my perspective is working on a horizon – even a gradated one – between “left” and “right.” That metaphorical frame goes back to the French Revolution and ought signal once again my citations of Russell Means in the introduction.

As Rifkin continues, “More than just affecting ideologies or discourses of time, that network of institutionalized authority over ‘domestic’ territory also powerfully shapes the possibilities for interaction, development, and regularity within it.”³²⁹ He correctly states that, “Such an imposition can be understood as the denial of Indigenous temporal sovereignty, in the sense that one vision or way of experiencing time is cast as the only temporal formation – as the baseline for unfolding time itself.”³³⁰ If temporality, as Tink Tinker suggests, works differently in Indigenous ICMs, static and transcendent notions of genocide as a concept, as I argue in this chapter, will not be sufficient.

During a recent *Erasing American Indian Genocide* conference held at Iliff School of Theology, Glenn T. Morris (Shawnee) of the Fourth World Center for the Study of Indigenous Law and Politics at University of Colorado at Denver, acting as the moderator, eloquently expressed, “We often think of genocide as a moment but genocide is a process that continues to the present moment. It’s not a single act of murder but an entire ideological process – political and religious.”³³¹ Thinking in terms of genocide in

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Glenn T. Morris (Shawnee), “Moderator Comments,” Delivered at the Erasing American Indian Genocide Conference, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, October 17, 2019, <https://www.iliff.edu/americanindian-conference/>

this context, we must move beyond the poetics of “the event,” which hearkens back to eurochristian contexts of sacrifice. At the same conference, Seneca scholar Barbara Mann advanced a “fractal view of genocide” through analogies of tsunami’s “wave train” by focusing on 1) the duration of event 2) the level of government acquiescence, and 3) the level of populism “naturalized” through repetition and ignoring of injustices involved. Mann’s work significantly attends to the overlapping ideological affordances glossed over by seeing violence against Indigenous People as isolated events.³³² This is absolutely necessary for thinking in terms of shared Indigenous contexts of eurochristian colonial oppression.

Following Tinker, Morris, and Mann, in this chapter I argue that genocide is systemic, processual, and structural, rather than being eventual, which is a carryover from eurochristian thinkers’ fascination with “the event.” This requires being open to a conceptual space for a deep framing that is not eurochristian. As Mann said at the conference, “The metanarratives of the two cultures [eurochristian and Indigenous] never interact.”³³³ This requires a different view of temporality, as Mark Rifkin addresses in *Beyond Settler Time*; but it continues to require a much longer historical perspective, which I am attempting to enact here.

³³² Barbara Alice Mann, “Thou Shalt Save Alive Nothing That Breatheth,” Paper Presented at Erasing American Indian Genocide Conference, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO, October 17, 2019, <https://www.iliff.edu/americanindian-conference/>

³³³ Ibid.

As a contemporary theological example, in 2015 Pope Francis canonized “saint” Junípero Serra. This was again a perpetuation of the long history of Native American genocide, safely guarded within a eurochristian rhetorical mask. By canonizing the controversial missionary, the rhetorical act underwrites a persistent poetics of sacrifice and erasure of Indigenous perspectives. With respect to the Franciscan missionary, as Tink Tinker’s *Missionary Conquest* details, the destructive outcomes of “good intentions” among missionaries ought not displace the real destructive effects they have on Indigenous lives and communities. Understanding that sometimes missionaries are well-intentioned does not excuse or “forgive” – itself an entirely eurochristian concept – genocidal actions.

Tinker notes that in Spanish colonizing efforts, conversion meant the erasure of culture, not just a proclamation of faith. Spanish colonization employed the *reduccion* model all over South America and New Spain, and Serra brought that to Alta California. This model, later reinterpreted through instances of Indian “removal” in the U.S., became the legal basis for Nazi Germany’s own development of the camp:³³⁴

Serra’s primary mission strategy, then, was to isolate converts from their home communities and relatives. While this strategic initiative had political and economic as well as religious effects, its most devastating aspect was the

³³⁴ See Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492-Present* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1997); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); and James Q. Whitman’s *Hitler’s American Model* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

imposition of a massive social modification. To implement this strategy, converts were collected into compounds similar to [[John] Eliot's praying towns a century earlier.³³⁵

Serra's methods had long been in use by Spanish and Portuguese colonizers as they moved inward by first trafficking in women as forced laborers and sexual partners for the men.

By Native models of relation consistent across both continents, conscripted compromises have been necessary to and reflective of Indigenous Survivance ICMs. In accounts of the early "alliances" between Natives and Spanish conquistadors, trafficking of women fused initial bonds. Native men were obligated to provide labor and act as guides for conquistadors as they moved inland. The mythologized accounts of Matoaka in the north speak to the same process, often without regard to the diplomatic roles that women played as the political leaders of Indigenous groups.³³⁶ When they refused such service, they were characterized as "revolting," thus justifying their extermination. There was a definite colonizing strategy for separating and Christianizing some Indians.

Even when it is not avowedly Christian, the irruption and deterritorialization evident in contemporary discourse on globalization (with ayahuasca included) can be read as an attempt to make everything eurochristian in the same ways that upon arrival in

³³⁵ George E. "Tink" Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 48.

³³⁶ See Gunlög Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Barbara Mann, *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000); and Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking the Cultural Encounter in the Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

South America, colonizers applied two distinctions for their *encomienda* system, which was ultimately designed for Indian removal. The processes motivating colonizers like Powell and Pratt in the nineteenth-century, and Dillon Myer in the twentieth, were unfolding as the symbolic actions informing earlier Spanish performances of the eurochristian religious poetics of sacrifice.

As Juan Carlos Garavaglia notes, the first category of the *encomienda* system was *mitayas*. *Mit'a* is Quechua word for 'turn', meaning that certain people would take their turn doing service work for the larger community. The Spanish and Portuguese colonizers reframed the concept according to a eurochristian hierarchical model where subjects of a king pay tribute and taxes. So “[*m*]itayos were to keep living in their own villages while serving in rotation on the Spaniard’s lands or doing other tasks. Sometimes the products of their service were also called *mita*.”³³⁷ This was partly because the Spanish needed a ready supply of Indian labor to get their colonies started.

The other *encomienda* system was the *yanacona* or *originario*. These terms applied to Indians who were separated from their communities permanently to serve the Spanish. Again, with the Quechua word *yanacona* there was a pre-Spanish concept for leaving one’s home to go work somewhere else. It had to do with “high-status specialists” who were needed in different places,” but under the Spanish hierarchical

³³⁷ Juan Carlos Garavaglia, “The Crisis and Transformation of Invaded Societies: The La Plata Basin (1535-1650),” *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas, Volume III: South America, Part 2*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.

model the term came to mean something like “bondage” and was a form of slavery.³³⁸ Even in the passage from *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* that I am citing here, however, the term “high-status specialists” rings as something like ‘free masons’ in feudal Europe, who were “free” from local servitude because they were specialized enough to participate in grand projects such as the building of massive cathedrals. Free masonry, as I detail in chapter five, was important to the liberalizing processes of Brazil in the nineteenth-century. Deep framing persists in subtle ways.

Within the first fifty years of contact we see a shift from *mitayo* to *yanacona* system. This was “a process by which people legally entitled to stay in their home villages were taken under so-called protection by the Spaniards when they went to Asunción [now the capitol of Paraguay] to ‘pay’ *mita*, and in time were enslaved by out-and-out purchase.”³³⁹ The pattern of “becoming” *yanacona* and the need for “protection” was part of a eurochristian process of converting both the land and the peoples there into “Christendom” or eurochristian**dom**ination. At first, the Spanish could not control everyone; but as they gradually gained a hold on territory, there was no longer need for *mitayos*. They had prepared for the homogenizing descent of the Basileia or “kingdom” of Christ. This made way for the Franciscans, who sought more explicitly to “civilize” Indians by converting them using *reducciones* after 1574.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid., 11.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 17.

Although converting Indians had been a tool for invasion since the beginning, the rapid decline in population from violence, disease, and cruel working conditions had the colonizers worried that the Indians would not reproduce enough children to carry on multiple generations of forced labor. On top of that, a new generation of *mestizos* had grown up. This of course increased the reliance on imported slaves from Africa.

The trafficking of women was another tool of colonization used from the outset. Spanish men generally did not bring women with them, and so through both rape and alliances early on, Spaniards sought establish dominance. As Garavaglia notes, Indigenous Peoples of the region intermarried between local groups to maintain political balances. I mentioned this with respect to Thomas Morton and the Merry Mount colony in New England in the previous chapter, though a better North American parallel here appears in Susan Sleeper-Smith's *Indian Women and French Men*. Sleeper-Smith, along contemporary historians of Native American history such as Alejandra Dubcovsky and Nick Estes,³⁴¹ rightfully emphasizes women's role in maintaining Indigenous political structures within political and religious contexts.³⁴² Such works importantly point to the persistence of Indigenous deep framing among *conversos*. Early on, however, the result of intermarrying created elaborate kinship systems that the colonizers could hardly understand.

³⁴¹ See Alejandra Dubcovsky, *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (New York: Verso, 2019).

³⁴² Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking the Cultural Encounter in the Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 5.

One result in Indigenous contexts was that a man's family was in service to another group if a woman from his family partnered with that group. The lack of gender balance among the colonizers as they arrived speaks not only to their inherent masculinist patriarchy, it also speaks to a fundamental way that they would never reciprocate in the social patterns of Indigenous Peoples. It would have been inconceivable for a Spanish man to serve Indians because his sister married one. In the form of class divisions, complex racial distinctions based "blood quantum," and steadily consistent violence against Indigenous women on both continents, eurochristian colonization persists today, just as racial and gendered power dynamics saturate the discourse on ayahuasca's globalization. Attention to gender in this context ought to be complimented with attention to the survivance ICM to articulate crucial distinctions between Indigenous genderings and progressive liberal ones.

With respect to liberalism, the idea that we have "become secular" speaks to a persistent eurochristian deep framing that allows us to distance ourselves from a violent past based on religious ideology. This is what Rifkin refers to as "settler time." Tinker and Newcomb insist that deep framing is more than ideology or identification. It is not a matter of simply blaming everything on Christians by faith. Rather, it is a matter of seeing a eurochristian religious poetics at work over generations that transcends identification or an avowal within a certain form of belief. To say "we are now secular" already frames our history within a eurochristian linear temporality that sees a time of "faith" being part of the past. It is always a narrative of furthering, of progress, which would later be named "manifest destiny" in the north. "Manifest destiny" is a good

example of what Tinker and scholars like myself mean by a “colonialist romance” that lauds a kind of hero-worship for discoverers and pioneers as they did the groundwork for eurochristian**domination**.

Furthermore, mass migrations of displaced people today, whether due to political problems, the Drug War, or the environment, are part of the same eurochristian colonial pattern that has wreaked genocide on Indigenous Peoples for generations. The flipside to “progressively cosmopolitan” ideas that see globalization as simply an inevitable deterritorializing of the world through advanced capitalism (or neoliberalism) is a historically misconstrued retreat into concepts of nationalism, which carries with it an amnesia concerning the entrenched notion of eurochristian sovereignty already embedded within eurochristian strategies of territorial control. In this analysis, idea of territory or “property” in this sense is always already eurochristian. As Barbara Alice Mann (Seneca) writes:

Now that no one’s being gunned down *en masse*, at least not on this continent, for talking back to the gatekeepers of Western culture, I expect that this trickle of Turtle Island voices will sweep into a tsunami. Maybe it will even become obvious to the old guard of academe that in refusing, refuting, and otherwise disputing Christian hegemony, Indians are not “weakening” their arguments by “essentializing” Indigenous tradition but are decentering Euro-Christianity as the all-inclusive norm.³⁴³

That conditions have to some extent changed after centuries of more overtly destructive methods does not eliminate the poetic process. And just as one will find that many Indigenous People across Turtle Island profess to be Christians *by faith* today, the avowal

³⁴³ Barbara Alice Mann, *Spirits of Blood, Spirits of Breath: The Twinned Concept of Indigenous America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 40.

of identification is not part of what we mean by deep framing, nor does an analysis of eurochristian religious poetics simply amount to a rejection of Christian faith.

The eurochristian *social movement* has been premised on cultural erasure, and when that did not seem possible, outright extermination. *Both* methods are genocidal. It has become fashionable to stress ‘hybridity’ over notions of ‘syncretism’, as well as to stress ‘lived religion,’ but within the context of this project such moves tacitly accept the eurochristian legal framing that persists. This is especially the case with ayahuasca religions.

It is certainly not the case that people look first to “the law” before their personal inquiries into faith. But within international rhetorical policies such as the Doctrine of Discovery and the “War on Drugs,” vilification of substances projects an abstinence-based agenda that expresses itself as eurochristian because, as Dawn Paley has argued, the War on Drugs is not a War on Drugs; instead, “it is very clearly a war against people, waged with far wider interests than controlling substances.”³⁴⁴ She notes that the military and paramilitary violence in Colombia is particularly genocidal: “sixty-four of Colombia’s 102 Indigenous groups are at risk of extinction, and Indigenous peoples have been and continue to be disproportionately impacted by the armed conflict in Colombia.”³⁴⁵ Paley tracks U.S. aid to support military and paramilitary forces under the guise of fighting drug cartels and leftwing activists. Starting with Plan Columbia in 2000

³⁴⁴ Dawn Paley, *Drug War Capitalism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2014), 29.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

and the Mérida Initiative in Mexico and Central America, these security operations agreements have had more to do with expanding capitalist interests than curbing the flow of drugs to the U.S. The destabilization uproots rural communities from their homes, forcing them to migrate where they face precarious existences and add to refugee crises. As is especially the case in Mexico, the lines between state, police, military, paramilitary, and cartels are entirely blurred. These plans are the current-day iterations of both the Monroe Doctrine and “just war” theory, and they are framed within the eurochristian poetics of sacrifice incorporated into U.S. law and foreign policy.

Certainly, ayahuasca is not being trafficked like cocaine, though cocaine has also been deemed sacred at times to decriminalize traditional coca use among Indigenous Peoples. Instead, ayahuasca’s diaspora and “drug tourism” establish the pathways that accompany the arrival of capitalist initiatives in South America. As Pien Metaal notes, “the way coca is used in the original cultural setting of the Andean Amazon has never ceased, but it has undergone changes that challenge the concept of the traditional claim itself.”³⁴⁶ Similarly, ayahuasca healing centers in this context run the risk of being transferred, like *mitaya*, into *yanacona* through the expropriation of ayahuasca’s global diaspora. This is of great concern to Indigenous People in the Amazon.

We might see individual healing centers as benign because ayahuasca is so often discussed as being able to treat people with drug problems and spiritually enhance

³⁴⁶ Pien Metaal, “Coca in Debate: The Contradiction and Conflict Between the UN Drug Conventions and the Real World,” *Prohibition, Religious Freedom, and Human Rights: Regulating Traditional Drug Use*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (Berlin: Springer0Verlag, 2014): 25.

individuals' lives. But in this study, this is merely an iteration of a twenty-first century "marvelous possession" so well described by Stephen Greenblatt with respect to early eurochristian perspectives, which is why we need to attend to the longer history. When we seek to exempt ayahuasca and decontextualize it as a special kind of substance, we obscure what's going on all around it. Decontextualized, we can too conveniently ignore the genocidal violence of the Drug War. The Drug War is part of an imperialistic logic expressed within eurochristian terministic screens, but seeing the pattern requires a longer historical view.

Civilization and Empire

Why do I emphasize "eurochristian" instead of something like "imperial"? Over his career, Michel Foucault traced the long history of Christian ascetism and the development of a particularly internal "conscience," and ultimately the notion of "governmentality" to a particularly eurochristian *habitus*. Similarly, Jeremy Schott has particularly seen the formation conceptions of Christianity separate from Judaism within an alignment of a political theological adherence to Empire in *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity*. John Dominic Crossan articulates the melding process with empire, emphasizing "that imperialism is not just a here-and-there, now-and-then, sporadic event in human history, but that civilization itself, as I am using the term, has always been imperial – that is, empire *is* the normalcy of civilization's

violence.”³⁴⁷ While writers like Crossan seek a theological interpretation of Jesus Christ against the greedy politics of empire, Schott’s work importantly sees the very identity category of Christianity as tied to romanization. By the time of “discovery,” Christian theological notions were embedded within the political-theological justification for invasion and conquering of foreign lands. The Drug War continues this process, but we have a hard time seeing its connection to a eurochristian frame. When we look at Indigenous Peoples in relation to colonialism, we are much better able to see the poetics of the framing at work.

By in large, following the rubber boom the twentieth-century there was an explosion of Protestant evangelical missionary presence in South America. As Andrew Dawson notes, neo-Pentecostalism is at the heart of current religious poetics in Brazil:

By tapping into the foundational concepts of popular Catholic, Afro-Brazilian, and Spiritist discourse and practice, neo-Pentecostalism broadens its appeal among the poorer sectors of Brazilian society whilst unwittingly providing qualified legitimacy to beliefs and practices at the heart of popular religious expression in Brazil. Among the fastest growing religious organizations in the world today, neo-Pentecostalism grew from 3.9 million in 1980, through 8.8 million in 1991, to 18 million in 2000. Predominantly a religion of the urban poor, neo-Pentecostal denominations represented 10.6 per cent of the population recorded in Brazil’s census of 2000.³⁴⁸

Neo-Pentecostalism’s emphasis on healing inevitably influences the development of ayahuasca religions, but it must be coupled with similar impulses in charismatic

³⁴⁷ John Dominic Crossan, *God and Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 30.

³⁴⁸ Andrew Dawson, *New Era – New Religions: Religious Transformation in Contemporary Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 14.

Catholicism. Both are inflections of ‘healing’ are reflections of liberalizing impulses. As Thomas J. Csordas notes a nuance:

Despite the currency of the notion of being “born again,” Charismatics are more likely to say that religious experience allows them to discover their “real self” than to claim that they have been given a “new self.” Identity is expressed as a sense of coming to know “who I am in Christ.”³⁴⁹

Theological nuances aside, both the neo-Pentecostalism and the charismatic Catholicism are performing *Homo renatus* aspects of eurochristian religious poetics, and liberalized focuses on the ‘self’ continue this process.

Dawson explains that since the 1960s, following the widespread popularization of “indigenous religiosity” by writers such as Carlos Castaneda and Michael Harner, appropriations of Indigenous practices have been rhetorically employed to establish a new religion’s authenticity:

The subsequent rise of identity politics in post-dictatorial Brazil, along with the environmental movement’s championing of indigenous culture as ecologically responsible, have further catalyzed the appropriation of indigenous elements as ‘must have’ accoutrements for both progressive mainstream (e.g. Christian eco-spirituality) and alternative (e.g. neo-shamanism) religious repertoires. The appropriation of indigenous elements nevertheless remains piecemeal and acontextual.³⁵⁰

Early spread of evangelical Protestant forms of Christianity followed a secular, liberalizing move by the Brazilian state away from the Catholic Church in the late nineteenth-century. The recent generations of evangelicals follow in the footsteps of the

³⁴⁹ Thomas J. Csordas, *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 18.

³⁵⁰ Andrew Dawson, *New Era – New Religions: Religious Transformation in Contemporary Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 28.

multiple “awakenings” described by Linford Fisher, the “rebirthing” persists and deepens with the expansions and developments of “late capitalism.”

For this project, we must remain suspicious of all good intentions professed by evangelizers and rhetorics of “healing,” because constant and intergenerational evangelism is premised on the erasure of Native traditions while replacing them with a “civilizing” eurochristian frame. It continues to do this even when individual clergy become attuned to more localized Indigenous political issues and practices. The asymmetry of the fact that some Indigenous People clearly embrace eurochristian notions without giving up their own traditions is no excuse to minimize the fact that from a eurochristian universalizing perspective, the agenda by far is and has been to wipe out these traditions over time.

We are accustomed, following the postcolonial movements of the twentieth-century, to recognize that colonialism was unjust, but many eurochristians still have trouble recognizing the persistence of its effects and the ways our everyday lives continue to invest in its legacy. Evangelicals especially continue to present their “missionary” impulses as benevolent and not inherently genocidal. But current efforts build upon missionary work in South America between the 1920s and 1960s was intimately tied to the civilizing agendas of liberal American capitalists who, through U.S. foreign policy, promoted plans for state “development” during the emergent Cold War.³⁵¹

³⁵¹ Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

In their massive coverage of Protestant evangelicalism in South America throughout the twentieth-century, *Thy Will Be Done*, Charlotte Dennett and Gerard Colby trace the intimate relationships between the Rockefeller family's Standard Oil and their support of Protestant evangelical "civilizing" of Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon. In particular, they focus on Nelson Rockefeller's role as the first Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs and his support for the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which was involved with CIA operations in the region to destabilize leftwing movements. These efforts inadvertently participated in genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and the involvement is often purported to be merely coincidental; however, within a longer eurochristian framing we see a rather harmonious alignment between the entities.

Premised on a "civilizing" mission through the evangelization of Amazonian Indians through Bible translation programs such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Rockefeller's view was in line with the Monroe Doctrine and the emergent Cold War:

"My feeling," he told Roosevelt, "is that liberal leadership of this hemisphere should be provided by the United States and that it is not in the interest of any American country to have people look to or be led by a nation outside of the hemisphere. National sovereignty [in South America] could be ignored if countries strayed toward accepting peaceful coexistence, much less socialism."³⁵²

We must remember that eurochristians like Nelson Rockefeller and William Cameron Townsend were liberal, modernist Protestants whose "conscious capitalism" differed from a quietist trend among American evangelicals after the Scopes trial. This had created a trend among evangelicals to dissociate their religion from "politics," but that

³⁵² Ibid., 165.

trend would be actively reversed in the postwar years to vilify “Godless communism” as the U.S. simultaneously turned to nationalist insulation at home and aggressive foreign policy in South America.

Here the dyad of the liberal, modernist Christian versus the conservative, fundamentalist Christian becomes a tension internal to a broader struggle against non-believers. Liberal capitalist policies in South America during the twentieth-century became a warrant for the “protection” of Amazonian Indians expressive of eurochristian religious poetics. Ayahuasca’s diaspora is part of the fallout of that dynamic. For example, before starting his projects on the “new frontier” of South America, Nelson Rockefeller had visited Indian reservations to see New Deal democrat and Commissioner for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, John Colliers’ modern “innovations.” As Colby and Dennett note, both Collier and his father, Charles Collier, were skeptical of Rockefeller’s true intentions: “Confirmation that Rockefeller was planning to use Indians merely as rubber gatherers deeply disturbed Collier. The last time Amazonian Indians had been used as labor for rubber gathering, they had been enslaved and killed.”³⁵³ As a product of the Amazon, we should be careful about separating ayahuasca too much not only from other “drugs,” but also from oil and rubber.³⁵⁴ Where do we draw the line between “civilizing” intentions, “development,” and interests in “national security”?

³⁵³ Ibid., 145.

³⁵⁴ Irineu Serra, founder of Santo Daime, was a one-time rubber-tapper. For a labor activist perspective on the devastation, including genocide, resulting from the rubber boom at the turn of the century, see John Tully, *The Devil’s Milk: A Social History of Rubber* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011).

If contemporary eurochristians want to portray themselves as different, they would need to do more than just admonish “capitalist greed.” They would need to, following Newcomb and Heath, more actively disavow the Doctrine of Discovery and seriously wrestle with what such a rejection might mean in terms of deep framing.

Robert J. Miller, *et al.* have particularly traced the persistence of the Doctrine of Discovery through the English colonies so that, even in 2007, they were the most reluctant to sign on the overwhelmingly popular United Nations’ *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).³⁵⁵ As Miller notes:

According to the principle of "intertemporal" law, modern-day territorial boundaries and land titles "are to be judged by the law in force at the time the title was first asserted and not by the law of today." Consequently, how European countries and their colonies divided up the lands and assets of Indigenous Peoples and Nations in the distant past still determines national boundaries today and thus is highly relevant to Indigenous Peoples.³⁵⁶

It is crucial to understand the ways the Genocide Convention is at work in concert with the emergent concept of universal human rights, as well as the fact that UNDRIP underscores the necessity for particularly Indigenous Peoples’ existence not addressed “universal” declaration.³⁵⁷ These steps are positive, but as I have previously stated, there remains no enforceable context, especially for large powers such as the U.S., which

³⁵⁵ Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg. *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³⁵⁶ Robert J. Miller, "The Doctrine of Discovery: The International Law of Colonialism," *Indigenous Peoples' Journal of Law, Culture and Resistance* 5 (2019): 36. 35-42

³⁵⁷ Nor are all Indigenous People happy with UNDRIP.

signed onto UNDRIP in 2012. International law works as “soft law.” It is potentially most effective at this point as a rhetorical guide to reframing domestic policy and “hard” law by being a reference point. Simultaneously, the international legal situation, along with plans of “development” in South America importantly situate all ayahuasca discourse, but especially discourse on ayahuasca’s diaspora. How can such reframing work without attention to the inherently genocidal implications of eurochristian religious poetics?

Genocide and Historiography

As with the Genocide Convention after World War II, the process of forming legally binding international law for Indigenous Peoples was a compromise.³⁵⁸ The western nations were underwritten by the Doctrine of Discovery, whether Catholic or Protestant. Despite deriving from a nation that had broken with the Catholic Church and embraced emergent liberalism, the U.S. hesitated to sign on until they were confident that in doing so there was enough wiggle room to escape any direct owning up to genocidal crimes. That said, most U.S. citizens have little to no active conception of the fact that as a nation it did indeed eventually sign on to UNDRIP. By in large, they are never taught about it in public school, nor are they taught about so-called “universal” human rights because public education is inherently nationalist and uncritical of state involvement in genocide either at home or abroad.

³⁵⁸ For an analysis of compromised language in UNDRIP, see Charmaine White Face, *Indigenous Nations’ Rights in the Balance* (St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press, 2013).

Focus on the term ‘genocide’ is important because the legal rhetoric relating to religious exemptions for ayahuasca religions relies on a liberal ‘politics of recognition,’ which only *recognizes* ayahuasca religions within eurocentric legal norms that have historically and simultaneously been engineered within an apparatus designed to either wipe out or assimilate indigenous peoples. The liberalizing process of becoming recognizable occurs as a historically de-Indigenizing force. That said, even by the softened language of the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, both cultural assimilation and violent death fall under the definition of the crime of genocide. Articles II and III state:

Article II

In the present Convention, genocide 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.

Article III

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ United Nations, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nation on 9 of December 1948, treaties.un.org, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf>.

Ward Churchill has importantly traced the history of the Genocide Convention, noting the loosening of language through compromises with various nations. By and large, however, Americans do not learn this in school, even in its flawed form, as evidenced by my university students on a daily basis. Instead, when they think of genocide at all, they tend to employ the Shoah as a prototypical model.

As Churchill notes, this speaks more to nation-state mythologizing in the second half of the twentieth century than it does to the historical development of Raphael Lemkin's terminology.³⁶⁰ While I am sympathetic to recent scholarly work arguing that twentieth-century rhetoric around the question of genocide merely display bad-faith efforts by Cold War global politics,³⁶¹ the severe conditions continuing to affect Indigenous Peoples all over the world are minimized and tacitly accepted when people merely throw up their arms and call the term 'genocide' "useless." Moreover, misconstrued claims that I am being hyperbolic in my use of the term need to be situated against a fraught history of the concept in legal practice that strayed from Lemkin's original description of the crime. Again, following Glenn Morris and Barbara Mann, my conception of genocide is processual and intergenerational, paralleling the religious

³⁶⁰ Churchill notes both that Lemkin developed the concept of genocide to deal with the Armenian genocide and that fate Sinti and Romani peoples under the Nazis cannot be distinguished from that of the Jews: Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492-Present* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1997), 39.

³⁶¹ Anton Weiss-Wendt, *A Rhetorical Crime: Genocide in the Geopolitical Discourse of the Cold War* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2018).

poetics León has described. Attention to deep framing following Newcomb, Tinker, and Vizenor help us to attend to Indigenous groups who are continually at risk of both discursive and existential erasure.

Historiographical approaches to genocide have shown how difficult the term has been for legal prosecutors. For example, Anton Weiss-Wendt concludes an article titled, “Problems in Comparative Genocide Scholarship,” with a section titled “Future Uncertain.” He rightly notes that “putting a name to a particular event does not automatically bring about a solution to the problem.”³⁶² In the same article, Weiss-Wendt notes:

Just how contentious the subject of genocide is, can be seen in the example of the National Museum of the American Indian, which opened on the Washington Mall in autumn of 2004. To avoid controversy, the museum curators not only shunned away from using the word genocide anywhere in the exhibit but also omitted direct references to the destruction of the indigenous population on the American continent.³⁶³

As multiple scholars of genocide note, one problem that often arises when discussing genocide is the tendency to conflate Holocaust Studies with studies of Comparative Genocide.

Again, as with American public discourse, the presence of the Nazi-perpetrated Holocaust is often viewed as a kind of prototypical example. Scholars such as Steven

³⁶² Anton Weiss-Wendt, “Problems in Comparative Genocide Scholarship,” *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008): 63.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 62.

Katz have argued for the uniqueness of the Nazi's crimes, but as David Moshman counters:

The claim that the Holocaust was unprecedented, however, raises the same problems as the claim that the Holocaust was unique. Every historical event is qualitatively different from every previous historical event and is thus, in a trivial sense, unprecedented. An event might be said to be unprecedented in a stronger sense if no previous event resembled it, but the comparative study of genocide shows that there were many events prior to the Holocaust that resemble it in important ways, and that there have been many since.³⁶⁴

Moshman notes that “virtually all scholars believe [the U.N. Genocide Convention] is deeply flawed, and some have proposed alternatives.”³⁶⁵ He walks his readers through multiple definitions and cites, in particular, Ward Churchill's return to Raphael Lemkin's initial conception of genocide and Churchill's reworked definition of genocide: “In the present Convention, genocide means the destruction, entirely or in part, of any racial, ethnic, national, religious, cultural, linguistic, political, economic, gender or any other human group, however such groups may be defined by the perpetrator.”³⁶⁶ A processual account of genocide moves beyond emphases on singular events and allows us to see how the logic plays out in deep framing.

In *A Little Matte of Genocide*, Ward Churchill cites Lemkin's definition from his 1944 book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. I requote it here:

Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all

³⁶⁴ David Moshman, “Conceptions of Genocide and Perceptions of History,” *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 72-73.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.

members of a nation. It is intended to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves [even if all individuals within the dissolved group physically survive]. The objectives of such a plan would be a disintegration of political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the socioeconomic existence of national groups, and the destruction of personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed at the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed at individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.³⁶⁷

In the terms of this project, the eurochristian deep framing forms a “coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the essential foundations” of the lives of Indigenous Peoples.

Because of its historical role in the wake of the Second World War and the 1948 United Nations *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, the question of *intent* hovers closely to any discussion of genocide. With the discussion of deep framing, I think we need to re-think ‘intent’ if we are going to do anything about genocide; partly because, as Weiss-Wendt and Churchill have both noted, we are dealing with a rhetorical problem where the international community created too many loopholes with respect to prosecuting instances of genocide. It is clear that powerful national entities have made the legal language flexible enough to excuse some of the most egregious cases of genocide. The failure to prosecute genocides need not deter our analysis here. It is not my intention to speak for the United Nations. Instead, I will follow Lemkin’s earlier definition as cited by Churchill while emphasizing the processual

³⁶⁷ Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492-Present* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1997), 70.

nature of religious poetics. My hope is that as we begin to approach the ayahuasca diaspora, it will help illuminate the eurochristian framing at work.

Genocide is an ancient phenomenon. In “Conceptions of Genocide and Perceptions of History,” David Moshman cites *Deuteronomy* chapters two and three as evidencing clear cases of genocide with intent that long precede the Shoah, as well as more recent events that take on hazier sets of circumstances yet amount to genocide, such as the “dirty wars” in South America, following Israel Charny.³⁶⁸ Newcomb has identified this as the Chosen People-Promised Land ICM. Moshman then turns specifically to the invasion of Turtle Island. Covering Columbus’s invasion, he writes, “The destruction of the Taino of Hispaniola appears to meet all eight criteria” used and debated among various scholars of genocide: group destruction, real group, intent, total destruction, special groups, one-sided, mass killing, and government perpetrator.³⁶⁹ As he writes:

The destruction of the Taino of Hispaniola, then, qualifies as genocide under any reasonable interpretation of any of the seven definitions considered in this chapter. This genocidal process, in many tragic variations, was to be repeated across the Caribbean and then throughout the Americas for centuries to come. Regardless of the definition, the conquest of the New World [*sic*] included a series of genocides that were aimed at, and succeeded in eliminating, hundreds of cultures and nations. The perpetrators had multiple perceptions, motives, and methods, but their intent, and effect, was genocidal.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ David Moshman, “Conceptions of Genocide and Perceptions of History,” *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 82-83.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

Definitions, however, remain important, and Moshman concludes a few pages later:

It seems reasonable, then, to define genocide as group destruction without regard to means of destruction or type of group destroyed. Moreover, although genocide is usually perpetrated by governmental or quasi-governmental authorities, there is no apparent reason to make this a criterion of genocide. Thus, group destruction is genocide regardless of the type of perpetrator, the means of destruction, or the type of group destroyed.³⁷¹

I cite David Moshman at length to bring my readers quickly up to speed on the scholarship of comparative genocide. I am also signaling Moshman's scholarly acceptance of the extensive work done by Ward Churchill on Native American genocide in *A Little Matter of Genocide*, which remains one of the most important books on the subject.³⁷²

As Weiss-Wendt notes, the subject of Native American genocide remains taboo in the United States, and it is frequently denied, minimized, and erased. This is not taboo among genocide scholars so much as it is in U.S. public discourse, which speaks to a lack of widespread education on the subject. That alone should give us pause when we reflect on anything associated with Indigenous traditions and appeals to law. The law was largely premised on exterminating them.

In his analysis of genocide in the Virginia and Massachusetts Bay colonies, Alfred Cave writes, following Tony Barta, that we need:

³⁷¹ Ibid., 89.

³⁷² Some readers will know Churchill's name from national media surrounding his dismissal from University of Colorado at Boulder. The court ruled that he was unjustly fired but refused to reinstate him to his faculty position.

to focus on the acts, not the stated intentions, of the expropriators. While the role of ideology in justifying and sustaining genocidal practices over the long term remains essential, the early process of colonial subjugation of indigenous peoples contain the seeds of genocide even if the intention is usually not explicitly avowed.³⁷³

Ward Churchill, however, writes, “In every instance, the destruction of indigenous economies was undertaken within the framework of an overarching intent, expressed as a matter of policy by the governments involved, to achieve the outright “extermination” of targeted indigenous peoples.”³⁷⁴ I would submit that both minimization and denial of genocide are indirect accomplices to intent. They accomplish an obfuscation of genocide because, on some level, minimizers and deniers realize that genocide actually happened and want to distance themselves from their implicit complicity. A CDA approach to religious poetics allows us to see that it is both the individual acts and the governmental policies that contribute to genocide through a poetics of sacrifice.

What deniers and minimizers want is to excuse and “exempt” themselves and their inherited privileges from the charge itself. In other words, they see themselves as benevolent exceptions to an otherwise colonialist, racist, ideological scheme.³⁷⁵ Their exceptional status is always reliant on the fact that they are “good people.” “Good

³⁷³ Alfred A. Cave, “Genocide in the Americas,” *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 283.

³⁷⁴ Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492-Present* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1997), 150.

³⁷⁵ Carl Schmitt saw the miracle as antecedent to the exception in his 1922 book, *Political Theology*. Following that euroformation, those who claim exceptional status claims to be blessed by the intervention of God into human affairs.

people” don’t want genocide. “Good people” believe in Christ’s universal message. Oftentimes this shows up as a different form of intent, such as being overtly benevolent towards Indigenous groups through missionary work, for example, or translating the Bible into Indigenous languages for easier conversion. Within this context, Drug War rhetoric is yet another example of genocidal “benevolence,” yet most often eurochristian religious groups uncritically support it. The support for prohibitionist policies reveals the imbrication of eurochristian poetics with international politics. This is part of a monopoly that eurochristian framing wants to superimpose onto “ecstatic” experience. The international situation is infused with Drug War rhetoric, and ayahuasca in diaspora must account for that situation and the historic role of the U.S. in relation to it. It ought not rely on rhetoric of exception.

Writing of cultural genocide in *The Historiography of Genocide*, Robert van Krieken notes that most Latin American nations and English-derived nations (The United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, along with South Africa) were the most opposed to the article on cultural genocide that was supposed to be included in the convention.³⁷⁶ He cites a long passage by Alexis de Tocqueville from *Democracy in America* in which the French tourist compares the different styles of brutality between the Spanish and English settlers, both resulting in the same devastating outcome. The similar outcome is why, with respect to an analysis of ayahuasca’s diaspora, we must take an anticolonial stance that does not merely accept and celebrate the achievement of religious

³⁷⁶ Robert van Krieken, “Cultural Genocide in Australia,” *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 140.

exemptions for a couple of ayahuasca-using groups. That Tocqueville understood this in the early nineteenth-century is further evidence that colonizers were quite capable of understanding genocidal processes during their own historical contexts. Reduction to well-intentioned systems inadvertently perpetuates genocidal conditions by requiring the translation of Native traditions into recognizable rights-based discourses. At the same time, the governing body of the United Nations has capitulated to Drug War rhetoric implicitly designed to further the civilizing processes of eurochristianity, even while its own research on drug policy thwarts the old paradigm of maligning drugs.³⁷⁷ This capitulation reflects U.S. hegemony in the postwar developments of international institutions. While this may be more difficult for secular Europeans to accept than for Americans, the focus on the longer history of eurochristian religious poetics outside of denominational affiliations and in concert with the rise of liberalism helps us see persistent mechanisms at work. The ayahuasca diaspora brings these persistent mechanisms to light.

While there is now a mountain of scientific research claiming significant medical benefits of ayahuasca use that directly contradicts the Drug Enforcement Administration's statements, the DEA's rationale has internationally framed a public and professional debate motivating advocates to prove in a positivistic way that ayahuasca does indeed have medical potential. Conscientious approaches at integrating plant-based

³⁷⁷ In the summer of 2019, I took this online course offered by the U.N. policy makers: Université de Genève, "Drugs, Drug Use, Drug Policy and Health," *coursera.org*, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://www.coursera.org/learn/drugs>

medicines and psychiatric therapy go a long way toward disqualifying the inherent contradictions in the DEA's prohibition of DMT.³⁷⁸ Much of what is published on ayahuasca, as I have noted, implicitly reacts to and contradicts drug scheduling definitions in place worldwide as the result of U.S. hegemony in advancing a War on Drugs. This "war" has ironically attempted to prevent any research on the substances named. Such has been the dilemma for all research on psychedelics since the early 1970s, and much has been written on that subject.³⁷⁹ The rationales for the Drug War and its escalation in the late twentieth-century implicitly perform eurochristian sacrificial poetics. Genocidal policies are masked by naming wars on people "wars on drugs," and the history of drug policies in the U.S. evidence this.

Rights-Based Movements and Reactionary Policies

As D. R. Lander has correctly traced, the contentious marijuana charges against Timothy Leary in the late 1960s "were successful in effectively rendering unconstitutional the Marijuana Tax Act, which had been in existence since 1937, and helped lead to the incarceration of hundreds, if not thousands of people."³⁸⁰ Removal

³⁷⁸ See, for example, Jordan Slosower, "Integrating Psychedelic Medicines and Psychiatry: Theory and Methods of a Clinical Model," *Plant Medicines, Healing and Psychedelic Science*, edited by Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018): 113-132.

³⁷⁹ See especially, Nicolas Langlitz, *Neuropsychodelia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

³⁸⁰ Devin R. Lander, "Legalize Spiritual Discovery": The Trials of Dr. Timothy Leary," *Prohibition, Religious Freedom, and Human Rights: Regulating Traditional*

from taxation and conversion to prohibition could bolster efforts to make drug wars a matter of national security. The escalation of the War on Drugs moved from a war on immigrants to a backlash against the counterculture and the civil rights gains of communities of color in the 1960s. The consequence of Leary's case prompted Richard Nixon to promote a federal regulation in the form of the Controlled Substances Act, which was then pushed onto the international community. We should remember this context along with the Leary and his colleagues' foundation of the League of Spiritual Discovery and their nonprofit, International Federation for Internal Freedom (IFIF), which had set up shop in Zijuatanejo, Mexico in the early 1960s to continue the exploration of psychedelics and spirituality following the famous Marsh Chapel experiment and Leary's removal from Harvard. Leary had, since the mid 1960s, advocated for starting one's own religion.³⁸¹ This included seeking exempt status for psychedelics following Native American peyotism, which did not convince the U.S. courts.³⁸² Following his outrageous media exploits and the arrival of the 1970 *Controlled*

Drug Use, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2014): 185.

³⁸¹ Timothy Leary, *Start Your Own Religion* (Oakland: Ronin, 2000).

³⁸² Beside the fact that the charges were largely trumped up, making Leary's defense a cartoonish response to a legal system that had no idea what it was dealing with, Leary also appealed to the Native American Church's use of peyote. The court countered:

Appellant argues that the religious use of peyote, a psychedelic hallucinogen, by Indians who are members of the Native American Church has been constitutionally protected by the Supreme Court of California in *People v. Woody*, 61 Cal.2d 716, 40 Cal.Rptr. 69, 394 P.2d 813 (1964). He refers also to the California Supreme Court's decision in *In [sic] re Grady*, 61 Cal.2d 887, 39

Substances Act, psychedelic research declined, and to the extent that psychedelics have begun to be researched again in the twenty-first century, appealing to religiosity has been largely taboo in labs.

Ayahuasca is especially interesting in this context because it publicly appeals to Indigenous and “shamanic” uses long-associated with Do-It-Yourself religions that Leary had called for while at the same time receiving support from recognized religious groups for scientific study of the substance. Simultaneously, ayahuasca religious rhetoric reflects a liberalizing and transnational impulse against Brazil’s dictatorial regime in the 1960s. As we shall see in the following chapter, much of that impulse can be attributed not just to resisting governmental restrictions but a trend in Spiritualist movements to seek material and scientific validation of supernatural phenomena. Here, however, I want

Cal.Rptr. 912, 394 P.2d 728 (1964), decided the same day as *Woody*, in which conviction of a “self-styled peyote preacher” for unlawful possession of narcotics, namely, peyote, was annulled and a new trial granted in order that the defendant might have an opportunity to prove that his use of peyote was in connection with an honest and bona fide practice of a religious belief. By parity of reasoning he contends that marihuana, another psychedelic drug, is entitled to the same constitutional protection as peyote. With due deference to the California Supreme Court, we are of course not bound by its decisions. However, we note an essential difference between *Woody* and the instant matter in that peyote in the *Woody* case played “a central role in the ceremony and practice of the Native American Church, a religious organization of Indians,” and that the “ceremony marked by the sacramental use of peyote, composes the cornerstone of the peyote religion.” Grady was apparently the spiritual leader of a group of individuals and provided peyote for the group which he said was for religious purposes. We are not impressed that the California cases are directly in point, and we will not apply them insofar as the circumstances of this case are concerned.

Leary vs. United States, 383 F.2d, 851 Fifth Circuit (1967),
<https://www.ravellaw.com/opinions/642849fd33bd3a875d5a889ef2ed2051>

to emphasize the parallel international moves of the rise of the security state and the escalation of Drug War policies because it is within that context that we begin to see ayahuasca's international diaspora. The escalation on the international stage is a repetition of the waves of Indigenous removal in earlier centuries.

Richard Nixon's reinterpretation of regulation at the federal and international levels enacted an expansion of Drug War rhetoric that reinforced "Law and Order" politics as a directly conservative reaction to the civil rights gains of the 1960s. In that scheme, as authors such as Michelle Alexander have thoroughly articulated, the "Drug War" became a mechanism to incarcerate people of color without seeming racist.³⁸³ Analyzing rhetorical strategies of various protest movements with a longer view of history in mind, Jordan Camp argues "that the increasing geographical scale of civil rights insurgency and mass protest against Jim Crow racial regimes in the postwar period led to the expansion of mass arrest, confinement, and incarceration in the governance of U.S. capitalism."³⁸⁴ While drug policy in the U.S. had long accompanied a xenophobia of unwanted immigrants, the new drug scheduling enabled law enforcement to go after U.S. citizens with similar vigor.

Importantly, however, we need to separate liberal civil rights "progress narrative" rhetoric from an older history of the extermination of Indigenous Peoples. Rhetoric for the recognition and inclusion of minorities in the privileges of U.S. citizenship was

³⁸³ See Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, New York: The New Press, 2012.

³⁸⁴ Jordan T. Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 5.

converted into a security apparatus that was able to better locate internal “threats” to national security. When we take a critical stance toward progress narratives, we can see that the outgrowth of neoliberalism is less “neo” than it might appear. Connected to a longer view where we see liberalism itself as an outgrowth of eurochristian religious poetics we can see neoliberalism as merely the most recent manifestation of a will-to-empire reinforced by those religious poetics.

As Vine Deloria articulated with respect to very different agendas of American Indians and African Americans in 1960s civil rights efforts,³⁸⁵ the Indian platform during the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s was not seeking inclusion into the rights-based, liberal scheme that African Americans and the Women’s Movement were vying for, because Native Americans did not want to become part of the entity that was illegitimately occupying their land. Surely there would be some overlapping improvement in those areas, but the cost for Native Americans would always remain essentially a matter of traditions. As Deloria writes with urban Indian populations in mind:

As we become aware of our customs we will be able to live in a tribalizing world. Tribal society does not depend upon legislative enactment. It depends heavily in most areas upon customs which fill in the superstructure of society with meaningful forms of behavior and which are constantly changing because of the demands made on them by people.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 180.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 237.

As such, the central concerns of Indians often remain opaque to liberal progressive outsiders. Deloria writes:

Non-Indians must understand the differences, at least in Indian country, between nationalism and militancy. Most Indians are nationalists. That is, they are primarily concerned with development and continuance of the tribe. As nationalists, Indians could not, for the most part, care less about what the rest of society does.³⁸⁷

In Vizenor's terminology, Indians are concerned with a Survivance ICM, and certainly by "nationalism" Deloria means nothing like American exceptionalism or the *indigenismo* nationalisms of twentieth-century South America.

In *God is Red* (1973), Deloria writes that the Civil Rights movements were the inevitable fallout of the Nuremburg trials. It seemed to promise an achievable "just" society in a near future:

The middle 1960s also saw in the rise of the drug culture an immediate release from the complexities of modern life. Timothy Leary's admonition to "drop out, turn in, and tune in" [*sic*] spoke of the same stability of reality in the religious field as did King's dream of a just society, but it was predicated on the idea of individual isolation and a refusal to accept citizenship responsibilities. As the two movements began to intertwine, the formation of a "counterculture" was suggested as a means of explaining the apparent alienation between the two general modes of existence.³⁸⁸

Deloria's words importantly link the spiritual questing of psychedelic enthusiasts such as Leary with progressive civil rights culture. Part of the utopic vision was an overcoming of racism, and at the same time, psychedelic drugs took on an era of achieving a 'postracial' and transcultural state that very much remains present in discourse

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 241.

³⁸⁸ Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion: 30th Anniversary Edition* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2003), 50.

advocating for ayahuasca's ability to help to heal the traumas of modern society. Deloria, however, saw a major flaw with such rhetoric and Indians' place in it:

The collapse of the Civil Rights movement, the concern with Vietnam and the war, the escape to drugs, the rise of the power movements, and the return to Mother Earth can all be understood as desperate efforts of groups to flee abstract articulations of belief and superficial values and find authenticity wherever it can be found. It was at this point that Indians became popular and widespread and intense interest in Indians, as seen in fantasy literature and anthologies, seemed to indicate that Americans wanted more from Indians than they did from other minority groups.³⁸⁹

To be sure, in South America among Western seekers, ayahuasca is often used in a group ceremony, but the phenomenon of the individual expert, the "shaman," often maintains an emphasis on individualism, as if it is a sign of having successfully dropped the trappings of modern alienation. Deloria's words remain even more significant in the context of a longer view of the poetics of sacrifice, because he indicates that in their search for escape, Western seekers tend to expect to find the resources they need for spiritual growth by extracting and expropriating them from Indigenous Peoples. And when that extraction process is deemed illegal, they turn to arguments for their religious freedom and expression as U.S. citizens under the First Amendment.

In contrast, U.S. citizenship was "granted" / forced onto Indians in 1924 and annexing more of their lands as an extension of the *Dawes Act* of 1887.³⁹⁰ Assimilationist Indian Termination Policies were then, perhaps ironically, put in the early 1950s following the Genocide Convention. In the longer view, however, there is

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 51.

³⁹⁰ Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (New York: Verso, 2019), 82.

less room for seeing “irony.” Rather, an annihilating dialectic that recognizes and then sacrifices an Indigenous “other” merely reiterates the entrenched eurochristian poetics. If there were no longer Indians to be recognized, the U.S. government seemed to rationalize, there would be no need to charge the government with genocide of them.

In 1951, the Civil Rights Congress produced the paper, “We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People,” but by the late 1960s civil rights agendas for African Americans and Indians were different. The question for Indians was not a recognition of identity but one of *sovereignty* – even *international sovereignty*. It is this very sovereignty that is erased through the international recognition and exemption of ayahuasca religions and biopolitical regulations of plants. It is not that Indigenous People do not recognize that ayahuasca is “medicine”; it is that they recognize that in ayahuasca’s international diaspora, this localized medicine from the Amazon has been thoroughly decontextualized at the expense of Indigenous cultures, even while much of the rhetoric around ayahuasca purports to spread “Indigenous wisdom” and “traditional knowledge.”

To counter this rhetoric, we ought to contextualize the excitement around ayahuasca’s diaspora to the north with the ongoing plights of Indigenous Peoples living under the ongoing occupation of U.S. colonialism. Following the 1960s counterculture and the rise of mass incarceration with the escalation of the drug war, psychedelics maintained a place in U.S. culture for providing the means of access to transcultural and utopian desires. In terms of the racism that accompanied the longer history of eurochristian religious poetics informing the initial drug war rhetoric, psychedelics (and

ayahuasca among them” became “white,” while crack cocaine became “black.”³⁹¹ The rise of the cocaine trade was also a result of colonization and an escalating drug war.³⁹² As Paul Gootenberg writes, transnational cocaine boomed as foreign attempts at state “development” in South America failed: “illicit cocaine did not, as often presumed, erupt from a pristine state of lawlessness or statelessness. In fact, its centers were among the most state-affected areas of the Amazonian Andes.”³⁹³ It was the racialization and escalation of cocaine, particularly following U.S.-backed Operation Condor which instigated intensified genocides throughout Central and South America during the 1970s and the Crack panics during the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton years, that further cemented a relationship between drug war policies, mass incarceration and militarization of police forces.

Accompanying these policies was a rhetorical divide between substances used for “spiritual growth” and those used by poor, urban people and grown in countries deemed to be unable to govern themselves. When it comes to ayahuasca, adherence to only clinical or medical benefits of ayahuasca is merely a way of sidestepping these related ethical issues arising from “development” plans for foreign investment in the region. Again, as Dawn Paley argues, the war against drugs is really a war against people. She

³⁹¹ See Carl Hart, *High Price* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014).

³⁹² Paul Gootenberg, “Introduction: Orphans of Development: The Unanticipated Rise of Illicit Coca in the Amazon Andes,” *The Origins of Cocaine: Colonization and Failed Development in the Amazon Andes*, ed. Paul Gootenberg and Liliana Dávalos (New York: Routledge, 2018): 7-8.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 13.

argues “that there are three principal mechanisms through which the drug war advances the interests of neoliberal capitalism: through the imposition of law and policy changes, through formal militarization, and through the paramilitarization that results from it.”³⁹⁴ Parallel to, and occasionally within, arguments for the medical benefits of ayahuasca, many have argued that ayahuasca experiences produce religiously and spiritually heightened “states,” but even such claims can exist alongside a hostile relationship to Indigenous Peoples despite the best of intentions. All of this remains important to a discussion of ayahuasca because the eurochristian Doctrine of Discovery was *and continues to be* the legal mechanism by which all contemporary states on Turtle Island stake their claim to occupancy, and this is why attention to the Doctrine of Discovery’s persistence ought to ground an enquiry into the international diaspora of ayahuasca. Genocidal policies continue to perform eurochristian religious poetics, yet impulses to spiritualize ayahuasca use rhetorically turn public attention away from the harsh material realities affecting Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon and in the north.

Contemporary Contexts

If connecting ayahuasca discourse to genocidal eurochristian religious poetics still seems a stretch, let us take a contemporary example: the Amazon rainforest, ayahuasca’s home environment. In 2019, the world saw raging fires in Brazil, where the avowedly evangelical president, Jair Bolsonaro, had been claiming since his first day in office that

³⁹⁴ Dawn Paley, *Drug War Capitalism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2014), 219.

he will undermine Indigenous People's rights to land.³⁹⁵ Among his rationales for forcibly assimilating and displacing Indigenous Peoples into broader Brazilian society has been an intention to destroy the forest for expanding agribusiness. The forced assimilation is also culturally genocidal. This is persistent Eurocentric "civilization" rhetoric at work. As Fiona Watson wrote in *The Guardian* just as he was being elected in 2018:

Bolsonaro thinks "Indians smell, are uneducated and don't speak our language", and that "the recognition of indigenous land is an obstacle to agribusiness". He declares that he will reduce or abolish Amazonian indigenous reserves and has vowed on several occasions: "If I become president, there will not be one centimetre more of indigenous land." He recently corrected himself, declaring that he meant not one millimetre.³⁹⁶

Accompanying this rather clear agenda of genocidal intent for capitalist growth, Bolsonaro also frames a liberal, "protective" rhetoric with respect removing Indigenous Peoples from their lands, saying they are "manipulated" by non-governmental forces. So, he is apparently "looking out for them"? No, this is logic inspired by over five-hundred years of eurochristian deep framing.

³⁹⁵ Ernesto Londoño, "Jair Bolsonaro, on Day 1, Undermines Indigenous Brazilians' Rights," *The New York Times* 2 June, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/02/world/americas/brazil-bolsonaro-president-indigenous-lands.html>.

³⁹⁶ Fiona Watson, "Bolsonaro's Election is Catastrophic News for Brazil's Indigenous Tribes," *The Guardian* 31 October, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/31/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-indigenous-tribes-mining-logging>.

Simultaneously, as *Reuters* reports, “A Brazilian congressional committee on Tuesday [August 27, 2019] approved a proposed constitutional amendment to allow commercial agriculture on indigenous reserves, a practice that is currently prohibited.”³⁹⁷ While some leaders in the international community have voiced concern that the loss of the Amazon concerns the entire world, Bolsonaro has reacted by intensifying his own nationalism.³⁹⁸ This kind of behavior is a direct reflection of the colonizing habitus of the eurochristian Doctrine of Discovery and its use in underwriting land claims for nation states. Since the Doctrine’s claims persist despite claims to secularization, they also persist in having a political-theological effect and framing on our most mundane activities.

Most recently in Brazil, tapes released anonymously to *The Intercept* revealed a closed-door attempt to put an evangelical anthropologist, Edward Matoanelli Luz, into a position “for the area that cares for isolated Indians from Funai [Coordinator of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indians CGIIRC]. The audio also shows that the group’s goal is to convert indigenous people to Christianity.”³⁹⁹ As I cover in more detail in chapter

³⁹⁷ Maria Carolina Marcello, “Brazil Congress Committee OKs Commercial Farming on Indigenous Reserves,” *Reuters.com*, August 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-agriculture-indigenous-idUSKCN1VH2H9?fbclid=IwAR0T0BAr4R1IzITGaISzayLkzdS1quFPViVhAU9F20CM5yP9wGU-xsv1to>.

³⁹⁸ Aurelien Breeden and Megan Specia, “Dispute Over Amazon Gets Personal for Bolsonaro and Macron,” *The New York Times*, August 26, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/26/world/europe/bolsonaro-macron-g7.html>.

³⁹⁹ Sílvia Lisboa and Felipe Milanez, “Áudios Comprovam que Pastor Assumiu Área Sensível da FUNAI para Converter Índios Isolados,” *The Intercept*, February 13, 2020, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/13/audios->

five, during the 1950s and 1960s, controversies over Service for the Protection of the Indian (SPI) in Brazil led to the formation of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) in 1967 and eventually to Article 231 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, which explicitly bars missionaries from evangelizing Indians. As the article reports (in my translation):

The anthropologist is the son of the president of the New Tribes of Brazil Mission, the MNTB, pastor Edward Gomes da Luz. The MNTB is an American evangelical current that arranges missionaries to preach, build churches and convert recently contacted indigenous peoples, native languages. *Novas Tribos* was already expelled by Funai from the lands of the Zo'é people in 1991, accused of imposing Christian doctrine and spreading diseases. In 2015, the chain was denounced by the Federal Public Ministry of allying with Brazil nut exploiters who enslaved indigenous people.⁴⁰⁰

This appointment parallels evangelical President Bolsonaro's appointment of Pastor Ricardo Lopes Dias as head of the sector of isolated Indians.⁴⁰¹ Bolsonaro's policies and intentions, aligned explicitly with evangelical rhetoric of "civilizing" or eradicating Indigenous Peoples and occupying their lands is the current-day manifestation of the eurochristian religious poetics of sacrifice.

In terms of current international politics, neither be the neo-colonizing rhetoric of French President Emmanuel Macron's assertions that international efforts intervene in

missionarios-converter-indios-amazonia/?fbclid=IwAR2wa8AX1oiFVizZGbn70f1qX39ZPcYzO7dui_0PBiLI6sScDLfNhF3ycR4.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Rubens Valente, "Governo Bolsonaro nomeia evangelizador de indígenas para chefiar setor de índios isolados," *folha.uol.com.br*, February 5, 2020, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2020/02/governo-bolsonaro-nomeia-evangelizador-de-indigenas-para-chefiar-setor-de-indios-isolados.shtml>.

Brazil's destructive policies toward the Amazon, nor the retreat to nationalism of Bolsonaro escapes eurochristian deep framing. These global political figures merely signal a n ongoing process of erasure of Indigenous perspectives. When ayahuasca religions participate in the politics of recognition, they tacitly accept these religious poetics.

All broadly recognized ayahuasca religions emerge in Brazil during the twentieth-century, following the rubber boom. They very much evidence Luis León's concept of religious poetics insofar as they emerge and refine themselves buffered through state and international policies and agendas, even when they begin among rural impoverished rubber tappers. As Anthony Richard Henman writes:

The original [*sic*] transcendental content of indigenous oasca [ayahuasca] use thus came to be supplemented by many disparate elements: Kardecist spiritualism, evangelical Protestantism, baroque folk Catholicism, and afro-Brazilian religiosity – each of which had themselves already undergone a complex process of religious syncretism. In this historical process, the UDV was a relative late-comer; it was founded in Porto Velho only in 1962, by José Gabriel da Costa (1922-1971), who was recognized as the Mestre Superior ["Superior Master"] by eleven other rubber-tappers who belonged to an informal circle latterly known as the Mestres de Curiosidade ["Masters of Curiosity"]. Mestre Gabriel established the basic hierarchical system which characterizes the UDV, and fired it with a missionary zeal which has led ultimately to the setting up of numerous local branches, mainly in the states of Rondônia and Acre, but also in numerous Brazilian cities outside the region: Brasília, Manaus, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Fortaleza, Campinas.⁴⁰²

Keeping in mind analyses by Indigenous scholars such as Tinker and Newcomb, we can see some hierarchical structuring derivative of eurochristian deep-framing here. Like

⁴⁰² Anthony Richard Henman, "The Religious Use of Ayahuasca: The Case of the União do Vegetal in Brazil," *erowid*, February 2009, https://erowid.org/chemicals/ayahuasca/ayahuasca_article2.shtml.

many evangelical churches in the U.S., the UDV's official position is that it is an apolitical association, yet at least one of its top leaders, Mestre Luis Felipe Belmonte, was recently named second Vice President to Bolsonaro's newly-formed far-right party in Brazil.⁴⁰³ As BBC News points out, the party's official position is to "fight corruption and advance Christian values."⁴⁰⁴ This position is resonant with the overt Law and Order politics that now ranks Brazil among the top ten nations with the highest incarceration rates.⁴⁰⁵ It is also a reflection of the massive success the Protestant evangelicals from the north have had since Brazil separated itself from the Catholic church in the late nineteenth century.

The United States currently ranks number one on in mass incarceration, and its rates in recent years have exceeded that of Stalinist Russia's gulag.⁴⁰⁶ With respect to the

⁴⁰³ With my gratitude to Bia Labate for pointing me to this Portuguese source, in translation: "The second vice-president will be Brasilia's millionaire lawyer Luis Felipe Belmonte, who is deputy to Senator Izalci Lucas (PSDB-DF). The other positions are distributed among Planalto Palace officials, such as Tércio Arnaud Tomaz (member), political activists, as well as lawyers Karina Kufa (treasurer) and Admar Gonzaga (secretary)." Alfonso Benites, "Com Cartuchos de Munição e Número 38, Bolsonaro Lança Partido à Sua Medida," *El País*, November 21, 2019, https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/11/21/politica/1574370572_790996.html.

⁴⁰⁴ BBC News, "Brazil's President Bolsonaro Launches New Political Party," *British Broadcasting Corporation*, November 21, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-50507996>.

⁴⁰⁵ "Incarceration Rates By Country Population." *World Population Review*, October 24, 2019, accessed January 11, 2020, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/incarceration-rates-by-country/>.

⁴⁰⁶ Adam Gopnik, "The Caging of America," *The New Yorker*, January 22, 2012, accessed January 11, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/01/30/the-caging-of-america>.

international diaspora of ayahuasca, we need to situate it within twentieth-century transnational impulses among evangelical missionary efforts between the U.S. and South America. This is counterintuitive for some, both because people often want to associate the use of psychedelics within countercultural impulses such as Timothy Leary's efforts as well as traditional Indigenous knowledge. The traction that recognized ayahuasca religions have made with respect to legal recognition and exemptions, however, owes much to theological affiliations with more conservative Christian social impulses. Paralleling this, liberal ayahuasca enthusiasts are frequently astounded to find alliances between UDV leadership (if not all members) and overtly oppressive rightwing governments. Yet the framing of spiritual growth and healing, as Deloria suggested, operates within utopian conceptions of liberal progress narratives, especially those aligned with civil rights.

Post-Christianity

Looking at the longer history of eurochristian religious poetics in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery, things start to make more sense. Yet interestingly, even conservative evangelicals in the U.S. have begun denouncing the Doctrine of Discovery. When they do so, however, they are simultaneously resistant to acknowledge a eurochristian deep framing to genocidal impulses. Instead, these groups appear to be responding to a transnational impulse to combat what they see as a "post-Christian" world. Post-Christianity is a slippery term, often signaling internal politics of the conservative Christian right, which had been a powerful political force backing Ronald

Reagan's drug war policies. For mainline liberal Christians, the term can signal attempts to "decolonize" institutional Christian spaces and be more inclusive of non-Christians. More broadly, "post-Christianity" can often signal a globalized turn of the "civilizing" agenda. In all cases, it is certainly no claim that Christianity is "dead."

As Thomas S. Kidd's recent book, *Who is an Evangelical?* argues with respect to the U.S., the sentiment of "post-Christianity" is at times a rhetoric surrounding a crisis among white evangelicals in the waning of the Christian right movement. In that context, contemporary Protestants often refer to themselves as simply "Christian," with the implication being that Catholics are somehow not Christians.⁴⁰⁷ These rhetorical contestations actually serve another purpose, however. In positing dramatic disputes between liberal and conservative eurochristians – or even racial disputes among the perception that evangelicals are mostly white versus acknowledgment that the base is much more diverse – such discourses occupy the center of a public discursive spaces concerning religion, framing all issues as Christian issues, even the issue of "post-Christianity," within a liberal politics of recognition. The disputes thus cooperate with one another by demanding that only eurochristian issues take to stage for public debate. The notion of religious hybridity (much less "syncretism"), however, ought not be contextualized within a "neutral" eurochristian perspective or a liberal "inclusive" one. The engine of disputes between "liberal" and "conservative" Christians, like "liberal" and "conservative" political categories, is fueled by a prior eurochristian framing which

⁴⁰⁷ My students at MSU Denver, many of whom are the children of parents recently immigrated from South and Central America, often evidence this completely ahistorical claim when speaking of their faith positions.

always already excluded Indigenous Peoples, unless they themselves have embraced Christianity.

As is well-known, throughout South America forms of mother-substitution permeate Catholic and Afro-Caribbean-based religiosities; and it is not surprising that these hybrid forms merged with Indigenous practices as well in ways that seem impossible to separate out today. Occasionally, we see postcolonial and anticolonial attitudes that align themselves with conceptions of Native resistance. Beatriz Labate writes with respect to ayahuasca's internationalization that boundaries between "shamanism,"⁴⁰⁸ therapy, and tourism blur:

In one direction, there is a process of secularization and scientization as health sciences, psychology, and anthropology penetrate the vegetalismo universe. Simultaneously, the other way around, we find a 'shamanization' of the world of the gringos, promoting reverse colonization, and a new diaspora."⁴⁰⁹

Lisa Maria Madera has traced this with respect to a myth from Aguarico (eastern Ecuador), where ayahuasca theology is intimately bound in the drama of colonization:

through the *ayahuasca* visions, the Christian story itself is healed and Christ himself redeemed and released from the grip of the *brujo diablos*, who for a time controlled his house. The narrative power fully rephrases a shattered Christianity. In this gospel according to *ayahuasca*, the colonial expansion of Christianity is reframed as the aggressive and greedy action of *brujo diablos* during the time that Nuestra Señora lay dead.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ For my critique of "shamanism" in liberal culture see Roger Green, "Archaic Revivals and Shamanism in a Liberal Global Imaginary," *Psychedelic Press, UK* vol. 4, 2015.

⁴⁰⁹ Beatriz Caiuby Labate, "The Internationalization of Peruvian Vegetalismo," *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 199-200.

⁴¹⁰ Lisa Maria Madera, "Visions of Christ in the Amazon," *The Journal of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2009): 89.

Indeed, the theology of some recognized ‘ayahuasca religions’ in Brazil assert that the ayahuasca vine itself is the Second coming of Christ here to spread his Kingdom through Amazonian ecological balance.⁴¹¹ Universalized and globalized contexts miss the fact that Indigenous ICMs are capable of persisting, embracing, and re-orienting the surface frames of Christianity in ways more radical than notions of “hybridity” can attest.

Michael Taussig’s study of commodity-fetishism in South America among Columbian miners also expresses an inversion and appropriation of colonizer-religion’s concepts. In reference to the Virgin of Guadalupe in and the Zapatistas in Mexico, he writes:

In fact, she is the Christian mask concealing the fertility goddess, Tonantzin – a satanic device to mask idolatry, according to one prominent sixteenth-century Church Father. It has been suggested that this Virgin is identified with the promise of successful rebellion against power figures and is equated with the promise of life and salvation, whereas Christ is identified with the crucifixion, death and defeat.⁴¹²

Moreover, miners in Colombia reenact a ritual from carnival time “whenever danger is imminent or accidents have occurred.”⁴¹³ He continues, “This miners’ rite is also a recurrent drama of salvation from a persistent threat of destruction; here also the role of the intercessor is pitched against the destructive power of the devil. The intercessor is the

⁴¹¹ Alex Polari De Alverga, *The Religion of Ayahuasca: The Teachings of the Church of Santo Daime* (Vermont: Park Street Press, 1999), 2.

⁴¹² Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 210.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 208.

Pachamama or Earthmother.”⁴¹⁴ Even in hybrid forms, eurochristian poetics of sacrifice persist.

In these localized contexts, as with Santa Muerte cults in the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico, there are radical inversions of eurochristian deep-framing impulses, but these impulses are far from those “official” and legalistic ones that would recognize a “religion” as such. They truly evidence *mestizaje* contexts, yet the five-hundred-year developments of what Gloria Anzaldúa calls *mestizaje* consciousness and Luis León calls “La Llorona’s Children” cannot be merely reoccupied to serve as a displacement for Indigenous perspectives. It is, rather, the deathspace of the borderlands that ought to be attended to along with the plight of surviving Indigenous Peoples in the north when we consider the diaspora of ayahuasca. The massive displacement and northward migration of people from South and Central America as a result of Drug War Policies and security agreements move through this deathspace as if on their way to *Mictlan*, the Nahuatl term for the land of the dead, which is situated in the north.⁴¹⁵ But connecting these injustices within the larger history that is exactly what is *not* happening in much of transnational ayahuasca discourse, though it speaks more directly to the outgrowth of conditions that affect Indigenous Peoples across both continents.

Why is ayahuasca condensed into “one substance” with a great variety of recipes? What social forces work to make a singularity here? I think at least part of it has to do

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Yuri Herrera’s recent novel, *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, is a nice fabulist account of this “deathspace” in the borderlands, aligning *Mictlan* with the U.S.

with a longstanding tendency stemming from largely Protestant-Christian frames that are suspicious of “ritual” and ritually used substances. In addition to this, legal foundations for the Doctrine of Discovery connect both Protestant and Catholic dispositions within a eurochristian social movement. As I have written elsewhere with respect to the history of the concept of the “fetish,” William Pietz has adequately traced the *maleficium* underwriting Taussig’s descriptions back through Hegel, Charles De Brosses, and Roman law.⁴¹⁶ These trends persist in globalized discourse.

Globalized Christianity and Liberal “Decolonization”

The persistence of eurochristian religious poetics occurs most evidently in globalized discourse. Interestingly, even among conservative Christians, there has recently been a sea change among evangelicals in the United States with respect to the Doctrine of Discovery, but this sea change has yet to wrestle with its own inheritance from eurochristian deep framing because it continues to advocate for a universal civilizing agenda. The diaspora of ayahuasca reveals why this is such a problem because its discourse inevitably gets framed within the same discursive motivations.

Conservative Christian rejections of the Doctrine of Discovery in the U.S. have much to do with inherent racism and the widespread political association between the term “evangelical” and “white Republican” reflected in U.S. public discourse. With an

⁴¹⁶ Roger K. Green, “Fetishism and the Erasure of Indigeneity,” *The Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, July 8, 2019, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2019/07/08/fetishism-and-the-erasure-of-identity-part-1-roger-green/>.

awareness that many evangelicals are not white and a self-conscious distancing from the unabashed white supremacist groups emboldened by Donald Trump's rise to power, evangelicalism in the United States and in Brazil is doing what modern Christianity does best: fracture and split, then reidentify as the "true" way. This is not only a Protestant phenomenon, as Catholic-oriented books like Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option* attest. We need to be attentive to these transnational religious poetics and their political context if we are to analyze ayahuasca use in its northern context because the poetics perpetuate a civilizing narrative even when groups explicitly attempt to reject the Doctrine of Discovery. The genocidal impulse is in the framing mechanism that situates progressive versus liberal conceptions Christianity that result in the (re)centering of Christianity itself.⁴¹⁷

In *The Benedict Option*, Dreher laments the loss of Christian "civilization," but he has no time for nostalgia. Instead, he advocates for fractured communities to create "cells" where people can live in a "truly" Christian way. Both Kidd and Dreher are moving toward similar solutions and rejecting some of the white supremacy supported by the dogmatic Christian right in the U.S., who see their rightwing vote as an implicit expression of their Christianity. In doing so, they adopt rhetoric of multiculturalism from earlier civil-rights based liberal movements. Simultaneously, both Kidd and Dreher denounce the Trump administration's politics as well, favoring a transnational Christian movement and revaluation of traditional values. Taken together, this is an expression of

⁴¹⁷ I should note that I am aware of many impulses to syncretize ayahuasca with Asian modalities. I see this as part of a liberalized, but nevertheless, eurochristian impulse, which I will articulate with my later discussion of the New Age.

the rise of charismatic Catholicism and rapid evangelizing among Protestants and Pentecostals the Americas during the mid-twentieth century.

Globally, Christian groups recently celebrated the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. As Martin Marty's *October 31, 1517: Martin Luther and the Day that Changed the World* notes, there has largely been a reconciliation among Catholics and Protestants, at least at official levels.⁴¹⁸ This does not, however, appear to be the case among many Christians in the United States who have inherited centuries of anti-papal attitudes that stem directly from New England's political-theological influences. Nevertheless, in the universal catholic agenda, the "repaired" relationship was not only with Protestant churches but with the Eastern Orthodox tradition as well. A Global conception of Christianity has been on the rise for half a century, and this informs the eurochristian support of the recognition of ayahuasca religions in the U.S., much of which is tied to liberal politics of recognition.

With respect to the "recognized" ayahuasca religions from Brazil – Santo Daime (including *ubandaime*), Barquinha, and the União do Vegetal (UDV) – all of them are avowedly Christian with a Christological theological domination, despite the copresencing at times of *orixás* and spirits of *indios* and *caboclos*. In other words, hybridity exists. The issue, however, is attending to asymmetrical forms of power over time and the persistence of eurochristian religious poetics. In the U.S., eurochristian support played a significant role in Supreme Court cases "recognizing" and

⁴¹⁸ Martin Marty, *October 31, 1517: Martin Luther and the Day that Changed the World* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2016).

“legitimizing” ayahuasca religion and in granting religious exemptions for the use of entheogens like ayahuasca as sacrament. As Charles Hayes notes with respect to the Supreme Court decision on the UDV church’s use of ayahuasca:

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Association of Evangelicals defended the UDV’s case for religious freedom, prompting psychedelic researcher and UCLA professor Charles Grob, an expert witness at the hearing, to notice that “religious rights can apparently trump the Drug War.”⁴¹⁹

With respect to Indigenous Peoples, this is a truly interesting statement. So long as a church’s theology is avowedly Christian, the very status of Christianity can exempt a group and its sacrament from Drug War politics. Ayahuasca gets support from both Protestants and Catholics beneath an overarching value of religious freedom, but the very idea of ‘religion’ within that conception, as I noted previously, is always already framed within eurochristian religious poetics.

In recent years, two religious groups from Brazil – the União do Vegetal (UDV) and Santo Daime churches – received religious “exemptions” for using ayahuasca as sacrament from the United States government, following a 2006 Supreme Court in favor of UDV.⁴²⁰ At the same time, as Kenneth Tupper among others has recently noted, the definition of “drug” has much fluidity, even outside of overtly religious contexts in the

⁴¹⁹ Charles Hayes, “Can Science Validate the Psychedelic Experience?” *Tikkun* 22, no. 2 (2007): 66-67.

⁴²⁰ Centro Espírita Benfícete União do Vegetal in the United States, “Supreme Court Case,” *udvusa.org*, accessed May 6, 2020, <http://udvusa.org/supreme-court-case/>

diaspora of ayahuasca.⁴²¹ Despite “exemptions” and reflective rhetorical stances such as, “it depends on what you mean by ‘drug,’” it is especially important that we *not* separate the plight that ayahuasca faces from the historical context of Drug War rhetoric and its devastating effects. The reason being that the very rhetoric supporting the War on Drugs, and indeed drug scheduling itself, is entrenched within largely European and Christian attitudes about substance abuse rooted in an allergy to “wildness” and “savagery.” In this sense, the discursive iterations and controversies surrounding ayahuasca use and control must be situated within a broader history of eurochristian-supported efforts at colonization and control of the land, plants, animals, and peoples, of what they saw as the “New World.”

In the global context, conservative Christian discourse is in the process of disavowing the Doctrine of Discovery and simultaneously using that disavowal as a way to make them appear to morally acknowledge the plights of Indigenous Peoples during eurochristian colonization. Yet they continue to evidence the deeper framing of eurochristian poetics by advancing “civilization” rhetoric. Narcissistic persecution narratives are pervasive in this rhetoric, such as claiming that Christians are “not allowed to be Christians anymore” due to “political correctness.” In embracing multiculturalist rhetoric, these groups seek to evidence that they have shed racism historically present in conservative Protestant resistance to civil rights liberalism, yet they still clearly privilege a “civilization” narrative. This “hybrid” attitude shows up importantly in the recent

⁴²¹ Kenneth Tupper, “Is Ayahuasca a ‘Drug’?” *Chacruna*, August 28, 2019 <https://chacruna.net/is-ayahuasca-a-drug/>.

release of *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*, which presents itself as implicitly authoritative because it is collaborative effort between Native American and Korean Christians – Mark Charles (Diné) and Soong-Chan Rah. This book interestingly provides a rejection of the Doctrine of Discovery framed for conservative Christians that nevertheless continues to express eurochristian religious poetics.

While on a whole, I agree with the sentiment of any book denouncing the Doctrine of Discovery, as a scholarly work, *Unsettling Truths* is severely limited. For example, it is unapologetically apologetic for Christianity at the expense of Indigenous Peoples' traditions, though of course one of the authors self-identifies as Diné. My analysis of deep framing explicitly denies such authenticity-claims based on identity ascriptions. Deep framing is not about what we “say” we are; it is about transgenerational thought-patterns that coordinate a frame for making sense of the world through our neural pathways. It is not just ideology, it is physical, as Lakoff's work attests.

As a whole, the authors of *Unsettling Truths* would rather try to recover a “lost” concept of New Testament Gospel than say anything about the persistence of Native traditions. Both authors buy into a transnational eurochristian impulse, dismiss through occlusion some of the most powerful scholarship on Doctrine of Discovery, including Vine Deloria, Tink Tinker and Robert A. Williams, Jr. While they very lightly cite (indeed, through borderline plagiarism) Newcomb's use of Lakoff and Idealized Cognitive Models, they totally ignore Tinker's important essay, “Why I Do Not Believe

in a Creator God.” Instead, they fully embrace a “Creator God” who is entirely androcentric while reserving “nature praise” for the sunrise instead of anything challenging that eurochristian androcentrism.⁴²² More egregiously, they do not acknowledge Vine Deloria’s powerful 1972 “Open Letter to the Heads of the Christian Churches in America,” which first drew wide attention to the Doctrine of Discovery:

Christianity once had a message of the dignity of man. And this is my final question to you. At what point can we as peoples of the creation look to Christianity to demand from the political structures of the world our dignity as human beings? At what point can we become men and not mere appendages of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery?⁴²³

Although also framed in androcentric terms, Deloria was appealing to Christian humanism in his letter. On the whole, however, Deloria was rejecting precisely the kind of Christianity advanced by the authors of *Unsettling Truths*:

Rather than attempt to graft a contemporary ecological concern onto basic Christian doctrines and avoid blame for the current planetary disaster, Christians would be well advised to surrender many of their doctrines and come to grips with to lands now occupied. To admit that certain lands will create divergent beliefs and practices and to change and accommodate to those realities is certainly preferable to extinction. The problem of relating to a place’s spirit or alternatively bringing a spiritual reality to a particular place is yet to be understood in the sphere of religious thought. The fundamental element of religion is an intimate relationship with the land on which the religion is practiced should be a major premise of future theological concern.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Mark Charles (Diné) and Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: 2019), 6.

⁴²³ Vine Deloria, Jr. “An Open Letter to the Heads of the Christian Churches in America,” *For This Land* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 82-83.

⁴²⁴ Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion: 30th Anniversary Edition* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2003), 273.

Deterritorialized global religion is anathema to Deloria. Even if he employs the term ‘religion’, it is clear that his sensibility lies in exactly the practices that John Wesley Powell said in 1880 must be destroyed. Although critical of the Doctrine of Discovery, the fact that *Unsettling Truths* distances itself from the most powerful anticolonial Indigenous voices evidences how strong eurochristian religious poetics of civilization and sacrifice can be against the surface embracing of multiculturalism and post-race attitudes.

While *Unsettling Truths* rightly critiques American exceptionalism and cites Robert J. Miller, it also completely ignores as a whole the transnational impulses of Doctrine of Discovery because it implicitly relies on those very impulses in its adherence to universalized eurochristian notions. The authors are obsequious to events well-known Western history that have little to do with actual Indigenous perspectives in the U.S. or internationally. Like Dreher’s *Benedict Option* and Kidd’s *Who is an Evangelical?* they denounce Donald Trump to appear politically progressive.⁴²⁵ This move indicates a blended Christian perspective through evangelicals and conservative Catholics. That global Christian perspective seems more important to the agenda the authors advance than anything explicitly Native American, and it actively ignores all efforts of survivance by Indigenous scholars, including Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk), Glen Sean Coulthard (Yellow Knives Dene), and Barbara Mann (Seneca).

⁴²⁵ Mark Charles (Diné) and Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: 2019), 31.

Thus, as a whole, *Unsettling Truths* has little to say about anything Indigenous, even if it rejects the Doctrine of Discovery. Instead, the scholarship is surface-level, glossing well-known moments in Anglo-American political history and appearing “safe,” while ignoring the most important aspects of Indigenous history such as genocide, forced assimilation, and attempts at termination of sovereign status. The book is widely interspersed with largely New Testament citations. With respect to the Pentateuch, the authors present God as a “relational being” whose relationship is damaged by human “sin,” disrupting the “image” of God in Genesis 1:27. Yet there is no discussion of 1:28, which Newcomb and Tinker cite as evidence of the hierarchical ICM of man over nature, and which scholars of genocide also cite as problematic. *Unsettling Truths*’ treatment of the Pentateuch emphasizes messianic relationships through a New Testament reading that will bring a new message, where Jesus is going to redefine concepts of Promised Land.⁴²⁶

Advocating for aspects of Christianity prefiguring Emperor Constantine’s embrace, Charles and Rah claim that martyrdom used to oppose Empire, but that has been lost through contemporary Christians’ alliance with rightwing U.S. politics.⁴²⁷ In their reading, Augustine’s just war theory was anti-Christian, arguing that it went against Jesus who went to his death willingly, but this still evidences a poetics of sacrifice.⁴²⁸ Drawing on the efforts of Eusebius, Constantine, and Christendom more broadly, they

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 62.

argue that such movements imbue Christ with the “prostitution of Christendom.”⁴²⁹ They correctly point to a shared eurochristian imaginary between the United States and Benjamin Netanyahu’s Israel: “The United States needs Israel’s Old Testament legacy of promised lands to justify the history of enslavement of African people and ethnic cleansing and genocide of Native people.”⁴³⁰ For them, American Exceptionalism, embraced by both democrats and republicans, reveals America’s corruption of Christianity and underwrites Donald Trump’s slogan the “Make America Great Again.”⁴³¹ Thus, a more globalized conception of Christianity is at work. They then make an interesting move to mass incarceration rates appropriate for progressive politics and race but less directly relevant to Native peoples, because their discussion frames itself within a narrow view of the United States’ legacy of slavery, where they only address African Americans and not Natives impacted by the injustice.⁴³² But what about forced citizenship and termination policies? The authors have nothing to say about attempts to erase Indigenous Peoples by assimilating them into nationalistic discourse or Christian theology.

Many of the connections to foreign policy Charles and Rah point out have been made previously and more accurately by Native Maerican writers such as Winona

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 66-69.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 73.

⁴³¹ Ibid., 78.

⁴³² Ibid., 92.

LaDuke (Ojibwe, White Earth), but they do not cite these sources.⁴³³ In an interesting twist, they read legal abortion as “furthering colonialism” and the Doctrine of Discovery, but this is itself a coopting of the discourse for their conservative Christian agendas.⁴³⁴ As Native scholars like Nick Estes (Lower Brule Sioux) have pointed out, at times Native women killed their own children rather than have them stolen to be forcibly Christianized in boarding schools, and white men often used Native women’s bodies to impregnate and thus legitimate their settler status. This is echoed throughout both South American and North American contexts. All of this persists in current statistics of extreme sexual violence against Native women.⁴³⁵ The anti-abortion sentiment proves itself as incapable of actually addressing Indigenous Peoples’ needs or their histories, yet the authors claim that they are “resisting” a colonizing impulse among “liberal” Christians. Thus, they reframe a debate between liberal and conservative Christians as central, highlighting an entirely eurochristian drama that has little to do with Indigenous Peoples. In doing so, they appeal to arguments based on “human dignity” framed narrowly within a eurochristian tradition, rejecting what Weheliye has termed *Habeas Viscus* for those excluded from processes of rights-based liberalism. In Weheliye’s analysis, Indigenous Peoples and others left out of “full humanity.” As such, they become content for a

⁴³³ See Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005).

⁴³⁴ Mark Charles (Diné) and Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: 2019), 94.

⁴³⁵ Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (New York: Verso, 2019), 80-85.

eurochristian rhetorical agenda based on a poetics of sacrifice. Thus, in attempting to “decolonize,” Charles and Rah continue to enact Indigenous erasure.

Attention to Indigenous scholars’ theories and the long history remains crucial for understanding the context of the United States and ayahuasca’s increased use because it is not a matter of picking and choosing what parts of Christianity are legitimate, nor is it a fundamentalist-inspired reimagining of what “true” Christianity was prior to Constantine. Viewing eurochristianity as a persistent social movement that is both Catholic and Protestant is evidenced partly by an increasing blend between the two large movements in the early twenty-first century and partly because avowedly Christian authors – whether they identify as Indigenous or not – tend to prioritize their Christian message while downplaying or even continuing to erase Indigenous practices and their ways of being.

That hybrid forms and cross-influences exist, and to be sure, plenty of contemporary Indigenous People like Mark Charles self-identify as Christian, does not deter us from the fact that eurochristian religious poetics continue to underwrite the genocide of Indigenous Peoples throughout Turtle Island. Moreover, we need to attend to the deep framing rather than identity constructions. Oftentimes, sectarian conflict – like left-right political metaphors – work to stage a dialectic in which Indigenous People continue to be erased. The argumentative frame of what “true” Christianity is merely keeps the discussion eurochristian-centric. The emphasis on the *social movement* and not religious identification remains necessary, as does the long history.

Ayahuasca Religious Rhetoric in the Globalized, Diasporic Context

With respect to ayahuasca's religious diaspora, we also need to be attentive to the globalized eurochristian impulses that blur the lines between Protestant and Catholic categories in favor of reinvigorated evangelical impulses toward "civilization" because the drama of ayahuasca's diaspora is embedded within this longer process of colonization. Covering multiple ayahuasca groups in the U.S. who attempt to draw on the Native American Church's (NAC) exemption for peyote use, Feeney *et al.* write:

ayahuasca churches in the United States identifying as branches of the "Native American Church" can be seen as both appropriating the NAC name as well as attempting to exploit the special protections provided to members of the NAC. The basis for claiming the NAC title appears to be grounded upon two key, but misguided beliefs: (1) that the specific exemption for NAC ceremonial peyote use extends to other sacraments designated as controlled substances in the United States and (2) that anyone can start, lead, or be a member of a NAC branch. Another apparent justification for the creation of simulated Native American Church branches is the questionable belief that individuals are justified in appropriating the NAC title due to perceived unfairness of Native Americans being granted certain rights that are denied to non-Natives. And a variation on this belief, equally disputable, is that many people feel justified in using any and all mechanisms to legitimize their practices due to a perception that US drug laws themselves are either unfair or unjust.⁴³⁶

Feeney *et al.* point out that, following the UDV's success with the Supreme Court, the DEA published guidelines for Controlled Substance Act exemption based on religious belief. The DEA's guidelines state:

A petition may include both a written statement and supporting documents. A petitioner should provide as much information as he/she deems necessary to demonstrate that application of the Controlled Substances Act to the party's activity would (1) be a substantial burden on (2) his/her sincere (3) religious exercise. Such a record should include detailed information about, among other

⁴³⁶ Kevin Feeney, Beatriz Caiuby Labate, and J. Hamilton Hudson, "Bubbling with Controversy: Legal Challenges for Ceremonial Ayahuasca Circles in the United States," *Plant Medicines, Healing and Psychedelic Science*, edited by Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018): 93.

things, (1) the nature of the religion {e.g., its history, belief system, structure, practice, membership policies, rituals, holidays, organization, leadership, etc.}; (2) each specific religious practice that involves the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, importation, exportation, use or possession of a controlled substance; (3) the specific controlled substance that the party wishes to use; and (4) the amounts, conditions, and locations of its anticipated manufacture, distribution, dispensing, importation, exportation, use or possession. A petitioner is not limited to the topics outlined above, and may submit any and all information he/she believes to be relevant to DEA's determination under RFRA and the Controlled Substances Act.⁴³⁷

In attempting to fulfill these guidelines, the various groups use *ad hoc* notions of “hybridity” to justify their petitions. For example, Ayahuasca Healings (discussed in my previous chapter) claim their beliefs are “directly from shamanic, animist religions of the Amazon Rainforest and elements of other belief systems, most prominently Christianity.”⁴³⁸ Here the efforts to establish a *bona fide* religion in the eyes of a government agency accomplish the decontextualizing work of eurochristian poetics because, framed within a legal system that employs the Doctrine of Discovery to suppress Native practices, non-Natives claiming Native legal status look to that system’s authority to exploit and undermine the so-called “privileges” of exemption. As I detail in chapter six, such attempts completely misconstrue federal Indian law and broader U.S. law following the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993) and the Native American Graves Repatriation Act (1990). Here it is enough to say that the legal processes and the efforts by ayahuasca-using groups inadvertently work toward Indigenous erasure. Behind all of it is the Doctrine of Discovery.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 102.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 104.

Part of the rhetorical problem relies on underlying theories of religion. Resistance to the process must be a resistance to rhetoric of *static transcendence*. Despite drug scheduling, the ingestion of ayahuasca ought to be no more and *no less* sacred than the ingestion of coffee, tobacco, chocolate, tomatoes, potatoes, or maize – all of these “new world” substances were decontextualized and commodified through eurochristian transcendence.

What eurochristians deem “sacred,” meaning “set aside” needs to be replaced by *contextualized* practices within Indigenous deep frames, but such efforts must be led by Indigenous Peoples working in those frames. Yet even for eurochristians, what remains necessary is resisting that transcendence rhetoric itself. This could perhaps arise in localized, nuanced recipes for various versions of what people call ‘ayahuasca’, for example. More than that, however, we need to be able to see how decontextualization feeds a hoary, exotic romance that is entirely aestheticized as a desire for *ek-stasis*. Within eurochristian religious poetics, the aesthetics of transcendence and sacrifice carry within them a desire for the co-optation and annihilation of Indigenous Peoples. We are not simply talking about external violence here. Rather, it is a process of thinking enframing and fueling a eurochristian social movement. The aesthetics of transcendence are entirely hostile to Vizenor’s aesthetics of Survivance.

This desire for *ek-stasis* among eurochristians interested in ayahuasca as an entheogen is not merely *intended* by those who seek spiritual fulfillment. It is a part of the poetics of a rhetoric of transcendence. Intention is embedded in deep framing. Most of the time, imperception of the deep layers of that desire is exactly the mask of

euroformation that has already imaginatively erased Indigenous Peoples existence. They might see an Indigenous individual as a “person” but their gaze is an extraction, just as oil and rubber have been extracted from the Amazon. It is an expropriating, colonizing gaze.

It is also entirely understandable that over many years there have been self-conscious eurochristians who have sought to *reject* historic injustices by seeking different spiritual paths. Eurochristian colonists brought with them intense amounts of trauma from religious wars in Europe that is intergenerationally carried-over. In fact, the end of the *Unsettling Truths* book turns toward addressing the unacknowledged and persistent trauma affecting settler-colonial perpetrators. In doing so, it parallels the claims made by ayahuasca churches seeking religious exemptions above, as well as Alexander Dawson’s condemnation of the racial absurdities surrounding peyote consumption. For both the conservative Christians who believe they are rejecting American exceptionalism and the Doctrine of Discovery as well as the ayahuasca churches, the focus on “healing” the eurochristians comes at the expense of and Indigenous-focused discussion and thus re-instantiates a eurochristian frame by making it about eurochristian individuals.

Liberalized versions of *Homo renatus* saturate discourse on the spiritually-enhancing use of various substances outside of explicitly religious rhetoric as well.

Non-Religious Psychedelic Advocacy

Oftentimes, when western seekers *seek* the “ecstatic” they *understandably* seek release from the horror-trauma of eurochristian existence; but unfortunately, most of the

time they do it at the expense of others for their personal “spiritual” fulfillment and thus merely re-instantiate the existing problem by re-framing it as “self-work.” As Deloria’s words remind us, there are real contextual differences for Indigenous Peoples. In therapeutic contexts, therapists seek to establish the use of psychedelics to deal with trauma – whether it be ayahuasca, LSD, psilocybin, or MDMA – an awareness of this history becomes an ethical necessity. Recent books such as William A. Richards’ *Sacred Knowledge*, based on his work with psychedelic treatment at Johns Hopkins University evidence impulses to treat substances as achieving universalized “spiritual significance.”⁴³⁹ Yet psychedelics ought not be presented as agents of post-race utopias while ayahuasca’s home and the beings around it are under assault from regimes informed directly by the persistence of eurochristian religious poetics in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Popular discourse on psychedelics, as well as recent programs in palliative care, naturally blend discourse on spirituality and psychedelic substances, just as Leary *et al.* framed their manual, *The Psychedelic Experience*, on the theosophically-influenced translation of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. One also frequently finds pithy, popular science articles relating DMT to the experience of death and dying, as well as dreams, with catchy headlines such as “The Psychedelic Drug That Could

⁴³⁹ William A. Richards, *Sacred Knowledge: Psychedelics and Religious Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

Explain Our Belief in Life After Death.”⁴⁴⁰ In aggregation, such articles not only pique human curiosity but aid in destigmatizing research from an older aesthetic notion of the marvelous or ecstatic. Such normalizing can be helpful. But again, what happens when one’s own spiritual exploration comes with the decontextualization and at times exploitation of Indigenous cultures and traditions, even when an individual intends no harm to these groups?

In liberal transnational contexts, we constantly run into the problem of individualism, which is a result of both eurochristian and liberal political formations. Spiritual-seeking, as Leary’s exploits attest, become a matter of *rights* and *freedom*. These impulses underwrite the recent decriminalizing efforts for marihuana and psilocybin or “magic” mushrooms in some U.S. cities. In such rights-based arguments, there are often appeals to human use of consciousness-altering substances since before recorded history and the naturally-occurring existence of these substances in plants. “Shamanism” here, as with the Ayahuasca Healings group’s petition, operates as a terministic screen within an already eurochristian logological network. Likewise, tensions between ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ are in this context implicitly arguments about nature and how humans interact with or reveal themselves to also be a part of nature. Indeed, one of the most compelling aspects of ayahuasca discourse could be its inherent ability to push us beyond androcentric conceptions of being, but the problem is that when

⁴⁴⁰ Caroline Christie, “The Psychedelic Drug That Could Explain Our Belief in Life After Death,” *Little Atoms*, accessed August 31, 2019, <http://littleatoms.com/science/psychedelic-drug-could-explain-our-belief-life-after-death>.

we do so, those enculturated within eurochristian frames almost immediately conflate the “beyond human” with the “spiritual” while downplaying our own androcentrism. We may have an ecstatic experience, but little is changed structurally upon re-entry from that experience if we cannot address the deeply framed eurochristian religious poetics.

With respect to the very different *physical* effects produced in human bodies, regardless of whether or not one names their aggregative experience as “spiritual,” one would be entirely correct to make distinctions between DMT (ayahuasca) and other controlled substances, such as heroin or methamphetamines. They indeed produce different effects. Yet in recent years, The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has embraced better assessments than the drug schedules produced in the early 1970s during U.S. President Nixon’s escalation of a War on Drugs. Such efforts follow the work of David Nutt, *et al.*⁴⁴¹ As the office repeats in its *World Drug Report 2017* “Executive Summary,” “People who inject drugs (PWID) face some of the most severe health consequences associated with drug use. Almost 12 million people worldwide inject drugs, of whom one in eight (1.6 million) are living with HIV and more than half (6.1 million) are living with hepatitis C.”⁴⁴² In accordance with Nutt *et al.* heroin use, for example, is more than twice as likely to produce physical harm, dependency, and social

⁴⁴¹ David Nutt, Leslie A. King, William Saulsbury, Colin Blakemore. “Development of a Rational Scale to Assess the Harm of Drugs of Potential Misuse,” *The Lancet Health Policy* 369, no. 9566, (March 24, 2007): 1047-1053. DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(07\)60464-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(07)60464-4).

⁴⁴² United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2017 Book 1: Executive Summary* (Vienna: United Nations, 2017), 11. https://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/field/Booklet_1_EXSUM.pdf.

harm when compared to psychedelics like LSD.⁴⁴³ These results importantly provide good evidence for decriminalization of psychedelics. There is, on one level, good reason to distinguish between psychedelics and the variety of substances contributing to current opioid abuse epidemics. Moreover, research regarding ayahuasca's therapeutic potential often supports its ability to treat people addicted to other controlled substances, and the body of evidence grows every year. Religious rhetoric, however, is still a problem.

It should not be difficult for the average reader to understand that a great deal of anti-drug rhetoric has been espoused by religious organizations, nor is it a secret in the twenty-first century that consciousness-altering substances have been employed by humans since prehistoric times. Yes, substances have been used in ceremonial and collective settings that we might refer off-handedly to as "religious," despite any debates on the historical uses of ayahuasca among Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, religious organizations have often attempted to "heal" people from their substance uses and abuses. Appeals to "archaic revivals" among "neo-shamanic" movements here operate within a largely contemporary, liberal and rights-based social imaginary borne out of eurochristian deep framing.⁴⁴⁴ That imaginary has long-inherited the idea that

⁴⁴³ DMT is not listed specifically in their article but very similar to LSD in this regard. See Nutt, *et al.*, 1051.

⁴⁴⁴ And to be sure, substance abuse claims made by Christian groups appealing to biblical sources are largely reactions to nineteenth-century debates concerning liberalism and temperance movements. Like the development of fundamentalism, they are an entirely modern phenomenon and entrenched in political-theological positions in the U.S. and Europe.

modern, “civilized” people are alienated from a state of nature, as I contextualized in the previous chapter.

While some of my readers may be familiar with such language of alienation from Karl Marx’s conception of religion as the “opiate of the masses,” in this analysis, Marx himself was merely expressing a eurochristian framing. Whatever Marx’s feelings about religion were, his thought is already steeped within eurochristian temporal framing. Twentieth-century liberation theology evidences integration of Marxian concepts with eurochristian impulses. Against liberal and conservative Christian rhetoric about “Godless Communism,” left-right framing continues to promote eurochristian religious poetics. Drug War rhetoric fueled Cold War thinking about an “infectious” spread of Communism, justifying colonizing efforts in South America in terms of an ongoing need for “civilizing” missions.

Illicit drug markets are zones generative of and reconstituted by a host of disciplining processes that Michel Foucault articulated in *Discipline and Punish* as ‘power/knowledge’. His book was tellingly written during the years of Nixon’s escalation of Drug War rhetoric⁴⁴⁵ that initiated the mass incarceration resulting from

⁴⁴⁵ Despite Foucault’s broad importance as a scholar, his actions during this period have been criticized in ways directly relevant to my project, particularly that in his attempt to write a “history of the present,” some of his contemporary African American colleagues’ critiques of the prison system receive little or no mention. Moreover, in *Habeas Viscus*, Alexander Weheliye has noted:

Yet despite locating the naissance of modern racism in “colonization, or in other words, with colonial genocide” (*Society [Must Be Defended]*, 257), for Foucault, in a reversal of colonial modernity’s teleology that locates the temporal origin of all things in the west, racism only attains relevance once it penetrates the borders of fortress Europe. Even though the originating leap of racism can be found in the

drug criminalization.⁴⁴⁶ As important as it is to understand that the “modern,” liberal subject is artificial, that is, a *poetic* creation (*Homo faber*) of a political economy interested in regulating individualized rights, it is just as important to understand that no matter how fictional that subject is, even the recognition of its fictional or imaginary qualities will not dispel its real historical presence and the various effects produced by that presence. Liberalism in its contemporary form mechanically masks both the fact that the political subject is a poetic phantasy and that the historical rupture necessary to found that subject occurs as process of *naturalization*.

Put briefly, there is little that is “natural” about liberalism, but like any ideology it benefits from a belief that it is naturalized so that it may not be put in question as a mechanism of political organization or, in other words, a regulation of power and force.

Ayahuasca, and the plants and practices associated with it, was part of that “new” world, a “world” that existed in the face of Europeans who were working very hard to

colonized “rest,” only its biopolitical rearticulation in the west imbues it with the magical aura of conceptual value.

Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 57.

⁴⁴⁶ Foucault writes:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977), 194.

intellectually alienate themselves from “nature,” even as they projected its Christian codex or “book” form onto the “natural world” to decipher their latest interpretation of God as an author. Liberalism as a political economy grew out of these metaphysical interpretations and particularly Christian theological ideas about nature. Indigenous writers, such as Barbara Alice Mann, have likewise referred to this process as “Euro-forming, in which “universalist” and “archetypal” readings create facile readings based on analogy.⁴⁴⁷ Countering universalizing and decontextualizing perpetuations of eurochristian religious poetics, we might attend to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s reformulation of equivocation.

The Analytical Necessity for Equivocation and Non-Androcentric Worldview

In efforts to maintain Survivance, decolonize, and recover from eurochristian domination, Indigenous Peoples constantly have to reject the metaphysics imposed on them over more than five hundred years of eurochristian colonization, a schema in which their very existence posed deep political-theological problems. While strictly speaking, both communism and capitalism share the political-economic roots of my characterization of liberalism above, it is true that an especially anglophone attention to liberalism dating from the late eighteenth-century developed a different philosophical take than Marx and those claiming lineage to his thought in the later nineteenth and

⁴⁴⁷ Barbara Mann, *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 62.

twentieth centuries. Still, for my purposes, both “communism” and “capitalism” operate within a eurochristian frame, despite the fact that indigenous writers such as Rigoberta Menchú (Mayan),⁴⁴⁸ Nick Estes (Lower Brule Sioux),⁴⁴⁹ and Glen Sean Coulthard (Yellow Knives Dene)⁴⁵⁰ have employed their own Marxian-influenced concepts hybridized with their respective Native traditions. Communism in Central and South America, with its implicit allegiances to eurochristian universalism, has wreaked genocidal havoc just as liberally-imposed capitalism has. More importantly, it is the dialectical tension that reproduces the drama of the poetics of sacrifice that participates in the erasure of Indigenous Peoples.

For Indigenous Peoples, whether it be the Shining Path in Peru or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the universalizing tendencies that make one a communist subject first, or a “citizen,” can only be partially liberating from colonial oppression. It is within the drama of this context that we ought to situate both ayahuasca and “shamanism,” as universalized notions of shamanism merely extend a eurochristian poetics.

As Marisol De La Cadena describes poignantly for the *runakuna* of Peru, the speakers of Quechua from whom we get the name ‘ayahuasca’ or “vine of the dead / soul,” imposed citizenship from communist politics was an improvement for those deemed *indio*, and like many regions of South America, the persistence of economic class

⁴⁴⁸ Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú* (New York: Verso, 1984).

⁴⁴⁹ Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (New York: Verso, 2019).

⁴⁵⁰ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

hierarchies tempt many *indi@s*, *cabocl@s*, and *campesin@s* to reject indigeneity for class mobility. Such practical decisions are lost on the colonial romances that many white northerners impose onto the “naturalness” of ayahuasca and the mysterious Amazon.

Responding to Bruno Latour, Carl Schmitt, and Chantal Mouffe, de la Cadena writes:

notwithstanding the differences that sparked liberalism and socialism in the nineteenth century, both groups (in all their variants) continue to converge on the ontological distinction between humanity and nature that was foundational to the birth of the modern political field.

Modern politics required more than divisions among humans – for example, friends and enemies, according to Carl Schmitt (1996), or adversaries if we follow Chantal Mouffe.⁴⁵¹

Despite the emergence of political possibilities following the recent “pink tide” of less violent leftism in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia that gave space to indigenous leaders borne out of the resistance of *rondas campesinas* to groups like Shining Path, the forces of neoliberalism and persistent colonialism reveal the limits to which political leaders can act with respect to indigenous ways of being.

As De La Cadena’s analyses of these highland people evidences, the presence of “earth-beings” / *huacas* directly conflicts with the androcentricism of the political-economic forms imposed by eurochristian metaphysics. Her analysis covers specifically two generations of *runakuna* and specically two men who were employed as emissaries to the United States’ National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

With respect to the political situation in South America, De La Cadena writes, “Not even if he wanted to, could [Bolivian] President Evo Morales lend support to such a

⁴⁵¹ Marisol De La Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 93

[traditionally Indigenous] presence without risking his credibility as a legitimate politician.”⁴⁵² Such is the situation for even an Indigenous president in a nation named for the liberalizing efforts of Simón Bolívar, just as the “Bolivarian dream” is a precursor to the “pink tide.”

Still, Indigenous-led resistance movements have persisted in South America since first contact with Europeans. Kenneth Mills highlights the early intersection of resistance and dynamism necessary to confront colonization persist centuries later, just as Viveiros de Castro’s descriptions of the “backsliding” Indian attest. As Garavaglia notes, prophetically-inspired Indigenous resistance movements began within the first fifty years of contact in South America.⁴⁵³ Today, Amazonian ayahuasca mythologies, as Madera noted above, are capable of incorporating and reframing Christianity to serve their own deep framing, exhibiting a Survivance ICM.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has articulated scholarly terminology for thinking about Indigenous deep framing or “worldview” with the term ‘Amerindian perspectivism’. Of course, the necessity for such an analysis is because most of these scholars are *not* Indigenous and discursively caught up in the colonial romance of the “disappeared” Indian. Viveiros de Castro says:

I use “perspectivism” as a label for a set of ideas and practices found throughout indigenous America and to which I shall refer, for simplicity’s sake, as though it

⁴⁵² Ibid., 89.

⁴⁵³ Juan Carlos Garavaglia, “The Crisis and Transformation of Invaded Societies: The La Plata Basin (1535-1650),” *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas, Volume III: South America, Part 2*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 16.

were a cosmology. This cosmology imagines a universe peopled by different types of subjective agencies, human as well as nonhuman, each endowed with the same generic type of soul, that is, the same set of cognitive and volitional capacities. The possession of a similar soul implies the possession of similar concepts, which determine that all subjects see things in the same way. In particular, individuals of the same species see each other (and each other only) as humans see themselves, that is, as beings endowed with a human figure and habits, seeing their bodily and behavioral aspects in the form of human culture. What changes when passing from one species of subject to another is the “objective correlative,” the referent of these concepts: what jaguars see as “manioc beer” (the proper drink of people, jaguar-type or otherwise), humans see as “blood.” Where we see a muddy salt-lick on a river-bank, tapirs see their big ceremonial house, and so on.⁴⁵⁴

Especially important to such framing is an idea of personhood that is not specifically androcentric. Rather than study “representations,” “categories” or “the so-called ‘indigenous knowledge’ that is currently the focus of so much attention in the global market of representations,” Viveiros de Castro says his “objects are indigenous *concepts*, the worlds they constitute (worlds that thus express *them*), the virtual background from which they emerge and which they presuppose.”⁴⁵⁵ Viveiros de Castro’s terminology compliments the analyses of Tinker and Newcomb with respect to ICMs.

Much of what Viveiros de Castro argues is congruently seconded by Eduardo Kohn’s semiotic focus on Quichua language in *How Forests Think*, which argues “that

⁴⁵⁴ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation,” *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds* (Chicago: Hau Books, 2015), 58.

⁴⁵⁵ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “The Relative Native,” *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds*, trans. Martin Holbraad and David Rodgers (Chicago: Hau Books, 2015), 19.

we are colonized by certain ways of thinking about relationality,”⁴⁵⁶ yet eurochristian androcentrism prevents us from seeing that “signs are not exclusively human affairs.”⁴⁵⁷ Drawing heavily on Viveiros de Castro’s work, Kohn’s analysis describes in detail the interspecies communications present throughout Amazonian and highland Indigenous uses of ayahuasca. The Quechua term ‘*runa*’ means ‘human persons’, but it is not specific to *Homo sapiens*: “Runa animism grows out of a need to interact with semiotic selves qua selves in all their diversity. It is grounded in an ontological fact: there exist other kinds of thinking selves beyond the human.”⁴⁵⁸ Echoing Viveiros de Castro, Kohn notes “two interlocking assumptions”: “First, all sentient beings, be they spirit, animal, or human, see themselves as persons. That is, their subjective worldview is identical to the ways the Runa see themselves. Second, although these beings see themselves as persons, the ways in which they are seen by other beings depends on the kinds of beings observing and being observed.”⁴⁵⁹ “Shamans,” in this specific context have special interspecies techniques, such as the ability to steal “souls.” They are not necessarily beneficent “healers.”:

Shamans do not only potentially steal the souls of hunters, they can also steal the souls of the aya [wandering ghost of the dead, corpse] huasca plants of their

⁴⁵⁶ Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 21.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

shamanic rivals with the effect that these plants become soul blind; ingesting them no longer permits privileged awareness of the actions of other souls.⁴⁶⁰

Indeed, one wonders how many ayahuasca tourists have drunken “soul blind” ayahuasca over the years.

Drinking ayahuasca does not make one a shaman, but it can facilitate transspecies communication, so hunters often have their dogs drink ayahuasca with them before going hunting: “Dogs, then, can acquire jaguarlike attributes, but jaguars can also become canine. Despite their manifest role as predators, jaguars are also subservient dogs of the spirit beings who are the masters of the animals in the forest.”⁴⁶¹ Kohn notes that dogs are often given names preferred by colonists, mirroring a historical relationship between the Runa and the Spanish: “As a link between forest and outside worlds, dogs in many ways resemble the Runa, who, as “Christian Indians,” have historically served as mediators between the urban world of the whites and the sylvan one of the Auca, or non-Christian “unconquered” indigenous peoples.”⁴⁶² Kohn notes: “Until approximately the 1950s the Runa were actually enlisted by powerful estate owners – ironically, like the mastiffs of the Spanish conquest used to hunt down Runa forbears – to help them track down and attach Huaorani settlements.”⁴⁶³ In broader Spanish usage “runa” means “mongrel dog,” yet in Quichua it means “person,” but that “person” is not necessarily

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 117.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁶² Ibid. 139.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

“species-specific.” Thus, the hierarchy imposed by “civilized versus sylvan” is undone by the perspectivism inherent to a deeper ICM.

With respect to the issue of “shamanism,” in present-day Peru, Marisol de la Cadena has effectively tracked the updating of the same colonial tactics that Mills describes during the 17th and 18th centuries within neoliberal politics through current forms of *indigenismo*. De la Cadena employs Viveiros de Castro’s thinking in her work with *runakuna* (Quechua speaking) people in Peru, particularly his concept of the rhetorical term ‘equivocation’. As De La Cadena says, “equivocations are a type of communicative disjuncture in which, while using the same words, interlocutors are not talking about the same thing and do not know this.”⁴⁶⁴ In Western law and formal logic, equivocation is a fallacy wherein a term gets used with different meanings in the context of an argument. In Viveiros de Castro’s conception, equivocation allows for a proximal distance to be maintained between eurochristians and Indigenous Peoples. It acknowledges that while the same words might be used, the deeply framed perspectives may be entirely different. As De La Cadena notes, for Viveiros de Castro, “equivocations cannot be canceled,” but they can be “controlled,” and following Marilyn Strathern: “Translation as equivocation carries a talent to maintain divergences among perspectives proposed from worlds partially connected in communication.”⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴ Marisol De La Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 27.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

Such a conception of ‘equivocation’ is especially useful in encountering the various ways terms such as ‘ayahuasca’, ‘religion’, ‘shamanism’, ‘drug’, ‘healing’, ‘medicine’, and ‘decolonization’ work between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. For example, De La Cadena’s work follows a father and son, Mariano and Nazario Turpo, through the engagement in local and national contexts in Peru, as well as Nazario’s employment by The National Museum of the American Indian for its Quechua installation. De La Cadena notes a particular generational difference between father and son:

By identifying himself as a *chamán* – still a neologism in Pacchanta during the years of my fieldwork, and a word that Mariano would not have used to identify his own practices – Nazario protected himself from the potential dangers of the other names that his practice could receive: *Paqu, layqa, when they call you that, it is dangerous*.⁴⁶⁶

What De La Cadena witnesses is the dangerous responsibilities Mariano Turpo in particular faced as a representative of his *ayllu*⁴⁶⁷ who had to face oppression exploitation from local police who were stealing from his *runakuna* relatives during the 1950s and 1960s. Here De La Cadena translates ‘*kuna*’ added to *runa* as ‘being’, making *runakuna* something like ‘people-beings’ in contrast to *tirakuna*, or ‘earth-beings’ that eurochristians might identify as a ‘mountain’, ‘lake’, etc. Due to a political shift to the Left in the 1970s that attempted to treat all citizens as individuals, many Indigenous people were able claim the identity of “peasant” as a step up from *indio*. This of course

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 201.

⁴⁶⁷ In brief terms here, “kinship network.”

was happening in a country that simultaneously sold itself to the broader world as possessing an “Incan” spirit of *indigenismo*.

The Quechua terms above related to *chamán* could get Nazario in trouble if he was engaging in certain Native practices outside of his ayllu. But De La Cadena writes:

Listening to Nazario, I learned that being an Andean shaman (as my translation of *chamán* Andino) and being a *yachaq* is not quite the same thing – but these practices are not different either. Tourists access Andean shamans’ words and movements through several layers of translation.⁴⁶⁸

Such layers do not always offer enough protective distance, however. De La Cadena notes the disruptions using traditional practices can have for *runakuna*:

Mediated by this complex translation, tourists engage with *tirakuna* [earthbeings] that are obviously not *runakuna*’s. Yet the engagement summons earth-beings, and this can be very disquieting to them if done for futile reasons like tourism. Thus *runakuna* constantly worry about how tourism might affect in-ayllu relationship in villages where *chamanes* hail from. To avoid problems in *Pacchanta*, Nazario did not reveal much about his job as an Andean shaman. *Whether it is about coca, or a despacho that I make, I do not want to talk about it in Pacchanta. With the Auqui agency [in a nearby town], I have an obligation, that is why [I send despachos] – but here I do not say anything; they would get mad.* *Runakuna* would get mad – so angry they might blame him for any local trouble: droughts; human, animal, and plant diseases; car accidents; an increase in local crime – anything. They could even report him to the local authorities.⁴⁶⁹

This local example in Peru is both similar and different to what Natives in North America have faced as their spiritual practices became commoditized. Nazario Turpo learned to “keep his mouth shut,” yet instead of keeping silent in the face of the Spanish Inquisitors he is keeping his mouth shut among his own people and local authorities. Such are the complexities Indigenous Peoples face simultaneously against all forms of colonial and

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 201.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 202.

neocolonial powers. ‘Equivocation’ names the space of the slippages between eurochristian and Indigenous deep frames.

Among ayahuasca researchers, it is necessary to hear multiple different registers for the term ‘shaman’ or *chamán*, but diasporic discourse tends to have a mono-dimensional effect on this cypher. Many Indigenous People, whether scholars or not, despise the term for its universalizing and decontextualizing aspects, yet it is used constantly in ayahuasca discourse. Others, such as Nazario Turpo, embrace *chamán* among tourists while keeping local terminology distinct, as if he is performing distinct but not altogether unrelated work among different communities.

If we put this into a longer historical attention to the genocide of Indigenous Peoples, we can attend to the colonial drama of ayahuasca as it relates to magical “healing” in *vegetalismo* contexts. Anthropologist Silvia Mesturini Cappelletti has attempted to extend Michael Taussig’s work regarding the commodity-fetishism evident in the death-space created by the colonial vacuum which attempts to convert all Indigenous identities into “born again” Christian ones by returning to the *reducciones* introduced by Spanish colonizers:

The “reduced Indian” no longer inhabits; he survives. Day in day out, he [*sic*] is pushed to transform into a labor machine meanwhile he looks toward the forest for what has been lost. And it is there that Taussig sees the emergence of what both the colonizer and the reduced Indian will interpret as the “magic of the savage” in the coming together of a reciprocating confabulation. From both the fear of the savage and the fascination for the forest wilderness emerges the possibility of magic healing.

Ayahuasca, concurrently to the reduced Indian, comes out of the forest and becomes the magic remedy of the new mestizo way of life, the power of the forest in liquid form, the reminder of what is lost, and yet the means of countering

the power of new “savage spirits” within the newly reduced way of life of the colonized Indian.⁴⁷⁰

As the passage suggests through its paralleling the experience of the “reduced Indian” and the use of ayahuasca, the drama is not, properly speaking, Native – though it certainly addresses the colonized experiences of Indigenous Peoples. The context is largely *mestizaje*, yet Indigenous ICMs persist.

From a scholarly perspective of Indigenous Studies, and with a reminder that I myself am *not* Indigenous, this language also signals a number of alerts concerning the long history of romanticizing of Indians. For example, who is this character of “the reduced Indian”? At the same time, from the emergent *mestizaje* perspective being articulated, the passage makes sense: “this spread of ayahuasca throughout the Amazon, concurrent with its becoming “mestizo,” has functioned as a first major translation, allowing for further spreading both to parts of the new [*sic*] continent as well as to the main cities of the old continent.”⁴⁷¹

Silvia Mesturini Cappelletti is describing Luis León’s religious poetics, yet she does not rely on the border theories advanced by thinkers such as León or Gloria Anzaldúa. Even so, anyone familiar with Anzaldúa’s work will recognize some of the tensions at work in Mesturini Cappelletti’s writing:

⁴⁷⁰ Silvia Mesturini Cappelletti, “What Ayahuasca Wants: Notes for the Study and Preservation of an Entangled Ayahuasca,” *The Expanding World Ayahuasca Diaspora: Appropriation, Integration and Legislation*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (New York: Routledge, 2018), 165.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Between the impossibility of reducing complexity into universal, and often transcendental, simplifications, what we're arguing for is a relational approach, allowing for interpersonal and interspecies ways of sharing worlds and of making them, of relating with "entities" and keeping them alive.⁴⁷²

Mesturini Cappo advances the idea that instead of thinking of ayahuasca as a "recipe" but as a living entity. As she writes:

The heart of our argument focuses on decolonizing our comprehension of ayahuasca and perceiving the ways colonial thought endures through disentangling approaches to this subject that would reduce it to *mere* tourism, or *mere* indigenism, or *mere* individual healing or mysticism, or a *mere* drug, or substance, that can "function" without all those relations that "keep it alive."⁴⁷³

Apparent here is the fact that what "decolonization" means is different for different groups of people, an instance of equivocation.

This does not in any way undermine the broader impulse to "decolonize." It merely emphasizes that how we see colonization from respective positions cannot be either a reconstitution of a hegemonic colonizing force, nor can it be an isolationist identity retreat into a mystified notion of incommensurability.

Conclusion

A Global conception of Christianity has been on the rise for half a century, and this probably informed the eurochristian support of the recognition of ayahuasca religions in the U.S. Much of that public discourse on ayahuasca is tied to liberal politics of recognition. As we track ayahuasca's diaspora into international contexts, especially in

⁴⁷² Ibid., 172.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 174.

the north, we need to be aware of both the globalizing forces and the ongoing modes of survivance among Indigenous Peoples in places like the U.S. Attending to the ongoing legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery and its long history allows us to see eurochristian religious poetics in their ongoing process. Genocide, in this context ought to be viewed as processual as well. At the same time, the persistence of genocide does not mean that Indigenous ICMs are no longer present; rather, the discursive hegemony of eurochristian religious poetics must be kept in check, at least until more active disavowals of the Doctrine of Discovery can be articulated. Such disavowals are no simple matter, as I have shown with respect to evangelicals who adopt the progressive rhetoric of liberal multiculturalism while maintaining aspirations to “civilization” and conversions of all other humans to their worldview. Nor can it be a simple “rejection” of Christianity. The deeper framing is what remains the issue. Mesturini Cappo suggests that we view ayahuasca as a ‘being’. As I will detail in the following chapter, many ayahuasca enthusiasts already assign a degree of agency to ayahuasca.

Chapter Five

Ayahuasca's Motives: Equivocation and 'Religion' versus Practice

Summary

In the last chapter, I characterized eurochristian social framing as genocidal with respect to Indigenous Peoples, reading genocide following Indigenous scholars as a process rather than an event. I argued for discrete Indigenous framing following both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars against facile charges of essentialism or a reductively binary aspect of my thinking because attention to the asymmetry of power over a long period of time cannot be adequately accounted for by assuming a “neutral” space. The point is to attend to the current conditions shaped by intergenerational forces rather than claiming an entirely static and transcendent “Indigenous” or “European” essence. We know that Indigenous Peoples cannot simply be reduced to a victim status. They perform the ICM that Gerald Vizenor has called ‘Survivance.’ At the same time, injustices against Indigenous People cannot be minimized, and the ongoing presence of the Doctrine of Discovery in law and official religious policies, including contemporary missionary work, continues such injustice. As I have been arguing throughout, the Doctrine of Discovery evidences the framing of eurochristian poetics that has

“naturalized” injustice, so critiquing the deep framing gives us insight into an analysis of motivations surrounding ayahuasca discourse in diaspora.

In this chapter, I begin by addressing contemporary concerns surrounding ayahuasca, highlighting how attention equivocation can aid ways to maintain rhetorical proximity regarding issues such as gender and Survivance. I then turn toward an account of recent religious theory. Anticipating that many readers interested in ayahuasca will not have spent a lot of time considering theories of religion, my goal is to complicate ready-made assumptions about what religion is before addressing issues of religious freedom in the courts in my last chapter. Here I deal largely with the nineteenth-century contexts from which Spiritist movements emerged, paralleling political shifts in Latin America toward liberalism. Spiritist philosophies underwrite the formation of the recognized Brazilian ayahuasca religions that emerge in the twentieth-century, as well as many of the less overtly “religious” contexts often referred to as “New Age” or “neo-shamanic.” Throughout, I continue to historicize in relation to eurochristian framing. I have argued in previous chapters that liberalism, which focuses on the individual, tacitly carries on eurochristian framing, even when presented as more “secular.” This chapter continues to support that argument by addressing notions of “experience” prevalent in liberal, rights-based contexts.

Ayahuasca’s Motivations

As mentioned briefly at the end of the previous chapter, users of ayahuasca often attribute agency to the plants used or ‘Ayahuasca’ as a being encountered when the

collected plant mixture drunk in ceremonies. Writers such as Silvia Mesturini Cappo have seen attention to the reversals that local Amazonian groups employ with respect to ayahuasca's place in cosmology and theology as instances of cultural self-determination. Complimenting this, anthropologists such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Marisol De La Cadena, and Eduardo Kohn have pointed to a rehabilitated notion of equivocation, but we should be careful to maintain a critical eye in even optimistic uses of the term 'equivocation' because of its own legal history. *A Treatise of Equivocation* (c. 1595) was published in England by Jesuit Priests such as Henry Garnet as a guidebook for Catholics to maneuver through legal situations in which they were being persecuted. Garnet was eventually executed for his role in the Gun Powder Plot, which was designed to blow up Parliament. Possessing the book was evidence of treason in England:

The Treatise of Equivocation was written to instruct priests sent on a "mission" established by the Society of Jesus, whose aim was to preserve the Catholic Church in the newest heathen territory, England. The Treatise prepared priests to face the perilous questions asked of them by official interrogators, who as enforcers of the Anglican settlement had devised a series of interrogatories widely known as the "bloody questions" because they could force a Catholic priest to elect between the Queen and the Pope. The stakes were high: the penalty for being a priest in England, an act of treason, was death by public torture.⁴⁷⁴

Besides being a fascinating instance of rhetorical strategy, the treatise also conveyed a distinctly different linguistic philosophy from the emergent surveillance culture in England reflecting their differing theology. Halley notes: "In service of this goal they conceptualized language as multivalent, unstable, and conventional; and recognized a

⁴⁷⁴ Janet E. Halley, "Equivocation and the Legal Conflict Over Religious Identity in Early Modern England," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 3, no. 1 (1991): 36.

complex dialogue occurring within the Catholic mind, in which thought itself took on the representational qualities of speech and writing.”⁴⁷⁵ With this historical employment of equivocation in mind, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s use connotes signals historical contestations over the right to rule.

The young Thomas Hobbes, who graduated just after the Gunpowder Plot, would become especially concerned with language and meaning. In the 1620s, he worked as amanuenses to Francis Bacon, he absorbed Bacon’s thoughts on Nature. In 1622, he became a member of the Virginia company, which had transported the Pilgrims across the Atlantic two years prior. In the 1640s, while tutoring a young Charles II in France, Hobbes began composing *Leviathan*, which opens with an account of language and the senses. The book is saturated with eurochristian framing even as it incorporates Greek history (he had translated Thucydides). It was produced in context debates around religious freedom. For Hobbes, speech was first authored by God to Adam to name creatures. Over time, it expanded until it was dispersed at the tower of Babel. Language, for him is first to transfer our mental discourse into the verbal.”⁴⁷⁶ Hobbes evidences an inward shift typical of early modern thought.⁴⁷⁷ For Hobbes, an internal architecture

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, IL: Hackett, 1994), 16.

⁴⁷⁷ His articulation of signs is in many ways an inversion of Augustinian hermeneutics. For Augustine, language ascends as it becomes internal: literal-parable-allegorical-anagogical. In the anagogical, the act of interpretation itself comes closest to actual conversations with God (see *On Christian Doctrine*, Book IV). In Hobbes’s paragraph here on “signs” and signification, we get four uses in this order: 1) to register

separates reason from speech. He is suspicious of semantic slippage, though welcoming of art (rhetorical style). As language becomes more abstract, “names can never be true grounds for ratiocination. No more can metaphors, and tropes of speech; but these are less dangerous, because they profess their inconstancy, which others do not.”⁴⁷⁸ As language becomes externalized and immanent, one must turn all the more to the internal architecture of conscience to find transcendence, grace, or God in eurochristian religious poetics. That this internal move also manifested as a Protestant disdain for ritual performance and ceremony does not mean the poetics were not at work among Catholic authorities during the Inquisition, for example. Here I am signaling the early rumblings of liberalism within eurochristian poetics as they would develop into legal sentiments regarding the freedom of religion in later U.S. law.

As I will detail in chapter six, conflicting notions of interiority underwrite ideas of religious freedom such that, when ayahuasca enthusiasts seek legal protection for a recognized sacramental use of the plant, they inadvertently strengthen eurochristian religious poetics. Equivocation was thus already tied to formations of the self and despite Viveiros de Castro’s reoccupied use, it carries historical weight and motives. Janet Halley writes:

Official Anglicans, on the other hand, pro-pounded an inviolate, even natural and pre-discursive personal self only to extend the state's coercive power into the secret recesses of identity formation; with this contradiction the Anglicans

cogitation; 2) to show others the knowledge we have attained; 3) to make our will known to others and mutually support them; 4) to please and delight ourselves (Ibid. 17).

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 22.

disrupted their foundational premise and placed it within the range of historical mutability.⁴⁷⁹

While Viveiros de Castro's work is helpful, we still need to be attentive to deep framing, because without that attention even the concept of equivocation risks furthering the drama of eurochristian religious poetics. Attention to equivocation does not give eurochristians access to Indigenous worldviews, though it and Viveiros de Castro's articulations of 'Amerindian Perspectivism' are helpful. One way to understand this is the discourse surrounding ayahuasca's motives.

Ayahuasca researchers have commented on the "afterglow" for ayahuasca users, a window lasting several days to months in which a user feels "better," or more open. In a recent study, researchers found that within twenty-four hours of ayahuasca use subjects exhibited measurable increases in cognitive flexibility.⁴⁸⁰ These findings suggest that patients using ayahuasca in treatment may be more receptive to therapy after an ayahuasca session.

Among religious groups, there are also persistent accounts of ayahuasca as a kind of being or entity. In the recognized ayahuasca religions, that being is enmeshed in each respective group's Christology. In a 1991 statement by ayahuasca religions from Rio

⁴⁷⁹ Janet E. Halley, "Equivocation and the Legal Conflict Over Religious Identity in Early Modern England," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* Vol. 3, no. 1 (1991): 37.

⁴⁸⁰ A. Murphy-Steiner and K. Soar, "Ayahuasca's 'Afterglow': Improved Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility in Ayahuasca Drinkers," *Psychopharmacology* (January 11, 2020), accessed January 17, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00213-019-05445-3>.

Branco, Brazil, the various religious groups affirm a commitment against commercialized advertising of ‘hoasca’, restricting public discussion to only “persons advanced in their hierarchy” and limited rules for preparation: “The tea Hoasca is a product of the union of Mariri (Jagube) and Chacrona (Rainha), without the addition of any other substance besides water.”⁴⁸¹ They also claim that “use of the tea Hoasca is restricted to religious rituals held in locations authorized by the respective directorships of the individual groups; its use in association with drugs or any other psychoactive plants is strictly prohibited.”⁴⁸² They actively distinguish themselves from “non-religious” users:

As a practice prohibited by the Brazilian Legislature, medical charlatanism (*curandeirismo*) shall be avoided by the signatory religious groups. The tea Hoasca should be utilized according to the terms outlined in this Declaration of Principles, with whatever benefits derived therefrom dealt with exclusively from the spiritual point of view and without any promotional boasting that would mislead the public opinion and the authorities.⁴⁸³

Such statements, however, simultaneously set these groups apart from various Indigenous uses, implicitly discriminating against a great variety of plants often referred to as “plant teachers.”

Non-Indigenous ayahuasca users not explicitly affiliated with any religion have also adopted the position that the plants are entities. Peter Gorman, who cites twenty-five years of experience in “medicine dreaming,” writes:

⁴⁸¹ *Declaration of Principles of the Religious Groups who Consume the Tea Hoasca*, *bialabate.net*, November 24, 1991, accessed February 6, 2020, https://www.bialabate.net/pdf/laws/carta_prin_eng.pdf.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

These teachers all have, I believe, will and intent, and have made the choice to be teachers to humanity. They all, also, have built-in mechanisms that ensure that humanity has to want to ingest them, has to want to the knowledge they can impart once they have opened the gates they guard for us. Most of them prevent frivolous or accidental use by simply being physically difficult to ingest.⁴⁸⁴

Is Gorman's self-published book recounting his personal experiences an advertisement?

Among organized Indigenous groups recently, three consecutive years of the Brazilian Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca have produced policy deliberations. Among Indigenous Peoples of the Juruá Valley, who have also recently managed to stave off oil and gas companies from using fracking in their territory,⁴⁸⁵ concerns are also expressed regarding academic researchers:

Researchers who study ayahuasca and other traditional medicines are not closely involved in the interests of the indigenous movement. They may legitimately speak in academic contexts, but the true knowledge bearers on spirituality are indigenous peoples and they should be the protagonists.⁴⁸⁶

They also write:

Concern over inadequate use of medicines by the *nawás* [non-indigenous people] and/or churches and their commercialization, which can generate serious situations associated with their use. For example, the use of ayahuasca by the *nawás* in various kinds of festivals and other spaces, typically in pill form like a psychedelic drug" because "Amplification of the use of medicines outside the

⁴⁸⁴ Peter Gorman, *Ayahuasca in My Blood: 25 Years of Medicine Dreaming* (San Bernardino, CA: Gorman Bench Press, 2010): 15.

⁴⁸⁵ Martina Rogato, "Brazil Does a U-turn on Fracking. Indigenous lands protected from oil and Gas Exploration," *Life Gate*, March 4, 2016, accessed February 6, 2020, <https://www.lifegate.com/people/news/brazil-fracking-stopped-amazon-jurua-valley>.

⁴⁸⁶ *Declaration of the 1st Brazilian Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca, Chacrana*, January 30, 2020, accessed February 6, 2020, <https://chacrana.net/declaration-of-the-1st-brazilian-indigenous-conference-on-ayahuasca/>.

indigenous context means that there are more *nawás* than indigenous people using ayahuasca.”⁴⁸⁷

During the first conference, one of the Indigenous groups’ suggestions was, “Rather than using the generic name ‘ayahuasca,’ the names specific to each people should be used, along with the names of other traditional medicines.”⁴⁸⁸ However, by the second conference we see a concession to use of the generic term for policy purposes: “The term ayahuasca does not replace the names of this medicine among each people, such as *Uni*, *Huni*, *Kamarãpi*, *Heu*, *Tsibu*, and others. However, it was agreed in plenary session that this term will be used generically to cover all these names.”⁴⁸⁹

The globalization of ayahuasca is a fact that Indigenous Peoples themselves acknowledge, even when it means accepting a generic term to advocate for themselves. My strategy in this chapter continues to present ayahuasca in a transnational context by simultaneously pointing readers to a longer history of eurochristian framing imbricated in the discursive and policy-mechanisms informing both religious recognition for exemptions in ritual use of ayahuasca and non-religious advocacy for “plant healers” by largely individual and experience-oriented seekers of “traditional” or “plant” knowledge. While all groups assign a degree of agency to ayahuasca itself, a process of equivocation also appears to be at work as ayahuasca is globalized. Ayahuasca enthusiasts tend to

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ *Declaration of the 2nd Brazilian Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca, Chacrana*, January 30, 2020, accessed February 6, 2020, <https://chacrana.net/declaration-of-the-2nd-brazilian-indigenous-conference-on-ayahuasca/>.

mimetically reproduce eurochristian evangelicalism, an implicit intention to spread christemndom through liberal practices, even when they disavow “official” Christianity. This is why we must be attentive to eurochristian religious poetics rather than avowals of faith or orthodoxy.

Concern over commercialization is also present throughout all of these groups, but my aim in taking such a broad historical approach is to make non-Indigenous Peoples more aware of how even well-intentioned eurochristian efforts risk perpetuating the inability to hear Indigenous concerns as “protagonists” in ayahuasca discourse. In broader ayahuasca discourse, longstanding debates about authenticity of traditional practices versus ayahuasca or “drug” tourism are commonplace; but I have asserted that they can be better understood by attention to deeper historical religious framing that accompanied colonization or debates about authenticity. One element to listen for might be Indigenous ICMs of Survivance and compromise.

Survivance

In sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, in the colonized Incan territories in South America, we see a period where *caciques* or Native leaders were left in control of *mita* “payments” in a transitioning economy where Natives gave tribute to a sovereign they would never see. This disruption of the preceding economy caused profound changes, eventually leading to some *caciques* in the late seventeenth-century to be investigated for their own harsh treatment of Indians. During the period, *caciques* had gone through a process of euro-forming, gradually replacing oral memory and *kipus*

with European writing systems less dependent on collective memory. These were “new *caciques*.” As Thierry Saignes writes, this was in many ways a reversal of pre-contact economic relationships:

Perhaps the losers lost out because of excessive respect for “moral economy” and the duty to redistribute wealth among their subjects. As for the success of the new contenders, it was above all due to their expertise in commercial accumulation. The mercantile reorientation of the *ayllus*, in a setting of endemic fiscal corruption, afforded brilliant opportunities for “social climbing.” When the “new men” of the seventeenth century took over from the old lineages, they knew more than their predecessors about the strategies of financial and judicial manipulation and about forming alliances with local and regional government agencies.⁴⁹⁰

Still, by the eighteenth-century, “once-powerful lineages suffered economic impoverishment, arbitrary dismissal, or replacement” by crown-appointed governors, and throughout the entire region, “Inka domains deteriorated into more or less predatory arms of Spanish commerce and taxation.”⁴⁹¹ This is the same pattern we saw with respect to Marisol De La Cadena’s work with Mariano and Nazario Turpo in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and it likewise speaks well to persistent conditions surrounding economies of ayahuasca “shamanism” – as well as the persistent threat of genocide. Such genocidal persistence must be noted to assuage claims about today being different. We should continue to keep this in mind as questions of ayahuasca regulation arise in the diasporic context, especially because broader ayahuasca conversations rarely consider local Indigenous Peoples’ concerns. Even when well-intentioned, excitement

⁴⁹⁰ Thierry Saignes, “The Colonial Condition in the Quechua-Aymara Heartland (1570-1780),” *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas, Volume III: South America, Part 2*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 71.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

about an Amazonian Indigenous tea inadvertently participates in further marginalizing local Indigenous struggles for survivance.

Situating ayahuasca discourse within a larger historical perspective illustrates how the impact of eurochristian religious poetics especially affects ayahuasca in diaspora as it comes into contact with national and international legal systems. The discursive frames evident in its political theology express widespread eurochristian Idealized Cognitive Models (ICM). I have stressed this within a eurochristian poetics of sacrifice, which relies on a particular notion of transcendence embedded within a linear temporality. In that context, dialectical processes toward “civilization” serve as machines for the erasure of Indigenous Peoples. The dyad between ‘religious and secular’ thus allows a discursive tension the “civilizing” work of missionaries and the foreign policies and security agreements between nations. Universalized concepts of ‘shamanism’ and ‘ayahuasca’ arise as catchall categories within this process, which is ill-equipped to attend to local differences or deep frames outside of a eurochristian context.

As Marlene Dobkins de Rios has argued with respect to Peru, the influx of evangelical missionaries and population demographics since the Second World War profoundly changed traditional ayahuasca healing. For this reason, we should attend to parallels among the spread of Pentecostalism and charismatic Catholicism throughout the twentieth century emphasizing healing modalities. According to her, traditional healing:

has virtually disappeared in the spread of plant use to cities like Iquitos, Pucallpa and other rain forest areas of lowland South America. Rather, we see Mestizo healers (called *mestres* in Portuguese) with both European and Native American heritage using the visionary vine to determine the magical cause of illness and to

neutralize or deflect evil that their clients believe is responsible for their sickness.⁴⁹²

Still, advocacy groups, such as the International Center for Ethnobotanical Education Research and Service (ICEERS), actively work with Indigenous groups in South America to maintain traditional practices. We have both Indigenous and mestizaje contexts, though the former are certainly in a more precarious position than the latter. In addition to the social disruptions of missionaries, wars, and changing demographics, anthropological literature has long fueled the increasing trend of ayahuasca or “drug” tourism in South America, which has rapidly brought global markets into the Amazon. “New Age” seekers are a large factor too. Dobkins de Rios herself, along with others, have since lamented the part their own ethnographic work did in popularizing ayahuasca experiences with foreign tourists.

New Age perspectives importantly inform much of the broader discourse on psychedelics, as well as scientific discourse on ayahuasca. Nicholas Campion has claimed, “The modern New Age movement, in spite of its presumed association with the 1960s, millenarian in character and forms part of a broader cultural tradition which extends from the modern west to back through Christian millenarianism to the ancient Near East.”⁴⁹³ Modern liberalism introduces into this tradition an extreme focus on

⁴⁹² Marlene Dobkins de Rios, “Hoasca: Science, Society, and Environment,” *Hoasca: The Sacrament of the União do Vegetal*, ed. Joaze Bernardino-Costa (Novato, CA: Centro Espírita Beneficente União do Vegetal, 2013), 7.

⁴⁹³ Nicholas Campion, *The New Age in the Modern West: Counterculture, Utopia and Prophecy from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 5.

individuality and esotericism, which Campion describes as an attitude indebted to ancient Gnosticism in “the primacy of consciousness over matter.”⁴⁹⁴ While Gnosticism is characterized as “knowledge – directly from contact with the divine,” New Age practices assert that, “to reform society, inner change is more important than revolution in institutions and power structures; the revolution will surely fail, it is believed, people first banish their inner demons.”⁴⁹⁵ In this sense, they echo the internalized moves of early modern “proto-liberals” such as Thomas Hobbes.

Despite associations with countercultural movements, there is often something inherently conservative in such claims to Gnosticism and the tradition of mystical experience. Even writers like Peter Gorman, who stress humanity’s long history of being dependent and intertwined with various plants, we see the long-documented emphasis western individuals’ ‘healing’:

Ayahuasca’s spirit reaches down into the depths of your soul and roots around for those things, then brings them to the surface – in the frightening moments of ego-dissolution – in a wretched reliving of them, and then allows you to eliminate them. It’s not like vomiting at all: It’s as if great chunks of physical matter are explosively hurled from the bottom of your bowels – the vomiting often sounds like a waterfall in reverse, the water rushing up the rocks and violently cascading from your mouth. My guests swear they vomit in heaps; in truth they rarely vomit more than the few ounces of *ayahuasca* they drank as they have nothing physical in their stomachs to eliminate.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Peter Gorman, *Ayahuasca in My Blood: 25 Years of Medicine Dreaming* (San Bernadino, CA: Gorman Bench Press, 2010), 20.

As with many psychedelics, ayahuasca is capable of breaking down a liminal space perceived between internal “self” and external “world,” such that upon “re-entry” the person who has had the experience embodies a kind of gnostic instantiation.

What is generally left out of such accounts is the way internal ICMs return within re-entry. In contrast to Gorman, Glenn Shepard notes:

The Matsigenka currently use ayahuasca only in the rainy season when animals get fat on forest fruits and hunters are most active. The main purpose for using ayahuasca is not for healing in the strict sense, but rather for hunters to improve their aim. In this sense, despite the [recently introduced] *Psychotria*-based brew, the Matsigenka maintain the general features of the “pre-ayahuasca” indigenous shamanic complex described by [Antonio] Bianchi as focusing on ecological, rather than therapeutic, functions.⁴⁹⁷

Shepard also notes the Matsigenka’s reluctance to discuss their traditional practices and the fact that “Although women maintain an important pharmacopeia of medicinal plants, especially with regard to child health, medicinal plant knowledge and shamanistic healing are largely separate and independent realms of therapy.”⁴⁹⁸ This brings us to an important site of analysis for the ‘being’ and motivations of ayahuasca.

Ayahuasca and Gender

Let us take the gendering of ayahuasca as another example of decontextualizing of ayahuasca. Gender and “shamanic” duties are imbalanced by the introduction of new

⁴⁹⁷ Glenn H. Shepard, Jr. “Will the Real Shaman Please Stand Up?” *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate & Clancy Cavnar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 21.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

ayahuasca recipes since the mid-twentieth century, largely and ironically spread through the efforts of missionaries,⁴⁹⁹ yet at the same time “pre-ayahuasca” ICMs are maintained. Shepard notes that the Yora People, neighbors of the Matsigenka, welcomed the introduction of ayahuasca after 1984: “This openness and enthusiasm about ayahuasca shamanism contrasts sharply with the secrecy and modesty surrounding Matsigenka shamanism and healing.”⁵⁰⁰ Emphases on healing can be just as culturally disruptive as crass “drug tourism,” yet the phenomenon alone does not indicate that these are no longer distinct peoples.

Despite the fact that ayahuasca in the Amazon is variously gendered among different Indigenous groups, Western spiritual seekers overwhelmingly gender it as a woman, and usually a mother, as in “mother ayahuasca,” which in some ways echoes Marianist impulses that arguably resonated in Indigenous contexts such as Pachamama or Tonantzin / Guadalupe and later Santa Muerte. A whole genre of literary narratives written by western-credentialed medical doctors interested in the healing potential of ayahuasca often perpetuates eurochristian-encultured perspectives without much attention to the ways gendered concepts change across cultures. For example, in Joseph Tafur’s *The Fellowship of the River*, he notes that Westerners “call it the spirit of *la Madre Ayahuasca*. In this tradition, ayahuasca is regarded as feminine, a Mother Nature spirit of the forest. Through her, Mother Ayahuasca, we can access the healing wisdom of her

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 27.

plant spirit colleagues.”⁵⁰¹ Is this version of “*La Madre Ayahuasca*” Indigenous? New Age?

Cecilia McCallum's book on Cashinahua understandings, *Gender and Sociality in Amazonia*, describes a masculine use of *nixi pae* (ayahuasca) for “male agency.”⁵⁰² In contrast with respect to a nearby people, Donald Pollack's “Siblings and Sorcerers” says: “Notably, both Kulina men and women take ayahuasca: the Kulina regard it as an introduced drug they acquired from the local Panoan speaking peoples, and they call it by the same Panoan term, *rami*, that is used by the Kaxinaua and the Saranaua along the upper Purus.”⁵⁰³ This of course speaks to the colonial drama which spread ayahuasca use throughout the region. Pollack notes:

in abstract discussions of illness Kulina occasionally mentioned a rather mysterious condition called *ramikka dzamakuma*, “ayahuasca fever” or “ayahuasca sickness.” *Ramikka dzamakuma* is caused when a man wishing to seduce a woman prepares an infusion of ayahuasca by boiling the vine, and then smears her hammock and clothes with the liquid. The drug acts initially as an aphrodisiac and produces the desired amorous effects. However, within a few days she falls ill and may die unless she's treated by a special variety of shaman called a *wiwimade* (literally, storyteller), who is skilled in the specialized use of ayahuasca. The serious threat posed by this illness lies in the fact that only the local Panoan Indians are *wiwimade* shamans, and they are usually happy to let Kulina suffering from the illness die.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ Joseph Tafur, *The Fellowship of the River: A Medical Doctor's Exploration into Traditional Amazonian Plant Medicine* (Phoenix, Arizona: Espiritu Books), 2017.

⁵⁰² Cecilia McCallum, *Gender and Sociality in Amazonia* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 55.

⁵⁰³ Donald Pollack, “Siblings and Sorcerers,” *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia*, ed. Neil Whitehead and Robin Wright (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 209.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

Although characterized violently, it is important to note that in this context ayahuasca is employed for manipulative sexual gratification and produces “ayahuasca fever” rather than being “healing medicine.” It also seems to be about intergroup dynamics. Among the Napo Runa in Ecuador, however, ayahuasca is gendered as feminine and would apparently map rather neatly onto eurochristian notions of “mother ayahuasca” as Tafur describes above.

Westerners tend to gender ayahuasca as feminine, but even this is complex. As one former member of a Denver-based Santo Daime group told me, such language is constantly used even within masculinist-dominated group. This woman felt that the evangelical theology and patriarchal structure was too much for her, so she moved on to a more “secular” group that still has monthly ceremonies but sees themselves as working within a more Indigenous tradition of a Colombian *ayahuascera* who occasionally comes to the U.S. to give ceremonies. As Glenn Shepard notes, the over-focus on ayahuasca (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) alone eclipses other plant knowledges among Indigenous cultures, disrupting binary-gendered balances between masculine and feminine plants.⁵⁰⁵ The expropriated commodification of ayahuasca due largely to tourists’ interests has also

⁵⁰⁵ Glenn H Shepard, “Will the Real Shaman Please Stand Up? The Recent Adoption of Ayahuasca Among Indigenous Groups of the Peruvian Amazon,” *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24.

struck venture capitalists like Loren Miller, who attempted to patent⁵⁰⁶ ‘Ayahuasca’ that exploded into controversy.⁵⁰⁷

Emerging from such widespread interest is, as Brabec de Mori has noted, a “universalizing” *concept* of ‘Ayahuasca’ as a *single* substance, much like the universalizing and foreign term, “shamanism” that accompanies related research. This is truly the eurochristian-received construct of the “fetish,” a term that developed with the early West African slave trade. The two phenomena are intimately connected through a colonizing process that “de-natures” and alienates a concept from living systems of both nature and culture. Thus, for me, the entire study of ‘Ayahuasca’ merely indicates its entanglement within much broader socio-historical processes of domination and erasure. It may be a more recent and thus “neo-colonizing” form, but the “neo” here is merely a repackaging of long used techniques of colonization.

Gendering of ayahuasca becomes even more complex in northern liberal settings. I have already recounted some of this in chapter one. At the 2019 Queering Psychedelics conference in San Francisco, I found myself explaining my interests in Indigenous issues to a young transgender woman who is a member of ANTIFA, an antifascist political organization. She had asked a question about far rightwing impulses within psychedelic communities and had relayed to me a story of seemingly rightwing impulses at regional

⁵⁰⁶ Leanne M. Fectau, “The Ayahuasca Patent Revocation: Raising Questions About Current U.S. Patent Policy,” *Third World Law Journal* 21, no. 4 (2001): 69. <http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/twlj/vol21/iss1/4>.

⁵⁰⁷ Michael F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 107.

psychedelic festival in Texas. As I was explaining some of my research contradicting widespread notions the psychedelics are inherently liberating “leftwing” substances, I mentioned that Indigenous perspectives do not play by left-right political metaphors. Ayahuasca researchers constantly have to correct ideas inherited from countercultural contexts that ayahuasca and other psychedelics are inherently liberating from a leftwing perspective. As I tried to articulate perspectives that do not fit into “left-right” political binaries, the woman cut me off to say how she cannot stand it when people “virtue signal” around Indigenous issues.

As I understand the term, “virtue signaling” amounts to a kind of intellectual posturing where someone draws attention to how “woke” they are to achieve a kind of social or symbolic capital. This terminology is rooted in neoliberal contexts where identity is treated within market-driven categories. While I understand the annoyance of any self-righteous posturing, there is something I find suspicious about any term that can be easily invoked to shut down someone’s ethical positioning. Ironically, the conversation occurred while we were at a conference clearly framed within marginalized queer resistances in a largely North American political context. In public dialogue, Americans can surely be rather dogmatic moralists, but to deny an ethical comportment maintaining a respectful difference between eurochristians and Indigenous Peoples seems a rather convenient mask to keep the tyranny of a eurochristian status quo. At heart in all of this remains the necessity for attention to a longer history that has often been a denial and minimization of the genocide of Indigenous Peoples and vast asymmetries of access to power, even if “everyone suffers” and ayahuasca can be used therapeutically in non-

Indigenous contexts. As with reductive claims that speaking of Indigenous perspectives is somehow “essentialist,” negotiating Indigenous survivance against the discourse of neoliberal identity politics requires attention to deep framing.

In liberal contexts, the diaspora of ayahuasca and ayahuasca tourism has produced a legitimate and growing concern for sexual abuse of western women by “shamans.” A recent BBC story tells of abuse by Amazonian “shaman” who travels internationally.⁵⁰⁸ The story is accompanied by a podcast interviewing Guillermo Arévalo, who has been accused multiple times of sexual abuse. Situations like this inspired Chacrana Institute of Psychedelic Medicines to publish an “Ayahuasca Community Guide for the Awareness of Sexual Abuse” in 2018.⁵⁰⁹

Homophobia as well, has become a large issue in ayahuasca’s diaspora. Official stances by ayahuasca religious groups in South America maintain a kind of cultural conservatism congruent with conservative Christian evangelicals in the north regarding issues such as same sex marriage, but tensions can arise among non-explicitly religious ayahuasca “healers” as well.

Facing pushback for organizing the Queering Psychedelics conference to focus on a marginalized community’s issues, Bia Labate noted:

⁵⁰⁸ Simon Maybin and Josephine Casserly, “I was Sexually Abused by a Shaman at an Ayahuasca Retreat,” *BBC News*, January 16, 2020, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-51053580>.

⁵⁰⁹ Chacrana Institute of Psychedelic Medicines, “Ayahuasca Community Guide for the Awareness of Sexual Abuse,” *Chacrana*, November 19, 2018, <https://chacrana.net/community/ayahuasca-community-guide-for-the-awareness-of-sexual-abuse/>.

A leader of an important ayahuasca healing retreat center in Peru, for example, commented: “if you don’t want to discriminate against anything or anybody and not prohibit anything, why limit to the LGBTQI and not add P for pedophilia, D for digisexual, Z for zoophilia, M for metrosexual, G for gerontophilia? All this is love, supposedly... free sexual choices?”⁵¹⁰

These words are critical of “liberal” contexts and culture, but at the same time in their association of “P for pedophilia” with “LGBTQI” they reveal at the very least a lack of understanding about gender-spectrum issues and communities and at most explicit homophobia. Is it right to see this as a “cultural issue” where the U.S. is seen as merely liberally decadent? Or is it a patriarchal and heteronormative view firmly entrenched within centuries of eurochristian gender binaries? Am I “virtue signaling” with respect to Indigenous Issues, or was my trans friend unaware of her white privilege even if marginalized in a heteronormative context? Why is ayahuasca so frequently gendered as heteronormatively feminine and not Queer? These are just some of the contemporary issues in ayahuasca’s diaspora through economic and political liberalism.

With respect to the legal and rights-based subjectivities accompanying liberalism’s political formation, as well as the discussions for regulated use of ayahuasca, an ethical question arises especially with “New Age” or “neo-shamanic” groups seeking particular experiences deemed “archaic” within liberal social imaginaries: When one’s individual spiritual seeking comes at the cost of traditional cultures, which side is to prevail? What does the “right” to experience mean? and how do our existing drug policy

⁵¹⁰ Shelby Hartman, “Why We’re Starting the Conversation Around Queerness and Psychedelics,” *chacruna.net*, April 16, 2019, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://chacruna.net/why-were-starting-the-conversation-around-queerness-and-psychedelics/>.

discussions and arguments for religious exemption already frame discussions within a eurochristian context hostile to Indigenous Peoples even while attempting to respect their “rights”?

Outside of South America, a consideration of ayahuasca’s diaspora offers a chance to see how the deep, eurochristian political theological structures underwrite and persist through even secularized liberalism. Continuing systemic violence toward Indigenous Peoples is rooted in the logic of these structures and localized within the notion of *experience* itself, and it is therefore important to do the connecting work that situates eurochristianity as a social movement underwriting even the esotericism of New Age and neoshamanic impulses. This will mean blurring conventional lines between “secular” and “religious,” so I must make a digression into religious theory. I make this move to articulate some recent work in the field of religious studies especially because I expect many ayahuasca enthusiasts will be unaware of it.

Religious Theory

Tomoko Masuzawa has importantly explicated the notion of ‘religion’ as it evolved within eurochristian thought. She writes: “the early modern taxonomic system does not identify *religions* as such – that is, its aim apparently is not to sort out the plurality of ‘belief systems’ as we understand the term today; instead, it recognizes and categorizes different ‘nations.’ Or in our terms, different ‘peoples.’”⁵¹¹ These “nations”

⁵¹¹ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005), 61.

later became “races.” Masuzawa notes that according to the eighteenth-century Anglican theologian, Frederick Denison Maurice, among many of his contemporaries, bona fide religions “aspire to what is transcendent and universal.”⁵¹² Agency is here assigned to “bona fide” religions as “transcendent” and “universal.” This tendency exhibits the poetics of sacrifice in eurochristian framing, a social desire among eurochristians.

In the nineteenth-century context, all “religions” – to the extent that they were recognized as such – besides Christianity were seen as inherently “flawed.” This led to the nineteenth century notion of “World Religion” as opposed to “religions of the world.”⁵¹³ In this eurochristian line of thinking, the idea that Europe or “the West” was losing its distinct Christian-identity arose with comparative philology. The logic of the time period, evidenced by Mathew Arnold’s contrasting of “Hellenism versus Hebraism,”⁵¹⁴ was that Christianity had “liberated” Israelite religion from its narrow nationalism, unleashing its “universal” potential, and that a similar recovery project had to occur through historicizing the east. Masuzawa writes:

This concept of religion as a general transcultural phenomenon, yet also as a distinct sphere in its own right, is a foundational premise essential to the enterprise of the history of religions as envisioned by [Ernst] Troeltsch, and many others since. But if we recall the moment of its sudden appearance in “Christianity and the History of Religion,” the concept is patently groundless; it came from nowhere, and there is no credible way of demonstrating its factual and empirical sustainability.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹² Ibid., 77.

⁵¹³ Ibid., 119.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 149.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 319.

Thus, she concludes that ‘religion’ as a transcultural phenomenon was:

endowed with all the weight and moral cathexis that was once proper to liberal Protestant theology. This load of ideational energy has now been dislodged from that original site and transferred to ‘religion itself,’ now that the very theology has run up against the wall of its own undeniable history.⁵¹⁶

From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective combined with a longer historical view of eurochristian domination, we can see a regime of power, or what Foucault called power/knowledge at work. I have characterized this as *rhetorical* because its and audience-driven form of control, a regime of power.

This universalist approach to religion, combined with eurochristianity’s civilizing mission, underwrote both the initial sense among colonizers that Indigenous Peoples had no religion, as well as the later idea that they did have ‘religion’, or somethings like it, perhaps in “primitive” form, that could be a piece in the puzzle of the evolution of human thought because it preserved something archaic. Or, as the development theories subsided, the carried-over category of ‘religion’ advanced the idea of a system recognizable as ‘religion’. The subtle use of the Christian concept while detached from an overtly Christian language was part of the colonizing process. Or, finally in the New Age perspective that there is indeed an archaic, “universal” religion that predates Christianity itself called “shamanism,” which Indians maintain more direct access to because they are less alienated from a “state of nature” than “civilized man.” Even in his

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 320.

forward-thinking critique of social-Darwinist emphases on “survival of the fittest,” in 1902 the Russian ethnologist, Peter Kropotkin wrote:

In the last century the “savage” and his “life in the state of nature” were idealized. But now men of science have gone to the opposite extreme, especially since some of them, anxious to prove the animal origin of humans, but not conversant with the social aspects of animal life, began to charge the savage with all imaginable “bestial” features. It is evident, however, that this exaggeration is even more unscientific than Rousseau’s idealization. The savage is not an ideal of virtue, nor is he an ideal of “savagery.” But the primitive man has one quality, elaborated and maintained by the very necessities of his hard struggle for life — he identifies his own existence with that of his tribe; and without that quality mankind never would have attained the level it has attained now.⁵¹⁷

Hoary language with respect to primitivism and savagery aside here, Kropotkin’s well-intentioned defense of communal ways of living remain framed within a “primitive-to-civilized” eurochristian developmental framing even as he dismisses the trappings of Romanticism. The sentiment is repeated in current explorations of ayahuasca and mutual aid. A similar critique, undoubtedly part of New Age perspectives, has been the tendency to disavow the pseudoscientific racializing of nineteenth-century thought. We saw this earlier with writers like Alexander Dawson who want to expand non-Indigenous access to peyote. While laudable on the critique of racism, such perspectives nevertheless tend to maintain elements of progressive linearity or “evolutionary” views we might associate with Rifkin’s “settler time” and eurochristian framing. Nineteenth-century notions of universal religion prevail in twenty-first-century discourse on ayahuasca.

David Chidester, in *Savage Systems* and *Empire of Religion* has tracked the ways colonizers assisted in inventing local “religions” *only after* initial conquest, where a lack

⁵¹⁷ Peter Kropotkin. *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* (Jonathan-David Jackson, 2018), Kindle, 66.

of “true religion” justified the conquest itself. Kropotkin was merely one of many who critiqued imperialism from within its grasp. This of course was the implicit logic of the Doctrine of Discovery, which though less emphasized in the Russian Empire’s ethnographic collections of the late nineteenth century was nevertheless carried over in the temporal gaze of the naturalist.

More recently, Brent Nongbri’s *Before Religion* echoes and amplifies Chidester’s observations concerning the nineteenth century specifically with respect to Spanish conquest in South America. He specifically tracks the phenomenon of inventing religion by Garcilaso the Inca as he discusses a reversal from denigration to veneration of the mythological figure of *Pachamacac*. Garcilaso, already displaying colonized sensibility that would create “new caciques,” writes: “it is evident that the *Indians* held our invisible God to be the Creatour of all things,” but their worship had been corrupted by “the Devil,” whom they call *Cupay*.⁵¹⁸ The drama of colonialism is perpetuated by the superimposition of eurochristian concepts of “empire” onto pre-contact Indigenous peoples of South America. Thus, we see that *Pachacamac* was a being associated with *Ichma* people who apparently became part of *Tawantinsuyu*, the name that often gets translated the “Incan Empire” but literally means “four regions” in Quechua. Like ‘religion,’ quite a bit of eurochristian baggage accompanies the concept of ‘empire’, especially the assumption of the kind of military resistance that could induce a “just war” under the Doctrine of Discovery. But there is more to this as well.

⁵¹⁸ Cited in Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: The History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 137.

As Incan mythology is told, and the *four regions* of *Twantinsuyu* exemplifies, there are widespread Indigenous concepts of twinning across Turtle Island, emphasizing quantities of two and four in balance. Tink Tinker has discussed this with respect to people of Turtle Island as possessing a collateral-egalitarian Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM):

The Worldview that traditionally pervaded all Native communities in the Americas embodies a cognitive model we might call a collateral-egalitarian image schema, which is more of a community-ist model . . . this is distinct from what the euro-west too easily imposes on Native people as a communist model.⁵¹⁹

Here Tinker is in dialogue with Barbara Mann, who follows Jesse Cornplanter and Paula Gunn Allen in dispelling notions of a proto-monotheism on Turtle Island.⁵²⁰ The twinning concepts are significantly present even in the *intentional* early contact production of textual versions of the Mayan *Popol Vuh* and the Incan *Huarochiri Manuscript*, which were written to allow missionaries to genocidally identify and extirpate Indigenous cultures. Yet in daily practices among Mayans today the stories live on, as well as in literary forms such as Rigoberta Menchú's biography.

In Incan mythology, Pachacamac is paired with Pachamama, exhibiting a gender balance persistent along with the uniting of different regional entities. Similarly, *huacas* and "earth-beings" as described by Marisol De La Cadena, which are often insufficiently

⁵¹⁹ Tink Tinker, "Why I Do Not Believe in a Creator God," *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*, Ed. Steve Heinrichs (Harrisonburg, VA: 2013), 172-173.

⁵²⁰ Barbara Mann, *Spirits of Blood, Spirits of Breath: The Twinned Cosmos of Indigenous America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 34-38.

translated as “deities,” or sometimes “superhumans,” speaks to the material connection of land and place. Vertical hierarchical relationships seep into translation. When notions of a Creator God or deities, or even the Virgin Mary, who is sometimes superimposed onto *Pachamama*, colonize Indigenous Peoples with an up-down ICM, they simultaneously deterritorialize the Indigenous connections to *land*. Thus, eurochristianity and the notion of ‘religion’ operate as power/knowledge to disinherit Indigenous Peoples from their sense of place. Where else is there to go but into the arms of the Virgin for consolation? Perhaps, “mother Ayahuasca”? Yet as we saw above, the generic term ‘ayahuasca’, used of necessity invites loads of equivocation in Viveiros de Castro’s sense.

David Chidester ends his book, *Empire of Religion*, by noting, “I remain convinced that we cannot simply abandon the terms *religion* and *religions* because we are stuck with them as a result of a colonial, imperial, and now global legacy.”⁵²¹ He goes on:

In any critical history of the study of religion, they must be the objects of analysis. For the study of Religion, however, they must be not objects but occasions for analysis, providing openings in a field of possibilities for exploring powerful classifications and orientations, cognitive capacities and constraints, and the cultural repertoires of myth and fiction, ritual and Magic, humanity and divinity.⁵²²

Theodore Vial echoes this with respect to the history of race. While we cannot do without concepts, “our concept of race relies on a theological or philosophical

⁵²¹ David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 312.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

anthropology first worked out by expressivists in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.”⁵²³ Even when this anthropology is employed to call out Eurocentrism, it still contains within it the teleology of modernity. As Vial argues, “there are limits to how far we can move, given the conceptual structures of modernity we still inhabit.”⁵²⁴ Tinker would see those conceptual limits as the boundaries of eurochristian framing. Such subtle attention to cognitive framing is largely absent in broader discourse on ayahuasca or ayahuasca religions.

Indeed, and by using ayahuasca and ayahuasca religions as the *occasion* for this analysis, my hope has been that we may be more able to see the persistent eurochristian framing underwriting claims to modernity, civilization, race, empire, and even liberal secularism. The individuating and interiorizing of religion as “faith alone” and “private belief” allows this underwriting to persist even amid personal disavowals of the historical process. The “reset button” of being born again too easily absolves one of historical accountability and owning up to past violence, preserving and extending the trauma over generations, while the colonizers teach their children nothing of this past and tell them they are “innocent.” In this sense, every baptism is simultaneously an erasure, especially in its modern and liberally individuated or “secularized” form, or as a decontextualized “rite,” which maintains an amnesia with respect to the horrors introduced by forced religious conversions in earlier eras. In the “innocence” of their eurochristian *tabula*

⁵²³ Theodore Vial, *Modern Religion, Modern Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 158.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

rasa, secularized eurochristian subjects are romantically free to *explore* and to *experience*. This is all part of the colonial romance expressed through a rhetoric of sacrifice and renewal, of being *Homo renatus*. It is an adventurous *journey*.

Within the history of the study of religion, the Romantic tendencies I am describing have at times been discussed and critiqued as the phenomenological approach to religion. The appeal of the ayahuasca experience must be rooted here. I frame this as the problem of “experience,” which is an aesthetic phenomenon more deeply rooted within European culture than important books such as William James’s *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1901-1902). James is worth mentioning, however, because he explicitly addresses the correlation between consciousness-altering substances and expressions of spirituality. James argued: “the sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticisms of the sober hour. Sobriety diminishes, discriminates, and says no; drunkenness expands, unites, and says yes.”⁵²⁵ Throughout the nineteenth century, eurochristians often recontextualized their metaphysical assumptions through attention to the ways that science might evidence the materiality of spiritual experience. This move owed itself to Enlightenment notions of rationality which, when coupled with notions of progress and evolution, expressed the view that Christian civilization was “naturally” the most rational religious expression.

⁵²⁵ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Dover, 2002), 387.

Thus, comparative views of “universal religion” were operating within an impulse to historicize the “development” of civilization itself.

More particularly, the Romantic aesthetics that accompany and express liberalism and its political-theological underwriting work to fashion a subject capable of certain kinds of ineffable experience. I argue that such a subject – whether thought of as economic or political – is derived from a eurochristian political theology. Many people will be familiar with Caspar David Friedrich’s 1818 painting, “Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog,” which is often used to signify the Romantic aesthetics of the sublime. The painting is a classic example of the alienated, modern subject existing within an up-down or Conqueror model of an ICM underwritten by eurochristian framing. Friedrich’s “wanderer” certainly holds a walking stick instead of a sword. His contemplative space is nevertheless premised on hierarchical poetics. Here, romantic aesthetics, like liberalism, extend eurochristian religious poetics and eurochristendomination.

Romantic Aesthetics

Romantic aesthetics persist outside of overt claims to Christian belief, but they maintain a eurochristian social organization. For example, Sigmund Freud famously opened *Civilization and Its Discontents* as a reply to a letter from French dramatist, Romain Rolland. Rolland had wished that Freud’s *Future of an Illusion* had been more sensitive to an “oceanic feeling” common to humans but not necessarily bound to dogma. I want to articulate how liberalized and “New Age” notions of spirituality persist in transferring eurochristian religious poetics, so I quote Rolland at length:

I myself am familiar with this sensation. All through my life, it has never failed me; and I have always found in it a source of vital renewal. In that sense, I can say that I am profoundly 'religious' — without this constant slate (like a sheet of water which I feel flushing under the bark) affecting in any way my critical faculties and my freedom to exercise them — even if that goes against the immediacy of the interior experience. In this way, without discomfort or contradiction, I can lead a 'religious' life (in the sense of that prolonged feeling) and a life of critical reason (which is without illusion) . . .

I may add that this 'oceanic' sentiment has nothing to do with my personal yearnings. Personally, I yearn for eternal rest; survival has no attraction for me at all. But the sentiment I experience is imposed on me as a fact. It is a contact. And as I have recognized it to be identical (with multiple nuances) in a large number of living souls, it has helped me to understand that that was the true subterranean source of religious energy which, subsequently, has been collected, canalized and dried up by the Churches, to the extent that one could say that it is inside the Churches (which-ever they may be) that true 'religious' sentiment is least available.⁵²⁶

I cite this largely forgotten Nobel Prize winner at because I believe the sentiment that he describes is largely iterated throughout New Age-influenced discourse on ayahuasca (and psychedelics in general). Mainly, this view asserts that mainstream religion in its overly institutionalized form has calcified and is largely unable to attend to a persistent spiritual longing despite the emergence of secular or irreligious life. As William Parsons notes, Rolland's letter also mentions two "great minds of Asia," by which he means Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda.⁵²⁷ Part of the "oceanic feeling" already present in Romantic aesthetics is the sense of being confronted with one's mortality in the face of vastness.

⁵²⁶ Cited in William Barclay Parsons, *The Enigma of the Oceanic Feeling: Revisioning the Psychoanalytic Theory of Mysticism* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 37.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

Just as Vivekananda came to transnationally represent eastern practices at The Parliament of Religions for the September 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Frederick Jackson Turner had saturated his famous essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" with explicitly eurochristian Romantic aesthetics:

The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick, he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is, that here is a new product that is American. At first, the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American.⁵²⁸

Saturated with essentialist thinking, such euro-forming aesthetics, just like the New Age perspective, rely on the idea of a modern automaton, separated from nature, in awe of it, and finally, through gradual consumption and enlightenment, transcends it as a born-again, *experienced* character. With the "closing of the frontier," twentieth-century American colonizers would increasingly look south.

⁵²⁸ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" Paper read during the World Columbian Exposition, Chicago, July 12, 1893, *National Humanities Center*, accessed January 6, 2020, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/empire/text1/turner.pdf>.

The Romance of Missionary Empire-Building

As early as 1935, American missionary William Cameron Townsend was stressing the necessity to go into South and Central America to spread the gospel to Indians through the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), which founded in 1934 following initial work in Guatemala with the Kaqchikel Maya. Non-sectarian in form, both SIL and the later Wycliffe Bible Translators (1942) worked across various Protestant and Catholic groups. The liberalizing of Brazilian and Mexican governments had limited the role of the Catholic church and made room for various denominational groups to gain presence. SIL and Townsend often worked directly with political officials. In a pamphlet delivered to the American Ambassador to Mexico, Josephus Daniels warned early on of communist principles threatening Mexico: “When twelve million Indians and half-breeds descend on cities and towns in a wave of destruction, then it will be too late to save ourselves; now there is still time.”⁵²⁹ The eurochristian framing in terms of the protectors of a racialized civilization is naturalized in such language, and we must remember Townsend was a language expert. As part of a modernist move among evangelicals who stressed “development,” Townsend embraced social reform as a tool for his civilizing mission. He was one of many.

⁵²⁹ Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 72.

Following his own evangelical leanings, Nelson Rockefeller plead at the White House during the Second World War for U.S. involvement in South America, “regardless of German or Allied victory” in the war:

If the United States is to maintain its security and its political and economic hemispheric position ... it must take economic measures at once to secure economic prosperity in Central and South America, and to establish this prosperity in the frame of hemisphere economic cooperation and dependence.⁵³⁰

This is a clear extension of the Monroe Doctrine, which was the foreign-policy compliment to John Marshall’s inclusion of the Doctrine of Discovery in his 1823 Supreme Court decision. As Lindsay Robertson’s *Conquered by Law* demonstrates in the contextual history of the *Johnson v. M’Intosh* case, John Marshall’s ruling extend well beyond the initial case to address several other Supreme Court rulings by including the Doctrine of Discovery.⁵³¹ In 1943, Townsend announced to his staff that the U.S. government would pay “the Summer Institute of Linguistics to give its courses to one hundred Army and Navy officers.”⁵³² Twentieth-century missionary efforts in South America were entwined with aggressive foreign policy, even though local tensions existed in various countries.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., 95.

⁵³¹ The issue went back to the foundations of the nation. Marshall remained a committed federalist working against republicans such as Thomas Jefferson. Although Robert J. Miller has documented well in *Native America Discovered and Conquered* Jefferson’s own use of Discovery Doctrine since before the Revolution, Robertson notes Jefferson’s own critique of Marshall for “travelling outside” the parameters of the case. Lindsay. G. Robertson, *Conquest by Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 92.

⁵³² Ibid., 130.

The CIA would later face public scandal from church leaders in the U.S. for its use of missionaries. As one *New York Times* article in 1976 reported:

Rebutting the charge by the national council's executive committee that there had been "extensive contact" between his organization and religious personnel, Mr. [William E.] Colby said, "In fact, C.I.A. has very few such contacts."

He added that "such relationships are purely voluntary and in no way reflect upon the integrity or the mission of the clergy involved."

Mr. [Phillip] Buchen's Nov. 5 letter to Senator Hatfield said, by contrast, that "many clergymen" had been engaged in intelligence work and that "the President does not feel it would be wise at present to prohibit the C.I.A. from having any connection with the clergy."⁵³³

The controversy is itself framed by American ideas of a "wall of separation" between church and state, but the attention to a longer eurochristian history shows that even that discursive idea, which relies on notions of "secular" and "religions" is simultaneously part of a social movement informing imperialist expansion.

In this process, explicit evangelists and military are not the only actors. Both the government and liberal capitalists such as Nelson Rockefeller funded various knowledge-producing efforts in South America. Famous anthropologists such as Charles Wagley and Richard Evans Schultes were supported both by Rockefeller and the U.S. National Research Council. National security was the agenda. Schultes is particularly revered in ayahuasca discourse communities. He was a point of contact for William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, whose *Yagé Letters* (1963) did much to spread the word about ayahuasca among the counterculture. Schultes also trained Wade Davis, who has written much on

⁵³³ Kenneth A. Briggs, "Churches, Angered by Disclosures, Seek to Bar Further C.I.A. Use of Missionaries in Intelligence Work," *New York Times*, January 29, 1976, accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/01/29/archives/churches-angered-by-disclosures-seek-to-bar-further-cia-use-of.html>.

Schultes and ayahuasca. Schultes gathered “seven tons of rubber seeds in the tropical Putumayo and Vaupés regions of southern Columbia,” in addition to “passing on intelligence on the political sympathies of his Columbian colleagues.”⁵³⁴ The Romantic marveling at ayahuasca’s potential is embedded in this social forming, even when it is approached from a secular position. Burroughs and Ginsberg are not in any way “Christians,” yet they and others like them (myself included) operate within the eurochristian frame. Schultes’ *Plants of the Gods* (1979), written in collaboration with Albert Hofmann, the famous chemist who discovered LSD, operated within a countercultural milieu that has become normed. As the scholar of esotericism and counterculture, Christopher Partridge, words it, “occulture” has become “ordinary.” Building on Colin Campbell’s sociological designation of the ‘cultic milieu’, Partridge writes:

it seemed clear that there was an influential culture of enchantment, which encompassed marginal and mainstream, the deviant and the conventional, and which circulated ideas, created synergies, and formed new trajectories, all of which were driven by wider cultural forces. Indeed, it became increasingly obvious that, although hegemonic culture conserved many ideas trivial and peripheral, in actual fact they were contributing to socially significant constructions of the sacred and the profane.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 136.

⁵³⁵ Christopher Partridge, *The Lyre of Orpheus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7.

Applied to ayahuasca discourse and the psychedelic renaissance, Partridge's words here speak well to the ways Ayahuasca continues to signal liberal needs for the marvelous possession of a wondrous experience.

With respect to 'religion', Mircea Eliade famously drew on these Romantic aesthetics and Freud in his most famous book, *The Sacred and the Profane* (1957), wherein he lamented the loss of traditional and "archaic" forms of life. This again was part of a phenomenological approach to religion. Eliade had seen a "double fall" in modernity whereby religious sentiments persist but are relegated to the unconscious, and thus symbols come to stand as nodal access points to "universal" experience:

Symbols awaken individual experience and transmute it into a spiritual act, into metaphysical comprehension of the world. In the presence of any tree, symbol of the world tree and image of cosmic life, a man of the premodern societies can attain to the highest spirituality, for, by understanding the symbol, *he succeeds in living in the universal*. It is the religious vision of the world, and the concomitant ideology, that enable him to make this individual experience bear fruit, to "open" it to the universal.⁵³⁶

Taking Eliade's terms uncritically, and drawing especially on Eliade's, *Shamanism* (1951), psychedelic enthusiasts in the late twentieth-century such as Terence McKenna in his *Archaic Revival* began calling for a "return" to "traditional" practices.

Along with his brother, Dennis, who remains an important researcher in psychedelic studies today, Terence McKenna adventured in South America during the early 1970s and wrote compellingly about ayahuasca and other psychedelic experiences. However, as with social phenomena such as Burning Man and festival culture, which

⁵³⁶ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959), 211-212.

participates directly in a eurochristian-derived aesthetics of sacrifice despite its “pagan” trappings, these universalized sentiments create a deterritorialized and perennially utopic space that is thoroughly modern and entrenched within liberal notions of subjectivity that are deeply shaped by a eurochristian political theology, even when overt rejections of “mainstream” or “organized” religion are made. Like any reaction-formation, such iterations are repetitions rather than differences.

Terence McKenna’s influence on ayahuasca and psychedelic discourse cannot be understated, yet he clearly evidences the persistence of eurochristian Romanticism even when rejecting the “institutionalized” versions of “Western Christianity,” which vilify the use of “drugs.” When interviewed by Will Noffke for *High Frontiers* in 1984, Noffke laments the views of “organized religion” and asks McKenna: “There is a distinct denial [by organized religions] of the validity of personal experience. I find that a great many people look at the Psychedelic experience as highly suspect, highly dangerous, and uncontrollable. How have you found people deal with this?”⁵³⁷ Note the liberal political subjectivity inherent in the question.

The problem with organized religion is framed as its illiberalism, its denial of the “right” to experience. McKenna answers Noffke:

It's uncontrollable to the degree that it is not well understood. These pre-literate cultures have an unbroken tradition of shamanic understanding and ethnomedicine that reaches back to Paleolithic times and beyond. We have nothing comparable. So people in our culture who get into deep water with these plants, whom do they turn to? Whom do they at what's certain knowledge? And [in] Peru, we saw people who were naive about ayahuasca. People who had come from Lima for the experience got to the place where they were definitely having a

⁵³⁷ Terence McKenna, *Archaic Revival* (New York: Harper, 1991), 29.

bad trip. But the shaman is able to come over to them and blow tobacco smoke over them and chant Dash things that appear to us to be symbolic but that nevertheless act with the same efficacy as if the person had received a shot of Demerol. So one man's symbolism is another man's technology. This should be kept in mind when dealing with these cultures. How things appear to us may not be how they appear to the people who are in mashed in them. Unless you shed your language and enter into these cultures entirely, you will always have the point of view of a stranger and an outsider.⁵³⁸

On a purely descriptive level, there are elements of this passage that are congruent with claims that I am making with respect to the necessity of discrete Indigenous deep structures. For example, Winona LaDuke has shown with respect to Kennewick man, a 9,000-year-old relative of Columbia River peoples, that connections to ancient lineages are important and claimed by Indigenous People today.⁵³⁹ Oral histories also predate European contact but often are not valued as “factual” by eurochristians, nor are oral literacies and day-to-day forms of living until collected as part of a regime of power/knowledge within a eurochristian frame. Still, it seems there is a process of equivocation at work between Indigenous ICMs and liberal-secularist impulses toward individually transcendent experiences.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ “The Kennewick Man” controversy involved a dispute between scientists who wanted to study the DNA of the ancient skeleton and Columbia River people who wanted him buried under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. When DNA results supported the local claims, scientists came up with other excuses not to rebury him. As LaDuke notes, the issue crosses notions of biological determinacy for Native status as well as issues of allowing geneticists' claims to influence courts on Native status. Winona LaDuke, *Rediscovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), 122.

Claims to traditional connections matter to people outside of what western science has yet to determine. However, the lineage of Romantic aesthetics and eurochristian political frames that underwrite liberalism is quite apparent within McKenna's appeal to an "unbroken tradition." That in itself is not so much of a problem as is the detached language employed when McKenna says, "So one man's symbolism is another man's technology. This should be kept in mind when dealing with these cultures."⁵⁴⁰ This language, as with the "archaic revival" points to traditionalist leanings in Eliade's work, especially *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*.

By the time McKenna was writing, scholars had long-since pointed out the flaws of Eliade's structuralist universalizing, but McKenna and other psychedelic advocates often cite Eliade uncritically. Simultaneously, McKenna is correct to say one's cultural frame keeps one outside of emic knowledge. Yet his full-blown Romanticism shows up in his grand claims about humanity, which hearken back to eurochristian universalism and World Religion:

History is the shockwave of eschatology. Something is at the end of time and it is casting an enormous shadow over human history, drawing all human becoming toward it. All the wars, the philosophies, the rapes, the pillaging, the migrations, the cities, the civilizations – all of this is occupying a microsecond of geological, planetary, and galactic time as the monkeys react to the symbiote, which is in the environment and which is feeding information to humanity about the larger picture.⁵⁴¹

This quasi-mystical language fuses with scientific knowledge:

⁵⁴⁰ Terence McKenna, *Archaic Revival* (New York: Harper, 1991), 41.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

As nervous systems evolve to higher and higher levels, they come more and more to understand the true situation in which they are embedded. And the true situation in which we are embedded is an organism, an organization of active intelligence on a galactic scale.⁵⁴²

McKenna also laments the “guardians of scientific truth” as culturally limited: “This means that the contents of shamanic experience and of plant-induced ecstasies are inadmissible [to science] even though they are the source of novelty and the cutting edge of the ingression of the novel into the plenum of being.”⁵⁴³ The future, for him, will be psychedelic because the future is one of the mind. Yet at the same time, western, organized religion holds “us” back, as does science’s too-rigid view of knowledge. The result is:

We are alienated, so alienated that the self must disguise itself as an extraterrestrial in order not to alarm us with the truly bizarre dimensions that it encompasses. When we can love the alien, then we will have begun to heal the psychic discontinuity that has plagued us since at least the 16th century possibly earlier.⁵⁴⁴

By contrast, in my view, perhaps eurochristians could own up to our own participation and the ways that we have benefited from and continue to perpetuate such androcentric madness. This might be healthier than seeking a ticket out by way of a personal, exceptional experience.

It is important to note that while McKenna’s work has undoubtedly inspired many folks to experience ayahuasca (among other substances), he did not belong to an

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

ayahuasca religion. He is perhaps best categorized by Wouter Hanegraaff's definition of New Age.⁵⁴⁵ I include McKenna here because I believe that he shares much in terms of eurochristian thought lineage with ayahuasca religions, and because he is arguably prophetic in his rhetoric. Yet he is by no means a spokesperson for any "organized" sense of religion. If we are going to address ayahuasca in diaspora, we have to attend to both the avowedly religious use, which seeks exemptions, and the non-affiliated use, which nevertheless draws many claims to spiritual-enhancing qualities of ayahuasca. McKenna's focus on the self, on exploration of the unknown, on the freedom to *experience*, on progress and evolution, evidences the habitus of liberalism, even in his grand and rather monotheistic eschatology. In *Food of the Gods* he writes:

Religious use of psychedelic plants is a civil rights issue; its restriction is the repression of a legitimate religious sensibility. In fact, it is not a religious sensibility that is being repressed, but *the* religious sensibility, an experience of *religio* based on the plant human relationship that were in place long before the advent of history.⁵⁴⁶

Here, McKenna's view of history is indebted to the same nineteenth-century forms of religious experimentation in Spiritualism or Spiritism that inform ayahuasca religions.

His view maintains a eurochristian framing, even if he critiques organized religion.

Although I do not wish to reduce all of McKenna's thinking to this one frame, I do hope

⁵⁴⁵ Quoted at length in chapter three.

⁵⁴⁶ Terence McKenna, *Food of the Gods: The Search for the Original Tree of Knowledge, A Radical History of Plants, Drugs, and Human Evolution* (New York: Bantam, 1992): xix.

that my readers will be able to see the eurochristian underwriting in similar liberal secularized rhetorical positions on ayahuasca or psychedelics emphasizing *experience*.

In contrast, I have pointed to aspects of twinning and balance and Survivance in the ICMs of Indigenous Peoples as entirely different, obscured and harmed by the overbearing impulse of eurochristian thought to experience and commodify otherness expressed by Romantic aesthetics. I believe at root here is the concept of *experience* occupied by alienated, liberal subjectivities foreign to Indigenous traditions. The individuated experience emerges from eurochristian deep framing.

Understanding Eurochristian Alienation and Experience

The liberal emphasis on self is expressed as Romanticism when self-knowledge and reflection arise in proximity to an ineffable or “oceanic” feeling or experience of otherness and wonder. Some readers may hear echoes of Max Weber in my argument. Max Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) had argued that a Protestant, and particularly Puritan mode of being, “favored the development of a rational bourgeois economic life; it was the most important part, and above all the only consistent influence in the development of that life. It stood at the cradle of the modern economic man.”⁵⁴⁷ From this he argued that one of the most fundamental aspects of “the spirit of modern capitalism” and modern culture is “rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, [which] was born – that is what this discussion has sought to demonstrate – from

⁵⁴⁷ Max Weber, *Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 117.

the spirit of Christian asceticism.”⁵⁴⁸ He ended his book, not with a precise definition of the “spirit,” but by lamenting “the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order,” saying:

this order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which to-day determine the lives of all the individuals who are born in this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt.⁵⁴⁹

This technical rationality, or to use the term of his critical theorist descendants, instrumental reason, out-reasons the modern rational subject. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno would further analyze the mechanism of this instrument in their classic, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, in ways congruent with my analysis of deep framing, but here we ought to see this thought process as exhibiting an aesthetics of transcendence within eurochristian framing.⁵⁵⁰

Even in the lamentation and concern for a process of globalization, which sees capitalism as a force of nature to be transcended, we can see the eschatology of eurochristian temporal framing. If we merely put the diaspora of ayahuasca into concerns about consumer society, which are indeed real concerns, then we risk merely reinscribing eurochristian framing. Weber famously characterized modern life as

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 122-23.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ I am open to aligning the eurochristian frame with Horkheimer and Adorno’s work more explicitly and have done so in a series of posts on thenewpolis.com: <https://thenewpolis.com/?s=The+Dialectic+Of+Enlightenment+From+A+Postsecular+Lens>

“disenchanted.” This early sociological view of religion from Germany echoed French counterparts in that both were critiques of English liberalism. As Émile Durkheim had written in *Elementary forms of Religious Life* (1912), religion, like language, exists between and among people. It is not about what an individual claims to believe: “The point is to know why experience is not enough but presupposes conditions that are external and prior to it, and how it is that these conditions emerge in the proper time and manner.”⁵⁵¹ Durkheim’s comment helps us to see the liberal political connection to Romantic aesthetics favoring experiential descriptions or the ‘phenomenological view’ of religion.

While Durkheim, like Eliade, saw religious phenomena as a binary between sacred and profane, social rules or “rites” also occupy a liminality by which we move away from individual experience: “rites are rules of conduct that prescribe how man must conduct himself with sacred things.”⁵⁵² In *Purity and Danger* (1966), Mary Douglas follows Talcott Parsons’ assertion that Durkheim was implicitly arguing against English political philosophy.⁵⁵³ In *Thinking About Religion*, Ivan Strenski notes that the emergence of anthropological and sociological approaches to religion evidenced a cross pollination among biblical scholars and other scholars.⁵⁵⁴ Giving lots of attention to

⁵⁵¹ Émile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 16.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵⁵³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (Routledge, 2002), 24.

⁵⁵⁴ He cites William Robertson Smith as a prime example. Ivan Strenski, *Thinking*

James Frazer, Strenski points out that even though we might later question a thinker's motivation for studying religion, we should separate that from whether or not the way they studied is valid.⁵⁵⁵ In Strenski's reading, Frazer saw religion as a psychological way to conquer death:

Unlike Robertson Smith, who saw the ritual instinct as primary, Frazer saw myths as vital and primitive in human civilization's formation. Moreover, the myths that mattered were those related to cults and religions working to enhance life by means of the performance of the sacrifice of the god.⁵⁵⁶

Freud and Eliade later extended this view by relegating religious affection to the unconscious, but as Strenski emphasizes of both phenomenologists and psychoanalysts, "They found it quite difficult to let go of evolutionary ideas, especially the idea that Christianity represented the highest, or most highly 'evolved' religion."⁵⁵⁷ New Age views of ayahuasca struggle with the same problem.

As more economically liberal interpretations built on what had become "universal" notions of the "science" of religion among Dutch thinkers such as Cornelius Tiele and his "morphology of forms," or with Max Müller's impact in England, there was inevitably more emphasis on an individual's transcendent experiences. Thus, Scottish scholar Ninian Smart would use the phenomenological reductions or *epoché* as a way of

about Religion: An Historical Introduction to Theories of Religion (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 129.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 140.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 165.

“bracketing off” the subject’s beliefs. Strenski also covers the German Lutheran theologian, Rudolph Otto’s idea of the “numinous” and “religion” as an autonomous category informed by *experience* of the sacred or holy,⁵⁵⁸ a concept that is *sui generis*.⁵⁵⁹ For phenomenologists, there is no “explaining” religion, but rather as Gerardus van der Leeuw emphasized, description versus explanation.⁵⁶⁰

Most important to my concern here is the Protestant inflection on the notion of experience. Again, this conjures echoes of Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*. The German tradition since Hegel (at least) had been preoccupied with the notion of Spirit (*Geist*). Weber was critical both of a Marxian tradition of materialism, seeing religiosity as an important way of understanding economic growth, especially in its crassly capitalist forms, which had emerged through Benjamin Franklin’s inherited Calvinism in the United States. It is indicative of a deeply-framed Jewish critique of this Protestant emphasis on experience when Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* notes that he has never personally experienced the “oceanic feeling”:

From my own experience I could not convince myself of the primary nature of such a feeling. But this gives me no right to deny that it does in fact occur in other people. The only question is whether it is being correctly interpreted and whether it ought to be regarded as the *fons et origio* of the whole need for religion.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., 181.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 185.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 192.

⁵⁶¹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), 12.

Here Freud's comment is politicized in the sense that it is implicitly making a claim about religion in a liberal public sphere of "rights."⁵⁶² His expression of religious tolerance rings out amid a racialized persecution of Jewish people in Europe.

Complimenting both this tolerant view and a less individually-experienced notion of religion, anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski had proposed a "pragmatic critique," whereby, "Religious people may say one thing about why they are religious or the transcendent goals of being religious, but what about what we can see, feel, and hear with our own senses about the apparent effects, functions, and consequences – intended or unintended – of religion?"⁵⁶³ Strenski notes that "[r]eligious experience is for Malinowski one of the products of this noble – 'sublime' – foolishness of people who refuse to acquiesce in the ineluctability of their own annihilation."⁵⁶⁴ Following Durkheim, the religious tolerance expressed by early sociologists was not framed in terms of individual experience or the "right to experience" but rather because "the

⁵⁶² However, I would argue that his skepticism regarding experience echoes the liberalism of Spinoza's *Political-Theological Treatise* for religious tolerance. As I will explain with respect to John Locke, this is an entirely different notion of liberalism than the privatized interiority that informs Protestant conceptions of belief and property which inherit and employ the Doctrine of Discovery for the displacement and eradication of Native peoples. In other words, it is the same historically Christian impulse that persecutes Jews as it does Amerindians. That said, it is important to note that as Puritan Christians imagined themselves to be a Israelites coming to a "New Jerusalem," they aesthetically figured Indians as Canaanites to be wiped out.

⁵⁶³ Ivan Strenski, *Thinking about Religion: An Historical Introduction to Theories of Religion* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 262.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 273.

individual was sacred because this was a social value,”⁵⁶⁵ an emphasis on symbolism over literalism.⁵⁶⁶ This de-emphasis on liberal individuality evident within eurochristian scholarship ought to speak to the political fiction of the “individual experience,” which despite its poetic nature (in the sense that it is *made*) nevertheless reifies itself in people’s lives.

All of this background is especially important as we consider the different frames that are used to publicly define ‘religion’ in various regions when we consider ayahuasca in diaspora. While broadly eurochristian, public life in the United States has a much more Protestant inflection than South America. There are indeed nuances between various European locations even before we get to discussion of Turtle Island. In the discourse on the study of religion over the past several decades, there has also been an increasing emphasis on the study of religion with respect to public space. This is simultaneously a discussion about the presence and continuing viability of liberalism, but we only tend to notice this when we look at discursive motivations.

Liberalism in the South American Context

An unlikely, yet important, book with which to consider ayahuasca’s diaspora here is Jose Casanova’s *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994). Although he does not discuss ayahuasca religions, he does take a transnational view that helps us to see distinctions between how religion is framed in the public sphere in the U.S. and Brazil

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 293.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 303.

respectively. His book is also important because, unlike the majority of books on religion in the United States, his gives specific attention to Catholicism's deep connection to Latin American political situations. Even today, despite over a century of liberal government, Brazil has maintained a strong connection to Catholicism, with some important qualifications to be noted.

Casanova is an early critic of secularization narratives. For him, the cult scares of the 1980s were not "new religious movements" but rather the revitalization of religion in the public sphere. He argues that "we are witnessing the 'deprivatization' of religion in the modern world."⁵⁶⁷ Religions refuse modernism's / secularization's attempt to marginalize them. I see this as the emergence of the "postsecular." He asks, in 1994, "who still believes in the myth of secularization?"⁵⁶⁸ But we know well in the aftermath of an event such as 9/11 many committed liberals would challenge the "return" of religion. For example, many un-tolerant liberal secularists regarded Muslims post 9/11 as adhering "backward" concepts of religiosity by blending it with long-romantically exoticized notions of people at the "edge" of eurochristian civilization. Edward Said's *Orientalism* was one major critique of the persistence of such thought. Casanova, however, makes an important methodological claim: "What the sociology of religion needs to do is to substitute for the mythical account of a universal process of secularization comparative sociological analyses of historical processes of secularization,

⁵⁶⁷ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

if and when they take place.” Casanova’s claim implicitly subverts Protestant liberalism’s claims to secular space. In other words, part of the “myth” of secularization is the naturalization of experientially based, yet interiorized notions of belief privileged in particularly Protestant settings.

United States citizens and their political system has long asserted an overt value of separation between “church and state,” all the while naturalizing a political sphere underwritten by Protestant values. Hence, whenever there is an influx of immigrants who are (largely) not Protestant Christians, such as Irish and Italian Catholics in the nineteenth-century, or the Chinese and Mexican immigrants of the early twentieth-century whose presence stimulated the Harrison Act and the beginning of the War of Drugs, the turning away of Jews fleeing Europe during World War Two, or the Muslim refugees of recent years, there is a public panic in the so-called land of the free. To re-emphasize Casanova’s point: secularization theory should die or be revised. As we shall see, missionary Protestantism’s massive expansion to South America throughout the twentieth-century affected not only the localized contexts in which ayahuasca was spread throughout various Indigenous groups, it also informs many of the new immigrants to the U.S. from Central and South America.

Casanova argues that capitalism presents itself as universalizing secularism, but that alone cannot account for it. He argues against a ‘decline of religion’ thesis as well as a ‘privatization of religion’ thesis. Secularization theory should not espouse a fundamental tension between religion and secular society because America simply is not that way. However, liberalism makes government alone the decider for “public space,”

privatizing religion.⁵⁶⁹ The First Amendment leads to different ideas of “separation”:
“The limits of the liberal conception derive from its tendency to conceive of all political
relations, religious ones included, too narrowly in terms of juridical-constitutional lines
of separation.⁵⁷⁰” Addressing Hobbes and then Rousseau’s Civil Religion, which
individualize, and against Kropotkin and Durkheim’s more social focus, he writes: “In
the case of liberalism, the crucial need to maintain a clear differentiation between spheres
of legality and morality, in order to protect precisely all modern individual freedoms and
the right to privacy, led to an over-judicial conception of the public and private
divide.”⁵⁷¹ But things are both similar and different in South America.

Generally speaking, whether in the south or the north, groups who use ayahuasca
within a conception of ‘religion’ have had more political success in receiving exempt
status for their use of ayahuasca as sacrament than Indigenous Peoples who embed their
practices within relationship models that do not separate out notions of the sacred from
daily life. Positioning a group’s use of ayahuasca as a matter of religious freedom works
in a general sense transnationally, but not necessarily everywhere. For example, in
Uruguay, which has extremely progressive views regarding drug policies, as well as a
broad public commitment to secularism, religious rhetoric surrounding ayahuasca use can
be socially marginalizing. Juan Scuro writes:

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 65.

In Brazil, it is essential to emphasize the fact that Santo Daime is a religion, and that is precisely why the use of ayahuasca has been regulated exclusively for religious purposes, by duly recognized religious institutions. But in the Uruguayan case, this strategy acts the opposite way; although, that does not necessarily represent a difficulty for the Daimista community in regard to seeing itself and its rights recognized; the secularism of the Uruguayan state, with its freedom of religion, is their guarantee.⁵⁷²

Uruguay is not the norm, especially with respect to ayahuasca's diaspora, though this is an important expression of how ayahuasca religiosities fair with respect to notions of a binary between the secular and the religious.

Non-American contexts are worth considering as well. In the very secular England, by contrast, as Jonathan Hobbs⁵⁷³ and Charlotte Walsh have argued, ayahuasca is treated very much as a “drug,” following the 1971 *Misuse of Drugs Act*, which is interpreted in line with international drug conventions. Advocating notions of cognitive liberty, Walsh notes the English courts' reluctance to acknowledge defendants' appeals to religious freedom under the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights and the continuing “pipe dream” of expecting that the courts will relent on the issue.⁵⁷⁴ This act

⁵⁷² Juan Scuro, “Interpretations and Challenges in the Neoshamanic and Ayahuasca Fields,” in Uruguay,” in *The Expanding World Ayahuasca Diaspora: Appropriation, Integration and Legislation*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (New York: Routledge, 2018), 29.

⁵⁷³ Jonathan Hobbs, “‘Altered by the Hand of Man’: Contextualizing Ayahuasca Law in Britain and Europe,” in Uruguay,” in *The Expanding World Ayahuasca Diaspora: Appropriation, Integration and Legislation*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (New York: Routledge, 2018), 54.

⁵⁷⁴ Charlotte Walsh, “Ayahuasca in the English Courts: Legal Entanglements with the Jungle Vine,” in Uruguay,” in *The World Ayahuasca Diaspora: Reinventions and Controversies*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar (New York: Routledge, 2018), 258.

was but one local example of U.S. hegemony informing the 1971 United Nations *Convention on Psychotropic Substances*.

In the United States, however, the particular argument for religious freedom has worked in the courts for some groups, yet at the expense of Indigenous communities, even while the decisions made by the courts rest on earlier conceptions related to Native American religious freedom. Here again is the logic of erasure at work, though it officially presents itself as a recognition of religious freedom. Such a conception of “religious” freedom is entirely rooted in the eurochristian framing underwritten and expressed by the Doctrine of Discovery.

Brazil’s history is also important here, especially in the wake of the counter-reformation. José Casanova gives five case studies, covering Spain’s *Reconquista*, which generated religious-nationalism that later gave way to “Universal Christian Monarchy” spreading all over Europe in the wake of the counter-Reformation. This included the expulsion of Jesuits in late eighteenth century. He notes that Spanish nationalism in Franco’s regime was avowedly Catholic. Poland, in Casanova’s view, was a second “frontier” for Catholicism, but Catholic nationalism there was generally replaced by “universal rights” language espoused by Rome. Most important for this study, he characterizes Brazil as an outgrowth of Iberian Catholic nationalism, as well as a fusion of Catholicism and Freemasonry.

After an initial secular separation, Casanova argues that the Brazilian church sought social and economic stability by fusing with state and a return to Orthodoxy, at the expense of lower classes. Thus, throughout the twentieth century, secularism, Marxism,

Protestantism, and Spiritism were all identified as *threats* to the Brazilian church-state harmony. Against this, prophetic traditions informed liberation theology, which were also part of the social gospel movement, a Christian socialism as critique of liberalism that was born during the mass migrations and famines of the nineteenth-century that produced large populations of urban poor people. As this prophetic tradition entered the church, following Vatican II, the pope advised priests to stay out of politics, thus enhancing nationalist efforts at privatization and neoliberalism.

As R. Andrew Chesnut details in *Born Again in Brazil*, throughout this period, impoverished and racially marginalized people turned more toward faith healing, folk saints, and increasingly charismatic forms of evangelical Protestantism. On the conservative Catholic side of things, Mary Crescentia Thornton's *The Church and Freemasonry in Brazil, 1872-1875* laments the increasing sway of freemasonry toward more liberalizing impulses in government, which eventually led to the 1889 military *coup d'etat*. Although technically a democracy, Brazil's politics from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s could be broadly described as a series of undemocratic government *coups*, and even in recent elections claims of widespread government corruption persist. Despite my consideration of Brazilian ayahuasca religions, it is also important to remember that, despite its religious diversity, Brazil remains the largest Catholic nation in the world, and the groups using ayahuasca are but a tiny fraction of that population. Although equally indebted to eurochristian colonialism, Brazil is also significantly different than the United States.

Casanova's book reads American exceptionalism as Protestant, with Andrew Jackson as the first evangelical president. In terms of a critique of eurochristian framing, it is thus doubly significant that Jackson was influential in enacting the *Johnson v. M'Intosh* decision for Indian removal in the 1830s, even to John Marshall's dismay.⁵⁷⁵

The most notorious Indian removal in the United States occurred under Jackson with the "Trail of Tears." In the U.S., evangelical Protestantism became hegemonic throughout the nineteenth century as large groups of working-class Catholic immigrants faced discrimination. As scholars of 'whiteness' such as David Roediger have noted, these immigrants were not seen as "white," and pseudo-science regarding race and civic potential prevailed. With the emancipation of slaves, white wage labor emerged as a socioeconomic and racial distinction that was later amplified through Jim Crow laws. Emergent social gospel, resonating with socialism and impoverished urban centers eventually fractured U.S. Protestants with the rise of fundamentalism, yet as Casanova describes, fundamentalism became religion for "disinherited" as the social gospel became increasingly aligned with educated classes and progressive politics.⁵⁷⁶ This split was famously exacerbated by the Scopes trial, which signaled a retreat from public politics among evangelicals that would only re-emerge slowly through postwar appeals to Christianity as signaling American nationalist identity against "godless Communism." Still, the perception that a "disinherited" group of evangelical Christians who had kept

⁵⁷⁵ See Robertson's account in *Conquest by Law*.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

their faith and politics separate emerged in the late 1970s as the politicized concept of a “moral majority,” by the Christian right, which had sought to unify traditional impulses among both Protestants and Catholics.

Casanova notes that while Catholicism in U.S. often operated in the face of sectarian isolation, “we have witnessed in the late 1970s and 1980s a new style of ‘public Catholicism’ that is clearly distinguishable from both the ‘liberal republican’ and the ‘immigrant’ styles, and has no established precedent in the history of American Catholicism.”⁵⁷⁷ This is post Vatican II Catholicism:

There is no doubt that a new and activist intellectual stratum emerged within American Catholicism in the 1960s, whose members were to be found among bishops, priests, nuns, and laity alike and who became the carriers of the new Catholicism. But the neoconservative version of the thesis, which views the process as the rise of a new knowledge class usurping power from the old bourgeois class, is simply irrelevant in the Catholic context.⁵⁷⁸

Casanova notes, for example, various conflicting church views on abortion,⁵⁷⁹ yet Catholic quietism on room for a woman’s choice left evangelicals free reign over public discourse to manufacture claims about abortion that are by no means “traditionalist.”⁵⁸⁰ Although there are moments of alignment, especially in recent years, U.S. public discourse has largely been shaped by tacit Protestant hegemony while Brazil’s

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 175.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 186.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 193.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 197.

government has a long history of involvement with a universalizing notion of Roman Catholicism.

William Cameron Townsend's work in Guatemala and Mexico, especially as Mexico went through its own liberalization from the Catholic church, is also worthy of note. Political liberalization throughout South and Central America during the twentieth-century meant the opening-up of Protestant missionary attempts to civilize the world, especially through groups such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics and Wycliffe bible study. These larger sectarian characterizations and an increasingly blurred boundary between Protestant missionary work and Charismatic Catholicism post Vatican II must be kept in mind as we think about ayahuasca religions moving up north.

With respect to the Brazilian ayahuasca religions, the aesthetic sensibilities sometimes deemed secular mixed with the importation of Alan Kardec's Spiritism in the nineteenth century, which spread rapidly throughout the Caribbean, South and Central America. Although broadly Christian, the same universalizing and transnational forces inspiring post-counter-Reformation notions of universality among Catholics also inform Spiritism. This is important to note because Spiritism was able to adapt to both U.S. Protestant hegemony and popular Catholicism, as well as being entirely welcoming of the language of modern science. These transnational tendencies already underwrite some of the successes we have seen in recent years with ayahuasca religions in diaspora, and perhaps most interestingly they consciously seek reconciliation for notions of modernity with "innately" spiritual qualities so articulately expressed by Roland to Freud as an "oceanic feeling." This leads Spiritualist and Spiritualist-derived forms of religiosity to

be especially congruent with the values of liberalism, so long as one does not take a strictly secularist view of liberalism.

Spiritism as the eurochristian Underwriting of Ayahuasca Religion

No matter how transnational or rejecting of orthodox forms of “institutionalized religion” it may be, Spiritualism, like its New Age derivatives, emerged from a eurochristian theological frame and from Romantic aesthetics of the nineteenth century. Compelled by new scientific discoveries and considerations of animal magnetism and mesmerism, Spiritists saw their endeavors as likely to be affirmed by science, and they promoted both rationalism and optimism. As with the elements of New Thought (later popularized as “the power of positive thinking”) emergent in American Romanticism and following shifts toward Unitarianism away from Congregationalist and Puritan notions of a selective “elect” of predeterminate saved souls, Spiritualism reflects life-affirming as opposed to world-rejecting tendencies. Although utopic, the sensibility is that divinity is already infused with nature. If it is science’s role to uncover nature’s secrets, it will only reveal the divine mechanics of the universe. We ought to connect this not just to Romanticism but to Hobbes’s view of a rational ‘Nature’ corresponding to internalized rationality. It was in this Anglo-oriented lineage that nineteenth century Protestant American missionaries saw themselves and their “more evolved” status as the civilizers of the world.

Historians of Spiritualism have mentioned its socially-progressive tendencies. For example, Marlene Tromp’s *Altered States* explores how Spiritualist socializing, such

as séances, created spaces of permissibility to transgress Victorian gender roles by allowing the possessing spirits who had already “transgressed” the line between life and death to likewise transgress social and sexual decorum. In this case, the believability of metaphysical claims among Spiritists are secondary to actual material affects that the claims to the religiosity have on actual practitioners’ lives. In her detailed coverage of Spiritualism and Occultism in France during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sophie Lachapelle tracks a tenacious desire among practitioners to physically and materially evidence otherworldly encounters within Spiritualism. Similarly, Lynn Sharp’s *Secular Spirituality: Reincarnation and Spiritism in Nineteenth-Century France* rejects dichotomies between religion and secularity because:

Lines of spiritualist thought in the nineteenth century, especially spiritualism, created new combinations of spirituality, reason, and romantic outlooks that refused to give absolute primacy to either Enlightenment materiality or to the narrow religiosity of the Catholic church. Reincarnation and spiritism offered a secular version of spirituality popular with those who may have wanted to reject Catholicism in favor of science but definitely wanted a deep-seated religious outlook on the world.⁵⁸¹

Moreover, as Sharp notes, “Believers in reincarnation imagined an evolutionary, perfectible soul, improving as it moved through a series of lives.”⁵⁸² And while interest in such ideas was certainly due to orientalist studies, Sharp notes that most European scholars tended to see the roots of reincarnation in the West, not the East, with some

⁵⁸¹ Lynn Sharp, *Secular Spirituality: Reincarnation and Spiritism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), xii.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, xv.

claiming that druids influenced Pythagoras.⁵⁸³ Terence McKenna's viewpoints above are directly influenced by this Spiritist tradition, as are the recognized Brazilian ayahuasca religions. We miss the connection if we only focus on New Age sensibilities. There is a longer history at work.

As Andrew Dawson's work has noted, Spiritism arrived in Brazil through French émigrés as early as 1853 but emerged in its distinctly Brazilian form by the 1870s with the conversion of Adolfo Bezerra de Menezes Cavalcanti (1831-1900).⁵⁸⁴ As František Kalenda has traced, Spiritism's arrival in Brazil evidences some marked changes with European Spiritism. Kalenda notes that the journalist, Menezes, working in Bahia first translated Kardec and founded the first Spiritist center: *Grupo de Espiritualismo*.

Menezes also attempted founding a state-recognized Brazilian Spiritist Society. As Kalenda writes:

Menezes' idea of Spiritism was from the beginning very distinct from Kardec's. He formulated the doctrine in religious terms and even as a new, reformed form of Roman Catholicism. He called himself "Catholic by birth and faith" and claimed that "Spiritism and Catholicism are of the same Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The only thing separating them is time and words. Spiritism is a faithful translation of the Gospel teachings."⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁸⁴ Andrew Dawson, *New Era – New Religions: Religious Transformation in Contemporary Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 19-20.

⁵⁸⁵ František Kalenda, "'Ridiculous Charlatans or Lunatic Neck Cutters': Images of Spiritism in the Catholic 'Good Press,'" *Ibero-Americana Pragensia* 46, no. 1 (2018): 36. <https://doi.org/10.14712/24647063.2018.21>.

These features remain present in Brazilian ayahuasca religions. The former General Representative Mestre or “head” of the UDV, Raimundo Monteiro de Souza, unabashedly states: “The União do Vegetal is a Christian Reincarnationist religion. Its origin is Brazilian, though its purpose is universal: to work for the evolution of the human being in the sense of perfecting moral, intellectual, and spiritual values. It professes belief in reincarnation with the objective of evolution.”⁵⁸⁶ It emphasizes “the power of example” but also, of course, the sacrament of hoasca. They see this sacrament as different than ‘ayahuasca,’ which they see as outside their belief practices: “When we speak of Hoasca – or simply Vegetal – we are not referring to the substance in its chemical formation.”⁵⁸⁷ For UDV members, *experience* of the sacrament maintains the ecclesial body of the community. This is quite different than Indigenous contexts where not everyone partakes of the “consciousness-altering” substance.

‘Experience’, individualized within a eurochristian, liberal formation, is something westerners long for in their interests with ayahuasca, whether in explicitly religious settings or in healing ceremonies. When barred from such experiences, westerners lament the lack of “cognitive liberty” or “freedom of religion,” but the underlying conception of freedom here is a form of eurochristian-derived transcendence,

⁵⁸⁶ Raimundo Monteiro de Souza, “The Strength of Example: UDV, Memory and Mission,” *Hoasca: The Sacrament of the União do Vegetal*, ed. Joaze Bernardino-Costa (Novato, CA: Centro Espírita Benficiente União do Vegetal), 43.

⁵⁸⁷ Joaze Bernardino Costa and Flávo Mesquita de Silva, “Building the World of Hoasca: The Organizational Development of the União do Vegetal,” *Hoasca: The Sacrament of the União do Vegetal*, ed. Joaze Bernardino-Costa (Novato, CA: Centro Espírita Benficiente União do Vegetal), 21.

operating in a poetics of sacrifice. Both New Agers like McKenna and Brazil's recognized ayahuasca religions frame a such individuated experiences within a linear, evolutionary telos that is altogether different than Indigenous worldviews. Despite the difficulties in dealing with charges of essentialism then, it is necessary to engage in the critiques made from scholars in Indigenous Studies and from Indigenous People themselves in order to address the ways that globalization affects ayahuasca practices. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's description of Amerindian or Amazonian Perspectivism, as covered in the previous chapter, is also useful in such endeavors; but we still need to deal with the problem of *experience* that underwrites liberal seekers' motivations for "ecstatic" and "archaic" experience.

Religious Experience and Liberalism

In *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, Ann Taves has argued for a concept of *experiences deemed religious* as opposed to *religious experience*, especially for "researchers who do not focus on contemporary Western subjects."⁵⁸⁸ Taves argues that "religious studies have been hampered by a lack of precision regarding what we mean by 'experience' and a resulting inability to consider how we might access it with much rigor."⁵⁸⁹ Like Tink Tinker and Steven Newcomb, she draws on the metaphoric image-

⁵⁸⁸ Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 11.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

schema research produced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, particularly exploring how the metaphor of a “path” ends up becoming a structuring element for an experience deemed religious. Taken singularly in her language, this would be “ascriptive” while taken repetitively these would be “composite.” She also notes that “any experience we can describe is an experience of something. We cannot talk about ‘pure experience’ without making an experience of something (even if the something is “nothing”). Experience is thus a vaguely defined subset of transitive consciousness.”⁵⁹⁰ We should consider the ‘psychedelic experience’ or ‘mystical experience’ under the same rubric.

Taves draws on rhetorical analyses of narrative structure, as well as Courtney Bender’s ethnographic studies of “mystical” or “spiritual” persons that attribute claims to mystical experience as a function of the genre of narrative: “This narrative genre establishes the authenticity of experience, while at the same time obscuring the conventional features of the narrative structure.”⁵⁹¹ The frame of meaning will both effect and affect conditions of experience. Taves explores this with relation to Protestant versus Catholic positions on the eucharist whereby “different understanding of efficacy results in normative expectations regarding experience,” and in particular Protestant distinctions between magic, religion, and ritual experience.⁵⁹² According to Taves, and echoing Lockean notions of internalized conscience, “Protestants shifted the locus of

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 85.

⁵⁹² Ibid., 143.

magical agency [from the ordained priest] to the faith of the ritual subject,” a magical efficacy attributed to “faith.”⁵⁹³ Thus: “The valorization of ‘religious experience’ within the study of religion, particularly when understood individualistically, reinforced a Protestant bias and obscured a range of possible interactions between composite and simple ascriptions.”⁵⁹⁴ Such distinctions are especially important with respect to the influx of Protestant-derived religiosities such as Pentecostalism in early twentieth-century Brazil, which contributed to an increasingly competitive market of religiosities, and Spiritism maintained enough doctrinal ambiguity to allow it to integrate and effect hybrid forms.

Andrew Dawson has noted that while divides between “supernatural” and “scientific” allegiances transplanted themselves from France to Brazil, a class element was at work as well:

Complementing the discursive emphasis of the *séance*, Spiritism employed a practical regime of health-oriented diagnosis, prescription, and cure. Central to the successful implantation of Spiritism in Brazil, this cure-centered regime initially revolved around the homeopathic treatments and suggested spiritual-moral correctives which were prescribed by mediums (*médiuns receitistas*) subsequent to learning the symptoms and consulting the spirits.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 149.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Andrew Dawson, *New Era – New Religions: Religious Transformation in Contemporary Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 20.

Part of the fallout along class lines emerges around the concept of “disobsession,” which Dawson calls “the Spiritist form of exorcism.”⁵⁹⁶ Among impoverished classes, disobsession takes on a more practical and material set of conditions. With respect to Santo Daime, which was founded by Irineu Serra in the 1920s, Dawson importantly notes, citing Gregory Gregorim:

Over time, though, Irineu Serra sought to distance himself and his community from possession-based mediumistic therapies such as those favored by Afro-Brazilian [Candomblé and Umbanda] religious repertoires. In their stead Master Irineu appropriated and modified remedial approaches of an esoteric-Spiritist nature with which he was already familiar thanks to his abiding sympathies with movements like the Esoteric Circle of the Communion of Thought.⁵⁹⁷

Serra’s increasing austerity also moved away from early combinations of tobacco and alcohol-use more common to broader *vegetalista* practices in the region.⁵⁹⁸ This would come to distinguish it from one of its offshoots, *Barquinha*, which maintains orientations toward possession.⁵⁹⁹

In the 1960s, as Gabriel da Costa formed the *União do Vegetal* (UDV) church, he moved even further away from themes of possession:

Similar to Santo Daime and Barquinha, adepts of the UDV wear a uniform (green shirts and white bottoms) and millenarian themes are present throughout the discourse of the movement. Unlike Santo Daime and Barquinha, however, military motifs and martial terminology are not so prominent, having been

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 83.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 88.

superseded by a strongly hierarchical ethos reflecting typically esoteric concerns with initiatory levels.⁶⁰⁰

As a result, UDV, which won the U.S. Supreme Court exemption in 2006, “has done the most to expunge the elements of popular Catholicism, Afro-Brazilian religiosity, and mestiço-indigenous spirituality whose combination was largely responsible for its origin.”⁶⁰¹ This evidences a gradual move toward austerity that made the religion more palatable to U.S. contexts of religious recognition.

As many scholars of religion have noted, Protestant bias has skewed the academic study of religion in the U.S. Fewer are able to connect these Protestant underwritings to political subjectivity in liberal democratic culture. For my purposes, such connections are necessary for perceiving the eurochristian elements present in legal conceptions of religion and the legal recognition of religions for the purposes of exempt status to receive psychedelic sacraments. Moreover, the individuating and subjectivating forces of liberalism underwriting notions of experience are not merely represented in political bodies such as states but in the citizens of those states. Traditional folklore studies have often situated the popular folk forms *against* state and institutionalized forms, but ayahuasca religions and practices, like Spiritism before them, have worked *in conscious interaction* with both state institutions and western scientific discourse.

In the field of religious studies, recent trends toward “lived religion” have attempted to emphasize the materiality and tangibility of the ways actual individuals

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 90.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 91.

perceive, practice, and *experience* their religiosities and embed them into daily practice. To its credit, such scholarship is a welcome corrective to the Protestant biases that Taves describes, and such impulses have made their way into studies of religiosities in South America as well. For example, in her *Critical Introduction to Religion in the Americas*, for example, Michelle Gonzalez points to the necessity for ongoing interdisciplinary scholarship into hybridity and lived religions for Latinx religious studies. Informed by traditions of liberation theology,⁶⁰² she argues, “We cannot allow academic categories to misrepresent the lived religion of the people themselves, whose everyday religious practices, struggles, and faith should be the focus of our research.”⁶⁰³ Lived religion has also been a buzzword for trends in religious studies scholarship to resist static and transcendent notions of ‘religion’ against all-too-facile claims of being “spiritual but not religious.”

Despite these trends in the field, my focus covering the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery emphasizes the longer eurochristian framing underwriting the conditions of experience that are obscured when we take an already liberal approach to agency whereby individuals report on the experiences of “self-work.” Such is often the way individuals are conditioned and disciplined within secular liberal society. That disciplining process is made sensible through Romantic aesthetics. Noticing this relies

⁶⁰² Liberation theology also has an intersection with rehabilitated notions of political theology during the 1960s, particularly the thought of Johann Baptiste Metz.

⁶⁰³ Michelle A. Gonzalez, *A Critical Introduction to Religion in the Americas: Bridging the Liberation Theology and Religious Studies Divide* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 143.

on a critique of secularization narratives and a reassertion that liberalism itself carries on eurochristian religious poetics.

Liberalism and Secularization

Hans Blumenberg's interrogation and critiques of the various uses of "secularization" in *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1966) pointed to *metaphorical* constructions that deeply inform both cognitive linguists and Indigenous scholars with respect to legal concepts. Blumenberg notes that the "earliest explicit contact between philosophy and secularization" occurs in a pamphlet from 1799 titled *Reason Requires Secularization [Die Vernunft fordert die Säkularisierungen]*. An 1803 Act allowed for the transfer of church property in France: "What was possible with external, legally transferable property would no doubt also be possible with less massive and still less protected spiritual residues."⁶⁰⁴ He notes that Marx takes this concept up in his critique of Hegel: "The concept of secularization defines a transferable, analogizable process with regard to 'property' of whatever type, in whatever mode of seizure."⁶⁰⁵ Although this is but a tiny glimpse of a much larger critique, Blumenberg's grounding of the motivations for secularization in property decisions further emphasizes the necessity to keep in mind the eurochristian framing underwriting the Doctrine of Discovery and claims to land addressed in previous chapters.

⁶⁰⁴ Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, translated by Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 20.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

American politicians such as Thomas Jefferson were directly interacting with the European continental discussions of church-state relations. ‘Secularization’ here acts as the commodity form of “bona fide religion,” in other words, universal Christianity. Here the aesthetics of the Enlightenment and Romanticism work to create the power/knowledge expressed by a eurochristian framing that carries over into secularization. As a commodity-form, ‘the secular’ comes to embody middle-class sensibilities, just as Dawson notes that UDV and “*daimista* discourse and practice was both appropriated by middle-class neo-esoteric practitioners and relocated into an urban-industrial context constituted by late-modern processes such as individualization, globalization, and secularization.”⁶⁰⁶ It is not only that in their trajectory toward austerity ayahuasca religions are becoming “more secular”; rather, I am suggesting that ‘the secular’ as it is conceived in the U.S. is an already eurochristian conception, one that far from rejecting religion assumes a certain success on the part of Christendom. Therefore, the context frames the conditions ayahuasca’s reception both culturally and legally.

I admit, this may be hard for many Americans to swallow. What remains important to understand where I am coming from is my contention that liberalism carries some degree of eurochristian framing within it. Here Talal Asad’s words are helpful.

Following Margaret Canovan, he writes:

The essence of the myth of liberalism – its imaginary construction – is to assert human rights precisely because they are *not* built into the structure of the universe. The frightening truth concealed by the liberal myth is, therefore, that liberal principles go against the grain of human nature. Liberalism is not a matter

⁶⁰⁶ Andrew Dawson, *New Era – New Religions: Religious Transformation in Contemporary Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 93.

of clearing away a few accidental obstacles and allowing humanity to unfold its natural essence. It is more like *making a garden in a jungle that is continually encroaching*.⁶⁰⁷

We must remember here, scholars such as Anthony Pagden from my earlier chapters, who historicized the internal move of the modern eurochristian thought through a reconciliation between Aristotelean and Scholastic thought on “natural rights.” The liberal “state of nature” is a poetic fiction produced to narrate a version of events that would culminate in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* as “world history” where eurochristian civilization was the pinnacle of evolution on its way toward a transcendent unification with the divine. As Asad writes:

A secular state is not one characterized by religious indifference, or rational ethics – or political toleration. It is a complex arrangement of legal reasoning, moral practice, and political authority. This arrangement is not the simple outcome of the struggle of secular reason against that despotism of religious authority. We do not understand the arrangements I have tried to describe if we begin with the common assumption that the essence of secularism is the protection of civil freedoms from the tyranny of religious discourse, that religious discourse seeks always to end discussion and secularism to create the conditions for its flourishing.⁶⁰⁸

The essence of secularism is not antireligious. It is a political-theological manifestation produced by eurochristian religious poetics following the devastating wars of religion that in part brought the peace of Westphalia. It was the peace of Westphalia that decided that wars between European nation-states would no longer take place on the continent but

⁶⁰⁷ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 59.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 255.

could be carried out as proxy-wars in the colonies. This was an important pact made to end eurochristian religious wars.

As I have been arguing, in the context of ayahuasca's diaspora, it is necessary to keep in mind U.S. hegemony with respect to both South America and the rest of the world, especially through the disciplining of the War on Drugs. In adopting this stance with respect to international foreign policy, the United States arrogated to itself the inheritance of European colonialism when it enacted the Monroe Doctrine and the *Johnson v. M'Intosh* decision in 1823. These decisions made the United States a colonialist, rather than a "postcolonial" nation. This is entrenched in the eurochristian deep-framing which, within the "just war" tradition allows us to read parallels between displaced migrants whose lives have often been disrupted by Drug War Politics and the Indigenous Peoples in the early years after contact with Europeans. Again, although not a trafficked drug like cocaine or heroin, I have sought to maintain an association of ayahuasca with other "drugs" to show how the drug scheduling system is itself expressive of eurochristian framing that has been genocidal to Indigenous Peoples. I have also sought to show how rhetorics of exemption and exception with respect to ayahuasca ultimately integrate ayahuasca into a colonial frame that I hardly think Indigenous Peoples in the south or the north would accept, especially since its acceptance and integration into that particular biopolitical regime is based on the necropolitics relating to Indigenous Peoples.

Here again we must be critical of celebratory notions of hybridity. Concepts of hybridity that ignore historical socio-political factors can be dangerous when thinking of

diaspora because they neglect the asymmetry of racial inequities in the U.S. with respect to what Luis León has called the “religious poetics.” This is especially important with respect to Latinx and Chicanx religious cultures, and it is relevant in Brazilian ayahuasca religions too.

Luis León links religious poetics to ideas of ritual, *performance*, doing and acting. This importantly contrasts with a Lockean / Protestant relegation of religion to the privacy of conscience opposed to the more “actionable” civic sphere. Part of this certainly speaks to a greater historical presence of Catholicism. For example, drawing on a blend of ethnography and theoretical discourse, León proposes a borderlands reading of La Virgen de Guadalupe as a transgressive, border-crossing goddess in her own right, a *mestiza* deity who displaces Jesus and God for believers on both sides of the border.

León’s insights potentially inform the gendered notions of Ayahuasca as a “mother” expressed earlier, especially within wider Latinx constructions of motherhood. His discussion of *curanderismo* shows how Indigenous practices link cognition and sensation in a fresh and powerful technology of the body—one where sensual, erotic, and sexualized ways of knowing emphasize personal and communal healing. In *La Llorona’s Children*, he argues: “borderlands is not only a physical place but also a poetic device for describing perennially emergent and multiplex individual, social, and cultural formations.”⁶⁰⁹ León argues that devotion to the Virgen of Guadalupe “is a border tradition, straddling and blurring lines of religious demarcation.”⁶¹⁰ He follows the

⁶⁰⁹ Luis D. León, *La Llorona’s Children: Religion, Life, and Death in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004), 63.

material culture surrounding Guadalupe from Mexico City to Alta California and L.A. Later he describes multiple individual healers in the region and their devotees. According to him, Guadalupe “functions as a transnational symbol, one that is re-imagined in socio-political-spiritual movements; La Virgen de Guadalupe is the fulcrum on which religious poetics in Mexican-American Catholicism pivots.”⁶¹¹ Yet it is simultaneously local with respect to Indigenous tradition. At Tepeyac, where Guadalupe’s shrine is, “the Aztecs were said to have worshiped the fertility goddess, Tonantzin, and celebrated an annual pilgrimage there. In Nahuatl, Tonantzin means “Our Lady Mother” and was not an exclusive designation.”⁶¹² Mexico is certainly not ayahuasca country, but we should be attentive nevertheless to León’s description in ayahuasca’s diaspora.

León explores gendered identities of devotion to Guadalupe through mandas [promises] and the penitent figure of Juan Diego as “El Lloron,”⁶¹³ or the weeping man, a *mestizaje*⁶¹⁴ identity. Guadalupe devotion inspires “a virtual nation, the center of which can be and is everywhere and nowhere at once.” She inspires “the *penitente* tradition, [in

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 93-94.

⁶¹² Ibid., 69.

⁶¹³ Ibid., 95.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 65.

which] the idea of poetics, to make, is central, especially in religion, in acts that of charity that are not only the ‘good example’ but also and especially ‘prayer.’”⁶¹⁵

León’s focus on *espiritualismo* – a derivative of Kardecist Spiritualism – shows it to be a “hybrid” between Catholic, Protestant, and Indigenous traditions but not fitting any of these categories and particularly empowering women as healers. He ends with a fascinating study of the rich and complex world of Chicano/a Evangelicals and Pentecostalism in Los Angeles, a tradition that León maintains allows Chicano men to reimagine their bodies into a unified social body through ritual performance. He notes the recent trend toward *los evangélicos* who “practice spirit possession, religious healing, religious gifting and play, cultural affirmation, as well as trafficking with sacred and ancestral spirits.”⁶¹⁶ Throughout the book, the connections among sacred spaces, saints, healers, writers, ideas, and movements are woven with skill, inspiration, and insight.

León’s theories are extremely prescient for ayahuasca contexts, yet they are simultaneously at risk of conflation with celebratory concepts of “hybridity” between esotericism, Kardecist spiritism, and geographically localized concepts such as Tonantzin or Santa Muerta, both of whom underwrite or undermine La Virgen de Guadalupe. The question is partly whether León’s concept of ‘religious poetics’ is “neutral” with respect to poetic making. When read closely, despite references to virtual and perennial spaces, I read León as also suggesting that *territorialized* aspects of Indigenous impulses persist through the European attempts to superimpose Catholic (and later Pentecostal) forms

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

onto Indigenous people of Mexico and surrounding areas. That territorialization includes migratory patterns present before colonization. He is not, in other words, suggesting the kind of deterritorialized religiosities imposed by globalization, which Olivier Roy has labeled “holy ignorance.” He is pointing to something more Indigenous within a religious studies context. Border-thought is not transnational in the sense that NAFTA is transnational. It is more closely akin to what Survivance. Again, the folkloric and land-based attention to groups León studies are not largely present in ayahuasca discourse in the U.S. In crass terms, one might say that as ayahuasca moves north it becomes both more “white” and more reflective of Protestant evangelism, even when enthusiasts employ rhetoric related to Native Americans.

While disavowed by the traditional Native American Church (which also owes itself to a complex international or “inter-tribal”/international identification), the Oklevueha church won a Utah Supreme Court decision in 2004 in which the church claimed it was racist to limit peyote use to “federally recognized tribes.” This kind of rhetoric for inclusion without any attention to historical inequity embodies a eurochristian framing especially in its appeals to abstract liberalism and transcendence of all contexts. With respect to law and “religiously” exempt substances, even while the federal government still claimed that non-native possession of peyote is illegal, it importantly dropped the charges against the Oklevueha church *the day after* the Supreme Court ruling on the UDV church for ayahuasca use.⁶¹⁷ In other words, a church that thrives on erasing

⁶¹⁷ Gayle Highpine, “The “Legality” of Ayahuasca Churches Under the Oklevueha Native American Church,” *bialabate.net*, December 12, 2015, accessed May

distinctions between Indigenous Peoples and eurochristians – perhaps even through “progressivist” attitudes that reject nineteenth-century racial pseudo-science – benefits from the politics of recognition and exemption while effectively enacting assimilationist attitudes that have for a long time been in place to eradicate Indigenous Peoples. The U.S. government no longer needs Termination policies with groups like this around benefiting from the legal recognition of theologically Christian ayahuasca religions.

Contrasting this issue, when Indigenous people argue for the uniqueness of their cultural identities, they are often met with sanctimonious lectures about “essentialism” and neoliberal notions of “inclusivity” when what they often want is precisely *not* to be included but rather to be recognized as different and separately sovereign, not as isolated automatons making up some Rousseau-inspired notion of the general will of a democratic public, but sovereign peoples. This kind of Indigenous thinking must simultaneously fight against the appropriation of *indigenismo* as a nationalist concept in places like Peru and Mexico.⁶¹⁸ The recognition of such a tension speaks to the importance that perspectives informed by León’s religious poetics can bring to research on ayahuasca diaspora.

Of course, Nahuatl concepts from Mexico are not going to be the same farther south, where ayahuasca is traditionally used. My argument here is for a methodological perspective informed by León’s notion of religious poetics in the context of ayahuasca’s

6, 2020, <https://www.bialabate.net/news/the-legality-of-ayahuasca-churches-under-the-oklevueha-native-american-church>.

⁶¹⁸ See Marisol De La Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

diaspora, not specific descriptions for Mexico and the U.S. There is an under-examined religious poetics at work that is specific to Amazonia. Even the frame of ‘hybridization’ in these movements is largely already colonizing. It is precisely because of this process of erasure that concepts of Indigeneity remain critically important even outside of Indigenous groups who certainly do not need academics to explain their Indigeneity to them. Yet when we turn to Brazilian ayahuasca religions, another layer of complexity arises, especially related to issues of race, ethnicity, and class.

As I have said, the “recognized” ayahuasca religions from Brazil, Santo Daime (including *ubandaime*), Barquinha, and the União do Vegetal (UDV), are all avowedly Christian with a Christological theological domination despite the copresencing at times of *orixás* and spirits of *indios*. We cannot forget that even in Supreme Court cases “legitimizing” these groups and therefore granting religious exemption for the use of entheogens like ayahuasca as sacrament.

León’s poetic “return” also takes seriously the aesthetics of embodiment in all its queerness. Again, he writes:

In short, what I mean by “religion” is often (re)produced, but not limited to, institutional settings, rigorously defined and explicitly stated “religious movements,” or even ancient traditions that have been thought of as “great” or not so great. I also mean the emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, imaginative, real, dogmatic, ambiguous, semiotic, mystical, mundane, order, and disordered stuff that emerges when humans try to make sense – make history – out of the fantastic forces of their world, of their unchosen conditions.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁹ León, 17.

Despite public impulses to conceive ayahuasca religions as Indigenous, especially because the plants involved are indeed Indigenous, Andrew Dawson has tracked the increased movement of ayahuasca churches from rural and impoverished areas to urban centers with largely middle-class participation. Especially, in the highly racialized U.S. political climate, this process appears as a kind of “whitening,” especially as groups move from the organic state of what Alexander Weheliye terms *habeas viscus* – that which is outside the androcentric universalist human rights notions of personhood – toward moribund notions of *habeas corpus* that underly the necropolitics of state recognition.

Dawson especially tracks the world view of middle class *daimistas* by illustrating how they articulate an attitude of mystified consumption which “frames the appropriation of both worldly goods and the self as complimentary sources of commodity value.” As he writes, “The this-worldly orientation orchestrated by mystified consumption is, however, accompanied by an articulate and, at times, forceful world-rejecting discourse.”⁶²⁰ Dawson presents such discourse as:

dislocutory speech acts which, though qualifying the things of this world, do not actually foreclose on their use or employment. Members of the new middle-class, urban professional *daimistas* are imbued with a commoditized subjectivity which, though refracted by it, is neither ultimately overwritten nor wholly negated by conversion to Santo Daime.⁶²¹

⁶²⁰ Andrew Dawson, *Santo Daime: A New World Religion* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 188.

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*

Thus, a paradoxical matrix is produced through hybridized world-rejecting and this-worldly discourse.

Dawson adds to this an obstruction to viewing the transformations present in religiosity by academics too focused on defending the ritual use of psychoactive substances by appealing to Indigenous practices ancient in origin. These paradoxes are intensified with ayahuasca's transnational movement globally, but especially to the north. León's stress on both individually-embodied and state-subjectivating forces helps us to track complexities nullified by a strictly liberal politics of recognition when analyzing diasporic tendencies among ayahuasca religiosities in the U.S. This is because León's conception of 'religion' affords a blurring of the boundaries between "church" and "state" while subtly acknowledging a continued eurochristian presence in the very notion of religion. This conception at times caused a conflict between León and his colleague, Tink Tinker, who understandably wants little to do with eurochristian religiosity. But if we take León's concept of religion only in a descriptive sense (and not a defense of eurochristianity), we see that he has captured much of the paradox to which Talal Asad had pointed. Religion cannot be separated from the state any more than secularization can be "anti-religious" because both concepts are the fruition of eurochristian social framing.

An optimist under an ayahuasca glow might assert that ayahuasca's motive in moving out of the Amazon is precisely to be a corrective to the destruction caused by eurochristian world domination. That person may also see a congruence with Amazonian groups who have welcomed the recent introduction of ayahuasca, even as they seek to

affirm their distinct indigeneity. Surely such thinking is in line with groups such as Ayahuasca Healings who see themselves as ayahuasca missionaries.⁶²² Yet appeals to recognition that rhetorically influence legal arguments for religious exemption in the U.S. rest on complex forces of colonial oppression toward Native Americans.

This impulse to appease the State can be found within ayahuasca religions as they themselves self-consciously emerged in Brazil. For example, the União do Vegetal (UDV) church has been actively engaging in media outreach since inception in the 1960s in Brazil as an attempt to ward off potential persecution by governing authorities. Founded in 1961, the UDV's leader, Mestre Gabrielle, was arrested by authorities, which led the church to seek public transparency with respect to its mission and structure. Later, this same impulse developed into active support for scientific research on ayahuasca and the incorporation of the ritual retelling of Mestre Gabrielle's trials with the police in ceremony. Yet despite its support for scientific research, the UDV simultaneously insists that the "hoasca" they drink ceremonially is not the same as what non-affiliated ayahuasca healing centers provide outside of religious frameworks. The group displays a Spiritist proclivity toward science while maintaining a eurochristian conception of sacrament.

In South American contexts, the cultural place of ayahuasca use varies within identity and class categories foreign to outsiders, especially when it comes to Indigenous

⁶²² Roger K. Green, "Perennialism and Primitivism in Psychedelic Religions," *esthesis.com* March 17, 2017, <https://esthesis.org/perennialism-and-primitivism-in-psychedelic-religions-roger-green/>

Peoples, and different terms and recipes abound. As Marcelo Mercante has noted with respect to some Santo Daime communities, “I realized during my first conversations with the Madrinha that there was a standard speech ready to offer for researchers.”⁶²³ In light of this, even if we were to take Michelle Gonzalez’s call for the study of “lived religion” seriously, a host of methodological difficulties present themselves to a researcher of ayahuasca. Ayahuasca research is itself motivated by State, economic, and religious entities, as well as the motivations of individual researchers’ identities. It is neither “state-based,” nor is it “folkloric.” Therefore, an emphasis on lived religion alone is insufficient for analyzing ayahuasca’s diaspora.

Concepts of ethnicity in South America are also enormously complex. For example, Marisol De La Cadena’s work has shown that Peru’s attempts to advertise its national cultural heritage as *indigenismo*, Indigenous groups continue to be in economically and culturally precarious positions both with respect to the State and far Left organizations such as Shining Path, which leads De La Cadena to identify political *indigenismo* as a concept appropriated by neoliberal politics. Similarly, Marlene Dobkin de Rios long ago discussed the particular plights of the Peruvian concept of the “*cholo*” – or an Indian seeking “upward” social mobility. This has been a particular dilemma with respect to people going into practice as “shamans,” whether or not the practice employs some form of ayahuasca. As things stand, Indigenous communities often have to

⁶²³ Marcelo Mercante, *Images of Healing: Spontaneous Mental Imagery and Healing Process of the Barquinha, A Brazilian Ayahuasca Religious System* (Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010), 43.

confront issues of loss of traditional knowledge of local practices because Indigenous youth are often more interested in the benefits of urban life and “education.” At the same time, both interest and money from gringo “tourists” lend a certain element of power to otherwise very poor and marginalized Indigenous and mestizo practitioners.

Meanwhile, the effects of “ayahuasca tourism” undeniably change local economies. Andrew Dawson’s study of the Brazilian Santo Daime religion concludes that recognized ayahuasca religion is increasingly urban and “middle class,” yet ayahuasca is perpetually associated with Amazonian exoticism and utopian liberal imaginaries. Because of the religions’ anchoring in Kardecist spiritism from Europe, liberal Christian narratives persist alongside popular Catholicism. As a result, ayahuasca religions do not fit nicely into cliché connotations of “Latin American religion” and preferential options for “the poor” supported by traditional liberation theologies.

This is exemplified in the mimetic colonialism that takes place within the narratives of ayahuasca religions. Building from D.D. Brown’s work, Dawson points out that in contrast to the ayahuasca religions, Umbanda – an Afro-Brazilian religion less indebted to Kardecism – “employs a much greater engagement with inferior and suffering spirits and does so through a more pronounced mediumistic possession.”⁶²⁴ Dawson evidences this through the story of an Umbanda medium named Jose Lito or “Ceará,” who Padrinho Sebastião (then leader of Santo Daime) allowed to practice in the Daime community in the 1970s:

⁶²⁴ Andrew Dawson, *Santo Daime: A New World Religion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 28.

As a medium, Ceará incorporated a number of spirit-guides, the most important of which were the *caboclo* spirits Tranca Rua and Ogum Beira Mar. Over time, the consumption of the Daime was included within these rituals which now involved its administration to inferior and suffering spirits by way of a medium through whom these spirits were incorporating [...] According to official Cefluris accounts, Tranca Rua and Ogum Beira Mar were eventually converted to Santo Daime as part of a spiritual battle of wills between Padrinho Sebastião and the subsequently vanquished Ceará. Now indoctrinated into the *daimista* way and incorporated my Moto de Melo, Tranca Rua ordered the construction of a Star House so that the application of Daime to the spirits of Umbanda might continue in the embryonic rituals then known as ‘star works’ (*trabalhos de estrela*).⁶²⁵

Later, the term ‘Ubandaime’ was coined to articulate the Daime desire for the incorporation of Umbanda into their theological system.⁶²⁶

As I have said, Brazil has the largest number of Catholics out of any country in the world, even though the number of Protestant evangelical conversions has spiked in recent years. According to the U.S. State Department’s report on Religious Freedom, African-originating religious movements (Candomblé and Umbanda) have the most documented cases of religious intolerance in Brazil.⁶²⁷ What we see with the description above is the colonizing of non-Christian spirits, whether African or Indigenous. Mercante identifies the same phenomenon with respect to the “cleaning up” of Daime communities. He notes that with entities from the “darker side” of Umbanda, “those Exús and Pombas-giras are captured [in ayahuasca ceremonies] and sent to a field where

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁶²⁷ United States Department of State, “2018 Report on Religious Freedom in Brazil,” (June, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/brazil/>.

they will receive their indoctrination, returning later, to receive, formally, their baptism.”⁶²⁸ He goes on to note, “After the baptism, they continue working at the Center, they are incorporated in the ‘Jesus Christ Army.’”⁶²⁹ Even in death Indigenous people cannot escape eurochristian colonizing efforts. Of course, this also illustrates themes that Dawson has articulated with respect to hierarchical structuring among ayahuasca religions.

It is also important to note the evangelical influence here with an emphasis on conversion and baptism. These theological imaginaries thus carry on the colonizing and civilizing agenda of Christendom, even when they do “include” spiritual entities from other traditions. From Tinker and Newcomb’s perspective, we see that in such contexts, the spirits of Indigenous Peoples are subjugated even after death. This leads me to be suspicious of Dawson’s description of Indigenous contexts:

Allowing for particular structural and taxonomical differences, indigenous cosmologies are stratified, with primordial deities existing in the upper tiers of the supernatural sphere. Remote from everyday human activity, these divine beings are accompanied by a pantheon of lesser deities whose origins and characteristics are usually connected with celestial, climatic, totemic, and otherwise routine phenomena. Although indigenous deities involve themselves in the general ordering of human affairs and at times are difficult to differentiate from the numerous categories of spirits, it is the latter that most directly influence the day to day lives of indigenous peoples. More commonly occupying the lower strata of the indigenous cosmos, the spirits of animals, plants, and elements (e.g. of water),

⁶²⁸ Marcelo Mercante, *Images of Healing: Spontaneous Mental Imagery and Healing Process of the Barquinha, A Brazilian Ayahuasca Religious System* (Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010), 138.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

along with those of deceased human beings, are regarded as primary causal forces potentially influencing every facet of human existence.⁶³⁰

I am not Indigenous, and Dawson cites nothing in this paragraph, so I do not know where exactly he is getting this information. It seems rather hierarchical to me with respect to what I have presented by Tinker, Newcomb, and Viveiros de Castro that may be evidenced through mythological contexts so long as we keep in mind, following Brabec de Mori, that among Indigenous communities, myths do not refer to a prehistoric time.

Mythological Contexts

Certainly, within Turtle Island contexts in the north, as exhibited by multiple variants of ‘Sky Woman Falling’ tales, the essential concern is that water and animals precede humans, that humans are the youngest of siblings, and that they and the land owe their entire existence to the animals. From a deep-framing perspective, there is no way to superimpose a different hierarchy here. In the eurochristian perspective, humans are the pinnacle of creation and are charged with superiority over animals (*Genesis* 1:28; 2:15). It is not that Native people do not become Christianized, nor is it that a eurochristian like myself cannot intellectually understand that in stories of Sky Woman falling humans see their existence as dependent on animals and nature. It is that I am not oriented toward that thinking at the deeply-framed core of my cognitive behavior. Nor is it about “believing” in the creation as such; it is a transgenerational cultural forming. Even within

⁶³⁰ Andrew Dawson, *Santo Daime: A New World Religion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 67.

theologically Christian ayahuasca religions, as I have argued, we see the persistence of hierarchy along with a movement toward austerity over time.

That said, when we look, for example at the Afro Brazilian Raimundo Irineu Serra's "received" Santo Daime *hinários* (hymns), we do see emphasis on balance that we might attribute to Indigenous contexts. In "I Strike a Balance," the early verses speak of nature and cosmological forces followed by the refrain "I strike a balance, strike a balance / between everything that is and will be." The final lyrics, however, clearly assign a hierarchical creator authority: "I'm filled with joy / and I feel strong / I have it all / Because Eternal God gives it to me."⁶³¹ Of course, *daime* means "give me," so the reference here is simultaneously infused on the ayahuasca sacrament. "Mother earth" and "forest Queen" imagery balances with the care of the sky / rainmaking "Universal Father" in "Gardener," situating the ayahuasca taker as a caretaker in between them."⁶³² A racialized distinction between the religious adept and Indians appears in "The Stars":

I climbed a mountain of thorns / There were sharp points I endured / But the stars kept telling me / That everything can be cured / Then the stars went on to say / Don't talk, be someone who listens / So that I can understand / and talk with my Indians / The Indians are here right now / They've brought their good medicines / on bare feet with naked arms / So they can cure the Christians.⁶³³

Romantic aesthetics pervade the climbing imagery here. As with Madera's presentation of the Ecuadorian myth in chapter four, we see here at least a reference toward the

⁶³¹ "Hymns," *The Ayahuasca Reader: Encounter's with the Amazon's Sacred Vine*, translated by Steven F. Wallace, Edited by Luis Eduardo Luna and Steven F. White (Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2016), 296.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 297.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*

tendency among Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon to re-orient a eurochristian power structure by incorporation Christian imagery to “heal” Christianity itself. The “I” in the song, occupied by those who perform it ritually, distinguishes itself from “my Indians” while simultaneously acknowledging their healing knowledge. Is this mere superimposition of a colonial romance where Indians are exalted for traditional knowledge and mysterious “wonders?” Is it a sign of Indigenous resistance to eurochristian colonization by “curing” Christians? If we combine Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s notion of ‘equivocation’ along with Luis León’s ‘religious poetics’, we begin to get a clearer analysis of what is being *made* in the production of ayahuasca religions.

With respect to interactions between states and international treaties on “drugs,” we see the interaction with a global capitalist economy and liberalism’s individuating, rights-based discourse. In this context, the use of the psychedelic sacrament induces a kind of colonization of *experience* itself, and that experience is not just a mystical one but the paradoxical one articulated by Dawson as “mystified consumption.”

Oftentimes, and especially concerning the politics of recognition around ayahuasca in diaspora, people point to hybridized spiritual practices. In the north, this has especially been the case with the Native American Church and occasionally with Ghost Dance religion. As Reuben Snake and multiple testimonial voices in his book, *One Nation Under God: The Triumph of the Native American Church* attest, the Native American Church is an avowedly Christian organization. Clearly, there is room for great flexibility within even the collected voices of Snake’s book. As we will see in following

chapters, such organizations are necessarily formed through negotiations with the state in León's religious poetics.

The legal conditions informing the Native American Church have to do with the outlawing of traditional Native practices until the *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* in 1978 and its 1994 amendments. The discussions pertaining to the legal recognition of such practices are fundamental to understanding the Supreme Court's 2006 exemption for the UDV church to use ayahuasca in the United States. However, the nominally Christian aspects of pan-Indigenous movements in the United States were aided by flawed – though well-intentioned – anthropologists, such as James Mooney in his *Ghost Dance Religion and Wounded Knee*. As Nick Estes writes, Mooney distorted the Ghost Dance:

Pandering to the sympathies of a US public in an attempt to make the Ghost Dance more palatable, Mooney used cultural relativism to justify its existence. In his mind, because Ghost Dancers followed a Christ-like messianic figure, Wovoka, the movement had largely embraced elements of Christianity and thus resembled modern Judeo-Christian religions.⁶³⁴

Estes affirms that the movement's pan-Indigenous character had more to do with practical necessity than in any embracing of Judeo-Christian forms. He roots the practice in earlier pan-Indigenous prophetic movements. In an important distinction, he writes:

The categories of “good Indians” and “bad Indians” purposefully create criminal elements within Indigenous States' own criminal enterprise. But the Ghost Dance was not meant for US colonizers, nor did its followers seek recognition as a “legitimate” religion equivalent to Christianity. It was the US state's criminalization of not only the dancers themselves, but all things defying the civilizing mission, that led the military to conclude that the dance was a “hostile expression.” All dancing – and practicing Indigenous lifeways in general – was a

⁶³⁴ Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (New York: Verso, 2019): 125.

criminal act punishable by imprisonment or withholding of rations. To reservation officials, it didn't matter if the dancers were militant or nonviolent: Ghost Dancing was inherently an oppositional, political act.⁶³⁵

As far back as the New England conflicts, as Francis Jennings notes with groups who had nowhere to run and thus accepted Christianity to be able to stay where they were, colonizers used Christianity to distinguish “good Indians” from “bad Indians.” This was reflective of “just war” policies framed within the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. Not only that, acceptance of Christianity was the *only* path to be a recognized political “subject” at Plymouth and the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Abysmal conversion rates in the 17th century attest to the fact.⁶³⁶ Early attempts produced hecklers among Natives, who were later jailed for their improprieties or for missing a Sunday service. That hybrid forms and later converts in any case came to exist does not excuse the fact that the intentions of civilizing were and remain inherently genocidal. Moreover, to only focus on whether someone identifies as Christian or not minimizes and erases whatever traditional forms persist. The challenge then, is to make enough space to see traditional ways *outside* of eurochristianizing efforts and to listen to the few Native voices who are able to perceive such things.

While it appears to be less the case with younger generations, claims have often been made in the past that critique “essentialism.” When made by non-indigenous scholars against Indigenous voices, the charge is a way of shutting down and shutting out

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 126.

⁶³⁶ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 251.

Indigenous knowledge from eurochristian institutions. Scholars such as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) have insisted that denying the possibility of discrete Indigenous theories is a way of claiming that Indigenous People do not have the same intellectual capacities as eurochristians. Nor is she really interested in language of “allies.” Eurochristians tend to overtake discursive situations, to want to perform how much they “know” about Indigenous ways, how they have recovered or decolonized, etc. Nick Estes’ (Lower Brule Sioux) *Our History is the Future* details the longer history of Indigenous resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline, which outside of Indigenous discussions is often merely discussed as an environmental issue.

Terminology also remains a constant issue of equivocation. The general population of the United States is not well-informed on international concepts, and so discussions often center on individualized notions of rights. Sovereignty as a concept is often thought of in a genealogical relation to thinkers like Jean Bodin within a eurochristian tradition, but as Taiaike Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk) corrects in a conversation with Atsenhaienton of the Rotinohshonni (Iroquois Confederacy), “in the European system, the Crown is sovereign. In our system the people are sovereign. Their concept of sovereignty is very different from ours historically.”⁶³⁷ But to say the “people are sovereign” cannot be equated to how eurochristian Americans think about popular democracy or European philosophers like Jean Jacques Rousseau conceive of “general

⁶³⁷ Taiaike Alfred, *Peace, Power, and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 134.

will.” Similarly, notions of “healing” are miscommunicated places where equivocation occurs.⁶³⁸

Conclusion

‘Ayahuasca’ here is a site of religious poetics, yet a CDA perspective capable of maintaining attention to a longer history of colonial genocide embedded within a eurochristian deep-framing potentially opens up a way of attending to persistent Indigenous forms of survivance across both continents. The exigency the world faces today requires a different form of assessing why it is that humans from so-called “advanced civilization” risk destroying all life on the planet. As part of a long history of how this has come to be has been the very intentional erasure of the few left among us humans who have less androcentric relationships to their local environments. The fact that many Indigenous People have embraced and modified forms of Christianity today need not prevent us from being critical of the intentional eurochristian colonizing forces at work at the outset of European contact with Indigenous Peoples, simply because those very oppressive forces remain in play whether or not either Indigenous or non-Indigenous people self-avow themselves to be Christians today. I know well that various Indigenous groups are able to maintain a sense of cultural identity by incorporating, resisting, and remixing forms of eurochristian dominance. A helpful turn of phrase might be that perception constructs reality (literally), but that we can also potentially recognize *limits* to

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 132.

our own perception. This is counterintuitive to currently accepted psychedelic healing dogma which holds that psychedelics “expand” our consciousnesses because that rhetoric rests on a universalist notion of human becoming rooted in Western philosophical and religious framing. In such a view, psychedelics help us to “get out” of our own heads, but at the same time it always already accepts that we are imprisoned “subjects” who need to be “freed,” even when we know that, more and more, neurologically this not necessarily the case. Such “imprisonment” is fashioned by a eurochristian impulse that itself constructs the desiring machine that longs for the experience of the “other” – do *anything* but recognize your own, unwanted and inherited complicity in ongoing genocide. *That’s* part of the impulse of the romanticizing of *becoming indigenous* that many people seek in their quests for “experience.”

Intellectual historian Samuel Moyn has argued that such emphasis on human rights and genocide was late in coming to United Nations discourse, emphasizing that the concerns of the United Nations were prioritized by the Security Council, thus subordinating the Convention on Genocide and the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* to the concerns of international states seeking militarized solutions to global problems. While our contemporary critiques of the past may contain a sense of morality, the affective qualities shaping that sense of morality are historically out of step with the real politics informing the U.N. agreements. As Moyn tracks it, the discourse on rights was largely subsumed by an impulse to avoid war itself among post World War Two activists. Thus, the rights-based dialogues of the late twentieth century increasingly merge with neoliberal conjectures about identity. While I admire such research, it

dismisses the fact that, largely speaking, Indigenous Peoples are not concerned with “rights” but with protecting traditional ways of being that do not fit nicely into discourse on “rights.”

The United Nations’ 2007 *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* is unconditionally an achievement in the context of politics of recognition, even if by the diluting processes of various committees (as with the diluting of Raphael Lemkin’s discourse on genocide), but Indigenous Peoples still face an unrelenting process of erasure that cannot be reduced to a recognition of rights. Even so, we see León’s religious poetics at work in the collective policy statements by Indigenous groups in South America. At the 2018 Brazilian Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca, Indigenous groups stated, “We will broaden the dialogue with public authorities in the different spheres of power at national and international level in a unified form among the peoples, maintaining the autonomy of indigenous peoples and respect for their ways of life.”⁶³⁹

Relying on international groups such as the United Nations, they said,

We will define strategies for authorizing the circulation of ‘ayahuasca,’ demanding the creation of institutional mechanisms for applying and disseminating traditional rights, seeking to sensitize those professionals who work in the control and inspection bodies, as well as agencies within the legal system.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁹ “Declaration of the 2nd Brazilian Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca,” *Chacrana*, January 30, 2020, accessed February 12, 2020, <https://chacrana.net/declaration-of-the-2nd-brazilian-indigenous-conference-on-ayahuasca/>.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Relying on national groups such as Brazil's National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), they write, "We will guide people who visit the villages according to the objectives of their visit and the internal norms of each people, and will inform FUNAI about the entrance of these visitors."⁶⁴¹ Yet as Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett's *Thy Will Be Done* details, the creation of FUNAI, as it reorganized after the scandalously genocidal policies of its former incarnation Service for the Protection of the Indian (SPI), persisted in intimate involvement with U.S. missionary groups such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics and Wycliffe Bible study and the influence of U.S. policies from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Evangelical groups were intimately involved in efforts by U.S. capitalists such as Nelson Rockefeller and his various companies, such as New Jersey Standard Oil, the C.I.A., and a fight against "godless communism" throughout South America. Counterinsurgency efforts were aimed at winning "hearts and minds" of local peoples, and missionary work among Indigenous Peoples were explicitly used for this purpose.⁶⁴² From the perspective of a longer history of eurochristian deep framing, these efforts cannot be separated along the lines of "secular" policies of "development" and overtly religious forms of missionary "civilizing." Rockefeller, like Townsend saw his efforts as a form of evangelical colonial beneficence toward Indians, yet colonial corruption was embedded in the plans. Massive land purchases were meant to establish oil and other

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 264.

natural resource extractions throughout Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador. In the late 1950s, for example, corrupt SPL members had discovered an “Indian Trick”:

In Mato Grosso, where Nelson [Rockefeller] dreamed of immigrants working his land for him, land speculators cheated settlers out of their land titles. The speculators were often local politicians, a phenomenon not unknown in the United States. Once the settlers improved [*sic*] the land, the politicians used corrupted SPI agents to assert Indian land rights and then to move Indians onto remote parts of the land. The Indians, ironically, were the only people in Brazil who had constitutional rights to untitled land they occupied. Once the Indians were “discovered,” the settlers were promptly denounced as “stealers” of Indian land and fleeced of their titles. Then SPI removed the Indians to “safer” reserves and gave the titles to friends.⁶⁴³

Such practices were not confined to Mato Grosso alone, and New Jersey Standard Oil also benefited from political disruptions caused by the war between Peru and Ecuador, allowing the company access to lands on the west side of the Amazon.⁶⁴⁴ In Colby and Dennett’s words, throughout South and Central America, agrarian land reforms would benefit missionary efforts such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics:

Behind the rhetoric of God and bilingual democracies, oil and land whispered between the lines of government contracts with SIL. They were the secret of SIL’s power and [William Cameron Townsend’s] unique ability to help the United States as an official delegate of Peru at Inter-American Indian Congresses.⁶⁴⁵

The corrupt land policies applied to settlers in the twentieth century combined with centuries of reduction and removal practices applied to Indians from the time of the Spanish invasion. As Glenn Shepard’s work attests, no matter how ironic it was that

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 317.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 244.

ayahuasca use spread among Indians because of missionary efforts, what we see is the development of 'ayahuasca' as a generic concoction condensing various claims to religious freedom, Indigenous rights to self-determination, and the arrival of capitalism extending U.S. hegemony sought since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. The diaspora of ayahuasca does not simply radiate its afterglow from the Amazon toward the rest of the world. It is part of a process of religious poetics where local populations must inevitably contend with deep frames of eurochristian colonialism. In my final chapter, I focus on the legal contexts in the United States framing the reception of arguments advocating for the sacramental use of ayahuasca.

Chapter Six

Ayahuasca and the Courts

Summary

This chapter follows the philosophy of John Locke in relation to religion, secularization, and liberalism. I argue that the historically expressed value of a separation between “church and state” in liberal democracies itself remains underwritten by eurochristian religious poetics. I begin by addressing current conceptions of religion before returning to early modern contexts. Then I turn to historical coverage of the major Supreme Court rulings in the United States on religion. Alongside that reading I incorporate the history of Native Americans and the development of Federal Indian Law. Then I show how misconceptions between these two histories evidence the ongoing eurochristian religious poetics of sacrifice with respect to Indigenous Peoples as ayahuasca religions received state recognition.

Contemporary Contexts

As I move toward the conclusion of this study, I begin by reflecting on twentieth and twenty-first-century contexts. U.S. hegemony has long played a role in Latin American politics. Indeed, the idea of “Latin America” partially arises from a negative response to U.S. involvement during the nineteenth century following the Monroe

Doctrine. In the previous chapter I explained how missionary involvement, particularly of the evangelical and Pentecostal varieties, exploded during the twentieth-century following the shift to more liberal government in Brazil. That shift also saw the spread of Spiritism, which mixed with popular forms of Catholicism and Indigenous practices during the rubber boom. Founders of now recognized ayahuasca religions began as poor rubber-tappers, but as the religions of Santo Daime and UDV developed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries they adopted more austere practices, moving away from emphases on possession and imposing vertical hierarchies present in eurochristian religious poetics.

From a transnational perspective, one ought not separate ayahuasca too distinctly from other material extractions of the Amazon, which was already part of a globalizing process of expropriation. I realize that for people who want to emphasize ayahuasca's unique quality as sacred medicine, it may seem counterintuitive to lump ayahuasca together with the extraction of oil and rubber. It should be obvious that rubber as a commodity is highly different from ayahuasca, yet recent warnings concerning the overharvesting of ayahuasca are undeniably connected to its expropriative global commodification. As John Tully writes:

[Roger] Casement wrote of the deliberate killing of Indians by starvation and of “the destruction of crops over whole districts or inflicted as a form of death penalty on individuals who failed to bring their quota of rubber.” He went on to note that the “deliberate murder by bullet, fire, beheading, or flogging to death ... [was] accompanied by a variety of atrocious tortures” over the course of [Julio César] Arana's twelve years of operations on the Putumayo [as general manager of the Peruvian Amazon Company]. He estimated that during that time at least 30,000 Indians had been killed out of a population of 50,000. Almost 4,000 metric tons of rubber had been “extorted” from the valley and in six years up to

the end of 1910, that rubber had been sold for £966,000 on the London Market. He calculated that that every ton of rubber cost seven human lives.⁶⁴⁶

While Casement's anti-imperialism is laudable, the passage not only signals a mimetic reification of *mita* "payments" and expropriation introduced by Columbus. It also signals the Black Legend by which "civilized," Anglo-oriented eurochristians regarded South America as backward and "ungovernable." Joe Jackson has written an account of Englishman Henry Wickham's smuggling of 70,000 rubber tree seeds out of Brazil, which were then distributed throughout the English empire.⁶⁴⁷ Emily Conroy-Krutz notes that as the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions got its start during the early nineteenth-century, Samuel Worcester, whose meddling in Cherokee removal produced *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), wrote that South and Central America was in "so unpromising a state, that the opinion very generally prevalent is that for the pagans on this continent but little can be immediately done."⁶⁴⁸ As Colby and Dennett's *Thy Will Be Done* covers in depth, twentieth-century evangelicalism in South America took up the task in concert with New Jersey Standard Oil and the C.I.A. Today, from Canada to Venezuela, oil persists in genocidal efforts against Indigenous peoples for displacement as evangelicals continue to "civilize" and convert people. Barbara Alice Mann's notion

⁶⁴⁶ John Tully, *The Devil's Milk: A Social History of Rubber* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011), 97.

⁶⁴⁷ Joe Jackson, *The Thief at the End of the World: Rubber, Power, and the Seeds of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2008).

⁶⁴⁸ Conroy-Krutz, Emily. *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 36.

of fractal genocide comes to mind. Such is the state of things in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Ayahuasca is touted for its ability to “heal” us all as well, to make us kinder and more compassionate, to civilize us. If not always explicitly Christian, rhetoric around it is as steeped in eurochristian religious poetics as the expropriation of oil and other resources. Today much of the ayahuasca consumed in the U.S. comes from Hawaii, not South America. U.S. missionary work was heavy in Hawaii before the U.S. took it because American missionaries deemed the people higher up on their scale of civilization and so therefore more able to convert to the gospel: “By 1831, the [American] mission oversaw nine hundred schools, and as many Hawaiian teachers to staff them. One individual mission station examined five thousand students the year before, and another had ten thousand students in its domain.”⁶⁴⁹ The non-local farming of ayahuasca may seem antithetical to both users who belong to ayahuasca religions such as the UDV and to Indigenous practitioners. However, it remains a fact that the founders of recognized ayahuasca religions had their humble beginnings as rubber-tappers. They were already participating in a global economy as they encountered the brew. Undoubtedly, enthusiasts would counter my statements here by advocating for ayahuasca’s (and psychedelics in general) ability to show us just how deeply connected all life on this planet really is – as if oil and spices and indigo have not shown that. Rhetoric of ‘sacred medicine’ often attempts to exempt one’s spiritual growth just as eurochristians are often

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 120.

deterritorialized by psychedelic trips. It is no wonder that ayahuasca and micro-dosing psychedelics are especially popular today in Silicon Valley.

Returning to South America, Michael Taussig has perhaps been among the most attentive to the nuances among the ayahuasca phenomenon and what he refers to as the “magic of the state.” In one interview Taussig notes, “In the Putumayo, incidently, Indians were killed during the rubber boom (1900-1920) as the racial Other. Now the whites go to the Indian for hallucinogenic healing! You have to understand these as two sides of the one coin.”⁶⁵⁰ It is important in this regard to see the development of racism as imbricated within both eurochristian colonialism and globalization, just as in chapter one I explored the development of Indigeneity as a reaction to the colonial project, which was already global and “transnational” even if modern nation-states were in their formative stages. Recognizing this process does not mean that there is no such thing as Indigenous worldviews informed by intergenerational ICMs.

As I have been arguing with respect to eurochristian religious poetics, regardless of the conditions generating conceptions of Indigeneity, distinct ways of being persist that cannot be relegated to discourse on essentialism. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s work remains an important touchstone here, even if he himself is not Indigenous. Surely the reaction-formation induced by racial oppression and exploitation produced modern identity categories that have developed into forms of *indigenismo* caught up within

⁶⁵⁰ Michael Taussig and Peter Lamborn Wilson, *Ayahuasca and Shamanism: Michael Taussig Interviewed by Peter Lamborn Wilson* (New York: Autonomedia, 2002).

nation-state politics, but the main point of a focus on deep framing is the attending to compartments that *persist*, rather than simply *resisting*, colonization.

Here again, the importance of Luis León's "religious poetics" fuses with Gerald Vizenor's concept of Survivance, not just as an aesthetic but as an ICM. Unquestionably, various Indigenous cultures maintained economic relationships that were dynamic well before eurochristians arrived in what they deemed the "new world." The imposition of static ideas about these cultures was part of a eurochristian phantasy structure reified over several centuries, but that fact alone cannot extinguish the presence of cosmologies and orientations entirely distinct from the eurochristian phantasy structures themselves articulated in the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. Discourse on essentialism thus created a feedback loop promulgating erasure.

León stresses that "religious poetics" describes both the making and achieving of religion itself. As I have attempted to articulate, following Tinker and Newcomb, this "achievement" of religion is itself a documentation of erasure. Here León's observations are presented as purely descriptive of the phenomenon, although surely the *mestizaje* processes of Anzaldúa's "new *mestiza*" maintain forms of survivance important to "La Llorona's children." And this is exactly why León's work remains so crucial for a consideration of ayahuasca in diaspora, even though it does not speak directly to ayahuasca healing or ayahuasca religiosities.

'Religion' is a eurochristian concept. We generalize it for lack of a better term regularly, and as Chidester notes, despite incongruences it remains terminologically useful. If we could return to Cicero's use of *religio* as something like "tradition," it

would be great; but the fact of the matter is that discourse itself has a history, and as we receive that history ‘religion’ cannot be divorced from its eurochristian legacy, *especially in general usage outside of the academy*. The most important indicator of this fact lies in the place that ‘religion’ plays in law.

In both law and public culture, ‘religion’ is a concept informed by cathexis, and as such it is a reifying element in discursive power structures. Undoubtedly, analyses of “lived religion” evidence modes of behavior that exceed legal constructions of recognition. Yet in its reified sense, ‘religion’ has come into play as an important factor of what people expect in terms of what drug researchers call “set and setting.” Trans-generationally at this point, ‘religion’ – as well as its derivatives such as ‘spirituality’ and ‘soul’, etc. – affects *both set and setting*. Culturally, ‘religion’ is a condition for the possibility for certain experiences, whether we deem them as “sacred” or more loosely, following Taves, as “special.” ‘Religion’ is a cypher-like cathexis by which we pretend that there might be an overcoming of difference, and for that very reason it is often a tool for erasure. On the flipside of the coin, to use Taussig’s metaphor, it is that very notion of overcoming difference that perpetuates eurochristian colonialism itself.

This point goes well beyond any liberally utopic “recognition” of difference. The fact of globalization is its condensation of territory into only one “possible world.” Nowhere is this more apparent than in the awareness of global environmental destruction that threatens all life on the planet. It is therefore not a matter of mere inclusion. Inclusion is a relegation to a shared frame, and this is the impulse of eurochristianity *par excellence*. It is the root of Catholicism and Paulinism, invariably shared by Protestant

fracturing informed by inherited Roman aspirations to empire. Fracturing is here a tool of universalism. Nowhere is this more apparent than in legal processes that present themselves as secular, and the U.S. presents itself entirely in this regard.

The trajectory of liberalism reveals its eurochristian deep framing by posing questions of religious freedom within an idea of religion as avowed *belief*, premised upon the notion of *faith*, which was duty-bound and more fundamental than belief. Strictly speaking, the Protestant emphasis on *sola fide*, or “faith alone,” is not a matter of assent as a choice among choices. It is rather an acknowledgement of Christ, whose deterritorialized *gift* of faith unites the soul to the divine, thus generating a path from the “old man” (Adam / material) toward the “new man” (“Christ in me” / spiritual).⁶⁵¹ Liberalism in its eurochristian trajectory *assumes* such fidelity to Christ before questions of religious freedom, and secularization theories neglect to account for this embedded political theology.

Powerful critiques of modernism, such as Bruno Latour’s *We Have Never Been Modern*, situate well the flexibility of eurochristian discursive magic:

You cannot even accuse them of being nonbelievers. If you tell them they are atheists, they will speak to you of an all-powerful God who is infinitely remote in the great beyond. If you say that this crossed-out God is something of a foreigner, they will tell you that He speaks in the privacy of the heart, and that despite their sciences and their politics they have never stopped being moral and devout. If you express astonishment at a religion that has no influence either way on the way the world goes or on the direction of society, they will tell you that it sits in judgment on both. If you ask to read those judgments, they will object that

⁶⁵¹ Larry Rinehart, “*Sola Fide: The Mystery of Salvation by Faith*,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 49: no. 4 (Fall 2014): 583.

religion infinitely surpasses science and politics and it does not influence them, or that religion is a social construct, or the effect of neurons!⁶⁵²

Latour's book contrast's the tensions between Thomas Hobbes's nostalgia for a medieval worldview and Robert Boyle's embrace of mechanistic modernism, articulating what Latour calls the "modern constitution."

Building on Latour's work, in this concluding chapter I want to turn to John Locke's liberalism to further situate a eurochristian political theology embedded within later forms liberalism obscured by secularization narratives. To the extent that such obscuring produces historical amnesia, it erases liberalism's culpability with respect to the persistent agenda of the Doctrine of Discovery, particularly in legal procedures.

This by no means amounts to saying "we have never been secular." Rather, the secularization narrative is an extension of eurochristian deep framing in an attempt to civilize the world, convert every person, and usher in the *Basileia tou theou*. Appeals to ayahuasca exemptions for religious use in a rights-based culture, where the bearing of such rights is premised on a particular androcentric notion of "humanity," fuel both the religious poetics of ayahuasca and the persistence of eurochristendomination. Situating the recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court concerning ayahuasca religions within a longer history of liberalism, imbricated within a legal system that continues to avow the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, I argue that the erasures produced by liberalism perpetuate the genocidal impulses of eurochristian deep framing, even as such religious

⁶⁵² Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherin Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 39.

groups and their sacrament are recognized and considered increasingly “exempt.” Let me turn first to John Locke, one of Robert Boyle’s colleagues.

Locke, Mill, and the “Separation” of Church and State

Elissa Alzate gives a corrective to readings that overdetermine a separation in church and state in John Locke’s early liberalism. Alzate argues that Locke presents an eclectic reading of scripture in order to centralize toleration as an inherently Christian value in civil society:

Locke, using the authority of the Gospels, argues that true Christians do not persecute anyone. He contends that the qualities that define a Christian, including "Meekness of Spirit," are opposed to persecution. An individual cannot at the same time be a Christian and persecute others for their beliefs. People who persecute “have not really embraced the Christian Religion in their own Hearts.” He contends that a core set of beliefs unifies all Christians and underlies the numerous differences between sects. One of these fundamentals is toleration of religious doctrines and of worship that differ from one's own. An individual who is “cruel and implacable towards those that differ from him in Opinion” is “indulgent to such Iniquities and Immoralities as are unbecoming the Name of a Christian.”⁶⁵³

Far from a separation of church and state, religion for Locke would provide a kind of civic glue. Religious affiliation was a requirement for citizenship, and the public worship of God was required by his *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*. As Alzate writes, for John Locke:

Citizens of political society must, then, also be members of some religious society. They have religious liberty and liberty of conscience—that is, they may choose their own beliefs and the particular societies to which they belong. But, for

⁶⁵³ Elissa Alzate, “From Individual to Citizen: Enhancing the Bonds of Citizenship Through Religion in Locke's Political Theory,” *Polity* 46, no. 2 (April 2014): 221.

Locke, freedom of religion does not include freedom from religion. Although citizens, churches, clergy, and (most significantly) the magistrate have extensive obligations to tolerate diverse and competing beliefs, religion is ultimately a requirement of political society. All citizens must publicly profess belief in and worship God. Part of this profession is membership in some religious society.⁶⁵⁴

Locke's view of Christian tolerance also informs his notions of the "rule of law" and property by which he actively erased Indigenous claims to land, which he framed through a combination of social contract theory and notions of natural law.

Indigenous writers have long seen the eurochristian poetics underwriting Locke's thinking. As Tink Tinker writes:

Locke's move toward private ownership of property is authorized under this notion of natural law. Thus the origin of private property is part of the natural law for Locke and not just a conditions that begins under the social contract of what he calls political life. The latter (commonly called today the "rule of law") is invoked in Lockean doctrine as part of the set of needs that results in the social contract as an agreement among people to help regulate the ownership of property.⁶⁵⁵

People broadly associate Locke with the empirical notion of the *tabula rasa* or blank slate, yet in a eurochristian frame this is derivative of the baptismal ceremonies of Caribbean islands which christen the territory described as *terra nullius*, leaving the actual inhabitants to be deterritorialized and cast into a fictional state of nature from a distant and timeless past. Taken to its extreme it would be an ahistorical "reset button," but that is precisely why religion in the form of "civic glue" is necessary to maintain

⁶⁵⁴Elissa Alzate, "From Individual to Citizen: Enhancing the Bonds of Citizenship Through Religion in Locke's Political Theory," *Polity*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 2014): 228.

⁶⁵⁵ Tink Tinker, "John Locke on Property," *Beyond the Pale: Doing Ethics from the Margins*, ed. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas and Miguel De La Torre (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 52.

tradition and promote Christian values of toleration. As we have seen, natural law theory was already enfolded within the Doctrine of Christian Discovery through sixteenth century debates on the human status of Indigenous Peoples.

The innovation that Tinker points to is reflective of the same underlying Christian impulse that Alzate describes, yet it is obscured if we confuse the blank slate with secularization narratives. No matter how rational and scientific empiricism as a scientific method presented itself, it held within it eurochristian assumptions that would emerge with full-fledged liberalism as taxonomies of race, class, religion, and gender.

Lisa Lowe's *Intimacies of Four Continents* admirably traces the transnational impulses of liberalism within its colonial context. With regard to Locke specifically, she writes, "it is precisely by means of liberal principals that political philosophy provided for colonial settlement, slavery, and indenture."⁶⁵⁶ She goes on to write with respect to John Stuart Mill's writings on free trade in the context of the aftermath of the Chinese Opium War that "Liberal and humanitarian arguments provided for the innovations in imperial governance that administered the conduct of trade in the treaty ports, and criminal justice in the new Crown Colony of Hong Kong."⁶⁵⁷ Here as elsewhere:

"Liberty" did not contradict colonial rule but rather accommodated both colonialism as territorial rule, and one does not observe a simple replacement of earlier colonialisms by liberal free trade, but rather an accommodation of both residual practices of enclosure and usurpation with new innovations of governed movement and expansion.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁶ Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 9.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Liberal progress narratives mapped themselves onto a eurochristian cruel optimism, to invoke Lauren Berlant's term, and religious-inspired abolition movements often narrate liberalism's progressive impulses. Yet in Lowe's analysis:

we might view the British decision to end the slave trade in 1807, and slavery in its empire in 1834, as pragmatic attempts to stave off potential Black revolution, on the one hand, and to resolve difficulties in the sugar economy resulting from the relative inflexibility of slave labor within colonial mercantilism, on the other.⁶⁵⁹

Less stable racial terms such as 'coolie' – a precursor to the “rubber tapper” of the Amazon – came to signify an emergent global worker whose transience and precarious existence could sustain eurochristian civilization without achieving the full humanity of the androcentric rights-bearing subject. Citing Moon Ho Jung, Lowe writes: *coolies* “were never a people or a legal category. Rather, coolies were a conglomeration of racial imaginings that emerged worldwide in the era of slave emancipation, a product of the imagers rather than the imagined.”⁶⁶⁰

Lowe also tracks the eurochristian impulse toward “freedom” within Hegelian philosophy and the world economic context of the Haitian Slave revolts that informed his “Master-Slave” dialectic, as Susan Buck-Morss and Paul Gilroy have noted. Yet as Lowe importantly emphasizes: “the Hegelian dialectic of freedom and slavery has informed philosophies of history, even Marxist and third world anticolonial ones that

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid. 25.

have aimed to refute Hegel's decisive eurocentrism, through the key operations of dialectical sublation and teleology."⁶⁶¹ Contemporary Indigenous theorists such as Glen Sean Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene), have critiqued Marx's notion of the prior or primitive accumulation of capital for being presented as "prior" and thus foundational, rather than as an ongoing process of genocidal domination. In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard argues that "the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend."⁶⁶² In his rejection of liberal multiculturalism, Coulthard advocates a rehabilitated notion of Marx's theory of primitive accumulation whereby accumulation is not relegated to a particular period but rather seen in the "persistent role that unconcealed, violent dispossession continues to play."⁶⁶³ It is within Indigenous writers attention to persistent, violent dispossession that I have situated situate my own conception of genocide as processual, against event-based descriptions of the crime.

Tracking liberalism's narratives of "progress" here reveals them as entrenched in the eurochristian civilization project, even as they are shrouded at times within secularization narratives. Such are the trappings that *secure* the *Basileia tou theou* in a complimentary impulse toward New Age global spiritualities. While Latour has worked

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 140.

⁶⁶² Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 3.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 9.

to discredit the “humanist” narrative of modernity, the impulses persist in both legal and economic contexts, calling for “amendments” to the “modern constitution.”⁶⁶⁴ Thus, following Lowe and Coulthard, we must not merely “tell history differently”; instead:

we must return to the past its gaps, uncertainties, impasses, and elisions; it is [a matter of] tracing those moments of eclipse when obscure, unknown, or unperceived elements are lost, those significant moments in which transformations have begun to take place, but have not yet been inserted into historical time.⁶⁶⁵

My Critical Discourse Analysis has added to these efforts the ability to perceive the persistently active eurochristian deep frames rather than situating religion within an ideological taxonomy or Althusserian “state apparatus.” As Luis León’s “religious poetics” signals, the process is more fluid.

In an article rather sympathetic to Justice John Marshall’s situation in the *Johnson v. M’Intosh* decision, which formally melded the Doctrine of Discovery and U.S. property law, Carol M. Rose implies a utilitarian influence on Marshall: “the great Utilitarian thinker Jeremy Bentham said, back around 1800, that in any conflict between equality and security of property, it is imperative that security prevail – even where the inequality is so striking as in the case of serfdom or slavery.”⁶⁶⁶ In Rose’s generous reading, she writes:

⁶⁶⁴ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherin Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 138.

⁶⁶⁵ Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 175.

⁶⁶⁶ Carol M. Rose, “Property and Expropriation: Themes and Variations in American Law,” *Utah Law Review* 1 (2000), 5.

None of this is to say that native peoples' property claims have been even remotely adequately addressed in the United States. But by recognizing even an inchoate “occupancy” right, the Johnson case did at least establish the principle – however weakly executed in practice and however threatened in modern judicial misreadings – that Native Americans are not some kind of outlaw or enemy group, whose property claims count for nothing. Whatever their scope, their claims too are a subject for consideration and negotiation rather than simple confiscation.⁶⁶⁷

Yet next to Lowe’s work, we might see the utilitarian connection as more intimately tied to liberal economic security. The people were perhaps less of a threat because in Marshall’s conception they had already been consumed by the liberal body politic.

There is no question that utilitarian humanitarian policies underwrote the sensibility of the “white man’s burden” during the nineteenth century. The third chapter of John Stuart Mill’s *Utilitarianism* discusses the sanctions and the binding effect of moral philosophies. Mill admits, with deference to Christ,⁶⁶⁸ that ultimately, character will be the deciding factor but that in the meantime utilitarianism may be useful either to believers or non-believers. He believes that alignment between utilitarianism and God will become more aligned progressively over time.⁶⁶⁹ For this reason, Mill says the ultimate binding effect for morality in utilitarianism is “the conscientious feelings of mankind,”⁶⁷⁰ with the rather convenient caveat that those who possess appropriately

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁶⁸ John Stuart Mill. *Utilitarianism*, edited by Oskar Piest (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1957), 35.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 37.

cultivated characters will be more morally adept than others. In accordance with Locke, this necessitates a social foundation that holds liberty in high regard in order to promote equity among members of society, especially with respect to the accessibility of cultivation and individual interest.⁶⁷¹ We should understand ‘liberty’ here in the sense that Rose and Lowe have indicated above.

With Mill’s conception of “human development” throughout history towards a social consciousness at the level of the species, he is able to assert that the mass of cultivated individuals able to think collectively need not seek the opinions of other humans:

Every step in political improvement renders it more so, by removing the sources of opposition of interest, and levelling those inequalities of legal privilege between individuals or classes, owing to which there are large portions of mankind whose happiness it is still practicable to disregard.⁶⁷²

Disregarding other humans’ less cultivated perspectives is nothing personal for Mill; it has merely up to this point in history (the early 1860s) not seemed useful or necessary to include them, even though a time will conceivably come when all inequity is made null and there are no longer outsiders. Until then, it is not “necessary to the feeling which constitutes the binding force of the utilitarian morality on those who recognize it, to wait for those social influences which would make its obligation felt by mankind at large.”⁶⁷³ When the utilitarian perspective finds itself in conflict with other perspectives, its binding

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 43.

force lies in the character of the individual and the ability to put selfishness aside and act on the part of the whole. This is a reoccupation of Locke's "tolerant" Christian citizen. Because of this, a disinterested and balanced character is more capable of determining what ought to be done in a given situation.

His next chapter concerns the proof of utilitarian principles. Mill restates his theory: "The utilitarian doctrine is, that happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as means to that end."⁶⁷⁴ He believes the proof must be positive in the sense that people must be able to see it. He moves on to a discussion of virtue:

Virtue, according to the utilitarian doctrine, is not naturally and originally part of the end, but it is capable of becoming so; and in those who love it disinterestedly it has become so, and is desired and cherished, not as a means to happiness, but as a part of their happiness.⁶⁷⁵

When virtue does this, it results in greater happiness, which leads Mill to fully utilitarian claim that "happiness is the sole end of human action, and the promotion of it the test by which to judge of all human conduct; from whence it necessarily follows that it must be the criterion of morality, since a part is included in the whole."⁶⁷⁶ Happiness can only be methodologically determined "by practiced self-consciousness and self-observation, assisted by the observation of others."⁶⁷⁷ He then importantly distinguishes will from

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., 49.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

desire, saying volition is sometimes conscious and sometimes not.⁶⁷⁸ Through habit, the will may continue to act when desire has faded away. The will must be awakened with respect to virtue “by making the person *desire* virtue—by making him think of it in a pleasurable light, or of its absence in a painful one.”⁶⁷⁹

Mill’s final chapter connects utility and justice. Justice, like the binding sensation of moral sensations, may be either external or internal. He gives multiple examples of “universal” justice: 1) the right to liberty; 2) the right not to have one’s moral rights taken away; 3) each person ought to get what he or she deserves; 4) it’s unjust to break faith with anyone; 5) justice must be impartial, which is closely related to the notion of equality.⁶⁸⁰ Mill then admits to the enormity of the concept and gives an etymology. He sees the beginning of the concept of justice with the Hebrews but sees a kind of secular fallibility acknowledged by Greeks and Romans in the fact that men can at times make bad laws. Humans carry the idea of justice outside of legal systems, and Mill finally ends his description of justice as being a kind of “legal constraint.”⁶⁸¹ But justice is also related to the idea of duty (compelling one to be just) and meting out punishment for not being just:

I think there is no doubt that this distinction lies at the bottom of the notions of right and wrong; that we call any conduct wrong, or employ instead, some other term of dislike or disparagement, according as we think that the person ought, or

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 54-57.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 60.

ought not, to be punished for it; and we say that it would be right to do so and so, or merely that it would be desirable or laudable, according as we would wish to see the person whom it concerns, compelled or only persuaded and exhorted, to act in that manner.⁶⁸²

He pushes this a bit further claiming, “Justice implies something which it is not only right to do, and wrong not to do, but which some individual person can claim from us as his moral right.”⁶⁸³ From here Mill analyzes the desire to punish, which leads him to a distinction between humans and animals.

For Mill, humans can have sympathy for those both inferior and superior to them, and they generally have a wider range of sympathies and emotions than animals.⁶⁸⁴ This “superior” intelligence in humans allows them to extend their own sense of security to others in their communities and sympathies for those in the community suffering injustices:⁶⁸⁵

And the sentiment of justice appears to me to be, the animal desire to repel or retaliate a hurt or damage to oneself, or to those with whom one sympathizes, widened so as to include all persons, by the human capacity of enlarged sympathy, and the human conception of intelligent self-interest. From the latter elements, the feeling derives its morality; from the former, its peculiar impressiveness, and energy of self-assertion.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸² Ibid., 61.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 62.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., 64.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 65.

A *right* is something someone has which he or she may be hurt for and something that raises a demand for punishment: “To have a right, then, is, I conceive, to have something which society ought to defend me in the possession of.”⁶⁸⁷ Even so recognized, people still have a hard time distinguishing between internal and external senses of justice. Settling them historically, Mill says, has been the idea of a volitional contract that is itself a fiction (Hobbes), but he is not satisfied with such a concept. He believes at their core people have more of a retributive sense of justice.⁶⁸⁸ Driving his point home, Mill claims:

Justice has in this case two sides to it, which it is impossible to bring into harmony, and the two disputants have chosen opposite sides; the one looks to what it is just that the individual should receive, the other to what it is just that the community should give. Each, from his own point of view, is unanswerable; and any choice between them, on grounds of justice, must be perfectly arbitrary. Social utility alone can decide the preference.⁶⁸⁹

Justice, according to Mill, must be rooted in utility, and that utility is its most sacred and binding element.⁶⁹⁰ Having thus connected utility and justice, Mill closes reasserting the necessity for equality with regard to the treatment of all persons,⁶⁹¹ which inevitably

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 66.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 71.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 78.

includes the sense that social utilities are more important and more imperative than individual utilities.

In light of the eurochristian deep framing and genealogy of liberalism that I have been tracing, a eurochristian religious poetics underwrites and sustains a civic bond beneath even the most seemingly cold and arbitrary (or “providential”) justice indicated by Mill’s utilitarianism. Justice in this respect depends on the character and good will of the magistrate. Implicitly, the hierarchical nature of the judge’s position is indicative of his eurochristian character which endows him with the rational distribution of justice. It rests on his own liberty.

I have traced Mill’s liberalism here with an eye toward the deep framing of the eurochristian worldview that underwrites the Doctrine of Discovery. Far from a secularization narrative that would read liberalism as moving away from impulses toward Christian civilization, we see the tacit acceptance of the euroforming at work in situating and habituating individuals toward the *Basileia tou theou* through economic and legal processes. Such a deep framing persists today among those who would present “progressive” approaches toward the exemption of substances such as ayahuasca and other psychedelic “entheogens” for spiritual discovery. In contemporary discussions, this impulse remains present in appeals to “cognitive liberty.”

Cognitive Liberty

For example, in contrast to obsequiousness gestures toward the state’s authority to “recognize” and regulate official religious status or determine public health policy, legal

scholar Charlotte Walsh has argued instead for a cognitive liberationist approach to drug policy. In doing so, she returns to a classical sense of liberalism where “the state should only deploy the criminal law where an individual’s actions demonstrably run a high risk of causing harm to others.”⁶⁹² Reviewing ten years of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the U.K.’s 1971 *Misuse of Drugs Act*, she argues that “that privileging the ‘sacred’ over the ‘profane’ is philosophically an untenable distinction: accordingly, the possibility exists for crafting a range of constitutional exemptions.”⁶⁹³ She further argues:

Whilst judicial recognition of the impingement of the prohibition of (certain) drugs upon cognitive liberty – and, indeed, upon liberty itself – may be a distant reverie, successfully drawing upon the ECHR to win incremental gains in the spheres of drug-taking as a form of self-medication or as a religious sacrament seems more conceivable.⁶⁹⁴

As other scholars and ayahuasca enthusiasts have done with respect to drug policies, Walsh invokes international Human Rights acts as a plea for a reassessment of legal interpretation based on ‘soft’ law. Yet from a perspective attending to deeper

⁶⁹² Charlotte Walsh, “Psychedelics and Cognitive Liberty: Reimagining Drug Policy through the Prism of Human Rights,” *International Journal of Drug Policy* 29 (2016): 80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2015.12.025>.

⁶⁹³ Charlotte Walsh, “Drugs and human rights: private palliatives, sacramental freedoms and cognitive liberty,” *The International Journal of Human Rights* 14, no. 3 (2010), 439.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

eurochristian frames – and echoed in later talks by Walsh herself⁶⁹⁵ – it appears that, while a cognitive liberationist approach to ayahuasca may be more ethical than merely appealing to existing legal apparatuses, where Indigenous perspectives are concerned, “cognitive liberty” alone does not go far enough.

Situating cognitive liberty within a broader history of classic liberalism, Walsh draws on psychedelic enthusiast, Andrew Weil, to define ‘cognitive liberty’ as “the right to choose one’s own cognitive processes, to select how one will think, to recognise that the right to control thinking processes is the right of each individual person.”⁶⁹⁶ In a more recent article, Walsh traces the unsuccessful defense of Peter Aziz in England, who sought exemption for ayahuasca use both on the grounds that English Law was ambiguous with regard to it as a controlled substance and that it fell under his religious freedom according to *ECHR*, Articles 7 and 9. As she notes, “The primary question that arises is whether or not shamanism – especially a transplanted Westernized version of such, a New Age variation – would be deemed to constitute a religion in English courts.”⁶⁹⁷ Importantly, she cites a Rastafarian case – *Taylor* (2001) – where religious

⁶⁹⁵ Joe Friendly, “Horizons 2015 Psychedelic Drug Policy Activism, Cognitive Liberty,” *YouTube*, 11 October 2015, accessed May 6, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TrpN6BITPk&feature=share>

⁶⁹⁶ Charlotte Walsh, “Drugs and human rights: private palliatives, sacramental freedoms and cognitive liberty,” *The International Journal of Human Rights* 14, no. 3 (2010): 433.

⁶⁹⁷ Charlotte Walsh, “Ayahuasca in the English Courts: Legal Entanglements with the Jungle Vine,” *The World Ayahuasca Diaspora: Reinventions and Controversies*, ed. Beatriz Caiuby Labate; Clancy Cavnar; Alex K. Gearin (New York: Routledge, 2017), 248.

use was trumped by the “public health threat” of the potential to distribute cannabis. She contrasts this with cases in the U.S. and Holland where religious status trumped health concerns. Eventually, Santo Daime had an ambiguous win in England when charges against leaders were suddenly dropped. Yet generally speaking, when it comes to legislation one cannot easily separate either the regulative impulses of both religiosity or therapeutic use of entheogens.

Following Mill, Walsh notes the ironic imbrication of “legal moralism” in “religious puritanism,”⁶⁹⁸ and she adds that, though unlikely to be taken seriously in legal arguments, ayahuasca use ought to be defended by appeals to cognitive liberty.⁶⁹⁹ In fact, she adds that, with respect to English Law and the interpretations *Misuse of Drugs Act*, “the prospect of exceptions being extended to those wishing to imbibe ayahuasca in the name of cognitive liberty, or simply because they want to, seems little more than a pipe dream.”⁷⁰⁰ Thus, any such appeals to cognitive liberty for entheogen use must continue to appeal to broader human rights apparatuses such as the *European Convention on Human Rights* and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

While I find Walsh’s arguments pragmatic, we must also go beyond the liberal roots of cognitive liberation by attending to Indigenous philosophical thought.

Contrasting thinkers like Bruno Latour, Viveiros de Castro has advocated for treating

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 6373.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 6476.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 6505-6507.

Amerindian perspectivism as seriously as eurochristians place Hegel in philosophical history, and rather than “taking indigenous conceptions as entities akin to black holes or tectonic faults, we can take them as similar to the cogito or the monad.”⁷⁰¹

Perspectivism flips the script with respect to liberally accepted notions of multiculturalism. As I have said, according to Viveiros de Castro, “perspectivism supposes a constant epistemology and variable ontologies, the same representations and other objects, a single meaning and multiple referents.”⁷⁰² The accepted language of multiculturalism, on the other hand, assumes a static ontology with varying epistemologies, which downplays embodied notions of difference. Once again, Viveiros de Castro explains:

This cosmology imagines a universe peopled by different types of subjective agencies, human as well as nonhuman, each endowed with the same generic type of soul, that is, the same set of cognitive and volitional capacities. The possession of a similar soul implies the possession of similar concepts, which determine that all subjects see things in the same way.⁷⁰³

This produces a perspective that is mono-cultural but “multinatural”:

Such a difference of perspective – not a plurality of views of a single world, but a single view of different worlds – cannot derive from the soul, since the latter is the ground of being. Rather, such difference is located in the bodily difference between species, for the body and its affections [. . .] is the site and instrument of ontological differentiation and referential disjunction.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰¹ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “And,” *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds*, trans. Martin Holbraad and David Rodgers (Chicago: Hau Books, 2015): 50.

⁷⁰² Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “Perspectival Anthropology,” *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds*, trans. Martin Holbraad and David Rodgers (Chicago: Hau Books, 2015), 59.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, 59.

We must push the idea of cognitive liberty beyond the limited rights-based, androcentric, and ethnocentric notions Mill ascribed to it if we are to take it seriously on defenses of entheogen or psychedelic uses.

Recognition of cultural texture for the widely accepted notions of multiculturalism remains laudable but insufficient for the dynamic nature of twenty-first century globalization. While the traditional liberal notion of tolerance also remains important, we must question the inherent notions of cultural superiority imbricated within liberal politics and legal frames. Referring to cognitive liberty alone is similarly not enough, because at heart such a defense protects individuals instead of collectivities.

Counterintuitively, liberal notions of education need to move beyond merely seeking something “outside” of experience that is sought only with the intention of assimilating it into experience. This means, in a way, a resistance to “newness” that must simultaneously be a resistance to traditionalist and nostalgic conceptions of culture. Indigenous people have no direct link to an archaic and “forgotten” past. Rather, persistent modes of survivance present an entirely different deep framing. Indigenous People continue to exist in the face of hundreds of years of colonialist attempts to wipe them out. If Western seekers only look to their ayahuasca experiences to form “new tribes” or to heal the alienation of liberal subjectivity through Freudian-influenced

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., 58-59.

psycholytic therapy,⁷⁰⁵ they are not resisting but rather perpetuating Christian colonialism in its older and broadest sense.

As Jodi Byrd (Chickasaw) writes, relying on Indigenous critical theory, “helps to identify the processes that have kept indigenous peoples as a necessary pre-conditional presence within theories of colonialism and its ‘post.’”⁷⁰⁶ Byrd highlights the register in which we must consider Viveiros de Castro’s articulation of Amerindian perspectivism without relegating it to a neoliberal or multicultural politics of recognition. Moreover, the Indigenous critique alongside my examination of eurochristian deep framing as it persists through rights-based emphases on individuals ought to give pause to the universalizing tendencies among impulses toward religious exemptions for ayahuasca and other psychedelic substances. As Byrd densely articulates, “the Indian” has occupied an important, if spectral presence in European theories, most recently those in the poststructural lineage, signaling what she calls the transit of Empire:

To phrase this slightly differently, the Indian is simultaneously, multiply, a colonial, imperial referent that continues to produce knowledge about the indigenous as “primitive” and “savage” otherness within poststructuralist theory and philosophy. As a philosophical sign, the Indian is the transit, the field

⁷⁰⁵ “Rather than being overwhelmed by a mystical psychedelic experience, subjects in psycholytic therapy feel the effects of the medicine but retain more control of their thoughts and emotions, allowing for a more expanded but still manageable dialogue with their therapist. This style of psychedelic-enhanced therapy was popularized by psychiatrist and LSD researcher Stanislav Grof, who found great success with it in treating a range of psychological issues.”

Wesley Thoricaca, “Psychedelic vs Psycholytic Therapy: What’s the Difference?” *Psychedelic Times*, April 20, 2017, accessed February 28, 2020, <https://psychedelictimes.com/psychedelic-vs-psycholytic-therapy-whats-difference/>.

⁷⁰⁶ Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxxiv.

through which presignifying polyvocality is re/introduced into a signifying regime, and signs begin to proliferate through a series of becomings – becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-Indian, becoming multiplicity – that serves all regimes of signs. *And* the Indian is a ghost in the system, an errant or virus that disrupts the virtual flows by stopping them, redirecting them, or revealing them to be what they are and will have been all along: colonialist.⁷⁰⁷

In attending to modes of Survivance, then, it remains important to acknowledge this seduction toward “becoming,” especially as ayahuasca users will continue to present ayahuasca use as invoking a possible world of *sumak kawsay* or *buen vivir* in a global setting. As Byrd notes, “it is the work of indigenous critical theory both to rearticulate indigenous phenomenologies and to provide (alter)native interpretive strategies through which to apprehend the colonialist nostalgias that continue to shape affective liberal democracy’s investment in state sovereignty as a source of violence, remedy, memory, and grievability.”⁷⁰⁸ With this critique and my earlier genealogy of eurochristian liberalism in mind, I now turn toward a contextualization of the U.S. Supreme Court decision on ayahuasca based on the way ‘religion’ has figured throughout the Court’s history.

Religious Freedom and the U.S. Supreme Court

In *Religious Liberty in a Lockean Society*, Elissa Alzate appropriately warns us that in addition to historical fluidity in terms of both the establishment clause and the free exercise of the First Amendment, in the Supreme Court:

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., 21.

The justices all have (and have at every point in the Court's history) differing views of what religious freedom means (both according to their own personal opinions and their individual interpretations of the constitutional provisions), the government's role in safeguarding it, as well as how to balance it with our other rights and liberties. It is just as dangerous to attribute one political perspective to the Supreme Court as it is to the American founding.⁷⁰⁹

The famous "wall of separation" between church and state is taken from a letter of Thomas Jefferson's to Baptists in the U.S., echoing their 17th century founder, Roger Williams.

As Alzate notes, the concept of separation as derived from Locke's liberalism, "arose out of the desire neither to empower religion nor to weaken and control it. It serves to preserve and enhance individual liberty to the extent possible. Religious liberty is less about religion than it is about individual freedom."⁷¹⁰ Locke saw religion as an internal "natural right" that, while ungovernable, was tied to the external civic rights to Life, Liberty, and Property. The internalized conscience is protected in its freedom by private ownership of property. Perhaps evading promises they knew they could not keep, Jefferson and his colleagues famously replaced Locke's emphasis on 'property' with the much more vague, "pursuit of happiness." The slippage between 'property' and 'pursuit of happiness' is, however, an *enormously important instance of political-theological rhetoric*. Its substitution could be elided thus: 'the pursuit of Property which will make me happy.' Yet we know that the conversion to property, expropriation, in the context of

⁷⁰⁹ Elissa Alzate, *Religious Liberty in a Lockean Society* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan), 64.

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

the Doctrine of Discovery is a baptismal christening renaming the land within a context where eurochristian subjects would exercise and transfer their rights to dominion.

Despite the inclusion of the Doctrine of Discovery into U.S. law in 1823 and the subsequent use of it for Indian removal, the first major case regarding “religious freedom” in the U.S. did not occur until 1879 with *Reynolds v. United States*. The case involved George Reynolds, secretary to Brigham Young, and his violating a federal statute against bigamy. In tracing the concept of religion, which is not defined in the U.S. Constitution, the Court invoked Thomas Jefferson’s efforts at religious liberty, including his famous “wall of separation” statement in his 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptist Association. In the sentence following the “wall” statement, Jefferson wrote,

Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore man to all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.⁷¹¹

As we know from previous chapters, Jefferson had a career-long knowledge of the Doctrine of Discovery. It is both interesting and telling that the Supreme Court in *Reynolds* chose the 1802 letter as an authoritative clarification of the First Amendment, adopted in 1791. The Court had already established its authority over states concerning religion in the Fourteenth Amendment (1868).

As my reading of the Lockean liberal tradition within a eurochristian framing suggests, Jefferson’s appeals to “natural rights” already situated a civil society based on

⁷¹¹ “*Reynolds v. United States* (1879),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 15.

religious tolerance among Protestant-derived christianities, yet the invocation and restoration of the natural rights discourse would simultaneously situate the legal tradition within international laws developed under papal authority as the Doctrine of Discovery.

In *Reynolds*, the Court supported its intervention into Mormon practices of bigamy on the basis of “good order”: “Polygamy has always been odious among the northern and western nations of Europe, and, until the establishment of the Mormon Church, was almost exclusively a feature of the life of Asiatic and African people.”⁷¹² Leaving the accuracy of the statement aside, the Court’s impulse was to justify its decision by appealing to even international contexts. The decision goes on to invoke policies of James I of England, which made the offence punishable by death. According to the Court, “Laws are made for the government of actions, and while they cannot interfere with mere religious belief and opinions, they may with practices.”⁷¹³

In 1892, the Court revoked an *Alien Contract Labor Act* of 1885 that had been employed against an Episcopal church that had contracted an English clergyman from London. Defending the church, the Court cited the Declaration of Independence as well as “the constitutions of various States [where] we find in them a constant recognition of religious obligations.”⁷¹⁴ The Court affirmed that “There is no dissonance in these declarations. There is a universal language pervading them all, having one meaning; they

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Ibid., 16.

⁷¹⁴ “*Church of the Holy Trinity v. The United States* 143 U.S. 457 (1892), *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 20.

affirm and reaffirm that this is a religious nation.”⁷¹⁵ While the ruling does cite with approval the idea that contracting a Jewish rabbi would fall under this protection, it also states: “These and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.”⁷¹⁶ *Bradfield v. Roberts* (1899) supported partial federal funding for a Catholic hospital as well.

The next major Supreme Court cases occur in the 1940s and involve Jehovah’s Witnesses. Challenging a school’s policies that had expelled children for refusing to salute the American flag, the Court initially supported the expulsion saying, “National unity is the basis of national security.”⁷¹⁷ The decision was reversed in 1943 after a West Virginia law was introduced compelling students to raise a “stiff armed salute” during the pledge of allegiance. The context of World War II resounds in the reconsidered position:

Ultimate futility of such attempts to compel coherence is the lesson of every such effort from the Roman drive to stamp out Christianity as a disturber of its pagan unity, the Inquisition, as a means to religious and dynastic unity, the Siberian exiles as a means to Russian unity, down to the fast failing efforts of our present totalitarian enemies. Those who begin coercive elimination of dissent soon find themselves exterminating dissenters. Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁷ “*Minersville School District v. Gobitis* 310 U.S. 586 (1940),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 30.

⁷¹⁸ “*West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* 319 U.S. 624 (1943),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 52.

As noted earlier, Nazi persecution of Jews was not based on their religion but rather on notions of “race” inspired by U.S. policies toward Indian removal. Here, as in the case against Mormon polygamy, the Court’s ruling imagines itself in an international context, and Jehovah’s Witnesses are read in a eurochristian context as adhering to *Exodus* 20: 4-5, which prohibits worshipping graven images. As indicated in chapter four, by the 1940s the U.S. government was also involved in supporting missionary efforts to spread Christian civilization to Indians in South America. Appeals toward religious tolerance and the separation of church and state are consistent with eurochristian socializing efforts even when made under the auspices of “secular” laws.⁷¹⁹

Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing Township (1947) affirmed a strong separation of church and state while simultaneously citing Jefferson and Madison in support of liberty. The issue revolved around compulsory payments to authorities when state reimbursement was granted to parents of children in New Jersey who opted out of public school busing to educate their children at parochial schools. The court shot down the idea that the state’s reimbursements to the parents broke the establishment clause of the First Amendment. It consistently read Jefferson within a Lockean frame, though stressing that a person’s religion ought to remain “inviolately private.”⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁷²⁰ “*Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing Township* 330 U.S. 1 (1947),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 80.

The major cases of the 1950s involve increasing religious diversity in educational settings where students could opt to leave class in public schools for part of the day to attend religious instruction. As the ruling in one case summarized,

The evolution of colonial education, largely in the service of religion, into the public school system of today is the story of changing conceptions regarding the American democratic society, of the functions of State-maintained education in such a society, and of the role therein of the free exercise of religion by the people.⁷²¹

Sanctimoniously, the Court wrote in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952):

We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. We guarantee the freedom to worship as one chooses. We make room for a wide variety of beliefs and creeds as the spiritual needs of man deem necessary. We sponsor an attitude on the part of government that shows no partiality to one group and that lets each flourish according to the zeal of its adherents and the appeal of its dogma. When the state encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our traditions. For it then respects the nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs. To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that the government show a callous indifference to religious groups.⁷²²

Again, in the international context, the developing Cold War set the stage for policies amenable to the idea of religion and religious “diversity” in the U.S. during the 1950s to fight “godless” Communism. This would be signaled loud and clear with the nation’s adoption of the motto “In God We Trust” in 1956.

⁷²¹ “*Illinois ex rel. McCollum v. Board of Education* 333 U.S. 203 (1948),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 84.

⁷²² “*Zorach v. Clauson* 343 U.S. 306 (1952),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 93.

As I alluded in previous chapters, in 1953, the U.S. Congress enacted House Resolution 108, the federal termination policy that would seek to dissolve recognition of 109 recognized Native American groups. It was followed by the *Indian Relocation Act* in 1956. As Ward Churchill notes, the implementation was headed up by Dillon S. Myer as Indian Commissioner. Myer was “qualified” because he had been in charge of the Japanese internment program during the 1940s.⁷²³ Over the next few decades the removal policy would dismantle cultural bonds:

Cut off irrevocably from the centers of sociocultural existence, they have increasingly adopted arbitrary and abstract methods to signify their “Indianness.” Federally sanctioned “Certificates of Tribal Enrollment” have come to replace tangible participation in the political life of their nations as emblems of membership. Federally issued “Certificates of Degree of Indian Blood” have replaced discernible commitment to Indian interests as the determinant of identity. In the end, by embracing such “standards,” Indians are left knowing no more of being Indian than do non-Indians. This process is a cultural form of what, in the physical arena, has been termed “autogenocide.”⁷²⁴

Indian “religion” had been outlawed in the U.S. since the late nineteenth century. Indian Removal policies following *Johnson v. M’Intosh* developed into disputes between state and federal Indian policy in Georgia, which led John Marshall to define Indian Tribes as “domestic dependent nations” as opposed to “foreign states.”⁷²⁵ Here, the U.S.

⁷²³ Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide and Colonization* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2002), 351.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁷²⁵ William C. Canby, Jr., *American Indian Law in a Nutshell* (St. Paul, MN: West Academic Publishing, 1981), 17.

government again clearly saw itself as inheritor of the Doctrine of Discovery policies in force by England.

As William Canby notes, “It is accordingly not surprising that, when the colonies revolted from Britain, nearly all of the tribes allied themselves with the Crown.”⁷²⁶

Following Removal during the 1830s and 1840s, “In 1849, with the East nearly free of tribal Indians, the Bureau of Indian Affairs moved from the War Department, where it had existed since 1824, to the Department of the Interior.”⁷²⁷ Then, “In 1871, Congress passed a statute providing that no tribe thereafter was to be recognized as an independent nation with which the U.S. could make treaties.”⁷²⁸ This created two methods – statute or executive order – by which reservations were created until 1919. Originally meant to keep Indians separate, reservations became tools for “civilizing” Indians:

The appointment of Indian agents came to be heavily influenced by organized religions, and when reservation schools were first set up in 1865, they too were directed by religious organizations with a goal of “Christianizing” the Indians. In 1878, off-reservation boarding schools were established to permit education of Indian children from their tribal environments.”⁷²⁹

The goal of these policies were intentionally genocidal, even by the watered-down language of the U.N. *Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide*.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 21.

Forcible removal of children for assimilation and “civilization” played into attempts to erode both traditional practices and tribal political cohesion, which had become the bases for which Indian groups were and are federally “recognized.” As Canby notes:

In 1883, Courts of Indian Offenses were authorized, with judges to be appointed by the Indian agents. Neither these courts nor the codes they administered were fashioned after indigenous Indian institutions; they were imposed as federal educational and disciplinary instrumentalities in furtherance of the civilizing mission of the reservations. See *United States v. Clapox*, 35 Fed. 575, 577 (D.Or.1888). Accordingly, certain religious dances and customary practices, as well as plural marriages, were outlawed.⁷³⁰

Echoing *Reynolds* while blatantly imposing a centuries-long eurochristian mission of domination, American Indian Law works to define, limit, and fracture Native existence. The shift from land to property in the *Dawes Act* (1887), which allowed the parsing of reservation lands into “allotments,” combined Lockean notions of land “development” with individuating and privatized notions of religion while echoing similar processes developed in South America a few centuries earlier. It also allowed the sale of tribal lands considered “excess” to be negotiated by Indian agents. In order to opt in to an allotment, an Indian had to become a U.S. citizen. After 1919, Congress imposed U.S. citizenship onto all remaining Indians in the *Snyder Act*, also known as the *Indian Citizenship Act*.

It was between the years of 1883 and 1924 that cultural genocidal policies worked hand in hand with outright genocidal violence such as the Wounded Knee Massacre of

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

hundreds of Lakota people in 1890. The events importantly following the developments of Ghost Dance prophetic movements. Anthropologists such as James Mooney, who bought into all of the romanticized aesthetics of the “disappearing Indian” in his *Ghost-Dance Religion and Wounded Knee* (1896), simultaneously embodied Captain Richard H. Pratt’s famous phrase, “Kill the Indian, save the man.” The Native American Church was born out of well-intentioned efforts to protect Indians from bloodshed by integrating traditional practices such as the use of peyote within Christian theology. Omer Stewart’s book *Peyote Religion* (1987), while also flawed, is a more economical way of considering the romanticism that saturates James Mooney’s writing.

Situating discourse on Native use of “entheogens” in this period is crucial for understanding the legal and cultural reception of ayahuasca in diaspora because so much of it is already enframed within eurochristian-oriented discourse and genocidal policies. After the 1928 Meriam Report exposed the failure of federal Indian policy under the Allotment period, a shift in in policy followed with the *Indian Reorganization Act* (1934) and the efforts of sympathetic sociologists such as John Collier: “The Indian Reorganization Act was based on the assumption, quite contrary to that of the Allotment Act, that tribes not only would be in existence for an indefinite period, but that they *should be.*”⁷³¹ While successful in many ways, as explored earlier, we ought to situate the Act within the liberal “development” projects of capitalist eurochristians such as Nelson Rockefeller and William Cameron Townsend. It is also essential that the

⁷³¹ William C. Canby, Jr., *American Indian Law in a Nutshell* (St. Paul, MN: West Academic Publishing, 1981), 25.

“developmental” moves made by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs during this period would be manipulated in foreign policy and missionary efforts in South America, including the well-intentioned efforts of anthropologists such as Richard Evans Schultes so revered in the discourse on ayahuasca.

The international situation is also crucial for situating termination policies by the U.S. during the 1950s. As historiographical work on the discourse of genocide shows, both civil rights reacting to the Civil Rights Congress in their 1951 paper, *We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People*, as well as Termination policy for Indians, came on the heels of the U.N. genocide convention. As I have alluded already, U.S. Supreme Court decisions have historically reacted to international situations, especially in Europe. If there were no more Indians, the U.S. government could avoid being charged with the crime of genocide by the U.S.S.R. and others during the postwar years. Termination policies, like the Dawes Act, would be declared “failures” in the 1960s, as Indian “citizens” came to be regarded within civil rights contexts. This would be expressed in the *Indian Civil Rights Act* (1968), but as Canby importantly notes:

The primary effect of the Act was to impose upon the tribes most of the requirements of the Bill of Rights. Traditionally, tribes had not been subject to constitutional restraints in their governmental actions, because those restraints are imposed in terms either upon the federal government or, by the 14th Amendment, upon states. Since the tribes were neither, the constitutional restrictions did not apply to them.⁷³²

⁷³² Ibid., 30.

This statement is especially important for understanding religious recognition of both Indians and ayahuasca religions.

While I have been covering the history of First Amendment decisions regarding religious “freedom” in the U.S., it is important to be aware that this *did not apply* to Indians until after 1968, and even more so until after the *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* (1978). As Vine Deloria wrote during the early 1970s:

The nature of tribal religion brings contemporary America a new kind of legal problem. Religious freedom has existed as a matter of course in America *only* when religion has been conceived as a set of objective beliefs. This condition is actually not freedom at all because it would be exceedingly difficult to read minds and determine what ideas were being entertained at the time. So far in American history religious freedom has not involved the consecration and setting aside of lands for religious purposes or allowing sincere but highly divergent behavior by individuals and groups.⁷³³

Even the new found “recognition” of Indian religious freedom exists in liberal politics entrenched within eurochristian religious poetics tacitly promoting a “civilizing” frame based on Lockean principles of religious “tolerance” by Christians and among Christians.

With respect to the Supreme Court, we begin to see some sea changes with respect to rulings on religion during the early 1960s. Most cases are dealing with religion and prayer in public schools or taxation. *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) found a New York public school policy requiring students to recite a prayer professing faith in God to breach the establishment clause. Justice Douglas, concurring, wrote: “The First Amendment leaves the Government in a position not of hostility to religion but of neutrality. The philosophy

⁷³³ Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native’s View of Religion*, 30th Anniversary ed. (Golden: Fulcrum, 2003), 282.

is that the atheist or agnostic – the non-believer – is entitled to go his own way.”⁷³⁴

Abington School District v. Schempp similarly draws on the language of “neutrality”:

It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historical qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objective fully as a part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment.⁷³⁵

Here “civilization” is treated progressively, and “neutrality” is valued within that “secular” frame, yet we know that within the eurochristian framing of the Doctrine of Discovery this context is highly motivated and anything but “neutral” with respect to Native Americans.

Justice Brennan’s concurring remarks in *Abington* are several pages long, opening with a direct reference to Locke and stating “The fact is that the line which separates the secular from the sectarian in American life is elusive”:⁷³⁶

A too literal quest for the advice of the Founding Fathers upon the issues of these cases seems to me futile and misdirected for several reasons: First, on our precise problem the historical record is at best ambiguous, and statements can readily be found to support either side of the proposition. The ambiguity of history is understandable if we recall the nature of the problems uppermost in the thinking of the statement who fashioned the religious guarantees; they were concerned with far more flagrant intrusions of government into the realm of religion than

⁷³⁴ “*Engel v. Vitale* (1962),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 109.

⁷³⁵ “*Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 114.

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, 116.

any that our century has witnessed. While it is clear to me that the Framers meant the Establishment Clause to prohibit more than the creation of an established federal church such as existed in England, I have no doubt that, in their preoccupation with the imminent question of establish churches, they gave no distinct consideration to the particular question whether the closet also forbade devotional exercises in public institutions.⁷³⁷

Brennan then goes on to note that the religious diversity of the United States in 1963 is much greater than the Founding Fathers, who “knew differences chiefly among Protestant sects.”⁷³⁸ Brennan’s comments are notable because they do not simply seek to base the decision on legal precedent or the aspirations of the Founding Fathers. Instead, Brennan attempts an account for cultural changes in the body politic. Of course, he has ignored all Native American practices suppressed by this tradition, but his approach to the material is innovative in context.

Abington’s avowal of the value of “secular” approaches to the study of religion fueled the creation of religious studies programs in the United States schools, as distinct from theology programs. Comparative religion was by far the going model, and by the late 1960s and 1970s, liberal attempts at the inclusion of Native American ‘religions’ became normal. Another landmark case of the early 1960s was *Sherbert v. Verner* (1963), which involved unemployment compensation for a Seventh Day Adventist who refused to work on Saturdays for religious reasons. The court famously set up the “Sherbert,” test requiring the government to show a compelling interest for denying the benefits.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

Once again reflecting international situations, *United States v. Seeger* (1965) involved conscientious objectors to Vietnam. As the Court was flexible and sympathetic to protect even atheists in earlier cases, it notes the shift in language from “God” to “Supreme” being used to indicate “whether a given belief that is sincere and meaningful occupies a place in the life of the possessor parallel to that filled by the orthodox belief in God of one who clearly qualifies for the exemption.”⁷³⁹ *Board of Education v. Allen* (1968) and *Epperson v. Arkansas* (1968) deal with enforcing use of certain textbooks and an Arkansas law forbidding the teaching of Darwinian theory. Tax cases and another conscientious objector case occupy the Court’s thought on religion into the 1970s. Meanwhile the *Indian Civil Rights Act* had passed in 1968 subjecting Indians to the Bill of Rights and the First Amendment.

While various Indians had become U.S. citizens and after 1934 bans on religious practices were lifted, we know that termination policies in the 1950s were devastating. During the early 1970s, the question of racism came up with regard to federal Indian law’s recognition of Indians. The Court rejected such a claim, saying, “The preference is not directed towards a “racial” group consisting of ‘Indians’; instead, it applies only to members of ‘federally recognized tribes.’”⁷⁴⁰ As Canby notes, conflicts between Indian and non-Indian status raise various issues regarding equal protection claims. This made

⁷³⁹ “*United States v. Seeger* (1965),” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 141.

⁷⁴⁰ William C. Canby, Jr., *American Indian Law in a Nutshell* (St. Paul, MN: West Academic Publishing, 1981), 388.

free exercise of religion difficult for Indians, instigating the *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* (AIRFA) (1978). But rather than the government showing a “compelling interest”:

Indians who seek to block federal (or state) action on religious grounds accordingly must usually prove a violation . . . Such controversies are not truly Indian Law cases, even though they have a distinct Indian flavor. Their resolution depends a great deal upon the general principles of the First Amendment or statutory free exercise of religion, and not upon Indian status.⁷⁴¹

What is truly happening over the course of the twentieth-century is the relegation of all things Indian to broader U.S. law as federal Indian law and Indian groups continue to be eroded, depending upon the government to even designate who “counts” as an Indian.

A reading of Supreme Court cases on religious freedom since *Johnson v. M’Intosh*’s explicit inclusion of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery reveals, time and again the Lockean, eurochristian religious poetics at the foundation of the First Amendment. Even after the 1960s, when recognition of religious diversity in the U.S. became much more apparent, Indians have continued to struggle with the policies of government “recognition.” Increasingly dealing with questions of taxation and school funding, whether it be in the form of bus programs, text books, or buildings and maintenance, a common question of “excessive entanglement” and the “surveillance” necessary to ensure that government funds do not aid in parochial schools’ explicit

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., 392.

religious education following *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971).⁷⁴² The Court affirmed: “The Constitution decrees that religion must be a private matter for the individual, the family, and the institutions of private choice, and that while some involvement and entanglement are inevitable, lines must be drawn...”⁷⁴³ The “Lemon test” was referred to in following cases to assess excessive entanglement.

While many parochial school cases dealt with Catholic schools, two important cases dealt with religious recognition of Amish practices. *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) recognized the rights of Amish parents to pull their children from mandatory state public schooling after eighth grade due to a religious belief that high school would potentially corrupt their children by exposing them to overly “worldly” content. The Court found in favor of the First and Fourteenth Amendments over the state of Wisconsin, basing its rationale on the historical presence of the Amish as a social group:

Aided by a history of three centuries as an identifiable religious sect and a long history as a successful and self-sufficient segment of American society, the Amish in this case have convincingly demonstrated the sincerity of their religious beliefs, the interrelationship of belief with their mode of life, the vital role that belief and conduct play in the continued survival of Old Order Amish communities and their religious organization, and the hazards presented by the State’s enforcement of a statute generally valid as to others.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴² “*Lemon v. Kurtzman*,” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 180.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁷⁴⁴ “*Wisconsin v. Yoder*,” *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, edited by Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013): 199-200.

This language enacts a religious exemption for anabaptist traditions and parallels the Court's kindly regard for other sectarian offshoots of Protestantism such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. However, a second case involving an Amish concern, *United States v. Lee* (1982), denied an Amish employer who sought exemption from paying social security taxes for his employees: "When followers of a particular sect enter into commercial activity as a matter of choice, the limits they accept on their own conduct as a matter of conscience and faith are not to be superimposed on the statutory schemes which are binding on others in that activity."⁷⁴⁵ These decisions, and following the passage of AIRFA in 1978, would converge in an important case regarding Native American practices and the later attempts for religiously exempt use of ayahuasca: *Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith* (1990).

The case involved two members of the Native American Church: Alfred Smith and Galen Black. Working as drug-rehabilitation counselors, Smith and Black were fired from their jobs when their employer discovered they had ingested peyote. Then the state of Oregon denied them unemployment benefits because of peyote's Schedule I status: Justice Scalia delivered the Court's opinion, saying while "It would doubtless be unconstitutional, for example, to ban the casting of "statues that are to be used for worship purposes," or to prohibit bowing down to a golden calf," the plaintiffs:

seek to carry the meaning of "prohibiting the free exercise [of religion]" one large step further. They contend that their religious motivation for using peyote places them beyond the reach of criminal law that is not specifically directed at their

⁷⁴⁵ *United States v. Lee*, "Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents," ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 235.

religious practice, and that is concededly constitutional as applied to those who use the drug for other reasons.⁷⁴⁶

It is well-known that peyote does not cause harmful effects on users, and it has long been used in Native American Church contexts that seek prevent Indians from succumbing to alcohol abuse. Referring back the *Reynolds* the Court's decision, however, evidences what many other Supreme Court cases do, an implicit consideration for national security. In this case, the rhetoric of the escalated Drug War influenced its decision,⁷⁴⁷ and the only mention of AIRFA is made in the dissenting opinions:

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act, in itself, may not create the rights forceable against government action restricting religious freedom, but this Court must scrupulously apply its free exercise analysis to the religious claims of Native Americans, however unorthodox they may be. Otherwise, both the First amendment and the stated policy of Congress will offer to Native Americans merely an unfulfilled and hollow promise.⁷⁴⁸

Omer Stewart, who was an expert witness during the proceedings, had covered various unsuccessful legal attempts by non-Natives such as Timothy Leary and Art Kleps to seek religious exemptions for other Schedule I substances, pointing out various flaws in drug restriction rhetoric. These attempts were often thwarted because they, unlike the Amish, were recently established groups.⁷⁴⁹ He also pointed out flaws in "blood quantum"

⁷⁴⁶ "*Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith,*" *Religious Liberty and the American Supreme Court: The Essential Cases and Documents*, ed. Vincent Phillip Muñoz (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013): 357.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 367.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 370.

⁷⁴⁹ Omer Stewart, *Peyote Religion: A History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987): 325-26.

restrictions and legal precedent for the NAC's sometimes including non-Natives in their ceremonies.⁷⁵⁰

In 1993, the U.S. Congress passed the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act* (RFRA), which:

Prohibits any agency, department, or official of the United States or any State (the government) from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, except that the government may burden a person's exercise of religion only if it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person: (1) furthers a compelling governmental interest; and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.⁷⁵¹

The Act explicitly cites *Employment Division v. Smith*, finding: "in *Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990) the Supreme Court virtually eliminated the requirement that the government justify burdens on religious exercise imposed by laws neutral toward religion."⁷⁵² Drawing on *Sherbert v. Verner* and *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, Congress demanded that a "compelling interest" test be employed for all such cases.

Congress's decision followed the 1990 passage of *The Native American Graves Repatriation Act*, which helped give more support to AIRFA, particularly in its recognition of Native Americans' connections to local places. The Supreme Court, however, views Congress's actions as an unconstitutional overstepping between the

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 332-33.

⁷⁵¹ "H.R.1308 - Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993," www.congress.gov, accessed March 27, 2020, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/1308>

⁷⁵² Ibid.

legislative and judicial branches of government. Elissa Alzate sees RFRA as out of step with the Lockean tradition underwriting religious freedom in the U.S., arguing:

RFRA laws disturb the delicate balance existing between our various rights by placing religious liberty hierarchically above the others. Such legislation furthermore endangers the fundamental rule of law by allowing for exemptions to be made on a case-by-case- basis.⁷⁵³

It might be tempting to read such decisions as liberal “progress,” but the deeper history tells us another story; namely, that “progress” is a eurochristian mask.

A CDA perspective attentive to the deep framing of eurochristian religious poetics offers us various interpretations of these events. First of all, a review of Supreme Court rulings clearly evidences an explicit avowal of the Lockean tradition amid affirmations that the United States is a “Christian nation.” The contradictions make more sense once we see that “secular liberalism” is a utilitarian extension of a worldview where eurochristians developed legal mechanisms for religious tolerance with respect to other various branches of christian with no consideration of tolerance, indeed with outright prohibition of Indian practices until the mid-twentieth-century. Second, to the extent that Native Americans are considered at all only follows various genocidal policies aimed at assimilation into eurochristian society. From relegation of domestic dependency following Marshall’s explicit imbrication of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery into U.S. law, to the end of treaties and the development of boarding schools and forced conversions, to the *Dawes Act* and *the Citizenship Act*, to policies of termination, and finally to an *Indian Civil Rights Act*, the overwhelming legal tendencies have been

⁷⁵³ Elissa B. Alzate, *Religious Liberty in a Lockean Society* (New York: Palgrave, 2017), 3.

genocidal cultural erasure, deterritorialization, imposed citizenship, and relegation to the Bill of Rights. At every step of the way, surely there were well-intentioned people who, due to their own deeply framed eurochristian religious poetics – even when expressed as entirely “secular” – have relegated Native Americans to a “civilizing” process.

Ayahuasca and the Supreme Court

As I have been articulating throughout this work, arguments which seek religiously exempt status for the use of ayahuasca and other “entheogens,” while at times well-intentioned, continue to perpetuate this civilizing process. As I have explored in previous chapters, the most recent attempts have followed the 2006 Supreme Court decision in *Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente União do Vegetal*. Despite the Court’s reservations concerning the constitutionality of RFRA, the “compelling interest” condition was a major part of its decision. As the ruling states:

If such use [of ayahuasca] is permitted in the face of the general congressional findings for hundreds of thousands of Native Americans practicing their faith, those same findings alone cannot preclude consideration of a similar exception for the 130 or so American members of the UDV who want to practice theirs.⁷⁵⁴

Equal protection rationales here continue the erasure of Native American status even while drawing on exceptions granted to them by the liberal politics of recognition. In other words, “recognition” is yet another mechanism of erasure.

⁷⁵⁴ Supreme Court of the United States, *Gonzales, Attorney General, et al. v. O Centro Espirita Banificente Uniao Do Vegetal et al.* 546 U.S. (2006).
<https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/05pdf/04-1084.pdf>

As I have stated earlier, writers such as Alexander Dawson have pointed out the racist hypocrisy surrounding the relegation of peyote to Native use:

These claims about the inauthentic use of peyote by non-Indians underpin the curious place that peyote now occupies within the Mexican and US legal systems. Despite reams of scientific evidence attesting to its relative harmlessness, peyote is today illegal (a Schedule I drug in the US), classified as without therapeutic value, and subject to a high potential for abuse. That is, it is illegal unless one is a member of the Native American Church in the US (members must also have one-quarter Indian blood) and members of groups with a history of traditional use in Mexico (the most notable being the group historically known as the Huichols).⁷⁵⁵

Yet, again, Elizabeth Povinelli shows how Native Americans are caught in a crossfire of legal forms of recognition:

For instance, at the moment that the Supreme Court upheld the Circuit Court of Appeals' exemption [for an ayahuasca religion], the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was removing all references to the 'Native American Church' in its regulatory guidelines and replacing it with reference to members of federally recognized tribes. This change aligns the enforcement regulations of the DEA with the actual language of the [American Indian Religious Freedom Restoration Act] AIRFRA, which does not recognize members of the Native American Church, but recognizes Native Americans. So we have a decision that exempts members of the UDV on the basis of an analogy with members of the NAC, even as the DEA is refusing to recognize the equality of rights among all members of the NAC.⁷⁵⁶

It is important to remember, as I covered in chapter one, that the UDV success is not technically an "exemption." It is rather a practical agreement with the DEA for regulated importation and dissemination of a controlled substance. However, as the multiple

⁷⁵⁵ Alexander Dawson, *The Peyote Affect: From the Inquisition to the War on Drugs* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 4.

⁷⁵⁶ Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "The Brackets of Recognition: Recognition, Espionage, Camouflage," *Democracy in Crisis: Violence, Alterity, Community*, ed. Stella Gaon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 126.

attempts such as Ayahuasca Healings and the Oklevueha membership controversy⁷⁵⁷ evidence, the surface-level approach to identity and religious freedom is incapable of attending to the deep structures persistent in Indigenous Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs). Therefore, as spiritually “liberating” as such groups may present themselves, even at times as they seek to align with Native spiritualities, they effectively carry on the relegation of all things Indigenous to eurochristian frames.

While I have not explicitly focused on the large amounts of scientific studies related to ayahuasca here, we should see much of that entirely secular work in the context of the Drug War policies that are themselves an outgrowth of eurochristian religious poetics. This of course hinges on seeing that liberalism itself is expressive of these poetics. I do not go so far as to claim that scientific studies of ayahuasca are inherently genocidal, but I do believe that the rhetoric surrounding the Drug War is an outgrowth of eurochristian religious poetics of sacrifice dating back to the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, where “just wars” are created and inflicted to perpetuate eurochristendomination.

Concluding Recommendations

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective attending to deep framing, attention to the underwritten religious poetics must be taken into account along with

⁷⁵⁷ “Why Becoming a Member of the Oklevueha Church will Benefit You,” *nativeamericanchurches.org*, accessed March 14, 2020, <https://nativeamericanchurches.org/joining-oklevueha-why-and-how/>.

critiques of cultural appropriation and exploitation. In terms of practical application and policy, I have advocated that the dismantling of all Drug War rhetoric take precedence over rights-based claims to religious freedoms and exemptions for the use of ayahuasca. We should simultaneously be wary of the rhetoric of “spiritual exploration,” fulfillment, and “healing,” surrounding ayahuasca. Indigenous contexts in South America evidence that ayahuasca has a variety of uses, and it by no means automatically makes one a “better person.” I advocate that anyone interested in exploring their spirituality weigh the cost of their perceived need for individual “growth” against the ongoing assault on Indigenous Peoples. Those of us socially-framed through eurochristian religious poetics have inherited a long history exempting our seeking of spiritual fulfillment from the violent results of such endeavors. What decolonization means for eurochristians is inherently different than what it means for Indigenous peoples, but eurochristians can start by acknowledging both the longer history and the continued presence of the Doctrine of Discovery in current legal practice and social formation. Thus, in this study I have pointed directly here to ayahuasca in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery as a starting place for realizing the centuries-long process fueling religious poetics of sacrifice and exception as an alternative to carrying on colonizing tendencies that would expropriate “marvelous possessions” to serve the desire for experience at all costs. Recognition of Indigenous difference must be rooted in work on deep framing rather than utopic, deterritorialized, neoliberal approaches to “identity.” Acknowledging Indigenous traditions outside of eurochristian poetics must be distinguished from liberal attempts to enact “archaic revivals” and forming new “global tribes.”

In April of 2020, as I finish this writing, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies is introducing a “special bulletin” on psychedelic commercialization and access. Similarly, the Chacruna Institute for Psychedelic Plant Medicines hosted a virtual conference titled “The Psychedelic Liberty Conference” amid the worldwide Coronavirus outbreak. Some lawyers at the conference were advocating that groups seeking religious exemptions should simply keep good records of their ayahuasca use and cultivation and go about their business without worrying about following DEA guidelines because the DEA has no jurisdictional authority to determine whether or not a religious group is recognized as such. The logic is, following RFRA, that it is the burden of the government to show a it has a compelling interest against the religious group’s use of ayahuasca. Such thinking in no way takes into account the separate legislative entity known and Federal Indian Law and the fact that religious “exemption” for peyote use was never really the privilege that those non-Natives seeking “religious freedom” characterize it to be. The erosion of Federal Indian Law, which was certainly flawed to begin with, is part of a much longer “civilizing” and assimilating process that erases Indigenous ways of being. Undoubtedly, as the world situation and psychedelic rhetoric has long-advocated, current exigencies reveal the interconnection of species on the planet. The efforts of many members of these groups are laudable and well-intentioned. But what do we really mean by “liberty”? What underwrites our notions of spiritual progress and appeals to religious freedom? To the extent that we think of ayahuasca as Indigenous both as a plant and as a mixture used throughout the Amazon, it seems more ethical in considering ayahuasca’s diaspora to the North, as well as to the rest of the world, to

highlight the continuing struggles of Indigenous Peoples and to advocate for the nuanced kinds of decolonization necessary to prevent further erasure. This study has argued that often, appeals to religious freedom and “exemptions” for ayahuasca perpetuate centuries-long forms of eurochristian religious poetics. We would do well to continue to analyze how these efforts play out in the wake of the Doctrine of Discovery. Many people are unaware of the Doctrine of Discovery and its persistent legacy, so I have attempted to initiate some of the necessary educational work here. This is certainly not meant to be the final say, and I can only hope others will take up the task of learning how the Doctrine of Discovery informs not only discussions around ayahuasca use in diaspora but other places where we can see its continuing effects. A Native colleague of mine who read a recent draft of this said to me, “Much of what you have said about ayahuasca here could be said about Sun Dance as well.” I have to leave many nuances of such statements up to Indigenous People to clarify. I have hoped to draw attention to what must be an ongoing conversation.

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