AMERICAN WRITERS

SUPPLEMENT XXVI

Edited by Jay Parini

ANDREWS
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BISS
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DEGANAWIDA, THE PEACEMAKER

(c. 1150 CE: Native traditional/academic; c. 1450–1550 CE: non-Native academic)

Christopher Buck

Deganawida, a name traditionally considered too sacred to pronounce (yet fine in printed form), is respectfully referred to as "the Peacemaker" by the Iroquois people, who are more properly known as the Haudenosaunee ("People of the Longhouse"). The Iroquois were aboriginal inhabitants of lands bordering Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, an area comprising nearly all of present-day New York State, part of Pennsylvania, and southern Ontario and Quebec. The Peacemaker is a legendary yet historical figure, memorialized in traditions held to be sacred by indigenous peoples among the Iroquois Nations—and, generally, among Native Americans and Native Canadians today. This article takes a look at the Deganawida epic, a cycle of narratives that exists in some forty versions—composites of Iroquois sophiology, as it were—recorded largely as part of a process of Haudenosaunee survival and revival, culturally, spiritually, and politically.

The version privileged here is titled *Concerning the League*, translated by the linguist Hanni Woodbury in collaboration with two native speakers of Onondaga, the late Reg Henry and the late Harry Webster. This version (hereafter abbreviated *CL* in page references) provides a direct, authentic link to the past. Other major versions will be referred to as well.

WIDENING THE AMERICAN CANON: ORATURE AS LITERATURE

It may surprise readers to characterize Deganawida (a.k.a. Tekanawitaʔ and other variant spellings) as an "American writer." Yes, the Peacemaker was "American" in that he was a Native American—and possibly Native Canadian, that is, a "dual citizen," if his Canadian birth "on the northerly side of the lake, Lake Ontario" (*CL*, p. 2) has any credence—and was certainly a Native North American. (Obviously the United States and Canada, as nations, did not exist during the founding of the Confederacy.) Not being a "writer" in the traditional sense, the Peacemaker was a charismatic figure—orator, author, and author of a living tradition. Thus, Deganawida, the Peacemaker, with the assistance of Hiawatha and Jigonsaseh (the leader of the corn-planting "Cultivators," also called the "Peace Queen"), united five warring Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) nations into a formidable and enduring federation—a consensus-based matrilineally hereditary federal council of fifty chiefs ("sachems," or spokesmen), each appointed by local councils of clan matrons, with protocols rooted in "Condolence" ceremonies that served as a vehicle for political decision-making. Never would Deganawida have been able to accomplish this had he and his illustrious cohorts not met face-to-face with the warlords of belligerent tribes and skillfully persuaded them to become close allies, replacing war with a sophisticated system of peaceful conflict resolution by democratic consultation and collective decision-making. Barbara Mann refers to Deganawida, Hiawatha, and Jigonsaseh as "the peace trio" (*Iroquoian Women*, p. 38). J. N. B. Hewitt, for instance, speaks of the peace trio as "the swart statesmen Dekanawida [*sic*], Hiawatha, and … the equally astute stateswoman Djigonsasen [*sic*], a chieftainess of the powerful Neutral Tribe" ("Some Esoteric Aspects," p. 322).

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Some may disagree with characterizing the Peacemaker as a [Native] "American writer," since the Deganawida epic is *about* him, not *by* him. However, the latter could not have happened without the former. In that sense, the "message" and the "history" contained in the Deganawida epic may be said to have been "authored" by Deganawida. Since the Deganawida epic qualifies as oral literature (and arguably as sacred literature), an analogy may be drawn with the traditional ascription of Moses as the traditional "author" of the Torah (i.e., "The Five Books of Moses"), even though, as one early Jewish Christian document argued, referring to Deuteronomy 34:6, "But how could Moses write that 'Moses died'?" (*Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, chap. 47). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "author," in part, as "A creator, cause, or source." One literary example given is this: "The author of our religion." If the semantic penumbra of "writer" adumbrates this sense of its synonym, "author," then a case can be made. That said, provisions of the Great Law were preserved on wampum belts (freshwater shells strung together), a form of communication which, like writing, used visual symbols to convey information and aid memory. So transmission was not entirely oral. (See Barbara Mann, "The Fire at Onondaga: Wampum as Proto-Writing.")

The Peacemaker's inclusion in the *American Writers* series is justified if "orature" is accepted as "literature." Compositions in languages lacking writing can be designated as "oral literature." Literary productions in most indigenous languages remain predominantly "oral" in character until print technology brings them to the threshold of "writing." "Oral literature" therefore becomes "orature" with the emergence of print technology as a means of literary dissemination, once such languages are committed to print. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "orature" as a "body of poetry, tales, etc., preserved through oral transmission as part of a particular culture, esp. a preliterate one." Thus the Deganawida epic, better known as the "Great Law of Peace," is orature here being recognized as part of the American literary canon.

That said, in Hanni Woodbury's translation, *Concerning the League*, a stock introductory formula is used to directly quote the Peacemaker. The recurrent phrase "Thereupon Tekanawitaʔ said," occurs 191 times (present writer's count). This phrase is a literary device used in Iroquoian texts to distinguish temporal sequencing from declarative statements. Non-Native academics generally do not take this formula literally as indicating direct quotations by the Peacemaker. However, many, if not most, Native American and Native Canadian authorities tend to accept the statements attributed to Deganawida as substantially authentic transmissions of his teachings.

The Deganawida epic, moreover, belongs to world literature. Enter the Peacemaker among the men and women of American and world literature, as a man of wisdom. The Deganawida cycle is an originary voice that stories America before America was "America"—originally called "Turtle Island" by the Iroquois themselves. Deganawida may therefore be considered to be a venerable "American writer" (orator/author of oral/written tradition) of history and culture, as a *maker* of history and culture, long before American literati came on the scene.

Some regard the Peacemaker as the founder (along with Hiawatha and Jigonsaseh) of the first New World democracy. In this sense, not only is Deganawida a truly American orator/author in the indigenous sense but is equally "American" given the extraordinary value that America attaches to democracy. That said, the notion of the Peacemaker as an "American writer" (orator/author) fails to do justice to so powerful a personality, who, by his inspired vision, charismatic influence, and skillful diplomacy, "wrote" history and revolutionized a culture, which survives today as a lived legacy. Given these reasons, recognition of Deganawida as an "American writer" is both justified and timely.

Equally at issue, however, is the question of how this canonization of the Peacemaker comports with the views of Native Americans and Native Canadians. What justification for this cultural appropriation, this impingement on all things indigenous, this infringement, as it were,

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of sacred indigenous tradition, which is so culturally sensitive? By what right can the non-Native present writer presume to profane (i.e., to publicly render secular) a sacred oral tradition? The Iroquoian ethnologist Michael K. Foster, curator emeritus of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, recounts how Chief Jacob ("Jake") Thomas (d. 1998), a prominent proponent and interpreter of Haudenosaunee culture, justified this profanation/translation to the non-Native world when, in September 1992 on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, he took the unprecedented step of reciting the Great Law in English (drawing much indigenous indignation thereby), in a nine-day event on the grounds of his home, which attracted national media coverage. Among the some two thousand people present, a large number of these listeners were white, not Iroquois. During the summer of 1994 Chief Thomas repeated the event. Responding to criticism, he offered this justification, according to Foster:

> I think the white man needs to understand. It isn't that he's going to take the law and use it himself.… They already did! The 13 colonies already took the Great Law for their so-called Constitution. So what should we be afraid of? … If they want to learn it, they have a right to. That should have been done 500 years ago, to study and respect the Confederacy. Maybe we wouldn't have the problems we have today if they would have studied our people, and [would now] understand and honor and respect [us].
>
> (Foster, "Jacob Ezra Thomas," p. 227)

It is in the spirit of this advice that the following epitome of the life and teachings (i.e. oral "writings") of the Peacemaker are here presented. In so doing, this is not intended as exploitation of Native American spiritual traditions. It is not a "theft of spirit." Rather, it is recognition of the universality and contemporary relevance of the Peacemaker's enunciation of "the Good Message, also the Power and the Peace."

The Iroquois were known for their political genius, which impressed Benjamin Franklin and continues to be noted by the U.S. government to this day. In 2010, for instance, the U.S. Mint issued its Native American one-dollar coin, featuring, on the reverse, an image of the "Hiawatha Belt," with five arrows bound together, along with the inscriptions "Haudenosaunee" ("People of the Longhouse") and "Great Law of Peace." The official description reads, in part:

> The Haudenosaunee Confederation, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy of upstate New York, was remarkable for being founded by 2 historic figures, the Peacemaker and his Onondaga spokesman, Hiawatha, who spent years preaching the need for a league. The Peacemaker sealed the treaty by symbolically burying weapons at the foot of a Great White Pine, or Great Tree of Peace, whose 5-needle clusters stood for the original 5 nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca.
>
> (U.S. Mint, "2010 Native American $1 Coin")

The mastermind behind Iroquoian political genius was Deganawida, assisted by Hiawatha (no resemblance to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poetic fiction) and Jigonsaseh (whose presence assured a male-female equilibrium in the League's governance system). According to Chief John Arthur Gibson's 1899 version (pp. 34–60), Hiawatha was a former cannibal whom Deganawida won over and who then became the latter's spokesman. (In Gibson's 1912 version, the cannibal is not named.) Together, Deganawida, Hiawatha, and Jigonsaseh established the Iroquois League, uniting the "Five Nations" (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca) into a powerful confederacy, into which the Tuscaroras, after a gradual migration that began in 1714, were adopted in 1722 (now the "Six Nations"), with the Tuteloes and Nanticokes added to the "Longhouse" (the grand metaphor for the League) in 1753, and protection extended to the Delawares and others. The territory under the sway of the Iroquois League was vast, as James A. Tuck notes in *Scientific American*:

> Five tribes of the Iroquois confederacy were, from west to east, the Senecas, the Cayugas, the Onondagas, the Oneidas and the Mohawks. At the beginning of the 18th century their power extended from Maine to Illinois and from southern Ontario to Tennessee. The Tuscaroras became the sixth after being ousted by white settlers in the Carolinas.
>
> ("The Iroquois Confederacy," p. 36)

Arthur Gajarsa, circuit judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (1997–2012), in *Banner v. United States* (2001), noted:

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> The Iroquois Confederacy, or Haudenosaunee, is believed to have been formed in the fifteenth century when the legendary Hiawatha and the Great Peacemaker united the warring eastern Native American tribes. Prior to European colonization, the Iroquois Confederacy exercised active dominion over nearly thirty-five million acres, most of what is now the states of New York and Pennsylvania, and was considered the most powerful peacekeeping force of Native Americans east of the Mississippi River.
>
> (*Banner v. United States*, 238 F.3d at p. 1350)

In New York, Archibald Kennedy and James Parker (Benjamin Franklin's printing partner) published a pamphlet, *The Importance of Gaining and Preserving the Friendship of the Indians to the British Interest Considered* (1751), calling for the Iroquois Six Nations to be federated with the colonies. In his letter, dated March 20, 1751, to James Parker, Benjamin Franklin held up the Iroquois confederacy as a model of good governance:

> It would be a very strange Thing, if six Nations of ignorant Savages should be capable of forming a Scheme for such an Union, and be able to execute it in such a Manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble; and yet that a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a Dozen English Colonies, to whom it is more necessary, and must be more advantageous; and who cannot be supposed to want an equal Understanding of their Interests.
>
> (*Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 4, pp. 118–119)

Having justified the significance and importance of Deganawida as an "American writer" (orator/author of oral/written tradition) in the grand sense of the word, a word regarding methodology: The present author has adopted and adapted a new methodology called "tribalography," which is still under development, and so may mean slightly different approaches depending on the scholar. In her highly influential article "The Story of America: A Tribalography," LeAnne Howe explains:

> Native stories are power. They create people. They author tribes. America is a tribal creation story, a tribalography.… I am suggesting that when the European Founding Fathers heard the stories of how the Haudenosaunee unified six individual tribes into an Indian confederacy, they created a document, the U.S. Constitution, that united immigrant Europeans into a symbiotic union called America.
>
> (pp. 29, 37)

Tribalography, as understood by the present writer, recognizes that traditional narratives are formative (culturally foundational), performative (ceremonially recited), and transformative (spiritually and socially revitalizing). They represent the past in the present. Fact and fiction synthesize into the grand, collective tradition, admixed with legendary and mythic elements (not unlike the "magical realism" of Gabriel García Márquez), integrating symbolically mnemonic accounts, where cosmogony (origin of universe) functions as sociogony (origin of society), in a sacred embrace of physical and metaphysical epistemology that characterizes Native American perspectives. In other words, while there is no way to definitively recapture "pre-contact" history by way of "post-contact" sources, a consensus, for the most part, has emerged that the Peacemaker was a historical figure.

HISTORICITY OF THE PEACEMAKER

Without considering Native Americans, one cannot understand the early development of North America. Enter the Peacemaker. Legends are historically rooted and culturally bound. As such, Deganawida is not an ethnographic curiosity but a living cultural presence. The overmastering fact in the history of the Iroquois is the dominance and centrality of the "Longhouse" tradition based upon the Peacemaker cycle. Phenomenologically, the Deganawida epic—most notably *Concerning the League*, dictated by Chief John Arthur Gibson in 1912—compares favorably with the sacred scripture in the world's great religions and, as such, belongs to world literature.

Most ethnologists and linguists have assumed that Deganawida was a historical figure and use the term "tradition" for that reason. A solid intellectual approach is that the Peacemaker ought to be treated as phenomenologically parallel to the founders of world religions—such as Buddha, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, or Bahá'u'lláh. By adopting this approach, the Deganawida epic, in

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its several versions, is understood as a sacred or "enlightened" tradition within the Haudenosaunee worldview, with an appreciation of the irreducible historical dimension of the Peacemaker as founder (variants and possible embellishments within the collective tradition notwithstanding). For the Peacemaker gave supernatural sanction to the League that he and Hiawatha founded, "because the Great Spirit never planned for humans to hurt one another nor to slaughter one another" (*CL*, p. 106). While the historicity of the Peacemaker is widely accepted by scholars, dating varies. By analogy, such dating presents problems akin to the so-called "quest for the historical Jesus."

All religions are influenced by subsequent events. As such, there is no single pristine account of the Peacemaker, uninflected by various outside influences, be they Christian or otherwise. Traditionally, however, a plurality of Deganawida traditions are considered to be simultaneously true. That said, the Gibson-Goldenweiser version (see below) has been widely acknowledged as the best version extant, in that it is structured faithfully to how it was ceremonially recited and ritually performed in the present.

So what is the most tenable date of Deganawida? Arguably the most widely accepted date among academics is c. 1450 CE. In "The Long Peace Among Iroquois Nations," Neta C. Crawford, after reviewing traditional sources and scholarly literature, concludes that

> it seems likely that the League of the Iroquois was formed well before the five original nations came into contact with European explorers and settlers.… The negotiations for the formation of the League were probably concluded around 1450, about 85 years before the Mohawks, in the League members' first direct contact with Europeans, met Cartier on the Saint Lawrence.
>
> (p. 351)

Similarly, Jon Parmenter, in his *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534–1701*, holds that plausible dates for the historical Peacemaker, where the date of "founding" can be interpreted as the initiation of diplomacy by the Peacemaker and Hiawatha, could be anywhere circa 1400–1550, while the League formation itself was a lengthy process that took place over generations. Taking Crawford's and Parmenter's best estimates together, the date range for the historical Peacemaker becomes c. 1450–1550.

That date range is not the final word on the subject, however, for what about "ethnohistory"? What does Haudenosaunee tradition have to say about the question of when the Great League was founded, and why is that tradition important? The answer is as political as it is academic: indigenous scholars and activists are reclaiming the right to their own history. So the date range that extends to the mid-1500s may soon be regarded, by the Iroquois at least, as racist history. The Haudenosaunee see insisting on the post-contact date (after Columbus) as colonializing their history.

In principle (legally, at least), oral tradition should be taken far more seriously. As of March 21, 2014, U.S. federal law, as put forth in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), now recognizes that oral tradition is accepted as admissible on a par with expert opinion:

> Where cultural affiliation of Native American human remains and funerary objects has not been established in an inventory prepared pursuant to section 5 [25 USCS § 3003], or the summary pursuant to section 6 [25 USCS § 3004], … such Native American human remains and funerary objects shall be expeditiously returned where the requesting Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization can show cultural affiliation by a preponderance of the evidence based upon geographical, kinship, biological, archaeological, anthropological, linguistic, folkloric, oral traditional, historical, or other relevant information or expert opinion.
>
> (25 USCS § 3005(a)(4))

One Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) voice is that of Barbara Alice Mann, associate professor in the Honors Department of the University of Toledo and also an Ohio Bear Clan Seneca, who would therefore be considered an expert in more than one sense as defined by NAGPRA, given her command of the oral tradition, documentary evidence, and the scholarly literature. At the polar opposite are the reductionist views of the anthropologist William A. Starna, professor emeritus at the State University of New York College at

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Oneonta. This intellectual landscape—a hyper-critical minefield—is difficult to map, because the claims are so territorial, with so much heritage and history at stake.

At issue is a central question: was the League "pre-contact" (before Europeans arrived on the American scene), or was it "post-contact"? The earliest date posited for the formation of the Iroquois Confederacy is August 31, 1142, during which a "Black Sun" (total eclipse) occurred right before the League was finally and fully established. This date has been proposed by Barbara Mann and Jerry Fields, an astronomer, in "A Sign in the Sky: Dating the League of the Haudenosaunee." According to Mann and Fields, the Peacemaker, along with Hiawatha and Jigonsaseh, flourished in the twelfth century. This is squarely based on a Seneca legend which holds that, during a ratification council held at Ganondagan (near modern-day Victor, New York), a solar eclipse coincided with the Senecas' decision to join the League. In William W. Canfield's comment on a parallel traditional account, as told to him by "the Cornplanter" (a warrior, Seneca chief, and major Iroquois leader of the late eighteenth century), he cites both the Cornplanter and Chief Governor Blacksnake as authorities for the Seneca eclipse tradition:

> The legend of its formation here published is not only based upon what was considered reliable authority by Cornplanter, but has also the sanction of that other noted Seneca chief, Governor Blacksnake (the Nephew), who was contemporaneous with Cornplanter.… These chiefs both claimed to have seen a string of wampum in their early years that placed the formation of the confederacy at a time when there occurred a total eclipse of the sun—"a darkening of the Great Spirit's smiling face"—that took place when the corn was receiving its last tillage, long before events that could be reliably ascribed to the year 1540.
>
> (Canfield, "Notes to the Legends," *The Legends of the Iroquois*, pp. 205–206)

The same traditional/astrophysical approach was used by Dean Snow to arrive at the Julian calendar date of June 28, 1451, by adopting the date of a later solar eclipse. (See "Dating the Emergence of the League of the Iroquois: A Reconsideration of the Documentary Evidence.") Such an eclipse could easily be interpreted as a divine portent of cosmic and therefore historical significance.

The latest date for the formation of the Iroquois Confederacy has been put forward by Starna, who postulates that "the genesis of the League is tied directly to the arrival of the Dutch [in 1609] and the trade at Fort Nassau [1613–14]" (p. 321). Henry Hudson, an English navigator in the service of the Dutch East India Company aboard the ship *Half Moon*, discovered the Delaware Bay and River, according to the journal kept by his first officer, on August 28, 1609. According to Starna (pp. 285–286), the earliest documentary mention of a version of the name "Deganawida" is found in *A Dictionary of the Mohawk Language* produced sometime in the period 1743–1748 by Johann Christopher Pyrlaeus, a German-born Moravian missionary. Pyrlaeus' informant was an elderly Mohawk man, Sganarády. While Starna recognizes the Deganawida epic's "status as a sacred text" (p. 320), he does not accord it much historical value. Starna, moreover, holds that, once the Deganawida epic is set aside, nothing in the historical or archaeological record confirms the existence of the League before contact; in other words, that "the impetus for and timing of the formation of the League … cannot be satisfactorily answered solely on the basis of the Deganawidah epic" (p. 315), and that it is too much to expect historians to accept a sacred narrative of events so deep in the past without independent evidence.

Even if one does not accept the date of August 31, 1142, proposed by Mann and Fields, they make a powerful and compelling argument against dating the formation of the League as a response to Europeans in the mid-sixteenth century and beyond:

> We know who "the enemy" was during the mid-sixteenth century: the Europeans. We also know who "the enemy" was in League tradition: the cannibal cult. At no point does League tradition state that the cannibals were Europeans; quite the opposite, the cannibals were an absolutely Native group. If the mid-sixteenth century claim is to stand, its advocates must demonstrate that the cannibals and the Europeans are one and the same. They must

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> also explain why the Keepers seem unaware of this extraordinary fact.
>
> (p. 110)

DEGANAWIDA EPIC: VERSIONS BY LANGUAGE

Although the chronological focus of the sundry Peacemaker traditions (collectively referred to as the Deganawida epic) is essentially "pre-contact," the primary sources are "post-contact."

Native-Authored English Versions: As previously stated, more than forty versions (oral and written) of the Deganawida epic exist (Kimura, p. 49). All are honored as "authoritative" among Iroquois communities and speakers. Perhaps the most truly representative tradition is the Chiefs' version (English-only), "written from dictation by the ceremonial Chiefs" from each of the Six Nations. These chiefs were Peter Powless (Mohawk), Nicodemus Porter (Oneida), William Wage and Abram Charles (Cayuga), John Arthur Gibson (Seneca), Thomas William Echo (Onondaga), and Josiah Hill (Tuscarora), with J. W. M. Elliott serving as secretary, along with Chief Hill. The chiefs' version was promulgated on August 17, 1900, at the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, Canada, where, in 1874, Loyalist Mohawks and their confederated allies followed Joseph Brant to the banks of the Grand River near Brantford, Ontario. There, the Six Nations reconstituted the old League.

This endorsed version, promulgated "by the authority of the Six Nations Council," represents a synthesis of parallel traditions. Of these eight leaders, Gibson (1850–1912) was arguably the most influential. In 1872, at age twenty-three, Gibson was appointed a Seneca chief, having inherited his title, Kanyataiyo ("Beautiful Lake"), from his mother's side. At thirty-one, Gibson suddenly became blind due to an injury suffered during a lacrosse match, a sport invented by the Iroquois. From then on, Gibson's nephew would typically escort and assist him. As one of the approximately 20 percent of the Grand River Iroquois who followed the Longhouse religion, Seneca was Gibson's mother tongue. Although his English was excellent, he spoke mostly in Onondaga. (While his wife would address him in Cayuga, he would reply in Onondaga.) Gibson could, at will, converse with visiting Oneida chiefs. Occasionally Chief Gibson performed rituals in Mohawk. He knew some Tuscarora as well. Chief Gibson was trained as a ceremonialist under the oldest living Onondaga fire-keeper at that time (Fenton, 1962, p. 286.) Besides the Chiefs' version, there is the 1899 Gibson-Hewitt version and the 1912 Gibson-Goldenweiser version. (See below.)

The Chiefs' version was compiled in English in 1900 ("or composed in one of the Iroquois languages and then translated by them into English—the exact method used is not known," according to Hanni Woodbury in her introduction to *Concerning the League* [p. xvi, n. 12]). It was published as *Traditional History of the Confederacy of the Six Nations* in 1912 by Duncan C. Scott, superintendent of Indian Affairs in Canada. Arthur C. Parker (Seneca, but who did not speak any Iroquoian languages) published *The Constitution of the Five Nations* (1916), in which he combined the Chiefs' version—reviewed, corrected, and revised by Albert Cusick (Onondaga-Tuscarora)—with the Iroquois code of laws set down by Seth Newhouse ("Da-yo-de-ka-ne," Mohawk-Onondaga) in "Indian English," corrected by Cusick. Parker edited Newhouse's code of laws by reorganizing the sections to more closely resemble the U.S. Constitution. Oddly, Parker does not cite Scott's prior publication of the Chiefs' version.

Twice previously, the chiefs had rejected Seth Newhouse's 1885 Native-English version of the Peacemaker narrative, *Cosmogony of the Iroquois Confederacy*, for which he wanted to be paid and which called into question certain titles of chieftainship and some of the Council's procedures as well. A true Mohawk patriot, Newhouse translated his *Cosmogony* into Mohawk, possibly with Hewitt's assistance. It languishes as an unpublished manuscript.

The Chiefs' version was promulgated ostensibly for the purpose of preserving the Peacemaker tradition for posterity. Why English? Theoretically, while the Chiefs' version could have been set forth in an Iroquoian language, as a practical matter, English was preferred since "birth speak-

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ers" of indigenous languages were fast disappearing. Moreover, this project was also concerned with legitimacy. This is indicated by the text's noting that "the installation of the Lords or Chiefs as rulers of the people, laid down in these unwritten rules hundreds of years ago, is still strictly observed and adhered to by the Chiefs of the Six Nations and people" (p. 196). Not only was the Chiefs' version an anticolonial project, it was one of self-empowerment as well, particularly as a bulwark against Canadian colonial and assimilation policy. According to Takeshi Kimura (p. 62), the Chiefs' version is best understood as a response to a self-sovereignty dispute between the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and the matrilineally hereditary Six Nations Council "in order to justify the political authenticity of the chiefs' council." That there was a clear need to establish and maintain such legitimacy is illustrated by the fact that, in 1924, the Canadian government abrogated the authority of the Six Nations Council. Establishing the League tradition in an authoritative, written version was an act of covert resistance against overt coercion into U.S.- and Canadian-friendly tribal councils—in other words, a "settler" oppression tactic.

This is not to say that the Chiefs manipulated and recast tradition beyond recognition in light of these exigent historical circumstances, especially since such updating is itself traditional. As social agents, anchored in time and place, the Chiefs obviously had reasons—a complex of motives—for producing an endorsed version of the Peacemaker epic in English, since doing so was far from customary and traditionally would have been frowned upon. Thus the Chiefs' version was not only culturally and religiously significant but had political, economic, and juridical dimensions as well. By providing an authoritative narrative of the Longhouse tradition to the Department of the Indian Affairs and to outsiders generally, the Chiefs' version was intended for the public. This rendition was not an "invention," since the Peacemaker tradition was a long-standing and venerable one. That said, Parker's version crucially included women's sections, which are missing from other traditions, because men spoke of men's tradition and women spoke of women's tradition. Scholars have not quite grasped that fact, although Barbara Mann's work has drawn attention to this problem and to the need to hear *both* traditions to regain a full perspective.

According to Kimura (pp. 181–182), the Chiefs' version was promulgated "for the purpose of authorizing and legitimating a political structure." Specifically, "the matrilineally hereditary council's primary intention was to persuade the Department of Indian Affairs to accept the legitimacy of their special status." To achieve that objective, a process of "reconstructing tradition" was involved. This reconstruction was essentially an act of reconstituting and codifying a somewhat fluid tradition into a solid framework, vested with the stamp of authority by representatives of the Six Nations.

In their "introductory remarks" of August 17, 1900, Chiefs Josiah Hill (Six Nations Council) and J. W. M. Elliott (secretary of the Ceremonial Committee on Indian Rites and Customs) acknowledge that some of the miraculous feats ascribed to the Peacemaker may betray some Jesuit influence (p. 197). According to Darren Bonaparte, however, the birth of the Peacemaker has precedents not only in Christianity, but also in the Iroquois creation story, where Sky Woman and her virgin daughter may have been recast as Deganawida's grandmother and mother. In either case, Kimura (p. 63) states that this foreword was probably prepared by the *Christian* chiefs (not individually identified), since certain characterizations in the Chiefs' prefatory remarks—such as "much modified" (p. 196), "past mythological legends," "crude (religious) belief," and "transition from a state of paganism to that of civilization and christianity" (p. 197)—could *not* have been made by the traditional Longhouse chiefs. Some of the Christian chiefs strongly advocated an elective rather than matrilineally hereditary tribal council, for instance. Although united for the purpose of producing the Chiefs' version, the preface raises some questions that must remain unanswered until the perspective of each of the eight ceremonial Chiefs is analyzed. That said, the preface may well be an instance of "double-voicing" (what W. E. B. Du Bois called

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"double-conscientiousness"), in which an oppressed group speaks in language that the oppressive power would respond to.

Other Native-English versions—beginning with the 1885 version by Seth Newhouse—are cited in the selected bibliography below. Native-language versions are listed, by language, at the end of this article as well. A brief overview of these versions in indigenous languages is provided as follows:

Onondaga Versions: In 1888, Chief John Buck, Sr. (a fourth-generation Onondaga chief, fire-keeper, and wampum-keeper), dictated in Onondaga, a critically endangered language, his version of the League tradition to the ethnographer J. N. B. Hewitt at the Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, Canada. Hewitt was part Tuscarora and had a good command of the Onondaga and Mohawk languages. (It was Hewitt, a founder of the American Anthropological Association, who in 1887 definitively established the connection of Cherokee with the Iroquoian family of languages.) The original is preserved as MS 3130, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. A translation of Chief Buck's was published by Hewitt in 1892. This version, albeit anomalously, ascribes certain events to Hiawatha instead of Deganawida. Oddly, this version refers to the "Seven Nations."

Now we come to the preeminent—and perhaps definitive—version of the peacemaker epic. A renowned speaker in the Longhouse, the Seneca chief John Arthur Gibson has already been introduced above. Chief Gibson assiduously followed the time-honored method of committing oral traditions to memory. From youth, Gibson took every possible opportunity to hear recitals from his elders, which, over time, he learned by heart, bit by bit. Stock phrases and word-for-word repetitions, as obvious memory aids, are very typical of oral literature. (Improvisation is not acceptable in the strict *performance* of a sacred narrative. Although the main *action* can never be changed, certain details in the *narrative* can fluctuate, depending on the era and the telling.

And so, in 1899, at the Six Nations Reserve, Chief Gibson dictated, in Onondaga, a version of the League tradition to J. N. B. Hewitt. Known as the Gibson-Hewitt version, this manuscript is preserved as MS 2316, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution (189 typescript pages). The 1899 recitation is a shortened version in that it does not relate the great ceremony for condoling deceased chiefs and raising their successors in their stead. This version, it should be noted, is distinct from the Chiefs' version (1900), which was dictated in English, not Onondaga.

In 1912 Chief Gibson dictated his fuller version of the League tradition to the anthropologist Alexander Aleksandrovich Goldenweiser (born in Kiev) at the Six Nations Reserve. This "Gibson-Goldenweiser" version was transcribed in the first part of the twentieth century, when recording technology was unavailable. This undertaking was completed just four months before Chief Gibson suddenly died of a stroke on November 1, 1912. The original manuscript (529 pages on lined legal pads) is archived as III-I-116M in the Canadian Ethnology Services Archives, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Québec. Taken together, the Gibson-Hewitt (1899) and the Gibson-Goldenweiser (1912) versions represent "the most satisfactory single native account of the League" (Fenton, p. 158).

Oneida Versions: On June 22, 1971, Damas Elm (ninety-three-year-old Oneida elder of Southwold, Ontario) recited "The Story of Deganawida" in the Oneida language. This version was recorded on magnetic tape. The text was transcribed by the linguist Floyd G. Lounsbury with the assistance of Damas Elm on June 23–28, 1971. It remains unpublished. The archival files are difficult to access since they are deemed "culturally sensitive."

Another Oneida version is that recited by Chief Robert Brown (a.k.a. Anahalihs ["Great Vines"]), Bear Clan chief of the Oneida tribe, translated by Brown and Clifford F. Abbott of the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay and edited by Randy Cornelius (Tehahuko'tha), also of the Sovereign Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. It appears that Brown's recitation closely parallels, if not depends heavily upon, Gibson's 1912 Onondaga version, such that it may be fair to say that Brown was recasting Gibson's work into Oneida.

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But there are significant differences as well. Although not formally published, this version is currently available on the Internet.

Mohawk Versions: Chief Seth Newhouse produced a typescript translation of the Mohawk version of the "The Great Law of Peace," as the Peacemaker cycle is also known. This Newhouse document is archived as MS 3490, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. The translation is titled *Constitution of the Confederacy by Dekanawidah: Collected and Translated from* [the] *Mohawk Text by Chief Seth Newhouse*. Digital scans of all forty-three pages of the translation are available online. A bilingual Mohawk-English version was published in 1993 by Ohontsa Films.

Cayuga Version: The ethnographer J. N. B. Hewitt committed to writing the "Cayuga version of the Deganawida legend 1890," cataloged as MS 1582, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. Digital scans of all seventeen pages are available online. (See bibliography.)

Non-Native English Version: In January 1946 the University of Pennsylvania Press published Paul Wallace's *White Roots of Peace*. See discussion of this book below.

DEGANAWIDA EPIC: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Comparing the major versions, Christopher Vecsey identifies twenty-two key structural elements common to the majority of extant versions of the Deganawida epic. To give the reader a fair impression, Christopher Vecsey's twenty-two elements may be cited as a structural framework of analysis. As Vecsey observes: "No one version contains every episode, although Gibson's 1899 manuscript comes the closest to completeness" (p. 82). From a traditional (plurality) perspective, these episodes enjoyed reciprocity as simultaneously true. Gibson simply put together all the versions he had heard, which is allowed in indigenous tradition. Vecsey wrote this in 1986, before Hanni Woodbury published her translation of *Concerning the League* in 1992. The Gibson-Goldenweiser version (*Concerning the League [CL]*, translated by Hanni Woodbury et al.) has most of these core elements (as summarized by the present writer), with headings by Vecsey, as noted:

(1) "The Migration and Separation of the People" (Vecsey, pp. 82–83): This element is absent in the Gibson-Goldenweiser version.

(2) "The Birth and Growth of Deganawida" (Vecsey, p. 83): In the distant past, war and blood revenge plagued the Mohawk homeland on the northern shore of Lake Ontario (in what is now Canada), where warriors, ruthlessly and relentlessly, killed and scalped inhabitants of settlements across forest and countryside. (This may be a Western interpolation. According to Mann, the war was the overthrow of the Mound Builder priesthood.) To escape the dangers of this ongoing onslaught, a mother ("End of the Field") takes her daughter ("She Walks Ahead") away from her people and migrates to a remote area of the bush, where the two do not see another human being for a long time.

Later on, the mother discovers that her daughter is pregnant and demands to know who the father is. The daughter has no idea. The old woman, sure that her daughter is lying, grows angry, and the two are estranged until a messenger from the Great Spirit appears and tells the mother that her daughter is about to have a divine birth. (This is patent Christianization, since the Haudenosaunee traditionally do not value "virgins" and "virgin birth" stories.) They should call the boy Tekánawí·ta'; [Deganawida], whose mission will be to bring about peace. The boy grows rapidly, a sign of supernatural origin or powers (*CL*, pp. 1–14).

(3) "The Journey to the Mohawks, the Situation, and the Mission Explained" (Vecsey, p. 84): When the boy becomes a young man, his mother and grandmother return home, where he announces to their people the Good Message, the Power, and the Peace. After the Peacemaker tells the village's children of his mission, the older women spread the news, and a day is appointed for the Peacemaker to speak to the elders (*CL*, pp. 15–36). This is his message, which the chief and elders accept:

> Thereupon Tekanawitaʔ [Deganawida] stood up in the center of the gathering place, and then he said,

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> "First I will answer what it means to say, 'now it is arriving, the Good Message.' This indeed, is what it means: When it stops, the slaughter of your own people who live here on earth, then everywhere peace will come about, by day and also by night, and it will come about that as one travels around, everyone will be related. Then, indeed, [?]in future days to come.
>
> Now again [?], secondly, I say, 'now it is arriving, the power,' and this means that the different nations, all the nations, will become just a single one, and the Great Law will come into being, so that now all will be related to each other, and there will come to be just a single family, and in the future, in days to come, this family will continue on.
>
> Now in turn, the other, my third saying, 'Now it is arriving, the Peace,' this means that everyone will become related, men and also women, and also the young people and the children, and when all are relatives, every nation, then there will be peace as they roam about by day and also by night. Now, also, it will become possible for them to assemble in meetings. Then there will be truthfulness, and they will uphold hope and charity, so that it is peace that will unite all the people, indeed, it will be as though they have but one mind, and they are a single person with only one body and one head and one life, which means that there will be unity. Moreover, and most importantly, one is going to assembly in meetings where it will be announced that all of mankind will repent of their sins, even evil people, and in the future, they will be kind to one another, one and all. When they are functioning, the Good Message and also the Power and the Peace, moreover, these will be the principal things everybody will live by; these will be the great values among the people."
>
> (*CL*, pp. 36–41)

This episode is omitted in the Chiefs' version and in the Gibson-Hewitt version.

(4) "The Cannibal Converts" (Vecsey, p. 84): After returning to their camp in the bush, the Peacemaker carves a canoe of white stone. He sets out on his mission. He first encounters a Mohawk who had fled for safety from the bloodshed, and the Peacemaker tells the Mohawk to announce his forthcoming arrival and mission to the chief. Peacemaker then encounters a cannibal, the story of which is one of the most famous episodes (*CL*, pp. 78–90) of the Peacemaker epic:

> After Tekanawitaʔ had departed in that direction he came to a house belonging to a cannibal who had his house there. Then Tekanawitaʔ went close to the house. Then, when he saw the man coming out, departing, sliding down the hill to the river, and dipping water, thereupon Tekanawitaʔ hurriedly climbed onto the house to the place where there was a chimney for the smoke to escape; he lay down on his stomach and looking into the house he saw that the task of breaking up meat and piling it up had been completed.
>
> Then the man returned, and he was carrying a drum of water in it. Thereupon he poured it into a vessel, put meat into the liquid, and hung the vessel up over the fire until it boiled. Moreover, the man watched it, and when it was done, he took down the vessel placing it near the embers. Thereupon he said, "Now indeed it is done. Moreover, now I will eat." There upon he set up a seat, a bench, thinking that he will put it on there when he eats. Thereupon he went to where the vessel sat, intending to take the meat out of the liquid, when he saw, from inside the vessel, a man looking out.
>
> Thereupon he moved away without removing the meat, and sat down again on the long bench, for it was a surprise to him, seeing the man in the vessel. Thereupon he thought, "Let me look again." Thereupon he, Tekanawitaʔ, looked again from above where the smoke hole was, again causing a reflection in the vessel, and then the man, standing up again, went to where the vessel sat, looked into the vessel again, saw the man looking out, and he was handsome, he having a nice face. Thereupon the man moved away again and he sat down again on the long bench, and then he bowed his head, pondering and thinking, "I am exceedingly handsome and I have a nice face; it is probably not right, my habit of eating humans. So I will now stop, from now on I ought not kill humans anymore."
>
> (*CL*, pp. 78–83)

Hiawatha mistakes the Peacemaker's face, which is reflected in the pot, for his own. In the Gibson-Hewitt version, the Peacemaker gives the former cannibal the name Hiawatha, who is then sent to a settlement to announce the coming of "the Good Message, and the Power, and the Peace." However, in the Gibson-Goldenweiser version (Vecsey, p. 84, citing the Gibson-Hewitt version, pp. 34–60), the cannibal remains unnamed, and the Peacemaker confers the name "Hiawatha" on the great warrior and chief of the next Mohawk settlement. (See also *White Roots of Peace*, pp. 42–45.) If analyzed sociologically, this episode

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may indicate a transition from cannibalism (especially by Mound Builder priests among the Ohio Iroquois) to crop farming and deer hunting.

(5) The "Mother of Nations Accepts Deganawida's Message" (Vecsey, p. 84): Arriving at the waterfalls on the eastern side of the river, the Peacemaker encounters "Fat Face" (the traditional name is most commonly spelled "Jigonsaseh"), the head mother of the Senecas, who became the Head Mother of the League. The Peacemaker chides her for feeding the warriors, thereby aiding and abetting warfare. After converting her to his message, he sends Fat Face to travel east, to announce his arrival in three days (which is really three years) (*CL*, pp. 90–94). On the role of women who carry the traditional title of "Jigonsaseh," Barbara Mann notes that the Head Clan Mothers of the League were the title-keepers (and also lineage-keepers):

> The Jigonsaseh … allowed or disallowed passage of war parties, thus giving them tacit veto power over warfare. Because federal officials could be put forward only by their respective Clan Mothers, and could be impeached by them, Clan Mothers effectively controlled the national agenda: Federal officials of the two Brotherhoods (Congress) and the Firekeepers (the Executive Branch) considered matters at a national level only after they had already been discussed, approved, and forwarded by the "women's councils," i.e., the Clan Mothers in their own councils.
>
> ("The Lynx in Time," p. 440; see also Mann, *Iroquoian Women*, chap. 3)

Seneca Chief Cornplanter refers to the office of those who succeeded Jigonsaseh (who, according to parallel traditional accounts, would, and did, carry the title of "the Jigonsaseh") as the "Peacemaker Queen," among the Seneca. (Cornplanter, qtd. in Canfield, "The Peacemaker," *The Legends of the Iroquois,* pp. 149–154.) Barbara Mann stresses the traditional importance of this office. She also laments the fact that it was largely forgotten, due to American and Canadian policies of forced assimilation, and further obscured by Western scholarship, which has simply failed to appreciate the importance of the "Peace Queen" and those who held her office, in succeeding generations, among the Iroquois nations. Speaking of the original Jigonsaseh, Mann notes: "Her negotiations with the Peacemaker and her personal centrality and ending the Second Epochal war resulted in the women's sections of the Iroquois Constitution, twenty-three of the one hundred seventeen clauses, according to Renée Jacobs' count" (*Iroquoian Women*, p. 155).

(6) "The Prophets Prove Their Power" (Vecsey, p. 84): The Peacemaker proceeds to a Mohawk settlement. He camps on the outskirts overnight, and awaits invitation. The next day, the chief sends scouts, calls a meeting, and invites the Peacemaker to deliver his message. The chief accepts, yet "the Great Warrior and his deputy" express hesitation, challenging Deganawida to a test to see if he is endowed with supernatural power. The Peacemaker climbs a great tree, perched precipitously over a deep gorge. The Great Warrior's men then cut down the tree. Deganawida plunges into the river's turbulent waters below and disappears. The next morning, a young man sees smoke rising from the edge of the cornfield, which turns out to be where the Peacemaker is encamped, and the chief, Great Warrior, and deputy are now convinced of the Peacemaker's power to accomplish his mission (*CL*, pp. 95–130).

(7) "Tadadaho the Wizard Prevents Peace" (Vecsey, p. 85): The Peacemaker proceeds eastward. "First I will go to the dangerous place, where we two will converse, the Great Witch [or 'Sorcerer'] and I." If the Wizard accepts, they will hear a great voice announcing this, at which time the meeting should be convened at "Standing Stone" [the Oneida nation] (*CL*, pp. 130–132).

(8) "Hiawatha's Relatives Are Killed" (Vecsey, p. 85): Meanwhile, Hiawatha's eldest daughter has taken ill and died. Then the next daughter succumbs. To console him, the young warriors divert Hiawatha's attention by putting on a game of lacrosse. During the game, his third daughter, the youngest of the three and pregnant, goes to the river to bathe. On her way back, the warriors see a great bird flying low overhead. In their zeal to seize it, they collide with the last daughter, whose injuries are fatal (*CL*, pp. 132–138).

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(9) "Hiawatha Mourns and Quits Onondaga" (Vecsey, p. 86): Heartbroken, Hiawatha departs. He goes to a cornfield, builds a lean-to, and lights a fire to camp overnight (*CL*, p. 139).

(10) "Hiawatha Invents Wampum" (Vecsey, p. 86): At his camp, Hiawatha cuts and cores sumac branches (later described as "basswood," identified as elderberry in the Chiefs' version) into short sticks, hooks them onto a horizontally suspended rod, and gazes at them (*CL*, pp. 140–141). This is the origin of the "Welcome at the Woods' Edge" wampum. Since wampum already existed and was widely used, what Hiawatha actually invented—or rather, revivified—were the Condolence speeches.

(11) "Hiawatha Gives the Mohawks Lessons in Protocol" (Vecsey, pp. 86–87): Puzzled at seeing this, the man guarding the cornfield reports to the chief, who sends two scouts to invite Hiawatha to the chief's house. They address Hiawatha three times. No response. On hearing this, the chief guesses what's expected. Cutting shafts from feathers, he arranges these in similar fashion. When the scouts then present these to Hiawatha, he accepts the chief's overture, saying: "This is right and I accept it." (This is the origin of the "Invitation Wampum," which is part of "forest diplomacy.") The chief calls a meeting. Hiawatha relates what transpired among the Mohawks and announces the Peacemaker's imminent arrival (*CL,* pp. 141–171).

(12) "Deganawida Consoles Hiawatha" (Vecsey, p. 87): This element appears to be absent in the Gibson-Goldenweiser version.

(13) "Deganawida and Hiawatha Join Oneidas, Cayugas, and Senecas to Mohawks" (Vecsey, p. 87): The Peacemaker arrives in the middle of the night, tells Hiawatha he has been to Onondaga, where he announced his mission to the "Great Sorcerer," and from there proceeded to the "Great Mountain" (a Seneca settlement) as well. The Peacemaker's unobserved arrival astonishes the inhabitants of Standing Stone [Oneidas], who take council, where Deganawida proclaims his message. They accept.

Meanwhile, the Great Sorcerer (by whom Tadadaho is likely meant), now growing impatient, shouts a great shout, heard all over the world. Deganawida then sends two messengers to "look for smoke." They transform into hawks, see the smoke rising, and change back into humans. They see a man smoking a large pipe, who is the chief of the "Big Pipe People" (the Cayugas). He accepts the Peacemaker's message. The messengers proceed to the "Great Mountain."

The Senecas remain unconvinced. So the Peacemaker goes to them, and finds them split into two factions. The chiefs accept, although the warriors do not (*CL*, pp. 141–222).

(14) "Scouts Travel to Tadadaho" (Vecsey, p. 87): Deganawida and Hiawatha launch the stone canoe to cross the great lake. Representatives from the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca nations embark, climb aboard. Hiawatha paddles. In the middle of the lake, the Sorcerer shouts, "Is it time yet?" This stirs up a fierce gale, with great waves threatening to capsize the canoe. Then the Peacemaker commands, "Rest wind!" The Sorcerer shouts again, stirring up a great whirlwind. Deganawida then says, "Stop wind!" and calms the tempest (*CL*, pp. 223–225).

(15) "The Nations March to Tadadaho, Singing the Peace Hymn" (Vecsey, pp. 87–88): This element evidently is absent from the Gibson-Goldenweiser version as well.

(16) "Deganawida and Hiawatha Transform Tadadaho" (Vecsey, p. 88): At last they reach the "Great Sorcerer" (i.e., Tadadaho). "They observed that all over his head beings were writhing—it was like snakes, his hair, and his fingers were gnarled—all over they were writhing, nor was he about to talk. Thereupon they saw something hanging on him" (*CL,* p. 228). The Peacemaker then sends Hiawatha to fetch "Fat Face" (Jigonsaseh), now called "our mother, the Great Matron." She arrives. A "grand council" convenes. The Peacemaker proposes the following to the Great Sorcerer:

> Now, indeed, all of them have arrived, they of the four nations, that is, the Mohawks and the Oneidas and the Cayugas and the Senecas; they are the ones who have accepted the Good Message and the Power and the Peace, that which will now function: the Great Law. Moreover, everything reposes there, the minds of the several nations, and as to you, they place before you their proposition that it is to be you who is the title bearer, and the Great Chief,

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> and you also are to be the fire keeper at the place where we will kindle the fire, whose rising smoke will pierce the sky. Then one will see it in all of the settlements on earth.
>
> (*CL*, pp. 230–232)

So, after the uniting of four nations (Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, and Senecas), the allegiance of one more remains to be won: the Onondagas, led by the Great Sorcerer (still, at this point in the saga, unnamed). The Peacemaker then proclaims:

> "Now moreover, it is accomplished; now she has arrived, our mother, the Great Matron whose name is [Tsikonhsahsen]; now she has accepted the Good Message, and this, moreover, is what you should confirm and adopt, the Great Law, so that she may place antlers on you, our mother, and they shall together form a circle, standing alongside your body." … "Now you are looking at all of the ones who will be standing with you." Thereupon the man bowed his head. Thereupon his hair stopped writhing and all of his fingers became quiet. Thereupon Tekanawitaʔ said, "Now, indeed, it is functioning, the Peace." Thereupon the man spoke up saying, "Now I confirm the matter, I accept the Good Message and the Power and the Peace."
>
> (*CL*, pp. 232–234)

In this dramatic scene, the Great Sorcerer bows his head in humble, yet grand, acquiescence. His hair stops writhing. His fingers uncurl. Unseethed, he accepts the message. Then the Peacemaker strokes the Sorcerer's head, straightens his fingers, while others disentangle the objects hanging from his shoulders. The Sorcerer is now righted, his humanity restored (*CL*, pp. 226–235).

(17) "Deganawida and Hiawatha Establish Iroquois Unity and Law" (Vecsey, p. 88): The Peacemaker then summons Jigonsaseh, the Great Matron, whom he recognizes as a "Great Chief." Together with Jigonsaseh, Deganawida places a crown of antlers (a symbol of authority) on the Sorcerer's head. The Peacemaker confers on the Sorcerer the title "Thatotaho'." Antlers are then placed on the other chiefs (*CL*, pp. 235–251).

(18) "Deganawida and Hiawatha Establish League Chiefs and Council Polity" (Vecsey, pp. 88–89): After the Peacemaker sets forth rules of order for the operation of good governance among the Five Nations, Hiawatha then invites the recalcitrant Seneca warrior chief ("the Great Warrior") and his deputy, who are brought to the council to hear the Peacemaker's message. He offers them the special authority over all of the League's warriors, and also offers them the post of "Doorkeepers." The Great Warrior accepts, whereupon the Peacemaker gives thanks by reciting a short version of the Thanksgiving Address:

> Thereupon Tekanawitaʔ stood up, saying, "The Great Power came from up in the sky, and now it is functioning, the Great Power that we accepted when we reached consensus. So now our house has become complete. Now, therefore, we shall give thanks, that is, we shall thank the Creator of the earth, that is, he who planted all kinds of weeds and all varieties of shrubs and all kinds of trees; and springs, flowing water, such as rivers and large bodies of water, such as lakes; and the sun that keeps moving by day, and by night, the moon, and where the sky is, the stars, which no one is able to count; moreover, the way it is on earth in relation to which no one is able to tell the extent to which it is to their benefit, that is the people whom he created and who will continue to live on earth. This, then, is the reason we thank him, the one with great power, the one who is the Creator, for that which will now move forward, the Good Message and the Power and the Peace; the Great Law."
>
> (*CL*, pp. 294–296)

The Peacemaker then lays out the specific laws of good governance by which the Confederacy will function. Women become the proprietors of lordship titles (*CL*, pp. 294–326).

(19) "The Confederacy Takes Symbolic Images" (Vecsey, p. 89): The Peacemaker establishes the central hearth, being the council fire. They plant a great white pine ("Great Tall Tree Trunk") named, in Woodbury's translation, as the "Great Long Leaf," which puts forth four white roots ("Great White Root[s]") extending east, west, north, and south (*CL*, pp. 296–297). Arrows are bound together by the sinew of a deer, to represent the Confederacy's strong bond (*CL*, pp. 300–309): "for this bundle, made of five arrows, is impossible to break, and it is impossible to bend it" (*CL*, p. 306).

Later, on his way home, Hiawatha comes upon a lake, on which a group of ducks are

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floating. When the ducks take notice, they fly off, magically lifting all of the water from the lake. On the lake bed, Hiawatha sees "white objects" (that is, shells; *CL*, p. 326) that remind him of his first wampum of sumac sticks. He then collects the white shells and puts them into a pouch of fawn skin, and places these objects near the central fire, to serve as symbols of the Great Law (*CL*, pp. 326–330). According to Mann ("The Fire at Onondaga: Wampum as Proto-Writing"), wampum was a full writing system, whose characters were immediately readable by any wampum reader.

(20) "The League Declares Its Sovereignty" (Vecsey, pp. 89–90): This element is absent in the Gibson-Goldenweiser version as well.

(21) "The Condolence Maintains the Confederacy" (Vecsey, p. 90): The Peacemaker sets forth clear laws of succession to the matrilineally hereditary titles of the Confederacy, with ceremonies for mourning the passing of a former chief and installing his replacement. The League is constituted by fifty chiefs, upon each and every one of whom is bestowed, by the head clan mothers (each of whom bears the position title of "Jigonsaseh," after the Great Matron), a matrilineally hereditary title (*CL*, pp. 237–250). The Condolence ceremonies are then set forth, in considerable detail and at great length. These solemn rites of passage are followed by installation ceremonies to induct a successor to the deceased chief (*CL*, pp. 486–701).

(22) "Deganawida Departs" (Vecsey, p. 90): This element appears to be absent in the Gibson-Goldenweiser version as well. In other words, there is no departure scene in *Concerning the League*. Certain other versions feature the Peacemaker's farewell prophecy.

THE PEACEMAKER'S MESSAGE

As Kathryn Muller points out (p. 22, n. 5), the Gibson-Goldenweiser version is unique in that it refers to the "Good Message, Power and Peace" (Onondaga: *kaihwíyóh*, *ka'tshátstéhsæ' and skę̈ë́'nų'*) as three distinct concepts, whereas the Chiefs' version refers to the "the message of the good news of Peace and Power." According to Barbara Mann (personal communication, September 3, 2014), these are traditionally referred to as the "Three Pillars," since "three" is the indigenous number meaning "pay attention"; therefore, the Chiefs' version, in giving two, not three such "pillars," reveals its Christianization. However, the Oneida version recited by Chief Robert Brown of the Wisconsin Oneida Nation (who is considered a national treasure), echoes this formulation: "First, what is the meaning of 'good message' and second what is the meaning of 'power' and then third what is the meaning of 'peace has now arrived'?" (Brown, pp. 46–47). So, in the final analysis, this may be a distinction without a difference.

Translator Hanni Woodbury characterizes the "Good Message, Power and Peace" as the "three Great Words" (*CL*, p. 61 and n. 61-1.) In *Concerning the League*, "the Good Message, Power and the Peace" occurs only once (p. 63). But its variations are numerous. "Good Message and the Power and the Peace" is the expression most commonly met with (37 times). "Good Message" comes up 112 times. "Peace" (also capitalized) occurs 114 times. "Power" is found 85 times. The three great words, summed up, is the "Great Law" (16 times).

In Chief Brown's Oneida version, the Peacemaker gives the following explanation to a Mohawk chief (a former cannibal), to whom he gives the name "Two Matters":

> ["Two Matters"] "Who are you and where did you come from?"
>
> [The Peacemaker] Then he said, "I am the Peacemaker and from the north I have come.… The Creator sent me here on earth. The Creator appointed me to lecture people on what they are doing.…
>
> Now I will tell you what message the Creator send [sent] with me of what there will be on earth. He intended everyone to have a good mind on the earth you travel. He thought there would be reasons. First, he intended all the peopled [people] should be having peaceful thoughts in their minds. Then love will come from that. If their thinking is not peaceful then they will not have love. And if they do have love then from it will come compassion and if they have no love, then they won't have any compassion.

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> Each and every one of you has the power. Whatever power you have comes from what you have thought. Then that comes from a good mind. He intended you all to be helping each other. You people should not be arguing."
>
> (*The Great Law of Peace*, pp. 28–31)

This explanation appears to be a gloss on the "Good Message," which gives rise to the "good mind," from which, through force of thought, arise feelings of peace, love, compassion, and altruism.

That said, further distinctions have been made. In the popular non-Native English version, Paul Wallace's *White Roots of Peace,* originally published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1946 and considered a classic of Native lore, the Peacemaker elaborates on "the Good News of Peace and Power" as follows:

> So Deganawidah passed from settlement to settlement, finding that men desired peace and would practice it if they knew for a certainty that others would practice it, too.
>
> But first, after leaving the hunters, Deganawidah sought the house of a certain woman who lived by the warriors' path which passed between the east and the west.
>
> When Deganawidah arrived, the woman placed food before him and, after he had eaten, asked him his message.
>
> "I carry the Mind of the Master of Life," he replied, "and my message will bring an end to the wars between east and west."
>
> "How will this be?" asked the woman, who wondered at his words, for it was her custom to feed the warriors passing before her door on their way between the east and the west.
>
> "The Word that I bring," he said, "is that all peoples shall love one another and live together in peace. This message has three parts: Righteousness and Health and Power—*Gáiwoh*, *Skénon*, *Gashasdénshaa*. And each part has two branches.
>
> Righteousness means justice practiced between men and between nations; it means also a desire to see justice prevail.
>
> Health means soundness of mind and body; it means also peace, for that is what comes when minds are sane and bodies cared for.
>
> Power means authority, the authority of law and custom, backed by such force as is necessary to make justice prevail; it means also religion, for justice enforced is the will of the Holder of the Heavens and has his sanction."
>
> "Thy message is good," said the woman; "but a word is nothing until it is given form and set to work in the world. What form shall this message take when it comes to dwell among men?"
>
> "It will take the form of the longhouse," replied Deganawidah, "in which there are many fires, one for each family, yet all live as one household under one chief mother. Hereabouts are five nations, each with its own council fire, yet they shall live together as one household in peace. They shall be the Kanonsiónni, the Longhouse. They shall have one mind and live under one law. Thinking shall replace killing, and there shall be one commonwealth."
>
> (Wallace, *White Roots of Peace*, pp. 39–40)

This version of the Peacemaker's message is one of the most widely cited today, being the easiest for Westerners to follow. The above passage, or a substantial part of it, appears on various Native American and Native Canadian Web sites as well. Who are the sources of authority for Wallace's variation on Deganawida's "gospel"? Paul Wallace, a literary historian, credits Chief William D. Loft, to whose memory Wallace dedicates his book. Conversant in five of the Iroquoian languages, Chief Loft, Mohawk of Caledonia, was Speaker of the Six Nations Council at Grand River, 1917–1918, and a noted orator of Haudenosaunee traditions and stories in the 1920s and 1930s. Another source may be the Gibson-Goldenweiser version, which Wallace read in a draft translation that was begun by Hewitt and completed by William Fenton, with Simeon Gibson (son of John Arthur Gibson), archived in the Smithsonian Institution's National Anthropological Archives. (MSS. 1517b, c.) Yet another source may be J. N. B. Hewitt, who gave a paper at the International Congress of Americanists held in Washington in December 1915 on "Some Esoteric Aspects of the League of the Iroquois," published in 1917.

Here, the three words that epitomize the essence of the Peacemaker's message—*Gáiwoh*

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("Righteousness"), *Skénon* ("Health"), *Gashasdénshaa* ("Power")—correspond to their respective Onondaga equivalents: *kaihwíyóh* ("Good Message"), *skęé'nų'* ("Peace"), *ka'tshátstéhsæ'* ("Power"). Evidently, Professor Wallace has taken artistic license with these sacred terms of art, reconfiguring the "Good Message, Peace, and Power" as "Righteousness, Health, and Power." Thus, "Good Message" becomes "Righteous-ness." "Peace" becomes primarily "Health" and only secondarily "peace" (i.e., "also peace, for that is what comes when minds are sane and bodies cared for"). In the Gibson-Goldenweiser version, "health" occurs only twice, and only in relation to a person's individual health (*CL*, pp. 13, 448), whereas "righteousness" is absent entirely. Such a shift in emphasis is scarcely warranted by the 1912 text. Since Deganawida is revered as the "Peacemaker," whose purpose was to unite five warring Iroquois tribes into "the League of the Great Law" (*CL*, pp. 310–311) by means of the "the Good Message, the Power, and the Peace," it would seem odd to rename these three great words as "Righteousness, Power, and Health."

Christopher Jocks (Mohawk), in his article "Living Words and Cartoon Translations," implicitly takes a jaundiced view of this variation (or outright alteration of the original message), but stops short of outright criticism (i.e., "I cite this modern exegesis not in order to criticize its accuracy … but to demonstrate how deeply a tradition in translation may draw from very different realms of discourse in the process of recontextualizing itself in the target language" [pp. 225–226]). Invoking the Mohawk terms of art, Jocks notes that the first two terms in "the phrase, *skén:nen*, *ka'shatsténhsera*, *karihríio*, or its equivalent" are "easily glossed as 'peace,' and either 'power' or 'strength,' respectively." "'Good message,'" Jocks hastens to add as to the third term, "is the most direct rendering of the word's composition" (p. 225). These key words are transmogrified, if not mutated, in their transposition from source language to target language in translation, in a process that Jocks calls "the 'cartooning' of culture" where "the link with the living tradition based on enactment is seriously endangered" (p. 230). In so criticizing the recasting of the Peacemaker's message, Jocks demonstrates how the "appropriation" of Native American spirituality implicates ethical, political, and hermeneutical issues. (See also Jocks's "Spirituality for Sale.")

However, the sixfold explication of the Peacemaker's three core principles evidently goes back to Hewitt, who wrote:

> The founders of the league, therefore, proposed and expounded as the requisite basis of all good government three broad "double" doctrines or principles. The names of these principles in the native tongues vary dialectically, but these three notable terms are expressed in Onondaga as follows: (1) *Ne'´´ Skĕñ´no*^{n}', meaning, first, sanity of mind and the health of the body; and, second, peace between individuals and between organized bodies or groups of persons. (2) *Ne'´´ Gaii'hwiyo'*, meaning, first, righteousness in conduct and its advocacy in thought and speech; and, second, equity or justice, the adjustment of rights and obligations. (3) *Ne'´´ Gă's'hasdĕ*^{n}*''´sä'*, meaning, first, physical strength or power, as military force or civil authority; and, second, the orenda or magic power of the people or of their institutions and rituals, having mythic and religious implications. Six principles in all. The constructive results of the control and guidance of human thinking and conduct in the private, the public, and the foreign relations of the peoples so leagued by these six principles, the reformers maintained, are the establishment and the conservation of what is reverently called *Ne'´´ Gayanĕñ'sä'gō´nă'*—, i.e. the Great Commonwealth, the great Law of Equity and Righteousness and Well-being, of all known men. It is thus seen that the mental grasp and outlook of these prophet-statesman and states-women of the Iroquois looked out beyond the limits of tribal boundaries to a vast sisterhood and brotherhood of all the tribes of men, dwelling in harmony and happiness. This indeed was a notable vision for the Stone Age of America.
>
> ("A Constitutional League of Peace," p. 541)

Thus, it would appear that Paul Wallace's elaboration of the Peacemaker's message depends on Hewitt, who reflects the central Iroquois view of a twinned cosmos.

CONCLUSION

The Deganawida epic, in its sundry versions, belongs to world literature. It can be regarded as

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a foundational American text, both in the precontact and post-contact periods. Its authenticity is unimpeached, and its magical realism granted as edifying embellishment. Few would doubt its historical core, much less its cultural significance. The influence of the Peacemaker—and that of the Confederacy founded on its principles, organization, and laws he expounded—is a matter of debate. The foremost proponents of the Iroquois influence thesis are Donald A. Grinde, Jr., and Bruce E. Johansen in their book *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy*, with a foreword by Vine Deloria, Jr.

On October 4, 1988, during the 100th Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Concurrent Resolution 331 (H.Con.Res. 331) by a vote of 408–8. Then, on October 21, 1988, the Senate approved Senate Concurrent Resolution 76 (S.Con.Res.76, identical to H.Con. Res. 331), by unanimous voice vote. The joint resolution reads, in part:

> Whereas the original framers of the Constitution, including, most notably, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, are known to have greatly admired the concepts of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy;
>
> Whereas the confederation of the original Thirteen Colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the Constitution itself …
>
> RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (THE SENATE CONCURRING), That—
>
> (1) the Congress, on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution, acknowledges the contribution made by the Iroquois Confederacy and other Indian Nations to the formation and development of the United States; …

And so LeAnne Howe may be right after all, when she states: “America is a tribal creation story, a tribalography.… When the European Founding Fathers heard the stories of how the Haudenosaunee unified six individual tribes into an Indian confederacy, they created a document, the U.S. Constitution, that united immigrant Europeans into a symbiotic union called America.” The Deganawida epic is formative in that it is the founding “document” of the Iroquois League. It is performative in that it remains in practice to this day. It is transformative in that it decolonizes and revisions our conception of America’s origins.

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Acknowledgments

The author acknowledges the ideas, edits, corrections and encouragement of the following individuals, whose astute input has greatly enhanced the quality of this article: (1) Barbara Alice Mann, Ph.D. (Native American, Ohio Bear Clan Seneca), associate professor, Honors Department, University of Toledo, author of *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000, 3rd printing, 2006); (2) Donald A. Grinde, Jr., Ph.D. (Native American), professor, Department of Transnational Studies, University at Buffalo, the State University of New York, editor and author, *A Political History of Native Americans* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: CQ Press/Sage, 2002 [Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2003]); (3) Bruce E. Johansen, Ph.D., Jacob J. Isaacson University Research Professor, Communication and Native American Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, author of *Encyclopedia of the American Indian Movement* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO/Greenwood, 2013); (4) Clifford F. Abbott (linguist), professor of information and computing science at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, author of *Oneida Teaching Grammar* (University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, 2006); and (5) Steven Kolins, M.S., technical support specialist in the University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, published writer of encyclopedic articles.

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