Chapter 1

Nationalism, Indigenism, Cosmopolitanism

Three Perspectives on Native American Literatures

For David Murray and Shamoon Zamir

Criticism of Native American literatures today proceeds from one or another of the critical perspectives I call nationalist, indigenist, and cosmopolitan. The nationalist and indigenist positions sometimes overlap, and both nationalists and indigenists tend to see themselves as apart from and in opposition to the cosmopolitans. Nonetheless, as I will try to show, nationalist, indigenist, and cosmopolitan positions are all overlapping and interlinked so that each can only achieve its full coherence and effectiveness in relation to the others. All three positions may be enlisted for the project of an anticolonial criticism, as all three may also operate to reproduce colonial dominance under other names.

I am concerned with nationalism, indigenism, and cosmopolitanism as critical perspectives. But it would be foolish not to acknowledge that they have been taken as perspectives undergirding identity rather than criticism. One might think that identities and critical perspectives are related as cause to effect; it would therefore come as no surprise to discover that a non-Native person like myself would occupy a cosmopolitan critical position: I am a cosmopolitan critic because of "who I am." But this would be a gross oversimplification.

Neither identities nor critical perspectives are given by birth; neither identities nor critical perspectives are "in the blood" or produced by descent alone. This is not quite to say—as Werner Sollors once seemed to say—that identities are entirely a matter of consent. We know perfectly well that non-whiteness in the United States disqualifies or severely con-
strains certain choices of identity. And it is most certainly not to say, as Scott Michaelsen recently has said, that there can be no real difference between Indian and white identities. Michaelsen writes that "as soon as Indians begin to conceptualize whites (and themselves), it is already too late to imagine a real difference" (32), so that the "project of legitimation," the concern to determine "who is an authentic Amerindian, what is authentic Amerindian culture, and, perforce, what is not" (113–14) should simply be abandoned.

Rather, I am claiming, first, that what it means to be identified and accepted as an Indian person by other Indian persons is complex and subject to cultural, social, and historical forces—none of which, in my view, entirely extinguish personal agency. Second, I am claiming that an Indian or non-Indian identity does not in and of itself determine critical perspective. (Although critical perspective, as we shall see further in Chapter 5, may indeed partly serve to define the particular sort of Indian identity one might claim.) One might reasonably think it likely that the non-Native or outsider critic like myself would be drawn to cosmopolitanism, but this likelihood is by no means an inevitability. There are many non-Indian culture-workers who are committed to what might well be called a nationalist perspective, and there are others—many eco-critics among them—who foreground an indigenist perspective. No one of these scholars pretends to an Indian identity as somehow necessary to legitimate his or her critical perspective.

In what follows, I will comment as well, although briefly, on nationalist, indigenist, and cosmopolitan preferences for the textual and institutional locations for teaching Native American literatures, and the critical methods for writing about them.

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The nationalist bases her critical position foremost upon her understanding of the term sovereignty. As Russell Means and Ward Churchill1 have written in their brochure, "TREATY: A Platform for Nationhood": “Within the understandings of International Law, it is the right of all sovereign nations and sovereign peoples to enter into treaty relationships with other sovereign nations and peoples. Conversely, only sovereign nations and peoples are entitled to enter into such relationships (3). Thus Native "nations and peoples" were and are sovereigns inasmuch as, according to Pauline Turner Strong and Barrik van Winkle, between 1607 and 1775 the Crown and the various colonies entered into at least 185 treaties with Indian peoples . . . , treating them as sovereign political entities, if only to limit their sovereignty” (1993: 11).

Once the United States achieved its own independent existence as a
“sovereign political entity,” for almost one hundred years, from 1776 until 1871 (when Congress ended the treaty-making practice), it continued to enter into nation-to-nation treaties with the tribes. Since that time, some Native communities that had not signed treaties with the government have still been able to meet the (changing) requirements for “federal recognition” as tribal nations. “Nation,” here, although it is synonymous with “tribe,” is not synonymous with “state”; as we shall see further, Native people typically think in terms of the nation-people rather than the nation-state. The “sovereign political entities” that Native nations were and continue to be were not and are not states.

As Charles Wilkinson and Sidney Harring have shown, there is a strong line of cases from Chief Justice John Marshall’s well-known 1832 ruling in Worcester v. Georgia, through Crow Dog of 1883 and Talton v. Mayes of 1896, up to Williams v. Lee of 1959, among others, that clearly supports the view that Native peoples were and continue to be competent self-governing entities—that they are indeed sovereign. (There is, to be sure, a contrary set of rulings from the decision in Corn Tassel in 1830, to Kagama of 1886, which introduces the “plenary power doctrine,” effectively granting Congress the power simply to do as it pleases with tribal nations.)

Extending the scope of their paradoxical condition as “dependent sovereigns” (cf. Resnik) — extending sovereignty — is the foremost political task Native nations face today.

Native people who identify themselves as Lakota, or Ho-Chunk, Mohawk, or Miwok, if they follow Means and Churchill and regard tribal membership as comparable to citizenship, may be opposed to the idea of their citizens holding dual citizenship. Means and Churchill, for example, believe that citizens of the Lakota nation are not U.S. citizens, and U.S. citizens residing in Lakota territory have the status of resident aliens. They may apply for Lakota citizenship—which, if it is granted, will require them to renounce their U.S. citizenship.

That the terms employed by Means, Churchill, and many other nationalist critics — “sovereignty,” “citizenship,” or “nation,” for example—are obviously European terms does not compromise the case being made or the very real stakes involved. As Craig Womack has forcefully reminded us, nationhood and sovereignty undoubtedly had their own indigenous forms before the arrival of the European invaders (17). And “Before the Europeans arrived,” as Mark Trahant clearly puts it, “indigenous people governed themselves. It’s that simple. It doesn’t matter what the governments were called: A tribe, band, or pueblo. The fact is that a self-governing community was here first with a unique political framework” (3). Indeed, many of the court rulings acknowledge this “simple” fact.

But perhaps it is worth a pause here to note Gerald Vizenor’s recent attempts to find a way a way around the European vocabulary, a way to
speak of Native sovereignty as distinct from “treaty sovereignty” or territorial sovereignty “in the sense of colonialism and nationalism.” (1998 188 and 183) Vizenor offers the neologisms “sovenance” and “transmotion” as terms that might substitute for the usual Euramerican vocabulary for and conceptualization of issues of sovereignty. “Sovenance” is “the sense of presence in remembrance, that trace of creation and natural reason in native stories.” As for “transmotion,” “Native stories of survivance are the creases of transmotion and sovereignty” (15). These two quotations are the clearest I can find to define “sovenance” and “transmotion,” although it will be apparent that “transmotion” is part of the definition of “transmotion.” This is often the case with Vizenor’s neologisms, the consequence of a determination always to keep meanings and possibilities open.

Although Vizenor is not, as we shall see further, a nationalist, the position he develops here does more or less resemble that of the cultural nationalist. Stories, pictographs and maps, ledger book art, and the continuous history of Native presence on this continent (constituting a “narrative”) are what testify to the sovereignty of Native peoples; it is Native cultural integrity that underpins Indian claims to autonomy and political self-determination.

I think this is not far different from Vine Deloria, Jr.’s earlier sense that “inherent in their peculiar experience on this continent is hidden the basic recognition of [the tribes’] power and sovereignty” (1970:115). Thus as Scott Richard Lyons, citing Deloria, affirms,

the making of political decisions by Indian people hasn’t been the work of a nation-state so much as that of a nation-people. The sovereignty of individuals and the privileging of procedure are less important in the logic of a nation-people, which takes as its supreme charge the sovereignty of the group through a privileging of its traditions and culture and continuity. (Lyons 455)

These latter are tied to “power from the land” (477).

But even when Native invocations of nationalism today do seem in some measure “derivative of European nationalist ideologies” (Lazarus 85), they are nonetheless also marked by post-World War II anticolonial nationalism. And this sort of nationalism, as Neil Lazarus notes, “merely by virtue of its specificity as anticolonial nationalism, [is] obliged to go beyond” (85, my emphasis) the older nationalisms of Europe and the U.S. Anticolonial nationalism, therefore, does not strictly imitate nor does it (in the complex and antinationalist senses of Homi Bhabha) merely mimic European nationalism. Lazarus remarks that “’the people’” — Natives or indigenes — in anticolonial movements around the world “could or would not have spoken the language of nationalism with-
out transforming it at least to some degree into a discourse capable of expressing their own [other-than-European] aspirations” (86). Indeed, as Partha Chatterjee writes, so far as it has been successful, anticolonial nationalism “produces a different discourse. . . . Its problematic forces it relentlessly to demarcate itself from the discourse of colonialism. Thus [anticolonial] nationalist thinking is necessarily a struggle with an entire body of systematic knowledge” (in Lazarus 86). It is this “struggle with an entire body of systematic knowledge” that will lead the anticolonial Native American nationalist to the indigenist who, as we shall see, defines her position precisely in terms of Other bodies of knowledge. And this “struggle” will also lead the anticolonial Native American nationalist as well to the cosmopolitan whose worldliness requires expertise in the translation of Other knowledges, what I shall further describe as anti-imperial translation.

Native American nationalisms—there are many Native nations and as well a “pan-Indian” nationalism—differ from other nationalisms, as we have noted, in that they do not seek the creation of postcolonial states. The “twin pillars of sovereignty,” as Scott Lyons writes, are “the power to self-govern and the affirmation of peoplehood” (456). This means a decrease in the “dependency” of Native nations on the federal government and a greater degree of “autonomy.” But it is not clear just what political forms expanded sovereignty for the people—as the “agency that lays claim to a monopoly of decision-making power,” the “single center of legitimate collective self-knowledge and self-control,” and the sole possessor of “legitimate force” (Ree 87)—might actually take.

As Rennard Strickland writes, “Sovereignty is not a state of salvation that magically erases all troubles. . . . Our challenge—the challenge of Indian law—is to forge the sword of sovereignty into a weapon capable of attacking the basic human problems of Indian people” (52). This “challenge” is currently being met in a variety of ways, but, inasmuch as my focus is on critical nationalism, I will, with all due apologies, excuse myself from the task of specifying these ways further here.

For Native American nationalist criticism, the attempt to extend the political meanings of sovereignty to the realm of culture—to Native literary expression—has also occasionally meant the assertion of a “sovereign” critical stance in the sense of an exclusivist or separatist stance. Thus, the Native artist-activist Loretta Todd writes,

In the modernist period, it was the lands and resources they sought; in the postmodern it is the experiences, the sensation they want. Nothing is authentic or autonomous, therefore everything is fair game. Couple this with a still-vague yearning for meaning and the past and what do you get? Most often, appropriation of “tribal” cultures throughout the world. (74)
To resist this, Cecil King, an Odawa, insists that Native people “be consulted and respected as not only human beings, at the very least, but as independent nations with the right to determine what transpires within our boundaries. We want to say who comes to our world, what they should see, hear, and take away” (118). Speaking to anthropologists, King does not seem to be recommending that anthropologists and those they wish to study consult as equals (what others have recommended), but, rather, that there occur a straightforward turning of the tables: where once anybody came, saw, heard, and took away whatever he or she pleased, now We will say who can come, “what they should see, hear, and take away.” As a title of Vine Deloria’s put it, for now, “We Talk, You Listen.” (But Deloria has never been a separatist.)

King’s position in relation to Native culture and non-Native anthropologists (Native anthropologists, I think, would also be subject to the We of the Tribal Council or Cultural Preservation or Intellectual Property Offices of a given Native nation) has been extended to literature as well, most powerfully of late in the subtitle of Craig Womack’s book, Red on Red, Native American Literary Separatism. Separatism, indeed exclusionism, is the theme of the “dream” King reported in his talk. In his dream, King saw that

all the peoples of the world were together in one place. The place was cold. Everyone was shivering. . . . Then someone said that in the middle of the gathering of Indians, what was left of the fire had been found. It was a very, very small flame. . . . All the Indians banded together to protect the flame . . . adding minuscule shavings from small pieces of wood to feed it.

When others learn that the “The Indians have a fire,” they rush toward it, claiming that “it was our responsibility to share the flame with them.” To them, King replies,

“It is our responsibility to preserve the flame for humanity, and at the moment it is too weak to be shared, but if we are all still and protect the flame it will grow and thrive in the caring hands of those who hold it. In time we can all warm ourselves at the fire. But now we have to nurture the flame or we will all lose the gift.” (119)

Maybe later; but assuredly not now. Perhaps, as Peter Whiteley has developed the matter, this does mean “the end of anthropology”—at Hopi and elsewhere. And perhaps—given the violence done to Native cultures then and now by anthropologists and by those, not only collectors and New Agers but literary scholars as well, who have followed after—it is time to leave the “flame” in the hands of the Indians. As Whiteley puts it, “if anthropologists are not interested in the fates of their subjects, then what use can their knowledge have, either to the community itself or to any genuine ‘science of man’?” (197). But he also offers five propositions (we
will consider them in detail in Chapter 3) which might restructure the relationship between researcher and researched. Nonetheless, it may perhaps be too late for consultation, at least “in the field”; perhaps, at least for a while, separation must be the order of the day.\(^6\)

In any case, it seems to me that so far as any critical account of Native American literature would be anticolonial in its possible effect, that account at this historical juncture must acknowledge and legitimize invocations of the nation in opposition to oppression;\(^7\) it cannot, therefore, stand apart from some form of nationalism. Here I need to repeat that nationalist positions also need other positions, those of indigenists (as persons with different bodies of systematic knowledge) and cosmopolitans (as persons who can translate between different bodies of knowledge), for their anticolonial projects to succeed (for them not to replicate colonialism under another name or to become “neurotic” entities).

Separatism, for literary studies as for all else, is hardly possible in the world today; were it possible, moreover, it would deprive itself of important opportunities. As Michael Geyer has written, “we paralyze ourselves by proscribing thought on humanity, because it has been the mainstay of a Eurocentric imaginary before” (526–27). As Frantz Fanon saw the matter, “national liberation . . . leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history” (in Lazarus 72; Fanon 247–48). “It is at the heart of national consciousness,” Fanon insisted, “that international consciousness lives and grows.” Rather than nationalism as separatism, it is important to theorize Fanon’s alternative nationalism, a “liberationist, anti-imperialist, nationalist internationalism” (Lazarus 72), what Anouar Abdel-Malek has called a “nationalitarian” position. We shall take this up further in the discussion of cosmopolitanism below, and note that varieties of “thought on humanity” and “international consciousness” have been very much present beyond Europe: in Africa, in the Middle East and South Asia, and on the North American continent as well.

I will turn here to the particular sort of inquiries a nationalist orientation to the criticism of Native American literatures might advance with sovereignty at the center of its concerns. Most of the work I know has been with traditional oral narrative of a variety of types; some of this work is now being applied to written work in English by Native Americans.\(^8\)

Because questions about sovereignty, as Elaine Jahner notes in a recent article, are “questions about the boundaries of communities,” it has been possible to demonstrate the way in which communities use the transmission and reception of particular narratives\(^9\) as a way of defining their distinctive, bounded identity. Examining Lakota Stone Boy narratives, Jahner shows how Lakota people assert their “communal identity” (6) by the transmission and reception of these stories over the years. The historical process of selecting certain stories and story versions rather than

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others is, in Jahner’s words, itself “an exercise in sovereignty” (7), that is, the right to independence and self-governance as a nation or people. (This would seem very nearly an illustration of the sort of thing Vizenor, as cited above, has in mind.)

Craig Womack, studying Philip Deere’s Creek migration story and Linda Alexander’s Creek narrative of how turtle got his shell busted, draws conclusions similar to Jahner’s. As Womack states it, “When Creek people assume they have the inherent right to interpret their own literature and history . . . they are setting themselves apart as a nation of people with distinctive worldviews that deserve to be taken seriously. This is an important exercise in sovereignty” (29). To borrow a phrase from Julie Cruikshank, Native communities “negotiate with narrative” to “establish . . . cultural identity,” an identity that undergirds a particular sense of distinctiveness connected to a particular geoscape, and implies autonomy and a full capacity for self-governance. Storytelling, as Cruikshank makes clear, can be understood “as communication-based social action” (2000:155). She examines the way in which “each speaker” at the Yukon International Storytelling Festival, “structures his or her narrative to convey themes of identity by linking social institutions, land, and social history” (58). The sense of the “land” at issue here is, to be sure, spiritual, in a manner we shall soon consider, but it is also legal and political, involving “land ownership” (60) and control—sovereignty. In similar fashion, Womack’s study of Alex Posey’s Fus Fixico letters, a written literature mimetic of speech, shows how they, too, are political in ways that complement their expressive aspects rather than conflicting with them.10

Perhaps this is the place to repeat my sense that (as with Jahner and Cruikshank) the critic or ethnographer need not be a member of the nation in question in order to choose to foreground the issue of sovereignty as a process by which narrating communities define themselves, positioning herself, therefore, among the nationalists.

Let us now look briefly at nationalist preferences for the textual location of Native American literatures. Nationalists tend to see the inclusion of Native American texts in anthologies of American literature as appropriation; they would rather restrict them to anthologies of Native literature only, or, even better, collections of Lakota or Cherokee or Navajo texts. Craig Womack, consistent with his separatist approach, insists on opposing “an argument for inclusion . . . saying with all the bias I can muster that our American canon, the Native literary canon of the Americas, predates their American canon. I see them as two separate canons” (7). In view of a five-hundred-year history of contact, one may wonder about the degree of separation that Womack can actually “see” between Native canons, then or now, and the settler canon, less than two hundred years old and lately open to revision.
For all that I cannot support Womack’s logic of “literary separatism,” I can understand the importance of its rhetorical instantiation: inasmuch as the “spirit” or “essence” of a nation (to invoke a nineteenth-century construction which nonetheless retains a certain residual force today) is expressed through its literature, national sovereignty requires literary sovereignty—as, indeed, literary sovereignty (“our” canon is “separate” from “their” canon) can be taken as evidence of national sovereignty. This is a version of the cultural nationalist position I mentioned above.1

(But Womack, unlike Vizenor, is a political nationalist as well; his nation is Creek.)

Nationalists do seem willing to permit Native American literatures to appear in anthologies of anticolonial “resistance literature,” where nationalism as a force—as in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and elsewhere—is specifically marshaled, although they are concerned—with good reason—lest the very particular nature of Native American resistance be obscured by such comparativism.

Regarding institutional locations for pedagogy, nationalists are leery of Native literatures being taught in the context of general American literature courses or surveys, most likely to be offered by departments of English or American studies in the United States. They would reserve the teaching of Native literature to courses like “The Oral Tradition,” “Contemporary Native Fiction and Poetry,” or, again, “Indigenous Resistance,” most likely to be offered by Native Studies or American Indian Studies departments or programs. Better yet would be courses in “Lakota Literature” or “Navajo Literature,” and perhaps best would be these courses as taught in the tribal colleges, where instruction would proceed in a manner consistent with a particular institution’s understanding of the Lakota or Navajo “way” or worldview.

As for critical methods, nationalists are again wary of “foreign” perspectives of the sort likely to be employed by cosmopolitan critics. Following the lead of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, nationalists insist upon “Reference to the body of nationalistic myths, legends, metaphors, symbols, historical persons and events, writers and their writings [as forming] the basis of the critical discourse that functions in the name of the people; the presence of the Indian nation as cultural force [as] a matter of principle” (Cook-Lynn 84–85). Although this may at first appear clear, even self-evident, I think, rather, that it is badly confused. This is to say that “the Indian nation as cultural force” is not a “presence” that may be discovered in any given text. Rather, it must be determined which cultural “forces” in expressive forms—“myths, legends, metaphors”—might be said to operate in a manner consistent with what is today meant by “the Indian nation”—unless, of course, one categorically insists that anything Lakota “functions in the name of the people,” that all things Lakota of ne-
cessity assert “the presence of the Indian nation as cultural force.” Even
were one to grant this, it still seems unlikely to be the case that all Lakota
“writers and their writings,” all Lakota “historical persons and events” of
necessity function as “cultural force[s]” specifically affirming the people
and the nation. (And there are dangers, as a number of writers have
pointed out, in treating the “people” or the “nation” as a unitary force
or indivisible essence.)

Womack cites this passage of Cook-Lynn’s approvingly, although his
formulation of the matter is more clear. For Womack, the most impor-
tant thing in any approach to Native literatures “should be a study of
the primary culture that produces them” (25). Here, one might ask—as
also with Cook-Lynn—whether culture and nation are synonymous, or
whether one precedes or determines the other. Womack reasonably sug-
gests that a particular body of Native oral and written materials “must
surely provide models for interpretation and principles of literary esthet-
ics” (76), that criticism should be text- or performance-specific. And, in-
deed, his own studies of Creek literature have importantly begun to in-
dicate just what those “models” and “principles” might be. Nonetheless,
it is necessary to point out that the “models” or “principles” any “body”
of “materials” may provide are not inherent in those materials. Critical
models and principles are constructs; like so much else, they are the con-
junctural products of an encounter between an individual mind and a
cultural corpus. Womack has in the past expressed exasperation with ob-
servations such as this, seeing them as hairsplitting designed to miss or
evade the force of his point. To the contrary, however, one can only offer
such observations when one has taken his point with nothing less than
the utmost seriousness.

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From an indigenist perspective, it is not the nation, but the “earth” that
is the source of the values on which a critical perspective must be based.
Thus, in Linda Hogan’s novel Power (1998), Omishto, the narrator, re-
members a time when “The whole earth loved the human people” (229).
Power concludes with Omishto dancing, while “someone sings the song
that says the world will go on living” (235). The “world,” here, is obviously
not the world of nations and nationalisms; rather, it is the animate and
sentient earth. Indigenists look to a particular relation to the earth as
underlying a worldview that can be called traditional or tribal. It is this
worldview that determines one’s perspective on literature as on all else,
often regardless of national allegiances or statuses (e.g., whether one is
or is not a “citizen” of a particular Native nation or one of the people; whether
one’s community has greater or lesser amounts of sovereignty).
These are the “local knowledges” or ethnic epistemes ("ethnicities") that daily and immediately “struggle with an entire body of systematic knowledge” (Chatterjee in Lazarus 86, and above), and it is these knowledges that give to nationalism its values and that underpin a different politics. If it should be the case, as Michael Geyer somberly observes, that “Beyond any metaphysics of place, Western practices effectively and pragmatically constitute global norms” (524), the burden on these knowledges and the politics to which they give rise is substantial indeed.

Winona Stevenson, a Cree woman, has recently quoted her mother as saying to her, “You are of this land, you are Indigenous, and that’s what makes you different from everybody else” (37)—from “ethnic” persons or other Canadians, that is to say. Ward Churchill explains his indigenism as founded “upon the traditions—the bodies of knowledge and corresponding codes of values—evolved over many thousands of years by native peoples the world over” (403). The late Michael Dorris suggested that “a shared consciousness, an inherently identifiable worldview” would have to exist among Native peoples for the general category of “Native American literature” to exist. Quoting Dorris, Louis Owens writes that today, “in spite of the fact that Indian authors write from very diverse tribal and cultural backgrounds, there is to a remarkable degree a shared consciousness and identifiable worldview reflected in novels by American Indian authors” (1992: 20, my emphasis). And José Barreiro affirms that “the principles that guide Native cultures bear a remarkable resemblance to one another” (in Whitt 225). These “principles,” “bodies of knowledge,” and “codes of value,” this “shared consciousness” and “worldview,” as I have noted, are said to derive from the special relationship to the land that indigenous peoples everywhere are presumed to share—again, regardless of their political relation to the dominant settler states that surround them.

In these regards, we may consider another quotation from Stevenson that is typical of indigenist discourse. She writes that indigenous people are spiritually attached to [a particular] place . . . we never left the bones of our ancestors behind. Every hill, mountain, river, coulee, and forest has ancient stories that tell us how we are related to it and to each other” (42).

The latter part of Stevenson’s statement, as Keith Basso has shown for the Western Apache and others have shown for other peoples, would seem to be accurate—although, as Cruikshank has made clear, land ownership “claims made by adjacent First Nations inevitably overlap, forcing communities into competition with one another” (2000: 53). This is to say that the “ancient stories” a mountain, river, or hill may tell one Native narrating community may not be exactly the same story it tells another.
Meanwhile, the first part of Stevenson’s statement can only be true, in point of fact, for long-time residents of northeast Africa. Although they might literally claim “never” to have “left the bones of [their] ancestors behind,” the historical record indicates that almost everyone has come from somewhere else (indeed, from there). Thus the question—a highly political question—arises of just how long it takes to become indigenous. In Hawai‘i, for example, some claim indigenousness after seven generations of residence, while others would require 150. In the southwest, the Hopi claim to indigenousness rests on a presence dating back some hundred generations. But Navajo people in place for perhaps thirty generations can hardly imagine themselves as anything but indigenous to the landscape they know so well, and to which they are “spiritually attached.”

Considerations of this sort would make indigenousness as defined by literal relation to landscape more difficult to achieve for those Native writers who grew up in the cities, or far from the home-places of their people. I note this not to impugn anyone’s claim to indigenousness, but only to indicate the complexities of the issue—and to suggest that some indigenists (along with some nationalists) could equally well be called “cosmopolitan patriots,” an apparently oxymoronic category proposed by Kwame Anthony Appiah, to which we shall return. All three of the positions I have named are imbricated, but this observation should in no way be thought to undermine the distinctive and necessary claim of the nationalists to speak on behalf of the sovereignty of native nations, nor of the indigenists to speak on behalf of those whose knowledge differs.

Indigenists base their politics on the epistemology and ethics of their geocentric worldview. As Arif Dirlik has written, the indigenist’s insistence on a special relationship to the land as the basis for indigenous identity is not merely spiritual, an affirmation of an ecological sensibility, . . . [it] also calls for a transformation of the spatial arrangements of colonialism or postcolonialism. Indigenism . . . challenges . . . the system of economic relations that provides the ultimate context for social and political relationships: capitalist or state socialist. (21)

Indigenist geogenic knowledge, as I have said, may thus contribute to the nationalist’s “struggle with an entire body of knowledge”—the knowledge that sustains colonialism—and provide a basis on which to construct both an-Other discourse and, as Dirlik claims, an-Other set of “social and political relations.” It is the combination of indigenous “local knowledge” and the knowledge produced by turning a European-derived nationalism against colonialism that gives to Native nationalism its positivity, rendering it more than a force against or in-reaction-to. And just as the nationalist needs the indigenist for her anticolonial project, so, too, does
the indigenist need the nationalist, for it is only in terms of the nation that “the spatial arrangements of colonialism or postcolonialism” can be transformed in such a way as to respond to local needs.

Non-Natives will not, of course, be able to claim an “indigenous identity,” but some may indeed serve to help expound indigenous understandings. I return, here, to Peter Whiteley’s sense—he is speaking specifically of Hopi people, but his remarks pertain more broadly—that “what is badly needed in ethnographic description are Hopi perspectives—social, cultural, critical, historical, ecological, and so on” (in Biolsi and Zimmerman 195). Rather than just “speaking for” Hopis, “anthropologists should start explaining to their audience, in a socially constructive way, how Hopis situate, evaluate, and feel about their actions in contemporary perspective”; and, regarding Hopi ritual, Whiteley’s specific subject, they should convey to their audience “why privacy needs to be respected, why many accounts of ritual are subversive, and that Hopis want members of the dominant society to appreciate and learn from Hopi practice but without desecrating it” (196).

As we shall discuss the matter in Chapter 3, this will involve complex acts of translation of a sort that can lead to the radical transformation of the translator’s own sense of his or her “proper” speech or “native language.” I am suggesting—with full awareness of a certain utopianism or overreach—that the non-Native who begins by learning to understand the language and so the knowledge of another and who then attempts to “explain” it by translation, may occasionally or partly find his own tongue changed by it. This sort of translation, what I have several times called anti-imperial translation, is very different from acts of translation historically, which, as Eric Cheyfitz has powerfully shown, have been acts of appropriation. If an older universalism once engaged in imperial translation, perhaps a newer cosmopolitanism may engage in anti-imperial translation.

Outside a postcolonial, responsible anthropology, although by no means independent of it, we may also note the extraordinary development of “ecocriticism.” Ecocritics may be persons with no claim to indigenousness as an identity but who nonetheless work from a deep sense of what David Abrams names the sensuous “surround”14 as a source of vision and value. And we shall later speak of that cosmopolitanism which has shifted from an emphasis on “world citizenship” to an emphasis on world humanity or an ethics of earth, what Richard Falk calls “globalization-from-below” (59). This, as already will be apparent, is in no way a cosmopolitanism committed to overriding indigenous knowledges.

Indigenists would probably disperse Native literary expression among anthologies and departmental or institutional locations. Fourth and Fifth World anthologies comprising literature from indigenous persons...
around the globe would be suitable, in their eyes, for Native literature, or anthologies like *The Indigenous Voice*. Like many nationalists, indigenists would also include Native literary expression in anthologies of “resistance” literature, foregrounding epistemological difference and value rather than the national category. But, again, this is a matter of emphasis. The nationalist struggle for power is a struggle for power in the interest of a different kind of life, based—to say this yet once more—on different understandings, and, as noted above, this different kind of life can only express itself at the level of the people, whatever (nonstatist) political form Native nation-peoples of the twenty-first century may construct in order to materialize an expanded sovereignty.

As for courses in which Native literatures might best appear, indigenists might offer such things as “Epistemological Pluralism,” “Nonanthropocentrism,” or “Environmental Ethics.” So far as critical methods are concerned, indigenists would turn to a number of recent efforts to consider such matters as how and to what degree language use in the English texts of some Native writers might parallel usage in tribal languages—this, of course, for writers who speak or know a tribal language. Or how imagery and description in a given text—its reference to colors, numbers, plants, animals—might reflect specifics of one or another traditional culture. Similarly, texts by Native writers have begun to be examined to see whether and how their constructions of the self or person, the family or community, or, indeed, the meaning and function of gift giving and exchange might derive in significant measure from traditional, indigenous understandings of these matters. Julie Cruikshank’s *Life Lived like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* is a model of such work with contemporary traditional people.

* * *

Just as Winona Stevenson’s mother encouraged her to “remember that you are of this land,” so did Kwame Anthony Appiah’s father urge his children to “Remember that you are citizens of the world” (1997: 91), a cosmopolitan perspective. The “world” invoked by contemporary cosmopolitans has a long history, going back to strands of the Classical and early Christian traditions as these are revived in the Renaissance and substantially developed in Enlightenment thought.

Before going further, it must be noted that Anthony Appiah and his father, of course, encountered concepts of the “world” in their own part of it, in Asante, and we must note the existence of what might be called comparative cosmopolitanisms, the development of concepts like worldliness, universality, and internationalism apart from or prior to Europe’s. I am thinking in particular of Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land*, which
tells of commercial relations, friendships, and rivalries from the twelfth century among South Asians and Egyptians, Jews, and North Africans, among others in the Indian Ocean trade—until the early sixteenth century when the Portuguese arrived and “declared a proprietorial right over the Indian Ocean: since none of the peoples who lived around it had thought to claim ownership of it before their arrival” (288). Many of these people surely must have been, in a variety of ways, cosmopolitans before Europe.

And I am thinking of Barry O’Connell’s sense “that indigenous peoples in North America might very likely have developed their own forms of the cosmopolitan.” O’Connell cites the “extensive trading networks . . . that connected many different cultures not only within geographic regions but across vast distances.” He adds that

In at least some parts of the country affiliation to a political entity was by choice so that people at least sometimes seem to have moved from one political unit to another. . . . Crossing cultural lines had to have happened and even though the number of “cosmopolitans” may have been small, they surely existed as mediators, traders, translators, etc. (personal communication, 4/4/01)

A great deal of further work is needed on this subject, work that is necessary to contextualize what I roughly present here, an account—lengthy enough and yet sketchy nonetheless—of cosmopolitanism’s history in Europe and the United States.

The Classical origins of cosmopolitanism derive not from Aristotle’s chauvinist ethnocentrism but from Cynics and Stoics—from Diogenes, for example, who claimed that his true polis was the cosmos, making him cosmopolites, a citizen of the world. Thomas Schlereth’s observation that “Stoicism . . . became a response to an immense world in which the insulation of the small city-state was stripped away and individuals had to come to terms with and find a place in an enormously enlarged environment” (xviii) seems applicable to the situation of individuals in many of the nation-states of the world today. Cosmopolitanism in the ancient world, however, also derives from Alexander the Great (said to have visited Diogenes), thus linking world citizenship to world conquest or imperialism, a linkage which we shall note also persists today in what Michael Geyer calls “corporate globalism” (525) and Richard Falk terms “globalization-from-above” (59) or “negative cosmopolitanism” (60). In the Christian tradition, Augustine’s cosmopolitanism bases itself on the recognition that all are citizens of the “City of God”; we are all brothers and sisters in Adam, and we may be brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is in part the discovery of the “new world” in the fifteenth century that provokes or enables a revival of cosmopolitanism. As in the time of Rome (and in our own day), sudden and substantially increased local
awarenesses that the world is very large and nearer at hand than one had
thought tends to lead, on the one hand, to defending the primacy of Us
(cf. *The Tempest* and today, in another register, the Ku Klux Klan), and,
on the other, to great curiosity about Them. Important figures in Renais-
sance cosmopolitanism are Pico della Mirandola, Erasmus, Francis Bacon—Benjamin Franklin’s idol in envisioning a worldwide brotherhood of
science—and Montaigne, one of the “fathers” of anthropological cultural
relativism (cf. his essay “On the Cannibals”). Eighteenth-century cosmo-
politans thus were, as Schlereth has noted, already a third generation.
Perhaps there already was a tradition of cosmopolitanism in America as
good; Scott Lyons speaks of “the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois League” as
a “more cosmopolitan example of a nation-people,” quoting Oren Lyons,
who writes that the “Haudenosaunee were—and remain—a multicultural
nation-people” (Lyons 455).

As the nineteenth century approaches, Rousseau will champion love of
country as a virtue against a cosmopolitanism already fading as “an overly
intellectualized and philosophically abstract political norm” (Schlereth
111)—as, of course, some still regard it today. In the nineteenth century,
European nationalisms overwhelm the cosmopolitan ideal (as twentieth-
century nationalisms would as well), urging a movement, in David Hol-
linger’s phrase, “from species to ethnus” (51) and, significantly, from
culture to race. The racialization of the nation (*natio*, to be born) as a
filiative entity of blood-brothers and -sisters, is a major development of
nineteenth-century Europe and America, whose legacy retains potency
in the present. (We will examine some of the workings of “Indian blood”
in *Cogeweew* in Chapter 4, and of “race” in *Indian Killer* in Chapter 5.)

But the United States has always been a civic not a *volkisch* nation; to
speak of “my fellow Americans” is to speak of an affiliative aggregation
of (to borrow the terms of the French Revolution) *citoyens* and *citoyennes*.
Even in the United States, however, the nineteenth century was not espe-
cially hospitable to cosmopolitanism. Noah Webster’s dictionary, pub-
lished in 1828 (the year of Andrew Jackson’s election to the presidency
as champion of the “West” and conqueror of “savage” Indians), defines
“cosmopolitan” in negatives only: “the cosmopolitan ‘has no fixed resi-
dence’ and is ‘nowhere a stranger’” (in Bryant 280). Nonetheless, in the
writing of Thoreau, in that of Herman Melville, and, it should be noted,
in the work of the Pequot preacher William Apess on behalf of an anti-
racist union of Christian fellowship, a universalist or cosmopolitan light
still shines.

Cosmopolitanism was kept alive in mid-nineteenth-century Europe in
Marx’s appeal to the workers of the world, and—to select one important
instance—it makes a return, later in the century, under the sign of the
*intellectual*. The intellectual, Ross Posnock notes, was an “offense” to the
nationalist. Intellectual was the name given in France, in 1898, to “those like Zola, who dared speak for universal rather than French values during the hysterical chauvinism unleashed by the Dreyfus trial” (1997: 324). The long-standing charge against the cosmopolitan, that she was rootless and so potentially a betrayer of the nation, was now leveled at intellectuals like Zola, who understood their loyalties to be to the republic of justice first, and to the French or any other nation only afterward. Suspicion about the cosmopolitan’s relation to a nation-state, or, indeed, a nation—people and its claim to sovereignty, persists today.

Here I want briefly to return to Anthony Appiah’s construction, “cosmopolitan patriotism,” which I called an apparent oxymoron above. This is because Appiah’s understanding of patriotism separates it from nationalism. For him, patriotism is a “sentiment” that, unlike nationalism, “can be made consistent with different political ideologies” (1997:619, my emphasis). He writes that his father, Joe Appiah, believed that “there was no point to roots if you couldn’t take them with you” (618). And Joe Appiah’s son, Kwame Anthony Appiah, believes that one can “be cosmopolitan—celebrating the variety of human cultures; [and] rooted—loyal to one society (or a few) that you count as home” (633). Again, this loyalty is patriotic but it is not nationalistic.

Appiah’s particular loyalty or patriotism is to a society that encourages us “to love our country as the embodiment of principles, as a means to the attainment of moral ends,” that might “enable a certain kind of human freedom” (1997: 628), in particular, the “form of freedom” invented by the French and American revolutions. But similar social principles, says Appiah, have “roots in Asante” (636), the society that he and his father “count as home” (633). Yet if patriotism is tied to place only as place is committed to principle, then “patriotism” hardly needs to be reconciled with cosmopolitanism because it has already been defined as cosmopolitanism—even the intellectual cosmopolitanism of Zola, as I have construed his position. Appiah’s cosmopolitan patriot is loyal to the principle first and to the “home place” only as it embodies or adheres to that principle. This sort of love of country is not what one usually means by “patriotism”—although it is exactly what one has to mean by it if one is, in fact, to see it as consistent with a cosmopolitan position. Appiah’s father—and Appiah himself?—can only be a “rooted cosmopolitan,” or a “cosmopolitan patriot” because he believes the place or places to which he is loyal are places that “enable . . . certain kind[s] of human freedom.”

Would Native persons loyal to other principles embodied or adhered to in other places also qualify as cosmopolitan patriots? Would it be better to call them simply cosmopolitans? Might they not also be indigenists? If they are loyal to their nation right or wrong, then they are obviously nationalists—or patriots in the narrow sense of the term.
Patriots and nationalists who are loyal to their country even when its principles do not “enable . . . certain kind[s] of human freedom,” may tend to be scornful of cosmopolitans who can only be selectively patriotic. And yet, in my view, cosmopolitans will probably find themselves supporting not only nationalitarian forms of nationalism, but also—if warily—most nationalisms directed against an oppressive colonial order. Being on the left, as Albert Memmi has described it, like being cosmopolitan as I have described it, “means not only accepting and assisting the national liberation of the peoples, but also includes political democracy and freedom, economic democracy and justice, rejection of racist xenophobia and universality, material and spiritual progress” (34).

In supporting nationalist movements, Memmi continues, leftists, like cosmopolitans, must understand that we are “perhaps aiding the birth of a social order in which there is no room for a leftist as such, at least in the near future“(34). Nonetheless, I believe leftists and cosmopolitans must choose what Richard Rorty has called the principle of solidarity, a political morality, over the epistemological morality of objectivity. As Tobin Siebers glosses these terms, “we can support the truth”—or what we believe to be the truth—“or we can support our neighbor. To choose the first is to be objective; to choose the second is to support solidarity” (47). Cosmopolitans will choose solidarity knowing full well that those whom we have chosen to support may not always be overjoyed to find us marching with them.

But this is because cosmopolitans also understand, as Richard Falk makes clear, that to believe there can be a simple distinction between nationalism and cosmopolitanism today “inevitably overlooks the originality of our political circumstances in the late twentieth century—an originality that makes both poles problematic” (Falk 54) In the early twenty-first century, the “original” or special condition of “our political circumstances” is the predominance of “regional and global market forces” operating as “a structural and defining attribute of the current phase of international history” (55). Thus, as Falk unsentimentally acknowledges,

To project a visionary cosmopolitanism as an alternative to nationalist patriotism without addressing the subversive challenge of the market-driven globalism currently being promoted by transnational corporations and banks, as well as currency dealers and casino capitalists [!] is to risk indulging a contemporary form of fuzzy innocence. (57)

But surely the nationalist patriot must also not indulge in innocent visions either.

In much the same way, Immanuel Wallerstein comments that
What is needed . . . is not to learn that we are citizens of the world, but that we occupy particular niches in an unequal world, and that being disinterested and global [cosmopolitan?] on one hand and defending one's narrow interests [national?] on the other are not opposites but positions combined in complicated ways. Some combinations are desirable [to “help create a more democratic, egalitarian world”], others are not. Some are desirable here but not there, now but not then. Once we have learned this we can begin to cope intelligently with our social reality. (124)

In these regards, Falk continues,

extensions of cosmopolitan democracy suggest a possible reconciliation of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. If global economic governance structures are reoriented to express a kind of equilibrium between market-oriented (globalization-from-above) and people-oriented (globalization-from-below), then it is possible that political space will be recreated to enable the reemergence of the humane state. (Falk 59)

Or, as in the Native American struggle for sovereignty, some Other polity expressive of the nation-people rather than the nation-state. This once more seems to mean that cosmopolitans and nationalists will have to make common cause. For, as Neil Lazarus has written, “it is only on the terrain of the nation that an articulation between cosmopolitan intellectualism and popular consciousness can be forged” (91). Cosmopolitans and nationalists will—it must be repeated—thus join with indigenists: because it is only through local knowledges that “popular consciousness” can express itself. Cosmopolitan techniques of anti-imperial translation are necessary to engage with “popular consciousness,” and cosmopolitanism, in this reading, is the critical perspective that is foremost concerned with fulfilling the “potentialities of both nationalism and radical intellectualism” (Lazarus 92).

* * *

At the most basic level, cosmopolitan perspectives on Native American literatures read them in relation to other minority or subaltern literatures elsewhere in the late-colonial or postcolonial world; cosmopolitan criticism must always in some degree be comparative. With traditional oral performance, for example, the cosmopolitan critic, like the rigorous nationalist, will insist upon the need to develop competence in the particular language from which the text of the original performance derives and the culture that formed and received that performance. The cosmopolitan critic, thus, would not dispute Craig Womack’s observation that Creek literature derives from a “geographically specific Creek landscape
and the language and stories that are born out of that landscape” (20). But the cosmopolitan critic might also wish to understand things about Creek (or Ho-Chunk or Tuscarora or Wendat) literature that could only be answered by informed comparison with other texts or traditional performances—in particular, those of tribal neighbors (to whom the landscape, as we have noted, may tell other stories) or of tribal peoples in a variety of landscapes (and with similar and different histories). For the earliest Native American written literature—autobiographies, novels, poetry—the cosmopolitan critic will attempt to allow the text to stand, in Barry O’Connell’s title for his fine edition of the writings of William Apess, on its “own ground,” without failing to consider relevant texts that are similarly and differently grounded.

The postcolonial perspective seems especially promising for the written literature of some indigenous peoples over the last thirty-some years. It might prove fruitful, for example, to examine the ways in which Native nationalism—a nationalism, as we have noted, that does not seek to express itself in the form of a state but that does link specific land claims and a people’s experience to principles of sovereignty—operates differently or perhaps in some regards similarly in resisting colonial force to other anticolonial nationalisms elsewhere.

The cosmopolitan critic, as I have noted, can agree with Womack in believing that criticism of Native literatures “should be a study of the primary culture that produces them” (20, my emphasis), without, however, sharing his separatist conclusion that studying the effect of the meeting between that “primary culture” and other cultures is of little concern. Womack’s distinction between “our canon” and “their canon,” I must repeat, is hardly clear after five hundred years of contact.

Gerald Vizenor has explored the possibilities of Native cosmopolitanism in his fiction and criticism, celebrating the once pitied, or despised “halfbreed” as the “mixedblood” or “crossblood,” and transforming the lowly “mongrel” into a hero of comic invention.20 In a similar spirit, Louis Owens writes that his own important study of contemporary Native American fiction, Other Destinies, is “For mixedbloods, the next generation.” I might also cite W. S. Penn, who subtitled his recent collection of autobiographical essays, As We Are Now, “mixblood essays on race and identity.” These Native writers—along with Patricia Penn Hilden, Diane Glancy, Wendy Rose, Leslie Marmon Silko (in Almanac of the Dead and, now, Gardens in the Dunes), and Sherman Alexie (on alternate days21), among others—are all exploring different constructions of (to take a term once more from Vizenor) “post-Indian”22 culture and politics.

Might this post-Indianness be seen as a form of cosmopolitan patriotism in that post-Indians are loyal to the principle of the collective good of the people (rather than “human freedom”), and to the principles Vizenor...
has called “continuance” and “survivance” wherever they may be found or carried? Although Craig Womack is a Creek in Canada who insightfully discusses Joy Harjo as a Creek in Arizona, I think Womack would consider himself and Harjo as nationalists away from home rather than cosmopolitan patriots. But obviously the distinctions can get very fine at this level of inquiry.

Sherman Alexie, as I have noted, has mocked mixedblood identification as fussy and pretentious; an Indian is an Indian, Alexie has said—and an Indian, as we shall see further, is not a Native American. Louis Owens and Gerald Vizenor have more than once been Alexie’s targets; and yet the mixedbloods in their books are nothing if not Indian. Womack sensibly wonders whether “identifying as mixedblood, rather than as a part of a tribal nation, diminishes sovereignty” (in Penn 32). But Alexie, as we shall see, is neither tribal nor, in the usual meanings of the term, nationalist.

Vizenor’s post-Indian mixedbloods, however, have values that are tribal (indigenist?) but not national. This tribalism, we might say, is “traditional” rather than traditional, with the inverted commas signaling a self-consciousness in the former that the latter, by definition, does not possess. Womack has defined contemporary Native traditionalism—what I have written as “traditionalism”—as “anything that is useful to Indian people in retaining their values and worldviews no matter how much it deviates from what people did one or two hundred years ago” (42).

Womack is trying to shift the balance of opinion that once (but not for well over half a century!) took anything that deviated “from what people did one or two hundred years ago” as evidence of a tragic fall from the traditional. But, as Marshall Sahlins has pointed out, “‘tradition’ often appears in modern history as a culturally specific mode of change” (1995: 380, my emphasis). After first encountering invaders from more complex societies, Sahlins writes, “The first commercial impulse of the people is not to become just like us but more like themselves” (388), and the indigenization of modernity on the part of small-scale societies around the globe has been well documented. Nonetheless, as Sahlins continues, the advent of the colonial state interrupts and alters the possibilities of experiencing change as continuity. In Antonio Gramsci’s useful distinction, the question is whether dominance has also achieved hegemony, the internalization on the part of the colonized of the worldview of the colonizer. In a great many cases—many of them quite surprising cases—it has turned out that peoples suffering intensive dominance have still managed to keep “their values and worldviews,” in Womack’s phrase, remarkably intact.

And yet Womack’s “no matter how much” is troublesome; past a certain point, deviations from what people did a hundred years ago are simply too great to be “useful” “in retaining [older] values and worldviews.” One
cannot say “no matter how much,” for too much will no longer enrich “native self-conceptions” (Sahlins 1995: 386) or be consistent even with traditionalism-as-change. Meanwhile, it does seem to me that the mixed-blood Indian characters in the work of a number of authors (Vizenor, Penn, Hilden, Glancy, Alexie, Owens, and others I haven’t mentioned) are still best spoken of as Indians—I am agreeing here with Womack, in spite of his “no matter how much”—rather than as figures of hybridity. We will return to this issue in Chapter 5.

Critics both Native and non-Native who work from the cosmopolitan perspective can, like the nationalists, fully acknowledge the importance of the issue of sovereignty in the political struggle of colonized peoples all over the world and at home. Anticolonial cosmopolitans, as I have several times indicated, will wholeheartedly support nationalitarian nationalists, and, although somewhat warily, they—we—will also, in the name of solidarity, likely support (most of) those who instantiate the nation as synonymous with the people, both of which are aligned against colonialism. In the same way, cosmopolitans both Native and non-Native will also support indigenists whose traditional, place-specific values and principles constitute the local knowledge, the epistemological basis for an Other discourse, to be used against “the entire system” of colonial knowledge. (I argue for the value of indigenous Native historiography in Chapter 3.) The cosmopolitan critic knows that a commitment to sovereignty, the home place, and the oral and written traditions of their tribal nations are “roots” that all or almost all Native American writers will choose to carry wherever they may travel, or indeed, wherever they may dwell.

Cosmopolitans wish to see Native American literatures not appropriated by but included in anthologies of American literature. Cosmopolitans would also site Native literatures in resistance anthologies which would add to the category of national resistance to colonialism writing expressive of the resistance of incarcerated persons, of gays and lesbians, or people in concentration or internment camps—any literature directed against oppression and dominance. (I have noted the legitimate concern of nationalists and indigenists that such expansion might obscure the very particular situation of colonized Native peoples around the world. They are wary—with good reason—of any universalizing of resistance.)

As for pedagogical location, cosmopolitans would disperse the instruction of Native American literatures widely among departments of English, American Literature, American Studies, Cultural Studies, American Indian Studies, and Native American Studies. Although anthropology’s history as the handmaiden of colonialism is well known, that history is not binding on the present, as it need not be on the future. Cosmopolitans, although fully aware of the animus against anthropology still expressed by any number of Native writers today, can nonetheless
support the teaching of Native American literatures in departments of
anthropology (at least in some departments of anthropology) in courses
like “Representation and Self-Representation,” “Ethnography and Lit-
erature,” or “Postcolonial Literatures.”

Cosmopolitans of every sort can agree with indigenists on the impor-
tance of reading and teaching Native American texts—Black Elk and
John Neihardt’s Black Elk Speaks, N. Scott Momaday’s The Way to Rainy
Mountain, Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony and Almanac of the Dead, the
poems of Simon Ortiz, Linda Hogan’s Solar Storms and Power, among
many others—which forcefully present non-Western worldviews. Cosmo-
politans are interested in exploring how “seeing with the Native eye” might relativize Western perspectives and whether or how that might
alter aspects of Western epistemology and ethics. Cosmopolitan criticism
is, in these many regards, what I have elsewhere called “ethnocriticism,”
and, as I have said here, it is importantly dependent on attempts at anti-
imperial translation.

A cosmopolitan ethnocriticism will not rule out a priori any method-
ology because of its race, gender, or national origin. Recognizing the
primary need to attend to the terms and categories Native people use
for themselves, the cosmopolitan critic may nonetheless carefully draw
upon “structuralism,” or “deconstruction,” Marx, Freud, Bakhtin, or
feminism(s) for insights into a Native American text. Without doubt, the
application—one might well say imposition—of these “Western” or foreign
perspectives to Native texts can be yet one more instance of colonialism
directed against the Native. This danger is very real. Several recent writers
have noted the possibility of a second erasure of Native agency in this re-
spect, in Julie Cruikshank’s words, “first by colonial forces, then by post-
colonial analyses” (2000:139), ostensibly sympathetic to Natives but quite
careless of their actual desires. But this is only to say yet again that cos-
mopolitan criticism must be open to the work of indigenists as much as
to the work of nationalists if it is genuinely to be responsible.