Introduction to Native American & Indigenous Studies

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Agenda

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Week 1 – Keywords: Indigeneity/Indigenous, Native

Week 2 – Keyword: Land

Week 3 – Keyword: Sovereignty

Week 4 – Keywords: Nation, nationhood

Week 5 – Keywords: blood, tradition

Week 6 – Keywords: colonialism, decolonization

Week 7 – Keyword: Survivance

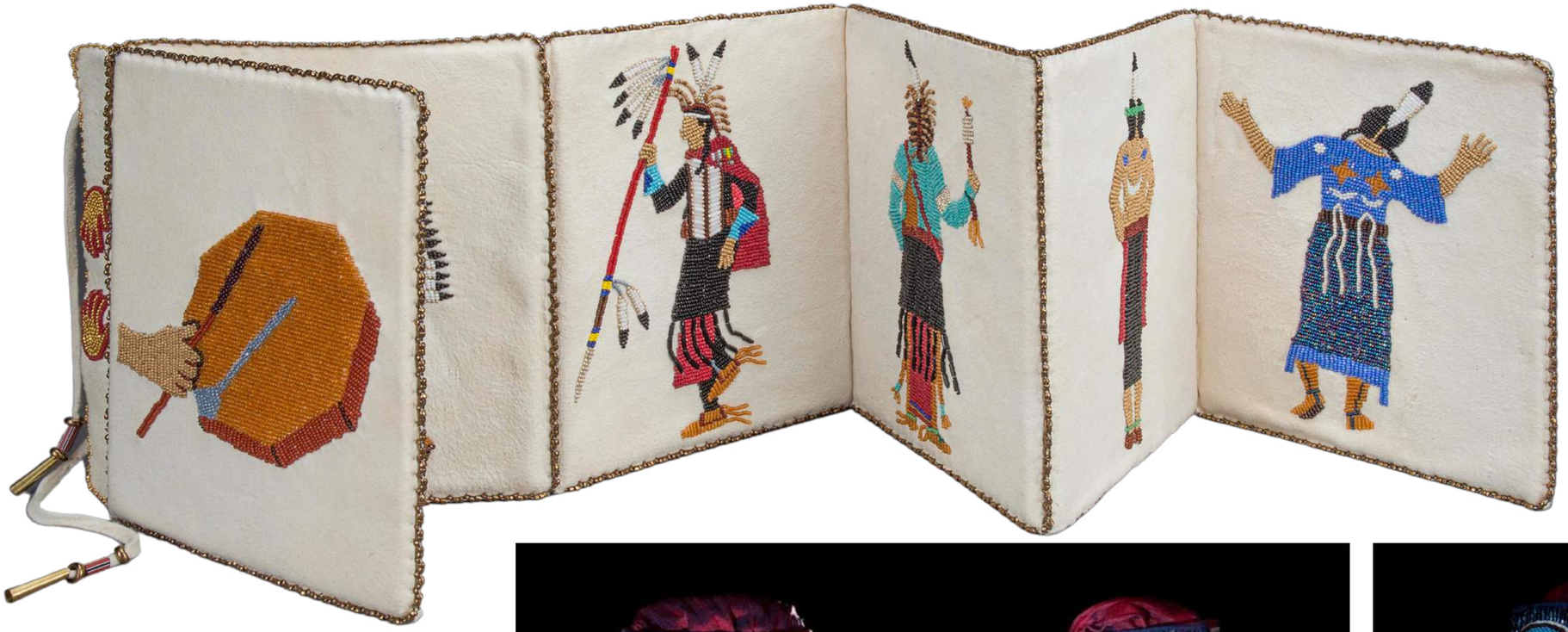
Week 8 – Keyword: Knowledge

Week 9 – Keywords: Literature, Art

Week 10 – Keywords: Queer, 2-Spirit or, previously (derogatory), berdache

Week 11 – Keyword: Resistance

Week 12 – Keyword: Race



Kiowa Ceremonial Dance: Beaded Book
(2005)

Kiowa Ladies: Beaded Heel Shoes
(2017)

Teri Greeves
(b. 1970) **(Kiowa)**

William Apess

- Between 1829 and 1836 William Apess was highly visible as an activist, lecturer, and author. A Methodist minister and mixed-blood Pequot, Apess was an outspoken advocate for Indian reform— education, christianization, temperance, and equal treatment under the law. Long a controversial figure in his native New England, Apess also briefly drew the eyes of the nation.
- In his *Eulogy on King Philip, as Pronounced at the Odeon, in Federal Street, Boston* Apess variously identifies himself as Pequot, (pan-)Indian, colored, Christian, male, (first) American, and embodiment of the Enlightenment notion of the "universal human"; he declares, "My image is of God; I am not a beast" (278). Like other overtly political texts advocating radical - perhaps revolutionary - social change (Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* and King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" may be parallels), Apess's *Eulogy* must confirm existing alliances, construct new ones, and, at the same time, reinforce the oppositions originally necessitating his plea. Definitive categories (racial, philosophical, religious, political, personal) disintegrate and coalesce by turns; throughout, they are at once applicable, useful, and contingent.

William Apess

- In *Eulogy*, Apess is undeniably an Indian author addressing a non-Indian audience; he is simultaneously - as an advocate of Christian American Enlightenment humanism - a man and a Christian urging like-minded others to retrain their sights on shared goals.
- With the *Eulogy*, Apess makes a strong statement of cultural nationalism for Indian peoples and indicts whites' treatment of Indians both past and present.
- While the Eulogy's surfaces treat history, its undercurrents address race. Whether he is speaking as revisionist historian, Indian activist, or Christian minister, Apess's aims are always political, and to wage politics in Apess's day was to struggle with racialist ideologies. The years when Apess published, 1829-36, are precisely those delimiting Andrew Jackson's presidency - key years for American expansion, critical years for the fate of indigenous populations.
- In his book on the origins of racial Anglo-Saxonism, Reginald Horsman marks 1815-50 as the period when white American society explicitly rejected American Indians (190). From the eighteenth century flowering of interest in human origins to Apess's day, the History of the Human Race had gradually metamorphosed into the History of Human Races. The period's intellectuals attacked the Enlightenment belief in a common, inherently perfectable, and inalienably equal humankind, a belief that had explained observable, superficial differences in terms of environmental factors. Increasingly, scientists, social philosophers, historians, and charlatans cited arguments and empirical evidence as proof of innate differences among the "races of man." Historical studies lauding the Anglo-Saxons' transcendent achievements throughout time began to be understood as a promise of things to come: Anglo-Saxons were destined to rule the world; other races must either bow or disappear. In the early nineteenth century, this certifiable racial destiny had begun to be used to rationalize social conditions and justify political policy.

Nation for Native Americans & NAIS

- Within Native studies, the word nation is often used to signify a Native American tribe. Closely related to other critical concepts such as *nationalism*, *nationhood*, and *nation-state*, the definition of nation in Native studies is not contested, but what nation is supposed to represent, and in turn how that nation envisions a future for itself and how it should be treated by other nations, continues to be robustly debated.
- Nation has come to stand in for any grouping of peoples who share a culture that can be traced to a particular tribe, band, or land base. Generally replacing the term *tribe*, nation is imagined as a term freighted with authority and being more accurate, reflecting the political structure and organizational principles of Native social and cultural experience. (One of the earliest advocates of the term nation was early nineteenth century Pequot writer William Apess, who understood Native peoples as belonging to "nations" that were distinct from the surrounding colonial state).
- In *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, Vine Deloria Jr. was one of the first Indian intellectuals to refer to tribes as nations, as a way to differentiate the status of Native peoples from racial minorities and to raise "their claims of in de pen dence on the world scene."
    - Deloria did not advocate complete independence from the United States but rather that Native nations have the right to negotiate their relationship with the United States on an equal footing.
    - In the wake of Indian termination and relocation, nation and nationalism became the means of asserting indigenous sovereignty of the same status as the sovereignty asserted by the United States.

Nation for Native American Studies

- Since the height of Red Power in the 1970s, the increasingly conservative Supreme Court's federalist approach has granted increased authority to state governments while simultaneously diminishing tribal authority. In light of this trend, Jeff Corntassell and Richard Witmer argue that the concept of indigenous nationhood is an important corrective to what they term the "forced federalism" of Native tribes. Part of asserting indigenous nationhood, they argue, is that Native nations must act like nations. Rather than focus their political energy on lobbying federal and state governments, they need to develop their own po liti cal and economic systems independently of their surrounding settler state.
- Michael Witgen, by contrast, has challenged the presumption that claims to nationhood are necessarily anticolonial. In his book Infinity of Nations, he contends that Native collectivities, in particular, the Anishinaabe, were founded on alternative logics that were not based on bounded territories or fixed notions of communities. Native collectivities later become fixed into "nations" as a means for the colonial state to more easily administer colonial projects in relation to "subordinate political units." Thus, Witgen's work suggests that indigenous nationhood, rather than serving as an antidote to colonialism, is actually part of the colonial process.
    - Witgen's critique of Native nationalism is that the concept of "nation" is generally tied to state power. His analysis suggests that Native collectivities can be, and were, ordered under different logics that are not statist. His critique points to a larger conversation within Native studies about the relationship between nationalism and the nation-state. Within Western academic discourse there is a wealth of writing about nationhood that views nations as a product of industrialization and modernity. In this conception, of course, nations are attached to state power. Nation itself is a Western construction that is often associated with nation-states

Against the Nation in NAIS

- Native studies has been especially invested in documenting and acknowledging these articulations of nation that are not tied to the nation- state. Numerous scholars assert that Indian Nations should strive to be the opposite of nation- states in that their goals should be focused on creating communities based on interrelatedness and responsibility. Native feminists have been very vocal in their critiques of the nationstate, warning that the nation- state reproduces heteropatriarchical forms of belonging that naturalize hierarchies. This has the effect of recreating indigenous nations as a mirror image of the heteronormative state. Similarly, as Lori Brooks notes, nationalism should be based on the multifaceted families of Native peoples and their nations, not on exclusionary practices of nation- states.
- This distinction is more fully elaborated in Taiaiake Alfred's *Peace, Power, Righteousness* (1999). Alfred advocates an ideology of Native nationalism, one that rejects European forms of governance and is dedicated to the reestablishment of Native systems of governance that promote the values of indigenous culture.
    - Alfred proposes that Native nationalism is preferable to Native sovereignty; he sees sovereignty as necessarily invoking colonialist forms of state governance.
    - For Alfred, indigenous forms of governance work against the colonial dominance that disempowers Native communities. Alfred's fear is that the very nation-states that are responsible for Native genocide will recolonize Natives in the pre sent and use Natives to legitimize the state's assimilationist measures that aim to incorporate indigenous nations and lands
    - Thus, for Alfred, decolonization is only possible when we build indigenous forms of governance, and in order to do that, Natives must return to ancestral values

19th Cent. nation-building

- In what is sometimes called the long nineteenth century, the United States—bent on making sure it was taken seriously on the global stage—had begun a strategy of nation-building.
- Nation-building is both a policy choice as well as an ideological manufacturing. Put another way, nation-building requires both the extension of the nation and its fixed geographic regions as well as its court system's fomentation. Additionally, and in tandem with such processes, nation-building means defining what 'American' means—what and who qualifies as distinctly American.
- Thus, what is called in American literary studies the era of American Romanticism was meant to not only create a sellable product in the novel, story, or poem but in creating a specific idea about what is and is not 'American.' Novels like *Last of the Mohicans* are just as much about policy as they are about establishing the Indian as a savage, less evolved and ultimately dying-out race. Novels like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are just as much about Christian nationalism as they are about abolitionism.
- By the end of the 19th century, the US has made itself capable of mass-scale industrialization (largely thanks to the continuity of slavery through prison labor and then low-wage immigrant labor) as well as imperialism.
- Additionally, by the end of the 19th century, the Western world had used Darwin's notion of survival of the fittest to apply to different human races and invent the eugenics movement. The U.S. was the shining city on a hill that propagated the most of this movement's "scholarship" on the inevitability of the Anglo-Saxon supremacy.

the final frontier

- In John F. Kennedy's acceptance speech at the 1960 DNC in LA, historian Richard Slotkin writes, the presidential nominee "asked his audience to see him as a new kind of frontiersman confronting a different sort of wilderness: 'I stand tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch 3000 miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West .... We stand today on the edge of a new frontier ... a frontier of unknown opportunities and paths, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.'"
- Kennedy's use of "new frontier" to encapsulate his campaign echoed debates about US history that had begun more than six decades earlier. In 1894, historian Frederick Jackson Turner had presented his history-making "frontier thesis," claiming that the crisis of that era was the result of the closing of the frontier and that a new frontier was needed to fill the ideological and spiritual vacuum created by the completion of settler colonialism. The "Turner Thesis" served as a dominant school of the history of the US West through most of the twentieth century. The frontier metaphor described Kennedy's plan for employing political power to make the world the new frontier of the United States. Central to this vision was the Cold War

Mak' sito'maniyañ ukiye,
Oya'te uki'ye, oya'te uki'ye,
Wa'ñbali oya'te wañ hoshi'hi-ye lo,
Ate heye lo, ate heye lo,
Maka o'wañcha'ya uki'ye
Pte kiñ ukiye, pte kiñ ukiye,
Kañghi oya'te wañ hoshi'hi-ye lo,
A'te he'ye lo, a'te he'ye lo.

The whole world is coming,
A nation is coming, a nation is coming,
The Eagle has brought the message to the tribe.
The father says so, the father says so.
Over the whole earth they are coming.
The buffalo are coming, the buffalo are coming,
The Crow has brought the message to the tribe,
The father says so, the father says so.

—Sioux Ghost Dance song as transcribed and translated by James Mooney in *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (1896).

Literary Nationalism

- Within literary studies in particular, many scholars have called for intellectual nationalist projects. Literary scholar Craig Womack challenges non-Native scholars who dismiss "nationalism" or "nationhood" as concepts based on political exclusion. He contends that Native nationalism is not a fixed and static concept but is dynamic and fluid. He further contends that imagining sovereignty and nationalism outside of the narrow realm of political science enables Native peoples to imagine a flexible notion of the nation.
- Craig Womack, Jace Weaver, and Robert Warrior provided an extended defense of what they term *literary nationalism* in ***American Indian Literary Nationalism*** (2006). They draw from Simon Ortiz, whom they celebrate for his humanist and nationalist intellectual work, and especially because he is not an isolationist. Oritz's work, they explain, is an example of Native literary nationalism that does not need to reconcile the "au then tic" Native voice or cultural traditions. Rather, Ortiz's work speaks to how Natives have strug gled and endured, and such narratives are critical to an American literary canon that cannot continue to overlook Native voices. Further, Ortiz's work exemplifies the "intellectual rigor" that can be both Indian and Western. Native intellectuals are charged with affirming such work and writing about the ways that oral history and now literary works infuse nationalist sentiment and struggles.
    - Talking back to debates within literary criticism at large, Weaver, Womack, and Warrior all write against the trend of "hybridity" in literary criticism. Instead of favoring the hybrid, which they feel erases the Native voice, they favor literary nationalism, and in this case, American Indian literary nationalism that is also connected to tribal sovereignty

Against Nationalism

- This literary nationalism has been critiqued by Eliva Pulitano. In her *Toward a Native American Critical Theory*, Pulitano contends that this nationalist discourse rests on "essentialist notions of identity and pure origins." She calls for a greater engagement with postcolonial theories of hybridity, which she holds would complicate pretensions of a unitary indigenous identity.
- As Jodi Byrd warns, there is a troubling trend within indigenous nationalism of thinking that " others" are always oppressive. Byrd understands why the policing of boundaries and membership are necessary to secure what little rights and resources Native peoples have but also that this kind of rigid exclusion is a modern product, and furthermore, as Warrior clarifies, tribes have always welcomed others into their nations and have strived to de> ne responsible and right relations in the pro cess of doing so.
- The critiques of essentialism within Native nationalism are particularly pre sent within queer indigenous studies because of the ways in which tribal citizenship (and feeling welcome) can rest on blood quantum, marriage, roll status, and where one lives. Meeting these requirements can be difficult when one identifies as "queer." Within Native studies, Queer indigenous studies questions who is included in the "nation." As Chris Finley notes, indigenous nationhood is often articulated in heteronormative terms in order to render a vision of indigenous nationalism that is more palatable to the colonial world order.
    - At the same time, Queer Native studies challenges the assumption within non- Native Queer studies that nationalism is necessarily regressive. Rather, this work suggests that indigenous nationhood can be queered when it is removed from a nation- state framework focused on citizenship and civil rights discourses.

- A nation is not defined simply by its culture, language, territory, or any other "shared attribute"; nor can it be reduced to an intersubjective recognition by its citizens. Both culture and intersubjective recognition have to be pre sent in order for a social group to become a nation as such.
- Anthony D. Smith, has argued that while nations may be modern, they are not made out of thin air. Some nations, especially those defined ethnically, are the political descendants of cultural traditions and heritages that predate modernity and have coalesced over the generations. Smith calls these preexisting things *ethnies* and argues that they constitute the raw materials for the making of nations.
- Ethnie was a term invented in the nineteenth century by the French sociologist Georges Vacher de Lapouge to describe human groups that formed coherent entities and achieved solidarity; the word is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, which is sometimes translated as " people" in that specifically cultural sense that suggests the need for an article (e.g., "a people," "the people," perhaps "those people," or "my people"). But the original Greek term evoked ideas that are broader than what is usually meant by ethnic today.
    - Ethnos could refer to animals just as much as people, women in contradistinction to men, castes, occupations, swarms of bees, and religious groups, not just a people in some biological or kinship sense of a "tribe" (although the Greeks had a word for that too— genos— which was considered a subdivision of *ethnos*).
    - "In all these usages," Smith writes, "the common denominator appears to be the sense of a number of people or animals living together and acting together, though not necessarily belonging to the same clan or tribe" (Smith 1998, 22).
- The French ethnie was picked up by scholars to describe "primitive" peoples, and it played a significant role in the popularization of ethnicity, a word that first appears in the Oxford En glish Dictionary in 1933. Smith's reclamation of ethnie challenges the modernist theory of the nation through its emphasis on the organic roots of many (but by no means all) nations today. Smith defines ethnie as "a named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, elements of a shared culture, and association with a specific homeland." He defines nation as "a named human population inhabiting an historic territory and sharing common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties."

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Over the whole earth they are coming.
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The Crow has brought the message to the tribe,
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—Sioux Ghost Dance song as transcribed and translated by James Mooney in *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (1896).

Next class…

Keywords: Blood, tradition

- *Native Studies Keywords* pp 199-270
- Ep. 1-3 of *Reservation Dogs*