

native american
scholarship and the **transnational turn**

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The term transnational has had a strong impact in various corners of literary and cultural studies over the past decade, but is only now emerging as a significant category of analysis among Native American writers and critics and in Native American studies. This essay grew out of a specific attempt to make some sense of why so many Native American scholars in literary studies have steered clear of discourse on the transnational.¹ The exercise was in its original form particularly useful in providing a deeper understanding of how criticism fits into larger constellations of ethnic studies, politics, and culture. I am pleased to have the opportunity to rework these ideas along with so many others in Indigenous studies who are auguring the contours of a shared intellectual project across national, regional, and international boundaries.

In grappling with some of the problems that arise in bringing Native American perspectives into a discussion of transnationality, I am not a partisan for such avoidance. In fact, I tend to find many aspects of the transnational turn useful to developing Native criticism, especially when transnational discourse describes still-emergent formations of economic realities that had been, in earlier generations of Marxian thought, subsumed under the category of internationalism. That is, the effects of capitalism, which were once contained and constrained by the sovereignty of nations, now supersede and trump the power of states. Put in another way, states as opposed to different groupings increasingly are incapable of effectively addressing the needs of people within their borders. Indigenous peoples are among those different groupings. The shared Indigenous intellectual project under discussion here is easy to see as a transnational one, insofar as we are recognising that Indigenous experiences might make more sense understood with less focus on the national boundaries in which

various Indigenous peoples exist. At best, the transnational turn describes the reality of what we often seek in looking for ways to reach across borders and oceans in search of consonance and, perhaps more importantly, perspective. By rendering these realities, we help make their effects available for critical work. This is especially important for those of us attempting to articulate Indigenous studies, but mere invocation of the transnational is not enough. As an analytical category, transnationalism is, to put it mildly, all over the place.

Ramon Saldivar reflects what I see as a valuable perspective when he argues, for instance, that we are witnessing 'nothing less than the end of one epistemic era and the beginning of another'.² In this new era, he argues, the new questions that transnational analysis helps us formulate 'are valuable because they have supplied so much moral resonance to contemporary dissident movements and have helped to destabilize the seemingly unshakable fixity of culture, politics, and the marketplace'.³

It is easy to find value in this elegantly figured formulation which is on the smarter end of the discourse. Saldivar's approach contrasts with one Robert Gross describes (even if he does not endorse it), a version of transnationalism that is more nebulous than some versions of American studies. Gross argues that transnationalism 'captures a world of fluid borders, where goods, ideas, and people flow constantly across once-sovereign space. Instead of adopting an American identity, newcomers sustain a cosmopolitan consciousness.'⁴ This essay proceeds from an interest in why Native critics generally have not adopted a more robust position on transnationalism in contrast to these conceptualisations.

This interest contributes to my ongoing agenda of charting the uneasy, yet I contend ultimately productive, relationship most Native scholars have to the leading theoretical approaches in contemporary literary studies and social theory. This uneasiness often expresses itself in thoroughgoing rejectionist terms yet also often reaches towards a demand for more scholarly attention to Native positions. Enough exceptions exist to make a counter-case focusing more on the strains of contemporary Native scholarship that engage comfortably in highly recognisable forms of theory (for example, the work of Gerald Vizenor or Louis Owens). However, Native American critics in general have established a strong practice of warily regarding various theoretical trends, including the move to transnationality when studying American Indian texts and issues.⁵

The assumption behind this argument—that Native scholars are not using the term transnational with any frequency—is not easy to prove given the breadth and length of Native scholarship. However, I can offer several observations that help bolster my claim. As already mentioned, the first version of this essay focused on Native scholars in literary studies. Checking the indices of many books from the field published after 1998 that were authored, or included a contribution, by a Native scholar, revealed that the terms transnational, transnationality

or transnationalism were not deployed. This indicates that the centrality of these terms to American and British literary studies has had little impact in Native literary studies.⁶

Since then, I have expanded the research to include books by Native scholars in a broader range of Native studies, including books by all scholars in Native and Indigenous studies, which yielded limited uses of the term transnational. The few exceptions were Renya Ramirez's book *Native Hubs*, Andrea Smith's *Conquest*, and a chapter by Faye Ginsburg on Indigenous media.⁷ It also uncovered Arnold Krupat's use, before 1998, of the term 'transnational capital', with the Marxian connotation that it had when deployed in the 1980s.⁸

In an example published since the previous version, Craig Womack (a leading figure in Native literary studies) comments in his summary of book-length critical studies by Native scholars, that Native American engagement with the discourse on nationalism puts the field at odds with some global trends in literary and cultural studies. He argues that, 'because of the transnational and comparative interests of cultural studies, national literatures are also questioned'.⁹ According to Womack this has a specific effect on Native literary studies, which has tended in many cases to continue to focus on the national political claims of Native nations. In spite of the fact that Native people and Native critics have in many cases developed sophisticated ways of thinking through what brings them to engage with nationalist discourse, Womack reveals that 'there is the tendency in cultural studies to view nationalism as a pathology and a contrary tendency in Native studies to view it in terms of the survival of tribes'. He continues with the assertion that 'some critics are stymied by the transnational turn in cultural studies and the seemingly contrary sovereigntist emphasis in Native studies'.¹⁰

Bibliographic searches for uses of transnational terms in Native and Indigenous studies yielded a few more results from one area of study: international Indigenous political organising.¹¹ The lack of transnationalism as an analytical category within published work is also reflected in the broader field of study as revealed by a review of the programs for the first three meetings relating to the founding of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association.¹² A search of the three programs, which included over two hundred and seventy sessions, yielded a total of three instances (one for each annual program) of transnational terms in session or paper titles.¹³ None of this proves concretely that Native scholars and others in Native studies are not taking part in transnational discourse, but the absence of the term requires explanation.

In this essay I articulate some of the possible reasons for this absence and discuss what is gained and lost by it. Some of the reasons are related to older arguments in Native American studies, which will not be rehearsed here. I am interested in understanding the relative absence of a term like transnationality among Native scholars not as an alarming situation in which unsophisticated, uncritical revanchists refuse to participate in a broader world of

theoretical insight. Instead I argue that a resistance to (or perhaps resistance against is a better way of saying it) ideas like transnationality can be (though certainly is not necessarily) intellectually defensible and provides fruitful theoretical insight.

— POSTCOLONIAL PRECURSORS

The most recent notions of the transnational have progressed in some fashion from postcolonial studies. A major reason for the lack of engagement with transnationality by Native American scholars is the widespread rejection of postcolonial studies. Though it fails to take account of the formulations of the most nuanced of postcolonial scholars, this objection is grounded in the reality that Native Americans remain colonised peoples rather than people facing post-independence realities and challenges. Thus the post in postcolonialism creates a stumbling block to engagement.

Taking into account those who argue for a definition of postcoloniality that is not bounded by the temporal idea of being historically on one side or the other of a decolonial struggle, Jace Weaver has argued that the main thrust and de facto focus of postcolonial studies remain post-independence texts and contexts. Weaver's stronger objection is the central concern in postcolonial studies with Western categories, which have 'never accounted for Native world-views ... [S]ince the time of the first contact with Europeans, American Indians' reality has been all too monotonously the same, controlled by those who conquered them.'¹⁴ The realities of Indigenous peoples who continue to suffer from internal colonialism may, in various ways, be consonant with what postcolonial studies describes. However, the object of its study makes postcolonialism less compelling for Native scholars. The late Louis Owens, following a similar line of argument, writes, 'those of us working in the field of what we call Native American literature can and undoubtedly will chafe at the ignorance and erasure of Native American voices within the metropolitan center and within what at times appears to be the loyal opposition to that center called postcolonial theory'.¹⁵

Weaver's and Owens's analyses coalesce with Vilashini Cooppan's argument that is critical of:

a prevailing version of postcolonial studies in the United States that so embraces its aura of 'new work' and its dual allegiances to high theory and a rather reified, distanced, and monolithic 'Third World literature' that it largely estranges itself from the individual and collective histories of several important allied traditions such as American studies, Native American studies, African American studies, Asian American studies, Latino studies, and Gay and Lesbian studies.¹⁶

It may be, then, that Native critics do not engage with transnationality because its major proponents, in spite of broader inclusivity, remain in the end more interested in what is beyond

their borders (Southeast Asia, Africa or the Caribbean, for instance) than the transnationalism produced by colonialism within its borders. Cooppan argues this has led to a 'discipline alienated from at least some of the circumstances of its world'.¹⁷

The US context provides further evidence for why Native American scholars have not engaged transnational discourse. For Americanists in literary studies, and many in American studies, transnationality has become an alternative to the exceptionalism that has been a pre-occupation in these related fields for generations. The aftermath of the 1998 American Studies Association's (ASA) annual meeting in Seattle is perhaps most instructive. Paul Giles, a British scholar of American studies, was among the many who helped steer the agenda of the meeting toward a renewed critique of American exceptionalism as practiced by American scholars. He argued 'it remains very difficult to dislodge many of the primary, foundational assumptions of American studies, because such assumptions are often bound unconsciously to a residual cultural transcendentalism that fails to acknowledge the national specificity of its own discourse'.¹⁸ Giles suggests that American studies have a lot to gain from paying attention to, for instance, European scholars who do not share that assumption.

In 1998 the ASA president, Janice Radway, attempted to advance an agenda for the field that would help overcome what Giles and others had identified as the main culprits in the ongoing parochialism of American studies. Radway suggested many provocative things in her presidential address in Seattle, chief among them the 'recognition of the theoretical centrality of working class and ethnic studies, women's studies, queer studies, and Native American studies to a reconceived American studies project'.¹⁹ For Radway, then, Native studies and the other fields of study provide new material for new ways of thinking about what theory is and how theorists develop it.

Radway's address, the Seattle meeting and the broader currents of which they are a part, contributed to the widespread embrace of transnationalism in American studies and literary studies. The speech, thus, is a landmark that bears reading by anyone considering the ramifications of US ethnic studies to a transnational agenda. I refer to these landmarks from a decade ago, not so much to glean from that complexly interesting, ongoing discourse some signposts for this essay, but because my memories of that meeting and its aftermath are so different from some of those who have derived a transnational agenda from them.

I was at the meeting in Seattle, but I did not attend the presidential address nor its predecessors at any of the American Studies Association annual meetings that I had taken part in. Perhaps this is evidence of a personal tendency toward truancy, but there was more going on there, or at least I remember thinking so in the case of Radway's speech.

The 1998 ASA annual meeting, in fact, represented one of the strongest efforts in the past generation to include Native American studies on the agenda of a national academic association meeting. Nearly every timeslot in the program featured a panel about some aspect of

Native American history, literature, visual culture or other subject. This was in part a tribute to the hard work of one member of the program committee, Ned Blackhawk, now an accomplished scholar but then a graduate student. (His beating the bushes resulted in a remarkable number of people willing to participate.) The effort was so successful that meeting organisers set aside time to discuss forming a Native American interest group in the association. All indications coming out of the meeting were that American studies was turning an important corner vis a vis Native American studies.

In his article 'The Transnational Turn: Rediscovering American Writers in a Wider World', Robert Gross focuses extensively on the Seattle discussion of what transnationalism can mean for American studies. Referring to the spirited listserv exchanges and scholarly work that resulted directly after the meeting, Gross calls the meeting's program the 'most controversial in years' and ends up with a fairly optimistic view of what can come from broadening American studies to a shifting, changing transnational world.²⁰ Yet, in the midst of the controversy, during the meeting itself, I remember sharing with my colleagues in Native studies the feeling that we were out of the loop, or perhaps more accurately being more interested in our own loop than the one that seemed to be part of every hallway and lobby conversation.

That meeting in Seattle, taken within the larger context of what it meant to those who represent its leading currents, may be the best example of what I am grappling with here. That is, at the Seattle ASA meeting Native scholars seemed happy to find solid crowds at their sessions and happier still to have found a potential place in which to do their scholarly work. They were not, seemingly, prepared to be part of the broader project that was being proposed. Perhaps that is why, in spite of ongoing efforts and plenty of hip, sophisticated papers at ASA meetings, Native American studies remains marginalised within American studies.

The next year's ASA meeting in Montreal, for instance, continued much of the enthusiasm of Seattle, but subsequent meetings witnessed a decline in the number of Native American studies scholars (especially, I might add, Native scholars) to a plateau not much different from what was happening before 1998. American studies had a banner year in 2008 in that the ASA has its first Indigenous president, Philip Deloria, and the program has its highest number of Native scholars and Native American studies panels and papers. Yet I doubt that anyone would predict that these numbers are sustainable without concerted effort.²¹

— SORTING OUT AN INDIGENOUS POSITION

In considering my own scholarly relationship to this issue, I find myself in agreement with those who regard broader agendas, like those offered in American studies and literary studies, with a healthy dose of wariness. Faye Ginsburg argues that 'First World scholars have too

often written about Aboriginal people as a means of elevating their own academic status, rather than as a part of an effort to support the broader project of Aboriginal cultural creativity'.²² An inclusive agenda for American studies has lots of people working on it, as does a similar postcolonial version and numerous others; however, the articulation of Native voices on issues critical to the present, real needs of actual Native communities has a relative few stalwarts. What, then, is more compelling? Signing on to the latest attempt to reconceive literary, ethnic or American studies, or seeking surer ways of addressing the intellectual needs of the Indigenous world? The question of whose broader project takes precedence is crucial to any discussion of transnationality.

Ginsburg argues that the entrance requirements to a discussion that seeks to take Indigenous people seriously needs to 'demonstrate the importance of this work [Indigenous expression and scholarship] in its own right ... not only as a counter to dominant theory but also as part of broader and historically grounded social processes through which new social arrangements emerge that counter the dominant cultural formations'.²³ Further, what is clear to me is the extent to which Indigenous scholars have contributed to discussions of transnationality specifically by refusing to get with the program, failing to adopt its premises, and continuing to focus on the concerns that have fueled the agenda of their world. In effect our nationalism is born out of native transnationalism, the flow and exchange of ideas and politics across our respective nations' borders.

This is not to suggest that Indigenous scholarship is always correct or good. However, Native scholars within Native American and Indigenous studies have proceeded to the point at which they can articulate with some clarity an agenda for the field that reflects broadly their own intellectual preoccupations. Ginsburg's argument illuminates a history of refusal by Native scholars and demonstrates the extent to which Native studies has succeeded through its wariness in the development of its own currents. Resistance, then, can have its benefits, even if those benefits accrue primarily to Native and Indigenous studies and not as clearly or directly to American studies, media studies, literary studies, history, or the many other fields that over the years have sought out stronger ties to our work.

— OUTLASTING COLONIALISM

In conclusion I will offer a literary example that encapsulates the ethos of this resistance, though I hesitate because I do not want to be read as romanticising the connection between the work of Native scholarship and the history of resistance in Native communities. I use this example, nevertheless, because I find something similar between the argument I am progressing and what N. Scott Momaday refers to in his novel *House Made of Dawn*, when he writes, '[t]hey have assumed the names and gestures of their enemies, but have held on to their own, secret souls; and in this there is a resistance and an overcoming, a long outwaiting'.²⁴

Though he is not usually associated with nationalist discourse, this passage from Momaday reveals a strong link to a Native version of nationalism, and it is here, finally, that I would like to address the obvious connection between transnationality and nationalism. Nationalism remains constitutive in much of contemporary Native American studies, and my most recent book (which I coauthored with Jace Weaver and Craig Womack) is called *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, which is reflective of the work by other Native scholars in that it does not deploy the term transnational.²⁵ In the book each of us, in our own way, makes a case for the continued engagement in discussions of nation and nationalism in Native American literary studies. We argue that the discourse on nationalism remains important to Native American literary studies because it remains the domestic and international language in which Native struggle is waged and remains a primary vehicle for fueling Indigenous imaginations. Because Native peoples continue to have political status as nations, at least in the US and Canada, we as scholars remain committed to framing and developing our work as members of our respective nations.

Both postcolonial theory and American studies have featured strong critiques of nationalism, and transnationality has been part and parcel of the development of alternatives. This is, indeed, the tension I have already discussed in Womack's work that appeared after our coauthored book. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, for instance, lay claim to the category of the transnational because, 'we have become convinced that new forms of colonialism pervade the contemporary world and that new forms of feminist theory are required to address these changing conditions'.²⁶ Nationalism, they argue, is not addressed adequately with appeals to globalism, which they see as erasing and levelling the material differences of our contemporary world. Instead, they argue that 'Transnational is a term that signals attention to uneven and dissimilar circuits of culture and capital. Through such critical recognition, the links between patriarchies, colonialisms, racisms, and other forms of domination become more apparent and available for critique or appropriation.'²⁷

Similarly, Giles, in his critique of exceptionalism in American studies, writes, '[d]iscourses on nationalism rarely declare themselves to be particularist rather than universal models'.²⁸ His embrace of a transnational approach is an alternative that leads to a comparative approach, and, as he states, 'it is one of the tasks of comparativist criticism to recover a sense of that latent contingency'.²⁹

As some Native American scholars, including me, reach more and more toward a sense of our field that encompasses not just North America, but the Indigenous world more broadly, I think these positions are worth considering. Grewal and Caplan, especially, provide a reminder of how important it is to find modes of critique that in and of themselves can help us identify the ways the language we use can blind us to the very realities we hope to change.

Andrea Smith's insightful and important book on sexual violence in the Indigenous world comes to mind as one example.³⁰ Renya Ramirez's articulation of the concept of Native hubs is another.³¹ Both these scholars use incisive forms of transnational analysis and it is no coincidence that they are committed to feminist forms of analysis and criticism. Thus, I would argue that the sort of comparative perspective that these transnational approaches highlight are already present in the best work being done by Indigenous studies scholars in North America and elsewhere—whether that work uses the language of transnationality or not. Their work reflects Wai Chee Dimock's approach that:

Transnationality ... points not to the emergence of a new collective unit ... but to the persistence of an old logic, the logic of capitalism. Market born and market driven, it is infinite in its geographical extension but all too finite in its aspirations. It offers no alternative politics, poses no threat to the sovereignty of the state.³²

That sort of turn to the transnational, one that seeks to describe a constellation of material realities in the lived world, seems eminently helpful and useful.

The transnationality that Dimock describes operates within the universities upon which so many of us have come to rely as places from which we articulate and promulgate our work. As J. Hillis Miller argues, 'The university ... is becoming more and more like a bureaucratic corporation itself, for example by being run by a corps of proliferating administrators whose bottom-line business, as in any bureaucracy, is to perpetuate themselves efficiently, even if this means large-scale "administrative cutbacks".'³³ Miller suggests that scholars can most effectively counter these new realities not by retooling ourselves as more efficient cogs in the machine, but by recognising that 'the university is the place where what really counts is the ungoverned, the ungovernable'.³⁴ I take Miller's suggestion to be an invitation to engage in critical work that highlights and participates in the innovation that is at the heart of the Indigenous world we encounter as scholars. Miller offers this proposal neither as an easy task or a simple solution, but rather as a pathway toward addressing the situation in which all scholars of conscience find themselves.

Native nations and Indigenous peoples have persisted, succeeding in the long outwitting that Momaday describes, by being ungovernable, unpredictable, and obdurate. At its best, Native writing (and sometimes Indigenous studies scholarship) gives voice to that ungovernability and succeeds in unsettling a history that in the minds of many is already complete. Irrespective of whether or not more of us adopt the language of transnationality our most successful work will always be reaching similarly toward ungovernability.³⁵

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1. This essay began as an invited presentation for a forum on transnationality in US ethnic studies at the Modern Language Association's annual convention in 2005 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (USA). A brief version of that presentation appeared as 'Native American Critical Responses to Transnational Discourse', *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 122, no. 3, 2007, pp. 807–8.
 2. Ramon Saldivar, 'Transnational Migrations and Border Identities: Immigration and Postmodern Culture', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 98, nos 1–2, p. 229.
 3. Saldivar, p. 229.
 4. Robert A. Gross, 'The Transnational Turn: Rediscovering American Studies in a Wider World', *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2000, p. 378.
 5. Vizenor, White Earth Anishinaabe, and Owens, who claimed Choctaw descent, are among the most cited and most prolific critics in Native literary studies. Vizenor has written novels, poetry, screenplays and criticism, including *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*, University Press of New England, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1994. Owens, who died in 2002, wrote fiction, poetry, and memoir, including *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1998.
 6. Books with indexes consulted include Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2002; Shari Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2001; Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, House of Anansi Press, Toronto, 2003; Owens, *Mixedblood Messages*; Jace Weaver, *Other Words: American Indian Literature, Law, and Culture*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma 2001; Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997; Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2005; Craig Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999.
 7. Andrea Smith, *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008; Renya K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2007; Faye Ginsburg, 'Resources of Hope: Learning from the Local in a Transnational Era', in Claire Smith and Graeme K. Ward (eds), *Indigenous Cultures in an Interconnected World*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000.
- The broadened search, as noted, included indexed books in North American Native and Indigenous Studies, including works by Native scholars in literary studies that came out after the original version of this essay. The search group was made up of Taiiaki Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1999; Bill Anthes, *Native Moderns: American Indian Painting, 1940–1960*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2006; Joanne Barker, ed., *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2005; Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006; Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2008; Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of US–Indigenous Relations*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2007; Jessica R. Cattellino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008; Maria Eugenia Cotera, *Native Speakers: Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, Jovita Gonzalez and the Poetics of Culture*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2008; Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2004; Vine Deloria, Jr. and David E. Wilkins, *Tribes, Treaties, and Constitutional Tribulations*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1999; Jennifer Nez Denetdale,

Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 2007; Kathleen M. Donovan, *Feminist Readings of Native American Literature: Coming to Voice*, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1998; Helen Hoy, *How Should I Read These?: Native Women Writers in Canada*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2001; Margaret D. Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters: Feminism and Pueblo Cultures, 1879–1934*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1999; Daniel Heath Justice, *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2006; Amelia V. Katanski, *Learning to Write ‘Indian’: The Boarding School Experience and American Indian Literature*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2005; Penelope Myrtle Kelsey, *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature: Dakota and Haudenosaunee Writing and Indigenous Worldviews*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2008; C. Richard King, *Native Athletes in Sports and Society*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2005; Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography, 1827–1863*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2004; Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2005; David Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher: Charles Eastman and American Indian Thought*, Minnesota Historical Society Press, Minneapolis, 2009; Gus Palmer, Jr., *Telling Stories the Kiowa Way*, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 2003; Robert Dale Parker, *The Invention of Native American Literature*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2003; Robert Dale Parker (ed.), *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2007; Beverly R. Singer, *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens: Native American Film and Video*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2001; Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, South End Press, Boston, 2005; Sean Kikkumah Teuton, *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008; Russell Thornton (ed.), *Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1998; Robert A. Williams, Jr., *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2005.

As a sort of control group, I looked at the following works from outside of North American Native and Indigenous studies, none of which, interestingly, included any indexed references to

transnational terms: Maria Burgh, ed., *Resistance: An Indigenous Response to Neoliberalism*, Huia Publishers, Wellington, 2007; Jessica Hutchings and Clive Aspin (eds), *Sexuality and the Stories of Indigenous People*, Huia Publishers, Wellington, 2007; J. Kehaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008; Roger Maaka and Augie Fleras, *The Politics of Indigeneity: Challenging the State in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand*, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2005; Aileen Moreton-Robinson (ed.), *Sovereign Subjects: Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2007; Martin Nakata, *Disciplining the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2007; Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004; Ty P. Kawika Tengan, *Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai‘i*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008.

Clearly, this method of limning Native and Indigenous studies for transnational discourse is not ironclad—some authors who adopt some sort of transnational approach will not necessarily use the term transnational, while others might not index it even if they use it. Further, indexes vary widely. Still, given the number of books in this sample, it seems difficult to assert that transnational discourse has established a strong presence in Native and Indigenous studies.

8. Arnold Krupat, *The Turn to the Native: Studies in Criticism and Culture*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1996, pp. 15, 18, 88.
9. Craig Womack, Introduction to *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (Janice Acoose, Lisa Brooks, Tol Foster, LeAnne Howe, Daniel Heath Justice, Phil Carroll Morgan, Kimberly Roppolo, Cheryl Suzack, Christopher B. Teuton, Sean Teuton, Robert Warrior, and Craig S. Womack), University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2008, 37.
10. Womack, *Reasoning Together*, 37.
11. Examples include Jeff Corntassel, ‘Partnership in Action? Indigenous Political Mobilization and Co-optation During the First UN Indigenous Decade (1995–2004)’, *Human Rights Quarterly*, 29 (2007), pp. 137–66; Guillermo Delgado-P., ‘The Makings of a Transnational Movement’, *NACLA Report on the Americas*, vol. 35, no. 6, May–June 2002), pp. 36–8, 59; Andrea Muehlebach, ‘What Self in Self-Determination? Notes from the Frontiers of Transnational Indigenous Activism’, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, no. 10, 2003, pp. 241–68. An example of transnational discourse showing up outside of discussion of

- Indigenous political movements is Robin Maria Delugan, "South of the Border" at the NMAI, *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 30, nos 3 and 4, 2006, pp. 558–73.
12. For a discussion of the founding of NAISA, see Robert Warrior, 'Organizing Native American and Indigenous Studies', *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 123, no. 5, October 2008, pp. 1683–9. The association's website can be found at naisa.org.
 13. Programs for NAISA meetings are available at naisa.org.
 14. Weaver, *Other Words*, p. 293.
 15. Louis Owens, *I Hear the Train: Reflections, Inventions, Refractions*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2001, p. 226.
 16. Vilashini Cooppan, 'W(h)ither Post-colonial Studies? Towards the Transnational Study of Race and Nation', in Laura Chrisman and Benita Parry (eds), *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism, Essays and Studies*, no. 52, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge, p. 7.
 17. Cooppan, p. 7. The field of postcolonial studies is vast, of course, and I do not want to suggest that Cooppan can stand in for even a significant segment. Her work, though, has a currency across postcolonial and American studies that is helpful here.
- I should also note that I have a companion piece to this one focused on the relationship between indigeneity and subalternity. That essay, 'The Subaltern Can Dance, and So Sometimes Can the Intellectual', grapples with relating the work of Gayatri Spivak on the subaltern to contemporary Indigenous studies. It is scheduled to appear in an upcoming special issue of *Interventions* edited by Jodi Byrd and Michael Rothberg.
18. Paul Giles, 'Reconstructing American Studies: Transnational Paradoxes, Comparative Perspectives', *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3, p. 343.
 19. Janice Radway, 'What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November 1998', *American Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 1, 1999, p. 24.
 20. Gross, p. 377.
 21. I should note that I served as co-chair of the ASA program committee for the meeting in Albuquerque.
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