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1. *American Indian Fiction and Anticolonial Resistance*

Arnold Krupat and Michael A. Elliott

Just as the usual dates (1620, 1776, 1865, 1914, etc.) and categories (Colonial Era, Age of Revolution, Transcendentalism, Age of Realism, etc.) conventionally used to periodize the literature of the United States are not particularly useful for framing Native American literature, so too 1945 is not a date especially important to Native American fiction—if taken as opening a period labeled “Fiction Since World War II.” Considered, however, as a benchmark for acts of resistance on the part of colonized peoples, particularly in Africa and South Asia, that would lead to national independence and an end to direct colonial oppression, 1945 may be a useful date to invoke for a body of Native American fiction that can be read in the context of the global history of resistance to European colonialism. The force of colonial histories and legacies has produced significant affinities between Native American literature and the postcolonial literatures of other parts of the globe. However, the similarities remain limited, for there is no “post-” as yet to the colonial situation of the indigenous peoples of the United States. Native nations continue to live in a condition that Thomas Biolsi and Larry Zimmerman have called the “late imperial” (4). They remain in the position enunciated by Chief Justice John Marshall when he described them, in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), as “domestic dependent nations.” To undo this paradoxical or oxymoronic status as “dependent sovereigns”—to resist colonial limitations on their *sovereign* rights—is the foremost concern of Native nations today.

Thus the editor of this volume properly notes that “the central theme of post–World War II Indian writing in the United States . . . is identity,” where “identity” must be “understood in relation to the agenda of sovereignty/land” (Cheyfitz, this volume). This “agenda,” as he has made clear, is played out against a specific body of federal Indian law. Native resistance to colonialism envisions as its farthest horizon nothing less than the full return of tribal lands and the right to administer tribal-national affairs within the boundaries of those lands. The urgency of this project is such that our history of Native American fiction since 1945 will be guided by an attention to and an emphasis on its literal or figurative, explicit or implicit resistance to colonialism.

This is not to claim that all Native fiction writers since 1945 are of one mind ideologically or politically, nor is it to suggest that each and every one of these writers foregrounds resistance. But if not literally by 1945, then by 1953, the period of Indian termination and relocation; by the 1960s and Red Power movements; by the 1970s and the emergence of AIM (American Indian Movement) activism (and its repression by the federal government); and today, in the face of deeply troubling statistics on life expectancy, joblessness, suicide, alcoholism, and diabetes among Native people¹—statistics that can be matched only in colonial (or, indeed, in some “postcolonial”) settings around the world—resistance to colonialism of various kinds and in varying degrees marks a good deal of Native American fiction.

Our privileging of thematics or ideological content is consistent with the editor’s claim that “Practical social power, not aesthetic originality or genius, is the category of understanding in Native art” (68). To be sure, we have no wish to reduce Native American fiction to a manifesto, ignoring form, technique, or, indeed, any relevant aesthetic issue, but we are in agreement that “for a Native community the beauty of expressive oral culture”—and the beauty in some measure of Native American fiction since 1945—is, if not “synonymous with its practical social power” (69), surely related to it. Thus, for example, it has often been noted that the texts of Native American writers have important relations to the oral tradition. So far as this can be shown for any particular text, the insistence on the traditional and the oral and the concomitant privileging of the voice and the face-to-face presence (literally or figuratively) of narrator and auditors may work to instantiate values different from those implied by the privileging of modern (and postmodern) written texts. Appeals to orality beyond an apparently obligatory and usually vague obeisance to a presumptive “Indian-ness”² need not express nostalgia for the past and an imagined fullness of communication. Rather, the values implied by a commitment to orality may be seen as alternatives to textual and postliterate values acquiescing in the atomized, fragmented isolation of the so-called “global village” of anonymous intercommunicators. Invoking or, in Kimberly Blaeser’s phrase, “*writing* in the oral tradition” (our emphasis) is thus not just an aesthetic choice for the Native American novelist but perhaps also an attempt to assert the ability of fiction to effect social change in concrete and immediate ways.

In similar fashion, representations of the boundary-crossing and convention-violating trickster figure of oral tradition, as found in a number of contemporary Native American novels,³ tend to work ironically toward subverting the limits imposed by colonialism and imagining a freedom beyond its constraints. Here, the “traditional” is marshaled for historically new (i.e., not strictly traditional) purposes. To tell stories with “plots” and “characters” different from those of Euro-America is, in Karl Kroeber’s phrase, to offer “unique insights into the sources of unfamiliar modes of human imagining” (248), thus instantiating an alter-Native, or, simply an other and different, knowledge that contests the knowledge on which the colonial order is founded. On one hand, it is certainly true that readers concerned to know more about, for example, Laguna religion or the traditional referents for the colors Leslie Marmon Silko mentions in *Ceremony* will find our perspective less than fully satisfactory. Unfortunately, we do not have the space for such detailed exegesis. Yet our approach could theoretically engage these topics fully. We would do so in the hope of showing how the persistence of traditional religious beliefs and ceremonies, or the ritual instantiation of traditional color symbolism, works in the interest of asserting the sovereign integrity of tribal peoples and their resistance to the ongoing colonial policies of the United States.

* * *

We will try to understand resistance to colonialism in Native American fiction as being articulated through three overlapping and potentially complementary perspectives: nationalist, indigenist, and cosmopolitan. The call for nationalist resistance in the Native American novel has been most strongly articulated by Elizabeth Cook-Lynn,⁴ in a manner that, as Eric Cheyfitz writes, “is first of all *political* in the *activist* sense of the word” (2001:21). This requires, Cook-Lynn states, that Native fiction “take into account the specific kind of tribal/nation status of the original occupants of this continent” (1996:93). Cook-Lynn herself, moreover, has publicly lamented the absence of a fully articulated nationalist perspective in Native American contemporary fiction, to the point that she has criticized her own novel (*From the River’s Edge* [1991]) for its “appalling” “intellectual uncertainty” about matters of politics and sovereignty (1996:85). As she suggests, the reader of Native American fiction written thus far is more likely to find a nationalist perspective in conversation with other approaches to the questions of anticolonial resistance.

From an indigenist perspective, it is not the nation but the “earth” that is the source of the knowledge and the values that constitute resistance to colonialism. In Linda Hogan’s novel, *Power* (1998), Omishto, the narrator, remembers 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 domain of nations and nationalisms but the animate and sentient earth. Indigenists look to a particular relationship with the earth as underlying knowledges and values that can be called “traditional” or “tribal” and that have been historically lived by indigenous people.⁵ Moreover, in some cases, e.g., Hogan, Silko in *Almanac of the Dead*, and Gerald Vizenor in *The Heirs of Columbus*, Native authors recognize that these values can also be embraced by people who are *not* indigenous. We should also note that *Power*, a text whose commitment to the values of earth is a virtual model of indigenism in Native American fiction, also contains a certain muted nationalism: Omishto is a Taiga person, and, although she is not given to specific reflection on legal or political issues, she has a decided sense of what could be called the necessity for Taiga sovereignty.

Cosmopolitans understand the identity theme in relation to the “agenda of sovereignty/land” against the backdrop of similar and different worldly or global identities and agendas after and/or in opposition to colonialism. Recognizing the importance of nationalism as a force against colonialism, cosmopolitans also recognize the way in which—as African examples sometimes make clear—nationalism can itself become an oppressor.⁶ Cosmopolitans are concerned to explore commonalities that exceed national boundaries. But unlike an older, now-discredited universalism that saw difference as a problem to be solved and offered “Eurocentric hegemony *posing* as universalism” (Appiah in Lazarus et al. 78), contemporary cosmopolitanism takes difference as a fact of human existence, and thus a challenge to all conventions of “*common* sense.” Cosmopolitan criticism, to take terms from Paul Gilroy and James Clifford, understands “roots” as inevitably crossed by “routes.” Rooted and routed, the cosmopolitan critic rejects no position, a priori, because of its race, nation, gender, or sexual preference, and selectively supports nationalist and indigenist perspectives in opposition to internal colonialism. These positions, although sometimes construed as in opposition to one another, are often, as we have noted above, overlapping and interlocking, and they may (although they need not) be complementary.

* * *

Although this *Columbia Guide to American Indian Literatures* does indeed begin in the year 1945, our consideration of Native American fiction takes 1968, the year in which N. Scott Momaday's novel, *House Made of Dawn*, appeared, as its starting point. Momaday's novel won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1969,⁷ inaugurating, it has plausibly been argued, a "Native American renaissance" in literature.⁸ Beginning, then, with Momaday, a Kiowa, we work forward in a more or less chronological manner. The reader should be aware that this is a guide to American Indian literature since 1945, not a comprehensive encyclopedia or history of that literature. We do not attempt to cover all of the many interesting Native novelists at work in the period of our concern—an impossible feat.⁹ Rather, we endeavor to introduce many important writers of Native American fiction since 1945, and, in particular, to offer a way of reading their work in terms of its resistance to colonialism.

* * *

Strictly speaking, Momaday's fictional production has included only one other novel in addition to *House Made of Dawn: The Ancient Child*, published just over twenty years later, in 1989. Momaday has also published *In the Presence of the Sun: Stories and Poems, 1961–1991* (1992), which consists of many previously published texts, and *In the Bear's House* (1999), also reproducing a good many previously published pieces, but adding eight "Bear-God Dialogues," conversations between Urset, a kind of Ur-Bear, if not Bear God, and Yahweh. Momaday has also published two prose autobiographies, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969) and *The Names: A Memoir* (1976), along with several volumes of poems and reproductions of his paintings. From the time of his inclusion in Alan Velie's *Four American Indian Literary Masters: N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Gerald Vizenor*, published in 1982, to Lee Schweninger's *Literary Masters: N. Scott Momaday*, published almost twenty years later in 2001, Momaday has been treated as the preeminent Native American novelist, virtually an iconic figure. We shall consider here only the two novels.

House Made of Dawn opens with its protagonist, Abel, a mixed-blood¹⁰ veteran of World War II, running at dawn, "alone and . . . hard at first, heavily, but then easily and well," in a gray and rainy valley, where "snow lay out upon the dunes" (7). In the fourth and final section of the novel (four is an important pattern number in most Native cultures), Abel runs again, some seven years later (seven is a Euro-American pattern number, but there seems no particular reason for it here), also at dawn, now "on the rise of the song, House made of pollen, house made of dawn. Qtsedaba" (191). That final word announces the end of a story in the oral tradition at Jemez Pueblo, or Walatowa, where Momaday spent most of his early life, and it echoes "Dypaloh," the first word of the novel (in a prologue), the traditional marker of the onset of Jemez oral storytelling. The phrase, "House made of pollen, house made of dawn," is from a translation of the Navajo Night Chant, and it precedes the words with which the Night Chant closes—"In beauty it is finished"—which signal the completion of the healing or cure that is the primary purpose of the ceremony. Traditionally, the Night Chant was performed for a specific patient in need of its restorative powers, but it involved all or a good many people in a traditional Navajo community whose ongoing health was also at issue. Much of the criticism of *HMOD* over a period of more than thirty years has examined the question of whether Abel is indeed cured or healed; the question of whether Abel's fate does or does not bear on the health of a particular tribal community has been raised less often.

In an unfortunately neglected essay (Schweninger, who touches most bases, for example, does not mention it), Karl Kroeber notes that perhaps because it won the Pulitzer, “the novel’s strangeness as novel has never been adequately investigated” (17). Besides remarking a “bothersome . . . simple imitativeness” (18) in the writing—Kroeber cites a passage in which Abel’s Navajo friend, Benally, offers a thoroughly Faulknerian passage of recollection; and imitations of Lawrence (Evers notes a Lawrentian “sense of place” [1977]) and Conrad abound as well—Kroeber suggests that “Abel is inarticulate, as Momaday is without fluency in any native tongue. Without language there can be no imposition of a culture’s symbolic order on physical surroundings” (21). Abel’s killing of a mysterious albino whom he takes to be a witch is, no doubt, as Evers first suggested, in part an attempt to kill the “white” part of himself. But, Kroeber claims, “Abel’s assumption of a *personal* ‘duty’ to kill the ‘evil’ Albino *violates* the fashion in which the Jemez community would exorcize such a malignancy” (19; first emphasis added). Kroeber continues, “as with the rooster-pull ceremony drawn from [the ethnographer] Leslie White and indeed, just with the use of the novel form, Momaday is caught up in a hazardous contradiction between his theme and the means available to him for its artistic evocation” (19).

One need not agree with every word of Kroeber’s account (e.g., although the majority of Native American novelists are not fluent in a tribal language, they may well have heard a good deal of it spoken around them, or in some other way managed to tribalize their English) to acknowledge its profound implications for the most celebrated of Native American fiction works and for a great many that have followed in its wake. Momaday’s “theme,” to put it in admittedly oversimplified form, is Abel’s identity problem and its possible resolution by other than Euro-American cultural and communal re-membering (Paula Gunn Allen may have been the first to hyphenate the verb, thereby doubling its significations). But the culture and the community—Pueblo or Navajo—are neither Momaday’s (he has identified himself as Kiowa) nor, therefore, really Abel’s. Looking back now more than thirty years, one can say that the impasse as well as the achievement of *HMOD* have been exemplary for the Native American novels that have come after. The reader should be aware, however, that this sense of Momaday’s first novel that we more or less share with Kroeber is a minority view. From Matthias Schubnell’s virtually hagiographic study of 1985 to Susan Scarberry-Garcia’s detailed reading of *HMOD* in a book of 1990 to Schweninger’s recent volume, already cited (2001), *HMOD*, however it has been interpreted, has been treated as something of a founding masterwork.¹¹

Momaday’s long-awaited second novel, *The Ancient Child*, did not appear until 1989, some twenty years after the publication of *HMOD*. In *TAC*, a successful middle-aged painter named Locke Setman, or Set, with the help of a rather embarrassingly fantasized nineteen-year-old medicine woman-in-training, named Grey, not only leaves his life in the American metropolis but finds that his “true” or authentic identity was always already given in his name, Set, which means “Bear” in Kiowa. Set increasingly discovers and finally becomes the bear in himself, acknowledging that he is a type or figure of “the ancient child,” the protagonist in an important traditional Kiowa narrative about a boy who turns into a bear. The novel reaches its climactic moment in the light of a full moon, as Set, “an awful quiet . . . in his heart,” sees “the image of a great bear, rearing. . . . It was the vision he had sought” (312).

In the same way the novel presents Set as the “ancient child,” it presents Grey as a type or figure of Changing Woman, an important personage in Navajo culture associated with reproduction and renewal, conceptualized in the key Navajo term *hozho* (variously: balance,

happiness, beauty, harmony). Set ultimately “becomes” the bear he always was; Grey fully emerges as herself as Changing Woman. Rather than continuing as fragmented and restless individuals, they achieve wholeness in a collectively imagined cultural “eternal return,” fulfilling the assertion of the epigraph for the novel that Momaday took from Jorge Luis Borges: “myth is at the beginning of literature, and also at its end.”

How may we then relate *HMOD* and *TAC* to our concern with resistance to colonialism in the Native American novel? Both novels offer critiques of the Euro-American world, which clearly has caused, in Abel’s case, a serious illness of the psyche or soul, and in Set’s case, an increasingly deepening discomfort and malaise. Nor can these conditions be remedied by anything the dominant culture has to offer. What is needed is action based upon a different, an Other sort of knowledge, an indigenous knowledge derived not directly from a particular landscape but indirectly, from the stories, traditions, and rituals that are inspired by the landscape that Navajo, Pueblo, and, to some extent, Kiowa people share, and that have elements in common. Native people who were raised among these geoscapes cannot be who they truly *are* if they cannot live the stories, and the stories are not available to be lived if they are separated or severed from the land. Momaday’s insistence on the importance of these stories, their relation to the land, and the absolute necessity of a current lived relation to them is surely one of his major and enduring contributions to Native American fiction in our period, and it is engaged again and again in a wide variety of ways by most, if not all of the authors we will examine. The political history of Indian country, then, is right below the surface of *HMOD*. Momaday sets his novel during the period of termination and relocation (see note 1). After Abel is released from prison, for example, he finds himself adrift in a Los Angeles peopled by Indians relocated from their reservation communities, among whom are the Kiowa man Tosamah and the Navajo man Benally, Abel’s closest friend. Momaday’s eclectic, indigenist position, as we have thus far sketched it, could be made consistent with the nationalist’s acute concern for tribal sovereignty, although neither of his novels explicitly addresses the particular claims to nationhood of the Kiowa, the Navajo, or the Jemez Pueblo people. For Momaday the relation of people to stories and of stories to land is a form of resistance to Western colonialism.

* * *

In 1974, just five years after Momaday’s Pulitzer, the late James Welch (d. 2003) published *Winter in the Blood*, his first novel.¹² Unusually for Native American novels up to that point (but not, however, for other minority fiction, i.e., African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and women’s writing), the narrative is in the first person, and the narrator is unnamed. The latter feature is also unusual in Native American fiction.¹³ Momaday’s 1978 autobiographical text, for example, would be called *The Names*, and Momaday has famously quoted the “story-teller, Pohd-lok,” who gave him his own Kiowa name, Tsoai-Talee, as saying, “a man’s life proceeds from his name, in the way that a river proceeds from its source” (1976:n.p.). Some form of this belief seems to have been generally accepted among Native American writers—and Welch would himself affirm this in his own novel, *Fools Crow* (1986). The central concern of *WITB* is most certainly identity, and what identity the narrator can reconstruct for himself turns upon matters of family, nation, and history.

The narrator has complex feelings about all the members of his family, living and dead. He blames himself for the accident that took the life of his brother, Mose. He misses his dead father, First Raise; has deeply ambivalent feelings about his not-so-motherly mother, Teresa;

and shows little feeling toward her aged mother, his grandmother, soon to die. In an important and positive development in the novel, he learns that the old, nearly blind man named Yellow Calf,¹⁴ whom his father had years ago taken him to meet, is his grandfather. Yellow Calf will incarnate for the narrator the national life of his Blackfeet people by means of the recall and recitation of tribal history.

The narrator learns from Yellow Calf that his grandmother, also unnamed—a survivor of the Marias River massacre of 1870 (as was Welch's own great grandmother)—was the youngest wife of Chief Standing Bear.¹⁵ After Standing Bear was killed in a raid on the Gros Ventres, it was decided that this woman had something to do with the bad times fallen upon the people (*WITB* 152–56). She was ostracized, and, when the soldiers drove the remaining Blackfeet onto the new reservation, she was left behind (157). She would probably have starved had not Yellow Calf, then perhaps fifteen years old and a few years younger than she, served as “her hunter” (158) through the difficult winter, providing her with meat. With “the laughter of one who understands a moment in his life” (158), the narrator concludes that his mother's father “*was you, Yellow Calf the hunter!*” (159; italics in original). Yellow Calf, it appears, is his grandfather.

Yellow Calf represents for the narrator not only the historically continuous nation but also an ongoing indigenous worldview. In an earlier visit to Yellow Calf, the first since his father's introduction years ago, the narrator discovers, among other things, that the old man, unlike himself, has names in abundance. He is “still called Yellow Calf,” but he is also “called many things” (64).¹⁶ Deer come to feed near his cabin, Yellow Calf says, and converse with him; for the most part, Yellow Calf understands what they say, although “some of them are hard to understand” (68). For the most part, they seem to understand him. The deer “know what a bad time it is. They can tell by the moon when the world is cockeyed”; they “understand the signs. This earth is cockeyed” (68). The narrator, for whom that most certainly has been true, still finds this deer knowledge “impossible” to believe. He would like to believe it, but he can't (69).

Nonetheless, the visit to Yellow Calf seems at least tentatively transformative for the narrator. The final events of the novel involve the narrator, “a white horse and a cow” (171). He rides his old horse Bird—the horse he was riding at the time of the accident that took his brother's life—to attempt to save a cow drowning in mud, and the last scene ends with a cleansing summer rain. An epilogue concludes the novel. It treats the burial of the narrator's grandmother, and, consistent with the manner of the book thus far, presents a scene that is richly comic and entirely serious. The grave is not quite large enough for the coffin; Lame Bull, Teresa's husband, offers a eulogy that might have come from Eugene Ionesco or Edward Albee (“Here lies a simple woman . . . who devoted herself to . . . rocking” [175], “who never gave anybody any crap” [176]). Yet the last line of the text is the narrator's notation that he “threw the pouch into the grave.” The object in question is a tobacco pouch that belonged to his grandmother, and this seems to be as nearly traditional and ritualistic a gesture as one could imagine for him.

It would be hard to make a case for *WITB* as a “political” novel in any overt, explicit, or immediate way. It doesn't “feel” political, and certainly the narrator has nothing that might be called a “political consciousness,” though perhaps there is something of a political unconscious at work. At one point, the narrator, while his grandmother looks on, thumbs through a copy of the magazine *Sports Afield*, fixing on a stereotypical colonialist story set in Africa in which white hunters deliver a baby whose mother has been killed by “a man-

eating lion" (12). This colonial tableau could serve to remind us that the narrator himself lives in a colonial situation, on the "Reservation" (56).

The nearest to an explicit political statement in the novel is Yellow Calf's translation of the message from the deer that the world is cockeyed. The book does, as we have suggested, offer material for a nationalist, specifically, historically Blackfeet—and indigenist, the powerful, alternative knowledge of Yellow Calf—resistance to colonialism. The narrator's way out of a life of violence, alcoholism, and self-hatred is connection with his Blackfeet nation's past, and its usefulness, however tentative, for the present. At the close of the novel, the narrator feels that whoever he may have been, he is now the grandson of Yellow Calf the hunter. Although he still cannot "believe" the judgment on the world pronounced by the deer, he may yet come to acknowledge the communication between the deer and his grandfather. It is such communication that forms the basis of Native kinship with the land; and it is, perhaps, in some measure, such kinship that forms the substance of Indian resistance to U.S. colonialism.

Jim Loney, the mixed-blood protagonist of James Welch's second novel, is obviously not going to survive; the book's title, after all, is *The Death of Jim Loney*. Loney cannot manage to achieve the laughter or the traditional connections of *WITB*'s narrator. His name broadcasts his obvious isolation; unable to connect with family, nation, place, or history, the best he can do is to choose the location and manner of his death.¹⁷ Loney kills a former high school basketball teammate named Myron Pretty Weasel in a hunting accident, which he does not accept as accidental. He then shoots up his father's trailer, knowing that another former basketball teammate, the Indian policeman Quinton Doare, will track him. With Doare prepared to shoot, Loney makes himself visible and a target for the bullets that kill him. Welch has said that Loney's orchestration of the time, place, and means of his death are in themselves something positive. But, again, it is difficult to take this very far. Meanwhile, William Bevis, whose essay of some fifteen years ago remains, we think, one of the most insightful and lucid accounts of this novel, does convincingly detail the ways in which Jim Loney is deeply marked by a tribal heritage, however tenuous and vague. These include: Loney's attachment to the boy, Amos After Buffalo, who lives on the distant reservation; his recollection of "real" Indian elders he has encountered; and the fact that the violence he enacts and suffers specifically involves Indian men. Yet these are not enough to overcome Loney's alienation or to save him from his fate. In this novel Welch does not develop a nationalist, an indigenous, or, least of all, a cosmopolitan resistance that could save Jim Loney from his inability to heal the culturally split personality that is his colonial legacy.

With the benefit of hindsight, one can easily construct the narrative of Welch's novelistic career so as to present his next two novels, *Fools Crow* (1986) and *The Indian Lawyer* (1990), as revisiting the two sides of Jim Loney. *Fools Crow* is an attempt to present a Blackfeet world and worldview that is intact, if threatened, while *The Indian Lawyer* is an attempt to present what Loney, had he followed the advice of the two women who love him (his sister, Kate, and his lover, Rhea), might have become, a success in the dominant society. Having shown the horrible cost entailed by the loss of tribal connection, perhaps Welch found it necessary imaginatively to re-create that connection in *Fools Crow*.

To do this required leaving the contemporary world for a period more than a century earlier. *Fools Crow* deals with the Pikunis, the Piegan branch of the Blackfeet, in the 1870s, a time when traditional raiding and hunting were still practiced, although the advance of the whites threatened all aspects of Pikuni life. *The Indian Lawyer*, as the title announces, deals with Sylvester Yellow Calf, Esq., an Indian lawyer whose name and upbringing (he was

raised on the reservation by his now-traditional grandparents) link him to the Indian grandfather in *WITB*. The time is the present. We will look briefly at each of these fictions in turn.

The title character of *Fools Crow* is, appropriately, rich in names. Sinopa was his baby name, White Man's Dog his name through adolescence. He earns the name Fools Crow after a raid in which it appears that he tricked some Crow enemies. Son of Rides-at-the-Door, member of the Lone Eater band, warrior, husband, father, Fools Crow has a life seemingly representative of his Pikuni generation at its fullest. To convey the fullness of that life, Welch uses an English-in-translation for the natural world—animals mostly, and plants—of the Pikuni and for relational and conceptual matters as well. Thus, from the first chapter, we have White Man's Dog watching "Seven Persons rise into the night sky" (4–5) as he lustfully thinks of his father's youngest wife, who is forbidden to him as "his own near-mother," and hears "the hoot of an ears-far-apart" (5). White people are called "Napikwans," a compound that uses the word for the trickster-creator, Napi, in a form that roughly means "Old Man Person," or someone with wonder-working powers of a sort attributed to Napi. Elsewhere, an American doctor is referred to as "heavy singer for the sick."

As several critics have noted, there are scenes in the novel, in particular Fools Crow's late journey to the south where he encounters So-at-sa-ki, Feather Woman, an important mythic figure for his culture, that convey in entirely realistic fashion experiences that Euro-Americans assign to the realm of dream or fantasy. Fools Crow's experiences are not presented in an as-if or purely imaginary way, and to take them as they are presented requires a substantial effort from the Euro-American reader that literally calls for what has all too often, in merely honorific or hortatory terms, been called an encounter with Otherness. In *Fools Crow*, as Louis Owens has written, "Welch has accomplished the most profound act of recovery in American literature" (1992:166), and without falsifying the facts of colonial disease, famine, and violence that have come close to destroying the Pikuni. There is no doubt, as the novel draws to a close, that the old ways will be no more. But the story nonetheless concludes with the end of winter, when "The blackhorns [buffalo] had returned and, all around, it was as it should be" (391).

This is not sentimentalism or nostalgia on Welch's part. The novel has made it clear that all is *not* as it should be, that the "cockeyed" world of the colonial conquest will soon be fully in place. Nonetheless—and without irony—it is important to keep this moment in mind, though it may have been the last time when, from the national and indigenous point of view of the Pikuni, all was indeed "as it should be." *Fools Crow* offers specifically nationalist—Blackfeet—and indigenous—western tribes'—resistance to the "cockeyed" world that Euro-American conquest would impose.

Although Sylvester Yellow Calf's grandmother returned to a traditional way of life; although Yellow Calf himself eventually takes with him a war bundle he had once not cared to touch, it is hard to find much in the way of indigenist epistemology in *The Indian Lawyer*. Nor is there much nationalism. When Yellow Calf agrees to run for Congress, it is with the desire to do what he can for Indian people generally, rather than with any specific agenda for the sovereignty of his particular Native nation. One could, perhaps, call his resistance "cosmopolitan," but only by default. Sylvester Yellow Calf is a bright, decent Blackfeet man with a strong sense of responsibility to Indian people.

William Bevis, in his discussion of *The Death of Jim Loney*, speaks of the "insufferability of individuality" (590) from a tribal perspective. How might such an observation influence

our reading of the ending of *The Indian Lawyer*, whose last sentence has Sylvester Yellow Calf “going one on one against the only man who ever beat him,” himself (349)? Sly Yellow Calf is being observed by Lena Old Horn, a Crow woman who has lived and worked in Blackfeet territory and who now is leaving. It is April, not the cruelest month but “the coming on of spring” (347); it is sleeting, and there is a “freshening of the wind from the north” (349). But Yellow Calf does not notice the weather as he plays against himself alone. Leaving Browning, Montana, Lena may be going home; Sly certainly is staying home. That last sentence, with its freshening wind, seems hopeful. But it hardly seems “tribal,” “national,” transpersonal, relational. It is almost as if Welch in *The Indian Lawyer* took a brief respite from collective resistance. Certainly, Montana and America present obstacles to American Indians that the white population, for the most part, does not face, and the predicament in which Sylvester Yellow Calf finds himself is undoubtedly complicated by his Blackfeet background. But, all the same, this book is very much the story of Sylvester Yellow Calf, Indian lawyer, human, fallible individual agent, far more than the story of the Blackfeet nation or the Pikuni way.

Welch’s last novel, *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2000), begins with a brief prologue introducing the title character through a moment in his boyhood. As an eleven-year-old in 1877 (a year after the defeat of Custer on the Little Bighorn), Charging Elk accompanies his family to Fort Robinson, where their old way of life will be over, and they will be virtual prisoners. The novel proper begins some twelve years later, in Marseilles, where Charging Elk, ill and injured in performance with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in 1889, finds himself in a hospital. Confused and afraid, he escapes. Arrested for “vagabondage,” Charging Elk, as a consequence of bureaucratic errors, is unable to obtain the papers that will let him leave France, either for home or to rejoin the Wild West Show on its European travels. Speaking almost no English, and no French, he is taken in as a charitable act by a fishmonger, René Soulas, and his family. Dressing like a Frenchman of his class, he eats unfamiliar foods, works by the clock, and slowly begins to participate in the life of the family. In time, Charging Elk moves out, gets a job in a soap-making factory, and falls in love with a young prostitute in the ironically named Rue Sainte. A homosexual restaurateur who has become fascinated by Charging Elk forces her into drugging him. Charging Elk awakens to find the man performing oral sex upon him. He immediately kills the restaurateur, serves long years in prison for the deed, and is finally released on another technicality, the fact that he should not have been tried as a citizen of the United States because he is a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation—the French, in this instance, granting the Lakota a fuller sovereignty than any accorded by U.S. federal Indian law. Once more Charging Elk is taken in as an act of charity, this time by the orchardist and farmer, Vincent Gazier. Charging Elk falls in love with Gazier’s young daughter, Nathalie. The couple marry and move to Marseilles, and Nathalie becomes pregnant. Charging Elk then learns that Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show is to appear for a last time, and, alone, he attends. After the performance, he speaks with a Lakota family, one of whom, a young man named Joseph, urges him to return home. Charging Elk is moved by the encounter, although he knows he cannot accept the young man’s advice. The novel concludes with Charging Elk returning to his wife; she, Marseilles, and France have become his home.

This rather bland summary gives little sense of the degree to which Welch, in *Charging Elk*, imagines nationalist, indigenist, and cosmopolitan perspectives on identity as complementary and overlapping. For one thing, simply to embark on this novel required that

Welch himself engage in a cosmopolitan project, learning two cultures not his own, Lakota (Welch is Blackfeet) and French,¹⁸ and engaging a time period not his own, 1877 and, in particular, the years 1889 to 1905.

Charging Elk's sense of himself, from his experience as a young man in the Dakotas at the Stronghold, an off-reservation area, and then as a young and not-so-young man in Marseilles can be described as both indigenist and nationalist. In the land of his birth, and in France, Charging Elk understands the world—familiar at the outset, and then radically unfamiliar—through the conceptual categories of the Lakota and their language.¹⁹ Welch, who probably had to make considerable use of dictionaries, includes many Lakota-language terms (*mini sha* is wine, *nagi* is soul, *kola* seems to mean “age-mate special friend,” and so on) and on occasion he does so without translating. Sometimes, as he had done for the Blackfeet language of *Fools Crow*, he translates the Lakota, but only into the most literal, and not strictly idiomatic, English equivalents; intentionally, that is to say, Welch doesn't do a “good” translating job. And he conveys the fact that some Lakota terms, although they can be rendered roughly in English, are not really translatable.

Charging Elk from early until late in the novel reckons the months in the Lakota way; the novel's prologue is specifically set in the “Moon of the Shedding Ponies,” and its ending occurs many years later in “the Moon of the Falling Leaves.” Having left his country before the year was named in the usual way, by a Winter Count, Charging Elk does not know how to tell the Lakotas he visits in Marseilles in 1905 that he has been in France since 1889; he can say the French words for 1889, but believes that that does not convey the feel or meaning of the year to them. He wonders whether his *nagi*, his soul (but his Lakota sense of the soul is different from that of the Catholic French) will be able to take its proper road home from so far away. His is an indigenous worldview and identity, to the point where, although he does speak French, Charging Elk feels he has “no real language to share with these *wasichus*” (215), the term for the whites (a Lakota word that makes no reference to skin color, literally meaning “fat eaters,” or those who take the best part of everything).

Charging Elk sees the world as many tribal people see it, but not merely with a general indigenist way of knowing and understanding. As in some measure already indicated, much of his worldview is distinctly, specifically, and, we may say, nationally Lakota. The Lakota people's lands and history on them make him who he is. Charging Elk knows that he has been in the presence of Red Cloud and Crazy Horse; Sitting Bull and Black Elk are part of his acquaintance or conscious awareness. It is important to him that his father was a “shirt wearer,” and he hopes that his father was riding a fine horse as the time of his death approached. “We will go on,” Charging Elk tells the Lakotas he meets at the last Buffalo Bill show in Marseilles, “because we are strong people, we Lakotas” (435). As Charging Elk leaves, he says to them, “You have made a poor stranger feel as though part of him which had been missing for many years has come home” (435). Unsurprisingly, they respond, “You are not a stranger: You are Lakota, wherever you might go. You are one of us always” (435–36).

But where Charging Elk has gone, and where he will remain, is France. Having experienced genuine kindness and fellowship from the Soulas family who first took him in; having married Nathalie Gazier, soon to bear their child (Welch writes some beautiful and moving scenes of the love between these two very different people, Charging Elk and Nathalie), Charging Elk, who will most certainly always be Lakota, nonetheless confirms that France is home. Although he once had no language with which to talk to them, he now tells young Joseph, “I speak the language of these people. My wife is one of them and my

heart is her heart. She is my life now and soon we will have another life and the same heart will sing in all of us" (437).

Here, Charging Elk's identity is built upon what Kwame Anthony Appiah has called "cosmopolitan patriotism" (1997). Charging Elk can't go back to the Dakotas because his home is now France, where his wife and child to come, his father-in-law, and some few dear friends reside. But this is not to say that Charging Elk's identity is that of a French person, nor even that it is a hybrid identity. Appiah, to use something of a shorthand here, speaks of his own father's view of cosmopolitan patriotism—a variant, Krupat has argued elsewhere, of nationalism, more nearly than of cosmopolitanism²⁰—as based on the notion that one can take one's roots along wherever one goes. In this sense, Joseph's words to Charging Elk are accurate: "You are Lakota wherever you go" (435). Living elsewhere than the nation need not mean that he is less a "patriot," or, in the terms we have used, a nationalist.

Affirming that Charging Elk is not a stranger but still "one of us" (436), Joseph gives him a pouch with a stone from Paha Sapa, the sacred Black Hills. This is not just a memento or casual token, for the stone—called *inyan* in Lakota, though Welch uses only the English word—is extremely important to Lakota thought and belief (e.g., Stone Boy myths). Holding the sacred stone, Charging Elk returns to his wife, to their home. In the last words of the novel, he still reckons time in the Lakota way; he walks, knowing that the "Moon of the Falling Leaves would light his way" (438).

* * *

Leslie Marmon Silko's career as a novelist began with the publication of *Ceremony* in 1977. Since then, *Ceremony's* indebtedness or, at the least, its relation to Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* has regularly been noted. Like Momaday's Abel, Silko's Tayo is a mixed-blood, World War II veteran, though Tayo's father, absent and anonymous, is white, not an Indian from another tribe. Like Abel, Tayo is "sick" and/or dysfunctional, and desperately in need of healing.²¹ Abel does or does not begin to accommodate himself to his tribal community; Tayo seems to successfully reintegrate himself into his Pueblo community. Other parallels have also been drawn. In the context of resistance to colonialism, however, we may examine the ways in which both novels perform the sort of ideological work Anthony Appiah has identified for what he calls the first stage of postcolonial African novels.²²

These novels, according to Appiah, are "anticolonial and nationalist," "the imaginative re-creation of a common cultural past that is crafted into a shared tradition by the writer. . . . The novels of this first stage are thus realist legitimations of nationalism: they authorize a 'return to traditions'" (149–50). *Ceremony* performs this return by chronicling Tayo's adventures in living out the (ceremonial) vision "seen" for him by an odd but unquestionably powerful Navajo chanter or singer named Betonie, someone more adept, it is hoped, at treating Tayo's particular condition than old Ku'oosh, the Laguna specialist, has been. (Silko's Betonie has been compared to and contrasted with Momaday's Benally.) After a series of adventures and, in particular, after a refusal to act revengefully, Tayo returns to his people, apparently "cured." The novel ends with a quasi-ceremonial invocation, "Sunrise,/accept this offering,/Sunrise" (275), testimony, it would seem, to the recuperability of a "common cultural past," a "shared tradition," and a "return to traditions." The current availability (or at least, the availability around 1945) of the Laguna "way" is also reinforced by the novel's ideologically functional claim that certain "mythic" figures (e.g., Ts'eh Montano and her husband, The Hunter) are not only mythic but "real." You can go home again, Silko's

novel seems to say, for the traditional world of the pueblos, however it may be threatened, is nonetheless still functionally available and vital.

Silko's second novel, *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), is markedly different from *Ceremony*. There is no intact culture here to which one may return. To the contrary, it is almost as though Silko had taken the advice given to Marlow in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*: "In the destructive element immerse." For *Almanac*, unlike *Ceremony*, is not set in the postwar 1940s but in the horrific 1990s, where drug deals, the pornographic representation of torture and death on video, traffic in weapons and in body parts, and cynical real estate scams define the Western "culture of death" in the Americas. *Almanac* devotes 763 pages to illustrating the statements Silko has placed in two boxes in the lower left-hand and lower right-hand corners of an annotated "Five Hundred Year Map" of northern Mexico and the southwestern United States; the map (in the paperback edition) is printed just after the table of contents.

The left-hand box, labeled "Prophecy," reads: "When Europeans arrived, the Maya, Azteca, and Inca cultures had already built great cities and vast networks of roads. Ancient prophecies foretold the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. The ancient prophecies also foretell the disappearance of all things European." The right-hand box, called "The Indian Connection," states: "Sixty million Native Americans died between 1500 and 1600. The defiance and resistance to things European continue unabated. The Indian Wars have never ended in the Americas. Native Americans acknowledge no borders; they seek nothing less than the return of all tribal lands."

Almanac offers a dramatization of the ongoing "Indian Wars" in our time. It tells of the movement of armies from north to south and south to north to rid the Americas of "all"—or at least the most destructive—"things European." The north-south, south-north directionality (we shall see something similar at work in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*) in itself is important, as it contests the directionality of the dominant, colonial narrative of a "destined" (e.g., Manifest Destiny) progressive movement of "civilization" from east to west, from "sea to shining sea." This change in direction is important because it underwrites a change in *what* is important. And we must note that not all of Silko's "Indian" warriors are of Native American ancestry; her politics are not racialized. From the North, New Age pop spiritualists, guerrilla eco-warriors, homeless Vietnam vets, Lakota militants, a barefoot Hopi, and a Korean American computer genius, among others based in the United States, begin a march southward. At the same time, marching northward from Central America, comes a "People's Army" of Indians led by nonviolent twin brothers and a Mayan woman strategically committed to handheld missile launchers and rockets. The groups will converge on Tucson, the eccentric center of the story (and the place where Silko wrote all or most of the novel), and the meeting of these two forces will signal the beginning of the end of invader/settler dominance of the Americas. *Almanac* elaborates a commitment to a transnational solidarity that is not based on blood, a pan-Americanism, as it might be called, in which all those who adhere to tribal values of life and healing may work together against the culture of death brought from Europe but not strictly European. This commitment, based on indigenist values, may be considered a type of cosmopolitan patriotism, and it is also consistent with nationalism.

The indigenist perspective operates, as we have suggested (although there is not space to develop the suggestion) in terms of Silko's insistence on the values of "life," values indigenous to the peoples and cultures of the Americas, but available to others as well. The nationalism, as Eric Cheyfitz has demonstrated, has to do with *Almanac's* clear awareness of the

history that turned “the Pueblos into reservations, thus bringing them under the colonial regime of federal Indian law,” appropriating or putting constraints upon the land without which there can be no concept of the nation. As Cheyfitz further shows, Wilson Weasel Tail, a character who appears only toward the end of the novel and who may in part represent the author herself, offers a transnational “cry for all the dispossessed,” but he “necessarily grounds that cry . . . in nationalist terms, nationalist in *both* the Native and nation-state sense of the term,” implying that “revolutions can only take place in specific locales by overturning specific institutions.”²³ The land must be returned to the people whose inalienable relation to it, whatever federal law may say, cannot be abrogated.

Certainly a relation to their tribal land is central to the identity of Sister Salt and Indigo of the (invented) Salt Lizard people in Silko’s most recent novel, *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999). For all of their travels—Indigo’s include extended stays in England and Italy, as well as other parts of Europe—the two sisters remain focused on the necessity of a return home. Indeed, Shari Huhndorf has seen the book as a kind of reverse captivity narrative (190). After their mother and grandmother die, Indigo and Sister Salt are captured by police. Sister Salt is sent to a nearby reservation, and Indigo is sent to the Sherman Institute, in Riverside, California, one of the now-infamous government boarding schools. So far, there is nothing “reverse” about Indigo’s captivity, which parallels the unfortunate lot of a great many Native children forcibly removed from their homes from about 1875 until the end of the termination policy in 1970 and taken to schools for what David Adams has called an “education for extinction.”²⁴

But Indigo runs away from school and is taken in by a curious Anglo couple, Edward and Hattie, then accompanies them (she travels with Hattie, for the most part) on a tour of Europe, exploring English and Italian gardens at some length. Huhndorf contends that “Instead of meeting her fate in the white world, Indigo,” as Silko tells her story, “will find the tools necessary for her own survival and, by implication, the survival of Native America” (191). Indigo’s “education” out of school among the whites will not, therefore, be an education “for extinction” but one for “survival.”

Silko’s *Gardens* appeared only a year before Welch’s *Charging Elk*, and the points of intersection between the two novels are striking. First, both are set in roughly the same period (1880s to the early 1900s), when the federal government put a great deal of effort into the forced assimilation of Native peoples (or, perhaps more accurately, into the destruction of their Native polities and lifeways); second, the major characters in both novels are sent to “school,” as it were, in Europe. Although the endings differ considerably, with *Charging Elk* remaining in Europe and Indigo returning home to her Salt Lizard people, we suggest that these books, in their unofficial history of the period, provide not only reverse captivity narratives but also counternarratives of resistance to assimilation. *Charging Elk*’s “home” is France, yet he remains a Lakota through and through; Indigo’s home is in the desert with her sister and their people, so she is clearly a Salt Lizard person—with a difference. In constructing the histories of *Charging Elk* and Indigo, James Welch and Leslie Marmon Silko explore the complex, overlapping possibilities of indigenist, nationalist, and cosmopolitan (perhaps more exactly what we can call, following Anthony Appiah, “cosmopolitan patriot”) identities in resistance to colonialism.²⁵