The return of the “native” is a return to primitivism, essentialism, and a hierarchy of differences.


Session 8: “Reflecting on Patterns of Anthropological Relationships with Indigenous Peoples” Part One
Who are tribal peoples? How are they determined?

1996 - South African Boers demand to be allowed to attend inaugural Forum for Indigenous peoples held in Geneva.

Re-entry of the “Primitive.” Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s speech re-traditionalizing the native.

Anthropologists should question the logic of indigeneity as a special interest

Special rights for special peoples, against immigrants and foreigners?

Romanticism and indigenous identities

Culture loss as genocide

Indigenous peoples as ecologically noble savages
- Indigenous peoples are as modern as their Euro-American counterparts (e.g. Inuit of northern Canada, Alaska)

- Indigenous rights: taking chiefs at their word

- Indigenous cosmologies vs. science: no migration across the Bering Straits

- Some indigenous groups were in fact colonizers

- Politics of descent as a revival of racism?

- New forms of racial segregation, primitivism

- Discredited ways of thinking, now influential when dressed up as indigenous rights discourse