

Anhang, in dem die jeweiligen Berichte historisiert und in den größeren historischen Kontext eingeordnet werden.

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Glenn H. Penny, *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press 2013, xvii+372 p., \$ 47,50 (Hardcover) ISBN 978-1-4696-0764-1 (cl.). Frank Usbeck, *Fellow Tribesmen: The Image of Native Americans, National Identity and Nazi Ideology in Germany*, New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books 2015, ix+252 p., \$ 95, ISBN 978-1-78238-654-4 (cl.).

Have you ever wondered why Germans instinctively identify with “Indianer” rather than white Europeans (Germans among them) settling the North American continent? Have you asked yourself why German culture is captivated by American Indians, so much so that adult German men even today dress up in feathers and walk around half-naked in summer encampments near the Polish-German border? Or why German boys love Winnetou but not George Armstrong Custer? The popular German novelist Karl May, of course, has a role to play when looking for answers. But the history of the German infatuation with Native Americans has deeper cultural roots than a literary reference to May’s prolific writings would be able to explain: it started in the early nineteenth century and reverberated through such different periods as the Wilhelmine Empire, the Weimar Republic, the Nazi regime, postwar reconstruction, and East German communism.

Serendipitously, two scholarly works recently appeared on the subject, one written by seasoned American historian Glenn Penny from the University of Iowa, the other by German research fellow Frank Usbeck, currently at the TU Dresden. Whereas Usbeck’s work (based on his PhD thesis in American Studies) investigates more narrowly how the German imaginings of “Indians” intertwines with German

nationalism and how, particularly, National Socialism was able to capitalize on cultural fears and longings by employing the German fascination with Indians, Penny's work is broader in scope. Penny traces the German affinity with Native Americans to the early 1800s, long before the last Indian wars were fought in the American West in the 1870s and 1880s and also before Karl May's undyingly successful, fictional Winnetou series of 1893. Penny follows this affinity all the way up to German adult "hobbyists" (his term) playing Indians in 2006 near Cottbus, former East Germany.

Penny, like Usbeck, mentions the Nazi genocide as well as Hitler's ambiguous references to Indians, but he limits his observations to a few subchapters in the context of larger comparative questions. Penny points to the Nazi leadership's awareness of the popular appeal of "Indians" in German culture and to Hitler's personal admiration of both Karl May and the *Kampfesmut* (warrior bravery) of "old Indian tribes" (p. 152). But Hitler also referred approvingly to America's conquest and subjugation of its indigenous population in the context of his own imperial plans of German colonial settlement in East European territory. Another instance in which Nazism appears in Penny's comparative frame is the political instrumentalization of American Indians in various German regimes. His study provides absorbing insights into the malleability of the imagined Indian in the Nazi usage of the "fascist Indian," the East German adoption of the "socialist Indian," and the West German harnessing of the "democratic Indian" (p. 163-183).

The German fascination with "Indianer" did not remain unnoticed among Native Americans themselves, and one of the great values of Penny's *Kindred by Choice* is the discussion of the reciprocal relationships that developed between Native Americans and their German admirers. Paying attention to such reciprocity returns agency to American Indians, allowing us to see them not merely as figures in the German imagination but also as social and political actors. In the 1880s, for example, American Indians—Iroquois, Chippewas, Sioux, Omaha,

Lakota, and others—arrived in Germany “almost every year, fulfilling [German] childhood dreams and adult expectations” (p. 57). Those early encounters were eventually eclipsed by Buffalo Bill’s successful Wild West show, which arrived in Munich in April 1890 with a “troupe of more than two hundred Cowboys and Indians” (p. 60) and toured Germany for a full year until May 1891. The massacre of Wounded Knee, we need to remind ourselves, happened during the same year, in December of 1890. While in America the westward expansion had moved to its final violent stages, the Indian past was already nostalgically embraced and celebrated in the streets and literature of Germany’s burgeoning Wilhelmine Empire.

American Indians, however, also reversed and played with the roles allotted to them. In 1928, for example, a group of Lakota visited the grave of Karl May in Radebeul, with Big Snake praising May in a speech given in his native Lakota tongue. After 1945, Native American service men in Germany occasionally slipped into the roles of American Indian performers, and thus became unofficial cultural attachés for improving postwar German-American relations. The most famous among them was Buffalo Child Long Lance who, despite his mixed ethnic background, passed as a “pure” Indian in postwar West Germany. Also to be mentioned is how actively the American Indian “Red Power” movement (AIM) cultivated its relationships with sympathetic circles in West and East Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. It included Petra Kelly and the Green Party in the West and the East German academician and novelist Liselotte Welskops-Henrich, author of the famous *Die Söhne der großen Bäarin*, for which she had been awarded the GDR prize in youth literature.

Penny’s book is divided into two parts. The first follows a more chronological approach to interactions between Germans and American Indians, starting with the first German translation of Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales* (*Lederstrumpf*) in 1826 and ending with Hitler’s declaration during World War Two that the Volga will be “Germany’s Mississippi” (p. 155). These interactions are not limited to Europe, and Penny

includes a chapter on German settlers on the American continent. He discusses their complicity in the displacement and destruction of Native Americans, illustrating it with an in-depth look at the increasing friction in the 1860s between the Dakota and German settlers in and around the town of New Ulm, Minnesota.

Part 2 of *Kindred by Choice* still keeps a historical lens on German-Indian relations but now follows a more topical approach. In four chapters, Penny explores the employment of “Indians” in various political settings; the intersection of race and masculinity in the construction and reception of Native Americans; the question of comparative genocide in North America and National Socialism, especially within the framework of colonial settlement and Dirk Moses’ concept of “subaltern genocide” (p. 240); and, finally, the Native American reception of their German admirers, including tourism and social-cultural engagement of Germans on Indian reservations in more recent times. There is no easy way to sum up Penny’s argument, but half-way through his book we find a paragraph that might come close to this purpose. “For more than 150 years,” he writes,

“Germans have been concerned...[with] striking consistencies [despite] shifting contexts...with what they regarded as the United States’ persistent efforts to eradicate American Indians. ... [T]here is no question that German’s postwar reactions stemmed from much older awareness, interests, and concerns” (p. 232).

Both Penny and Usbeck argue that an important historical document feeding the German identification with American Indians is *Germania*, written in the first century by the Roman senator Tacitus. There, Germanic tribes are portrayed as noble savages that resisted subjugation by the Imperial Roman army. These tribes were perceived as free-willed people living the martial values of loyalty, honesty, bravery, and an untainted connection to nature. German Romanticism and nationalism at the end of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries revived those notions. Penny quotes the German philosopher

Fichte who, in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808), referenced Tacitus in order to support German national aspirations.

“Freedom meant to [Germans] that they remained German ... [and] that every man would sooner die than become [a Roman slave] and that a true German could wish to live only in order to be and remain a German and to bring up his children German also” (p. 19).

Longing for freedom and autonomy, resilience and bravery were seen as shared sentiments between Germans and American Indians. To construct and uphold such an invented shared legacy required cultural mechanisms of transference and the employment of various media, the subject of Frank Usbeck’s work. The “intuition and passion...ascribed to both Indians and ancient and modern Germans,” Usbeck writes, “became a common denominator between the two imagined identities, allowing Germans to assert a special bond long after Romanticism” (p. 39).

Usbeck’s *Fellow Tribesmen* investigates the cultural and intellectual roots of Germany’s infatuation with Native Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a focus on German nation-building and on the Nazi ideological commandeering of German “Indianthusiasm” (a term coined by Hartmut Lutz and adopted by Usbeck). Usbeck argues that the appropriation of idealized images of American Indians helped Germans to pursue their own dreams of national autonomy at a time when they had not yet become a unified nation. The romanticized notion of the noble Indian warrior, representing the same venerated values as attributed to the old Germanic tribes (“courage in battle, physical hardness, honesty, closeness to nature, a spirit of independence, hospitality [and] loyalty to family, clan and leaders” [p. 59]), fostered the dream of a strong and united Germany. As we know, this eventually came to fruition in 1871 over against the perceived hegemony of other European powers, such as France and England; it was reinvigorated in the 1930s and 1940s, when Hitler envisioned a racially pure and superior colonial empire across Europe

over against the competing American and Soviet powers and the belief in a Jewish world conspiracy.

Usbeck builds upon the already existing “corpus of scholarship” (p. 6) on the nexus of Germans and “Indianer,” but he probes more deeply the complexities and inconsistencies of the racial representation of Native Americans in Nazi propaganda and in various genres of German print media, such as “daily newspapers, magazines, academic journals [and select] monographs, works of fiction and government documents” (p. 6). In racial terms, Indians were portrayed as both inferior and superior. Nazi ideology embraced them as a vanishing people representing the purity of racial integrity. In this way, National Socialism continued the trope of the “vanishing Indian” that had already been both mourned and celebrated in the 1890s in Germany (and, of course, in white American discourse as well). “Nothing could be more romantic and heart-breaking,” Usbeck quotes scholar Fiorentino, “than the resigned stare of a man who knows he is going to die” (p. 136). The persistent nostalgia about American Indians helps to explain the parallel phenomenon of the appeal of the imagined Indian while not wanting to recognize realistically their contemporary situation. Many German writers, Usbeck observes, expressed their “disappointment in Indians who, rather than dying and turning into heroic memories, took every opportunity to make a living” (p. 138).

The “vanishing-race trope” (p. 136) also sheds light on the inconsistencies in the perception of American Indians. On the one hand, a longing of purity and unity fed German nation-building in the nineteenth century; on the other hand, the trope also expresses the fear that the racial purity of a Volk (peoplehood), with its imagined bond to soil and nature, is threatened by external forces, and hence demands a people’s vigilance. This anxiety was systematically exploited by Nazi ideology: defensively, it mobilized a sense of German victimization in the wake of the perceived humiliations of the Versailles Treaty; offensively, it called for an uncompromising will to populate new Lebensraum (living space) in the East.

While the defensive stance could employ the image of Indians bravely resisting subjugation, the offensive stance invoked the successful American conquest of indigenous lands as a model for the Nazi conquest of the East, with inferior peoples to be conquered, resettled, enslaved, and exterminated.

As is true for many dissertations turned into books, Fellow Tribesmen suffers, at times, from academic jargon that is overemployed and repetitive. There is abundant citing and referencing of secondary literature, and at times one would have wished for fleshing out in more sustained ways particular case studies. This critical remark aside, Usbeck enriches the scholarly debate by presenting a wide spectrum of the German media reception of American Indians and, importantly, by demonstrating the function of the image of Native Americans for inventing German national identity. “The Indian was not merely a literary image that drew its impulses from Karl May or from the Indian novelists of the 1930s,” Usbeck summarily states.

“Political events in the Americas evoked Nazi interest, and the image of Indians, reinforced by racial thinking, helped Nazi propaganda and Nazi policies begin subversive activities to destabilize societies. ... Indianthusiasm has always been part of the German mix of fascination with, and contempt for, America” (213).

Read together, the new studies by Usbeck and Penny offer historical depth, fresh conceptual insight, and valuable comparative frames for understanding the German fascination and identification with Native Americans.

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Martin Röw, *Militärseelsorge unter dem Hakenkreuz. Die katholische Feldpastoral 1939-1945*, Paderborn/München/ Wien: Schöningh Verlag 2014 (Krieg in der Geschichte, Bd. 83), 474 S., 56,- € , ISBN: 978-3-506-77848-2