UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

# “THE WISH TO BECOME A RED INDIAN:” INDIANTHUSIASM AND RACIAL IDEOLOGIES IN GERMANY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2017

“THE WISH TO BECOME A RED INDIAN:” INDIANTHUSIASM AND RACIAL IDEOLOGIES IN GERMANY

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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This labor of love is dedicated to Jamie and our children… and Slavica.

## Acknowledgements

The journey to produce this dissertation would not have been possible without the support, encouragement, and dedication given to me by many people who have all touched my life in profoundly meaningful ways. I have grown from a timid and anxious first-generation undergrad into a confident and compassionate professional, in part due to the friendships, mentorships, and even burnt bridges I have experienced on this path.

I wish to thank my writing and editing supporters, Drs. Janessa Doucette, Tammi Hanawalt, and Kiersten Baughman, and my dear friends, Alyx Kesselring and Cameron Brockmann. Without their keen eyes, smart suggestions, and blunt direction, I would still be stuck on page one.

I became a life-long learner and a dedicated social justice warrior at Loyola University Chicago. Not a day of writing goes by when I do not remember the late Dr. Paul Breidenbach telling me that anthropology is not something you read; it is something you feel… something you do… a way you passionately live your life to make other lives matter… to make them matter as much as your own does. Thanks to Dr. Breidenbach, I have passionately tried to live my life to make other lives matter.

In addition to shaping my professional paradigm, Loyola provided an opportunity for me to meet some of my closest friends. One such opportunity has developed into a beautiful, transatlantic, but close-knit friendship with Iain Perdue. I owe him a great debt of gratitude for his

sacrifices of time and finances to host and accompany me during key points of my fieldwork travels.

More importantly, he has been a constant source of encouragement, support, and honest critique during much of my academic journey. Iain (whom I lovingly call “Kip”) has held my hand at times, and pushed me to take independent risks at other times. Though, physically, he is thousands of miles away, his influence and intellectual fostering appear nuanced in these pages.

My doctoral research was possible because of three major funding opportunities. I received the 2016-2017 Nancy Mergler Dissertation Fellowship which allowed me to comfortably travel to and throughout Germany for fieldwork. I also received multiple travel grants and stipends from the Max Planck Society Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany where Dr. Günther Schlee has been a major source of mentorship and confidence-boosting throughout my doctoral program.

Third, but perhaps most endearing to my heart, is the Ancestor Fellowship and grant I received from the Illinois Holocaust Museum to travel to Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in Oşwięcim, Poland to collaborate on-site for an ethnographic and qualitative-survey with Max Planck Society. This experience was life-changing in many ways. The sheer dark and deep emotion felt during just one day at the memorial penetrates even the strongest hearts of those among us, but multiplied by several

weeks, it becomes one's paradigm for viewing the world, and understanding the capacity for both human hatred, and love.

While the Auschwitz project was not part of my dissertation research, it solidified many of the thoughts and inclinations I had about racial and nationalist discourses; however, it is the relationships I built with fellow researchers, Holocaust survivors, and Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum staff that I cherish most from this experience. Survivor, Fritzie Fritzshall, continues to teach me about hope during times of fragility, and integrity during times of recovery and growth. Likewise, survivor, Sam Harris, continues to show me grace in facing fear and uncertainties, and resilience in rebuilding broken dreams. Their friendship and mentorship mean the world to me.

I also have many people to acknowledge in Europe. Drs. Markus Lindner, Frank Usbeck, Mario Bührmann, and Renate Bartl each offered valuable insights and pushed me to think outside the box, and from a diverse set of lenses as I approached the murky topics of cultural appropriation and nationalist ideologies. Each of these scholars and teachers enthusiastically and patiently met with me (and even housed me) on multiple occasions as I inquired about their firsthand experiences with Indianthusiasm. I owe a debt of gratitude for their direction and nuanced advice.

I would like to thank Ed Bryant, Quinton Pipestem, and Kendall Old Elk (and his family), ex-pat Native American artists and dancers at El Dorado, a Wild West theme park in Templin, Germany. Their hospitality, friendship, and continued support, as well as their personal insights on, and experiences with Indianer continue to give my research direction.

Mentors at the University of Oklahoma steered me to take informed risks, and have the confidence to take criticism and turn it into legitimate scholarly contribution. Drs. Misha Klein, Asa Randall, Gus Palmer, Amanda Minks, Alison Fields, and Robert Lemon lent me countless hours of council, advice, and discussion on everything from theory, writing, and literatures, to ensuring I practiced self-care, spent time with my family, and enjoyed life outside of the library and institution.

Above and beyond the normal expectations of committee members, Dr. Misha Klein took a vested interest in not only my success, but in my journey to become a passionate anthropologist and social justice activist. Never once did she let me slide through a crack, become uninterested, or disengage from the pursuit. She has been my cheerleader, confidant, coach, and – at times – provider of hard truths (which only made me grow and blossom more). I could not have reached this milestone without her devotion and commitment. She is, without a doubt, the University of Oklahoma's rare jewel.

Also without question, my success on this academic journey would not have been nearly as great without the insurmountable support from my doctoral advisor, Dr. Sean O'Neill. In German, his title as my advisor is "*Doktorvater*" (Doctoral Father). This title is fitting in many ways, but none more so than because he is the one who has consistently led by example, been a constant source of encouragement and pride, and has lifted me from immature ignorance of social philosophy to scholarly understanding and published contributions in diversity and multiculturalism.

This dissertation is as much a reflection of his benevolent mentorship as it is of my expedition through critical discourse analysis. The influence of his own research will be clear at various points in this dissertation, but even more important are the many meandering conversations we have had, in which race, nationalism, and sociopolitical discourses usually figured prominently, but alongside family, music, food, Star Trek, Buddhist philosophy, and so much else.

My grad school journey started with a painful, heart-wrenching "see you later" to my kindred spirit in Chicago, Slavica Petrovic. As sometimes (but rarely) happens, our friendship grew into a secure bond that can never be broken, despite being separated by hundreds of miles. Slavica and her family taught me invaluable lessons of love, hope, and resilience. This dissertation is a result of her insistence that the sacrifice will be temporary because love is stronger than the pain of distance.

Andrew, Sarah, and Simon, my three children, have endured a lifetime of compromises and “alternative fun” as accomplices in this academic pursuit. They have entertained me, kept me young, and taught me priceless lessons of forgiveness, honesty, and humility. My only hope is that throughout this encounter, they have learned to make the world safe for human differences, to laugh away fear and anxieties, and to embrace every opportunity that comes their way.

Lastly, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for a lifetime of love, commitment, assurance, and laughter shared with my husband, Jamie. His selfless promise to support me around every corner and in every crevasse of life has been the guiding light for this academic odyssey, and the backbone of our 20+ year marriage. Only he truly knows what the journey to this dissertation means to me. Without his partnership, kindness, and remarkable ability to center my emotions, I would have never reached this milestone, let alone still be alive.

*Kelly R. LaFramboise*

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## Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the role of Indianer[1] – Germans (and other Europeans) who wish to be Native American so much that they embody and practice essentialized notions of Native American cultural traditions – in German racial discourses. Indianer reconstructions of indigenous identities are based on fictional, romanticized, and racist representations of nineteenth century Native Americans.

Myths of race and memory, as well as consumption of medically-engineered zygotes, and participation in plastic tourism all contribute to the racial and nationalist discourses of "Indianthusiasm" in Germany. Using critical race theory, discourse analysis, and ethnohistorical frameworks, this research reveals nuanced resurgences of WWII era German racial ideologies, as well as a broader, global look at misrepresentations of indigeneity and environmental stewardship.


[1] The word "Indianer" is the same in singular or plural tenses.

# Preface

"*Wunsch, Indianer zu werden:" Wenn man doch ein Indianer wäre, gleich bereit, und auf dem rennenden Pferde, schief in der Luft, immer wieder kurz erzitterte über dem zitternden Boden, bis man die Sporen ließ, denn es gab keine Sporen, bis man die Zügel wegwarf, denn es gab keine Zügel, und kaum das Land vor sich als glatt gemähte Heide sah, schon ohne Pferdehals und Pferdekopf – Franz Kafka,1912 (Gray et al, 2005:300).*

*"The Wish to Become a Red Indian:" If one were only an Indian, instantly alert, and on a racing horse, leaning against the wind, quivering jerkily over the quivering ground, until one shed one's spurs, for there were no spurs, threw away the reins, for there were no reins, and hardly saw the land before one was smoothly shorn heath when horse's neck and head already gone. – Franz Kafka, 1912 (Translation by Kelly LaFramboise).*

In just one long sentence, Kafka describes a complex story wrought with opportunity for interpretation. In this allegory, Kafka describes a dream of yearning to be a romanticized Native American. The alertness of the Indian implies that there is a clarity of mind, or an awakening to the realities of the Indian's freedom. The racing horse represents power, wildness, and untamed impulses that civilized society has forsaken. The Indian, riding without reins and spurs, represents the freeness of primitive indigenous life, living and moving as one with the horse, in nature. The Indian and the horse become one, and disappear into the wish itself.

Kafka tries to whittle down the story to having *only* the *wish*. One of the most meaningful parts of this one-sentence story is that Kafka is showing us a major point about language — like the wish, there are many

things that language, especially literature, cannot show or convey. The wish encapsulates all the desires one can have without language to make them a reality.

Kafka's attempt to isolate the wish from the story results in a virtual absence or nothingness, just as the popular, romanticized narrative of Native Americans often suggests. *The Wish to be a Red Indian* describes a popular desire in Germany, for Germans to become Indian, and to be one with nature, free from the spoils of modernity, and free from the realities of colonized indigenous history. Set in the broader context of a German longing and passion for the Wild West, and its iconic rugged freedom and independent nature, this dissertation examines the myths and racial discourses associated with German wishes to be "Red Indians."

**Why are Germans Passionate about Native American Culture?**

This popular wish, throughout Germany, both in history and contemporarily, has become part of the national fabric of German heritage and identity. Germans who desire to be Native American often trace their German heritage as far back as the Teutons in the Second Century, BC. Teutons were Germanic tribal people, who lived in clans, and defended their territories from the Roman Empire. Ancient philosophers, such as Tacitus wrote about the Teutons. Tacitus described them as brutish and barbaric. While Tacitus tried to describe the Teutons as noble warriors, he concludes by describing them as primitive, uncivilized, and unintelligent.

Germans who wish to be Native American also trace their popular hobby back to the 19th century when popular literature of the time highlighted indigenous American peoples, in an effort to preserve their memory as the common belief was that the Natives would disappear. Authors such as James Fennimore-Cooper, Herman Melville, and D.H. Lawrence wrote epic novels that included narratives about “nobel savages” and “warriors,” which often illustrated Natives as inferior, thereby influencing popular discourses about indigenous peoples.

In Germany, an author named Karl May wrote a series of fiction novels about an Apache Chief named Winnetou, and his German immigrant side-kick, Old Shatterhand. The storyline closely resembles that of *The Lone Ranger*, but in *Winnetou* novels, Winnetou is the hero, and Old Shatterhand is the lesser side-kick, whereas in *The Lone Ranger*, the Native supporting character, Tonto, is overshadowed by the heroic antics of the Lone Ranger. Tonto speaks “broken” English and is portrayed with many common negative stereotypes of “primitive” and “wild” Indians (as was common during the era The Lone Ranger as popular: the 1950s).

Most Germans who participate in the hobby of pretending to be Native American are avid fans of Karl May’s *Winnetou* stories. *Winnetou* continues to be quite popular in Germany, and his characters, fictional landscapes, and narratives remain central in German socialization of children as well as coming-of-age preparations for young men.

Since its first publication in 1893, Winnetou has been a hallmark in German racial ideologies. This is apparent in the many ways Winnetou and other stereotypical representations of romanticized Native people (mostly Plains Indian male warriors) are portrayed throughout German marketing campaigns and consumer goods. The popular grocery chain, Aldi, uses Native American imagery in ts Sunday sales fliers. Restarurants offer children's menus with names of entrees such as "Der Winnetou Burger" (The Winnetou Burger), and "The Mannitou Meal." Mannitou is an eagle in the book series which is spiritually connected to Winnetou. The two perform supernatural feats together. The "Mannitou Meal" is typically grilled chicken served with a dumpling or fries. There are also streets throughout Germany named in memory of Karl May and his characters. I walked down Old Shatterhand Strasse in Templin, Germany.

Throughout German history there have been ties to, or fascination with tribal life, and that of a romanticized image of anti-modernism. I was nott able to find the exact link as to why Germans prefer American Indians over Teuton tribalism, the closest I came to getting a straight answer about why Germans choose to emulate Native North Americans is because they feel Native Americans are closer to their idealized notions of what an anti-modern, survivalist should be. Germans manipulate Native identity and history to fit their romantic idea of the perfect indigenous race.

The Romantic Era in art and literature certainly influenced Karl May and other Europeans who were isolated from actual contact with indigenous peoples. The Sturm and Drang (Storm and Stress) proto-Romantic movement in German literature and music took place from the late 1760s to the early 1780s, in which individual subjectivity and, in particular, extremes of emotion were given free expression in reaction to the perceived constraints of rationalism imposed by the Enlightenment and associated aesthetic movements. Common attributes of art and literature during the Romantic Period included the desire for heroicism, as well as a deep, longing passion for and fascination by nature. While written over 100 years following Sturm and Drang, *Winnetou* is a Romantic novel.

This wish to be a romanticized Indian has several implications for anthropological study which will be detailed throughout this dissertation and summarized in the final chapter. First and foremost, however, it is a racial discourse. This phenomenon is a practice of cultural and racial appropriation. Germans are constructing their Native identities on imagery and ideas of romanticized and fictional representations of Native Americans, yet in some cases, Germans travel to North America to major in Native American Studies at American universities, where they learn Native languages, history, political science, and literature. They replicate what they have been taught when they return to Germany, and often sell their arts and crafts as “authentic Native American” goods. But most strikingly, this

representation of Native peoples is the dominant source of information by which other Germans learn about Native Americans. This fictional, exaggerated, and romanticized portrayal is what most Germans think is true of Native American history and contemporary life.

## Ethnographic Methods

Through participant observation, in-depth interviews, archival analyses, and media/discourse analyses, I present an argument that German fascinations with, and reconstructions of Native American cultures and identities continue in a more nuanced fashion WWII racial ideologies, and further contributes to a social memory of racial myths and essentialist notions of indigeneity.

I spent much of my fieldwork time at a casual, rustic resort called Apple Tree Ranch in Brandenburg, Germany in 2016[2]. This cabin and camp facility hosts year-round tourists who desire Wild West experiences while on holiday. It is owned by a German woman named, Jutta, and is managed by her life partner and American cowboy, Rick[3]. They have a staff of several Brazilian and Turkish ranch hands, and three herds of American Paint horses; two are wild, and one is tame (and used for guest horseback riding

[2] Apple Tree Ranch is a pseudonym for the resort. Brandenburg is the region of the camp's location. I have not given its exact location or village name. The owners asked me to keep the actual name and location private.
[3] According to IRB protocol and to protect their privacy, all names of participants and animals in this document are pseudonyms.

and local riding lessons). In all, there are about 55 horses, including two new foals and four certified, champion stallions.

*Entrance to Apple Tree Ranch*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany. 2016.*

*My cabin at Apple Tree Ranch.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany. 2016.*

The resort is also home to other farm animals, a fabulous yellow Lab named Dolly, and several feral cats. Apple Tree Ranch is full of life, and

draws a large crowd during peak travel seasons. On an average summer day, you will find the campgrounds and guest areas awash with Germans wearing cowboy and Indian regalia, practicing their roping/lassoing skills, trick-shooting, and performing the day-to-day chores of ranch life (such as mending fences, feeding livestock, mowing fields, and brushing horse manes).

Almost every long-weekend between May and October, the camp fills with German (and other European) guests pitching their tipis, donning their Native American regalia, hunting small game in the forest, fishing the lake, and holding sweat lodge ceremonies, powwows, and other indigenous-inspired ceremonies. There are many names for these groups of people. Some are official clubs, with formal names (such as Oglala Indianer Klub, Cree Camp and Coalition, and Iroquois Confederacy of Stuttgart). In some literatures, they are known as European Hobbyists; in others, simply “Euros.”

More recent, and ethnographic descriptions of these groups refer to them as Indianer – the German word for “Indian” in the Native American sense (Usbeck, 2015; Penny, 2013; Calloway, 2002). These descriptions also identify the movement, or phenomenon of “playing Indian” as “Indianthusiasm,” meaning “having an enthusiastic passion and drive to be an Indianer” (Usbeck, 2015:2). Apple Tree Ranch hosts groups and individuals, and offers them resources such as horses, wood for chopping and burning, a sweat lodge, a powwow arena, and acres upon acres of land used as a hunting ground and playground for Indianer to practice their Indianthusiasm.

I spent several weekends learning the intricacies and social norms of Indianthusiasm at Apple Tree Ranch. I dug fence holes, harvested pumpkins, bathed horses and donkeys, picked what seemed like tens of thousands of bushels of apples and pears, collected eggs daily, braved the goose pen to clean and replace water troughs, and learned to lasso a trash barrel. I processed rabbits and various birds after Indianer men hunted/killed them and performed a gratitude ceremony. I rode horses for entire days while talking to Indianer and camp staff, and washed my clothing in lake water, and hung it to dry on tree branches.

I did not wear regalia or participate in ceremonies except as an observer. All but three groups were accepting of my participation in daily activities and observations of Indianer ceremonies, prayers, powwows, and relations. During the weekends that the three groups who declined participation were at Apple Tree Ranch, I travelled to other popular Indianer sites in Germany, such as the Karl May Museum and Eldorado, a Wild West theme park near Berlin.

## Apple Tree Ranch and the Myth of the Eco-Indian

One of the major draws to Apple Tree Ranch, for many Indianer, is the opportunity to interact with nature. Visitors to this ranch have access to horses and donkeys, blue-eyed geese, hens and roosters, and, perhaps most endearingly, an affectionate dog named, Dolly. Plus, there is a dense, green forest that hides a calm blue lake, and seemingly endless rows of

wild blackberry bushes, apple trees, and pumpkin patches. The sunsets are breathtaking; the daily morning fog covering the pastures is postcard-worthy. It is a cornucopia of natural beauty and bounty.

*Dolly by the pond. Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany, 2016.*

Wolfy, the enormously-gigantic, and unusually fluffy rooster crows not just in the morning, but all-day long. Sun Catcher, one of the American Paint horses, has a perfectly shaped white sunburst shape on her muzzle; it is often hidden behind tufts of her silky, copper mane. Bullwinkle, the large and confidant stallion, meets every visitor with scrupulous curiosity, alarming huffs to assert his dominance, and powerful stomping to communicate his demands for apples, dandelion greens, and/or cucumbers. Despite his show of powerful superiority, he is a gentleman when saddled-up and ridden through the trails and openings in the forest.

*Wolfy by my cabin. Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany. 2016.*

*Three American Paint Horses*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany. 2016.*

It is easy to give human qualities and characteristics to animals and inanimate objects in nature. The animals at Apple Tree Ranch all have names, even the four pigeons who are nested in the eaves of the horse canopy. People at Apple Tree Ranch talk about the vegetation as though it has gender; Rick commented on the apricot tree next to the main barn, “she is really producing a lot of fruit this year.” Jutta said of the largest pumpkin, “he is a big, healthy boy!” Dolly, the yellow Labrador Retriever, is treated as though she is human by most of the guests at the ranch. She is invited to every gathering, and people often bring her personal gifts when they arrive for their stay.

As noted in Chapter Two, some Indianer develop emotional, intimate, and spiritual bonds with specific horses at the ranch. This is not

unique to Indianer, alone. Many people affectionately relate to their pets and wildlife as though there is an emotional bond. Likewise, many people experience spiritual, emotional, and meaningful moments when witnessing a natural phenomenon, event, or moment. Since it is rare to witness some natural occurrences (such as a double rainbow, comet passing, or solar eclipse), people attach emotions to their participation in the observance of such occasions. These events can have profoundly meaningful effects on people.

Many participants of this dissertation research reported having significant emotional responses to varying aspects of nature. One man told me the goal of his reconstruction of Cree culture is to “be one with nature, as the Cree in Canada are.” Another man told me “the best part of being here” <at Apple Tree Ranch> “is being one with nature, and feeling as though my body is not separate from the trees, horses, birds, or water, just as I am sure Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull were, or still are.” One of the women at camp said, “I feel like my thoughts and the horse’s thoughts are aligned as we trot through the forest. I can feel its heart in my chest; it can sense my desire to be one with it. Not everyone has that connection, you know. It is a really big deal to have that blessing.”

As strong as many Indianer desires are to be Native American, their desires to be part of, or connected to nature are equally as significant. There is social capital in being a person who can commune with nature.

Hans is known as “The Fire Whisperer.” Fellow campers refer to him when having trouble starting, or keeping a fire lit, and remarked at his ability to communicate with fire spirits to “receive fire blessings.” Nils is known as “The Rabbit Seeker.” One of his group mates told me, “Nils can find every rabbit in these woods, and they almost always give their life to him, willingly, because they know it is a spiritual calling to be chosen to feed him… and us.” Almost every camper was known for some association with an animal, element, or plant.

Indianer imagine a perfect life, with nothing in camp that is manufactured industrially. They wish to make everything from scratch and build their needed materials out of natural resources. They wish to fish the lakes in Germany, and hunt the alpine forests for food. They desire to, and believe they can do this without significantly altering the landscape.

Like many Americans, Indianer learned as kids that Native Americans lived “off the grid” (even though there was no grid at the time Germans are imagining Natives living), constantly in perfect harmony with nature, never exploiting the resources, or destroying the ecosystems more than they had to. Indianer subscribe to the narrative that Native American people were indeed the logical, benevolent consumers of woodland animals and edible plants, using the landscape in thoughtful, calculated ways. Never would any Native person overhunt buffalo herds or cut too many trees or use fire in risky ways. According to most of the Indianer I encountered in

2016, Native Americans truly understood what it meant to live an anti-modern, primitive, and nature-rich life.

Anthropologist, Shepard Krech, says this common mythical narrative is far from the truth. In *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, Krech says these notions of the Native American as the Ecological Indian, keeper and preserver of the environment, are merely an image fashioned by storytellers -- some centrally, and heartwarmingly intent on spreading good messages, while others are manipulative, meant to deceive, or distort (mostly as racial discourse) (Krech, 1999). Krech says the image is unsubstantiated, but caries heavy social power and is thought to be true, despite the evidence to the contrary.

Krech examines specific ecological discourses and analyzes each for cultural and logical evidence of validity or falsification of the myth. Krech helps us understand the ways Native North Americans actually mistreated, overused, and abused natural resources. He separates facts from myths, and describes a narrative completely different from the common one. He describes how the Native population was dispersed into unseen places throughout an expansive land mass, so Europeans, who were used to crowded spaces, falsely thought the land was a pristine paradise when they saw only a lightly peopled landscape.

The early European immigrants and Frontiersmen did not realize they were observing the seasonally abandoned and/or dormant landscapes

left behind by indigenous groups who had depleted the resources they required at the time. The European immigrants based their interpretations on a Western life style, they were apathetic of the cultural complexities of multidirectional and diverse indigenous tribes, and of how Native North Americans related to animals, plants and natural elements, or how they affected what archaeologists and anthropologists now see as heavily-used and well-manipulated land.

To understand the reality of American Indian use of animals and plants, we must grasp basic cultural premises, Krech says, beginning with the pervasive theme that religion and economy are not separate. This means animals take on qualities like those ascribed to supernatural beings. Buffalo on the plains and salmon on the Northwest Coast were addressed as sentient beings capable of seeing, hearing and responding to us in diverse ways (Krech,1999). If the Plains Indian People (whom Indianer adore) did not kill-off all the buffalo they forced over a "jump" – as theorized by archaeologists -- the surviving buffalo and those “smart enough” to avoid a jump would "tell" other buffalo, warning them away and leaving the people hungry and without skins for clothing (Krech, 1999). What Indianer (and others) fail to remember (or realize), is that overkilling was a sure guarantee of future bounty.

For some members of groups such as Oglala Lakota Klub and Cree Camp and Coalition, the goal is to use as minimal modern amenities or

technologies as possible when at Apple Tree Ranch. There are camp rules about the use of things like paper towel, aluminum foil, and instant coffee or tea in bags. Items of modernity must stay in the main house or locked in vehicles (which must be parked out of sight of the Indianer camp). If a camper wishes to use a forbidden item, they must leave the camp area to do so, and it must never be to make, fix, or replace a camp-approved item.

There is a fair amount of cognitive dissonance in the management of Indianer camps at Apple Tree Ranch. There is a varied state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude changes when it comes to abandoning modernity while at camp. The desire to remain anti-modern is strong, but practically, it is impossible. As I observed, campers often relied on advanced technology to complete camp tasks, and almost all foods consumed were purchased at a local grocery store.

On the one hand, industrial progress and recent technologies since WWII have improved the general standard of living by creating new, better-paying jobs and by making inexpensive mass-produced products readily available in Germany. On the other hand, industrialization and associated urbanization causes air pollution, overcrowding and urban blight, and threatening traditional local, regional, and national ways of life, arts and crafts, and centuries-old social structures. Pressures often seem mutually exclusive in nature, making it difficult to negotiate a middle way: machine-

made against handicraft, standardization against unique design, steel and glass against wood and stucco, flat roofs against pitched ones.

### **How Did Germans Learn about Native Americans**?

Contemporary Indianthusiasm can be traced back to a series of novels about a fictional Apache chief, written by German author, Karl May in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The first book in the series, *Winnetou*, became wildly popular at the turn of the century, and remains a staple novel in German literature and childhood socialization. You will learn more about Karl May, Winnetou, and their influence on Indianthusiasm in the following chapters.

While May perhaps started the craze and phenomenon of German fascination with Native American culture and history, he is no longer the focal point for most Indianer. Yes, there are Karl May festivals, expos, and popular culture reboots of his stories which many Germans flock to. However, for those serious about identifying as an Indianer – those who embody and maintain an idealized (and romanticized) representation of Native identity – Karl May is simply an entertainer, and the creator of fictional stories. Like Walt Disney, Karl May illustrates the wishes and landscapes desired by their consumers, but for Indianer, he does not represent their intent or focus.

## What is This Dissertation About?

In the chapters that follow, I argue that eco-spirituality, eugenics, misrepresentations of indigenous cultures in media and material culture, and myths of race and memory contribute to, and comprise racial discourses that continue racial ideologies and aspects of colonization from the 19th and 20th centuries. The first chapter describes one of the Indianer[4] clubs at Apple Tree Ranch, and their beliefs that they are being spiritually called to relocate the homeland of Lakota tribes to Germany. They believe they perform and embody a more perfect Lakota identity than the Lakota who live in North America.

In Chapter Two, I present an argument that Indianthusiasm is part of a racial (and racist) discourse. Theories of simulacra, aura, and landscape provide an explanation for the way Indianer perform their reconstructed identities, and critical race theory sheds light on the sociolinguistic ways Indianthusiasm contributes to and perpetuates systems of racism, as well as the ways denial and erasure play roles in the discourse and promotion of racism.

Chapter Three gives an overview of Germany's history of "racial hygiene" through eugenics, and how that history relates to the recent phenomenon of German couples procuring Native American sperm for In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) procedures at clinics located in close proximity to

[4] The word, "Indianer" is the same for singular and plural tense.

Native American reservations in the United States. An overview of Nazi eugenics and the Lebensborn system of state-sanctioned, racially-desirable reproduction, with an introduction to IVF through medical tourism, provides an argument about German racial and nationalist ideologies, and examines Indianer ideologies of racial purity, and their beliefs about Germany's dark past.

Chapter Four turns the focus to the production and consumption of misrepresentations of indigenous cultures. Using the example of Walt Disney World's newest theme park setting, "World of Pandora" (based on the film, *Avatar*), I present an argument that capitalism, consumerism, and nationalist ideologies prolifically script racial discourses and ideologies in the United States, and in Indianer communities in Germany. This chapter further analyzes the concepts of simulacra, and includes ecofeminist theories of oppression of women and indigenous peoples being rooted in ideologies of nature vs culture, and how these add to a racial discourse.

"Playing Indian" is a hobby deeply connected to social memories based on myths and folklore of romanticized ideas of indigeneity. Chapter Five offers an examination of the ways Karl May's influence, and Indianer beliefs about what it means to be "Indian" promote a social memory rooted in racial discourses, stemming from WWII racial ideologies. This chapter argues that problematic misrepresentations, which comprise German social memories of indigenous cultures, obscure and misinform understandings of

traumatic and contentious histories, which lead to breakdowns in cross-cultural dialogues and racial tensions between Native Americans and Germans.

Finally, in Chapter Six, I describe how eco-spirituality falsely justifies Indianer beliefs that indigenous peoples can commune with nature because they are *one with* nature. I also conclude with a description of the implications this research has on anthropological thought, and how future research will clarify and expand on some of the intricacies and complex phenomena of “playing Indian.”

The wish to be a “Red Indian” is prolific in Germany. It is part of the national fabric, embedded in national discourses of “Germanness.” This dissertation attempts to understand the racial aspects of the profoundly meaningful desire many Germans possess to want to be Indian, because being a good Indian means being a good German. These racial and national ideologies are intrinsically interesting, but are also part of a larger, historical discourse of essentialism and racism.

# Chapter 1: "Sitting Bull Will Guide Us": German Visions of a Lakota Homeland Relocation

*This chapter addresses eco-spirituality, "authenticity," and identity construction from a racial discourse perspective. While conducting participant observation at a camping resort in eastern Germany, I encountered a group of Germans who claim to have visions of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse who tell the group they are now the "true Lakota Nation" and should relocate the home of the Lakota culture to Germany.*

## Indianer Camp

On a very hot and humid August afternoon in a rural village about an hour north of Berlin, Germany, four German men sat outside of a tipi scraping rabbit fur. The men were topless and dressed in beaded and fringed tanned buckskin leggings. In their hair, they had placed feathers and beaded headbands that held back their long blonde and silver hair. They were dripping with sweat after having just run through the forest to hunt more small wildlife to skin and tan.

This group of men, along with around ten more who were also busy doing various chores, were participants at a camp that caters to Indianer. (Indianer is the German word for American Indians). These Indianer club members identify as being both Lakota (which they are not) and German in

a hybrid of national identity and desired subjectivities collectively known as “Indianer.”

*Paul and Emil at an Apple Tree Ranch Powwow*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany. 2016.*

Oglala Indianer Klub frequently gathers at Apple Tree Ranch (and other locations) to participate in Indianer activities including powwow, and the sweat lodge, where at least one, but almost always two, or more members of this particular group have a vision of Sitting Bull or Crazy Horse giving them instructions to make Germany the new “Homeland of Native North Americans” because, as several group members stated, “the American Indians in the United States and Canada have lost their way. Their cultures were stripped away and they forgot their languages.”

Understanding the history and development of the Indianer provides a better understanding of the sociocultural circumstances that prompt their

desires to identify with a romanticized ahistorical version of Native Americans. The fieldwork conducted in 2016 offers conversations with individual Indianer members that further allow for insight into their psyche, which reveal their cognitive dissonance and reluctance to acknowledge their misconceptions that are perhaps biased by their own fears.

Nevertheless, the game of “playing Indian,” as indicated by various scholars, is potentially dangerous because it often fosters racist and sexist prejudices towards the people represented. The overarching intent of this chapter is to open the discourse concerning the promotion of Indianer ideologies and address the implications the phenomenon has on perceptions of contemporary First Nations and American Indian peoples.

Indianer spend enormous amounts of money and time constructing an American Indian image both bodily and in their landscapes. They learn the histories, languages, and cultural practices of at least one tribe, and work very hard to become as American Indian as they possibly can. The Oglala Indianer Klub identifies as actually being Lakota and German in a hybrid of national identity and desired subjectivities that Indianer typically construct as fact.

The youngest in the Oglala Indianer Klub said, “They don’t live like their strong, proud ancestors. They lost that natural, instinctual ability to be Indian.” During their time in the sweat lodges, the men have visions of popular Lakota chiefs and warriors who tell them to rebuild a home for the

“ancient American Indian ways” in Germany. The spirits adopt them into the Lakota Nation, give them a “Lakota” name, and assign certain titles and jobs to each club member.

The man sitting to his left was known as “Hawk’s Gaze,” and “Kurt Reinhold,” and another man is called, “When the Bear Attacks the Wolf,” and “Bertrand Niemann.” They have both received visions granting rights to make Germany the new home of Lakota traditions, and have both had numerous multi-day vision quest “journeys” in the forest where they are given explicit instructions of how to rebuild the Lakota Nation in Brandenburg, Germany. During the week, these same men work in larger German cities as lawyers, engineers, shopkeepers, mechanics, and various other careers and vocations.

At present, “Indianthusiasm” (a term used by German ethnologist, Frank Usbeck) is found throughout Germany where hobbyists recreate a powwow circuit, and unofficially and casually compete for who speaks the most Native languages, and has the most authentic regalia, native foods, dances, and music (Usbeck, 2015). There are profound meanings that Germans find in their reproductions of American Indian cultures, and these meanings both draw on and contribute to racial ideologies with nuanced understandings of the meanings of race and ethnicity as they are deployed in thoroughly modern ways by these hobbyists.

Dedicated to constructing meaningful identities inspired by American Indians, the rise of “Indianer” followed the World Wars when many Germans sought to regain a sense of national pride in the wake of mass destruction and genocide. Indianer considered American Indian cultures pure, anti-modern, and close to nature, and an antidote to the ills that led to the wars. Germans, inspired by Karl May’s fictional series of novels about an Apache chief named, Winnetou, and his German side-kick, Old Shatterhand, has been constructing and simulating North American Plains Indian culture and identity for over a century; this practice accelerated in the aftermath of both world wars when Germany needed to regain a sense of national identity. There is a paradox here; this group of Indianer believe they are regaining national identity as Germans by appropriating Native identity.

One of the campers, Bertrand, summarized this group’s position on Indianthusiasm as a means to regain national pride. He threw a leather pouch at me as we were sitting near his tipi. It felt like it had only a few small stones in it. He motioned for me to look inside and said, “Those are pebbles from Auschwitz and Birkenau. I went there when I was fifteen. I picked up a little bit of the ground outside the ‘Arbeit Macht Frei’ gate. I keep them as a reminder that I am a child of Germany’s demons.” He slumped down to his knees and hung his head as he said,

*Dancing, sweating, ceremony… they all help us repent and rebuild character for our people. These eagle feathers bring strength back to us. Sitting Bull sees how much we have changed. He sees our hearts and knows we are strong now. He has guided us to be so much good again [sic] and even thinks we are the new Lakota Nation, the ones to bring back the old Lakota ways. The Oglala over in America have lost their way and haven't rebuilt like we have. The Holocaust will always be our albatross, but this… this life… Oglala life… Sitting Bull… this is our redeeming grace.*

Germans found profound meaning and desire in stereotypical Plains Indian stoicism and eco-minded spirituality. They thought Plains Indians to be "the last pure race on Earth" after being entertained by the likes of Sitting Bull in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, novels by James Fennimore-Cooper and Herman Melville, and travel reports from the 1893 World's Fair, where Plains Indians (including Lakota) were displayed, which later scholars have equated with a "human zoo" (Rydell, 1984 and 1993). These exhibits were part of the ethnological displays, which featured African peoples, Inuit, among others, and were very popular at the turn of the century.

## Literature Review

Historian Colin Calloway's account of Germany's historical fascination with the American Indian describes a phenomenon over 180 years old (Calloway, 2002:47). He suggests this intercultural gaze began with German immigrants to the New World in 1830. It continued as telecommunications and international travel became more accessible to those in non-elite classes (48-49). He supposes it may have even begun earlier with Viking contact, though little evidence is present to make that claim officially (48). Regardless, this fascination is not a new German cultural movement.

In his 1990 comprehensive collection of European chronicles of Native American contacts and reports, Christian Feest thoroughly illustrates a complex and multi-faceted history of this deeply meaningful relationship between Europeans and North American indigenous peoples. He curates a large volume that details artists on tour, travelling circus shows, and literatures depicting indigenous North American tribes translated in over seventeen European languages (1990). Feest meticulously documents century-old histories of European captive minds and eager identity constructions.

However, in conclusion of this epic analysis of contexts by which Europeans have a greater understanding of American Indians, and have developed an intimate relationship with the cultures, Feest states, "no such

relationship exists" (609). He goes on to say that under closer scrutiny, it is quite clear that the interest and "extremely profound phenomena" is a wholly fictional idea derived from white notions of exoticized Others (609).

In his article about Karl May, and the Wild West in Germany, Feilitzsch describes a fictional world inspired by travelogues and circus performances narrating Apache culture. Germans (and later, other Europeans) clung to the illustrations and stories as though they were real, and believed Karl May had lived among over a hundred indigenous tribes in North America (174). In fact, May never travelled to North America until decades after the *Winnetou* novels were published (174). Nevertheless, Europeans constructed an imagined reality whereby Apache and German immigrants on the frontier shared mutual trust, camaraderie, and victory over less-than-pleasant Mexican cowboy gangs.

Germans, since 1890, have been in love with Winnetou and Old Shatterhand. Entire narratives of good citizenship, environmental stewardship, and ethics have been rooted in Karl May's novels and expanded to a national discourse for over a century (Lowsky, 1987: 13-15). Karl May, much like America's Walt Disney, created an imaginary playscape, full of adventure and tall tales, which captivated the majority of Germans, and later other Europeans.

As such, this wildly imaginative discourse was not isolated in Germany. Popular Italian films and novels, called "Spaghetti Westerns"

captivated audiences throughout Europe and North America. Some of these films, directed by Sergio Leone and starring Clint Eastwood, were filmed in Europe, released in multiple languages, and were mainly known as being European Westerns, as opposed to John Ford and John Wayne films produced and released for an American audience, though they were also popular in Europe (Frayling, 1981: 124 and MacKay, 2013).

Frayling says that Old Shatterhand is fashioned after an imagined autobiographical "self" of Karl May (Frayling, 1981). He, like many of his readers wanted to *be* Old Shatterhand, accepted by Native peoples as a "brother" and living day-to-day on the Plains fighting for justice for Native people. Germans saw many Western films such as *Winnetou*, *The Longest Day*, *Son of the Great Bear*, *A Fistful of Dollars,* and even Walt Disney's *Peter Pan*. All of these films depict stereotypical and romanticized images of Native people.

Fantasizing Native American narratives didn't fade out after Karl May's death. Europeans, especially Germans, continued to build on the discourses and develop a passion for emulating the messages and landscapes. Inspired by Karl May, many Germans incorporated Native-Americanesqe styles, spiritualities, and romanticized notions of the noble savage into their identities and expressions of self (Penny, 2006 and 2013, and Michaels, 2012). Karl May remains as popular in Germany as Mark Twain, Walt Disney, and John Wayne are in America. Streets are named

after him. Annual festivals, school theater productions, and literary awards are held in his memory. Much of this German fascination with Native American cultures owes its continued popularity to Karl May.

Anthropologist Petra Tjitske-Kalshoven's ethnography on the hobbyist production and consumption of Native American material culture describes the complex and varied ways Indianer (called Indianists by the author) procure and maintain their collections of artifacts, regalia, and rare Native American historical objects. They also create museum-quality replicas of objects, sometimes mistaken as originals by art historians and art collectors (Tjitske-Kalshoven, 21012: 203-206). During camping excursions and powwows, these Indianer show off, buy, sell, and trade their intricate and meticulous creations.

This pastime is woven into a national fabric of Germanness and patriotism, which is paradoxical; German culture and traditions are different than Native American cultures and traditions. The two identities are not very similar, yet some Indianer assume Germanness and Indianness are both somehow synonymous. Multiple participants, when interviewed, told me that they feel like they are good Germans because they are good Indianer.

Before, and during fieldwork, I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Frank Usbeck in Dresden, Germany. His work on Native American imagery and narratives appropriated by the Nazi Party illustrates the darker results of German fascinations with Native American cultures. Mass graves at

places such as Auschwitz and Sachenhausen were inspired by the gravesite at Wounded Knee in South Dakota (Usbeck, 2015: 05). Inspirations from the Boy Scouts of America's appropriation of Native American culture and imagery were a model for the Hitler Youth organization (06). The Nazi party incorporated a plethora of Native narratives and imagery into their propaganda and organization.

For over a century, the beauty and suffering of Native peoples of North America have been a source of self-expression, identity-construction, and socialization for many Germans. The ways in which this narrative has been spread and manipulated vary throughout time. No two groups of Germans present their imaginings the same way, but all can trace the sources of inspiration back to popular media, performances, and literatures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Undoubtedly, in the nineteenth century, Inianthusiam in Germany was also influenced by news of America's poor treatment of their Native people and the romanticized ideas of Indianness that were propagated by Euro-Americans since the seventeenth century, beginning with tales based on the life of the Indian woman Pocahontas, who migrated to England where she became a tourist attraction for many aristocrats, especially men.

By the late nineteenth century German social scientists were in North America studying the American Indigene. Franz Boas, for example, wrote

extensively about the Inuit living on Baffin Island and the Kwakwaka'wakw from the Pacific Northwest (Boas, 1888 and 1895). However, the social structures, traditions, ceremonies, and even the clothing of these two tribes were far removed from the Plains style that contemporary Indianer participants model themselves after.

A likely source of imagery concerning the Plains peoples was the 1832 travel publication of *Reise in das innere Nord-Amerika in den Jahren 1832 bis 1834*, which was published in two volumes between 1834-1841. The images of these two volumes featured stunning portraits, dramatic ceremonials, along with the daily activities of Plains Indians, such as the Mandan, Dakota, and the Hidasta.

The paintings were created by the Swiss-French artist Karl Bodmer, for the German explorer Prince Maximilian zu Weid-Neuweid, who hired Bodmer to visually record their encounters with American Indians as they traveled by steamboat up the Missouri River. Prince Maxamillian had led an earlier expedition in Brazil and produced *Reise nach Brasilien* (1817) which included the first images of native Brazilians ever viewed in Europe, he wished to do the same with the native inhabitants of North America.

The image of the Plains Indian in feathered headdress and fringed buckskin is the most common stereotype of Indigenous America known worldwide. The image of the Plains warrior or scout with his tanned leggings, feathers, beaded headband, and moccasins standing in front of a

tipi has become iconic, recognized throughout the world as the quintessential Indian (Gal and Irvine, 2000). However, this dramatic appearance belongs only to a brief period of the American West that lasted from about 1700 to 1870 (Berlo and Philips 2015: 125). William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody was paramount in helping to perpetuate stereotypical ideas of “Indianness.”

Cody toured his Wild West show across the United States and Europe, employing indigenous people to reenact the attack of Indians on frontier settlers, along with other battles, such as the Battle of Little Big Horn. An early favorite performance of Cody’s was “The Duel Between Buffalo Bill and Yellowhand,” based on the episode in which Cody claimed have killed Yellow Hand, or Yellow Hair, one of the leading chiefs from the battle of Little Bighorn (Sagala, 2008). Not all of Cody’s performances, however, were violent. Native American actors also demonstrated trick riding skills and the making of various crafts and foods before and after the main shows.

Indigenous actors, of course, dressed in costumes made of buckskin and wore feathers, and according to Cody’s specifications they were required to stay in costume even during their personal time, especially in the cities of Europe. Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa leader who inflicted Custer’s defeat at the Battle of Little Big Horn, joined Cody’s show as a performer in 1885 (Utley 1998, Kasson 2002).

Yet, unlike the Oglala Indianer Klub, most Indianer do not consider themselves to actually *be* American Indian; they maintain their German national identities and only *desire* to be *like* a pre-colonized American Indian. Oglala Indianer Klub members also maintain their German national identity, but claim an Oglala spiritual identity, or claim they are in the process of becoming Oglala through a series of rituals and permissions granted by spirits.

*Powwow at Apple Tree Ranch*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany. 2016.*

Indianer insist their hobby is a German practice, not a borrowed traditional American Indian culture (Penny 2013, Usbeck 2015). Indianthusiasm reinforces their German national identity through a process of being German by being Indianer. The phenomenon of Indianthusiasm is not new; it has been a leisure activity in Germany for over a century and a

half. However, events between Germany and other European powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries galvanized the desire to embody a racially pure identity.

For example, the Versailles Treaty dealt a blow to German egos and ideologies of *Volksgeist* ("the spirit of the people") causing Jews (who were subsequently blamed for Germany's failures in WWI) to become the formalized inferior social group in the nation's racial ideologies of purity and nationalism (Bunzl, 1996). Of course, the history of anti-semitism in Germany long predates the country's defeat in WWI, considering the pogoms committed during the Crusdaes and Martin Luther's fulminations against Jews. Anthropologist George Stocking says *Volksgeist* applies to Germany's cultural identity as ideological ambiguity, or a rhetorical idea meant to create an exclusionary, exceptional, and unified sense of Germanness (Boas and Stocking, 1989; Bunzl, 1996).

Hitler and the Nazis later translated *Volksgeist* as racial purity resulting in the 20th century's largest industrialized genocide. The Nazis drew upon an already established nineteenth century racialized discourse which promoted the expectations of "good Germans," and depicted a racial ideology including racial purity (Bunzl, 1996; Boas and Stocking, 1989). Hitler contrived archaeological research to suggest Poland was an ancient territory belonging to Germany; therefore, his annexation of Poland was justified under the premise of *Volksgeist* at the time.

During Weimar and Nazi rules, German economic discourses began to criticize modernity; therefore, a movement to idealize American Indians as racially pure people who rejected (or were excluded from) modernity became a popular pastime for Germans seeking an identity in *Volksgeist* during war (Fiske-Rusciano, 2000). Hence, there is a paradox to be analyzed between German desires to emulate some aspects of American Indian culture and the desire by Hitler and members of the Nazi party to emulate the U.S. government's policies of oppression and even annihilation of American Indian peoples (Usbeck 2015). This paradox is also implicit in Kafka's text "Wunsch, Indianer zu Werden", in which even the imagined, putative Indian disappears.

Members of Oglala Indianer Klub find power through their fantastical and romanticized performances of Oglala culture. The dark cloud over Germans heads after the Holocaust left a national and cultural bruise on their collective ego that has only recently begun to fade, but certainly not completely; the world will never let Germany forget their transgressions.

Penny describes the national guilt and remorse Germans are encouraged to internalize and exhibit in their daily lives, and how a comparable genocide-guilt plagues both the United States (for its role in the killings of indigenous peoples after contact through the Indian Wars), and Germany (Penny, 2013:229-231). The official, and national reactions are

different, however. Consider the lack of reparations, for example, to indigenous peoples in the U.S.

## Holocaust Discourse and Indianthusiasm

During fieldwork, my experience was that most Germans do not like to talk about the Holocaust. Younger generations who were not alive during WWII feel the legacy of the genocide is an unfair burden forced on them because they played no role in the atrocity. Mentioning the H-word to some Germans results in eye rolls, groans, and “here we go again” attitudes, or from others the response is an anxious admittance of guilt, and an emotional apology followed by a history lesson on Germany’s Weimar Republic, politics, economic crises, and the seemingly quick takeover by the Nazis following WWI. They want to stop talking about the Holocaust as soon as possible and move on to talking about the Euro or their most recent holiday, or to ask if their English is acceptable.

It is stressful for younger Germans to constantly have to explain their country’s past wrongdoings. However, some Indianer have taken to hobbyism to rebuild their national identity by performing a culture that they consider to be brave, strong, peaceful, stoic, noble, and eco-friendly. Where the Holocaust keeps Germans reluctant to exude pride in their nation’s identity, Indianthusiasm gives its practitioners the power to reclaim a national identity that gives them the appearance of pride, respect, honor, and bravery.

By claiming ownership of the Lakota Nation and declaring its relocation to Germany, these Germans employ authority, potentiality through performance, to reclaim a German authoritative and colonialesque world power, which is paradoxical because they are assuming the role of the victim of colonialism. Being Indianer is something to be proud of and to strive for. It is a German practice that replaces Holocaust shame with honor and humble respect in the eyes of the performers, even though they are appropriating the identities and cultures of other genocide victims.

The meaningful inspiration by American Indian cultures made Indianthusiasm a somewhat popular mode for rebuilding national identity and self-esteem after WWII. This preoccupation is rooted in German polycentrism, feelings of related tribalism, and political resistance. Bertrand, a member of Oglala Indianer Klub, explained to me that he hates the Holocaust as much as any other person in the world and that he is embarrassed by the stain the Holocaust left on his country.

> *We systematically exterminated around 12 million people because we thought we were superior humans. Do you know what it is like to wake up every day and know that somewhere in the world a victim is still haunted by their abuse and family's murder because of German arrogance? It is a pain in the ass to have to keep apologizing, but I do it because it is my burden as a German.*

Axel added,

> *Those Germans who fell for that ridiculous Nazi propaganda… they were weak. They were sheep. What a bunch of*

*babies. "Waah, we are so poor and helpless…Waah, Hitler will save us!" They claim they had no idea. They knew. Where did they think all the Jews and disabled people went, on holiday to Iceland?*

## Indianthusiasm is a National Discourse

Bertrand, Kurt, Friedrich, Axel, and the other ten group members in Oglala Indianer Klub idealize romantic representations of Plains Indians as more than a leisure activity; they believe they have become Indian, adopted by Sitting Bull, and bestowed great responsibility and power in the Lakota Nation. Perhaps there is also a constructed identity following a traumatic realization that German ideologies of race and nationalism were illiberal and sordid during the Nazi regime, a shadow that will be cast over Germany for a long time. Rather than relocate themselves to North America, they have constructed an idea that they think will allow them to heal Germany's tainted reputation by making it Lakota and returning German ideals and standards to the Fatherland.

This is quite a contradiction; by appropriating a colonized, genocide-victim identity, they feel they are repairing their tainted German identity, because they think nineteenth century Indianness is an ideal, or racially pure way of being. This is not without controversy. During my fieldwork, I did encounter Indianer who do not think they have the power to rebuild Germany's sordid reputation through Indianthusiasm; however, they do think it positively contributes to a repaired sense of self-worth.

This group of hobbyists holds notions of sincerity and harmless intent, which is often cited as justification for Indianer practice. Similar analysis of this is found in John Jackson's work that argues sincerity imagines authenticity as an incomplete measuring stick; it is an analytical model that attempts to deny people agency in their search for identity (Jackson, 2005), by demonstrating that sincerity contrasts and challenges the German "scripts" that lead to monolithic notions of racial authenticity. This raises the questions: can these hobbyists be sincere in their reconstructions of Lakota identity and culture? Does the impact of North American indigenous peoples' objectification and exploitation override hobbyists' intent? Does the perpetual stereotype of the Noble Savage serve as the dominant caricature of their ethnicity on the global stage?

Stereotypes perform in the constructing of "otherness" and their function was perhaps best explained by post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha in his essay "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism" (1992). Bhabha explains that stereotyping is a process that affects both the stereotyped and the maker.

In discourse, stereotyping is used to establish cultural and racial hierarchy that is activated through various differences. Indianer claim they are German first; however, they pretend to have have become Lakota, a fantasy they enact through what they believe are the proper actions and attire of a "real Indian," or in other words a "good Indian. This essentially

creates a fetish of the Lakota, because the Germans maintain the power and thus represent the colonizer. This approach on the part of the Indianer echoes that of Western Orientalism, as described by Edward Said. The Western experts are the true keepers of the flame, while the descendants of the culture of enquiry are somehow debased and inauthentic (Said, 2011).

What appears to be the crux in the case of the Indianer is that the East German protagonist was once also the colonized (by Soviet Union and Deutsche Demokratische Republik -DDR); meaning that the desire of the Indianer is essentially to gain power over someone, or something; but this, of course, comes at the expense of the Lakota people, who have long struggled to shed colonialist stereotypes.

## Appropriation and Essentialism

Indianers spend enormous amounts of money and time constructing an American Indian image both bodily and in their landscapes. They strive to learn the histories, languages, and cultural practices of at least one tribe, and work very hard to become as American Indian as they possibly can. The Oglala Indianer Klub identifies as actually *being* Lakota *and* German in a hybrid of national identity and desired subjectivities.

The youngest in the group said, “They don’t live like their strong, proud ancestors. They lost that natural, instinctual ability to be Indian.” During these sweats, the men have visions of popular Lakota chiefs and

warriors who tell them to rebuild a home for the “ancient American Indian ways” in Germany. The spirits adopt them into the Lakota Nation, give them a “Lakota” name, and assign certain titles and jobs to each club member.

The man sitting to my left is called “Hawk’s Gaze,” and “Kurt Reinhold,” and the man on my right is called, “When the Bear Attacks the Wolf,” and “Bertrand Niemann.” They have both received visions acquiring rites to make Germany the new home of Lakota traditions, and have both had numerous multi-day vision quest “journeys” in the forest where they are given explicit instructions of how to rebuild Lakota Nation in Brandenburg, Germany.

I asked one of the other men, “Oak Fire Smoke Brings Harvest” (aka “Friedrich Wolpert”) if he has ever traveled to the United States or Canada and visited a reservation or met with any Lakota people. He nodded his head yes and nodded toward Bertrand and told me they both went on holiday to South Dakota, Montana, and Nebraska in 2013 to tour the major Lakota landmarks such as Wounded Knee, Little Big Horn, Red Cloud’s gravesite, Black Elk’s cabin, Red Shirt Table in Badlands National Park, and Fort Robinson, the site where Crazy Horse was killed.

They attended a few powwows and spoke with Oglala Lakota youth and women who were selling dreamcatchers and jewelry at Wounded Knee and Red Shirt Table, and a few students and staff at the Jesuit high school on the grounds where Red Cloud is buried. Friedrich (employing eugenic

tropes to demean contemporary Native Americans) said, “They all looked in-bred, ugly, and stupid. Something wrong with their faces. They were poor and dirty. How can they be like that knowing their ancestors fought to death to give them the right to be Indian?” Bertrand interrupted to ask me, “Did you know there is a trailer house on Black Elk’s property that has a ‘restaurant’ but all they serve is bison burgers, fry bread, and deep-fried chicken tenders? Noting Black Elk would have ever eaten.”

That restaurant is Betty’s Kitchen. Betty Black Elk, the owner, is a descendent of Black Elk, and her grandson lives in Black Elk’s cabin (though she fears it is dilapidated and unsafe for him). Betty, her children, and the entire Black Elk family have had a long and tenuous struggle to gain small business ownership and they have tribal council representation on the reservation. Yet, Bertrand and Friedrich seemed uninterested in any of the political or economic hardships suffered and encountered by the Black Elk family, and were dead set on only caring that the family has not carried on Black Elk’s traditions as a holy man or as a “traditional Lakota.”

Betty has explained that her pursuit of owning a business on the reservation was a way to honor her great grandfather’s role as holy man of the Lakota because she was learning ways to heal economic and social wounds. She explained that her family’s role on the tribal council was also a continuation of Black Elk’s leadership and spiritual guidance because the

Black Elk family still employs spiritual guidance and spiritual medicine when deciding how to proceed as a member of the tribe's governing body.

Betty's business is a testament to the survival and stance of Black Elk's Lakota people to adapt to the very things Black Elk spoke of in his biography, such as the ways the Lakota people must work within the colonizer's system to keep a Lakota identity while negotiating the colonial landscape (Neihardt, 1932). Friedrich and Bertrand's insistence that Lakota traditions are stuck in the 19th century and somehow died off with the final Indian Wars, suggests they have some cognitive dissonance about how cultures change and adapt over time. They do not juxtapose their positions on American Indian cultural traditions with their positions on the last one and a half centuries of cultural or social changes in Germany.

Axel (aka "Stallion Stance,") the youngest of the four men, stood over a large pile of wood that he had spent the entire morning chopping. I asked him if he had ever traveled to America to visit the places Bertrand and Friedrich went to and speak of often. He lowered his head, kicked some dirt, and said,

> *yes, but I don't really agree with these guys all the time. I think the Lakota over there are doing the best they can with what they have been allowed to have. They aren't all ugly and stupid. I met some who work really hard to keep their culture vibrant. It isn't the same as it was under Crazy Horse, but they had a rough time and have to get back what was lost.*

He kicked some more dirt, looked at Bertrand out of the corner of his eye, and continued,

> *But, you know, maybe getting back to it means relocating it to a place where it is safe from the white settlers and treaty-breaking government. I believe these guys had visions from Sitting Bull, too. I have had a vision, too. I know Germany is the new home of these cultural traditions. I believe it in the depths of my soul. I have had that spiritual awakening. We will be the ones to bring back the old ways. We already are, look at us right now*.

I asked Axel if he has spoken with any Oglala or other Lakota about these visions, or the plan to make Germany the new home of "Lakota traditional culture" (as they often refer to it as). He replied,

> *No. In my vision, the spirit told me the Lakota would not be receptive to the task. The spirit told me to be resilient and strong in doing the right thing. It told me the storm will be great and that I need to suffer the scars before embracing the light of day again.*

Friedrich added, "Sitting Bull told me we have a war coming. We need to prepare. Lakota will resist. We must keep going. Sitting Bull will guide us." They all yelled a collective, "*Mitakuye Oyasin*" which is Lakota for "We are all related." This phrase is a popular symbolic souvenir amongst tourists to Lakota landmarks because it evokes a sense of belonging and relatedness to the Lakota, something this group of German Indianer desire very much.

Kurt, while stringing rabbit hides to a clothesline of sorts, asked Bertrand and Axel if they remembered the time the group was camping

near Hannover. “We were setting up the tipi, and our other friend, Dirk, was digging a fire pit. An eagle circled over us. It stayed with us all weekend, remember?” Bertrand added,

> *You wouldn’t think we were crazy about this vision stuff if you saw that eagle. It was sent to us. It stayed with us the whole time. The eagles left during WWII. They saw no honor in Germany during that time. Now, they are coming back, and that day they saw honor in us.*

The men all paused from doing their chores and collectively sighed and said a silent prayer to themselves. The memory of the eagle sparked a meaningful reflection in the group.

Kurt announced that he needed to run up to the store to grab some milk to soak some leather in that he was hoping to make into moccasins for his new twin granddaughters. “Milk works best to soften this kind of leather.” The other men scurried to hand Kurt some money and listed off items they needed from the store, too. Axel needed batteries for his flashlight. Bertrand needed aluminum foil to cover the fire grate for cooking. Another man, Viktor, wanted a pineapple. All of the items they were in need of were not traditional American Indian items, but Axel quickly answered, “No, but they all help us to be the best traditional Indians we can be.”

Bertrand added, “Like the Indians in America, we don’t have access to only natural resources. We have to improvise.” I paused for a moment and watched the men go back to their chores as Kurt drove away. I was not

sure if I wanted to persist in pressing them about their ideals of traditional American Indian practices for fear of risking their thoughts that I was critical or judgmental of their actions. I finally decided to ask, “If you have to improvise, like the Indians in America do, then why is Germany a better home for Lakota, if not all American Indian culture?”

## Critical Race Theory and Indianthusiasm

Scholars of race and ethnicity in the United States have heavily criticized the phenomenon of playing or becoming American Indian. Philip Deloria explores the ways non-Native people have played, and pretended to be American Indian through fantasy or imagined simulation (Deloria, 1998 and 2004). Through this phenomenon of play, Deloria argues, American Indians become humiliated and dehumanized, but at times empowered and embraced.

The effects of pretending to be Native reveal historical traumas and complexities of colonization (Deloria, 1998 and 2004). Likewise, Michael Taylor discusses the intersections of gender and ethnicity in American Indian identity as they are represented in images and performances by sports team mascots (Taylor, 2013). Constructions of Native identity by non-Natives are problematic and results in humiliation, dehumanization, and loss of sovereignty. Taylor examines how these images and representations work to inform and construct identity for non-Native men in historic, imagined contexts via a popular culture framework.

It was while researching racial tensions in South Dakota that I first heard about the German fascination with Lakota peoples. During my first week of fieldwork for my MA thesis at the Pine Ridge Oglala Lakota Reservation in South Dakota, I found myself sitting around a concrete picnic table with five men, all members of the reservation's Tre Tre Cripts gang, a reservation re-make of the notorious Compton street gang.

During our conversation, one of the men asked me if I was from Germany. I thought the query odd, but paid little attention to it at the time. Later that summer, while visiting the Wounded Knee Cemetery for a political rally, I noticed a German flag draped across the fence surrounding the mass grave site. I asked a longtime Oglala Lakota friend of mine about the presence of Germany and Germans on the reservation and he replied, "Oh the Germans love us. They know us better than some of us know ourselves."

This exchange left an impression. Upon returning to my coursework at the University of Oklahoma, I often made mention of the connections between American Indian and German discourses of victimhood, nationalism, and masculinity. I later went to Germany for eight weeks during the summer of 2014. During this visit, I was immersed in the dynamic and diverse Indianer community in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Heidelberg.

This visit launched my doctoral research interests to focus on connections with my thesis work on racial discourse and my fascination with

German understandings of gender and national identity from a critical race theoretical perspective. In March 2015 I returned to Frankfurt, Germany for the annual American Indian Workshop where I presented a paper, but more importantly, collaborated with European scholars of American Indian cultures and returned in 2016 for four months to conduct more in-depth fieldwork with groups of hobbyists throughout Germany.

In many ways, the idea for this research was inspired by Oglala inquiries about German fascination with Plains Indian culture, and why Germans heavily romanticize Native imagery and history. Tribal members encouraged me to include German racial ideologies and racial discourses about Lakota culture into my interests in more general discourse analyses of non-Native representations and appropriations of Oglala traditions and everyday life.

Several Lakota commented that it is ironic for Germans to be appropriating the culture of a people victimized by genocide, and how that irony is perceived differently by the German people who are now participating in the performance of this identity. Competing definitions about what it means to be Lakota often cause tension and a breakdown of communication between Indianers and the Lakota who have a stake in Indianer appropriations. Axel's statement that Crazy Horse told him not to tell any Lakota about the cultural movement from America to Germany,

suggests hobbyists are fully aware of this tension and disapproval by Lakota and create justifications to get around it.

## Eco-Spirituality: Justification for Racist Ideologies

While observing and participating in camp chores and Indianer activities, I pondered the question about how these men are improvising techniques and materials to reconstruct American Indian identity and how they plan to carryout Sitting Bull's instructions to bring the "old ways" to a new home in Germany. When I asked the group, "If you have to improvise, like the Indians in America do, then why is Germany a better home for Lakota, if not all American Indian culture," Friedrich quickly replied, "It wasn't *our* idea. It was the great spirits who told us to make Germany the new home. We have to improvise because we have not had the time, or frankly the money, to build the ark, you know, to say it a certain way." Bertrand continued,

> *Germany is Germany; it is not exactly the same as North America. For one, we are much smaller. For another, we do not have some of the same natural resources America and Canada have. It will be difficult to make a home for some cultures, like those from the Pacific Northwest. We don't have polar environments or things like orca, seal, or polar bears. That one will be difficult. That will require much improvising.*

Axel, falling back into his homemade leather and wood lawn chair, said,

*Germany had a bad history recently. It knows it needs this transfer of culture to revitalize these German values and standards. They are the same as American Indian values: strength, bravery, nobility, respect and stewardship for the Earth, an ability to broker peace in times of conflict, and strength of character like the warriors and chiefs in American Indian history. Germany knows those deeply. We strive to be all of those characteristics. That is what makes us German. That is why Indian culture will find its new home here.*

Friedrich gleefully nodded in agreement and added,

*When we were East Germany, when the Berlin Wall was standing, we were isolated from the world, much like Indians on reservations are isolated from the outside world. The Soviet Union and the DDR were like our colonizers. Like, East Germany was our reservation and the DDR was our colonizing government. We know full well what it feels like to be corralled like horses, like Indians are in America. Like Pine Ridge and Standing Rock. We know that. We lived it, too*.

Viktor continued,

*During that time, we looked to Indians for inspiration and hope. We knew we were connected symbolically. It was an instant, 'Oh, yes, just like the Indians' feeling. We all, and I mean all Germans, we all read Winnetou as kids. We all know that whole series like it is our own life history. When the wall went up, we all became Winnetou.*

He cracked open a bottle of beer, leaned against a tree, and said,

*It was those values that Axel mentioned, strength, bravery, eco-sustainability, and remaining calm in the face of danger… those are how we survived the Wall. Those are how Indians survived the US Calvary, too.*

Axel interrupted,

> *Except they started to lose those values. They got sent to boarding schools and some tried to pass as white so they didn't get lynched and beaten. Today's Indians don't all have, or even remember those values. I guess for a while Germans lost them too. We carried out the largest genocide in modern history. We weren't very eco-friendly or calm, or noble. We lost those values like the Indians did. Only difference is we took it really far and killed a lot of people. Germans aren't the keepers of peace like Indians are. Well, maybe we try to be now. We let in a shit-load of refugees this year. We are trying to broker peace. But for a while we forgot. Indians forgot, too, but they seem lost and unwilling to snap back. With Germany having the Spirit's blessing, we will make a new home for those values. We will honor them as Indian values, too.*

When he returned from the store, Kurt made it a point to tell me that this quest to relocate the spiritual home of American Indian culture to Germany is a sort-of pilgrimage. He explained that the culture will be travelling thousands of miles to find its new "true home" as ordered and authorized by "great spirits" such as Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. Kurt insists this relocation will heal the past wounds of language-loss, ethnocide, and Americanization that he thinks have left today's American Indians in North America cultureless.

He implies that a spiritual healing will commence and American Indian traditions will revive and rebuild in Germany (by Germans, not American Indians). That is a key point in all of this. The "new home" will be built in Germany; the revived traditions will be practiced by Germans. This relocation excludes North American indigenous participation. This is a spiritual healing for Germans, not American Indians.

This Indianer club is not unique in their spiritual quest to heal the world by claiming an authority through supernatural communication. Research on the Vale do Amanhecer (Valley of the Dawn), a spiritual mecca where practitioners and seekers mush all sorts of new age and spiritual practices together: crystals, tarot, a hodgepodge of native and traditional practices plucked here and there from around the world, and Spiritism (sometimes called Kardecism). The Spiritist "doctors," including a very famous one called John of God (João de Deus) perform spiritual healings and "surgery," which is highly sought by terminally ill people desperate to be saved from untimely death. The location is near the Brazilian capital of Brasilia, which is thought to be a magnetic center of some sort which gets interpreted as having healing and spiritual powers. People travel from all over the world in search of healing and spiritual enlightenment (Pierini, 2014). Like the Vale do Amanhecer, the hobbyist group near Berlin seeks a spiritual mecca by borrowing from native and traditional practices, yet realize it is not easily accessed or available to “outsiders,” so they devise a way to make their backyard the mecca.

The fourteen-member Oglala Indianer Klub in Hertzberg, Germany idealizes a romantic representation of Plains Indians as more than a leisure activity; they believe they have become Indian, spiritually adopted by Sitting Bull, and bestowed great responsibility and power in the Lakota Nation. Rather than relocate themselves to North America, they have constructed

an idea that they think will allow them to heal Germany's tainted reputation by making it Lakota and returning German ideals and standards to the Fatherland.

Aside from a visit to a reservation or powwow in North America, there is a popular discourse that seemingly informs people who have yet to take the pilgrimage to "Indian Country" that it is a place of great importance to the Indianer experience, especially to those in roles of leadership or event organization. Hobbyists are expected to attend a "real" American Indian ceremony or performance at some point in their life. People make great sacrifices to be able to afford a trip to South Dakota, Montana, or Alberta. For Indianthusiasts, popular American Indian historical sites and events have become more significant as a pilgrimage than perhaps a Camino walk, visit to Israel or the Vatican in Rome.

As it rained and thunder stormed, we sat in the camp lodge and watched a television documentary on Karl May, the author of the *Winnetou* series. We dined on German staples such as bratwurst, potato salad, and pickles. Just before I retired to my cabin, Kurt asked me what I thought of their visions and their mission to relocate the home of America's indigenous cultures to Germany. I debated giving a blanket statement on the ethics of American anthropology and that I was not there to be an authority on the matter. I contemplated telling him how I thought their vision was a convenient justification for wanting to have the authority to dictate Native

ceremony and customs without being accused of, or feeling like they are appropriating Native culture. I thought about telling him I think their ideas about “Indian values” being “German values” are opaque and that they could be values honored by many, if not all cultures, therefore, they are not so uniquely and symbolically tying Germany and Indians together in an ethereal and romantic relationship.

However, I decided to simply tell him that I found their lives to be fascinating and intrinsically interesting. I told him I understood how meaningful and profound their experiences are, and that I could tell how deeply their beliefs are held. I mentioned that I thought it was odd and concerning that they would not discuss their visions with any Lakota or other American Indians, or that as far as I know, no Lakota or other American Indian has had a vision from one of the great spirits telling them of the plan to relocate the home of America’s indigenous cultures to Germany, but that since I am neither indigenous nor religious, I am not the person to make such conclusions about the political, social, or spiritual implications of their claims. I was left feeling speechless and dumbfounded by the entire day’s conversation.

I have met many groups of Indianthusiasts in Germany, and have never encountered anyone claiming an authority to take ownership of, and relocate an entire two-thirds of a continent’s indigenous cultures and traditions half-way across the world without including any dialogue or

rapport with the indigenous peoples concerned. I told Kurt I thought communication with American Indians was important since it is their culture and way of life being transported across the world (according to this group's beliefs). I told him there would be much animosity and resistance by American Indians; I am certain American Indians will not be too keen to allow a group of Germans to take ownership of their identity and become the authority of cultural traditions.

However, I reminded him that I I am thankful to have learned about his visions, and to have spent the day doing chores and learning about Germany's lush forest environments as we procured small wildlife and collected a wheelbarrow full of walnuts. I didn't have a theoretical or discourse analysis to give him. How do you tell someone who truly believes he has been called by a spirit that his beliefs are contrived or may need some more evaluation? Kurt seemed satisfied with my answer, however, and reminded me that the horse caravan was leaving at 7:30am and I better not be late or I will get stuck riding Buster, the moody and often disobedient stallion.

The next morning, we saddled up the horses and went on a day-hike in a small but beautifully rural and green village near the ranch. The group of fourteen were joined by another small Indianer group from Dresden, and our conversation shifted from the relocation of culture, to one about Germany's rebirth and economic growth following WWII.

We discussed Germany's global leadership, the refugee situation, and the upcoming parliament elections coming in a week. The two groups kept all talk about Indianer hobbyism to a hush. Conflicting ideas about the "right way" to "be Indian" mean the two groups relate more as Germans than as Indians in each other's presence.

After our eight-hour horse ride in the forest, and the small group from Dresden retreated to their campsite, I asked Viktor and Axel what the Dresden group's role will be in the relocation and revitalization of American Indian culture in Germany. Axel said,

> *Well first they need to decide if they are Lakota or Cree. I think they are interested in both and they have to pick just one." Viktor interrupted, "Yeah, but they think we are full of bullshit so it will take some time for them to come around. Hopefully we can get them in the sweat lodge this week and they can experience a vision, too.*

I asked Viktor how he felt about the Dresden group's dismissal or disbelief about his group's visions. He replied,

> *It isn't a surprise. We know there will be resistance. They will get the vision, too. When they are ready, they will get a vision. We will be here to welcome them and expect their help when they get that vision. Germany will rise up as the great Indianer home. In a lot of ways, it has always been that. All of our most important German values are American Indian values. We have always been on the same page, except that damned 20$^{th}$ century when the world went to shit and Indians lost their culture and Germans lost their minds. But see, now it is time to change all of that. Germany is the place for both Germans and those lost, old Indian ways to be reborn, together.*

## Chapter Conclusion

The movement to relocate the spiritual home of North America's indigenous traditions is as much as movement to build German national identity as it is to follow a spiritual or religious calling. American Indian culture is a crutch by which this group leans to repair or rebuild their German identity. It is not *really* about relocating American Indian spirituality to Germany; it is about reconstructing a German identity based on a romanticized and stereotypical image of the 19th century Native North American warrior.

This group dismisses modern American Indians at every step. They do not acknowledge today's indigenous North Americans in any way having autonomy or authority on their own cultures. This desire to claim ownership of a spiritual revival, and claim to be given divine authority, much like Manifest Destiny, is a German desire to erase Germany's unethical history. There are issues of guilt and disassociation tied to Germany's role in the Holocaust that this group claims it can erase by becoming, rather than playing Indianer.

While this is a minority view in the hobbyist phenomenon, many of its ideas about German values and a void in German lives that can be filled by being Indianer are shared by a majority of hobbyists. While they may differ in their opinions about where the home of American Indian spirituality should be, they are alike in their desires to become Indian, and in thinking

Germans embody American Indian values and culture as a way to be good Germans.

# Chapter Two: "I'm Not Racist, but…": Everyday Language of Indianer Racism

*This chapter is a description of the racial discourses, racial tensions, racism, and critical race theories related to "playing Indian." The Indianer group "Cree Camp Coalition" provides an example of Indianthusiasm's racial ideologies, as well as provides data for an analysis of Indianer material culture and desires for "authenticity" and racial appropriation.*

## Critical Race Theory and Anthropology

Anthropology has a long history with the concept of race. Prior to our understanding of race as a cultural concept, race was thought to be a biological (genetic) difference between differing groups of people. Before Edward Tylor, difference was seen as a matter of biological differences among humans, and passed down through family lines. This is still a common view by publics across the globe. We can see this dominant view of social hierarchies as it is broadcast across many media sources today.

Edward Tylor gave us the idea of cultural difference with input from other scholars, especially in Germany (1881). Boas relativized the idea (known as cultural relativism), suggesting that no particular culture was superior, in sharp opposition with most of the other scholars of his times (Boas, 1888 and 1895). Despite evidence and theoretical contributions by Tylor and Boas, the question of race has continued to muddy many public discourses.

The popular beliefs about race being biological were mostly based on phenotypic characteristics, but also in some cases arguments were made in cases of religious difference, mental disorders, and other traits deemed inferior by the dominant, mostly middle to upper class white majority of Europe and the United States (*Race the Power of an Illusion*, 2003). George Stocking, a historian of anthropology (and anthropologists) says that Franz Boas, known as the "father of American anthropology" worked tirelessly to change the way people thought of race and the classificatory systems of ranking people based on biological traits (Stocking, 1991).

Boas trained many of anthropology's first scholars by sending them throughout the world to observe, record, and understand difference from a cultural and historical perspective rather than a scientific perspective. Boas was a pioneer in theoretical perspectives of culture, language, history, and biology. Because of social constructions of inferiority and superiority (based for a long time and still by many today on biological differences), racism has resulted from centuries of hierarchical thinking.

According to critical race theorist, and linguistic anthropologist Jane Hill, and sociologists Richard Delgado and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, racism is defined as being all the ways a minority group is oppressed, marginalized, made inferior, and kept inferior by systems and structures that are primarily built for the benefit of the dominant social groups (mostly white --which is

also a constructed category of people who are unmarked and “naturalized” as the baseline for all of the ways others are deemed inferior--) which excludes social benefits for those not in the dominant groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, and Hill, 2008). Racism, like the concept of race, is complex and multi-faceted. It is a social phenomenon, imbedded in almost every aspect of society and culture from politics, economy, education, religion, and commonly in language, symbols, and public discourse.

Critical race theory does not deny that normative white individuals contribute to internalized racism in America, but more importantly it emphasizes a collective, systematic cultural entity; something much bigger than individual bigotry and xenophobia (Delgado, 2012, and Hill, 2008). We must keep in mind that individual, “ordinary people” who do not share *white supremacist* beliefs *can and do* speak and behave in ways that advance the structural power of racism as a whole (Delgado, 2012, and Hill, 2008). In other words, you do not have to be a self-proclaimed racial purist or white supremacist to have racist notions or speak racist language. Our discourses are so perverse with imbedded racisms that oftentimes people do not even realize their words and behaviors are racist or contributing to a perpetuation of systematic racisms.

Additionally, Hill, Delgado, and Bonilla-Silva agree that, by principle, non-white projection of anger or a negative opinion of the social construct of whiteness does not qualify as racism; instead, it is a complaint, or reaction

against inequality and marginalization. Hill states that if language is found to be racist by its targets, then it *is* racist language (2008). Likewise, Delgado, Hill, and Bonilla-Silva agree that erasure, or language that refuses acknowledgement of ethnic historical context, or lived experiences of racism and injustices, suggests that the sufferings and burdens of non-whites are no more heavy or atrocious than the white people's sufferings.

Delgado, Hill, and Bonilla-Silva agree that erasure, or language that refuses acknowledgement of ethnic historical context, or lived experiences of racism and injustices, suggests that the sufferings and burdens of non-whites are no more heavy or atrocious than the white people's sufferings (Delgado, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; and Hill, 2008). Erasure silences non-whites and refuses to accept or listen to discourse on racial issues. Erasure is a common form of racist language.

## Everyday Language and Racism

In Germany, Indianer erase or ignore Native North American voices of frustration and replace those voices with their own, which often results in cultural tensions and a complete breakdown of intercultural dialogue, leading to a refusal to accept or listen each other's complaints on racial issues. It begins with denial, silencing and erasure (Gal and Irvine, 2000). These statements of erasure are common, according to Native American men, who recount the many times they have experienced silencing firsthand. Erasure and/or denial of autonomy and authority are ways

Indianer reject accusations and evidence of their contributions to racism. Sample statements of erasure reiterated to me by my thesis research participants in 2012 include:

“I grew up poor, too; I know what it’s like.”

“I am not racist, I have lots of Indian and black friends.” (LaFramboise, 2013).

I heard similar statements from Indianer in 2016. Johann, a 19-year-old Austrian Indianer said, "I know what it is like to be the low man on the totem pole. I grew up in a poor village. My mother worked at a bakery and my father drove a dairy truck. Our house was small. Sometimes, we didn't eat meat. Yet, it never drove me to alcoholism, or my parents to suicide. I don't see why American Indians are so quick to give up, or to be so comfortable in their poverty."

Critical race theorists say that beliefs such as these erase the historical, cultural, and lived-experiences of the person or people the white speaker is comparing himself to (Delgado, 2006, and Hill, 2008). Johann was comparing apples to oranges, but he thought his modest upbringing in a primarily democratic-socialist country was the same as racially-oppressed and socially-inferior Native Americans living in extreme poverty on reservations in the United States.

He ignored the oppressive history, traumatic experiences, and continued mistreatment of Native people in America. Certainly, Austria has

seen its share of war and historical chaos. However, Johann could not separate the two national discourses in his mind, or see any difference in the ways the two examples are very different.

Similarly, a form of language that is embedded in everyday discourse, denial, is the acts of thinking and asserting that one's beliefs or language is not hurtful and does not contribute or constitute racism. Denial of racism, if employed, is a surefire indicator that the speaker has, or is about to utter racist speech (Delgado, 2006; Bonilla-Silva 2010; and Hill 2008). One example of a statement denying racism reiterated to me by one 2012 Lakota research participants is, "I don't mean to sound racist, but… those Indians would live better if they quit drinking. They can be really nice people when they are sober" (LaFramboise, 2013).

Statements that begin with a phrase of denial ("I'm not racist, but…" or "It's not racist to say…") are exactly what the speaker negates them to mean by saying them in the first place. These statements provide an escape or a shield against accusations of prejudice or racism for the person speaking the phrase because no one likes to be called a racist, and seldom do people admit they are racist. Typically, being accused of racism evokes a defensive response that further denies any evidence that the speaker (or what the speaker said) can be interpreted as racist.

## Indianthusiasm and Semiotics

Semiotics, the study of symbols and signs, suggests that imagery, aside from actual spoken or written language, communicates discourses the same ways that language does. Symbolism and language go hand-in-hand; oftentimes language stimulates images in people's minds based off of their socialization into a language and symbolic systems (Baudrillard, 1988, and Eco, 1983).

In this way, another language theorist, Noam Chomsky, says that references to some of history's most atrocious events are common in debate and discourse (and everyday language). Recalling popular events, especially ones remembered for their brutality or harshness, or drawing on popular traumas usually invoke emotional reactions from the "audience" in a way that promotes a challenge to the status quo (Chomsky, 2008).

Oftentimes, during fieldwork in Germany, I heard participants refer to Hitler, Nazis, or the Holocaust as a way to describe a person or incident that has affected them negatively, e.g. calling someone with strict rules and discipline a Nazi (like the Soup Nazi on *Jerry Seinfeld),* but I have heard it frequently used outside of satire. Kurt, a German Indianer visiting Apple Tree Ranch, called another camp participant a "Beer Nazi." His insinuation was that the other man's strict enforcement of drinking rules around the camp fire, and during particular camp ceremonies, equated him with the

fascist Nazi regime.  He did not call the other man “Beer Nazi” lightheartedly. He said it with the intent to inflict negativity.

Semiotician, Umberto Eco agrees with Chomsky in thinking that drawing such comparisons with vivid imagery produces a symbolic discourse alongside a linguistic ideology (Eco, 1983). Comparisons (symbolic in nature), such as calling someone Hitler, or calling a poor neighborhood "the ghetto," are a form of erasure that lessen the uniqueness and emotional ties by victims of the actual historical event, and separate the individual significance and extreme brutality of the experience.

This type of erasure is often used in rhetoric to express desperation, to bring awareness to current experiences of mistreatment and racial tensions; Erasure denies identity, heritage, and symbolic ownership of historical and lived context (Chomsky, 2008). Such language conveys an ambivalence of racial discourse (Hill, 2008 and Bonilla-Silva, 2002). The people making such comparative claims may not directly intend to weaken or lessen the painful and devastating results of the original event, but are employing analogy or symbolic reference to influence concern and reactions from those they are speaking to. Eco states that signs (representations) often aim to be the very thing they are signaling or representing (1983). Representations of culture seek to abolish the distinction of the reference and reify the mechanism of replacement.

Eco contends that a sign or symbol is not the image of the thing, but its replica, or its double (1983). The sign or symbol holds all of the symbolic meaning and cultural significance, but it is not "the real thing." In most cases, whether it is the "real" thing, or a representation, it still conveys the same message and contributes to discourse in the same way. For example, a copy or reprint of a famous work of art, such as *Starry Night* by Van Gogh conveys all the same imagery, meaning, symbolism, and discourse as the original hanging in the Museum of modern Art in New York. The copies we find everywhere from Wal Mart to a velvet tapestry for sale at the Oklahoma State Fair, are not the "real" thing, but they work to contribute to social understandings the same way the original painting does.

### Other Critical Race Theory Applications in Indianthusiasm

Another form of linguistically framed critical race theory is discussed by linguistic anthropologists, Dell Hymes and Jan Blommaert. They have researched the concept of "voice" as it applies to inequality and how groups of marginalized people often become "voiceless" or "silenced" (Hymes 1996 and Blommaert 2008). Oftentimes, minority groups are not given the opportunity to express their ideas or concerns. When an attempt is made to voice their position, they are given little to no authority in majority matters, and they are often met with rejection, humiliation, and sometimes even punitive action (Hymes 1996 and Blommaert 2008). Without a voice, marginalized groups (not just races) continue to suffer social inequalities.

As a result of having a muted voice, some members of the marginalized group begin to internalize their silenced status. They can become unsure of their voice, or fearful of retribution for voicing their thoughts.

These various types of racisms and oppressions are naturalized, or made to seem invisible and “normal.” Peter Ives, describes the concept of hegemony as naturalized state of acceptance and ignorance, which is the way we internalize social rules, norms, and ideologies without questioning their place or purpose in society. Hegemonic oppression, especially racism, is often unseen, unquestioned, and unanalyzed by the public (Ives, 2004). People of color internalize many systematic racisms and do not fully realize what is happening or why such hegemonic discourses are so oppressive.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon describes the violent nature of oppression and the physical, symbolic, and profound ways hegemony leads to oppression and inequality, and how they provoke violence upon those labeled by society as “inferior” (Fanon, 1963). Unfortunately, violence is a stark reality as a contribution to and result from racism both blatant and systematic.

Racism can be challenged or meaningfully addressed in the sphere of discourse because there are people right now working fast and hard to change how we think about race, racism, violence, oppression, and inequality. Many anthropologists, of course, are engaged in meaningful research to uncover and understand how these discourses permeate

society and become hegemonically imbedded in the everyday language and practices of society (Ives, 2004; Augustinos and Every, 2010; Haskell, 2009; and LaFramboise, 2013).

Challenging racist discourse is not a quick, swift process. However, by meaningfully addressing these discourses and collaborating in multicultural dialogues about how racisms are permeating our society, we can change the discourses and raise awareness of the realities of such language, symbolism, violence, and oppression. It is just a really hard, uphill battle that seems impossible to ever peak.

Racism, especially that toward Native American peoples, is not a phenomenon isolated in the United States. During fieldwork, I encountered blatant racist language, symbolic racism, and racist representations of Native Americans in multiple forms. A new group of Indianthusiasts arrived at Apple Tree Ranch just as I was contemplating going to Berlin to get away from research for a few days. As I would find out, this group presented what was perhaps my most difficult experience of trying to remain open-minded during the many participant observation experiences I had.

### Cree Camp and Coalition: a European Indianer Club

Thirty-eight Indianer hobbyists pulled up riding Vespas, and BMW and Ducati motorcycles. One man pulled up driving a Mercedes cargo van, and a woman in an old Volkswagen Vanagon both filled with all the bikers'

regalia and camp supplies. The group calls themselves Cree Camp and Coalition (CCC, or Triple C).

Rolf, a young (twenty-something) man stepped off his Vespa, removed his helmet, and revealed his “man-bun” that he then let down, pulled into a ponytail, and clipped on a bright green and fluorescent blue feather. I think it was a shortened peacock feather that had been painted to appear brighter. Rolf and I had communicated through Facebook and email prior to his arrival. I was expecting his group to arrive in four days, but they decided to forego another stop on their trip and spend the whole time at Apple Tree Ranch.

Rolf introduced me to Hans, Adel, Helga, Brigitte, Volker, Jurg, Diedre, and Leo (and a few children). This subgroup comprised the youngest men and women, as well as the most physically fit and energetic of the larger group. While the other group members went directly to the kitchen to have a beer and snack, the youngest members went to work putting up tipis, chopping wood, and organizing their campsite.

*Adel by his tipi. Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany, 2016.*

*Indianer Kamp. Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany, 2016.*

The rule of thumb for CCC is that English is spoken for all group activities and business matters. Six group members are Swedish and do not speak German, so English is the lingua franca. For the most part, group members honored this rule. However, at times I heard Swedish, German, English, and several indigenous North American languages.

Jurg, after dropping off a load of gear, went to the barn and returned several minutes later with Becky, the pregnant mare. He tied her to a tree with a long rope so she could move about easily, gave her a bucket of grain and one of water, and kept her near him the whole afternoon.

“I like her the most. We have a special bond. We can read each other’s minds and comfort each other. Our hearts are connected. I just like having her around when I am working.” Becky never appeared out of sorts or uncomfortable, though she did keep a close eye on the rest of the tame herd as they grazed in the paddock behind the tipi camp.

**Generational Tensions in CCC**

Adel complained that the old men and other younger guys are lazy and useless. “We come out here, and every time they go hang out while we do all the work. Then they come and gripe about how they don’t like the way we do things, even though *we* are the ones taking direction directly from nature, our universal mother.” Adel took his ax and mallet and headed to the wood pile to assist in chopping wood. I could hear him griping an annoyed prayer to "a spirit" the whole time he walked.

Hans, a Swedish Olympic athlete (cross-country skiing) chopped wood faster and with more strength than any other Indianer group member I had seen at the camp so far. He was quiet and worked non-stop until all his jobs were complete and cleaned up. Once he was done, he walked to the barn and retrieved Pearl, his favorite horse.

> *She is getting old. You can see it in her eyes. You can see the years of wisdom she has. She just has to look at me, and I know what she is thinking. We are bonded. She is the biggest female. Strong enough to carry me, but not an asshole like the bigger males.*

Brigitte exclaimed, “Hey! Baxter is not an asshole! He is just confident in his himself and doesn’t let anyone dominant him. Bax is a warrior’s horse. Brave, and loyal only to the ones he trusts.” Brigitte, one of the few women I met at any of the Indianer weekends at Apple Tree Ranch, assumed many of the domestic duties in camp. She cooked, cleaned, looked after children, and gathered wildflowers, seeds, and other edible plants.

The older Indianer eventually made their way back to the campsite. As they did so, Hans and Jurg returned Becky and Pearl to the pasture. I asked Rolf if they returned them because the other men were in camp, or if they returned them just because they had other things to do now. Rolf said, “They don’t like the other people to be around and not respectful to the horses [sic]. These guys have a lot of noise pollution as well as disregard for the horses’ spirits, and it bothers the horses.”

It was obvious that there is a rift between the generational gap in Cree Camp and Coalition. The older men paid very little attention to the younger group members except to yell at them about something, or order one of the younger women to do something, get something, or for Hans to lift fix something heavy. One of the older men, Lars, barked orders at Rolf, Helga, and Hans all evening. “Turn that log over!” “Bring me another beer!” “Cut that log smaller!’ “Sit over there so Nils can sit here!” I later learned that Lars is Hans’ father. There are a few family subgroups within the larger group.

The older men spent the evening and late into the night reminiscing past camp trips, conducting club business, and gossiping about their wives and coworkers. They compared crafting projects such as beaded knife sheaths and moccasins. They “googled” images, recipes, patterns, and Native American words. Much beer was consumed. Rolf told me Karl, one of the older men and the club president, works for a local beer distillery and provides the club with free beer during all their activities. Rolf said, “It isn’t as good as other German beers, but free tastes okay, I guess.”

**Camp Life**

Some group members worked on crafting projects while sitting around the campfire. Jurg and Leo worked on refitting a hide onto the group’s drum. Lise and Vera peeled potatoes and cubed squash into huge pots filled with water and herbs. Georg, the club vice president, and his

father, Gilbert, butchered meat and cooked it on a charcoal grill off to the side of the camp near the main house.

Adel and Volker wanted to hear all about America, Pine Ridge, Oklahoma, and things like peanut butter and marshmallows. Volker insisted Americans eat whole kernel corn on their pizzas despite my strong objection. Adel wondered if it is required to own a gun (or several) in America, or if Americans typically wear cowboy hats if they don't look like Hollywood celebrities (as if cowboy or Hollywood are the only two identities Americans embody). Neither man has ever been outside Europe. Their idea of "American" culture is primarily drawn from pop culture and digital media.

After everyone settled, the food was prepared and consumed, and energy levels lowered, Adel, Leo, Rolf, Nils and Georg gathered around the drum, and four women began singing. The whole group joined in, some dancing in place, others moving around the drum to form a circle or wall around the drummers. They sang a Crow veterans song. Rudi held the German flag with much reverence. After the first few songs, the group broke up to their respective tipis for the night.

I walked back to my cabin, joined by Dolly, the affectionate and friendly yellow Lab, and the one-eyed pregnant cat, Heidi. In many ways, this group was just like the other six or seven who had visited Apple Tree Ranch during my ten weeks stay. This group was the largest, and included Swedes and a couple Austrians. The only major difference I noticed was

the complete opposite attitudes by the polarized generations. Usually it is the older Indianer wanting more traditional, “authentic,” and respectful treatment of Native culture and ceremony, but this group was different, as I would learn later.

The older members are much more “German” than “Cree,” or the various other tribes’ that CCC members are trying to emulate. The older members are not as careful with their portrayal or respect for Native cultures. They are more like Germans on holiday playing with their "Indian toys.” However, the younger members are adamant about doing things “the right way” and being very mindful of their actions, words, thoughts, and intentions, for spiritual purposes. They speak more of a mindful connection to nature, a desire for old traditions, and a spiritual connection to Native North America. The older members seem to care mostly about beer, who is doing what/sitting where, and comparing sizes of feather fans or axes. In one case, several men literally had a pissing contest.

### Indianer Materials and Group Authority

Leo is meticulous with his beadwork, stitching, styling, and representation of Crow culture/identity. He spends a lot of time keeping his material culture clean and looking untouched (even though he wears/uses it all a lot). Other men in the group react with either eye rolls and sighs, or a sort-of jealousy/desire to have similarly immaculate regalia.

Leo eats up both types of reactions. He responds to the eye rolls with comments about compliments he receives from “actual” Crow or Shoshone when they come to Germany for powwows and festivals. He responds to the jealous comments with stories of how much time and money he spends on his regalia, or by giving tutorials on how to properly care for a feather bustle or headband, etc. Once, I witnessed him give Rolf an otter pelt and say, “Hier. Den kannst du haben. Es wird hübsch aussehen mit deiner roten Perlenweste.“ (Here. You can have this. It will look nice with your red beaded vest.)

For almost all of the Indianer I met, their material culture is their most prized possessions. They put a lot of time and money into crafting or procuring the “most authentic“ pieces they can. In many cases, the objects carry heavy social power. Indianer treat some items, such as their versions of an Eagle Staff, as though they are a living, breathing being... an object with agency.

*Georg in Iroquois regalia by the lake.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Brandenburg, Germany. 2016.*

**Archaeological Applications to Indianthusiasm**

Generally, agency is thought by anthropologists to only apply to humans, but archaeologists, such as Chris Gosden, have come to argue that objects carry the capacity to act for or against the status quo or hegemony (Gosden, 2005). Objects are agents of communication (among other things) as well, in that they are seen and interpreted by humans for information flow. Stratos Nanoglou, describes the materiality of representation as having powerful messages, upon sight, of objects acting as mechanisms of information, which then communicate expectations,

identifications, queues, ideologies, rules, and in some cases, “Truths” (Nanoglou, 2009). Indianer regalia and other constructed objects that give them a perceived Native American identity, act as vessels of symbolic language and social power.

## Materiality

In theories of materiality, archaeologists argue that objects are socially constructed and produced by societies for the purpose of controlling or suggesting certain human thoughts and actions (Meskell, 2005). Archaeologists theorize materiality to determine the meaning behind the presence of particular objects and images in various markets as well as throughout colonial and archaic history, but also within a contemporary vernacular discourse (Meskell, 2005). Objects carry messages. They give people ideas and represent discourses, ideologies, and social expectations.

Archaeology studies the relationships between objects (material culture) and the humans who produce, use, value, and operate within the social framework of particular objects. Figuring out people’s relationships to their material culture is important for anthropological understandings of past societies, as well as contemporary ethnographic study. During fieldwork, I often found myself relating archaeological theories of materiality and landscape to an Indianer account of how he received various objects, or how entire families of multiple generations of Indianer

“pass down” objects thought to carry significant meaning and supernatural power.

Materiality, according to Daniel Miller, is the archaeological study of how “stuff” becomes objectified in their cultural contexts, allowing archaeologists to examine material culture to better understand how a specific culture was constructed, and how it functioned, sustained itself (or failed) temporally and spatially. To objectify an idea or expectation (such as what Indianers expect of a visit to Pine Ridge) means to represent it as an ideology, hegemonic notion of social hierarchy, or as an emotion -- as if it were something that actually exists outside of being a mere construction of physical properties (Miller,2007).

People’s relationship to, and perceptions of objects are culturally constructed and dependent on the social norms, practice, and agency assigned to the objects (Meskell, 2003). Material objects have the ability to intervene in human actions through object-agency. But they are only “allowed” to do so because people give the objects meaning and communicate those meanings through discourse (Robb, 2010). A person’s ability to own cultural property is a major indicator of which aspect of discourse they are participating in, and how those people’s identities and social stratification are perceived.

## Maps

Take for instance, the hand-drawn map of Pine Ridge Reservation carried in the pocket of Arlo, an eighty-one-year-old Indianer from Dresden, Germany. He visited Pine Ridge in 1965. During his visit, he became friends with members of the Long Knife family who helped him document his travels by drawing a map of the reservation using markers and craft paper. Arlo showed me this map. It is drastically worn and faded. Arlo would not let me photograph the map. He said it was too sacred.

Arlo spoke of the map as though it was his child, or a living, breathing being. He told me it has survived countless beatings, near losses, and even two heart attacks. He keeps it in his wallet when he is not wearing regalia. When he is at camp, it stays in his medicine purse. The map has a social identity. According to his wife, Lise, it is known by Indianer throughout Germany and Europe. At a powwow in Malmö, Sweden, another German Indianer, Dirk, told me about “Old Man Arlo’s sacred map.” Members of Cree Coalition pray for the map’s safety, and that it remain an important member of the group after Arlo’s passing.

The map as an object hold significant meaning and agency; however, it also carries ideologies of the place it represents. It depicts a space, and places at Pine Ridge that are meaningful to most Indianer. The map is a somewhat semiotic message of hope, perseverance, and imagined community for the Indianer who encounter it.

Social identities are often constructed (partially) via people's meaningful experiences with spaces and places. Space, or how a place is experienced, manipulated, and made to have meaning by people, is described by De Certeau as having movement, unlike a map. Maps have become a semiotic discourse for people's understandings of places and spaces. A map is a scientific rendering of physicalities and distances, but is far from able to describe the "feeling" of the place, or the social life that happened within the place (DeCerteau, 2002). People cannot fully experience or know a place from a map only. This differs from semiotician Umberto Echo's and Walter Benjamin's theories that symbols and images often do convey the profoundness and meaning of the things they are depicting.

For a map to even be made, the location must be known, experienced, and given meaningful significance. A map cannot *fully* capture the emotional, affective experience or cultural meanings within its depiction. A map is a disengagement from reality (De Certeau, 2002). Everyday stories (narratives) about a place give social meaning and movement to create a phenomenological experience (De Certeau, 2002). The users of the place transform it into being a productive moving abstract that is practiced and given character (De Certeau, 2002). Space is not tangible or concrete. Spaces are stories, representative of the experience and meaning captured and produced by the people who give meaning to the story. Space

is a discourse that can flow from the physical place to a memory, or to a recreation in order for its meaning to remain profound and significant.

## Space and Place

Indianer "camps" such as Apple Tree Ranch are also an example of how a space can be transformed into a place, experienced as "authentic" even though it is a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1988). Karl May built-up the narrative of Native Americans to be a significant part of many Germans' everyday lives. 19th century Native American stories represent idealized German notions of tribal, natural, pure, and spiritual values.

That narrative, created and initially told by Karl May, Buffalo Bill, and other early purveyors of Native culture was transformed into a physical and embodied experience by hobbyists in Germany. It is an example of how space and place intersect and form integral relationships. You can't have space without place and vice versa. Indianer camp, a space of great cultural (perhaps even spiritual) significance successfully consumes and structures people's lives both inside and outside of its physical boundaries.

Separation from camp invokes great yearnings to return, and grandiose nostalgia of fantastical and ethereal experiences in the same way Wendy Ashmore describes people's feelings about landscapes (cosmos). According to H. Glenn Penny, historian of German fascinations with Native America, Indianer desire to experience the same sensations invoked during their time at camp, or from a visit to Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge, or other

historically significant Native American spaces and places in North America in their everyday lives away from camp or away from their visits in North America (Penny, 2006). The Indianer ontology, an artistic narrative, is transformed into a space experienced by the hundreds of thousands of Germans who practice, or participate in the narrative.

Significant Native American spaces in North America are assigned such a prestigious status by many Indianers that they have become a quasi-religious shrine; a pilgrimage site that pays homage to the 19th century Native American story and its significance as a foundational tenet of most Indianer lived experiences. As such, they consume a lot of Native material culture as a way to remain influenced and inspired by Native culture when separated from the spaces, places, and people they are obsessed with.

## Walter Benjamin and Aura

Walter Benjamin studied the social relationship of art masterpieces with their reproductions or replicas and concluded that mass reproductions of iconic pieces of artwork depreciate the value and meaning of the original and take away the singularity that produces a sacredness of the object being reproduced (Benjamin, 1982). To explain the power of authority assigned to masterpieces, Benjamin introduced the concept of the "*aura*" or the atmosphere of detached and ethereal beauty and the power they have in supporting cultural narratives. To describe aura, he gives the

example, of resting on a summer afternoon, you see the shadow of a mountain range on the horizon or a large tree branch with its shadow cast over you; you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch in the shadow, a copy or representation of the “real” thing.

Benjamin suggests that such majestic places have a powerful way of becoming significant and sacred, or deemed greater in value, and yet they can be experienced from a distance because it is the *meaning* that is mobilized, not the physical presence (1982). In this way, Native North American places can be experienced from a distance as Indianers find ways to capture the places’ profound meanings in their lives and make it a part of their everyday life in Germany.

This can be done in many ways. Lakota have many cultural products that can be consumed in all aspects of daily life. Through its many dances, songs, bead patterns, stories, regalia, etc, people bring those icons and figures into their everyday lives and interact with them away from the physical locality of meeting them “in-person” at Pine Ridge (or another Native place).

Even though German people know the “characters” in the history they are simulating, their aura presents them as “authentic”; they wield a powerful presence of magnitude as replicas of Native American (Oglala) warriors and leaders. The Lakota story carries across the iconic “label”, so its aura is present as a reminder of the sacredness and intense

meaning people experience (or hope to experience) when they are in South Dakota, etc.

## Landscape Archaeology

When looking at the spaces, places, and objects with which people experience the “Native Culture,” an appropriate set of theories and methods comes from landscape archaeology. Landscape archaeology studies the ways in which people (usually in the past) constructed, manipulated, and found meaning in the environment and physical spaces around them. Landscape archaeology places most of its emphasis on the study of the relationships between objects, human alteration of land, and the natural, physical environment. This approach to archaeology utilizes phenomenology as a theoretical approach to understanding how people experienced the spaces, places, and objects that held profound meaning in their everyday lives.

Wendy Ashmore’s work on ceremonial landscapes and civic plans relates to both Native places in the U.S. as well as Indianer Camp as landscapes and spaces of great spiritual and cultural importance, i.e. she analyzes evidence to recognize (and interpret) material conceptions of the “cosmos” which she describes as “an important and profound space” (Ashmore, 2010). This perception of an existing landscape that holds such profound meaning is interpretive of the cultural structures in place during the time of the site being studied.

Other resources on landscape archaeology include Tilley's 1994 publication, *A Phenomenology of Landscape* which is a humanist view on landscapes, breaking down the binary of nature and culture, and proposes that the two halves of the binary are intertwined and experienced together, not separately. People assign meaning and importance to their physical spaces and live in them and with them, not next to or on top of them.

Crumley 1999 suggests that people's affinity to a cosmos (meaningful space) is a frame for their life's meaning. People desire to make what gives their life meaning into a tangible experience, whether that is as a shrine (or structure) built of stone and wood, or as paintings and objects that depict the aura and significance of the space (Crumley, 1999). If Wounded Knee is meaningful in a person's life, then they try to construct ways of keeping that meaning present in their daily lives. Pine Ridge, Little Big Horn, and the vast prairie lands of the Dakotas are experienced by some German Indianers as real, tangible, contemporary places, but the meanings people have assigned to them have transformed them into a cosmos; they hold immense power in their places, but are transported in many ways as spaces that consume people's lives away from their physical locations.

Crumley goes on to say that (in ancient societies) caves and stone mountains are entry points into the supernatural world (1999).

Similarly, Wounded Knee is the entry point to 19th century Native culture, a *mythical* and spiritual place where folklores and Lakota narratives become real and people have ethereal experiences with the myths and icons associated with the Lakota culture. Crumley suggests these types of places create liminality, or a space between reality and fantasy (1999).

Wounded Knee is the place that initiates the entrance into an altered state of mind, but the experience of the space is what people attempt to recreate over and over again in their everyday lives back in Germany. They seek a way to keep that feeling alive at all times. Wounded Knee is a space of liminality in Crumley's terms. It is a space between reality and fantasy (for Indianer tourists).

Van Dommelen says that landscape cannot easily be separated from society because it often plays an integral part in the reproduction of the existing social order… I think he says, "land owns people." (1999). He explains this by saying that land is not just dirt and rocks. It is an entity always fused with life and meaning. Wounded Knee is not just a place with a mass grave and stone monument, surrounded by open fields and ravines, craft huts occupied by contemporary Oglala selling their material culture. It is fused with social meaning, memory, and ideology.

Wounded Knee has immense influence and control over people who experience it both in the physical locality, as well as when they

are away. It also influences meaning in the lives of Indianers who have not visited the cemetery but aspire to go someday. Analysis of landscape archaeology theories correlates with an assumption that Wounded Knee, as a culturally meaningful and significantly experienced space, is a landscape, a cosmos.

Wounded Knee Monument. Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise, Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota. 2013.

Just as Wounded Knee is a place and a space, the structures that are placed in that place are objects. The monument depicting the names of the massacre victims, a marble construction that sits in the center of the cemetery, is an icon, or a shrine. It symbolizes a variety of aspects of people's relationship to Wounded Knee, as well as social constructions of memory, class, race, and kinship. Objects are distinct. They have many functions and serve many purposes in many facets. They have particular meanings, contexts, interpretations, and always contain messages and knowledge that humans interpret (with great variation) and internalize upon

contact with an object. Archaeologist Nanoglou says that architectural structures that represent, or suggest expectations or idealized social categories are material, and should be treated as objects (2009).

## Object Agency

Representations inform our understanding of the world and shape our emotive and expressive identities and how we perceive those of others. While representations such as the monument itself seek to mirror the ideas, concepts, or people they were designed to depict (massacre victims), they stand alone as material culture – objects – in the same world as the one they attempt to mimic (Nanoglou, 2009). Wounded Knee represents trauma and racial hierarchy (US Calvary vs Lakota) as an object that mimics a "real" social construction of "Lakotaness" and violence against Lakota people. In this way, the cemetery has agency, or the capacity to act independently within (or opposed to) social factors such as class, and race-limitations that influence the agent's opportunities (Sillar, 2009).

In this case, a person's ability to own a visit to Pine Ridge (Wounded Knee) to experience the object (the cemetery, or other places in the area) suggests their socioeconomic position, as well as the discourse to which they relate their identity and derive their social expectations. Looking at the theory of materiality and the effects objects have on social structure and social relationships, archaeologists can interpret objects as agents of discourse and tools for structural power.

Humans have the tendency to use objects (especially those representative of human-beings) as a way to reify or justify our own being, or our own essence (Miller, 2005). We use objects to communicate our representations and expressions of our paradigms and philosophies. In the article, “What Do Objects Want?” archaeologist Chris Gosden describes objects as having sensory and emotional impacts on their consumer. When observed, objects incite ideas, affects, memories, and discourses that have been culturally constructed (naturalized) throughout that person’s lifetime, or they build on further construction, adding to the person’s perceptions.

Objects, such as racist souvenirs found in tourist markets throughout "Indian Country," have been constructed to be socially tied to spiritual or racial (ethnic, etc) stereotypes; these are vessels of knowledge, or of a discourse transported across space and time to continue and, sometimes, promote the stereotypes. Over time, and as the number of discourses being transported increases, they contribute to social memory, therefore becoming a common, or vernacular icon of the culture and its ideologies being depicted.

The ideas and meanings behind objects (such as shrines, e.g. Wounded Knee cemetery and monument) are widely accepted and go unquestioned or unopposed because they are interpreted through social memory as accurate and authentic; they are given substantial weight by society as measures of one’s placement in a social hierarchy.

Spaces can be *mobilized* through material objects. Lakota products, sacred objects, mundane cultural objects, and even media bring the Plains, and Lakota culture away from its place in the Dakotas to make a space, or an experiential aura in people's lives away from the physical location of the people (Lakota). Objects can even symbolize time in the space. Indianer are transporting an imagined identity and interpreted culture from the 19th century to present-day Germany, sometimes taking an authoritative stance and ownership of the culture. In some cases, Indianer dismiss Native north Americans as being "actual" members of their ethnic groups. I spoke with a few Indianer who felt they were now the rightful and proper agents of tribal identities.

**What it all Means: Cultural Authority**

One of the Swedes in CCC, Lars, is downright mean. He makes fun of Germans, Americans, Jews, Muslims, and women. On several occasions I overheard him tell others that he thinks he (and other male members of the group) are better Indians than the "actual, leftovers who call themselves Indians in America and Canada." During a snack-break, Lars and I sat on a bench outside the barn and he agreed to talk to me as an "official interviwed participant".

I asked him about what he said earlier about being a better Indian than those in North America, and he said,

> *Look, I know that sounds racist. I mean, I would kill the guy who said he was more Swedish than me. I would skin him alive and*

*drape the Swedish flag over his dead body. Maybe some Cree would do the same to me for thinking I was a better Cree. But look. I am a real Swede. I am a good, honest, loyal Swede. Those guys over there are not the real kind of Indians anymore. They are drunks. They are poor. They are dirty and lazy. Half of them look like their parents were brother and sister, you know what I mean? Over here, we honor the old traditions. We live the Old Way. We don't piss around and lay about all day and not work and expect the government to hand us money, food, and houses.*

I wasn't brave enough at that point to verbally make Lars understand that they actually *are* sitting around drinking beer all day and not working. Being one of the only non-Indianer women at camp until Jutta came home from work put me in an awkward position; for the most part, none of the other women wanted anything to do with me. They kept me at an arms-length, whereas the men in the group tripped over each other for my attention. I was hyper-aware to not stir up any emotions or make myself a target of any kind by either the men or women. As I learned on multiple other ocassions at the camp, emotions run high here.

Lars continued,

*We have proper camp. We sing the songs. We hunt. We make our dress. We have ceremony. We smudge. We dance. We support each other. We are Warriors and noble women. Those people over there... calling themselves indigenous, or First Nations, or whatever... have become like the blacks. They just think their misfortune is all the white people's fault and lay around waiting for someone to apologize and hand them the good life. I bet they don't even know their language or songs. I bet they can't even tell the difference between a Cree rose and a Cheyenne rose bead pattern. Your earrings... those are Ottewa, right? See. I know that. I bet a real Ottewa wouldn't even know that.*

I told him my Ottewa friend in Chicago made me the earrings and that I am absolutely positive she knows her clan and tribe's designs. Lars said,

> *Right, well there is always one who does know, but overall 99% of them do not." He continued, "Indians over there today... they act black. They are thugs and welfare-brats. They just sit on those reservations and give up on life. Their kids commit suicide because they want out of the trap. Death is a better option than living like a rat on the prairie.*

As he whiddled a small piece of wood with his pocket knife, Lars continued to speak to me,

> *I am not saying we have Indian DNA. We aren't biologically Cree, or whichever tribe these guys honor most. We are Swede, German, Austrian, and we even used to have some Poles and Croats, but they went off and started their own club. We are Europeans. We are proud to be whatever nationality we are, and even dig at each other for how our country is the best. In every single case, we are hands down better than the tribes over there. No doubt. Our countries have money and no one is living like, say, the Lakota. No one is sitting in jail for simply being brown skinned. We can hold our alcohol and not be like those drunks who lay in the street because they can't even walk home. We have jobs, and take care of our children. We pay taxes and buy houses. We have cars that work and have all their correct parts. We eat a healthy diet of real food, not powdered-cheese nacho chips and red-colored corn syrup drink.*

I stopped him to ask if he had ever travelled to Canada or the United States to visit with North American indigenous peoples. He said,

> *Once, in 1997. I couldn't believe it. Nils and I went to an Apache reservation in Arizona called, San Carlos. Man, those people were so poor the children weren't clean or wearing shoes. Flies swarmed around their heads. They had missing teeth. Their hair was like broom bristles. It was like a cloud of dust just gathered at their feet all the time. And they were stupid. They had something wrong with their eyes and it was like they were just slow and couldn't even think right. One little girl... I thought if she stared any harder with her*

*mouth gaped open she would start to drool, or like insects would just fly in there and that is how she got food, like eating flies*.

I stopped him from continuing. I couldn't listen to it anymore. Lars wasn't recognizing the humanity of the people he visited at San Carlos. He removed all human dignity from his perception of the place and people. His expectations, and his middle class Swedish standards prevented him from having any empathy whatsoever.

## Chapter Conclusion

I was frustrated with this group. Unlike other groups who name-dropped Native Americans from North America, and seemingly sought my approval or at least understanding, or who fill their facebook pages with shares and likes for Native American sources, sites, and events... this group dismissed any sharing of the culture. They had animosity and disgust for contemporary Native Americans. Their obsession with Native culture and history was based on a romantic, 19th century idea of many North American tribes, with no empathy or regard for contemporary Native peoples.

This group ignores the parts of history that forcibly removed North America's indigenous peoples from their lands, erasure of languages and cultures, and wiping out of entire tribes. It seemed to me that this group felt no remoarse, nor recognized European colonization on North America as even a partial reason for the plight of many indigenous peoples in North

America. According to Lars (and other interviews with Karl and Nils), America's Natives "gave up" and "let fire water kill their cultures."

It is interesting that this group has such a negative view of contemporary Native American people because, as discussed in the next chapter, many of them turn to contemporary indigenous men to sire their offspring using advanced reproductive technology. This dichotomy of wanting to use advanced technology to conceive children using Native American sperm while erasing the perceived negative traits of contemporary Native American cultures (as though culture is innate and inherited), sets up a racial discourse wrought with harkenings and reminders of Germany's not-so-distant and painfully troubled past—e.g. The Holocaust.

## Chapter Three: Consuming an Indian Identity: Designer Genes and "Souvenir Sperm"

*This chapter analyzes the racial ideologies of Nazi era eugenics, as well as introduces the Indianer practice of In Vitro Fertilization using Native American sperm, and compares discourses of group membership to ideas of identity construction, which are interesting because scientific advances allow people to construct an identity for ethnic or racial group membership.*

As many Indianer campers at Apple Tree Ranch illustrate, it is a major goal to be as close to nature as possible. They desire minimalism, and to successfully get through their tipi-camp weekends using primitive technology and tools mostly sourced from nature. However, many of them describe themselves and their fellow Indianer as Germans who also have a penchant for fine engineering and advanced technology (outside of camp). Their complex relationships with technology are a dichotomy of wishing it never existed, and using it to produce their desired Indianer lifestyle.

One such way they have incorporated advanced technology into their constructed identity goes way beyond using a 3D printer to design a knife, engineering a hybrid gas/wood glass bead forge in their backyards, or flying in a Concord Mark2 Airbus over the Atlantic Ocean to visit a Native American historical place and attend a tribal festival/powwow. I learned of an interesting and surprising way some Indianer are using advanced technology to construct their desired Native American identities during a hot summer afternoon at Apple Tree Ranch.

## In Vitro Fertilization

Some Indianer are moving forward in their tribal identity construction by medically-engineering a German-Native-American human, using In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) during vacations to places such as Florida, Nevada, and Arizona. Advanced Reproductive Technology[5] (ART) and pre-implantation genetic customization allow couples to custom-design their children's genes, using precisely chosen sperm and/or eggs from donors. In the case of the Indianer parents I met in Germany, they look to sperm banks who advertise a carefully screened Native American donor inventory.

Advanced Reproductive Technology (ART) is a medical practice used to help a woman become pregnant outside of the usual means (sexual intercourse). The most common type of ART is In Vitro Fertilization (IVF). During this procedure, an egg and a sperm are joined in a laboratory dish. Once the sperm has successfully attached to the egg, and complete fertilization occurs, the zygote is placed in a woman's fallopian tube laparoscopically by a surgeon (medlineplus.gov).

For this procedure to be successful, a woman must first be on a cocktail of fertility and hormone medications which increase egg health, and sometimes increase the number of eggs released by the ovaries each month (cycle). Women must be monitored frequently via transvaginal ultrasound during the medication phase to examine the ovaries, and they

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[5] According to the National Institute of Health and the United States Surgeon General it is called Advanced Reproductive Technology; however, other sources call it Assisted Reproductive Technology (such as Amy Speier and Susan Khan).

must have several blood tests to monitor hormone levels. Most health insurances do not cover the medications or ultrasounds (medlineplus.gov).

Once a medical professional determines the timing is precisely right for implantation, a minor surgery, called follicular aspiration, is performed to remove the eggs from the ovaries. Follicular aspiration involves a transvaginal procedure where a long, thin needle with a suction device is inserted through the vagina and into the ovaries to retrieve as many eggs as necessary. If these eggs are deemed unhealthy, donor eggs can be purchased and used for the fertilization step.

Once a healthy egg is retrieved or located, it is combined with a healthy sperm cell. This process is called, insemination. If they do not attach on their own, lab technicians can force the sperm into the egg using an injection needle. Once they are combined, they are stored in a sterile, environmentally-controlled chamber. The fertilization process typically takes a few hours (medlineplus.gov). They are monitored closely for about five days while lab staff check that the embryo is growing properly and dividing according to normal standards. This short waiting period often feels like an eternity for patients undergoing the procedure. The possibility for a failed attempt is high, and the insemination process almost always leads to emotional fragility.

Once the doctor decides the embryo is healthy enough, it is placed into a woman's womb through a thin catheter. If the embryo attaches to the

lining of the womb, and remains healthy, pregnancy ensues. In some cases, more than one embryo can be inserted, resulting in twins or more. According to the National Institute of Health, only about 40% of IVF procedures are successful (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). Due to the high risk of failure, unused embryos are usually stored cryogenically for future pregnancy attempts.

IVF was first introduced in England by Drs. Robert Edwards and Patrick Steptoe in 1978 (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov and Obasogie, 2013). Lesley Brown sought their medical expertise and became the first woman to successfully deliver a baby by using IVF. Her daughter, Louise Brown, was seen as the culmination of decades of scientific research in reproductive medicine. As a result, many breakthroughs and advances have been made; an estimated five million births have resulted using this breakthrough technology (Obasogie, 2013). IVF is now commonly practiced throughout the developed world by women and couples who can afford the procedure and various treatments that go along with it.

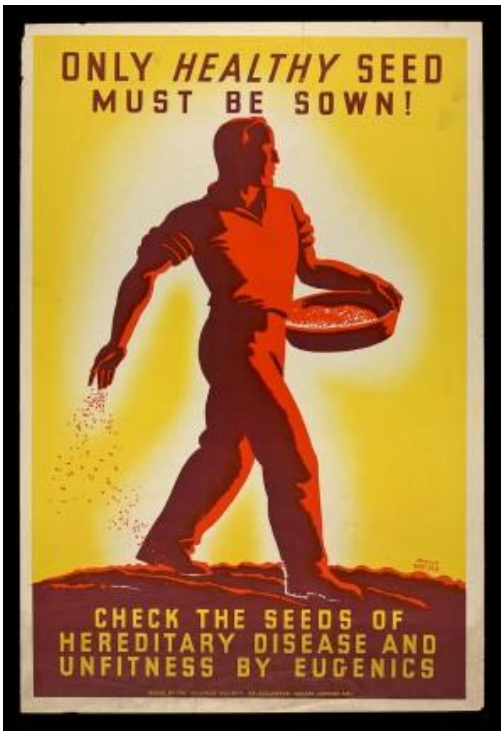
Years later, following his success with helping Lesley and Louise Brown, Robert Edwards won the 2010 Nobel Prize in Medicine for his revolutionary scientific achievements. What many do not know, however, is that he was an active member of Britain's Eugenics Society for much of his career (Obasogie, 2013). He served on its leadership council as a trustee for several decades. Edwards served as a member of the leadership

committee who led the society to change its name to The Galton Institute, after Sir Francis Galton, founder of the eugenics movement in the late 1800s.

## Eugenics

At the time of Edward's involvement, The Eugenics Society/Galton Institute problematically suggested that "science should be used to control human reproduction in order to breed preferred types of people" (Obasogie, 2013). This ideology stems back to the end of the 19th century. Galton, a scientists and polymath (and cousin to Charles Darwin), made significant contributions to many scientific fields (such as meteorology, forensics, and psychology) in addition to his work on genetics and heredity (galtoninstitute.org.uk).

While many of his theories and methods are still in use today, his chief contributions center on his "enthusiastic advocacy for selective breeding in human populations" (galtoninstitute.org.uk). This work has long since been discredited; however, the institute is still in business, and Galton is still revered for his advances and contributions in the field of genetics.




*1920s Eugenics Poster*
*on Display at The National Gallery*
*Image credit: Kelly LaFramboise. London, England. 2016.*

In 1907, a group of Galton's followers founded the Eugenics Education Society (EES). Galton encouraged local branches of the EES to disseminate their ideas and raise awareness for "good heredity" (galtoninstitute.org.uk). They compiled lists of individuals of note in the area to present their ideas to. Galton's eugenics focused on “negative applications—weeding out undesirables through practices such as forced sterilization and genocide.

In late 1910, the Royal Society awarded Galton the Copley Medal, its highest award. Two months later on 17 January 1911, Galton died. The eugenics movement, however, and ideas of a "clean gene pool,' did not die

with him. In fact, eugenics gained popularity as the 20th century progressed. In the U.S, many states enforced laws for the sterilization of Native Americans, African Americans, Asians, criminals, mentally ill and physically or intellectually disabled persons; and, in Nazi Germany, the "racial hygiene movement" led to the horrors of the extermination camps during the Holocaust (Thompson, 1971; Albanese, 2006; Obasogie, 2013).

Eugenics has led to disturbing implications and applications since its inception. Galton characterized it in 1883 as the “science of improving stock ... to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had” (Obasogie, 2013). Framed in this manner, eugenics has encouraged fascist, authoritarian, and dictatorial regimes who have attempted to eradicate or drastically slow the growth of "inferior" groups.

Nazis used eugenic studies and methods to call for and justify the extermination of people with disabilities, Jews, and other marginalized populations. As a social ideology, eugenics also received acclamations and funding support from the wealthy and other elites—particularly in the U.S. The idea of creating a perfect human, especially a “strong German” is not a new idea that recently happened with breakthroughs in IVF technology. Germany has a history of intense, and dangerous racial ideologies grounded in genetics and beliefs about nation-building using reproductive technologies.

Germany's economy was in shambles following WWI. The population was all but decimated. Therefore, the Weimar Republic looked to popular eugenics theories within the global scientific community for ways to restore population growth, primarily with optimally healthy and physically strong genes.

## Nazi Eugenics

Beginning in 1932, the Weimar Republic started sterilizing individuals with known hereditary illnesses. In part, their justification was to reduce the demand for institutionalized care, medical facilities, and residential care facilities which were costly, and were deemed a reason for the struggling economy. The German government felt sterilization of the "unfit" would limit the risk for future generations of chronically ill and disabled people.

At this point, sterilization was voluntary. Government health workers informed patients and their families of the reasons for sterilization, albeit strong-handed and suggestive of patriotic justifications. Some patients and families served the needs of their country by volunteering to be sterilized. However, the next year, after the Nazis took control of the German government, the "Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases" went into effect, which made sterilization required for all persons deemed "unfit" by medical professionals working under Nazi direction.

And the list of persons classified as hereditarily ill included those suffering from "congenital feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, manic

depression, hereditary epilepsy, Huntington's chorea, hereditary blindness, hereditary deafness, and serious physical deformities." People with chronic alcoholism could also be sterilized. The law established some 200 Genetic Health Courts at which teams of lawyers and doctors would subpoena medical records in order to choose candidates for sterilization. The Court proceedings were secret, and the decisions could rarely be reversed.

Throughout Germany, doctors, under the direction of (or in many cases by choice to belong to) the Nazi Party, were being trained in "race hygiene." They zealously identified and reported anyone in their communities who had any of the so-called genetic diseases and forcibly sterilized them. The Nazis and Nazi doctors also promoted the eugenics strategy of "selective breeding" as a way to rebuild the nation's population, specifically its Aryan population.

During the six years before World War II, Nazi doctors sterilized over 400,000 people, mostly German citizens living in mental institutions, nursing homes, and other residential care facilities for people dependent on health workers to maintain daily living. Hitler's *Rassenhygiene* (race hygiene) program was in full swing. The “racial health” of the overall German population took precedence over the health of any given individual. This policy was promoted as patriotism, and strength of the nation.

By the late 1930s, Hitler and the Nazis were using propaganda movies to persuade the public that those who were hereditarily ill and,

therefore, dangerous to the health of the nation, should be exterminated rather than kept alive as "neutered beings." The targets for extermination were objectified as "beings of lesser worth," "life unworthy of life," "ballast existences," and "useless eaters."

In late 1939, Hitler approved the *Aktion T-4* program, which authorized specific doctors and officials to carry out “mercy deaths” (euthanasia) of those the Nazis identified as being unworthy of life. Fifty volunteer physicians coordinated the program from its headquarters in Berlin -- located at number 4 Tiergarten Street -- hence the name T-4. Again, physicians at hospitals and psychiatric institutions throughout Germany readily identified and recommended candidates for euthanasia.

At the start, in accordance with the T-4 program, Nazi doctors murdered more than 5,000 congenitally deformed children. The children were given lethal injections or were starved to death at six well-secured asylums that had been remodeled to accommodate the killings. Then, the T-4 program expanded to include adults, who were taken to these and other killing asylums as well. Death certificates were sent to families of those who were killed, falsifying the reasons for their relatives' “sudden deaths.”

Eventually, church groups and the general public raised objections to the T-4 program. In response, Hitler called a halt to the program. Unfortunately, by then, August of 1941, almost 70,000 people had been killed under T-4. Although the official Aktion T-4 program stopped, the killing

did not; it simply took on another form.

Doctors and nurses around Germany continued to select and kill people in secret, under the direction of the government. Historian Edzard Ernst writes that Aktion T-4 "turned out to be nothing less than a 'pilot project' for the extinction of millions in the concentration camps" (2015:42). Most of the health care practitioners involved in T-4 simply transferred their "technology for killing" on an industrial scale to the new *Aktion 14f13* program. Through this next program, six million Jews were exterminated in the gas chambers of the concentration camps as well as millions of political prisoners, Roma (“Gypsies”), disabled, those too ill to work, Jehovah's Witnesses and religious leaders, homosexuals, intellectuals, Afro-Europeans, and Soviet and Polish prisoners-of-war.

Hitler's race hygiene program relied on and succeeded because of the enthusiastic collaboration of people in the medical community who favored eugenics as a scientific breakthrough. German physicians had been involved at all levels and stages. They had developed and accepted the pseudo-science of race hygiene. They were instrumental in developing it further into applied racism. They had evolved the know-how of mass extinction. Finally, they also performed outrageously cruel and criminal experiments under the guise of scientific inquiry. The aim of generating pure Aryans had taken precedence over the most fundamental ethical issues in medicine (Ernst, 2015). No one was safe in the presence of Nazi

care givers under the state’s medical system of routinized killing.

German physicians conducted numerous medical experiments in the concentration camps between 1941 and the end of the war. Karl Brandt, Hitler's personal physician, suggested that the camps would be the perfect "laboratories" for their eugenic experiments (Ernst, 2015:52). Experimentation was pivotal for implementing Nazi ideas of race hygiene, and killing could be justified, or at the least rationalized and seen not as murder, but as social healing, or as a therapeutic treatment, meant to preserve the health and wellbeing of the one racial community which really mattered (Aryans).

Nazi doctors considered people in concentration camps as the "living dead." If they served as objects of medical research, rather than human beings, their “useless lives” might have some utility. If they died, nothing was considered lost. They were destined for death anyways, being unworthy of life according to Nazi ideology.

Concentration camp doctors mastered techniques for sterilization and euthanasia, though, they were not humane or free from suffering side effects. They injected people with gasoline and shocked them with electricity to see if these procedures would kill them. They took away the prisoners' food and watched to see how long it took them to starve to death. They exposed naked bodies to extreme temperatures and elements. They cut off appendages to see how long it took to bleed to death. All of this was

done in the name of science for the purpose of promoting only the best genetic future for the Aryan race (Ernst, 2015: 57-63).

As described in an exhibit at Auschwitz Memorial, Camp doctors used twins in many of their experiments, because twins provided a perfect replica body to be used as a 'control' for each study. One twin would be injured, infected, or treated in some way and then left to die. Then, the other twin was killed, so that their bodies could be compared, scientifically, for the purposes of eugenic theory. Nazis were also interested in twins because, if they could figure out how to produce more twins, the population could be restored faster.

The eugenics-based horrors of the Holocaust were influenced by political, economic, and social factors. Nazis desired a master race of only a socially, physically, and racially “perfected” genetic pool. Manipulating the reproductive processes allowed them to design offspring to their liking, while using eugenic models of genetic studies to justify the prevention and extermination of undesired traits.

Eugenics was massively stigmatized after World War II. The world saw (and continues to see) the horrors of its most infamous implementation, the Holocaust. Eugenics became a controversial and sometimes forbidden scientific practice following WWII (Obasogie, 2013). However, many scientists continued to believe in its core hypothesis: that social ills have "natural," or fundamental, biological foundations that can be eliminated

through scientific control of human reproduction. Eugenicists in the years following WWII still emphasized so-called 'positive eugenics,' or strategically breeding in favorable traits" (Obasogie, 2013).

As early as the 1960s and continuing in the present, some scientists —"including a number of well-respected scholars at prestigious institutions—have tried to resurrect eugenic projects in one guise or another" (Obasogie, 2013). It is frightening to consider that these new eugenicists may be continuing to promote the problematic hypothesis that eugenic principles can be separated from the qualitative evidence that has continuously shown that inequality, intolerance, and oppression gave rise to the movement in the late 19th century, therefore continue a high risk for repetition of such atrocities as a result.

## Apple Tree Ranch, Indianer, and Reproductive Technology

Jutta and her best friend, Ursula, who visited the camp every Tuesday and every weekend, were always socializing in the guest areas. Ursula and her husband, Nils, are Indianer and participate in almost every Indianer event at Apple Tree Ranch, and at nearby Berlin area festivals and clubs. During one of our “Limonade und Kuchen” breaks on the patio, right before I was expected to leave the camp, Ursula dropped a doozy of a story on me.

Ursula asked Jutta, “Did you tell Kelly about my trip to Arizona yet?” Jutta shushed Ursula and rolled her eyes. “Oh, mein Gott. Nein! Es würde

ihr den Kopf zerbrechen." ("Oh my God. No! It would blow her mind.") Jutta's face turned red and she was visibly uncomfortable.

Ursula exclaimed, "Jutta! Oh mein Gott. Du behauptet das ist peinlich? Das ist eine gute Sache!" ("Jutta! Oh my God. You pretend this is embarrassing? This is a good thing!") Ursula leaned into the table. She grabbed my wrist, and as she stroked my tattoos she explained her and her husband's recent trip to Phoenix, Arizona.

"You see, it is like this: Nils, you know him; he is part of Cree Coalition. He is so into the Indianer and Wild West life. I am too, you know. I like it, too. But, Nils… his love for it is so deep it is in his bone marrow. He *is* Indianer *every minute* of *every day.* Even at work, he wears beads and leads a simple, minimal life there. His office looks like the inside of a wigwam. He speaks Apache, Hopi and Zuni. His Indian father, Gil Honanie, is Hopi. We stay there when we go to Arizona, you know?"

I did not know. At this point, I had no idea where this was going. She was desperate to justify every bit of her and her husband's "playing Hopi." She described gifts of regalia, material culture, listed off at least ten names of Natives who live in Arizona and New Mexico expecting me to know who they are. She said she knows Hopi "secrets." She described her experiences of "becoming Hopi" while in Arizona on many occasions. She told me about the many hours of dance and ceremony lessons, language

learning, and all the times she has spent cooking with Hopi, Zuni, and Apache women.

Her descriptions and stories were not unfamiliar to me. I, too, have spent two decades of summers building relationships with Lakota people on an impoverished, yet culturally vibrant reservation in South Dakota, and at an urban American Indian community center in Chicago, Illinois. I have been gifted regalia and star quilts, invited to sacred ceremonies, taught language and songs, and cooked thousands of meals with my Lakota social kin. I understand the beauty of intercultural friendship, and the deep desire to have these relationships. There is profound meaning in sharing and learning cultural differences from a perspective of wanting friendship, understanding the meaning of difference, and, for me, to take those lessons and turn them into social justice motivation in collaboration with the communities I have become close with.

However, I never fathomed playing Indian, consuming ethnicity as a capitalist opportunity, or incorporating reproductive technology as a means to procure an actual Native person out of racial and spiritual ideologies. What Ursula described to me is reminiscent of many historical German, racially-motivated milestones.

The word “Indianer” is a made-up German word based on the English word “Indian.” Robert Berkhofer writes in *The White Man’s Indian,* that Columbus called North American indigenous people “Indians” because

his geography was off, but that the name has stuck around, along with the images that suggest Native Americans are either blood-thirsty savages, or innocent, noble, and stoic stewards of nature: "the Earth's remaining natural or pure race" (Berkhofer, 1979). These stereotypes and tropes have been around for nearly 500 years. Not only do they obscure and erase the actual identities of Native peoples, they also have perpetuated as violent discourses of subjugation, exploitation, and in many ways, erasure of Native identities altogether.

For Germans, using the term "Indianer" rather than "Amerikanisch Indianer" is deliberate; it removes associations with the far-off land of America (especially since Germany was at war with the United States during WWi, a period of rampant Indianthusiasm due to the popularity of Karl May novels and even Karl May's public presentations/lectures). The term, Indianer, lends itself to incorporating Germanness into the practice of becoming or playing Indian.

Ursula continued to discuss her trip to America. "Arizona is our spirit home. I mean, we are German, of course. We are proud to be German, God. We are so *not* American. No offense. It is just that Germans have so many strong qualities and traits. We are athletic, intelligent, and efficient. Germans have some of the better characteristics of any Euro ethnicity."

She went on to say, "Look around. Look how we have bounced back from the wars. It is because we are brilliant engineers, strong bodies, and

quick to always do things the right way. I have no doubt German blood is high quality and preferable. But Arizona is our spiritual home. It is where our hearts belong."

## German Racial Ideologies

German Studies scholar, Susan Zantop, implies that Germans have long felt they, specifically, have the most desirable traits, and have found a pleasurable discourse in comparing their abilities to make friendships with North America's indigenous peoples, unlike French, British, and Spanish colonizers (Zantop, 2002: 04). Zantop says that Karl May, through his stories of brotherhood between Winnetou and Old Shatterhand, added another image of a heroic European man forming a strong bond with a Native American in addition to Pocahontas and John Smith, or Robinson and Friday – Caruso being the family name corrupted from the German name "Kreutznaer;" something Germans are often bitter about, yet use as evidence when describing their national aptness for befriending indigenous peoples (04).

Zantop also suggests that the "moral stature of the white hero is enhanced by the presence of a dark-skinned sidekick" (04). Germans, throughout the 20th century, delighted in alternating their identity performances between the strong, Teutonic superior hero, and the equally benevolent, agile, and alluring Indian. Ursula's description of Germans and Hopi suggest the discourse continues in the 21st century.

## 19th and Early 20th Century Literature and Racial Discourse

Much of the romanticized affinity is rooted in 19th and 20th century literatures. Some of Europe and America's turn-of-the-century literary geniuses were vessels of information and commentaries on Native American people and cultures. Herman Melville's texts situated the indigenous narrative within a context of the racial and ethnic "Other."

Melville's narrators—all white, European or American males—appear at times in opposition to, and at other times in ethereal harmony with, the Indigenous, African, or Asian characters and environments in his books (Krauthammer, 2008). Melville plays these non-white characters against the "white" narrator as racial and exotic "Others." This racial "Othering" includes segregation and colonizing, yet at the same time it invites contemporary readers to engage in critical thinking of nineteenth-century white American imperialist attitudes toward "Others."

By marking these races as exotic and "Other," in fact by striving to "mark" them in any way shape and form at all, Melville creates a literary, but more interestingly, an anthropological study (Krauthammer, 2008). Melville illustrates a set of unique social and cultural questions for his readers: does his encouragement of "civilizing" by way of colonization of "Other" spaces promote racial (racist) discourses, or do they contextualize the consequences of "civilizing" and colonizing those spaces and peoples as problematic or at the least, unfortunate for the "Others?"

I think they did both. The reader was introduced to both possibilities, and ultimately their social context determined how they interpreted his suggestions. Melville's texts served as much more than literary entertainment, but also as social commentary on the current (and historical) phenomena of colonization and "Manifest Destiny."

James Fennimore-Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans" was a commentary on the supposed "vanishing" of Native Americans in the mid to late 19th century. It was written in 1826, but takes place in the 1700s. Set during the French and Indian War, Fennimore-Cooper's book was widely received in Europe, namely Germany. His portrayal of Native Americans is at times as noble, "naturally regal,", and almost at-one with nature, and other times savage, blood-thirsty, war-mongering, and "wild" (Krauthammer, 2008).

Fennimore-Cooper pitted the "wild, savage" Indians (scouts for French troops) against the "noble, stewards of nature" (scouts for Great Britain) as illustrations of how Native Americans were not a unified culture, but complex and diverse, and nevertheless, vanishing, because according to popular belief at the time, neither "type" were as civilized, intelligent, or strong as European colonizers and settlers (Krauthammer, 2008).

Fennimore-Cooper's texts remain popular assignments in literature and history courses. Stereotypes of Native men are portrayed in film adaptations of the novel; silent and other turn-of-the-century films have

white actors playing as Native Americans. The director sets many scenes to view the Indians from side angles so the viewer can see such chiseled facial features, stoicism, and silhouettes that match popular beliefs about Native people. Fennimore-Cooper and Melville were largely responsible for (or at least very influencing on) people's ideas of Native American culture, identity, and existence.

A unique voice in late 19th and early 20th century literature was D.H. Lawrence. His works often portrayed or in some way shed light on the dehumanizing aspects (consequences) of industrialization and colonization. Concerning Native Americans, Lawrence was quite vocal about their exploitation for many things, one being artistic muses. In the poem "O! Americans," Lawrence beckons Americans to accept, or at least tolerate Native Americans and their cultures (Lawrence, 2015). He questioned whether or not Americans were "strong enough" to live side-by-side with Natives, and if Americans could leave their primitive thinking about indigeneity in the past and "adopt" new ways of thinking about equality, or at least non-exploitation of Native peoples. He did not think white settlers could (or should) mandate what Native Americans did with their own lands and time (Lawrence, 2015). He thought sovereignty and autonomy were owed to Native tribes.

While Lawrence wanted Native autonomy, he knew it wasn't likely to be given. He knew people would exploit Natives and benefit from

their material goods (Lawrence, 2015). But, at the same time he was against sentimentalizing the “Red Men” or holding them back for the profit of white/European artisans, merchants, and shopkeepers. I think Lawrence had his own paradox in how he wanted Native Americans to be treated, represented, and how they lived.

Perhaps one of Lawrence’s most interesting commentaries is on that of Herman Melville. Lawrence says the whale in *Moby Dick* is the deepest most interesting creature known to the white race, hunted by the absurd fetishization of the white consciousness because they feared the giantness, and seemingly violent (yet gracefulness) of the creature. Lawrence deciphers much symbolism in *Moby Dick*, and illustrates the social power that is wielded with the obsessive mindset of Americans regarding big, dark, scary things that haunt us deeply. Lawrence supposes (or parallels) Moby Dick, the whale, to that of non-White humans (such as Native Americans), incapable finally of being destroyed, but capable of causing much upset upon their pursuers.

Melville, Fennimore-Cooper, and Lawrence were largely responsible for raising awareness of, or creating discourses about Native Americans (and non-White “Others”) in America and Europe. The end of the 20$^{th}$ century also saw a boom in global consumer culture. The internet and online access to 24/7 shopping, searching, and communicating created a mass market for intercultural exchange.

## Consuming Ethnicity: Commodification of Identity

However, even before this digital-connectedness, the markets for commodifying and consuming ethnic goods was mostly comprised of tourism and corporations exploiting exotic products for profit. Therefore, in an effort to maintain autonomy in the imperialistic exploitations of indigenous resources, many tribal and religious leaders ventured into the corporate system and capitalized on their own ethnicities as they commodify and market their identities as consumer goods (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009). Creating value and opportunities for consumption, ethnically-owned corporations and entrepreneurs have brought the politics of ethnicity to the marketplace.

In this process, culture is commodified, and the commodity becomes part of culture. This usually results in a mix of good and bad results for those “producing” the ethnic product, and often spectacular profits for outside investors (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009). In a way, Indianer capitalize on this as well. Indianer force intellectual-property litigation and a transnational conversation on the global consensus acknowledging the right of indigenous peoples to profit from their vernacular customs and products. For this reason, Indianer set themselves up as cultural appropriators while Native Americans are left to still carry the burdens of racial tension, inequality, and economic hardships.

The widespread ability of commodified ethnicity to (re)shape identity, (re)vitalize group consciousness, and form new patterns of sociality explains its pervasiveness and demonstrates its influence in contemporary society. The Comaroffs provide a number of points of reference with which to scrutinize the marketplace of (re)producing cultural subjects and objects.

Amidst their examples, the San of Sub-Saharan Africa fell into a legal battle over the Hoodia plant used in their "spirit-journies" to suppress hunger and help maintain fasting rules. A South African state research organization succeeded in isolating *Hoodia*'s active ingredient, known as P57, for which they received a patent in 1996.

In yet another example of indigenous-property-turned-corporate-profit, the rights to P57 were sold by the research organization to multinational pharmaceutical companies, which attempted to commercialize the compound into a blockbuster fat-fighting diet pill. Meanwhile, a South African attorney representing the San condemned publically this act of bio-piracy and promised to legally obtain reparations for the stolen *Hoodia*.

While ultimately successful in securing a percentage of royalties from the sale of the substance, the loosely organized San groups were obliged to present themselves as a "people" (under the auspices of an NGO) in order to assert in court "their" right to *Hoodia* as intellectual property. This litigation, explain the Comaroffs, resulted in a "'thicker', ever more textured" sense of San identity and, with the proceeds of *Hoodia* sales at stake,

efforts to "'out'… in both senses of the term" Coloureds pretending to be San (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009: 92). This example illustrates the painful, yet frequent ways indigenous people have to fight to maintain autonomy, or to at least be the ones profiting off their own culture.

Indianer, while perhaps not as invasively exploiting ethnic products, in a way, also create landscapes of cultural tension and exploitative commodification by selling Nativeness at festivals, European powwows, and amateur museums and trinket shops. I found numerous European vendors selling handmade "American Indian" crafts and regalia at powwows, festivals, and tourist markets throughout Germany. These are goods made by Germans, not indigenous North Americans.

As we sat on the patio, Ursula continued to tell me her beliefs about German and Hopi racial superiority, despite Jutta's visible objection.

### "Othering" and Indianthusiasm

> *Germans have so many strong emotions about Arizona, and about the indigenous people who live there. Of all the states Nils and I have been to, it is the most beautiful, and it has the most real-looking Indians. It is the purest of nature in all America. Even the Indians there are the purest and just belong there, like they are part of the land. Their black hair and dark skin, and their slender physiques and turquois-silver jewelry are just so beautiful. The most beautiful are the Hopi, Apache, and Zuni men; they are just so gorgeous, you know? Have you seen any? You know what I am talking about. Yeah, you know… (giggle). They are so tall and athletic, and strong, yet soft, quiet, supple, and delicious… like a perfect German apple! And they are sweet, yet warriors, but not preemptively violent like European men… just perfect Arizona Native men. Their hair is so fine and straight. You just know they are a gorgeous gift from nature, you know?*

It is common for non-Native people to exoticize indigenous men. There is a popular narrative of essentialism and orientalism when it comes to indigenous masculinity. Typically, this narrative is two-fold. One one hand, people see indigenous men as rough, violent, and militaristic; this is the warrior theme. On the other hand, indigenous men are feminized. In this way, they are seen as being part of nature, and spiritually connected to the ecosystem. Anthropologist, Ty Tengan describes contemporary Hawaiian masculinity in a way that is also common of other perceptions of indigenous masculinity.

> *Native Hawaiians, like most other Pacific islanders, are thought to be strong, healthy, heterosexual, working- or- middle-class, between twenty and fifty years old, possessing "local" Hawaiian sensibilities, styles, and looks, educated, and knowledgeable in some cultural practice, nonviolent to women and children, responsibly providing for one's family, respectful of one's elders, having a tangible relationship with the land and sea, exhibiting spiritual facilities and mana, courageous and ready to fight for the people – a modern-day warrior chief (Tengan, 2008:11-12).*

Indeed, much of this paints the ideal picture of what masculinity is writ large in America. However, as with Hawaiian men, Native North American men have the added expectation of possessing ancestral knowledge as it pertains to their spirituality, arts, and ritual performances. They also have the expectation to be a steward of the land, and "look" like an Indian. Tengan says this is true of Native Hawaiians, as they are expected to wear floral shirts, flower leis, and perform hula dances as

though it is part of their identity to fit that iconic expectation. Among the stereotypical floral regalia in Hawaiian tradition, there are expectations of men to be hunters, fire-makers, sexually dominating, and in-tune with natural elements that make protection and providing natural for indigenous men (Tengan, 2008).

These expectations are what make Native men warriors in the minds of others. Indigenous warriors perform their identities simply by being members of their race, or tribe, and practicing their cultural activities; embodying an indigenous representation, and having an awareness of their role as an indigenous male (Tengan, 2008:12).

Ursula, with much essentialism and stereotyping, sees Native American men in the way Tengan writes of Native Hawaiian stereotypes, and as he suggests is common of other Native men as well. As she leaned back in her chair, wiping whisps of hair from her face, she said, "Nils is a good man. He is an ultimate German: strong, intelligent, and thin. He is a very good man. But, you know what? He is a German *man.* I don't have to tell you what that means, right?"

I shook my head no and responded, "I don't actually know what you mean. Please explain." Ursula leaned in, lowered her voice, and practically whispered, "He has that Nazi tendency in his DNA. You know, the German masculinity that craves power."

Jutta, now so uncomfortable she can't sit still or tolerate any more from Ursula, said, "Ursula, shut up! That is not even true! There is no Nazi DNA. Being a Nazi was a *choice*. German masculinity is not problematic. There is nothing wrong with German men's DNA. Kelly, please, I beg you to turn off that recorder and go play with Dolly or pick apples. Anything. Just not this. Not this. Ursula, please STOP. This is wrong."

**IVF and Indianthusiasm**

Ursula replied, "Kelly. I am going to tell you about how I went to Arizona to buy Indian sperm and have a procedure to get pregnant with that instead of having Nil's sperm to make a baby. So, do you really want to turn that recorder off now? Besides, it is my story, not Jutta's. She can leave."

Jutta yelped. She sprung out of her seat and got in Ursula's face.

> *She is going to write about this. The whole world will think we are crazy and racist. Everyone will say we are Nazis all over again. No one will see this the way you, Nils, Nina, Georg, Anna, or Frederik do. No one will think it is a good idea. Rick already told you it is a really bad idea. He is American. He knows this is bad.*

Jutta turned to me and continued,

> *Kelly, please. You have to know that this is bad. These people go to America and buy Indian sperm like it is some kind of elite souvenir. They have actual Indian babies and raise them as Germans. How do you think the Hopi and Apache, or other tribes these people buy souvenir sperm from feel about this? Karin, Heidi, Ursula, Nina, Anna... they all have American Indian babies. They bought them during a vacation to Arizona, Montana, and Colorado. They didn't want their husband's baby. They wanted an American Indian baby raised by their Indianer German husbands, so they just go buy the souvenir sperm and pay to have an IVF in America. Don't you think that is wrong?*

Ursula grabbed my arm and began to stroke my tattoos again. She insisted,

> *It isn't wrong. It is completely legal. Lots of women, even Jutta, have IVF. Lots of women travel all over the world for 'fertility travel.' My cousin, Margo, went to India to get a woman to carry Margo's egg and her husband's sperm. It isn't a baby that looks like it is from India because the Indian woman was just a carrier. None of her genetics at all.*

Ursula also mentioned, Nil's sister, Teresa, who went to England and had "some British guy's sperm put in her." She said, "Of course, it didn't work; just like a typical low-class Brit, right?" Ursula, casually and confidently continued,

> *Oh, and Tilda, our friend, she went to Australia. So many women do this. We have the technology now to choose what kind of babies we have, and where we get them, and where we go to get them put in us. It isn't bad. It is the wave of the future, actually*.

She eluded to a growing trend of medical tourism, specifically IVF tourism. Each year, more and more middle class or higher people travel out of their countries seeking affordable medical procedures abroad, including ART treatments such as IVF. As the lower middle classes of the United States and Europe have been priced out of an expensive and privatized “baby business,” the Czech Republic has emerged as a major destination of fertility tourism, offering an abundance of highly-desirable blonde-haired, blue-eyed egg donors at a fraction of the price.

## IVF and Racial Discourse

Anthropologist, Amy Speier, explores the Czech medical tourism industry in *Fertility Holidays*, a critical analysis of white, working class North Americans' motivations and experiences when traveling to Central Europe for donor egg IVF. Within this phenomenon, patients become consumers, urged on by the commodification of representation… of a white Europe and an empathetic, affordable health care system, which seems nonexistent at home (Speier, 2016).

Speier traces these fertility journeys across the Atlantic and peels back layers of sociopolitical, racial, and national contradictions in this global reproductive industry and discourse. Her research reveals the extent to which IVF tourism raises the hopes ingrained in ART, especially when the treatments are coupled with international vacations, called "holidays." The Czech clinics market their services as vacations with treatments peppered into the itinerary. This promises desperate couples a stress-free IVF cycle; yet, in almost every case documented by Speier, the medical tourists become wrapped up in emotionally-draining situations as they endure a psychologically-traumatic cycle of IVF procedures and frantic waiting on results in a strange place (Speier, 2016).

Speier's work exposes reproductive travel as an economic practice: a privileged act of consumption which is driven by complex layers of infertility, and the desire for white babies, an exciting European vacation,

affordable procedures, and advanced technological success. In many ways, Ursula's descriptions and experiences mirror the couples studied by Speier in that Indianer couples desire brown babies, and an American vacation. American ART procedures are not affordable, however.

Indianer pay monumental fees for IVF in the United States. As most of the women I spoke with mentioned, it is a risky gamble. When I left the ranch weeks later, Ursula was visibly pregnant. This is her first baby. Her IVF procedure was successful; she and Nils were preparing to welcome their baby in six months. Ursula explained, "It's great. I hope it's a boy… a little warrior. I hope he has black hair and blue eyes, just like Pierre Brice as Winnetou in the old films. I hope Nils teaches him old Apache ways and he grows up to be a beautiful Apache man, just like Winnetou."

I asked her if she was able to specifically get sperm from an Apache donor, to which she replied, "In my heart I know it is, because we prayed so hard. Nils's Hopi father prayed for us, as well. Plus, genetics is only half of it. Nils will raise him to be Apache. So, if his blood isn't Apache, his heart and soul will be."

Ursula described her trip to the clinic in Phoenix. This clinic partners with the biggest sperm bank in the country, the Seattle Sperm Bank. "They have the most Native American sperm. We talked to a consultant, told them everything we wanted in a donor."

Ursula pulled up a website on her iPhone to show me the profile for Donor #9784. “Carlos” is listed as having Bolivian, English, and Native American ancestry. He is 5’6” and 140lbs. He has black hair, brown eyes, and medium-dark skin. He looks indigenous (if quantifying that means phenotypical characteristics). His profile says he is artistic, musically inclined, well-rounded, and possesses the ability to put others at ease (seattlespermbank.com). Nothing on the website indicates “Carlos” is Apache. Someone more familiar with specific genetic traits could look at “Carlos” and better determine his regional attributes, but my best guess is that his phenotypic characteristics are due to his Bolivian ancestry.

Ursula stared at his photo, lovingly.

> H*e’s beautiful. He looks so much like our Apache brother, ‘Joseph.’ ‘Carlos’ is shorter. Maybe a little too short, but my genes run tall, so I think the baby will be tall. I think he will have blue eyes and be tall, like me, and the rest look like ‘Carlos.’ He will be a strong German, with beautiful, brave Indianer traits. Plus, someday he can have one of those DNA tests to see just how much Indian he is.*

Listening to Ursula describe what her “perfect baby” will look like, how it will behave, and how German traits combined with indigenous traits result in the “most perfect bodies… the most intelligent and strong Germans,” I was immediately reminded of Nazi eugenics, and the ideologies that resulted in the mass murder of millions of people at the hands of Germans who had similar visions of a “perfect body” and “strong German” genes. Despite her desire for her child to have indigenous DNA, her ideas of medically engineering a “strong German” made me

uncomfortable to say the least. It reminded me of a new type of *Lebensborn*. It is a German term that means the “Fountain of Life,” and was turned into a state-sanctioned system of breeding that was meant to provide Nazi Germany with elite generations of ideal, indeed perfect, Aryans for decades and centuries to come.

**Lebensborn: a German Racial Ideology**

Lebensborn was introduced into Nazi Germany in December 1935. Lebensborn was part of the Nazi belief in a ‘Master Race’ – the creation of a superior race that would dominant Europe as part of Hitler’s ‘Thousand Year Reich’. The initial success experienced by the Germans in WWII gave the regime the opportunity to expand Lebensborn throughout Nazi-occupied Europe.

The idea of creating a ‘Master Race’ was supported by Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS and one of Hitler’s closest confidantes. The Lebensborn system was Himmler’s idea. Between 1935 and 1939, Lebensborn was restricted only to Nazi Germany. If a woman wanted to participate she had to prove her Aryan background as far back as her grandfathers. Only 40% of those who applied to join Lebensborn passed this racial purity test (Albanese, 2006:04). Lebensborn enabled women to get pregnant even if they were not married. The Lebensborn clinics also acted as adoption centers and they ran state-funded homes for children born as a result of Lebensborn. By 1940, about 70% of those women

involved in Lebensborn were unmarried, and many did not want to be a mother in the social sense (Albanese, 2006:04). They gave birth, and then the state took over care of the children.

WWII gave Himmler an opportunity to expand Lebensborn. The SS invariably followed the German military into a war zone. The SS had a variety of roles to fulfil after an area had been overrun. Its participation in the “Final Solution” has been well documented. However, another role given to it by Himmler was to search out desirable Aryans to be suitable sires for Lebensborn reproduction.

Norway was occupied by Germany in 1940. This country especially interested Himmler because of its Viking past. Himmler had a great interest in the warriors the Vikings produced and their success as fighters. Norwegian women were encouraged or forced into sexual liaisons with SS officers regardless of whether they were married or not, and nine Lebensborn homes were established in the country (Thompson, 1971: 56). Children born as a result of such liaisons were brought up in Germany by approved Nazi parents.

They were baptized (of sorts) in a SS ceremony where their adoptive parents swore that the child would have a lifelong allegiance to Nazi beliefs. Other Lebensborn clinics were established in Western Europe – France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Luxemburg all had one home built

(Von Oelhafen and Tate, 2016: 13-16). Many children were born in the system.

The SS scoured occupied Eastern Europe in search of Himmler's ideal young child – blonde hair and blue eyes. Here, children were literally taken from their parents and sent to Germany where they were brought up by approved Nazi parents who also had to fit the Nazi ideal. It is thought that as many as 250,000 children were taken from Eastern Europe but the actual figure is not known as much documentation was either lost or destroyed as the war in Europe reached its end (Albanese, 2006:15). Effectively given a new identity, their past lives were all but destroyed and it is possible that some may not have even known that they had been forcibly taken from their birth parents. It is thought that as many as 12,000 children were born as a result of the SS campaign to produce as many Aryan children as was possible.

Children born as part of the Lebensborn system faced many difficulties once the war in Europe ended in May 1945. The Norwegian government considered such children as "rats" and their mothers as "German whores" (Rosvall, 2015:119). Many feared that the children would continue believing in what their SS fathers had believed in as they had been genetically "programmed" to do so (similar to Ursula's belief that German men's DNA carries toxic Nazi masculinity traits). The treatment of the Lebensborn children born in Norway was such that in 2008 those still alive

took their plight to the European Court of Human Rights, which ordered that each person should receive £2000 compensation (Von Oelhafen and Tate, 2016:11).

The stigma of Lebensborn is isolated to those who were affected during WWII, however, ideas of medically engineering a desirable gene pool have not faded. In the case of Nils and Ursula (and others who purchase commodified Native American sperm for the purposes of creating a specific genetic combination), Indianer consume and produce an imagined physical, and now, genetic ethnicity somewhat similar to Lebensborn.

**Other Examples of Indianer and IVF with Native Sperm**

Jutta rolled her eyes at Ursula's suggestion of her baby being the perfectly designed human and interjected, "He will look like a short Brazilian. He will be light-skinned because he is half German, half of a part-DNA Bolivian, and probably have an easy time learning to speak Spanish." Ursula gave a wincing look at Jutta and said, "Shut up. You are just jealous. Rick would never love a brown baby. Then again, Nils probably wouldn't love a white baby." Then, the two women laughed together in an effort to mend the afternoon's tensions between friends.

Ursula told me about other women who also travelled to America to have "Native American sperm IVFs." I met some of these women earlier, and I have seen their children. Some of the children have dark hair, but do

not look particularly Native American (phenotypically, that is). Some look stereotypically German with blonde hair, red cheeks, and blue eyes. However, Anna's two-year-old daughter has black hair, dark brown eyes, and light brown skin. Later, when I revisited Anna, I asked her about the baby's dark hair since Anna and her husband have blonde hair. Anna chimed, "Oh! She's Native Alaskan, possibly Tlingit. We got her in Seattle through IVF with donor egg and sperm." Anna was not shy about sharing that information, at all. She was proud to announce her daughter's possible genetic ancestry.

Anna introduced me to Gretchen, another IVF patient. Gretchen has two children using "Native American Sperm" from the Seattle Sperm Bank. One of her boys has dark brown hair and blue eyes, and slightly tan colored skin. The other son has dirty blonde hair and blue eyes. To an uninformed observer, neither "look" Native American, despite their meticulous Indianer regalia and assortment of Plains-Indian-inspired-toys.

Gretchen said it was more about the personal description of the donor than of their ancestry. However, she said The Seattle Sperm Bank's website advertises, specifically, for Native American sperm donations.

*We have donors from a variety of Native American lineages that also represent several multi-ethnic mixes. Each donor has unique skin tones, complexions, and physical characteristics so you can choose what is best for your family situation. Selecting the right donor for your needs is a major decision. We thoroughly research all our Native American donors so you have complete information on which to base that decision. Use our donor*

*search to expand your search options, or sign up for an all access pass to get more information on all of our donors. Browse our list of Native American donors below.* (*seattlespermbank.com)*

The company is well-known among these Germans as the “best place to get a Native American sperm donor.” Gretchen said the California Cryobank is also good, and that she knows women who have gone that route instead. “Any IVF clinic in America can get sperm from these two banks. You just have to search their inventory and find the guy who looks like what you want your baby to look like. Pick a clinic in a city where you want to go. You have to stay there a week or two after the procedure, so go somewhere fun like Orlando or Las Vegas!”

Hanna and Saul, a young German Indianer couple who attended a week of Indianer Kamp at Apple Tree Ranch, told me of their plans to travel to Orlando, Florida for their second IVF treatment using sperm they chose from a donor who identifies as being Spanish, Native American, and South African. Their first attempt two years prior was a failure. They have saved up over €30,000 to try again, this time incorporating a trip to Walt Disney World to visit the new "World of Pandora" theme park attraction designed to simulate the popular world and creatures from the film, *Avatar*.

Throughout many Indianer social discourses, Native American identities are viewed through essentialist lenses. Many of these ideas are founded in popular films, cartoons, songs, and books where Native American cultures and identities are stereotyped and pigeonholed as racist,

yet iconic images of Plains warriors kidnapping young white girls, stealing horses, and beating war drums (Berkhofer, 2011).

## “The Perfect German-Indian Baby”

Ursula's description of wanting her baby to look like the actor who played Winnetou in the 1960s films is evidence that popular media images of Native American culture scripts people's understandings of what it means, or what it looks like to be native American. In the case of *Avatar*, the Na'vi tribe is portrayed as being noble, peaceful, and pristine. Yet, in popular cartoons such as *Peter Pan*, Native Americans are seen as red-nosed, elibriated, savagely violent, and incapable of speaking more than static grunts and hoots.

Both common depictions are abundantly found in Indianer discourses. The first (harsh, violent, and criminal) is how many Indianer see contemporary Native Americans living in North America. The second (peaceful, pure, and noble), is how Indianer commonly see themselves as ideal recreations or representations of the quintessential and desired Indian.

Ursula thinks her DNA, combined with that of a sperm donor's indigenous DNA, will result in a child who has very little of the "negative" indigenous traits, and plenty of the noble, attractive, and peaceful warrior traits. She wants her baby to grow up to have the looks of a contemporary indigenous person, but the sociocultural traits of her husband's Indianer

ways. This is akin to many white savior stories. Ursula and Nils seem to think they will save their baby from its savage tendencies by socializing and enculturating it into a more noble and appropriate Indianer life.

Films such as *Avatar* and *Dances with Wolves* are iconic white savior stories of a strong, heroic white man having to save the poor, primitive, and under resourced indigenous group from the ravages of war and environmental destruction. These images are prolific, and they come with a huge dose of inappropriate and unnecessary cultural appropriation. A lot of German public cultures, and social ideologies are built according to, or as a reflection of, these racial discourses. The next chapter will describe one such way the *Avatar* film has permeated popular American tourism, including an enthusiastic following by German Indianer.

# Chapter Four: German Tourists and Walt Disney World's Avatarland: the Perpetual Feminizing and Naturizing of Indigenous Identities

*This chapter is an analysis of plastic tourism, popular media, and racist representations of indigenous people, and how participants in activities that misrepresent Native culture are socialized into discourses and ideologies that perpetuate racism, sexism, and social ignorance of cultural diversity. Walt Disney World's newest theme park attractions themed after the popular film, Avatar, have attracted German Indianer specifically due to its playful and participatory presentation of a fictional alien species inspired by a composite of indigenous cultures from North and South America.*

Dieter, one of the regular guests at Apple Tree Ranch, came to breakfast wearing an *Avatar* t-shirt. Several Indianer commented on it, beginning a lengthy discussion of the film, its message, and its critiques. Dieter, and the other Indianer and cowboys, all praised the film. "I love how it shows indigenous beings as stronger because of their connection to nature." "Jake is a great example of how people can actually become indigenous and held accountable for his actions as one of the indigenous beings." It was clear that these European men related not only to the film, but to the images of indigenous cultures and the eco-spiritual message.

We discussed the *Avatar* franchise to much delight of the Indianer. For the first time in six weeks, I felt like I had something I could relate to the

Indianer with: a love of simulacra, imaginative play based on childhood fantasies, and, as we shifted our conversation, of visiting one of the most popular themed spaces in the world: Walt Disney World.

## Walt Disney World's "Avatarland"

In collaboration with *Avatar* filmmaker, James Cameron, Walt Disney World (WDW) constructed a new area or "land" in their Animal Kingdom theme park in Florida. Opened in May, 2017, "Pandora: the World of Avatar" (a.k.a. "Avatarland") will bring the fictional planet of Pandora to life for visitors to experience scenes from the popular film including: floating mountains; bioluminescent rainforests; and soaring Banshees, all familiar icons to fans of the film. James Cameron is releasing two sequels to the popular film; their release dates have not been announced, but Cameron has frequently hinted that they will soon coincide with the opening of "Avatarland" at WDW (Pallota, 2017). Cameron is releasing two sequels to the popular film; their release dates have not been announced, but Cameron has frequently hinted that they will soon coincide with the opening of "Avatarland" at WDW (Pallota, 2017).

This new land reifies the world and culture of *Avatar*'s mythical indigenous race: the Na'vi, who starkly resemble a composite of real-world indigenous peoples. As Dieter and the others eluded, the *Na'vi* are similar to what Indianer desire in their own identity constructions. To become one

of the indigenous beings, as the character Jake does in the film, and to physically touch floating mountains and bioluminescent plant life is a dream-come-true for many Indianer who wish to be indigenous and connect with nature on a spiritual level.

*Bioluminescent Plants at World of Pandora.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Lake Buena Vista, Florida. 2017.*

*Floating Mountain at World of Pandora.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Lake Buena Vista, Florida. 2017.*

Kent, an Indianer and father of four, said,

> *I cannot wait to take my children to experience this. We can spend a day in Pandora. You know Disney will do it so well that it will feel just as though we really are Na'vi. I wonder if we will be able to connect to a Banshee. I wonder if there is interaction with the Mother Tree, or with other Na'vi. I have already just sent an email to my travel agent. We are so going.*

### ***Avatar,*** **Disney, and Critical Race Theory**

Scholarly critics have commented on racist undertones in the film's treatment of the indigenous *Na'vi* "creatures," characterizing it as a fantasy about indigeneity from a white privileged perspective, in which a white hero saves helpless indigenous beings from obliteration (Cammarota, 2011; Cox

and Levine, 2013; Fujki, 2016; and Meyer, 2015). This chapter will add to these critiques by arguing that a reified Pandora and *Na'vi*, visited by millions of people every year, will perpetuate a discourse of the White Savior myth, while continuing colonialism's feminizing and naturizing of indigenous identities.

During fieldwork in Germany, I encountered many Indianer who paid deposits on vacation packages to WDW in anticipation of visiting "Avatarland," for two reasons: 1) Germans love to go to WDW for vacation. After British, Canadian and Brazilian tourists, Germans are the most common international visitors of WDW (Personal communication with Walt Disney World Guest Relations, 12/21/2016). 2) In addition to Karl May's *Winnetou* novels and inspired films, and *Dances with Wolves*, *Avatar* is the most popular film amongst Indianer. Its portrayal of *Na'vi* as primitive, nature-communing, and indigenous-warriors is attractive to Indianer because it is another romanticized narrative of the eco-spirituality they crave.

*Avatar*'s *Na'vi* are portrayed as sensitive, peace-loving, and primal people who have a unique way of communing with nature by connecting their tails to portals on animals in Pandora; the *Na'vi* are *part* of nature, therefore are not capable of *having* culture. Similar characterizations and stereotypes of actual indigenous peoples have been documented by

anthropologists (Carr, 1996; Conklin, 1997; Denzin, 2005; Kroeber, 1939). Despite this historical concern and question, a fantasy land where the *Na'vi* are made "real" will only galvanize racist and emasculating stereotyping of indigenous identities when people fail to disconnect from the myth after leaving Avatarland.

During a family vacation to WDW in 2015, I observed attractions (rides and themed architectures), performances, and images that could be interpreted as offensive toward racial and ethnic minorities. The Disney Princesses who depict Disney's idealized notion of diversity (brown skin and exotic cultural practices) were staged away from the Caucasian princesses and fairytale castle in Magic Kingdom, or were located in another Disney park altogether.

Jasmine (from the animated film, Aladdin), scantily clad in a harem-esque outfit, greets park visitors in an area designed to look like a North African or Middle Eastern bazaar in an area of the park called, "Adventureland." Tiana (from the animated film, Princess and the Frog) greets visitors under a gazebo located in the colonial village called, "Liberty Square."

Pocahontas, another favorite of European hobbyists, is labeled in the park's *Times Guide* (a flier listing the daily character meet-and-greet times and locations, parade and show times, and park hours) as a "friend to

nature." She stands at the end of a nature trail in Disney's Animal Kingdom, a park dedicated to wildlife and ecology. The representation of Pocahontas, greeting visitors for autographs and photographs, is Disney's artistic and mythical portrayal of the historical Powhatan figure; this representation has virtually replaced previous understandings of ("the real") Pocahontas in popular discourse.

Many of the little European girls at the powwows and Indianer events I attended during fieldwork clutched Disney Pocahontas dolls and danced in circles, holding hands, singing "Colors of the Wind" from the Disney film, in German, English, Polish, and Danish. One preschool-aged girl visiting the Karl May Museum donned a Pocahontas Halloween costume, complete with a black wig and glittered moccasins. She received many comments on how beautiful she looked, and how "edel" (noble) she is.

Disney discourses on indigenous cultures permeate the Western world as ideology of wholesome goodness and family values. Almost every parent I spoke with at an Indianer event mentioned Pocahontas, Moana, and/or Brother Bear as motivating discourses in their children's socialization into the Playing Indian phenomenon. Several parents commented on how Native or indigenous people are "so close to nature," or "naturally the finest people" and are "gifts of Mother nature, herself." Like scenic landscapes to

behold, Native people often become objects of nature rather than cultures of humanity to those who objectify them, even if it is with sincerity.

## Ecofeminism and Naturing of the Feminine

Anthropologist, Sherry Ortner noticed women are considered to be subordinate to men in almost every culture; she says this was long-thought to be biological, or "natural" (Ortner, 1974). In the nature-culture debate, women are often categorized as being closer to nature due to childbirth, lactation, and menstruation cycles. Likewise, Anthropologist, Andrea Smith notes that Native Americans have been feminized and thought to be "at one with nature" rather than as cultural beings living in complex and sustainable societies (Smith, 2005). Native peoples (thought to be more feminine than non-Native colonizers and settlers) are, by their perceived association to femininity, socially categorized as "natural," or "primal." This ideology has led to the perpetual marginalization of Native peoples because they, like women all over the world, are subjugated and subordinated for their feminine characteristics.

By reifying the racist plotline and imagery of "helpless" indigenous human-like creatures (*Na'vi*), Disney's Avatarland provides a process whereby park visitors 9including German Indianers) experience and internalize discourses and ideologies that go unscrutinized because Disney is the most trusted brand in wholesome entertainment. This new attraction

further perpetuates the subjugation and marginalization of indigenous peoples around the globe by promoting racist imagery as “state-of-the-art” and “cutting-edge” technology by which park visitors enter into a mythical world to become Na’vi for a few hours.

## Disney and the Construction of Identity

The advanced technology and groundbreaking features of “Avatarland” are attractive to German tourists because many of the automated mechanics and engineering were designed by German companies such as Siemans and Bosch (Parsons, 2016). As one research participant said, “World of Pandora is a German’s dream-come-true.” It combines revolutionary German engineering and romanticized ideas of indigenous eco-spirituality. It is a simulacra playground for Indianers.

The only disconnect Indianer might encounter when leaving the park is that many of them do not carry the burden of being an indigenous person or an exoticized body; otherwise, many fail to disconnect from the myth and might incorporate the racist imagery into their real-world understandings of race and gender, as well as their daily play and practice of being Indianer. Because the *Na’avi* and Pandora are fictional, people assume their mimicry and appropriations of the indigenous representation are harmless. They do not realize the discourse and imagery have real world consequences.

Research on Disney's influence on social patterns and constructions of identities is vast, but not exhaustive. Henry Giroux and Grace Pollock have written about the cultural authority of Disney and the construction of childhoods and American popular culture. Disney's ever-expanding markets in products, services, and visual media have strong influence in the socialization of children in America through commercialism and capitalism (Giroux and Pollack, 2010). Giroux and Pollack also challenge readers to take a critical look at consumer habits compared to popular discourses of what is right and wrong and to "mitigate what gives us pleasure…and what elicits our disapproval" (Giroux and Pollak, 2010: xvi). In this case, Indianer may not often see negative discourses within a system that is praised as being the model of quality entertainment; therefore, they see no harm or risk in participating in the play and practice of being a *Na'avi*-inspired Indianer, who influences children's worldviews.

Brett Williams examines how Disney, as a cartoon and toy manufacturer, has more power than most parents and educators to shape children's worldviews (Williams, 1991:3). Adults charged with socializing children sometimes lack control and predictability in how cartoons and toys affect their child's relationship to the real world. The symbolic and mythic forms are experienced as being real and easily approachable by children. This is especially true in gender constructions. Children watch a lot of TV and are now consuming toys and technology at a faster rate than any other

time in history; the toy market is more and more gender “segregated” with agency to manipulate intended gender construction virtually removed, or impossible. Through its monopoly on children’s media, Disney controls the production and engagement of cultural meanings (lived experiences) and how the experiences relate to people’s everyday lives (Williams, 1991:7). Williams suggests that the distinction between what is symbolic and what is material is a process Disney has mastered by understanding their market and appealing to their aesthetic values rather than their logical values (Williams,1991:7). This phenomenon provides the context in which anthropology can, and does observe cultural processes.

Semioticians, Umberto Eco and Jean Baudrillard, describe these clouded and often mythical circumstances as hyperrealities: conditions in which what is real and what is fantasy are combined by masterful design to the point there is no clear distinction between which is real and which is not (Baudrillard, 1988 and Eco, 1983). Eco and Baudrillard use Disney World and Disneyland as examples of hyperrealities in as far as they are experienced by visitors. Eco describes the popular attraction at Disney World, “Pirates of the Caribbean”: “The Pirates moved, danced, slept, popped their eyes, sniggered, drank – really. You realize that they are robots, but you remain dumbfounded by their verisimilitude” (Eco 1983:24). Visitors to a Disney theme park experience a *real* fiction, much like Indianer produce a real fiction in their play. Disney manages to produce

a myth into a reality in which adults revert to a child-like state to experience childishness again while at the park. This is very similar to circumstances at Indianer events and ceremonies. They produce a myth and revert to child-like play to experience an imagined state of being.

Discourse is comprised not only of language, but also symbols, icons, gestures, ideologies, and expressions. The socialization of children via Disney products and experiences exists within a discourse constructed by Disney. Children are introduced to this discourse, and internalize it as part of their language and understanding of their world. It shapes their worldview. Some of the imagery and language portrayed at “Avatarland” can be interpreted as offensive or racist toward indigenous minorities. When experienced by children during the socialization process, these representations become naturalized as being appropriate or acceptable because Disney is a trusted brand of American values and family entertainment.

### How Disney Scripts Understandings of Ethnicity

In WDW there are parade floats and animatronic representations of Native Americans that are stereotypical of Plains “warriors:” flushed, red-faced, and wearing buckskins and feather headdresses. A voice-over-commentary states that “Plains Indians were the first humans to inhabit America.” It continues to say that “they domesticated

the horse," and "were a fierce presence on the frontier." This language suggests that Native Americans no longer exist, and that when they did exist they were "fierce," but had some useful qualities.

This imagery and language does not consider that much of the Wild West or frontier lifestyle was a product of colonization, including the horses that were also pushed away from their original lands, elsewhere. Likewise, Avatarland contributes further imagery and experiences of racialized portrayals of indigenous identities in addition to the other representations of indigenous cultures in the parks.

This ignorance of racial misrepresentation and assumptions of innocence in negative contributions to discourses on indigeneity are tied to a larger issue within everyday white racism. In her book, *The Everyday Language of White Racism*, Jane Hill states that "critical race theorists do not deny individual contributions to the internalized white racism in America, but more importantly it emphasizes a collective, systematic cultural entity" (Hill 2008:7). We must keep in mind that individual, ordinary people who do not share white supremacist beliefs can and do speak and behave in ways that advance the structural power of white racism as a whole (Hill 2008: 31-36).

In other words, you don't have to be a self-proclaimed racial purist to have racist notions or speak racist language. Hill states, "If language is

found to be racist by its targets, then it is racist language" (2008:96). The imagery of African, Arab, Asian and Indigenous peoples at Disney World contributes to a racial discourse. I suggest that many people are unaware of the negative implications of such imagery because white privilege is at play.

In his book, *Racism Without Racists*, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva explains that much of the racial discourse in America is a result of white privilege. White privilege is often misunderstood as white wealth or white power. Rather, it is a social position – based on skin color – which allows white people the ability to rarely have concern that their skin color will affect social, political, economic, or educational outcomes (Bonilla-Silva 2010).

Oftentimes, this privilege also makes white people oblivious to their privilege and the lack of such privilege by others, exemplified by the offensive imagery at Disney World going unnoticed and without concern. White privilege is a powerful social force that continues to shape lives at nearly every level of American social interaction, a Disney pilgrimage being no exception. Through this privilege, visitors to Disney World do not realize that the imagery is offensive, because it is not offensive to *them*.

The Disney Company is over an $80 billion corporation whose mass media productions and theme park entertainment are widely consumed by people all over the world, but especially white, middle-class Americans. WDW is no exception. In 2012 alone, 48.5 million people visited Magic

Kingdom; this does not factor how many visited the other three parks, let alone Disneyland in California or the four international parks in Asia and Europe (TEA, 2013).

Approximately 20 million (of the 48.5 million) were between the ages of 3 and 10 (TEA, 2013). Since WDW does not require a ticket for 0-2 year olds, and WDW considers 11-17 year olds as “adults” (for pricing purposes), it is unknown how many infants or older children visited in 2012. The point is that a large number of children who are in the peak years of socialization visit the parks every year, including German children. The messages being scripted by the Disney corporation are being internalized and incorporated into the everyday lives of children whose worldviews and understandings of race and gender are heavily influenced during this prime socialization period.

The Disney Company was found in 1923 by Walter E. Disney, an animator, illustrator, and business entrepreneur. Following massive success with animated film and a theme park in Anaheim, California, Disney expanded his entertainment empire to Florida. Magic Kingdom, the first of four theme parks built by the Disney Company in Lake Buena Vista, Florida opened in October 1971.

Disneyland in California was the original reification of Disney’s fantastical imaginary worlds; it made the places and characters from Disney

films a reality – tangible and experiential. Despite its tantamount popularity, Walt Disney grew annoyed and upset by the surrounding area outside the park's borders. An onslaught of motels, diners, souvenir stands, and bars opened up directly outside the gates of Disneyland. Walt Disney, as a result, desired a space solely dedicated to his vision of a wholesome family experience.

The Disney Company secretly purchased a great deal of acreage in a swampy area of central Florida; they did so in secret because if land brokers saw the Disney name on the bids, the price would sky-rocket. Disney obtained the large plot of land for a relatively rock-bottom price. It was not until construction began on Cinderella's Castle (the icon of Magic Kingdom) that people realized the Disney brand was moving to Florida.

Since 1971 WDW has grown to four theme parks: Magic Kingdom; Epcot; Hollywood Studios; and Animal Kingdom. The resort also includes a shopping center, two water parks, more than twenty-one resort hotels, a man-made lake, and Florida's second largest mass-transit system with a fleet of 319 buses, two monorail trains, and several boats. Disney is big. Disney does whatever it wants. Disney even incorporated the town of Celebration, Florida. When Disney moved to central Florida, the state was transformed from a bustling tourist destination to one of the most visited places in the world. Disney and Florida are synonymous now.

## Disney's Animal Kingdom: the Nature vs Culture Playground

The last (and largest) theme park to be built at WDW is Animal Kingdom. This 500 acre park opened on Earth Day in 1998 (Werner, 2012). The park is divided into four main areas: Dinoland; Pandora; Africa; and Asia. The central icon of the park is the Tree of Life[i]. Standing 144 feet tall and fifty feet wide, the Tree of Life is actually fake, as are most trees and bushes throughout WDW (wdwinfo.com). It is a sculpture that houses a 3D film called "It's Tough to be a Bug" in its trunk and under its "roots." The trunk, roots, and branches are carved to look like hundreds of different animals from all parts of the world.

*Tree of Life at Disney's Animal Kingdom*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Lake Buena Vista, Florida. 2017.*

*Tree of Life at night.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Lake Buena Vista, Florida. 2017.*

Despite the fake trees and slew of restaurants, rides, and shops, Animal Kingdom is home to real, living wildlife. Most of the acreage that makes up Animal Kingdom is a savannah. Giraffes, zebras, ostrich, rhinos, elephants, various birds and reptiles, lions, cheetah, tigers, primates, marsupials, and a diverse population of hoofed animals live on the savannah and can be seen by safari jeeps and overlooks as part of the Animal Kingdom experience. Unlike a typical zoo, the savannah is spacious and unrestricted. Only the carnivores are kept separate from the other animals. The park is an accredited zoological facility and participates in conservation and breeding programs of endangered wildlife; many rhinos,

elephants, and gorilla have been born in captivity at Animal Kingdom, and some have been released on game sanctuaries in South Africa.

The smallest section in the park is Dinoland. It is designed to resemble a mid-20th century amusement park midway with games and carnival foods. There are three dinosaur-themed rides, and some "life-sized" dinosaur statues for photo opportunities. Most visitors only enter this section for the rides. During my recent visit, I did not see anyone playing games at the midway booths, but the lines for two of the rides were somewhat long.

Larger and livelier, the Africa and Asia sections are designed to look and feel like you are walking through a village in a Sub-Saharan Africa or the Himalayan region of Asia. Musicians often take to the pathways to play "traditional" songs for WDW visitors. These are, of course, not actually traditional songs; they are sung in English and are sometimes renditions of the music from Disney's Lion King, a Broadway production. Disney employees are dressed in uniforms fashioned like regional clothing from unnamed places in Africa. Women wear headwrap scarves or turbans on their heads and sing and dance while men play drums. A specific country in Africa is not the inspiration, yet a singular "African" style is portrayed despite Africa being an entire continent composed of sixty-one countries

and thousands of diverse and unique cultures that vary greatly between the regions.

Most of the employees in the Africa section are immigrants or on work visas from countries in Africa. They greet visitors with purposeful Bantu accents saying, “Jambo!” followed by, “Welcome to Africa!” The restaurants and shops are inspired by African art and cuisine. The buildings promote quaint village life in rural Africa, though highly romanticized. The Africa section of the park is where visitors board Kilimanjaro Safari Jeeps for a guided tour of the savannah. The typical WDW visitor feels as though they have been transported from Florida to a safe, sanitary, and English-speaking paradise somewhere in Africa.

Similarly, the Asia section of Animal Kingdom is designed to make the visitor feel like they are walking through a Buddhist village, or a base camp at the foot of Mt. Everest, or at times somewhere in southeast Asia. Buddhist flags hang across the pathways. Buddha statues and ruins of ancient temples line the paths. There is a white-water rapid ride that is designed to look like the visitor’s raft is floating through a burning teakwood forest in Indonesia. There is a roller coaster called, “Expedition Everest” where a runaway train narrowly escapes the clutches of the infamous Yeti. Again, the restaurants and shops are inspired by Asian art and cuisine. The employees are immigrants or on work visas from places such as Nepal,

Bangladesh, and Tibet. They greet guests by saying, “Namaste!” followed by, “Welcome to Asia.”

## Avatarland: a Racial Discourse Playground

The World of Pandora is on the east side of Animal Kingdom. The area was originally slated to be a section dedicated to mythical creatures such as dragons, sea monsters, and unicorns. The original idea for the area was never developed due to budget constraints, disagreements between Disney’s Imagineers (their title for attraction engineers), and lack of cohesive design with the rest of the park (wdwinfo.com, 2013). Avatarland brings mythical creatures to the area, but with a much different direction and theme than originally thought.

People go to WDW for an immersive experience. Disney offers a simulated environment where people can enter their favorite stories and films, or feel like they are in a timeless and “exotic” far-off land. Avatarland is no different. In a promotional video, *Avatar* film director, James Cameron says that since the release of the film fans have continuously told him they wished they could “go to Pandora” to experience the bioluminescent forest and ride on the back of Banshees, the mythical flying creatures seen in the film (Cameron and Rhode, 2013: 1:03-1:14; and Cameron, 2012: 0:52-1:16). Avatarland grants visitors the opportunity to feel like they are actually

in Pandora, in this “playground for the imagination” (Cameron, 2012: 1:35-1:45).

Cameron has also stated that he especially wants people to be able to “actually walk on Pandora” and interact with the myth, not *as though* it was real, but *because* he and Disney have *made* it real (Cameron, 2012: 0:32-0:50). Because Disney has the reputation of being the most trusted provider of wholesome family entertainment, most visitors (especially children) will not question *Avatar*’s racist undertones because Disney’s new land is celebrating the film as a hallmark of special-effects-technology and one of the most profitable films ever made to date. In people’s minds, Disney does not produce racist imagery or negative racial discourses, therefore Avatarland will not be perceived by the public as a reified racist story.

*Avatar* has earned almost three billion dollars in profit (Hughes, 2013:1). An Avatar fandom quickly emerged (and still has an active fandom community in Germany). Anthropologist Orin Starn noticed a *Globe Magazine* tabloid headline after the release of Avatar that said, “WARNING: AVATAR CAN MAKE YOU SICK & SUICIDAL!” which suggested some viewers “had been so mesmerized by Pandora – ‘a wonderland peopled by noble beings’ – that they’d rather DIE than return to Earth’s gritty reality” (Starn, 2011: 197).Such dramatic and exaggerated reactions only lend a

suggestion that people were stricken with deep emotions and found a lot of meaning in the film and its never-before-seen special effects. Such dramatic and exaggerated reactions only lend a suggestion that people were stricken with deep emotions and found a lot of meaning in the film and its never-before-seen special effects.

Seeking an escape from modernity and capitalistic endeavors at the expense of indigenous peoples (just like Indianer do on a daily basis), the film became, once again, a popular inspiration to “become” Indian to experience what it is like to have a connection to nature rather than an association or participation in the activities that destroy indigenous homelands (Starn, 2011:197-198).

Starn tells how his teenage daughter described *Avatar*’s sci-fi, racist, pop culture fame: “it’s like *Romeo and Juliet* hooked up with *Jurassic Park*, and their kid hooked up with Lord *of the Rings*, and their kid hung out with *Star Wars* and that kid got together with *Alien* and their kid had a kid with *Dances with Wolves*, and then that’s *Avatar*” (Starn, 2011:179). While that sentiment was meant to convey sarcasm, it is actually an accurate depiction of the film’s intertextual configuration of race, gender and body, scientific development, space and time, and globalization.

Starn continues to analyze the film’s depiction of the *Na’vi* as the essential “Other”; a radical divide between the whites and natives. The

whites have the “advanced technology” and perform individuality, reason, scientific logic, and structural power; the *Na’vi*, Starn says, “are Plains Indians in sci-fi drag with a dash of World Beat spice – tied to a community, spirituality, connection to the ancestors, and, needless to say, harmony with nature” (Starn, 2011:179). While attempting to portray the whites as the enemy, or as the more “savage” of the two groups, *Avatar* fails at depicting the *Na’vi* as anything but a blue alien version of essentialist ideals of indigeneity. The *Na’vi* are essentially blue Lakota; *Avatar* is *Dances with Wolves* with blue Indians. In this same way, European hobbyism is Avatar and Dances with Wolves with European Indians, speaking European languages.

*Avatar* follows the history of Hollywood’s exoticizing of indigenous gender and sexuality as well. The lead female, Neytiri, is a blue alien Disney-like Pocahontas. Neytiri’s heteronormative body shape is sexually seductive, yet strong like a warrior. As Starn says, Neytiri mirrors the iconic depiction in “early 20$^{th}$ century *National Geographic* stills of bare-breasted native women” and that she has become a similar “object of desire as she leaps onto dragons and swings through treetops” (Starn, 2011: 180). Interestingly, I came across many Indianer collections of these old National Geographic magazines, sometimes with the pages of bare-breasted native women and warriors with feathered head covers framed on the walls of the Europeans’ homes. Now, at World of Pandora, Neytiri, no doubt, is

becoming the newest Disney Princess; she has all the independence, uniqueness, and spirit of the typical Disney female lead role; afterall, she can talk to animals.

## More on Ecofeminism and the Nature/Culture Debate

Despite a century of anthropological research and commentary, native people (especially women) are still exoticized and subjugated to eroticism. The universal subjugation of indigenous people and women has been a factor of the nature/culture debate for years. Ortner has determined that the distinctions between nature and culture parallel the distinctions between social gender roles (Ortner, 1974: 75). Culture almost always transcends nature; therefore, culture is superior to nature. Ortner says that women's "pan-cultural second-class status could be accounted for, quite simply, by postulating that women are being identified or symbolically associated with nature, as opposed to men, who are identified with culture (Ortner, 1974:75). Therefore, since culture transcends nature, if women are considered to be associated with nature, then culture (men) would subordinate, or be superior to women. The same holds true for indigenous people. They are associated with nature; therefore, are without (or with much less) culture than dominant white males.

In a critique of the Disney film, *Pocahontas*, Lauren Dundes points out that a central characteristic of womanhood is one's nurturance as the

“primary goal [that] can lead to dependence on others for approval and self-esteem” (Dundes 2001: 354). Dundes notes that oftentimes women are expected to forego their individual desires in order to meet the needs of the family or larger community. This self-sacrifice becomes the morality of women’s various relationships. If a woman deviated from this expectation to pursue an individual desire or goal, she is deemed selfish rather than dedicated, curious, or sophisticated (Dundes, 2001:354-355). Again, this is also true for indigenous people. By naturizing Native Americans, they are also feminized, therefore subjugated and objectified.

In an earlier article, Dundes (with her father Alan Dundes) analyzes Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* as an electral fantasy; Ariel (the mermaid) tries to assert herself as an adventurous individual, but ultimately is “controlled by her father Triton, the king of the sea, who eventually hands her over to a human for marriage” (Dundes and Dundes, 2000: 120). When critically analyzed, it is apparent that Ariel is not independent at all, even in her rebellious endeavors to defy her father’s wishes. She demands and requires constant assistance from multiple male allies along the way. Her male helpers always have the upper hand or cultural wisdom that supersedes Ariel’s knowledge of the world.

Similarly, indigenous people have been controlled by the American government, forced to marry outside of their traditions, made dependent

even under stages of rebellion, and usually always considered second class citizens (if they are considered as citizens at all). The treatment of indigenous people in much of Western discourse mirrors that of the treatment of women. This is the feminization of indigenous cultures.

Disney, let alone Hollywood, has a historical pattern of relating an ideal feminine gender with nature. Almost every Disney Princess can commune with wildlife or plants. Each princess has animal companions that assist with domestic chores and serve as confidants and sounding boards when the princesses vent their romantic frustrations. Pocahontas's animal friends cannot talk, yet her spiritual mentor/ancestor is a talking tree. Mulan's best friend is a cricket while her spiritual mentor is a talking dragon. Their spiritual connection to nature illustrates Ortner's point that it is not easy to breakdown the ideology that women are closer to nature while men are closer to culture (Ortner, 1974:76).

According to anthropologist Claudia Briones, alterity is often synonymous with femininity; being a conquered people means being inferior to the superior Western male (Briones, 2011: 315). So much so, Europeans lower indigenous culture to a play-status, or something they can do for fun, rather than actually be and suffer the social inqualities and tensions often experienced by Native people across the globe.

## Avatar and Misrepresentations/Misunderstandings of Indigenous Culture

As fantastical representations of actual indigenous people, the *Na'vi* are portrayed to "live in harmony with nature and worship a mother goddess called *Eywa*" (Briones, 2011: 315). Likewise, Indianer strive for natural harmony, oneness with nature, and the ability to manipulate nature for their benefit. The *Na'avi's* supreme deity is feminine, embodied in a bioluminescent tree known as the Tree of Souls. Pocahontas's ancestral mentor is an anthropomorphized willow tree named, Grandmother Willow. Members of the Nez Perce Indianer Klub in Berlin, Germany gather around a hornbeam tree that lives in a courtyard not too far from Alexanderplatz; they have named the tree "Gesegnetes Mädchen" (Blessed Girl), and feel deeply connected to the spirit world when engaged in prayer while touching or forming a circle around the tree's base.

Like descriptions of many global indigenous peoples, the *Na'vi* have a "mystic attachment" to their homelands. Briones says, "in many regards, the *Na'vi* become the prototype of the Rousseauian 'noble savage,' showing many of the most romanticized characteristics that Enlightment and Evolutionary anthropology attributed to egalitarian primitive societies" (Briones, 2011: 316). Likewise,German Indianer also adopt and perform

the most romanticized characteristics of primitive indigenous culture and strive for their camp life to be egalitarian and free from all modernity.

In *Avatar*, almost all aspects of *Na'vi* society are feminized. The shaman is female, the individual charged with teaching the White Savior *Na'vi* ways, and the deity whose essence illuminates the forest are all female. This is the one difference with Indianer. I observed mostly men in spiritual authority at all Indianer events I attended. However, there were a few "medicine women" that came to the cowboy camp, and the hobbyists designated to welcome attendees of powwow or Karl May festivals were women. Indianer refer to Earth as a feminine being, as well as many of nature's essential elements and attributes: water, soil, the moon, and the sky.

## Chapter Conclusion

Given that women and indigenous people are so often thought of as being closer to nature (therefore subordinate to white men), and that indigenous people are thought to be more feminine than Western notions of masculinity, therefore subordinante to dominant men, bringing Avatar's *Na'vi* to "life" at WDW reifies subordination as a social norm, or a normalized ideal because Disney is trusted to provide the highest of quality products that reaffirm Western family values. "Avatarland" confirms and affirms racist and sexist ideology and discourses about nature and culture.

Millions of people visit WDW every year. “Avatarland” draws many more people due to the film’s popularity, and the fact that it is new and cutting-edge. Experiencing the racist undertones and feminization of indigenous identity, as well as promoting a White Savior myth as something heroic and laudable, visitors, including German Indianer, will internalize Disney’s scripted depiction and perpetuate racial ideologies and the age-old belief that women and femininity are tied to nature and do not have or cannot be associated with culture.

## Chapter Five: Social Memory, Myth, and Fantastical Reality

*This chapter is an analysis of social memory, the myths of nostalgia and perceptions of history. These narratives present contradictions, controversies, and tension, yet they linger and can become national discourses of identity and belonging. In Germany, the Holocaust is one example of how social memory alters a national identity, and how a traumatic historical event leads to controversial social memories. Combined with the practice of "playing Indian," Holocaust and Indianthusiasm memories/myths provide an interesting topic for discussions of racial ideologies and social memory and how they relate to constructions of identity.*

The problem with attractions, such as "Avatarland," is that many people cannot separate the image of the fictionalized helpless and primitive indigenous cultures from their ideas of actual real-world indigenous cultures. These media discourses become people's perceptions of reality. People collectively think about indigenous cultures as a form of social memory; in this way, they create a narrative for the memory of indigenous people of the past, while denying, or erasing the realities of contemporary indigenous peoples, or while holding their ideals as the standard by which contemporary indigenous people must adhere in order to be considered indigenous-enough.

## Social Memory

Social memory, or “memory studies” is a concept used by scholars of the social sciences and humanities to explore the connection and meaning between social (or cultural) identity and historical memories produced by the various discourses and phenomena. These memories are often triggered by associations with certain places, objects, or people and the historical event or subject that is being memorialized. Social memory attempts to explain how and why various cultures self-identify as belonging to a particular group with a shared (though not always agreed upon) past.

The idea of myth can be broadly described as a way people create social realities through stories (sometimes exaggerations), without turning to any sort of empirical verification. These myths are seldom questioned or seen as fiction. They are accepted as truth. So, what people may *say* about the past is as good as a history book, whatever those words may amount to. The myth of the iconic, stereotypical Native American permeates German discourses; it is hardly scrutinized by Germans, and is taken as actual history, or as factual history.

The historical study of memory looks at how social groups select and interpret certain memories to serve the public’s changing needs. It explores how people join together to search for common memories to meet current affective or economic needs. The phenomenon begins when a group first recognizes an important memory, and then negotiates its meaning, and

then the group preserves and absorbs that meaning into their everyday lives and discourses. This chapter will describe two aspects of German social memory as I observed during fieldwork in 2016. I will break down the two aspects into what I call A) Germany's Disney-like Simulacra, and B) Germany's Dark Shadow.

## Karl May Spiele: Germany's Disney-like Simulacra

As I observed during fieldwork in 2016, many Germans have created a social and national memory inspired by Karl May's 1893 novel, *Winnetou*, and other 19th century fictional depictions of Native American culture and Wild West towns. In a few locations in Germany, entire villages are set-up to look like the historical-fictions of May's novels, including tipi camps, totem poles, and post offices designed to depict a Pony-Express postage and parcel post.

My first experience during fieldwork for this research came as I attended the outdoor theatrical extravaganza, "The Karl May Festspiele," in Bad Segeberg, Germany. Upon my arrival at the town's central train station, I could hear loud explosions, eruptions of cheers, and a John Denver soundtrack coming from the largest hill in the distance (where the amphitheater resides). Right off the train platform stood a life-size cardboard cutout of a Winnetou illustration. Passengers, donning their

brightly colored feathered paper headbands, cowboy hats, and war-painted cheeks waited in line to take selfies with the cardboard Indian.

The social, or collective memory of *Winnetou* and Karl May spans generations. Many young children also participate, excitedly, in the discourse. One small German boy, I guessed around five years old, gleefully burst into giggles and ear-to-ear smiles when it was his turn to take a photo with the cardboard cutout. “Mama, Er ist Winnetou! Er ist wirklich Winnetou! Wie auf den Büchern!” (Mama, he is Winnetou! He is really Winnetou! Like on the books!)

*Almost-Life-Size Cardboard Winnetou. Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Bad Segeberg, Germany. 2016*

Another small boy in line exclaimed, “Aber Mutti, gibt es nicht eine echte, nicht Pappe?” (But Mommy, is there not a real one, not cardboard?” The mother replied, “Ja, mein Sohn. Jetz geduldig sein. Ich möchte jede Foto-Gelegenheit zur Verfügung.” (Yes, my son. Now be patient. I want every photo opportunity available.) Many children in Germany are well-versed in May’s literature, and continue to produce social memory around the fictionalized representation of America’s Native cultures.

I rented a small room above a Biergarten in central Bad Segeberg. Just outside my window a bratwurst vendor peddled his sausages to passersby on their way to the Festspiele grounds and shoppers on their way to the village square to purchase Wild West souvenirs. These vendors are common in tourist areas throughout Germany. I saw them in Berlin, Munich, and Hamburg, as well. However, the vendor in Bad Segeberg was also smitten by the Festspiele atmosphere; He wore the typical Lederhosen, but instead of the iconic Bavarian feathered hat, he wore a black-yarn-braided wig tied back with a red headband to look like Winnetou.

The hotel I stayed at is owned by a young Romanian couple who, likewise, embodied the Festspiele style. Elena wore a brightly colored feather headdress and a Pocahontas-style Halloween costume. Her husband, Nandru, wore jeans with a blue gingham shirt, a black cowboy hat, and cowboy boots. He had a plastic toy pistol tucked into his belt and greeted customers at the door with, “Howdy, *Par’ner*” as American country

western music completed the ambiance. Their “special of the day” was a BBQ Cowboy Burger served with Bratkartoffeln (fried potatoes—but not like fries, more like a potato hash), and Blaukraut (red cabbage sauerkraut).

Their biergarten had the same cardboard cutout of Winnetou as the one at the train depot. They also advertised a meet-and-greet with Old Shatterhand on Fridays at 9:00pm during Festspiele season, and a contest to win a signed Festspiele poster.

In addition to this business’s enthusiasm for the Festspiele, it seemed the entire town plays along with Karl May’s myth as a local, well-loved social memory. The bakery across from the hotel/restaurant sells “Apache Brot” (Apache bread), which is just a typical German bread roll but in a cone shape to resemble a tipi. Even the Apotheka (pharmacy) employees don feathers, cowboy hats, and face paint. This hyperreality is played, but in a way, that reifies the narrative and makes it an authoritative reality rather than a colorful representation.

The concept most fundamental to hyperreality is the simulation and the simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1988:2). The simulation is characterized by a blending of ‘reality’ and representation, where there is no clear indication of where the former stops and the latter begins. The simulacrum is often defined as a copy with no original, or as Gilles Deleuze describes it, "the simulacrum is an image without resemblance" (1990:57). Jean Baudrillard maps the transformation from representation to simulacrum in four

‘successive phases of the image’ in which the last is that "it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (1988:6).

### Simulacra and Hyperrealities

Umberto Eco suggests that simulacra (hyperreality) is the world of "the Absolute Fake," in which imitations don't merely reproduce reality (or a perception of reality), but try improving on it (1983:6). In this case, Indianer[6] are reproducing a reality (albeit, an imagined reality), and passing it off as an improvement on the "original." They only *think* they capture the authenticity of historic Native American cultures, though. Their hyperreality is a production... a performance. It is not a reality of Native American culture or identity.

Deleuze, Baudrillard, and Eco trace the proliferation and succession of simulacra to the rise of hyperreality and the advent of a world that is either partially, or entirely simulated. Frederic Jameson contends that one of the conditions of late capitalism is the mass reproduction of simulacra, creating a "world with an unreality and a free-floating absence of "the referent"’ (1990:17). Although these theorists highlight different historical developments to explain hyperreality, common themes include the explosion of new media technologies, the loss of the materiality of objects, the increase in information production, the rise of capitalism and consumerism, and the reliance on religion in Western thought. Essentially, certain historical contingencies allow for the wide scale reproduction of

[6] The word “Indianer” is the same in both singular and plural tenses.

simulacra so that the simulations of reality replace the real, producing a giant simulacrum completely disconnected from an earlier reality; this simulacrum is hyperreality.

### Peter and the Karl May Contradiction

Nandru (owner of the hotel where I stayed in Bad Segeberg) introduced me to Peter, one of his employees who has lived in the village since he was born thirty-something years ago. Peter invited me to take a tour of the town with him after his shift ended. At that point, we wandered around the cobblestone streets, winding residential paths, and through the farmer's market in town square. Peter had a two-fold opinion on bad Segeberg's Festspiele identity. He is passionately a fan of Karl May, Winnetou, and Indianer culture, but rampantly annoyed by tourist behavior, capitalism's exploitation of Karl May's imagined world, and, interestingly, what he called "Germans' acceptance of fiction as reality, or myth as history."

Peter said,

> *Karl May is Germany's Walt Disney. He was a visionary who created beloved, captivating, and seemingly… what is the English word for 'unsterblich?'…. Ah, yes, immortal! He has immortally-lasting characters and worlds…just like Walt Disney's. His stories are woven into our national and cultural fabric both East and West ever since he first introduced Germans to Winnetou. He wrote what is now the 'German Standard'… the script for our most important German values. This is exactly what Walt Disney did in America, too… and because Disney was American, his became a global story… but Karl May, however, has remained primarily German.*

For the next hour and forty minutes Peter meticulously pin-pointed numerous comparisons between Karl May and Walt Disney's influence over national and cultural discourses, and how each artist individually handcrafted an entire worldview, or social memory, that became national icons for "good values."

However, the nonchalant and gross misrepresentations of Native culture, as well as the hyper-warrior theming of Native masculinity are common in both Germany, and Walt Disney media, as mentioned in Chapter Four of this dissertation. In Bad Segeberg, there does not seem to be a single space in the whole town that isn't pushing a fictional Apache narrative. Likewise, Disney has permeated American markets and discourses, and is the hegemonic standard for socialization into American values.

**Mr. Dandrick: Lifelong Karl May Fanatic**

I had just sat down at the small hotel room table around 10:30pm to finally eat a sandwich and type up my field notes from the day. I heard a rather hurried and dramatic knock at my door. It startled me! I was hesitant to answer it. Then I heard a loud German voice yell, "Bist du da, Frau Kelly?" ("Are you there, Ms. Kelly?") Then came more knocking. "Hotelmanager, hier. Alles ist sicher Kein Grund zur Sorge." ("Hotel manager, here. All is safe. No need to worry.")

I recognized the voice. It was Mr. Thorsten, the front desk clerk. I threw on my sweater and slippers; as I approached the door, I heard Mr. Thorsten say, “Sie ist nicht hier. Es tut mir leid, Herr. Vielleicht ist sie schon weggegangen” (She is not here. I am sorry, Sir. Perhaps she has already departed.) As I opened the door I saw a very elderly man with Mr. Thorsten.

After I invited them in out of the light rain, Mr. Thorsten apologized for the late intrusion. The elderly man, Mr. Bernie Dandrick, shuffled into my room and took a seat at the small table. He pulled a very worn and tattered book from his inside pocket and placed it on the table. Then he began to speak about the book, *Winnetou*, and the Karl May Festspiele.

Mr. Thorsten interrupted him. “Kelly, Mr. Dandrick wants to tell you about Karl May, *Winnetou*, the Festspiele, and his 75-year career as a Karl May storyteller. I told him you were leaving in the morning and he insisted we come right away to speak to the American anthropologist, despite the late hour.”

Mr. Dandrick continued, in German, to iterate his life of Karl May fandom. Again, Mr. Thorsten interrupted, “Kelly, is this okay with you? I’m sorry. This man is 95 years old and sometimes doesn’t comprehend time or proper etiquette.” He turned to Mr. Dandrick and gave him a hand sign to stop talking until I answered. “I am not leaving in the morning,” I said. “I extended my stay here for two more days. I am happy to speak with Mr. Dandrick, but perhaps it can wait until the morning?”

Then, Mr. Dandrick stood up, shook my hand, and said (in English), “Wonderful! Come downstairs at 8:00 and I will direct you to my home. You can see my collection and library. How many hours can you stay? Will you have time for a walk in the woods? Perhaps we can catch the second performance after our visit? I can translate it for you, and then introduce you to the cast.”

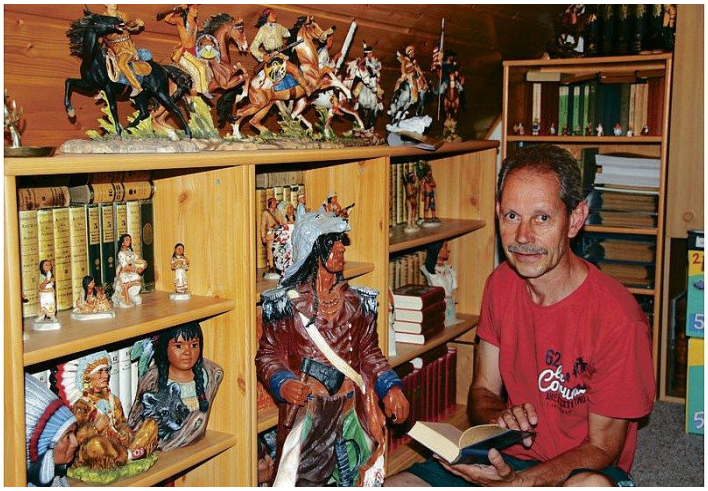
After exchanging our goodbyes for the night, the two men made their way down four flights of stairs and disappeared around the corner. I finished my sandwich, closed my laptop, and went to sleep. 8:00am would come early.

I laid in bed wondering what a 75-year career of storytelling consisted of. I fell asleep while asking myself curious questions about this man; how did Mr. Dandrick make it up four flights of stairs in his apparent fragile state? How did he know an American anthropologist was staying here?

The next morning, Mr. Dandrick and I walked to his house. When I walked through the door, I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of collectibles and memorabilia he had on display. Several large curios cabinets line his livingroom walls. The dining room walls are covered in framed images of Karl May book covers, *Winnetou* comic books, Winnetou film posters, and Festspiele photos and advertisements.

*1970s Native American Toy in Curios Cabinet. Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise.*
*Bad Segeberg, Germany, 2016*

Above Mr. Dandrick's fireplace hangs two long rifles and a fringed buckskin shirt. Mr. Dandrick told me these are former props and costumes from the Festspiele. Pendleton blankets and star quilts line Mr. Dandrick's couches. It was obvious that he has spent decades immersed in Karl May and Indianer culture. Mr. Dandrick's son, Fritz, sat on the floor skimming books to find just the right one to show me.



*Fritz Dandrick with Dandrick Family Collectibles.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Bad Segeberg, Germany, 2016.*

*Fritz Dandrick Wearing Lederhosen and a War Bonnet. Image Credit: Bernie Dandrick. Bad Segeberg, Germany, 1964.*

We spoke for many hours about their lives as Indianer and Karl May enthusiast. Both men have travelled throughout Europe. Mr. Dandrick is a professional storyteller at Karl May and *Winnetou* festivals, and at schools and senior citizen community centers. He has given guest lectures at German universities. He told me he is "considered one of the greatest Native American Ethnography experts in Europe."

Earlier, Mr. Thorsten, the hotel manager, described Mr. Dandrick's career as "a simulacrum of a fantastical reality... a fake reality." Mr. Thorsten expressed his belief that Indianthusiasm is "child's play," but attractive to many adults because of the historical and ethnographic nature

of the subject. Mr. Thorsten is not an Indianer, and Indianthusiast, nor flattered or very tolerant of the pasttime. He explained, "Unfortunately, I live in Karl Mayville. Perhaps my pennance for not saluting the German flag all those years as a disgruntled youth in Hamburg."

As I browsed all of the marvelous collectibles and memorabilia at Mr. Dandrick's house, I was approached by Fritz, now wearing a wolf-head hat, carrying a spear. Fritz is dependent on Mr. Dandrick due to chronic illness. He accompanies his father, and is just as knowledgeable and enthusiastic about Karl May, *Winnetou*, and German folklore about Native Americans as his father is.

Like Karl May, Mr. Dandrick has never travelled to the United States. He has never seen, first-hand, the places or people he claims to be an expert on. Most of the memorabilia, regalia, and material culture in his collection is from Winnetou events and German film or cartoon series. The blankets were gifts given to him by fellow enthusiasts.

Mr. Dandrick showed me seven scrapbook albums overfilled with newspaper clippings and event programs showcasing his biography as an Indianer Ethnographer and Historian. He has taught multitudes of European (mostly German) audiences about Indianer, having no reliable or ethnographic understanding of actual Native Americans. At best, Mr. Dandrick's lectures have been folklore stories passing as social truths.

## Folklore, History and Myth

Historians view folklore, oral history, and stories passed down from generation-to-generation (such as Disney and May's) as flawed, skewed, biased, and unverifiable, however popular and embedded they are in national discourses. Historians prefer what they consider to be more accurate versions of events: court documents, written and recorded eyewitness testimonies, personal journals, and verifiable and certified documents. Karl May had none of those in his books. Germans have produced a fictional social memory of 19th century Native American cultures. As problematic as a fictional account (passed off as truth) is, other social memories are more heavily scrutinized, especially those with much greater, global significance—such as the Holocaust.

## Germany's Dark Shadow

In his book about the American Holocaust Museum, Linenthal says that in a not-so-distant past, historians cared very little, for example, what today's Holocaust survivors *thought* were the causes behind the genocide, and only regarded their memoirs and oral accounts as "descriptive" but not "official," or "factual" (Linenthal, 2001). They felt they could get a more concrete understanding of the Holocaust by examining political and military documents, the era's economic manifests and logs, eye-witness accounts by US and British soldiers, and confiscated Nazi documents obtained while

liberating concentration camps and while invading German, Polish, and Austrian military holds.

The feelings of some historians, however, have changed (relatively) recently; history as an academic discipline analyzes various aspects of oral history, and uses different approaches that include methods (such as ethnography) that explore social memory. Prominent scholars in the field of memory studies (such as Linenthal, Savage, and Sturken) almost unanimously agree that the collected, meaningful, and diverse memories of social groups are no longer considered taboo, or as mythical, false explanations for a group's own ontology, but rather as important aspects to understand if historians (and anthropologists) are to truly understand how a social group finds meaning in itself. By analyzing and understanding a group's social memory, we can often find the affective aspects and other culprits of social change, which were likely the meaningful factors of the group's coalescence in the first place.

That is not to say that groups always share a *unified* understanding of events, people, or objects that concern their social memory. Often, when analyzing social memories that involve trauma and conflict, groups' memories, meaning, and understanding often vary greatly. While groups remember more than individuals (based on a collected version of the events remembered), the "version" of the memory is often the one depicted by people of power, privilege, economic hierarchy, and political presence.

Jay Winter, writing on the “memory boom” in historiography and other fields, says that the seemingly sudden onslaught of scholarly writing on memory, especially of the twentieth century, does not date to World War II and the Holocaust, but draws its inspiration instead from the trauma of World War I (Winter, 1996). Winter gives a series of examples of how scholars (after the war) recorded how Europeans, stricken with grief, trauma, and loss after the First World War, began to collectively remember soldiers, battles, politics, and even times of peace (1996). Therefore, after WWII and the holocaust, a boom of writing about remembering was already a practice familiar to Europeans.

As such, the phenomenon of the boom is integral to social science because social memory is found in many aspects of culture, discourse, and historical analyses. Sometimes social memory is celebratory (such as with the Festspiele and other Karl May discourses). Sometimes, it is patriotic, or commemorative. Sometimes, it is out of trauma, tension, or violence that it plays out in the lives of the group who is remembering.

## Memory and Memorials

Scholars of social memory agree that sites of trauma are typically met with controversy when memorialized in some way, and when experienced by diverse groups of people, especially those in which racial tensions and social conflicts occur (Gillis,1994; Sturken, 2003; and Dickenson, et al, 2010). This is certainly true of Holocaust memorials, but

also of the mass grave and surrounding cemetery at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, a site frequently visited by Indianer and other Germans with a fondness for Native American history.

*Wounded Knee Cemetery and Monument.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise.*
*South Dakota, 2013.*

Wounded Knee is a mass grave, sacred to Lakota people in the United States, but a pilgrimage destination for those who partake in the social memory of *Winnetou*-inspired Native American narratives. In a similar way, memorials, monuments and museums are symbolic of the event and people being remembered, but not usually experienced the same ways by victims as by tourists.

In this way, memory is semiotic. Also, memory contributes to discourses under the construction and rhetoric of the institutions that create

them. Foucault tells us there is social structure and power associated with memory and how it is constructed and “fed” to the public (1977). Deciding how and where an event will be memorialized, or how a memory will become socialized, is systematic, which goes beyond the simple construction of a monument (Foucault, 1977; Gillis, 1994; and Savage, 1999).

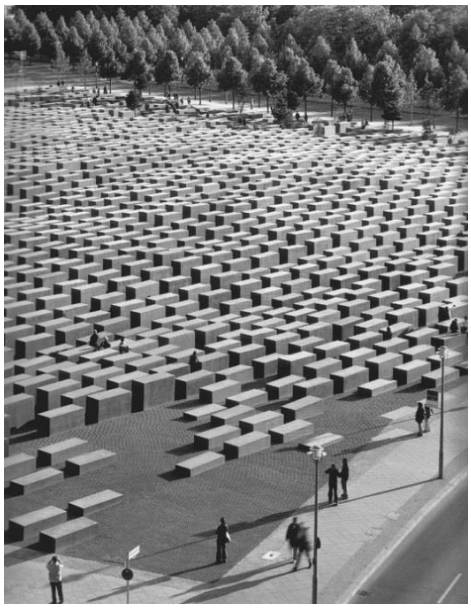
How people are expected to experience a memorial is also constructed. Like the remnants of concentration camps and death camps in Europe, Wounded Knee in South Dakota is undoubtedly a site of trauma, fraught with painful memories which lead to conflicting phenomenological experiences and ideologies between locals who live near the cemetery, and tourists who come to pay their respects (or according to many locals, gawk at the “handiwork” of the US Cavalry).

History scholar at Indiana University, Edward Linenthal, writes about American war memorials, and the patriotism, or national identity that is associated with these memorials, or those of “American Heroes.” He finds that memorializing patriotism is one way nations create a hegemonic national identity built around notions of bravery, sacrifice, strength, and offensive war tactics, or glory in promoting a defensive character (Linenthal, 1993 and 2001).

In Germany, the Holocaust is memorialized in very obscure ways. The Holocaust memorial in Berlin is actually called, “Memorial for Dead

Jews of Europe." The word "Holocaust" is not even used. There are no signs or information anywhere on the monument to describe what the monument is for. The monument is rather large, spanning perhaps an entire street block. There are rows of concrete (or some type of stone) walls, or rectangle pillars of various heights. Visitors can walk between the rows of "walls," and even sit on the shorter ones. (See image on next page.)

While I was in Berlin I had to rely on my *Frommer's Berlin Guide* to even know that what I was looking at was indeed the "Holocaust memorial." On the tourist map there is an icon of four or five of the various-height walls directly across the street from the American Embassy. The guidebook indicated that location was the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, but on the actual site there was no indication of what the structure was.



*Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.*
*Image Credit: Kelly LaFramboise. Berlin, Germany, 2016.*

While walking amongst the walls, I heard many people speaking English with “American” accents, tourists or ex-pats, no doubt. As a matter of note, my German companion who accompanied me to Berlin did not even want to visit the memorial and opted to sit on a bench outside the space and wait for me. His comment was, “It’s just a ploy to make people feel bad about all the dead Jews,” as though a ploy was needed for such a thing.

In Sturken’s *Tourists of History*, the author stresses that tourism to sites of trauma is about “innocence” and “rebirth.” She uses American sites, specifically the Oklahoma City bombing site, and the Twin Towers site of September 11, 2001. By visiting these sites, visitors express their innocence in the violent act that caused the site to be memorialized in the first place, while at the same time, consuming the tragedies and desiring to somehow be connected or associated with it as a member of the imagined community that remembers the events as a form of national identity --in the same way discussed by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (Sturken, 2007, and Anderson, 2006).

However, when a people and nation (rather than an individual or “outsider-enemy”) are responsible for the violent act, memorials are complex and experienced differently than how Sturken describes in *Tourists of History*. Historian, Lebow, describes post-war memory in Germany as a combination of guilt/shame, and a powerful urge to forget, erase, or deny

the horrors of the country's role in genocide (2006). There was a strong rush to change national identity in Germany following WWII, however the period following the war was fraught with its own identity paradoxes as the country divided into East and West Germany, and communist USSR claimed control of East Germany, adding The Cold War to Germany's long list of worries post-WWII.

**National Memory and National Memory**

For forty+ years following the Holocaust, Germans were conflicted about their identity as Germans (or what it meant post-war to be German). Lebow says that Germans opted to stay quiet, even passing laws to forbid public discussions of the Holocaust or Nazi regime (2006). It remains a painful subject for many Germans, and as Lebow says, one that will ultimately be shaped by memory discourses, but, remains painful because the rest of the world will not (for a long time) disassociate Germany and Germans from the Holocaust (2006). There is a long-reaching shadow over Germany's reputation as a world leader that will not dissipate any time soon, despite their successes postwar, and current position as a world leader under Chancellor, Angela Merkel.

Similar to the tourists I observed in Berlin, I observed tourists at Wounded Knee during fieldwork for my Master's thesis; I interviewed them, and also talked to local Oglala people about tourism at Wounded Knee (which includes many Germans of whom Oglala locals have many stories).

One commonality I found between many of the non-Native tourists is that they want a personal experience with the traumatic, historic place.

Sturken and Linenthal say people's attraction to traumatic memorials comes by way of their association of guilt (or innocence), a need to be connected to the social memory, and a desire to actually consume the trauma (Sturken, 2007, and Linenthal, 2001). At Wounded Knee, tourists want to touch the grave and memorial stone and connect with it somehow. In Berlin and also in Poland at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, non-German (and non-European in general) tourists want to experience the Holocaust in the capitol city of the country that was responsible for the trauma, somehow connecting them to the pain, having remorse for the tragedy, and participate in the memory.

Sturken associates this with innocence in her examples of the Oklahoma City bombing and September 11$^{th}$ memorials and how Americans who feel connected (by way of consumption) via association with national identity (2007). Holocaust memorials (and other sites of traumatic memorial such as Wounded Knee) remain sites of racial tensions due to the expectations, uses, and different ways the site is experienced by descendants (or victims), and those not directly involved or impacted by the trauma, especially those socially related as being the perpetrators.

According to Gillis, the meanings imbedded in these kinds of spaces receive a diverse array of interpretation (1994). Each group has their own

memory and version of trauma, history, or symbolism within the same space. Nora contends that for these reasons, conflict often ensues over how to memorialize traumatic events. In the case of the Berlin memorial, conflict even ensues over the meaning or reason why it should be there.

Communications professor, Greg Dickenson, says that social memory is rhetorical, meaning it serves a purpose to influence or suggest particular discourses to its agents (2010). In this way, I think Holocaust memorials in Germany serve to influence German, Jewish, and tourist groups in two distinctly different ways: first, it suggests a feeling and attitude of loss, grief, violence, and historical trauma for Jewish (and other groups effected by Hitler's "Final Solution") visitors who themselves, or whose ancestors were victimized. Second, it influences discourses of guilt, shame, and historical bigotry for some Germans, but also military and patriotic discourses for American and British soldiers (Dickenson, 2010 and Linenthal, 1993).

In *Tangled Memories*, Sturken describes the importance of memory to cultural identity. She says that memory is at the *core of identity* because it gives a sense of the past that has shaped a culture. She also says, however, that memory is complex, and tied up in social politics and its meaning is interpreted differently (2007). She, like Linenthal, claims that memory is central to national identity, and what it means to be an

“American people,” united in identity, but divided (sometimes) in memory’s meanings.

Sturken says that memory is often embodied in objects such as souvenirs (which she calls talismans), memorials in many shapes and sizes, books and magazines, and images (art, such as paintings but especially photos). Sturken, like Susan Sontag, says that photos, above all, are associated as telling the meaning and interpretations of memory (Sturken, 2007; Sontag, 2001; and Linenthal, 1993). A photo stops time and contains an image that becomes a memory. She specifies that memory doesn’t “live” in a photo, rather the photo *produces* the memory. Oftentimes, memory’s meaning and lasting interpretation and impact within a culture is because of the photo; the photo becomes the memory, or is the point of reference for the memory.

Alternatively, art historian, Kirk Savage writes about Civil War monuments (sculptures) and says that monuments themselves serve as sources of memory of Civil War events only when analyzed in conjunction with other sources of memory, agreeing with Sturken and others, however, that collective or social memory is largely a structure of national identity. By analyzing sculptures alongside historical documents, Savage is careful to not let the sculptures, alone, represent history (become the memories), rather accompany an analysis or memory provided by multiple sources

(Savage, 1999). This differs from Sturken's stance that a photo alone can become a single source for cultural memory.

Finally, in Lebow's *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, the most appropriate analytical category for the study was "institutional memory" which is describes as the attempts by political and social elites, their constituents, and their polarized opposition to construct meaningful interpretations of the past and distribute them (in a rhetorical way) widely or, even blatantly impose them on the public (2006). The author does, however, acknowledge that collective memory (or even in some cases the cultures themselves) is influenced by international and transnational factors; he maintains that the primary site of political memory is the *nation*, again agreeing with Gillis, Linenthal, Dickinson, Sturken, and Savage that collective memory is primarily embodied as *national identity (Lebow, 2006).* This is a big theme, recurrent, and mentioned by almost *everyone* writing on social or collective memory.

As I observed and experienced during my collaborative ethnographic survey at Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in Poland in October 2016, the Holocaust (and both world wars in general) are integral to German national identity and play a role in German hobbyist practices of appropriating Native American culture and identity.

## Chapter Conclusion

Discourses (especially those silenced, erased, or skewed) about Native American cultures, or the Holocaust, embodied as memorials, museums, festivals, productions, and monuments influence social memory and how people remember, discuss, and experience their role or their legacy in the social aspects of the events.

This is also a racial discourse: an example of how race and national identity intersect. As mentioned in Chapter Two, German identity has a history of being associated with *Volksgeist*, literally translated means, “the spirit of the people;” or the collective, imagined, sense of belonging and unity around a centralized and standardized ideology. Volksgeist was central to the Nazi regime’s ideology.

George Stocking describes Volksgeist as ideological ambiguity, or rhetoric meant to establish an exclusionary, exceptional, and unified “Germanness,” which was interpreted by Hitler and Nazis as racial purity, instigating the Holocaust (Stocking, 1991). Also, German philosopher, Wilhelm von Humboldt described Volkgeist as *Nationalcharakter*, roughly translated as the idea of what Germans thought it meant to be “good Germans” (1991).

Indianer commonly think their "Germanness" and "Indianess" establish their exclusionary and authoritative idea of what a good, even perfect Indian is. Many Indianer told me the exact prase, as though it is a

mandatory script for identifying as an Indianer: "to be a good German, you have to be a good Indian." By this, they mean that Volksgeist and Nationalcharakter are simultaneously quantified and qualified with how well one performs a reified, yet romanticized and fictional Native American identity. They combine Germanness and Indianness into a singular definition of what it means to be a good person... a perfect and pure person... the best kind of person.

Greta, who works at the biergarten just outside the entry gate to the Karl May Festspiele in Bad Segeberg, described the phenomenon of playing Indian as though it is a patriotic effort to erase some of the ills of Germany's past by embracing a culture and spiritual way of life – in fact, playing as a race that would have been the target for annihilation by the Nazi Party.

The irony is not lost on Indianer. Greta told me most of these guys are well aware that their fathers and grandfathers would have eventually killed off the Native people had they defeated the Allied Forces and annexed North America. She said,

> *...these festival tourists who flock to the Festspiele each year, do not think about today's actual Indian people. They idolize the idea of what they think indigenous North Americans were like two centuries ago. They like to think their Nazi ancestors would have only come across graves of long-gone Indians already killed by the United States government centuries ago. If they admit real Indian cultures are still alive and thriving in America and Canada, they would have to admit that they are stealing an identity, and playing leisurely roles of American-Holocaust victims.*

Indianer spend a lot of time on face work. Goffman describes face as, "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact." Face is an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession, hobby, or religion by making a good showing for him/herself (Goffman 1967:5).

There is positive face (desire for approval or appreciation) and negative face (avoiding ridicule and threats). An example of positive face from my fieldwork is a quote by Nils, "I just finished my turkey feather fan. Lars will be so jealous, but he will respect me for it." An example of negative face from the same conversation is Nils comment, "Don't hate me, but I think *Winnetou* is a really boring book."

Following a socially normative narrative for Indianer is also important. Their narrative, or storyline, along with their understanding of the causes and effects of their actions, and their greatly detailed description of events and circumstances related to their hobby are all imperative to their face, or presentation of self within the narrative.

The Karl May Festspiele is part of the Indianer narrative of Karl May stories, of Indianthusiasm, and of German imaginations about the American West. However, narratives often overlap, relate to other narratives within a discourse, and interconnect. Another common

narrative in Indianthusiasm is that of “being one with nature.” I observed Indianer in diverse settings, all of whom desired, or practiced an intimate relationship to and with nature.

# Chapter Six: Indianthusiasm and Theoretical Implications for Anthropology

*This chapter concludes the dissertation with a summary of the arguments and analyses, and describes the implications this research has on anthropological studies of race and identity.*

One of the major points of this dissertation is that German Indianer are constructing an identity based on essentialist ideas of 19th century indigenous Americans, which has permeated German discourse so much that it is the dominant knowledge-base for other Germans to know about Native American history, culture, religion, and political systems. Indianer are the authority on communicating Native American cultures in Germany, and they are (for the most part) wrong in their representations and portrayals.

These essentialist ideas have led some Indianer to claim ownership of the culture. Using spiritual influence, they make claims of historical Lakota leaders coming to them in visions to instruct them to relocate the Lakota Nation to Germany because, according to the men who have had the visions, "Germans are better Lakotas than the people who call themselves Lakota in America." We can pass this off as just being a small group of people with vivid imaginations. However, the discourse and social landscapes of Germany have created a space and stage for Indianer to take such authority, and to become "experts" on Native culture so much that their claims to have received spiritual instructions to annex the Lakota Nation go unchecked and unchallenged by German authorities.

## Rachel Dolezal and Transracialism

Outside of Germany, other examples of people constructing identities as a race other than theirs by birth include the case of Rachel Dolezal, the former civil rights activist and former Africana studies instructor. She was president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter in Spokane, Washington, from 2014 until June 15, 2015, when she resigned after it was revealed that she lied about being African American, many other aspects of her biography, and about alleged hate crimes against her.

In June 2015, Dolezal came to media attention when her European American parents stated publicly that Dolezal was a white woman passing as black. Their statement followed Dolezal's reports to police and local news media that she had been the victim of nine hate crimes; however, a subsequent police investigation did not support Dolezal's allegations. Dolezal's critics contend that she has committed cultural appropriation and fraud; Dolezal and her defenders contend her racial identity is genuine while not based on biology or ancestry. They have labeled this type of identity and racial reconstruction "transracialism." In a November 2015 television interview, Dolezal publicly stated for the first time since the controversy began that she was born white but identifies as black.

Her case is particularly controversial, because racial tensions in the United States have recently escalated, while at the same time, people have

generally stopped going "black-face" to Halloween parties (not completely eradicated or unheard of, but not as rampant as in the past), and cultural appropriation (as a "water cooler" topic of conversation) has shifted many public discourses on race and the politics of racial diversity. The "unmasking" of Rachel Dolezal made global headlines. Transracialism became a keyword for researchers to debate the implications of such ideology.

In the aftermath of the controversy, Dolezal was dismissed from her position as an instructor in Africana studies at Eastern Washington University because the university saw her questionable identity-claims as grounds for termination based on untruthfulness on her job application materials. She was also removed by the city council as chair of the police ombudsman commission over "a pattern of misconduct." She subsequently published her memoir *In Full Color* where she defended her claims and even compared her own experiences to slavery (again, furthering the tensions of her racial claims). She changed her name to Nkechi Amare Diallo in 2016, further inciting her critics and digging her feet further into her ownership of Black culture.

While Dolezal received global criticisms for her racial appropriation and claims to be transracial (in the same sense as one is transgender), other cases of "transracialism" go unscrutinized under the radar (such as Indianer who are at the far end of the performance spectrum and claim to

actually be, and have ownership of Native culture and identity. While there is a difference in the way Dolezal claims racial authority and the way Indianer claim Native identity (because Indianer are only temporarily acting as Native when dressed in regalia and participating in group activities), the two cases are similar because both are examples of people actively wanting to be, and taking steps to become another race.

### Wanting Authenticity

This relates to the Indianer couples who seek IVF treatments using donated sperm (loosely labeled as "Native American") in that Indianer couples consuming assisted reproductive technologies are actively choosing to design their family identity by going one step further than Dolezal or themselves and produce a child with "Native" DNA. The controversial ideology that makes "transracialism" desirable to some Caucasians also drives others to use acceptable forms of medicine and engineering to give the next generation the biological authority to be a racial identity that is desirable, but inaccessible to others with fewer resources and more scrutinized ethics.

This comparison does not aim to criticize millions of couples who have turned to IVF for assisted reproduction due to infertility or other situations where IVF provides a solution to complicated and complex fertility issues. IVF has helped millions of women become pregnant across the globe. While it remains an elite, or at least expensive technology and is not

easily accessed by economically-challenged women, it is widely available and practiced in most developed countries. However, most of the Indianer couples I encountered in the field do not suffer infertility, nor were any of the women unwed, same-sex, or single. All of the women I met could choose to have a baby with their husband or boyfriend instead of turning to IVF in America.

These couples actively sought out ethnic sperm from donors in areas of close proximity to an American Indian reservation whose phenotypic expressions matched the Indianer's expectations of what an Indian "looks like." It is desirable by both Indianer and people like Rachel Dolezal to *look* like the people/group they want to associate with or pass as, or claim authority as a member of. Looking "authentic" is essential to constructing a borrowed identity.

**Racial Essentialism and Holocaust-Era Lebensborn**

Essentialized "looks" and the desire for "authentic" and "superior" DNA is what pushed Germany into the Holocaust in the 1940s. Using 1930s eugenics, programs such as Lebensborn (state sanctioned breeding programs to populate the Nazi "empire" with perceived racially-pure populations), and Holocaust techniques such as forced sterilization and extermination of perceived socially inferior people reified Nazi racial ideologies. Many people were chosen for either Lebensborn or extermination based solely on their looks.

Essentializing race and identity based only on phenotypic expression leads to systematic racism as we have seen, especially in German history (as far as this research is concerned). Therefore, this dissertation posits that Indianer IVF using "Native American" sperm to produce a desired phenotypic expression, as well as the discourses that lead Indianer to desire such a child, are racist in that they essentialize looks and make claims of authority over ethnic socialization and genetic manipulation to produce an "ideal" if not a perceived "racially pure" human population. All of this ideology is based on fictionalized and romanticized depictions of what it means to be, or look Native American in German discourses.

### *Avatar* and Indianer

These fictionalized and romanticized depictions of Native Americans are prolific in most media and popular culture representations. Going as far back as black-and-white silent films of the 1920s, Native Americans have been portrayed as either violent savages hellbent on the war path to scalp and steal, or as noble savages, honorable warriors, having primitive (but interesting) technology and ways of thinking/being. Inspiration for numerous artworks, television and film characters, novel protagonists/antagonists, and even holiday champions (Thanksgiving) come from romanticized and misrepresented images of Native people.

Taking creative license, James Cameron designed the alien species in his wildly-popular film *Avatar* on a composite of several indigenous

cultures including Plains, Iroquois, and South American tribes. Some of the plant species on the planet of Pandora look like Plains powwow bustles. The Na'vi use bow and arrows to hunt while riding bareback on horse-like creatures (and dragons) -- though they are not truly bareback; they are connected to the creatures via a portal that connects Na'vi to the animal using hair and mane connections. They "plug-in" their long ponytails to an opening in the animal's mane or tail and can share thoughts and move as though they are one body.

*Avatar* is problematic. It is a white-savior-myth that perpetuates discourses that lead people to believe indigenous peoples are inferior, and unable to represent themselves in global/political conversations. The myth says that indigenous people need the heroic help of white people to defend their cultures and landscapes. The film *Avatar* portrays two white saviors: a white woman who is an academic linguist of sorts (played by Sigourney Weaver), and a white military soldier (played by Sam Worthington). Both characters represent the two most common stereotypes of the kinds of people who make contact with indigenous people in other common media narratives. Jane in *Tarzan*, John Dunbar in *Dances with Wolves*, and Jon Smith in *Pocahontas*-- from the explorers and anthropologists, to the militaries who have seized lands and brought terror to many indigenous tribes, both tropes are addressed in the film, *Avatar*.

These exploitative and racist narratives are now galvanized as millions of Americans travel to Walt Disney World in Florida to visit Avatarland at the Animal Kingdom theme park. Walt Disney World is a staple vacation destination for many American families (as well as families throughout the world). As noted in Chapter Four, popular discourses maintain that a trip to Walt Disney World is the epitome of success and a medal of honor for families who have "made it" to Disney World. A trip to Disney World is expensive. For my family of five, our last trip cost over $8,000. Airfare, hotel, park admission, and food are all premium expenses, and people pay it because the discourses make us believe that this particular trip is important; it is the hallmark of American life and family togetherness.

When we combine those two discourses (white saviors are needed to protect and save indigenous people, as championed in Avatar – which is now on display with participatory attractions at Disney World – and that a trip to Disney World is essential to fulfilling the American Dream), the results are devastatingly apparent: a racist discourse will continue, disguised as wholesome family values.

**Indianthusiasm and Social Memory**

Racial ideologies and national identity commonly intersect or overlap. This is apparent in the many ways people remember their national pasts, especially when there are racial tensions in the past. These racial

and political narratives present contradictions, controversies, and tension, yet they linger and can become national discourses of identity and belonging that are commonly protected and defended as "patriotic" and exclusive.

In Germany, the Holocaust is one example of how social memory alters a national identity, and how a traumatic historical event leads to controversial social memories. Combined with the practice of “playing Indian,” Holocaust and Indianthusiasm memories/myths provide an interesting topic for discussions of racial ideologies and social memory in Germany, and how they relate to constructions of identity.

Not a single day of field work passed without "the H-word" being uttered in at least one conversation. The Holocaust remains a central role in German identity. A few participants called it "the H-word" as though saying "Holocaust" is the same as saying a curse word. There are still uncomfortable tangles around discussions of the Holocaust in Germany. Younger generations seem to disassociate with it, and categorize it as something that happened a really long time ago, and of which they had no part in/of. Germans between 45 and 60 years of age are more willing to engage in Holocaust conversations, but remain guarded in the opinions of outsiders/non-Germans.

Older Germans whom I spoke with seemed to take one of two approaches to the incidents when the Holocaust was mentioned in

conversation. They either acknowledge its travesty and condone Germany's role in the extermination of millions of people as a result of racist and anti-Semitic ideologies, or they attempt to change the subject and void confrontation or conversations about that particular time in German history. This was the case with most older Indianer I spoke with. None of the older generations of Indianer attempted to engage in a conversation if "the H-word" was uttered. However, the younger generations often made comparisons of the Holocaust to the colonial efforts made by Americans to extinct Native populations, including recent events concerning oil pipelines on or very near Indian reservations in North and South Dakota.

**Memorializing the Holocaust**

In Germany, the Holocaust is memorialized in very obscure ways. The Holocaust memorial in Berlin is actually called, “Memorial for Dead Jews of Europe.” The word “Holocaust” is not even used. There are no signs or information anywhere on the monument to describe what the monument is for. The monument is rather large, spanning perhaps an entire street block. There are rows of concrete (or some type of stone) walls, or rectangle pillars of various heights. Visitors can walk between the rows of “walls,” and even sit on the shorter ones.

Aside from memorials in Germany, Germans visit concentration camp museums and memorials in Germany, Poland, and Austria. During my internship at Auschwitz in Fall 2016, a group of Indianer, together with

practitioners of New Age spirituality, held a "cleansing ceremony" outside the borders and gates of the Birkenau (Auschwitz II) camp. This group, dressed in Native American regalia and Bohemian-style dress performed sage-smudges, sang and drummed, and offered tobacco to "the spirits." When I inquired about the purpose of this ceremony, a participant told me, "We are here to heal the negative energy, to bring positivity, and to release the omens that keep victim-spirits from resting in peace."

This group also organized a "memorial 10k run" to raise funds to donate to survivors and the museum. Runners ran around the camp and between Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II. Spectators lined the path and cheered runners for support. Some runners wore kitschy bright-colored Native American inspired headbands. This event drew criticism from the museum staff because it draws unnecessary attention away from the intent of the memorial, and it distracts memorial visitors from the somber, quiet, and reflective nature of a visit to Auschwitz.

One museum guide remarked, "Look at them running with Indian headgear. You think they know they are dressed as a genocide victim? But no one wants to run dressed in striped pajamas and shave their head." The contradiction between valorizing one group, and wanting to emulate their culture, while memorializing another with intents to save their souls is another example of racial ideologies in practice, disguised as morals and ethical values.

## Memorializing Karl May

The Karl May Spiele outdoor theatrical extravaganza in Bad Segeberg, Germany is, in some ways, a memorial to Karl May and his fictional characters. The grounds of the spectacle are adorned with statues and portraits of Karl May. Vendors sell Karl May memorabilia, and advertise Karl May enthusiast conventions throughout Germany. Visitors can purchase poster-size portraits of Karl May, or desktop size bronze busts of Karl May's head and shoulders.

In the eastern German town of Radebeul, Karl May's home is preserved as a museum in his honor. The museum contains very little *Winnetou* memorabilia. The collections and displays consist of Native American artifacts, materials, collectibles, and hides. Controversy came to the museum in 2013 when a Minnesota Ojibwe tribe requested the museum remove two scalps from their exhibit and return them to Minnesota. To-date, the museum has not repatriated the scalps or other items in their collection other tribes have requested.

Despite the international attention the museum received as a result of viral media posts about the scalps, the museum remains a popular site for German tourists and Karl May aficionados. On Sundays, visitors can get a photo taken with Old Shatterhand. Once or twice a month, German historians and literature scholars give lectures at the museum about everything from Native American bead patterns or language, to literary

analyses of *Winnetou* books. The gift shop at the museum sells all Karl May novels, all Karl May films, and the same kitschy souvenirs found at the Karl May Spiele. You can even buy a bottle of Karl May Bier (beer).

Down the road from the museum, visitors can pay their respects to Karl May at his marble Romanesque Mausoleum. Visitors place momentums on his gravesite such as flowers, and postcards with sentiments about how *Winnetou* impacted their lives. It is clear that Karl May is an inspirational figure in Germany who has had significant impact on national identity and racial discourses.

## Conclusion

Having an identity in one's national history evokes emotions that contribute to public discourses, including (and perhaps especially) racial discourses. Narratives and interpretations of the narratives provide people with memories and myths by which they base their identity as a member of the group being memorialized. Germans identify as Germans, even when that evokes negative emotions and reactions concerning the Holocaust. Indianer identify as Germans who are passionate about and desirable of Native American identities and cultures. Their identity as Germans post-Holocaust and as people who strongly desire a Native identity poses a paradox of ideas. They have a national identity as Germans, as well as a national identity as Germans who want to be native American as opposed

to Germans who want to be German and just German, or German and European.

Some Indianer go as far as spending small fortunes to genetically ensure their children will biologically be both German and Native American. Their idea of what Native American is, is based on fictional narratives, stereotypical tropes, and Hollywood portrayals of indigeneity. They valorize Native Americans, yet remain astute in their German identity. They simulate Native culture, yet they only do so temporarily at camp or events before returning to their daily lives as just Germans. They borrow Native culture and history when it is useful or entertaining for their hobby. They take all of the beautiful aspects of Native cultures, and do not carry the social burdens or ecopolitical marginalization that Native Americans in North America have had to endure for centuries.

Playing Indian is a racial discourse. It is racial and cultural appropriation. Being an Indianer means being able to shed one's hobby as a fictional character as one pleases. Being half a world away from the people one is emulating means Indianer can do as they please without reprimand or local critique. It has no bearing on Native American social justice because American standards and ethics do not apply to German contexts. No one is going to stop Indianer from being Indianer, therefore Indianer will continue to be Indianer.

As with most racial tensions and racial discourses, emotions run high and conflicts occur. Future research will focus on these emotions, conflicts, and intercultural dialogues (or lack of) and will shed some light on Native American reactions to, and attempts to be inserted into German discourses on Native American history, culture, and spiritualities. This dissertation was a study of "dark anthropology" and "studying-up," which is to say a study not typical in Anthropology. It looks at elite social classes who have power and the ability to dictate how a marginalized culture is presented in their discourses and media. It is a study of the perpetrators of racial conflicts, and of appropriators, colonizers, and oppressors.

This dissertation is an analysis of a racial ideology and discourse in Germany that can be applied to other similar discourses across the world. There are still colonizers, oppressors, and perpetrators of racial conflict everywhere. They take what they want and become the social experts, further marginalizing those whom they take from. It is a tale as old as time. It will continue, because it is manipulated in media to be perceived as wholesome, righteous, noble, honorable, and heroic. It will also continue because racial politics still place white people above non-white people on social hierarchies. It will continue because Winnetou and Karl May are national icons in Germany, and this narrative is tied tightly into German national identity.

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