

COWBOYS AND INDIANS: THE AMERICAN WEST IN GERMAN ART OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

TERESA BRAMLETTE REEVES

(Under the Direction of Evan Firestone)

ABSTRACT

Eliciting fantasy, adventure, and romantic ideals of natural living, the American Indian has been a long cherished symbol for the German people. In the nineteenth century, with Germans migrating to the United States, Germany's evolutionary role in ethnography and anthropology, and the immense popularity of Karl May's work, this interest was intensified, easily surviving the tumultuous first half of the twentieth century. The spaghetti westerns of the 1960s, German support of the American Indian Movement beginning in the 1970s, and the rise of Indian fan clubs revived Karl May's work in the second half of the twentieth century, helping to sustain a German connection to all things Indian. This study follows the course of this influence on German art of the twentieth century through a chronological examination of representative works by Rudolf Schlichter, Max Ernst, Joseph Beuys, Sigmar Polke and Lothar Baumgarten. The image of America, as represented in the guise of the Wild West, has provided a point of deflection, a method of escape and a target for Germans artists for over one hundred years.

INDEX WORDS: German art, Native Americans, Emil Nolde, August Macke, Rudolf Schlichter, Max Ernst, Joseph Beuys, Sigmar Polke, Lothar Baumgarten, Wild West, Karl May

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In the process of assimilating the material necessary for this dissertation and setting aside the time for research and writing, I have nearly given up a dozen times. I have been stuck betwixt and between the studio and the library, the easel and the desk, the paint brush and the computer. I have doubted my ability to offer new insights, or even simply, to write. I have been frustrated by other commitments, other goals and the contingencies of life itself. Through all of this I have heard the steady voice of my husband Robert who refused, on rather pragmatic grounds, to let me give up on years of work and study. I was also gifted with a patient advisor, Evan Firestone, who consistently nudged me back on my slow path. And when it came time for him to read and comment on my work, he proved to be an outstanding editor. I thank both of these men for their support and assistance. I am also grateful to my readers. Isabelle Wallace, whom I have not yet even met, asked important questions and, together with J. P. Short, focused my attention on clarifying my methodological approach. Alisa Luxenberg provided valuable editorial suggestions and support, and Janice Simon, with typical energy and intelligence, lent her expertise to this project. Finally, I want to thank my mother, from whom I inherited a stubbornness that has served me well in this pursuit, and my father, who taught me to love art.

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 Private Collection, London
 From: Schimmel, Paul. *Sigmar Polke Photoworks: When Pictures Vanish* (Los Angeles, Zurich, Berlin, New York: Scalo and The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), p. 129.
79. Sigmar Polke
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 From: *Mu Nieltnam Netorruprup*, Kiel Kunsthalle & Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein, unpaginated.
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 From: Moure, Gloria. *Sigmar Polke: Paintings, Photographs and Films*
 (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, SA, 2005), p. 33.
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 From: W. Jackson Rushing III. *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century:
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PREFACE

Inspired by the historical Nez Perce tribal ruler Joseph the Younger (1840-1904), the contemporary German composer Hans Zender wrote the opera *Chief Joseph*, which premiered at the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden in 2005. The real Chief Joseph, venerated in songs and poems, is remembered as an eloquent spokesperson who honorably and peacefully attempted to negotiate with the United States government which broke treaty after treaty with the Indian nation he led. Zender's *Chief Joseph* is represented at three ages (the teen version wears a purple cowboy outfit complete with a 10-gallon hat) but does not attempt to tell a cohesive story about this famous Native American. Instead, Zender asserts that his opera is an investigation "largely based on the theme of a confrontation between Self and Other."¹ Littering his piece with clichés, Zender defends this approach with the notion that certain ideas about the "Indian" and the "American" are simply a part of "our [German] collected memory."² Jared von Hindman, who attended and reviewed a performance of *Chief Joseph* during its run in Berlin, observed that all of the participants are "white" with the exception of one Hispanic performer who wears "white face" in his role as an "Indian," and that the opera, quite unconventionally, is sung in English.³ Advertisements for Beck's (known as a quintessentially German beer) and Marlboro cigarettes (which feature the iconic American cowboy in its advertising) hang from the ceiling during most of the show. In addition, a group of "Indians" are dressed as butlers or hand servants, a plump man

¹ Hans Zender, "The Self and Other: Thoughts on my opera *Chief Joseph*," ("Das Eigene und das Fremde: Gedanken zu meiner Oper *Chief Joseph*"), Unpaginated summary from "Symposium on Music and Globalization," January 16-17, 2007, University of Music and Dramatic Art, Graz, Austria.

² Ibid.

³ Jared von Hindman, "Chief Joseph," www.headinjurytheater.com/operaart2.html, 2005.

(whose costume and mannerisms conflate stereotypes of American and Nazi soldiers) threatens to drop a bomb on the Japanese, a group of “American” tourists form the “chorus,” and a dumpster serves as gateway from which people come and go throughout the opera. Hindman describes this drama as noisy and confusing at times, but recognizes within it an emotional mix of guilt and accusation, atonement and deflection, attitudes variously expressed in the works of artists examined in this study.

Zender’s *Chief Joseph* is a recent manifestation of a long history of German interest in the American West, particularly the “Wild West.” The Wild West is generally understood to be the geographic area of the American West that was beyond the settled states during the years following the Civil War until the closing of the frontier (thus 1860-1893). The frontier’s border roughly corresponds to the present-day states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas and it moved westward to the Pacific Ocean. The original impulse for German fascination with the Indians who occupied this expansive territory was propelled by a curiosity for the exotic, but by the end of the nineteenth-century, adventure and a desire for freedom from the restrictions of a structured German society motivated a large segment of the population either to immigrate to the United States or live vicariously through inexpensive and abundant fictional accounts and stories. This escapism was fortified in academic and artistic circles by a philosophical backlash to the increasing industrialization, modernization and urbanization of the German state. Embracing nature, this new vision for a more ideal life valued authentic expression and spiritual harmony. In the early twentieth century, the inclination to venerate the “natural,” which could be embodied in the Native American,

was most visible in Germany in the “primitivist” expressions of artists involved in Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter.

The term Primitivism generally recognizes the influence of ethnographic objects on artistic practice, but it is problematic designation. Much of the recent debate about Primitivism was motivated by a 1984 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, *Primitivism in the 20th Century: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, organized by William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe. Rubin, who sought to update ideas on modernist primitivism found in Robert Goldwater’s *Primitivism in Modern Painting* (1938), argued for a universal language that speaks to all artists of all places. He ignored the specific function and significance of the tribal objects included in the show, choosing instead to privilege formal and aesthetic concerns. Many scholars found Rubin’s presumptive restructuring archaic and racist, seeing it as a continuation of aggressive, colonialist policies that re-claim and recontextualize non-European and outsider work. While primitivism continues to be a sticky term, I use it to denote an artistic practice that embodies stylistic assimilation, attempts to re-instate meaning and connect to a spiritual or emotional source, expresses adventure and novelty, and/or serves as a methodology for critique.

The reasons artists appropriated forms and symbols from non-Western art vary, but the decision to use such source material is often predicated on a desire to get outside one’s own culture—whether for novelty or critique. Primitivism, therefore, can assume a “mirror-like”⁴ quality which reflects current societal needs. To paraphrase Marianna Torgovnick: if the present is too materialistic, sexually repressed or overly permissive,

⁴A descriptive term used by Jack Flam in his introduction to *Primitivism and Twentieth Century Art: A Documentary History*, Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch, editors (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), p. 8.

then a primitive culture offers the antidote of difference, providing solutions to each issue through a presumed life of simplicity that lacks pretension and self-consciousness, but offers necessary limitations.⁵ Thus German artists in the first decade of the new century, like many other artists in the larger European community reacting to modern transformations, treated tribal arts as a bridge to a pre-capitalist utopia, an imaginary Paradise. The “primitive” artist was understood to be an exotic Other, seductive but dissimilar.⁶

After the loss of two world wars and the devastation of the Holocaust, the nature of German identification with the primitive Other, in the form of the Native American, changed. Guilt, loss, and collective shame merged with a defensive sense of victimization in the German psyche. This affinity allowed for a platform from which Germans could speak out against American hegemony and deflect guilt about the decimation of their Jewish population by pointing to the deplorable treatment of Native Americans by the United States government. Despite this familial status, however, the image of the Indian remained relatively one-dimensional, marked by nostalgia, romance and fantasy in the German mind.⁷ It is the goal of this study to examine German self-identification with the Indian Other, and to discover whether this recognition of similarity alters German engagement with Primitivism, a methodology that is traditionally premised on difference. I hope to accomplish this by looking at selected works by a group of German artists that span the twentieth century: Emil Nolde, August Macke, Rudolf

⁵ Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 8-9.

⁶ The general nature of this definition is made in full awareness of the problems inherent in this term.

⁷ See Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden, Suzanne Zantop, editors, *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002) for various viewpoints on this idea.

Schlichter, Max Ernst, Joseph Beuys, Sigmar Polke and Lothar Baumgarten. Each of these artists represents a particular time and attitude and thus serves as a case study, articulating a larger phenomenon in German art in the twentieth century.⁸ Not only allowing for the particularities of each period, this selection enables subtle differences to emerge. The Indian-related paintings by Macke and Nolde, who maintained a pre-World War I belief in an idyllic Indian, differ from the post-World War I work of Schlichter, yet even between them there are distinctions. Ernst, whose work is characterized by post-World War I Dadaism and pre-World War II Surrealism, serves to illustrate an evolving attitude toward Primitivism that presupposes a more informed understanding of the function and ritual value of ethnographic objects. Prefiguring Beuys' attraction to shamanism, Ernst's interests also allow for comparisons to be made between these two major figures and their mutual reliance on ideas of transformation and identity. Beuys is the quintessential post-World War II German artist, whose influence was, and still is, seen in a more recent generation, exemplified in this study by Sigmar Polke and Lothar Baumgarten who represent Native Americans in different, but equally challenging ways. Discussing multiple paintings, objects or installations by each artist is a necessary strategy in order to emphasize the repeated use of Native American imagery and/or to appreciate fully the artist's history and motivations. Therefore, though I may occasionally solidify a particular argument around a single work, I also plan to refer to additional work by that artist or others in his milieu. Biographical information will be cited only if it is deemed relevant to understanding an artist's environment and

⁸ Among the German artists who produced Indian-related imagery and therefore could have been included in this study are: Max Pechstein (1881-1955), Willi Baumeister (1889-1955), Otto Dix (1891-1969), George Grosz (1893-1959), A.R. Penck (1939-present), Jörg Immendorff (1945-2007), Rosemarie Trockel (1952-present), Max Becher (1964-present).

perspective. Through this examination I hope to go beyond the identification of a recognizable trend in German art, which was my initial attraction to this material (a leftover preoccupation from my work as a curator), and explore questions regarding the construction of the German self-image through an artistic engagement with the Native American ‘Other.’

Only two of the artists in this study have previously been contextualized in terms of Cowboy and Indian imagery: Rudolf Schlichter and Max Ernst. Beeke Sell Tower wrote about George Grosz, Otto Dix and Rudolf Schlichter’s interest in American iconography in the catalogue, *Envisioning America: Prints, Drawings and Photographs by George Grosz and his Contemporaries, 1915-1933* that accompanied an exhibition at the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard in 1990. Her examination, which included references to both western and urban landscapes, was very helpful in evaluating the link between Schlichter, Karl May and film. This relationship was further illuminated by Christopher Frayling’s book, *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone* (1981/1998).

Though there is abundant information on the Surrealist’s interest in ethnographic material, there are only two instances in which Max Ernst is considered in light of his experiences living in the American West. One is a short essay by Sigrid Metken, “‘Ten Thousand Redskins’: Max Ernst and the North American Indians,” included in the substantial catalogue for the Tate Gallery’s retrospective of Ernst’s work in 1991. The other is Samantha Kavky’s research on Ernst that she presented at the 2006 conference, “Surrealism and The American West” at Arizona State University in Tempe. In her unpublished talk, “Mimesis and Metamorphosis in the Arizona Landscapes of Max

Ernst and Dorothea Tanning,” Kavky advances a theory that relates Ernst’s decalomania miniatures to the writings of Roger Callois. Though I attempted to contact her several times and exchanged emails with the conference organizer in November 2006, Kavky never responded, but the ideas contained in her abstract, and passages from her dissertation, “Authoring the Unconscious: Freudian Structures in the Art of Max Ernst,” (2001) were enlightening.

Joseph Beuys characterized his decision to use a coyote in his first performance work in America in 1974 as an attempt to address the “American trauma with the Indian,” yet no one has explored this association in depth until very recently. In addition to my investigation, Eugen Blume’s essay, “Joseph Beuys’ “I like America and America likes Me,” included in the catalogue for the exhibition *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West* (2006), is unique in its focus, although his interpretation of this important *aktion* is premised on Beuys’ affinity for the founder of anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner. This text was published only a month before I submitted the first full draft of my dissertation and in no way impacted my research, though it added some useful details. In my thinking about Beuys’ practice, I was encouraged by Stephen Polcari’s *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* (1991) and Thomas McEvelley’s article, “Art in the Dark,”(1983) to explore how the artist may have been influenced by James G. Frazer’s ideas about scapegoats and farce. Further, Jörg Immendorff’s comments about his mentor’s overlooked humor and Gerhard Theewen’s article, “Beuys und der Humor: oder darf ein Künstler (über sich selbst),” (1992) strengthened my belief in the possibility that Beuys was somewhat more subversive and mischievous than is normally understood and reported.

The fact that Sigmar Polke repeatedly utilized Native American imagery over the years has not been recognized. Aspects of drug-oriented shamanic ritual and his flirtation with alchemy have been briefly noted by writers ranging from art critic Peter Schjeldahl to the German anthropologist Michael Oppitz (both, incidentally, represented in the catalogue for Polke's 1990 exhibition organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art). And although he directly confronted/affronted Texas audiences with his 2003 exhibition "The History of Everything," most of the commentary on this body of work was concerned with gun control and vigilantism rather than the nostalgic appeal of cowboys and Indians. Paul Schimmel, writing in an exhibition catalogue for Polke's photographic work, devotes three paragraphs to the artist's *Untitled (Fly Agaric)* series of manipulated photographs from 1975 which feature ethnographic photographs of Plains Indians worshipping a giant mushroom. But even in this brief reference, the emphasis is on the hallucinogens rather than the Native Americans.

There is simply not that much written material on Baumgarten, and he fiercely guards his privacy. Interpretation of his two major projects in the United States to date, *Carbon* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (1990) and *AMERICA, Invention* at the Guggenheim Museum (1993), exists primarily in short reviews. In both cases, the artist was heavily involved in the design of the exhibition catalogue, which has resulted in more of an artist's book than a critical tool for deciphering the work. Fortunately, Baumgarten chose to include essays by Hal Foster and Craig Owens in *AMERICA, Invention*, and these became central to my initial understanding of his work. Anne Rorimer's discussion of *The Tongue of the Cherokee* (a 1988 installation at the

Carnegie Museum of Art) included in *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn* was equally valuable.

Europeans have expressed an interest in America and its native inhabitants since their exploratory voyages brought them to this continent. Over the past few centuries, this has been revealed in literature, visual arts, music, politics and popular culture. More recently, the accumulation of this material expression has begun to be studied in academic circles. Ray Allen Billington was among the first historians to explore European fascination with the American frontier. Believing Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis that American identity (rugged individuality) was forged in the Wild West, his book *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier* (1981) forms a compendium of sources that delve into European interpretation of American imagery and character. He refers to his effort as a "pilot study," which, at the time, it was. In Germany, Christian Feest was tackling similar subject matter. His 1976 book, *Das rote Amerika—Nordamerikas Indianer*, was the beginning of a career that would lead him to become a major scholar. He notes that it was at a 1980 meeting of the European Association of American Studies that a "number of European students of the Indianist field first discovered their mutual existence," and thus initiated an upsurge of work in this area. Two books that were critical to my ability to grasp concepts related to the long history of Germans and Indians evolved from this communal effort and exchange over the past twenty-five years: *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections* (2002) edited by Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden and Suzanne Zantop, and Katrin Sieg's *Ethnic Drag: performing race, nation, sexuality in West Germany* (2002). Gemünden and Zantop, together with Lutz Koepnick and Eric

Santner have written on the intersection of German history and film, all texts which were important sources for my research.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Jill Lloyd for her remarkable book, *German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity*. And despite the controversy surrounding *Primitivism in the 20th Century: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe's catalogue contains a wealth of visual information. Finally, it is important to mention an exhibition that appeared at the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt in the fall of 2006, *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West*. Pamela Kort organized the show and produced the accompanying catalogue that provides an overview of German interest in the American West within a visual format. While the primary focus is on the nineteenth century, Kort does illustrate works by August Macke, Rudolf Schlichter, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Emil Nolde, Max Slevogt and Joseph Beuys. There is a dearth of written analysis on the twentieth-century work, with the exception of the previously cited discussion of Joseph Beuys by Eugen Blume. Sigmar Polke and Lothar Baumgarten are not mentioned. Kort's effort clearly serves to underscore the importance of my topic, which is treated in much greater depth in this study.

CHAPTER ONE

INDIANERS AND THE WILDEN WESTEN

If you take a trip to Silver Lake City, a contemporary theme park that occupies the former site of an East German Communist Youth Camp near Berlin, you will be transported back in time and space to an American frontier mining town in the Old West. An Indian chief in full headdress will greet you with a friendly “Guten Tag” and suggest a visit to the Music Hall where a group of Indians from South Dakota will perform ritual dances. Native arts and crafts are for sale in the General Store. A similar Wild West theme park can be found outside Munich, and in a small town close to Dresden one can attend an annual costumed gathering of “Indians” and visit the home of Karl May, the nineteenth-century German author of western adventure stories that are still hugely popular. Bad Segeberg near Hamburg is the site of Germany’s largest Karl May festival and pageant, a spectacle that was inaugurated in 1938 and has continued to grow each year. All of these sights and many more, speak to an ingrained interest in the American West on the part of many Germans, old and young, past and present.

Eliciting fantasy, adventure, and romantic ideals of natural living, the American Indian¹ has been a long cherished symbol for the German people. In the nineteenth century, with German emigration to the United States, and the immense popularity of Karl May’s work, the utilization of Indian imagery increased in German books, films and advertising, a trend that easily survived the tumultuous first half of the twentieth century.

¹ In this dissertation I will use the generic terms “Native American” and “Indian” because, for the most part, this is how Germans have referred to America’s native population. Peter Bolz, in his introduction to *Native American Art: The Collections of the Ethnological Museum, Berlin* writes that Columbus coined the term “Indios” to describe the varied people of the New World and that it drifted into other European cultures as Indian, Indien, and for the Germans, Indianer, without ever becoming more highly differentiated

The spaghetti westerns of the 1960s, German support of the American Indian Movement beginning in the 1970s, and the rise of Indian fan clubs revived Karl May's work in the second half of the twentieth century, helping to sustain a German connection to all things Indian.

In beginning this study, it is important to first look more closely at why Germans were originally attracted to the American West. Examples of their initial nineteenth-century fascination can be found in art, popular forms of entertainment and literature. Chief among the artists who depicted the indigenous populations of America were George Catlin (1792-1872) and Karl Bodmer (1809-1893). Catlin was an American painter and writer who produced two major series of paintings on American Indians and published a series of books chronicling his travels among the native peoples of North, Central, and South America. Spurred by exposure to a group of Indians who visited the East Coast, he set out to record the environment, appearance and customs of America's native people (fig. 1). He began his travels in 1830, spending time in areas relatively untouched by European civilization: the Arkansas, Red, and Mississippi rivers as well as visits to Florida and the Great Lakes. He made over five hundred paintings that he assembled into his "Indian Gallery." He took this collection of paintings on tour to Europe in 1840² and published *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians* in 1841. By the end of his life, Catlin was considered to have made the most comprehensive record of the life of indigenous people

(p. 9). Exceptions include Karl May's labels of "good" Indians (Apaches) and "bad" Indians (Comanches), and designations used in ethnographic and anthropological studies and displays.

² Catlin's "Indian Gallery" was presented primarily in London, Paris and Brussels.

in North and South America during the period 1830–60.³ His devotion to the Indian cause seemed genuine, though it became suspect due to his extensive marketing of the work.⁴ *Die Indianer Nord Amerikas*, a German translation by Heinrich Berghaus of Catlin's book, was published in 1848. It was the main source of information on Native Americans in Germany for many years, and was so popular that it was reissued in 1851 and 1924. Significantly, Karl May owned a copy of *Die Indianer Nord Amerikas* and was said to be profoundly influenced by it.⁵ Impressed by the Catlin's work, the German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt called the artist "one of the most magnificent observers of customs who has ever lived among the Native Americans,"⁶ and helped convince King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia to buy ten of Catlin's paintings, which were donated to the Königl. Museen in Berlin in 1855.⁷

Like Catlin, the Swiss painter Karl Bodmer also marketed the work he produced on a scientific expedition to North America organized by the naturalist and ethnologist, Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied. As their party trekked up the Missouri River in 1833, Bodmer sketched the landscape and the Indians they encountered (fig. 2). After returning to Europe in 1834, Bodmer exhibited his watercolors there to large audiences. The journals from the expedition were published in German by

³ Peter Bolz, "Indian Images for the King: George Catlin in Europe," in Pamela Kort, Max Hollein, editors, *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West* (Munich, Berlin: Prestel, 2006), p. 69.

⁴ See Brian W. Dippie, "Green Fields and Red Men," in George Gurney, Therese Thau Heyman, eds., *George Catlin and His Indian Gallery* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2002), pp. 27-61 for a discussion of Catlin's entrepreneurial activities.

⁵ Bolz, p. 82, referencing information from Gabriele Wolff, "George Catlin: Die Indianer Nordamerikas; Das Material zum Traum," *Jahrbuch der Karl-May-Gesellschaft* (1985), pp. 348-363.

⁶ Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*, translated by E. C. Otté (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), p. 236.

⁷ Pamela Kort, "'The Unmastered Past of the Indians' Murder,'" in *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West*, p. 52. Among the paintings purchased were *Bison Hunt Disguised as Wolves* (1854), *Moose Hunt in Snowshoes* (c. 1854), *Prairie Camp of the Ojibwa* (1854), *Mandan Chief Mato-Tope with Wife and Son* (1854), *Blackfoot Indians* (1854), and *Crow Indian on Horseback* (1854).

Maximilian in 1839, accompanied by aquatints based on Bodmer's original work.⁸ *Travels to the Interior of North America* was widely regarded as one of the finest ethnographic records of nineteenth-century northern Plains Indian cultures.⁹ Although their work was less visible in Germany than the paintings, prints and book illustrations by Catlin and Bodmer, other German-speaking artists also documented the West in the middle and late nineteenth century, including Rudolph Kurz (1818-1871) who spent six years on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers sketching Indian life from 1846 to 1852; Carl Wimar (1828-1863), who specialized in painting scenes of the American frontier; Friedrich Richard Petri (1824-1857), who painted images of the Indians in his new home in Texas; and Aby Warburg (1866-1929), a Hamburg art historian who photographed Pueblo life and culture in the mid-1890s.¹⁰ During a 1895 visit to the United States, Warburg met with the anthropologist Franz Boas, the director of the Bureau of Ethnology, John Wesley Powell, and three Pueblo Indian experts, Frank Hamilton Cushing, J.W. Fewkes and James Mooney. He was encouraged by these men to pursue

⁸ Martha A. Sandweiss, *Pictures from an Expedition: Early Views of the American West*, exhib. cat. (New Haven, CT: The Yale Center for American Art and Material Culture, 1978), p.5.

⁹ Colin G. Calloway, "Historical Encounters across Five Centuries," in Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden and Suzanne Zantop, eds., *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 65.

¹⁰ Kurz kept the drawings and observations from his travels in a journal, excerpts of which were published in English by the Smithsonian in 1927 and in *Bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 115 (1937). The original manuscript is in the collection of the Historical Museum in Bern, Switzerland. Carl Wimar was born in Germany but immigrated to St. Louis, Missouri in 1843, returning to Europe in 1852 to study with Emanuel Leutze at the Düsseldorf Academy. There he produced historical works that pitted Native Americans against pioneers as well as illustrative paintings from James Fenimore Cooper adventures and other popular novels. Upon returning to the U.S., he made two trips up the Missouri River in 1858 and 1859. The drawings and photographs from these expeditions were the basis of his work until his early death in 1863. Petri was trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden, but immigrated with his family to Texas in 1850 where he painted the western landscape and portraits of local Indians. Warburg presented slide lectures from his trip in Hamburg and Berlin after his return from the United States (at the Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Amateur-Photographie in Hamburg [January 21, 1897]; the American Club in Hamburg [February 10, 1897]; and the Freie photographische Vereinigung in Berlin [March 16, 1897]). Warburg's photographs were added to a collection that was later transformed by a fellow professor at the University of Hamburg into the Kultur-wissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg. Eventually, this material was incorporated into the Warburg Institute at the University of London.

his childhood passion for Indians and journey to New Mexico and Arizona to study Pueblo culture. He carried with him Kodak's new box camera with which he documented the southwestern landscape and its inhabitants.¹¹ When Warburg returned to Europe in May 1896 he had hundreds of photographs and a collection of Indian artifacts and handicrafts. A group of these objects, including a selection of Hopi and Zuni kachinas, was donated to the Hamburg Museum in 1901 and put on display soon thereafter. It is there that Emil Nolde may have first seen examples of the Native American "dolls" that would populate his later paintings.

At the same time these artists were documenting the Western landscape, expositions and world fairs began to offer glimpses of Native Americans in displays, performances and the presentation of objects of material culture. The public was eager to see exotic people and their possessions, making this form of "educational" entertainment hugely popular. Variations of these shows, called *Völkerschauen* by the Germans, were endlessly in development.¹² Among the spectacles common during the nineteenth-century were circular panoramas, theatrical tableaux, tableaux vivants, taxidermy, and wax works. Combining popular culture, scientific investigation, and imperialist agendas, the fields of ethnography¹³ and anthropology came of age.

By the late nineteenth century, museums were being established to house ethnographic material that was accumulating from royal and private collections (previously classified as curiosity cabinets), expeditions, and outright theft. Museum professionals, ethnologists, and anthropologists who emerged with these institutions

¹¹ Pamela Kort, "The Unmastered Past of Indians' Murder," *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West* (Munich: Prestel, 2006), pp. 57-58.

¹² Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 4.

borrowed ideas for display from the new phenomenon of department stores, such as the Bon Marché in Paris. With an emphasis on natural light provided by numerous windows perforating exterior walls and the walls separating the galleries from inner courtyards (as seen, for example, in the Berlin Ethnographic Museum of 1873), the new museums also utilized glass exhibition cases¹⁴ and studied crowd control to prevent “the spectator’s tendencies to meander through the exhibit in an aimless and disengaged fashion.”¹⁵ The idea that individuals can be understood through the objects they make, own or desire to possess, became central to the organization of both museums and department stores, which evolved simultaneously. The Berlin Ethnographic Museum was initially arranged geographically until the turn of the century when, as acquisitions multiplied and display cabinets were added, this organizational order was compromised.¹⁶ The Pitts River Museum in Oxford, England, examined in the chapter on Lothar Baumgarten, offered another approach to organizing ethnographic material during this era. It arranged objects according to type. Thus, musical instruments, weapons, masks, textiles, jewelry, or various tools were displayed in groups, ostensibly to show how similar concerns had been addressed at different times by different peoples.

Regardless of methodological approach, the establishment of these museums democratized access to cultural objects in order to achieve the moral imperative of education and a desire to improve the common viewer. The Museum of Natural History, established in New York City in 1869 as a philanthropic institution, was intended to

¹³ Today, the field of ethnography has lost credibility as a social science, unlike anthropology.

¹⁴ Zimmerman, pp. 178-181.

¹⁵ Alison Griffiths, *Wonderous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology and Turn of the Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 16.

¹⁶ H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 186.

provide visitors with a civilizing experience and to divert them from vaudeville houses, nickelodeons, and amusement parks.¹⁷ In Germany, institutions such as the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin worked to distinguish themselves from the *Volkerschauen* from which they were partially derived (fig. 3). What began as low-culture entertainment evolved into high-culture edification.

German ethnographers traveled the world collecting items for German museums. Prominent among them were Aurel Krause (1848-1908) and Franz Boas (1858-1942). Krause and his brother Arthur focused on the Tlingit Indians and it was their research, *The Tlingit Indians: Results of a Trip to the Northwest Coast of America and the Bering Straits* published in Germany in 1885, that became a standard reference work for generations of scholars.¹⁸ Boas's first ethnographic expedition, in 1883-4, was to the Inuit of Baffinland and resulted in the monograph *The Central Eskimo* (1888).¹⁹ As an indication of the deep interest in Indians among the German reading public, this trip was financed, in part, by the newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt*, which ran frequent accounts of his progress. After studying the Bella Coola Indians in British Columbia, Boas immigrated to the United States, eventually becoming a professor of anthropology at Columbia University.

In addition to this late nineteenth-century institutional trend of ethnographic collection and display, the public had access to traveling shows with cowboys and "wild" Indians. William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) (1846-1917) organized one of the first such spectacles. His "Wild West Show" originated in St. Louis, Missouri in 1883 and offered

¹⁷ Griffiths, p. 6.

¹⁸ Calloway, "Historical Encounters across Five Centuries," in Calloway, Gemünden, Zantop, p. 67.

¹⁹ Franz Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of [American] Ethnology* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888).

a stagecoach robbery, riding and shooting contests, gunfights, and howling Indians. After a few years of touring the United States, the troupe packed up its 240 performers, assorted buffalo, steers and horses and went to London where it was immediately a huge success. In a sporting arena transformed by painted western backdrops, Pony Express riders were attacked by Indian warriors and stagecoaches were robbed. Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley entertained the crowds with expert marksmanship. As a grand finale, the performers staged a battle touted as a re-enactment of Custer's Last Stand.

From England the troupe went home, then returned to Paris to participate in the 1889 Universal Exposition. From Paris they began a tour of Europe, playing to delighted audiences in Spain, Italy, Belgium and Germany (fig. 4). The success of the Wild West Show spawned imitators. Among the first was Dr. W. F. Carver (1840-1927), who with twenty-five Indians, toured Europe in 1889. By the turn of the century, more than forty companies entertained the continent. As Ray Allen Billington writes, "The American cowboy was better known in Europe at the century's end than the president of the United States."²⁰

German entrepreneurs, like Hamburg zoo owner Carl Hagenbeck (1844-1913) and circus director Hans-Stosch Sarrasani (1873-1934), opened their own shows, putting a German twist on Wild West entertainment.²¹ Hagenbeck built one of the first "modern" zoos in Europe (fig. 5). The Hamburg-Stellingen zoological garden, which still exists, made an attempt to create natural environments for the captive animals. Large areas were left open for cultural, military and equestrian displays, and exhibits often were peopled

²⁰ Ray Allen Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), pp. 48-51.

²¹ Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: performing race, nation, sexuality in West Germany*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), p. 125.

with natives in artificial habitats. In Germany, exhibiting people from German colonies was outlawed in 1901, but that didn't prevent large-scale installations of American Indians. One of the most successful shows that Hagenbeck organized was in 1910, when he brought forty-two Oglala Sioux and ten cowboys to the zoo. The Sioux lived in an Indian village of teepees that was fenced off but still visible to visitors. Performances were offered at regular intervals. These shows mixed Indian cultural artifacts with pitched battles between white settlers and the Indian warriors. Historian Katrin Sieg states that by 1910, "impresarios and performers had perfected the combination of outdoor mise-en-scene and trained cast that created a perfect feedback loop between ethnological truth and 'childhood dreams,' confirming the spectator's belief in the authenticity of fabricated characters and scenarios."²² Hagenbeck emphasized ethnological correctness, working with scientists and historians to create a sense of accuracy. In addition to the collections of objects that were often donated to German museums, ethnic show participants were commonly used as subjects for building anthropometric databases. The development of ethnology and anthropology as academic disciplines was closely connected to the history of the ethnic show in Germany, creating "the scientific foundation [for] the 'reality' portrayed."²³ Eventual replacement of real Indians with German impersonators cut the costs of travel, training and supervision. It also closed the communication gap, allowing the German-speaking audience to follow the entire story. Just like May's Indian hero, Winnetou, these new "Indians" spoke German.

²² Sieg, *Ethnic Drag*, p. 126.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

Hans Stosch-Sarrasani was the impresario of the Circus Sarrasani which traveled throughout Europe in the early years of the twentieth century (fig. 6). With a huge cast and a tent that was advertised as big enough for thousands of spectators, the circus was a popular success. In 1912 Sarrasani opened the largest permanent circus of all time in a building in Dresden that featured an elevated, revolving and electrically-lit stage.²⁴ The Sioux Indians he employed for his Wild West shows were often invited to perform at the Karl May Museum at Villa Shatterhand, in nearby Radebeul.²⁵

In addition to popular attractions that entertained audiences, many Germans sought detailed information about the New World to which their friends and family members were moving. The printed word was highly valued because, as Billington notes, “[Germans] were eager for every crumb of information about [America], and particularly of the frontiers where virgin communities were forming and men shaped their own destinies.”²⁶ He cites the German waves of immigration to the United States as central to the interest in the New World. One hundred thousand German-speaking people migrated to America prior to 1800. Most were Protestants lured by promises of free land, low taxes, and religious tolerance, and most landed in Philadelphia. By 1776, Pennsylvania was close to one-third German, and the British colonies were approximately ten percent German. Another four million Germans immigrated between 1848 and 1914, and by 1900, German-speaking people constituted ten percent of America's total population.²⁷

²⁴Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 115.

²⁵ Karl Markus Kreis, “German Wild West: Karl May’s Invention of the Definitive Indian,” in Kort, p. 267.

²⁶ Billington, p. 34.

²⁷ Calloway, “Historical Encounters across Five Centuries,” in Calloway, *Gemünden, Zantop* pp. 47-48.

Novelists, immigrants writing home, and promoters distributing brochures and pamphlets were the creators of the desired information about the Wild West. The novelist was the most important writer to shape perceptions of the American West, and "the least restrained by actuality,"²⁸ weaving fact and fiction in equal parts. Helping meet the demand for western fiction was the spread of literacy, technological advances that rendered printed material inexpensive and easy to mass produce, and an increase in leisure time.

The American writer James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) is credited with beginning the trend of western adventure stories. Written in English during the first half of the nineteenth century, his work was immediately translated into German, among other languages. After the publication of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* (*The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826; *The Prairie*, 1827; *The Pathfinder*, 1840; *The Deerslayer*, 1841), German printers rushed to make these works available. Cooper's novels were perceived as highly realistic. One German reviewer wrote, "Never has an author presented the natural scene with such... fidelity. Everything is action, character, poetry. He is incomparable when he describes the speech of the Indians and life in the wilderness...."²⁹ I will show that this naiveté was to remain a part of many German's understanding of the American West.

European authors were quick to follow Cooper's lead and utilize the metaphorical, as well as escapist, possibilities inherent in setting their stories in the untamed West. Charles Sealsfield (1793-1864), Friedrich Gerstaecker (1816-1872), Otto Ruppert (1819-1864), Balduin Mollhausen (1825-1905), Friedrich Armand Strubberg

²⁸ Billington, p. 30.

(1806-1889), and most significantly, Karl May (1842-1912), were among the European "Coopers" writing in German. They featured Teutonic heroes and a variety of Indian counterparts who ranged from "noble" to "savage." Eager readers were able to take advantage of an installation plan, the "colporteur system," which allowed for a low-cost product. The first chapter of a book would be given away or sold at a very small price to induce the purchase of later chapters that, while still affordable, were slightly more expensive. Approximately ninety percent of the German population was able to buy books under this plan.³⁰ Karl May's work was among the most popular of this serialized pulp fiction.

Karl May was born in 1842, the fifth of seven children of a Saxon weaver and mid-wife. He was often ill as a child, even suffering a period of complete blindness. He read when he could, favoring adventure stories such as *Rinaldo Rinaldini: The Robber Captain* (1797) by Christian August Vulpius.³¹ After graduating from school he became involved in a scam—the fraudulent sale of medicines—that landed him in Zwickau prison for five years. Six months after his release, he was again jailed for impersonating a government official (police officer or civil servant--reports differ). It was in the well-stocked prison library that he began to read the work of Cooper and other writers of the American West, and to write. Shortly after his release he found publishers who were interested in his work, and his life as a novelist began in earnest. May encouraged the perception that he was Old Shatterhand, the Teutonic hero of his popular *Winnetou*

²⁹ Unattributed quote from Harvey W. Hewett-Thayer, *American Literature As Viewed in Germany 1818-1861* (Chapel Hill, 1958), p. 24. Appears in Billington, p. 31.

³⁰ Billington, pp. 47-48.

³¹ Richard H. Cracroft, "The American West of Karl May," *American Quarterly* Vol. 19, No. 2, Part 1 (Summer 1967): 250. Cracroft does not mention the author of *Rinaldo Rinaldini* and he spells Rinaldini incorrectly, replacing the final "i" with an "e."

series, by claiming to have wandered the frontier in earlier years (fig. 7). It was later revealed that he did not actually travel to the United States until 1908, but his deceit did little to dampen public enthusiasm for his work.³²

Harmut Lutz asserts that the central trope of May's western novels is the German ideal of advancement and progress--*Wiedergutmachung* (to restore goodness). Only the noble German, a superior being in every way, could help the doomed Indian who struggled against the inevitable encroachments of a more highly developed civilization. In May's work the death of the Indian way of life was presented as something over which to grieve, but also as an event that was unavoidable, a natural consequence of advancement.³³ This sentiment encouraged a romanticized reading of the Indian. In effect, the Native American acted as a nagging conscience, a reminder of a simpler life circumscribed by nature.

May's idea of progress follows what Lutz describes as a "colonialist myth." According to Lutz, this fiction perpetuates the idea that those who are being colonized welcome the colonizer, voluntarily accepting colonial rule "based on a recognition of and love for the colonizer's cultural, intellectual, moral and even physical superiority."³⁴ Old Shatterhand and Winnetou act this out in spades. May shapes Winnetou as Old Shatterhand's tribal brother, a Europeanized (and therefore "good") Indian who recognized the German man's inherent power and understanding. May writes the following exchange between Old Shatterhand and Winnetou:

³² Christopher Frayling, *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone* (London and New York: L.B. Tauris Publishers, revised edition 1998), pp. 103-104.

³³ Sieg, p. 113.

³⁴ Harmut Lutz, "German Indianthusiasm: A Socially Constructed German National(ist) Myth," in Calloway, *Gemünden, Zantop*, p. 176.

Old Shatterhand: “Who do you think is stronger and wiser, the red man or the white man?”

Winnetou: “The pale-face. I say this because it is true. They have more knowledge and skill than we, and surpass us in every way.”

Old Shatterhand: “That is so. We do surpass the Indian, but you are not an ordinary Indian. The Great Spirit has given you gifts rarely found among the pale-faces...”³⁵

In casting Indians as brothers and as wonderful, exemplary people who love Germans, May’s colonialist myth also propagated the myth of hereditary German greatness. Lutz, then, believes that one function of the German enthusiasm for Indians (*Indianertumelei*) was self-aggrandizement.³⁶

Susanne Zantrop observes that a passion for Indians existed in other European countries besides Germany. Jean-Francois Marmontel's eighteenth-century novel *Les Incas* (1777) and Francois-René Chateaubriand's early nineteenth-century story *Atala ou les amours de deux sauvages dans le désert* (1801) led to sentimental identifications with the plight of Indians all over Europe.³⁷ By the mid-nineteenth century, Indian characters in novels were depicted with more realism, but elicited equally enthusiastic support. Billington cites a number of writers in addition to Cooper whose work intensified European interest in, sympathy with, and curiosity about Native Americans, including Gustave Aimard (1818-1883) who penned such popular novels as *Les Trappeurs de l'Arkansas* and *Le Grand Chef des Aucas* (both 1858); and Thomas Mayne Reid (1818-1883), an English author who was considered the “Giant of the Westerns.”³⁸ Despite this general European attention, Germans continued to assert that Native Americans had a particular resonance for their culture. Historian Christian Feest, though he wavers on the

³⁵ Karl May, translated by Marion Ames Taggart, *Winnetou: The Treasure of Nugget Mountain* (Goodyear, Arizona: Diggory Press, 2007), p. 24.

³⁶ Lutz, p. 179.

³⁷ Zantrop, p. 4.

absoluteness of such a claim, points to the amount of scholarship and critical reflection on the phenomenon of German interest in Indians as an indicator of the historical significance of this relationship.³⁹

The “specialness” of this connection is traced by historian Hartmut Lutz to a late nineteenth-century desire to define a German identity. Germany did not become a nation state until after the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. The territory that marks modern Germany was previously constituted by small states and principalities, and independent townships--*Kleinstaaterei*. The French Revolution had spurred German intellectuals to lobby for a united German state. It also initiated a search for a German identity based on a shared culture, language, lineage, and history.⁴⁰ Lutz asserts that two historical texts were proposed to serve as foundational to the new state: *Germania* (A.D. 98) by Publius Cornelius Tacitus and the *Nibelungenlied*, the Middle High German saga of Siegfried the Dragonslayer. According to him, these narratives "not only fabricated a German 'tribal' ethnicity, but prepared the ground for German-Indian identification."⁴¹

Tacitus located German origins in the Teutonic tribes, rather than in the ancient, and purportedly decadent civilizations of Greece and Rome. The Teutons were led by Arminius whose blue eyes and reddish blonde hair, and traits of honesty, bravery, loyalty, fearlessness, and stoicism in the face of adversity were considered supremely Germanic. Tacitus described the Teutons as being free from the restraints of civilized society, close to nature, independent and honest, as well as cruel, inclined to overindulge in drinking and gambling, and prone to go berserk in battle. In short, as Lutz writes, "Tacitus

³⁸ Billington, pp. 29-57

³⁹ Christian Feest, “Germany’s Indians in a European Perspective,” in Calloway, *Gemünden, Zantop*, p. 37.

⁴⁰ Lutz, pp. 170-171.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

assigned to the Germanic tribesmen the dual stereotype of the noble yet bloodthirsty savage, a cliché that was consistently applied to groups outside Hellenism or Christianity."⁴² One only has to recall the opening battle scene in the film *Gladiator* to get a sense of the difference between the Germanic hordes and the Roman army. Notably, the same stereotype of the “noble yet bloodthirsty savage” was used by Romantics to describe the Nordic Viking and the American Indian.⁴³

But since *Germania* was written in Latin, it was *Nibelungenlied*, one of the few surviving texts in German, which was dubbed the missing foundation story. Siegfried's traits of loyalty, courage, reliability and self-restraint were qualities favored by the nineteenth-century German bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the story of Siegfried contains tragedy and betrayal, both of which were incorporated into the construction of the German nation's collective sense of fate.⁴⁴ This fate played out in a pair of twentieth-century wars that operated on a global stage. Germany lost both. As a result, victimization was added to the themes of tragedy and betrayal that had been planted as a part of the national identity. All three played a role in Germany's twentieth-century identification with the American Indian. A sense of inferiority, of being the underdog, allowed some Germans to equate themselves with the American Indian.⁴⁵ After World War II, when the atrocities of the Holocaust were made known to the world, America's treatment of its native populations became a point for deflecting the attention on Germany's recent history of tyranny. The Native American became a symbol for a tribal group of people who were systematically victimized by a capitalist society bent on

⁴² Lutz, pp. 170-171.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 172.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 174.

⁴⁵ Susanne Zantop, “Close Encounters: *Deutsche and Indianer*,” in Calloway, *Gemünden*, Zantop, pp. 4-5.

achieving domination. During this post-war period there was a proliferation of Indian fan clubs in both East and West Germany. Katrin Sieg suggests that these club participants appear “to have been impelled by a sense of victimization, national defeat, and emasculation” to address their feelings symbolically through the ritual of ethnic masquerade. They identified with Indians, who they felt were similarly oppressed by white Americans.⁴⁶

From 1949 until 1963, West Germany was governed by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and it was he who set the political course for the post-war state, which rigorously avoided a public reckoning with Nazi criminals, advocated amnesty for convicted Nazi criminals, and substituted financial compensation to the Jews in lieu of atonement. Most importantly, Adenauer's administration sought to reframe Germans as victims of injustice and foreign occupation, rather than the perpetrators and accomplices of racial crimes.⁴⁷ In East Germany, "Indianists" were encouraged by the socialist government to develop an understanding of Native Americans and a solidarity with them as emblems of anti-imperialist oppression and resistance.⁴⁸ As both East and West Germany attempted to situate themselves vis-à-vis the powerful capitalist/imperialist West, the argument supporting victimization was revitalized.⁴⁹

Lutz, in his quest to understand how the German fascination with the American Indian is related to anti-Semitism, aggression, ethnocentrism, or explicit racism cites research by Emory Stephen Bogardus and Robert Lewis that shows that the closer the

⁴⁶ Sieg, p. 120.

⁴⁷ Andrei S. Markovits, Beth Simone Noveck and Carolyn Höfig, “Jews in German society,” in Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried van der Will, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 98-99.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴⁹ Zantop, “Close Encounters: *Deutsche and Indianer*,” in Calloway, Gemünden, Zantop, pp. 4-5.

historical and geographical contacts between ethnic groups, the more likely they will have conflict, while the further the groups are removed from each other, the simpler it is for them to idealize each other. Therefore, it was easy for Germans to romanticize Indians who lived on another continent. In the process of "othering" ethnic groups Lutz observes a tendency to concentrate on "extremes of good and bad," thereby excluding a more realistic and familiar middle ground. Thus, the Other can be simultaneously romanticized and demonized and, as in the case of the Indian, both admired and displaced with less guilt.⁵⁰

The early twentieth-century connection to the Indian as one who lived in harmony with nature also survived the World Wars. Concurrent with the anti-Vietnam war movement in Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s was a rebirth of early twentieth-century *Lebensreform* practices. *Lebensreform* had introduced alternative lifestyles and a back-to-nature approach that anticipated a later generation of hippies who sought similar ideals. In this context, some Germans began to identify the American Indian as one who practiced a more ecologically aware and balanced life. One group of environmental activists from this period referred to themselves as *Stadtindianers*. They fought airport extensions, nuclear power plants and other initiatives they considered "evil." In a more radical display, a group of "Urban Indians" from the University of Göttinger released a statement expressing "clandestine joy" [*klammheimliche Freude*] over the killing of a public official by the Red Army Faction.⁵¹ This admission was called the "Mescalero Letter," which makes reference to the Mescalero Apaches of New Mexico. More

⁵⁰ Lutz, pp. 167-168.

⁵¹ Gerd Gemünden, *Framed Visions* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 118.

productively, the Green Party of Germany, of which Joseph Beuys was an early member, traces its origins to the student protest and the environmentalist movements of this period.

The primary explanations of Germany's intense identification with the American Indian (over and above that of other European nations) involved empathy—first, as a response to a fabricated sense of tribal brotherhood, and second, as a method of coping with repeated defeat. The questions that arise are: how has this attitude been manifested in German artistic representations of the Native American Other? How are Indian identities imagined? What do those visual constructions say about the artist and his environment? How were these images used? How did representations of Indians affect the perception and interpretation of the United States? Does the projected sense of shared victimization alter German artists' engagement with modernist and post-modernist ideas of the Primitive? These questions and other issues will be addressed in the following pages.

CHAPTER TWO

PRE-WAR ARCADIA VERSUS RUDOLF SCHLICHTER'S WILD WEST

At some point between 1916 and 1918, the German artist Rudolf Schlichter (1890-1955) produced a vibrant watercolor he titled *Wild West* (fig. 8). Packed from edge to edge with action, Indians in war paint attack each other with tomahawks, a papoose is separated from his mother and drops helplessly to the ground, and a white-hatted cowboy (who, oddly, also sports war paint) fires his pistol into the melee. They appear before an abstracted backdrop of greenery, a space that lacks depth and thus pushes them into the foreground. The battle in this painting echoed the struggles of World War I, a current conflict that pitted Germany against her closest neighbors. With the exception of the innocent swaddled baby and the falling squaw, everyone seems bent on destruction. Weapons are raised and ready, the gun has already loosed its missile, and evidence of previous blood-letting lies beneath their feet. This violent scene stands in sharp contrast to the peaceful landscapes depicted in paintings by Emil Nolde and August Macke from 1911. The Indians that people Macke's *Indians and Horses*, for example, are passive inhabitants of a bucolic setting (fig. 9). Premised on a then-prevalent belief in certain artistic circles that modern man had lost touch with his spiritual essence, both Nolde's and Macke's paintings utilized the Indian as a symbol for a return to a more idyllic and balanced life. This chapter will explore the simulated and ruthless constructs of the Indian Other in Schlichter's work in comparison to the pre-war Edenic Indian exemplified by Nolde and Macke.

Emil Nolde (1867-1956), who was affiliated with the artist's group Die Brücke (The Bridge) in 1906-07, renewed his association with its artists in 1911 at a time when

they were enthralled with primitive art. The abstract, colorful and exotic appearance of this foreign material held both visual and conceptual allure. The original members of Die Brücke, Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, were self-taught artists. Their 1906 manifesto, “Programm,” appealed for a faith in the future, the strength of youth, the value of immediacy and authenticity, and the rejection of traditional genres and established practices. They embraced the Nietzschean demand to avoid the “herd instinct,” to oppose the norm and create their own values. They fashioned a life that included summers in the countryside, often in the woods of Moritzburg, near Dresden, where they were able to strip off their clothes and commune with nature in a setting that was only a few miles from the small town of Radebeul where Karl May lived until his death in 1912.

May’s home, which was subsequently turned into a museum and continues to be a tourist destination today, may have been visited by the Bridge artists. It features unusual decorations, American Indian artifacts, Victorian furniture and the odd paintings of Sascha Schneider.¹ The “magpie” aesthetic of May’s home—where objects from many different periods and cultures were assembled—has been compared to the equally eclectic studios and homes of the Die Brücke artists.²

This multi-cultural approach to living was fed by their intense interest in non-European cultures. Influenced by what had recently become available for viewing in museum collections in Dresden and nearby Berlin, by philosophical trends, and an artistic inclination for novelty, they mimicked the imagined lives of the Red Indians of Karl

¹ Sascha Schneider was an Art Nouveau illustrator who designed several book covers for Karl May’s work. He became a close friend of the writer.

² Jill Lloyd, *German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 48.

May, as well as Somali dancers and Polynesian natives.³ Nolde's interest in ethnographic material probably began as early as 1906 when he was involved with a group of artists and scholars associated with the Folkwang Museum in Soest, a town in northwest Germany.⁴ In 1911, following the lead of artists Franz Marc and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Nolde began a series of drawings based on objects in the Berlin Ethnological Museum. Jill Lloyd suggests that Nolde's first series of sketches from the museum's collection were in pencil, and featured South American pots and jewelry. Later drawings in color recorded more figurative artifacts.⁵ It is from this second group of drawings that Nolde found the imagery for his two oil paintings, *Exotic Figures I* and *Exotic Figures II*, 1911 (figs. 10 and 11).

Exotic Figures I is a simple composition representing two Hopi kachinas and an animal figurine.⁶ The latter has been identified as a fetish, although the cultural source is unknown.⁷ Nolde based *Exotic Figures I* on drawings of a Nuvak-chin Mana Hopi doll

³ One can see this fascination with native American culture in paintings, prints and decorations made for public and private spaces. Examples include Ernst Kirchner's wall-sized installation for the Cologne Werkbund exhibition (1914) that depicted a stylized Indian smoking a peace pipe; Erich Heckel's drawing, *Boomerangs and Bows and Arrows* (1909); and Max Pechstein's lithographed invitation that featured a kneeling archer (1910).

⁴ Jill Lloyd, "Emil Nolde's drawings from the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin, and the 'Maskenstillleben 1-4,' 1914," *The Burlington Magazine* 127:987 (June 1985): 381.

⁵ Lloyd, p. 382.

⁶ The Hopi are a Pueblo people who have lived in northeastern Arizona for many centuries. One aspect of their religion is the Kachina Cult. Kachinas represent both objects and forces of nature. Hopi men don Kachina costumes and masks and participate in dances that are intended to invest them with Kachina power. The dancers are also the traditional makers of the small figurines (called kachinas) that are traditionally given to children as educational objects. Each kachina represents a particular spirit source, but in and of itself, is not invested with power. Helga Teiwes, *Kachina Dolls: The Art of Hopi Carvers* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1991), p. 12.

⁷ In *Emil Nolde und die Südsee* (Neukirchen/Munich: Stiftung Seebüll Ada und Emil Nolde and Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2001), Figure 33 (unpaginated section of book), *Exotic Figures I* is listed as *Exotische Figuren I (Fetische)*. This is the only place I have seen this addendum to the title used, but it is significant in that it verifies the identity of the third object in the painting as a fetish. In Zuni ceremonies, fetish figurines of domestic animals were believed to be used to cultivate prosperity. See Elise Clews Parson, "Increase by Magic: A Zuni Pattern," *American Anthropologist* 21 (July-Sept. 1919): 279-286. While it makes sense that a Native American fetish would be included with other Native American objects, Nolde commonly mixed and matched objects from different cultures. For instance, the cat figure in *Exotic*

and a Sotuknangu Hopi doll. The Nuvak-chin Mana kachina, known as the “Snow Maiden,” has black dots above her eyes that allude to the moist snow for which she prays. The Sotuknangu kachina is variously referred to as the “Heart of the Sky” and the “Master of the Universe” and is most often impersonated by a religious elder during ceremonial dances. Both of Nolde’s figures have a jaunty, vaguely animated tilt to them, and the cut-out nature of their shapes is reminiscent of children’s paper dolls. The animal stands behind the female figure and has a slant-cut eye that suggests a slightly mischievous, even evil, demeanor. *Exotic Figures II* depicts one kachina placed just off center and two grinning cats against a background that repeats part of the major form in bold shadow (possibly a suggestion of the reflection the object would make on the back wall of a glass case).⁸ One cat is completely seen from head to curling tail, the other is represented by just a grinning head (suggesting the disappearing Cheshire cat in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*). Cartoon-like in appearance, with large round eyes and a teeth-baring smile that art historian Donald Gordon describes as a “grimace,” the cats are documented in a 1911 drawing by Nolde as being from an African figurine (fig. 12).⁹

Both of these paintings by Nolde mix human(s) and animal(s), a grouping that, in *Exotic Figures I*, was characterized by Gordon as a “whimsical caricature of the bourgeois German family: the grim and stolid male, the female with decorative facial

Figures II is identified in a pencil drawing in *Emil Nolde und die Südsee* as an African object [Katze-Afrika], yet it appears with a North American kachina. After extensive visual research regarding the animal figure in *Exotic Figures I*, I found nothing that conclusively confirmed either the identity of the animal or the place of origin.

⁸ This visual connection was made by Dr. Janice Simon, and while I agree that it is a strong possibility, none of Nolde’s drawings from the museum (from which the paintings were made) include any indication of the environment in which the objects were found. Therefore this would have been a remembered detail rather than a documented one.

⁹ *Emil Nolde und die Südsee*, unpaginated section, catalogue number 18 Katze-Afrika.

ornament, and the domestic dachshund hugging the ground.”¹⁰ Gordon’s description is apt, as it reinforces a central belief held by the artist—the importance of family. Nolde was attracted to the Volkish ideology that gained currency in Germany in the early twentieth century. Adopting the Romantic concept of a bond between man and nature, in particular the German character and the German landscape, the common folk (*volk*) or peasants epitomized Volkish ideals in their perceived simple life in harmony with the land. The emphasis on pre-industrial, agrarian modes of living and a spiritual connection to the soil was combined with a sense that the insular family offered protection from the decline of modern society.¹¹ The importance of the family is visibly represented in several paintings by the artist from this period, including *Man, Fish and Wife* (1912) and *Man, Wife and Animal* (1912) (figs. 13 and 14).¹² In these works Nolde emphasized the significance of a traditional social unit by coupling male and female figurines from the museum’s collection, and giving each pair a “pet.” The careful arrangement of these small collectibles echoes the games little girls play when they “mother” their baby doll, or assign each toy a familial role in imitation of the grown-up world. In fact, it is probable that Nolde identified the kachinas as “dolls.” Paul Ehrenreich, with Karl von Steinen, provided the Berlin Ethnological Museum with twenty-six Hopi kachinas in 1899. Ehrenreich described the purchase of some of these objects in the following passage:

¹⁰ Donald E. Gordon, “German Expressionism,” *“Primitivism” in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), p. 381.

¹¹ William Bradley writes that Nolde’s artistic vision was shaped by Volkish thinkers. See William S. Bradley, *Emil Nolde and German Expressionism: A Prophet in his own Land* (Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1986, 1981), p. 85.

¹² In drawings made by Nolde, the Man and Wife in *Man, Fish and Wife* are identified as wooden figures from Yorubia, Nigeria (figures 1 and 11) and the Fish is labeled as African (figure 15). In *Man, Wife, Animal* the Animal and Wife are identified as African (figures 17 and 9) and the Man is described as a profile figure from the Throne of the Sultans, Cameroon (figure 12). *Emil Nolde und die Südsee*, unpaginated section.

On another round through the village [Oraibi], I procured some katshina-dolls (tihu), which was more trouble than I had expected. After all, they belong to the children, who do not part easily with their toys.¹³

This understanding of the kachina as a doll has been perpetuated by the museum, which still refers to the “kachina doll” in recent publications.¹⁴ The fact that Nolde had this perception reinforces the playfulness in his painted arrangements that recalls another Volkish ideal, *Kindlichkeit*, the cultivation of a childlike nature,¹⁵ for children were valued as being uninhibited, natural, pure, and spontaneous. For Nolde, children were magically connected to nature and spirituality and thus linked to the “primitive.”¹⁶ Nolde’s sympathy with the notion of *Kindlichkeit* is expressed in paintings such as *Wildly Dancing Children* and *Christ Among the Children*. Relatedly, the idea that the kachina was a child’s toy, or even a means of instructing children, would have had great appeal for him.

Nolde’s approach to composing *Exotic Figures I*, *Exotic Figures II*, *Man, Fish and Wife* and *Man, Wife and Animal* contrasts sharply with those seen in other German still life paintings of ethnographic objects from the same period. Although numerous examples exist, the following paintings by Die Brücke artists provide good comparisons: Karl Schmidt-Rottluff’s *Still Life with Negro Sculpture*, 1913 (fig. 15); Erich Heckel’s *Still Life with Mask*, 1912 (fig. 16); and Max Pechstein’s *Still Life in Gray*, 1913 (fig. 17).¹⁷ Each of these canvases offers variations on a traditional still life (inanimate objects arranged on a surface) and feature ethnographic objects: a “negro sculpture” and

¹³ Peter Bolz and Hans-Ulrich Sanner, *Native American Art: The Collections of the Ethnological Museum Berlin* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), p. 116.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115 and elsewhere in book.

¹⁵ Bradley, p. 59.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁷ Similar still life arrangements can be found in work by artists living and working in other countries, for example: Henri Matisse, *Still Life with African Sculpture*, 1906-07, Max Weber, *Congo Statuette*, 1910 and Marsden Hartley, *Indian Pottery (Jar and Idol)*, 1912.

related objects in the Schmidt-Rottluff; a mask and basket in the Heckel; and a carved container in the Pechstein.¹⁸ Narrative or interhuman dynamics are not implied in these arrangements whose objects serve more to articulate the artist's interests at that point in time. The domestic setting implied in these paintings also suggests that these objects were possessions, selected by the artist for his own collection. Only the Schmidt-Rottluff could be seen as possibly recreating a museum display, but there is not enough visual evidence to confirm or deny that supposition. In contrast, Nolde's paintings are derived from the drawings he made in the museum and their appearance is quite different.

When Nolde made his drawings he was working in an environment that was described at the time as "crowded" and "unruly." By 1906, only twenty years after the occupation of a large new structure, the Berlin Ethnological Museum had run out of space for their rapidly growing collections. As a result, the original geographic arrangement of objects was disrupted. Glass cases were filled to capacity, making it difficult for viewers to make sense of what they were seeing.¹⁹ Yet Nolde was able to isolate certain objects and make simple, loose contour drawings in pencil and crayon on plain sheets of paper. No context is included, not even a simple horizon line to give spatial orientation. Instead, the forms float on the page. But when he used these same figurines in his paintings he gave them a place to stand, a dark floor against a lighter background. This simple compositional device changes the nature of how they can be read. No longer studies, they now occupy a "real" space. But rather than resembling still

¹⁸ The object holding the fruit in Pechstein's painting has been identified as a seat the artist carved after a Cameroon chief's stool he saw in the Berlin Ethnographic Museum. See Gordon, p. 388.

¹⁹ H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 186. The Director of the Field Museum in Chicago visited the Berlin Ethnological Museum in 1899 and observed that their collections were probably "the most complete in the world," but the "crowded conditions of the cases were a great hindrance to study."

life objects on a table, they anticipate the domestic combinations spelled out in the titles of *Man, Fish and Wife* and *Man, Wife and Animal*.

The animated nature of the kachinas in *Exotic Figures I*, which seem almost to vibrate with life, is matched in *Exotic Figures II* by the two wild-eyed cats. And despite the presence of stands supporting the figures in *Man, Fish, Wife* and the stiffness of the couple in *Man, Wife, Animal*, there is a definite sense of posed interaction (between the viewer and the figures in the first painting, and between the male and female in the second painting). In addition to the sense of engagement and pulsation of life that mark Nolde's paintings as different from the still lifes of Schmidt-Rottluff, Pechstein and Heckel, the scale of the objects in Nolde's work emphasizes their importance. His figures dominate their rectangular format, sitting close to the front edge and extending, in three cases, from top to bottom edge. This bold occupation of space helps link the figures to portraiture, a recognition that allows us to understand the underlying purpose of these four paintings. Rather than simply representing his interest in exotic objects, like his German colleagues, Nolde arranges the artifacts to express his Volkish beliefs—his attraction to the innocence of childhood, his faith in the centrality of the family, his search for vital energy, and the importance of a spiritual connection. In so doing, his primitive Other is tied to the German child or the German peasant, both of whom embody the soul of Volk.²⁰

In 1911, the same year that Nolde painted *Exotic Figures I* and *II*, August Macke (1887-1914) produced three paintings that depicted Native Americans: *Indians on Horses*, *Indians Riding Near a Tent*, and *Indians* (figs. 9, 18 and 19). *Indians on Horses* was one of three oils Macke contributed to the first Blaue Reiter (Blue Rider) exhibition

²⁰ Bradley, p. 4.

in 1911. It shows three Indians—two on horseback, one on foot carrying a standard or spear. All three have feathered headdresses which fall with their hair down their backs. The two bare-back riders wear long-sleeve shirts and dark pants with a wide white stripe that runs from waist to ankle. The walking figure turns to look at the riders behind and to the side of him. They occupy the foreground of a relatively shallow landscape that nevertheless holds an abstracted house, trees, and mountains. The painting visualizes harmony between men, their horses and their environment.

This unity is further expressed in symbolic pairings and numerical sequences, compositional devices Macke borrowed from his colleague in the Blue Rider group, Wassily Kandinsky.²¹ In *Indians and Horses* the number three is significant. For instance, there are three Indians and a tree on the left side of the painting has three large “leaves,” two on one side of the trunk, one on the other. There are two central tree-shapes (a possible male/female combination), one of which has nine leaves or three pairs of three. There are also three “rays of sun” that emanate from a dark disk on the top right side of the canvas. These triadic groupings refer to the power of three found, for example, in the Christian trinity of the father, the son, and the Holy Ghost. By overlaying more familiar Christian symbolism in this painting, Macke promoted his message of spiritual accord.

Indians and Horses is an illustration of paradise, idyllic and romanticized. Janice McCullagh claims that the iconography of the paradise myth is the central theme of Macke’s oeuvre and that his imagery evolves from the idea of Paradise as a thing of the past (a lost state to be longed for) to a contemporary vision of Eden that finds expression

²¹ Janice Mary McCullagh, “August Macke and the Vision of Paradise: An Iconographic Analysis,” (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1980), p. 52.

in urban scenes such as *Garden Restaurant*, 1912 and *Large Zoological Garden*, 1912. The earlier, more nostalgic sense of a perfect world can be seen in another of Macke's Indian paintings, simply titled *Indians*, 1911. In this tableau, three figures, two of which are clearly identifiable as Indians, fill the center of the canvas forming a triumvirate that is surrounded by opulent greenery and floral, garden-like elements. The three heads are so close to one another that they almost seem to merge, alluding once again to the Holy Trinity, but also to the three fates of ancient mythology.

Indians Riding near a Tent is the smallest of Macke's three Indian paintings, measuring only about 10 1/2 by 14 inches.²² The diminutive size and the hastiness of the paint application (evidenced in areas along the edges which were left untouched), suggests the possibility that Macke was sketching from life. Further, the landscape is relatively realistic in comparison to the carefully composed and abstracted forms in *Indians and Horses*. It seems likely that Macke actually observed a group of performing Indians, perhaps in a "zoological display"²³ or from a Wild West troupe such as Sarrasani's that was known to be touring around Germany in 1911.²⁴ If so, these Native Americans appear to be off-stage, as their movements are not visibly coordinated, but rather are languid and random. Attracted by the uniqueness of the event and its timely subject matter, Macke would have been equally drawn to this scene by the piebald horse

²²*Indians on Horseback* is approximately 18 x 24 inches and *Indians* is approximately 34 1/2 x 27 1/2 inches.

²³ Macke depicted zoological displays in paintings from this same time period, for example, *Large Zoological Garden* (1912). Zoos from this period often created exhibits with natives of non-Western cultures. Carl Hagenbeck's Hamburg-Stellingen Zoological Garden featured such displays, as well as the Berlin Zoological Garden.

²⁴ Karl Marcus Kreis notes that Sarrasani's show was touring Germany in 1911 in "Indians Playing, Indians Praying: Native Americans in Wild West Shows and Catholic Missions," in Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden and Susanne Zantop, editors, *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 195.

in the foreground and the pictographs on the tent, both of which are associated with Kandinsky and The Blue Rider group.²⁵

Each of these three Indian-related paintings by Macke is formally quite different: *Indians on Horses* is a carefully constructed landscape peopled with small Indian figures; *Indians* is a tightly composed close-up view of three Indians surrounded by dense vegetation; and *Indians Riding near a Tent* appears to be an observational plein air painting. Yet what is similar in this work, besides the subject matter, is the focus on bucolic synchronicity. Macke's Indian Other is a man of peace, living in harmony with his environment.

This privileging of nature and the "natural" man reflects the notion of *Lebensreform* then popular in certain circles in Germany. The perception that the newly industrialized nation was becoming less community oriented, less healthy, less safe and less compassionate triggered a series of alternative social, aesthetic and utopian movements that were centered on reviving man's essential connection to nature. The idea that a separation from nature had created a problematic disconnect for humanity derived, in part, from the earlier work of German philosophers such as Friedrich von Schlegel, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling and Friedrich Nietzsche.²⁶

Nietzsche's ideas inspired Nudism or Freikorperkultur, which took hold in Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century. Freikorperkultur was a Nature-centered movement that influenced the establishment of independent rural communes and

²⁵ Dr. Janice Simon suggested the possibility of this connection.

²⁶ In *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85) Zarathustra lives in a cave and worships the sun. In *The Will to Power* (posthumously published in 1906), Nietzsche writes, "the domestication (the culture) of man does not go deep—where it does it at once becomes degeneration...The savage (or in moral terms the evil man) is a return to nature—and in a certain sense his recovery, his cure from culture." Quoted in Lloyd, p. 115.

promoted a tolerance for alternative lifestyles. Vegetarianism, homeopathy, and sun and air therapy were among the anti-urban trends practiced.

The work of Rudolf Schlichter functioned in opposition to these pre-war ideals. He rejected the arcadian, back-to-nature ideals of artists like Nolde and Macke, describing their work as aesthetically and ideologically regressive.²⁷ His Indians were neither symbols of innocence, nor were they peaceful tribesmen. Instead, they fluxuated between real villain and imagined villain, reflecting the confusion and horror of modern warfare. One could argue that all three artists sought a form of escapism through fantasy and projected ideals, but Schlichter's nostalgia was far less sentimental and a good deal more ironic. Schlichter self-consciously set himself apart from the dominant culture.

His more satirical point of view can be seen in *Black Jack* (1916) a watercolor by Schlichter that features cowboys and Indians locked in a dramatic conflict (fig. 20). Action takes place throughout this colorful painting: Black Jack, one arm securely wrapped around a shapely woman, shoots at a nearby masked rider with his free hand; Indians exchange fire with cowboys across a ravine in the background; a pale child wanders away from a dead Indian in the foreground. One can almost hear gun blasts, galloping horses, and a musical score when looking at this image, a quality that, when combined with the campy theatricality and stereotypical nature of the narrative, evokes the image's filmic source.²⁸ With this reference to a then-new form of popular entertainment, Schlichter was able to defuse the carnage in his work by suggesting an

²⁷ Corrine Granof, "Obstinate Flesh: The Early Career of Rudolf Schlichter," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995), p. 56.

²⁸ Beeke Sell Tower, contributor, *Envisioning America: Prints, Drawings and Photographs by George Grosz and his Contemporaries, 1915-1933*, (Boston: Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, 1990), p. 23. Tower notes that Schlichter made a practice of sketching while he was watching movies, emulating the format of film by drawing serial images on long rolls of paper.

underlying sense of artificiality. The pretense is further emphasized in the costuming of the various characters, which mismatches authentic western attire with contemporary fashion, indicates disguise through masks and inappropriate make-up, and indulges in the addition of one of Schlichter's favorite accessories.²⁹ Just as in Schlichter's watercolor, *Wild West*, the warfare in *Black Jack* parallels the conflicts of World War I. Through anachronistic elements, masquerading "bad" men, and exaggerated drama, Schlichter offered a sly critique which questions the truth of perceived reality.

Western adventure films that featured cowboy stars such as William S. "Bill" Hart,³⁰ were an important visual source for Schlichter. These Hollywood productions, sold to German theaters in the first decade of the new century, were so popular that Europeans began making their own westerns by 1910. But these movies stressed a brutality that would have been unfamiliar to American audiences. Ray Allen Billington notes that films imported from the United States were routinely relabeled to enhance their appeal to European audiences: *Clementine* became *The Fist Fight on the Prairie*; *Oh Susannah* was renamed *Apache Battle on Black Mountain*. He writes that "these alterations symbolized the trend in European-made films; all were increasingly forthright, realistic, brutal, and openly favorable to sadistic scenes." In addition, red men were depicted as bloodthirsty savages bent on revenge, murder and rape. This approach would change after World War II, as later filmic representations would replace the Indian

²⁹ The damsel in distress wears pointy-toed button-up boots, a recognized fetish for the artist. The child in the foreground wears a modified sailor suit, a fashion popular in Germany during WWI and referred to as "die Matrosenkleidung" (little sailor suit). Sammlung Kindheit und Jugend, Stadtmuseum Berlin; www.stadtmuseum.de. The rider being shot at by Black Jack wears a mask and appears to have on clown make-up. The "cowboys" on the upper right hand edge wear different and incongruous hats—one has on a white cowboy hat (like Black Jack's), the other wears a black top hat.

³⁰ William S. Hart was known for acting and directing westerns that featured authentic costumes and props. Among his early films are *The Squaw Man* (1905), *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* (1912), and *The Sheriff's Streak of Yellow* (1915).

violence with the cruelty of the white man.³¹ But it is the image of the violent savage that rang true with German artists such as Rudolf Schlichter. He was deeply attracted to the perverse and erotic possibilities inherent in the cowboy and Indian genre of his youth.

During a six-year period of study at the Karlsruhe Academy (1910-1916), Schlichter revisited the heroes of his youth, fictional characters created by the writers Karl May, Charles Sealsfield and James Fenimore Cooper. Schlichter was quite open in recognizing the influence of Karl May in his early life. In his autobiography *Obstinate Flesh*, he credits May for giving him “countless hours of the most sublime dreams and fantastic exaltations.”³² Inspired by adventure stories of the Wild West by May, Sealsfield and Cooper, he began a series of drawings and paintings that variously depicted semi-clad Indians and their spurred and studded counterparts, the Cowboys. The Wild West, a place where nature and civilization often met in violent opposition, was a potent subject for Schlichter. He identified himself as an outsider, an individual living beyond the bounds of “normal” German society, and delighted in deviance for both its subversiveness and its ability to attract attention.³³ He actively encouraged a sense of himself as a sensitive and aberrant artist, writing often about his sexual proclivities and attraction to the sordid side of life.³⁴

Prior to moving to Berlin in the fall of 1919 Schlichter twice showed his work at the Galerie Moos in Karlsruhe. Both shows were reviewed locally, and both met with outrage.³⁵ In the second show he exhibited with *Gruppe Rih*, a group of artists who

³¹ Ray Allen Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), p. 321.

³² Schlichter quoted in Tower, p. 23.

³³ Granof, pp. 11-12. Granof makes the point several times that Schlichter’s habit of calling attention to his eccentric tendencies was part of an on-going strategy of self-promotion.

³⁴ Interests included auto-strangulation and various fetishes. He also lived with a prostitute c. 1916.

³⁵ Granof, pp. 66-70.

borrowed their name from a Karl May character's stallion "Rih," an Arabic word for "wind." Connoting "vigor, speed, change and unpredictability," *Gruppe Rih* was purposefully confrontational, a position that allowed them to be welcomed into the similarly aligned artist's group in Berlin, the Novembergruppe.³⁶ This association, in combination with his brother's popular restaurant in Berlin, provided Schlichter with an immediate introduction to the leftist artists in his new home city. He quickly joined the German Communist Party (KDP) and became friends with, among others, George Grosz, Otto Dix, and John Heartfield.

Within a year of arriving in Berlin Schlichter was offered the opportunity to have a solo show at a new space, Galerie Burchard. In this exhibition he presented a mix of paintings and collages that utilized themes of the Wild West, urban depravity, and *Lustmord* (lustful murder or the act of raping and murdering). The latter was a prevalent topic in pulp fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was derived, in part, from the much reported murders in the 1880s by Jack the Ripper.³⁷ Germany, too, had its share of sensational murderers that provided fodder for the tabloids. Schlichter would have been able to read about Fritz Haarmann (also known as the Vampire of Düsseldorf or the Silesian Bluebeard), Wilhelm Grossmann and Karl Denke, among other serial killers in the news.³⁸ Schlichter, as well as Grosz and Dix, repeatedly used this violent and sadistic imagery in their work from the teens through the 1920s. What is

³⁶ Ibid., p. 71.

³⁷ Dennis Crockett, *German Post-Expressionism: The Art of the Great Disorder, 1918-1924*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 72.

³⁸ Maria Tatar, *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 3-4, 42. Fritz Haarmann's murders were committed between 1919 and 1924 and were in the news as unsolved crimes during this same period. He was caught in December 1924 and executed in April, 1925. Wilhelm Grossmann was charged with murder and cannibalization of fourteen women in 1921. Denke committed approximately thirty murders over an estimated twenty-year period. He committed suicide in his cell the day after he was caught in 1924.

different, however, about Schlichter's use of *Lustmord* is that he often played out his narratives with Indians in the leading roles. By substituting Indians in the place of German rapists and murderers, Schlichter employed a strategy of transference that may have been intended to deflect guilt from soldiers who had committed unspeakable acts during World War I. In doing so he utilized a popular stereotype to make a point about man's brutality and lack of humanity. That he also found excitement and pleasure in the imagery speaks to his personal interest in sadism, which is relevant in that it helps shape our understanding of Schlichter's depictions of the Indian Other, his delight in the material serving to accentuate both impropriety and abnormality.

Maria Tatar has examined the phenomenon of *Lustmord* and suggests that many German artists of the postwar years used aggressively brutal imagery in their work to enable viewers to understand and identify with their wartime experiences. Misogynistic images were equally prevalent due, in part, to the fact that women had survived the war intact, thus easily converted "into the role of a covert enemy."³⁹ Blending the revulsion of violence and the attraction of nudity produced a distortion of reality (*Zerrbilder*) that was as central to *Lustmord* as the intrinsic sense of voyeurism.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Beth Irwin Lewis argues that the post-World War I generation of German artists "portrayed domestic violence in its extreme form—*Lustmord* or sex murder—because of pervasive social anxieties about the role of women," a major social issue of that period.⁴¹ The degeneration of the culture, which was blamed, in part, on the changing role of women, became visually linked to prostitution, promiscuity and pornography. And there was

³⁹ Tatar, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴¹ Beth Irwin Lewis, "Lustmord: Inside the Windows of Metropolis," in Charles W. Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr, editors, *Berlin: Culture and Metropolis* (Minneapolis and Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 115.

ample reference material on these subjects available to these young men, in the form of trashy and sexually explicit pulp fiction.⁴²

One example of *Lustmord* in Schlichter's work can be found in *Indian Attack, Child Murder*, 1916 (fig. 21). This early watercolor shows the rape of a light-haired woman, the murder of two infants and a nude woman who has been hung by the neck from a nearby tree limb. One child is being held high over the head of his killer, the presumption being that the small body will be thrown violently to the ground. A kneeling Indian, identified by his red coloring, holds the second baby up in the air with one hand, and with the other hand prepares to gut the helpless victim. A third Indian straddles the nude and perhaps, unconscious woman, his hands reaching out to fondle her breasts. It is assumed that the two "white" women, both of whom have been stripped of their clothing and dignity, are the mothers of the two children—all of whom are soon to be dead. The infanticide in this image evokes the biblical story of the Massacre of the Innocents. Raised as a Catholic, Schlichter would have most likely been familiar with this horrific tale, and the study of art history would have provided him with knowledge of various artistic interpretations. Like Rubens and other artists before him, the Massacre of the Innocents provided a comparison of ancient brutalities with the modern-day atrocities of war.⁴³ In addition to this potent connection, strangulation was a particularly ripe subject for Schlichter who not only experimented with this form of stimulation but later, after his

⁴² George Grosz, according to Lewis, p. 116, spoke of his fascination as a child for "the horror stories shown in primitive peep shows in country fairs. He like to read newspaper accounts of sensational murders and he devoured trashy pornographic, adventure, and detective novels."

⁴³ In Rueben's *Massacre of the Innocents*, a large figure in the foreground holds a baby high over his head in a gesture that is reminiscent of the standing figure on the left side of *Indian Attack, Child Murder*. Dr. Janice Simon noticed the possibility of this analogy.

marriage in 1929, went so far as to pose and photograph his wife, Speedy, as if she was the victim of a *Strangulationsexperimenten*.

The brushwork and drawing in *Indian Attack*, *Child Murder* are loose and expressionistic, successfully conveying the brutal narrative. Though Schlichter utilized a similar economy of means in both *Indian Attack*, *Child Murder* and *Black Jack*, done in the same year, the mood in the latter work is far lighter. Black Jack or Texas Jack was a western hero whose exploits appeared in the German pulp magazine *Der Grosse Kundschafter* (*The Great Scout*) as early as 1911. His fictional life found him fighting opium smugglers and leading foreign troops into Mexico, among many other adventures.⁴⁴ Schlichter's uncle Wilhelm, who had emigrated to the United States in 1870, claimed to have fought under Texas Jack and "Colonel" Cody.⁴⁵ With a change in scenery and wardrobe, *Indian Attack*, *Child Murder* and *Black Jack* could reflect the war raging in Europe.⁴⁶ Despite the simple nature of their rendering and distinct difference in tone, both offer scenes of death and depravity. It did not take much for Schlichter to connect tales of the Wild West to the events of 1916. Between what he read and was told, and the newsreels and documentaries produced by the BUFA (Bild und Filmamt) that relayed a censored version of Germany's war effort to the masses,

⁴⁴ See <http://www.texasjack.org>, unpaginated.

⁴⁵ Karl Marcus Kreis, "German Wild West: Karl May's Invention of the Definitive Indian," in *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West* (Munich: Prestel, 2006), p. 262.

⁴⁶ It is not entirely clear whether or not Schlichter saw action during WWI. According to Granof, Schlichter was excused from service due to acute myopia. See Granof, p. 103. However, Dieter Sudhoff records that Schlichter served as an "ammunition driver" on the Western Front in 1917. After a hunger strike he was deported to a homeland military hospital and was afterwards posted to a military base in Karlsruhe. Sudhoff also mentions Schlichter's myopia, writing that when the artist was first fitted with glasses he realized that he could never be a western adventurer like Texas Jack or Old Shatterhand because, he wrote, "I have not heard of a trapper with a pince-nez." See Dieter Sudhoff, "Obsessionen eines Malers: Rudolf Schlichter und Karl May," in *Jahrbuch der Karl-May-Gesellschaft* (1999): 9. "kein Westmann mehr werden könnte, von einem Trapper jmit einem Zwicker hatte ich noch nie gehört"

Schlichter had all the information he needed to create a link between the fictional realm of Western adventure stories and the very real world of the battlefield.

The fact that Schlichter sometimes translated imagery from a moving film to a static work on paper, utilizing the exploits of actors and actresses on a screen, infers a strategy of distancing or removal. Though not writing specifically about Schlichter, Maria Tatar points out that this gap between film action and audience viewing creates a situation in which “it becomes almost ‘natural’ to respond to violence in a voyeuristic manner—one that precludes interventionist efforts.”⁴⁷ Seeing a man brutally killed on the battlefield and experiencing an actor’s “death” in a darkened movie theatre are quite different. Tatar observes that a film viewer may feel sadistic pleasure during a particularly gruesome scene, and asserts that this sensation changes the nature of the experience from passive to “assaultive.” Schlichter’s work inhabits this same territory, teetering between disturbing and pleasurable, disquieting and stimulating. When his fictional source is relatively clear, as in *Black Jack*, the artificiality of his mayhem increases the viewer’s distance from emotional and psychological trauma. But in images like *Indian Attack*, *Child Murder* where he presents a more realistic and brutal tableau, the voyeuristic element is more in evidence.

Tower writes that Schlichter captured the particular nature of early films, the directness of gestures and actions without the real “presence” (*Gegenwartigkeit*). This idea of presence was suggested by Georg Lukács in his pioneering 1913 essay on the aesthetic of the cinema:

The fantastic [i.e., cinema], however, is not an opposite of vital life, rather it is a new aspect thereof: a life without presence, a life without fate, without causes, without motives; a life with which our innermost soul

⁴⁷ Tatar, p. 37.

neither will nor can ever identify; even if it—often—longs for this life, this longing is only for a strange abyss, something far away and distanced. The world as 'cinema' is a life devoid of background and perspective, devoid of differences in weight and qualities.⁴⁸

Tower argues that this view, shaped by the film narrative, was fundamental to Schlichter's Wild West work as well as his scenes of life in Berlin that also depict "the world as cinema." For her, the artist was attracted to an artificial vision of life, one without moral complications, depth or guilt. She sees escapism, then, as his primary goal.

But Lukács' essay, written prior to the advent of the First World War, could not anticipate the impact of the upcoming destruction and devastation. Nor could he foresee the transformation of millions of regular men into killers, and then, after the war, back into participating members of a peacetime society. This transition necessarily involved psychic alteration, unconscious hostilities, fear, doubt and attempts to rationalize perverse behavior. With this in mind, I would argue that Schlichter's use of Western adventures was neither simply an escapist exercise lacking in "weight," nor was it steeped in a longing for a lost past. Rather, Schlichter created a parallel universe in which he could explore human nature as well as satisfy his innate appetite for violence and eroticism. This world was complex and embodied both innocence and guilt.

Indian Attack, 1919 (fig. 22), a post-war drawing, depicts the attack on an Indian squaw by an Indian warrior, while a female child or young woman runs away screaming in the foreground. In the background is a sketchy representation of an Indian village. In this situation we are confronted with an example of Indian on Indian violence. Though perhaps from different tribes, we witness an assault that echoes the recent battles between

⁴⁸ Tower, p. 23.

various individuals from the culturally close European nations or even the sometimes violent conflicts between various factions of post-war German society. In *Indian Attack* there is a victim (female) and an attacker (male). There is no good guy in evidence to save the day. Like *Indian Attack*, *Child Murder*, this later drawing echoes the savagery of modern life.

Schlichter's adult life was shaped by World War I. Following Germany's disastrous defeat, the destruction of its economy and the demand for billions in reparation, two American-led efforts, known as the Dawes and Young Plans, were implemented in an attempt to revitalize the country. In the wake of the Dawes Plan of 1924, an enormous influx of American manufactured goods and cultural imports helped "Americanize" the Weimar Republic. Americanism, or as the Germans called it, *Amerikanismus*, was understood to be progressive. It brought assembly-line production, industrial efficiency, mass democracy and capitalism, the latter two offering an alternative to both aristocratic rule and communism. But *Amerikanismus* was also criticized as being materialistic and for promoting a success- and business-oriented civilization of 'machine-men' without culture or character. This was considered by some to be a threat to European, and especially German, traditions of thought.⁴⁹ But, inspired by films, music and fashion, artists like George Grosz, John Heartfield,⁵⁰ and Rudolf Schlichter infused their work with the iconography of America's Wild West and big, modern cities.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Tower, p. 14.

⁵⁰ George Grosz was so enthusiastic about American culture that he anglicized the spelling of his first name in 1915. His studio mate and friend, Helmuth Herzefelde simultaneously changed his name to John Heartfield. Grosz also decorated his studio with American advertisements and he collected ragtime music. He hoped that the America of his imagination would provide a platform for change, a way of reawakening what he called in 1917 "the decaying culture of Europe." Tower, p. 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Schlichter's work as a commercial illustrator reflects both personal and cultural interest in the American West. Among many other projects, he made twenty lithographs for a 1922 edition of Charles Sealfield's book, *Das blutige Blockhaus (The Bloody Log Cabin)* and sixty-six drawings for Bret Harte's *Kalifornische Erzählungen (California Tales)*, 1924. Also in 1924, Schlichter provided an illustration for the story "Lederstrumpf" (Leatherstocking), in his friend Walter Mehring's book, *In Menschenhaut Aus Menschenhaut, Um Menschenahut herum (In Human Skin, from Human Skin, around Human Skin)* (fig. 23). Mehring was a dada poet who was a featured participant in Berlin's postwar cabaret scene. He used the dada idea of fragmentation to evoke urban cacophony, writing bawdy and satiric lyrics, stories and poems that attacked the Weimar government and the bourgeoisie.⁵² This drawing for "Lederstrumpf," *Wa-ta-wah Zu*, lampoons both the mindless bureaucrats and self-indulgent revelers of a declining society. Named after a character in James Fenimore Cooper's series, *The Leatherstocking Tales*, Wa-ta-wah is the mother of Uncas. Uncas was the son of Chingachgook, the inspirational Indian friend of the book's hero Natty Bumppo. In *The Leatherstocking Tales* Uncas falls in love with a white woman and is punished for the sin of racial mixing.

Mehring's "Leatherstocking" is set on the fictional island Ixtochtlhude, a place that references both Germany and America. The main character is a young man, Walt Merin, who goes to visit his grandmother in a nation ruled by a sixteen year old girl, Wa-ta-wah. When first glimpsed, Wa-ta-wah is seated on a throne made up of small naked boys.⁵³ This is the scene represented in Schlichter's illustration, though he makes some

⁵² Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 146.

⁵³ Wa-ta-wah, die Präsidentin, sass auf einem Thron nackter kleiner Jungen ...

alterations. In his drawing a scantily clad young woman rests atop the nude bodies of both men and boys. One pointy-toed shoe (a particularly powerful fetish for Schlichter) is placed on the back of a clearly mature male physique with bowed head. Her hands are placed on the back of one man and the thigh of another. She is surrounded by a cast of characters, several of whom sport Indian attire, though one wears a scout uniform. One pseudo-native wears a leather shirt/jacket with fringed sleeves and lace-trimmed collar. The knife he holds could be a reference to the Cooper tale wherein the white lover of Uncas, Cora, is stabbed by another Indian. Another exotically painted and dressed individual, in the right foreground, looks more South American than North American. Among the guests at this gathering is a young man dressed as a clown and wearing an oversized pair of black spectacles and a false beard. This character is referred to in the story as being a socager (*Frondienste*), a term usually reserved for a feudal servant to an overlord. That he is a child posing as an adult (as evidenced by his small features and fake whiskers) and is in a position of servitude suggest ineptitude, and further, absurdity. His clown-like outfit underlines this idea.⁵⁴

Katrin Sieg places particular focus on the history of Germans dressing as Indians. She sees this practice as a “technology of forgetting.”⁵⁵ The assumption is that by “becoming” an Other, one can escape one’s own world. She equates the German preference for Indian role-playing with their sense of victimization, as well as with a romanticized view of the noble savage. The lack of innocence that Sieg associates with “playing Indian” is evident in *Wa-ta-wah Zu*. Here, fantasy and reality meet. Everyone is playing dress-up, pretending, living out one dream or another. Even the bull in the

⁵⁴ The round eye glasses of the Frondienste are similar to a pair worn by the artist himself.

⁵⁵ Sieg, p. 2.

background is between and betwixt. Is his head mounted on the wall or trapped between fence posts, partially in or bodily out?

Schlichter's suggestion of debauchery in this drawing, while not implicit in Mehring's story, could certainly fit a drunken costume party.⁵⁶ The naked men, the young girl's thighs bare almost to her crotch, and the "wild" attire all point to a form of exhibitionism often accelerated by alcohol. Billington has observed that, historically, Indians were believed to be unable to resist the temptation of alcohol. The theory went: Indians drink to get drunk; civilized people drink for pleasure and companionship. This frailty on the part of Indians was considered to be a sure sign of their animalistic nature. But Billington adds that "drinking was an escape-hatch from the poverty and humiliation that accompanied the shattering of their culture..."⁵⁷ With this in mind, Cooper's Indians in Mehring's story exhibit both real and imagined aspects of "primitive" behavior, empathetically responding to a shared sense of futility.

Mehring's reference to the popular *Leatherstocking Tales* corresponds to the release in 1920 of a German movie version of the *The Deerslayer* which was titled *Lederstrumpf*. Directed by Arthur Wellin, the silent film starred Bela Lugosi as Chingachgook.⁵⁸ Karl Hubbuch, an artist who attended the Karlsruhe Academy with Schlichter, depicted a poster advertising the movie in his drawing, *Lederstrumpf* (variously dated c. 1921 or 1925)⁵⁹ (fig. 24). In this work the movie poster is the most colorful part of the urban street scene, yet it is cut off at the top, fragmented in the artistic

⁵⁶ Schlichter's combination of alcohol, costumes and theatrical display can be found in at least four others drawings that precede the Mehring illustration: *Wild West Honky Tonk* (1916-1918), *Wild West Saloon* (1917), *Wild West* (1918), and *Le Vicomte de Halifax* (1918).

⁵⁷ Billington, p. 127.

⁵⁸ An American film of the same Cooper story appeared in 1920, as well as an earlier version in 1911, though it is unclear when these movies were screened in Germany.

⁵⁹ Lutz Koepnick, "Unsettling America: German Westerns and Modernity," in *Modernism/Modernity* 2 (1995): 6.

fashion of the day. What one does see is the powerful arm of a red man holding a pole which could be either a spear, a paddle or a simple stick. Two befeathered Indians look up from the lower right corner into the scene, as does a third man who also raises his arm in an unseen action. A rectangular sticker that reads “Kartenverkauf hier” (“Tickets here”) further obscures the advertisement. Prominent black letters announce the title, *Lederstrumpf* and begin a second line of information that fades after the word “Wildtöters” (Wild killers). Clearly intended as a visual pun, the drawing also emphasizes an arrow on a meter below the poster, lightly sketched in red. With this gesture, Hubbuch doubled his urban assault.

Another image from this same period depicts a cowboy hero vanquishing all manner of presumed “bad” guys. *Wild-West-Film*, a color lithograph by Walter Trier appeared in the *Die Lustige Blätter* (The Funny Pages) in 1921 (fig. 25). One of Germany’s few magazines devoted to political humor, *Die Lustige Blätter* also published drawings by Schlichter and George Grosz, among other contemporary artists. Trier, who had a successful career as a magazine and children’s book illustrator, features a broad-shouldered, pipe-smoking, über-cowboy who stands astride a dead Indian and a relatively compliant black man. Tucked under the arm which holds aloft a white man in gray working clothes is a petit blonde with stylish curls, who plants her feet with an authority that mimics that of her savior. Guns flank him from front and back, and two icons of progress—a plane (from the twentieth century) and a train (from the nineteenth century)—are present. Like the most alluring of theatrical presentations, it has everything one might want to see, an attribute also ascribable to Schlichter’s *Black Jack*. Here, however, the overblown nature of our “hero” is problematic in that he is clearly

portrayed as a racist thug. By utilizing cowboy and Indian imagery, Trier commented on the growing intolerance of difference in America, while also implicitly connecting this same tendency to Germany.

It is useful to compare Schlichter's drawings for Mehring's book and other projects to illustrations produced by Max Slevogt for both luxury and popular editions of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* (Pan-Pressé 1909/10). Pan-Pressé was started by Paul Cassirer who, influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, was dedicated to developing the book form as both aesthetically compelling and morally uplifting. He was particularly interested in addressing the "corrosive impact" of penny-dreadfuls; therefore, the Pan-Pressé version of Cooper's work featured an improved and complete translation and high-quality images by Impressionist painter and illustrator Max Slevogt.⁶⁰

The Slevogt drawings are small, black crayon lithographs on off-white paper. I have chosen one of the more active images from the set of fifty-two drawings originally included in the first luxury edition: *Uncas Jumps Down to Save Cora*, 1909 (fig. 26). This drawing represents the point at which the heroine Cora, who has been kidnapped by the villainous Huron Magua, reaches the rocky ledge of a steep precipice and declares she will go no further. Magua raises his hand to stab her, but Uncas jumps down from above to save Cora and Magua kills him instead. Cora is killed by another Indian, and then Magua is shot by Natty Bumppo (the Deerslayer) as he tries to escape. Thus, three main characters in *The Deerslayer* die in this scene: Cora, Uncas and Magua. In the drawing, the central focus is on Uncas, who is leaping into the center of the battle below him.

Though both the Schlichter and the Slevogt are loosely rendered, with figures occupying

⁶⁰ Barbara McCloskey, "From the 'Frontier' to the Wild West: German Artists, American Indians, and the Spectacle of Race and Nation in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West*, p. 310.

a simplified landscape, only Schlichter's *Indian Attack, Child Murder* graphically portrays death. Slevogt's *Uncas Jumps Down to Save Cora* depicts the moment before the three fatalities. In fact, Slevogt consistently avoided showing bloodshed in this series of drawings, preferring to represent the moment of suspension prior to the actual mayhem. Schlichter, in contrast, emphasized the brutality of rape and murder.

In Schlichter's critique of Weimar culture he was equally seduced and repelled by violence and depravity. This contradictory position—straddling two instincts—is characterized by Granof as located “between condemnation and celebration.” She observes that the male artists of the Berlin dada group exploited their fantasies at the expense of their ideological positions as Communists. Though they “saw themselves participating in the class struggle on the side of the proletariat” and thus supported the equality of women, in actuality their work “fed the search for vicarious sensationalism...and contributed to the very attitudes the artists sought to resist.”⁶¹ Schlichter's *Indian Attack, Child Murder* is but one example of the tendency within this group of artists to depict brutal murders of women. Similar portrayals can be found in work by Otto Dix (i.e. *Murder* and *Sexual Murder*, both 1922) and George Grosz (i.e. *When It Was All Over, They Played Cards*, 1917 and *John the Ladykiller*, 1918). In 1918, Grosz posed as Jack the Ripper in a photograph with his future wife, *Self-Portrait with Eva Peter in the Artist's Studio* (fig. 27). In this image the artist, with knife in hand, prepares to attack Eva as she admires herself in a hand mirror. Schlichter made an equally suggestive photograph of his wife Speedy in his studio a decade later, *Speedy and Rudolf Schlichter in a Strangulation Sex Experiment in the Studio*, 1928 (fig. 28).

⁶¹ Corrine D. Granof, contributor, *Art in Germany, 1909-1936: From Expressionism to Resistance, The Marvin and Janet Fishman Collection*, (Munich: Prestel and the Milwaukee Art Museum, 1990), p. 221.

Despite the violence in each of these images, there is also a suggestion of recreational diversion that can be found within the pretense. Akin to participating in a grown-up version of playing Indians or soldiers, both Grosz and Schlichter can enjoy the thrills within the relative safety of a game. The fantasy, then, offers both horror and sensuous pleasure, a combination that is extended to the artists' drawings and paintings of similar subject matter.

This sense of unreality or artificiality is critical to understanding Schlichter's Indian images. He repeatedly called the viewer's attention to the work's fictional source—whether that be Karl May adventure stories, film, or dada narrative. He typecasts the Native American as savage, but he also referred to Indians as victims (as in *Indian Attack*). He implicitly questioned the heroic qualities given to figures such as Black Jack by alluding to the improbability of their overblown actions, while he maintained an emphasis on conflict. In this early body of Schlichter's work one finds both critique and satire situated within a narrative staged by cowboys and Indians.

In early western movies it was easy to spot the hero, but in real life it was sometimes hard to tell the difference between the good guy and the bad guy. Schlichter accentuated the difficulty of this identification by alluding to deception in the costuming, masks, and make-up of the characters that occupy his dramas. Within this same reference is a suggestion of the travesty of war, a deadly charade perpetrated by leaders upon individuals who believe it is their moral duty to kill for their country. Schlichter's focus on deviance became, then, both a way of escaping the sheep-like mentality of the average person, and an indicator of post-war abnormality. He and his colleagues implicitly questioned the difference between death on the battlefield and the actions of a murderer:

Does war legitimize that kind of behavior? Is anyone truly innocent? Schlichter's work from 1916 through the early twenties quotes cinematic battles in an effort to convey the war experiences of his generation. His simulations define the Indian Other as a warrior, a designation that extends to himself, Germany's enemies, and far-away occupants of an imagined American West. His Indian is a far cry from Nolde's family groupings, Macke's passive man of nature and the nineteenth-century ideal of the noble savage.

CHAPTER THREE

EXILE IN AMERICA: MAX ERNST

In the spring of 1942 Max Ernst (1891-1976) was photographed by James Thrall Soby, a critic and patron of the arts who was also a friend and colleague of Ernst's new wife, Peggy Guggenheim.¹ In these images, taken on the terrace of Guggenheim's posh home on Beekman Place in Manhattan, Ernst is surrounded by a portion of his collection of Hopi and Zuni kachinas. One image has him standing above the group holding a kachina under each arm (fig. 29), yet another has the artist crouched down among the figurines, becoming a part of their company (fig. 30). In both he wears a wide-shouldered, fluffy jacket that resembles the soft down of a bird, a personal icon for Ernst. The poses in these two photographs indicate a relationship between the artist and the kachinas that goes beyond that of collector and object, suggesting a more parental role of prideful caretaking. Further, there is a sense of kinship, as if the man and the kachinas share similar qualities. These photographs were taken less than a year after Ernst arrived in New York City in July 1941, having escaped from Europe with Guggenheim's help. A couple of years later Ernst met Dorothea Tanner, with whom he would spend the rest of his life. Tanner and Ernst, after visiting Arizona, would purchase land in Sedona in 1946 and build a home that they inhabited, on and off, for the following decade. This chapter will explore the effect (or lack thereof) of Ernst's firsthand experience with the Indian Other. Did his exposure to the real American West enrich his understanding of ritual

¹ From February 1942 through World War II, Soby directed the Museum of Modern Art's Armed Services Program. He served as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture from October 27, 1943 through January 1, 1945, and as Chairman of that Department on an interim basis from 1947-1957. He was a Trustee from 1942-1979, and director of over fifteen major exhibitions. In addition he was on a committee to jury work for Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century. This information is derived from the biography associated with the James Thrall Soby Papers in the Archive of the Museum of Modern Art.

transformation and shamanistic practice, interests he had developed in conjunction with other Surrealists in post-World War I Paris, or did he simply maintain a foreigner's relationship to exotic material and thus perpetuate a more traditional relationship of often uninformed user and appropriation?

Ernst was born in 1891 in Brühl, a small town nine miles south of Cologne. He recalled having “played Indians” in the forest near his home, imagining the area as a jungle peopled with Mohicans and Iroquois braves.² He read the work of Karl May, Jules Verne, James Fenimore Cooper, the Brothers Grimm and Lewis Carroll as well as other popular books.³ And he was taken by his father, an amateur painter, to the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne where he was given his first exposure to a painting collection that ranged from medieval to early modern art. In addition, the Roman-Germanic department of the museum housed artifacts from ancient Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (the Roman name for Cologne). Thus, Ernst had early experience with articles of material culture from other times and places. This contact, in part, led to his interest in ethnography. Evan Maurer documents the young artist's studies in this area, citing his familiarity with James G. Frazer, William Wundt and Lucien Lévy Bruhl before WWI and Claude Lévi Strauss soon thereafter.⁴

In 1909, when Ernst was eighteen, he enrolled at the University of Bonn. After only one year of study he left the university to pursue a career in painting and quickly became engaged with modernist theories of the primitive. He joined Das Junge

² Patrick Waldberg, *Max Ernst*, (Paris: Société des Éditions Jean-Jacques Pauvent, 1958), p. 50. “...et il dut longtemps se contenter d'explorer les recoins de la forêt de Brühl, que sa tête échauffée transmuait en jungle, peuplée de Mohicans et d'Iroquois.”

³ Ibid., pp. 46, 49. Regarding Karl May, see M. E. Warlick, *Max Ernst and Alchemy: A Magician in Search of Myth*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), p. 34.

⁴ Evan Maurer, “In Quest of the Myth: An Investigation of the Relationship Between Surrealism and Primitivism,” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1974), p. 199.

Rheinland in 1911 at the urging of his new friend, August Macke, who was then living in Bonn.⁵ It was during this same period that Macke produced his Indian paintings; thus, Ernst was a firsthand observer of this blend of popular culture and fine art. After serving in World War I Ernst married, and for several years was a central figure in Cologne's Dada activities. In 1923 he left his wife and Germany for France, where he lived until 1941. During this nearly twenty-year period he became friends with André Breton, participated in Surrealist circles, and deepened his knowledge of ethnography through leading figures in the field such as Paul Rivet (who created the Musée de l'Homme in Paris in 1937⁶), and Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Marcel Mauss, (who were instrumental in establishing the Paris Institut d'Ethnologie in 1925). In addition, Ernst had access to Indian material from North America through his colleagues, Breton, Louis Aragon and Paul Eluard. Selected kachinas from the collections of these three men were included in the exhibition, *Yves Tanguy et objets d'Amérique* at the Galerie Surréaliste (May 27-June 15, 1927). In the catalogue for this show, which juxtaposed Tanguy's paintings with pre-Columbian and Amerindian artifacts, Breton wrote a preface in which he mentions a Hopi kachina in conjunction with the work of Ernst, finding similar visual qualities in both. A decade later, Marcel Duchamp's collection of kachinas was displayed in *Surréaliste d'objets* (1936).⁷ It is clear that Ernst had ample access to both scholarship and visual reference material on Native American culture during his years in Paris.⁸

⁵ M. E. Warlick, *Max Ernst and Alchem: A Magician in Search of Myth* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2001), p. 37.

⁶ The Musée de l'Homme was an outgrowth of the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadero, which was founded in 1878.

⁷ Louise Tythacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 155.

⁸ Two examples of Ernst's use of Native American material in his work from this period include *Oedipus* (1934) and *Lunar Asparagus* (1935). Both sculptures are totemic or stacked forms and appear to be capped with animal-like heads or features, thus referencing Northwest Coast Indian totem poles.

While Ernst was living in France, Hitler came to power in Germany starting a process that would lead to World War II. Like many Germans, Hitler was a fan of Karl May's "Winnetou" books. German writer Klaus Mann, in an article published in 1940, referred to May as the "Cowboy Mentor to the Führer." Filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, who produced three films in the 1970s that dealt with post-war German psychology (one of which focused on Karl May and another on Hitler), wrote "Hitler appreciated May's work enormously. He was fascinated by these upright, noble heroes who came up with strategy after strategy for avoiding bloodshed and doing away with the evils of the world." The Führer is even known to have ordered his staff to read the Winnetou books as "part of a morale-boosting exercise" after the losses of the Russian campaign in 1943.⁹

The Indian that Hitler admired, Winnetou, was noble and remarkably "German." One character in May's *Winnetou* suggested that "If [Winnetou] was the son of a European monarch, he would become a great leader in battle—better still, a prince of peace. But as heir to an Indian chief, he will die—perhaps miserably."¹⁰ Winnetou's purity is presented as being equal to that of his blood-brother Shatterhand, but the villains in May's books are described as "half-breeds,"¹¹ Mormons and Yankees. Hitler undoubtedly identified with Winnetou's perception that there are 'good' white people like the quintessentially German character Shatterhand, and there are 'bad,' genetically inferior whites. Winnetou forgave the good whites, absolving them of their role in killing

⁹ Christopher Frayling, *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone*, (London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 1981, 1998), p. 105.

¹⁰ Karl May, translated and abridged by David Koblick from the original 1892-93 edition of *Winnetou I*, *Winnetou* (Pullman, Wash.: Washington State University Press, 1999), p. 22.

¹¹ May's terminology.

off his race, but he continued to hate the atrocities of the “Yankees.”¹² Incongruously, “good” Germans deplored the genocide of the North American Indian, but somehow managed to permit the holocaust tacitly.

The popularity of May’s work continued unabated during the 1930s and 40s, spawning many imitations. One such writer of western adventure stories was Erhard Wittek who wrote under the name Fritz Steuben. Influenced by National Socialism, Wittek/Steuben chose to focus on the Indian hero Tecumseh (1768-1813), a historical figure who stood up against the American government in defense of Indian land and culture. His long, colorful life was documented by Steuben in a series of eight books with titles such as *Tecumseh: The Red Storm* and *Tecumseh: The Flying Arrow*, all produced between 1929 and 1952. Allegedly following historical accounts, Steuben’s books were extraordinarily popular in the Nazi era when sentiment against the Americans was strong, and they continue to be sold in Germany today.¹³

Soon after France declared war on Germany in September 1939, government officials began to arrest Germans living on French soil and place them in internment camps.¹⁴ Max Ernst was among those identified as an enemy alien. In and out of camps for the next year, he was finally able to make his way to Marseilles in hope of gaining

¹² Jeffrey L. Sammons, “Nineteenth-Century German Representations of Indians from Experience,” Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden and Suzanne Zantop, eds., *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 191.

¹³ H. Glenn Penny, “Elusive Authenticity: The Quest for the Authentic Indian in German Public Culture,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48 (October 2006): 803.

¹⁴ Ernst was interned as a “person under the jurisdiction of the German Reich” in 1939 at Largentière, and then Aix-en-Provence, where he shared a room with Hans Bellmer. He was set free at Christmas and returned to his home in Saint-Martin-d’Ardèche, but was re-arrested in May 1940. In June 1940, the Nazis took control of France, establishing the Vichy government to monitor the southeastern two-fifths of the country, while they occupied the remaining area. The Vichy government collaborated with the Germans and became increasingly a tool of German policy, especially after the Germans occupied the whole of France in 1942. Edward Quinn, *Max Ernst* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 1984), pp. 208-215, and “Vichy France.” *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*. 2008. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. <<http://search.eb.com/ebc/article-9381957>>.

passage to the United States. There he met Peggy Guggenheim who, in addition to helping secure his departure, would become his next wife.

Arriving in New York City on July 14, 1941, Ernst settled into Guggenheim's townhouse and began to develop friendships with other newly displaced Europeans like Claude Lévi-Strauss and Kurt Seligmann, accompanying them on curio hunts around the city and, not infrequently, to the American Museum of Natural History and the Museum of the American Indian. Ernst also befriended Julius Carlebach, a German immigrant whose shop specialized in ethnographic material. Carlebach provided access to surplus American Indian material belonging to George Heye, the founding Director of the Museum of the American Indian. Louise Tythacott, in her book *Surrealism and the Exotic*, describes "two taxi loads of Surrealists [who] set off one afternoon for a warehouse in the Bronx" where they bought numerous Inuit masks, kachinas and other carved objects for very small amounts of money.¹⁵

Another German-speaking artist who was involved with this group of ethnographers and Surrealists was the Austrian Wolfgang Paalen (1907-1959). He met Max Ernst and André Breton when he lived in Paris, a city he left in 1939. Traveling first to the Northwest Coast to add to his collection of Indian art, he eventually settled in Mexico. Like Schlichter and Ernst, Paalen had found childhood pleasure in Karl May's western adventures. He recalled in a 1946 monograph written by his friend and colleague Gustav Regler, that when he and his brothers "played Indians," he had served as the medicine man "because nobody else was able to make such satisfactory war paints and

¹⁵ Louise Tythacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 153. The reported prices vary: "Heye sold 15 Inuit masks to the artists and poets—some for \$38 and others for \$54 apiece (Cowling 1978a: 493); Sawin claims [the items] were bought 'for sums averaging \$15.' Matica Sawin, *Surrealist in Exile and the Beginnings of the New York School* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1995), p. 185.

tipi ornaments.”¹⁶ Amy Winter emphasizes Paalen’s early fascination with Native American culture by citing his invention of a personal totem—“the symbolic ancestor tree of tribal cultures” that she notes can be seen in his 1937 painting, *Paysages Totémiques de mon enfance* (fig. 31).¹⁷ The artist’s initial interest blossomed into a scholarly pursuit that is not only evident in his art work but also *DYN*, his self-published magazine. A double edition from 1943, *DYN 4-5*, is referred to as the “Amerindian” issue. Focusing on the art of the Northwest coast Indians, it provides historical context, interpretation, analysis, illustrations and photographs, and calls for the integration of Indian forms and concepts into modern art.¹⁸

This sense of an ideal, universal approach to art is demonstrated in two of Paalen’s paintings from 1944, *Ardah* and *The Sign of DYN* (figs. 32 and 33). Evolving from earlier work that depicted bird-like figures (eg. *Plumages*, 1938, Ulla and Heiner Pietzsch Collection, Berlin), one finds abstracted wing and feather shapes in both paintings. In *Ardah*, these forms are articulated in a series of dashes and dots that have been compared to “the patterning and coloration of Northwest Coast artifacts”¹⁹ as well as to “pre-Columbian feather mosaics.”²⁰ In addition, there is an allusion to Zuni inlay, the quillwork of East Coast and Plains Indians, and beaded work. The diversity of references speaks to Paalen’s desire to create a collective vocabulary that marries different styles. The surface detail and figuration in *The Sign of DYN* are less complex

¹⁶ Gustav Regler, *Wolfgang Paalen* (New York: Nierendorf Editions, 1946), p. 12.

¹⁷ Amy Winter, *Wolfgang Paalen: artist and theorist of the avant-garde* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2003), p. 18.

¹⁸The contents of *DYN 4-5* are detailed in Chapter 8: “Totem Lessons: The “Amerindian” Issue of *DYN*,” in Winter, pp. 159-179.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 212. One visual correspondence to the patterning referred to in this quotation can be found in a mid-19th century screen representing the Thunderbird, Nuuchah-nulth (American Museum of Natural History Library, 16.1/1892).

²⁰ Winter, p. 210.

than in *Ardah*, but are equally evocative of flight and, by extension, the cosmos. The shapes of several of Paalen's canvases from this period are comparable to the irregular supports found in Northwest coast Indian art, most of which are derived from their particular use. The flat-ended diamond shape of *The Sign of DYN* is based on a Tlingit tunic that was once owned by a Hutsnuwu shaman (and originally collected by George T. Emmons, with whom Paalen corresponded), and is a variation on *Ardah*'s pointed-end rectangle (fig. 34). It is not at all surprising that Paalen would have chosen to use the shape of a shaman's tunic for his own work as he was interested in the idea of investing objects with the same power as primitive artifacts. Several years after *Ardah* and *Sign of DYN* were made, Paalen formed the group Dyanton with Lee Mullican and Gordon Onslow-Ford, and briefly lived in San Francisco. Together they developed a complex iconography that was aimed at reintegrating man with the universe, a desire initiated by the Surrealist interest in primitive interconnectivity and updated with quantum physics and astrophysics.²¹

Ernst matched Paalen's acquisitive habit by adding to his collection of Amerindian material with the purchase of a large group of kachinas spotted on a car trip to California shortly after his arrival in the States in 1941. Traveling with his wife, her daughter Pegeen Guggenheim, and his son Jimmy from his first marriage, Ernst stopped at a tourist trading post in the Grand Canyon and "surrounded by a sea of ancient Hopi and Zuni kachina dolls," bought "just about every one."²² In addition to his purchases in

²¹ From the entry on *Key Lords of the Prismatic Situations* in the collection of the University of Kentucky Art Museum which cites an essay by Amy Winter in *Pacific Dreams: Currents of Surrealism and Fantasy in California Art, 1934-1957* (Los Angeles: UCLA, Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, 1995).n.p.

²² Recollection by Jimmy Ernst, cited in Sigrid Metken, "'Ten Thousand Redskins': Max Ernst and the North American Indians," in *Max Ernst: A Retrospective* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991), p. 357.

Arizona, Ernst made note of the surrounding environment, remarking that it looked like the invented landscapes of his earlier paintings.²³ Jimmy Ernst wrote the following account of his father's sense of recognition upon seeing the mountain range from Route 66 near Flagstaff:

On a late afternoon we got out of the car to watch a gigantic rattlesnake.... As Max looked up at nearby San Francisco Peak, he blanched visibly, his face muscles tightened. The mountain's green treeline abruptly gave way to a band of bright-red rock beneath a peak cap of sun-created pure magenta. He was staring at the very same fantastic landscape that he had repeatedly painted in Ardèche, France, not very long ago, without knowing of its actual existence.²⁴

This bonding moment with the Arizona landscape, in which he saw elements from his earlier paintings of rosy mesa-like panoramas (such as in *The Petrified City*, 1936 (fig. 35)), would bring him back to the area within just a few years. That he felt he had discovered it by "chance" was understandably significant to the artist whose inventions of *frottage* and *grattage* contributed methods involving chance to Surrealism.²⁵

In April 1942 the avant-garde American magazine, *View*, published a special issue on Max Ernst. One of the articles, written by Ernst, was titled "Some Data on the Youth of M.E. as told by himself," and is appropriately described by Samantha Kavky as an "exercise in self-fashioning."²⁶ Kavky claims that Ernst began actively asserting the persona of a shaman after his arrival in the United States, a campaign she believes was launched in *View*. She bolsters her argument with, among other things, two images of him that were reproduced in the magazine: the aforementioned photograph of Ernst hovering over his recently acquired kachinas, and a 1940 portrait of him by his former

²³ Sawin, p. 173.

²⁴ Jimmy Ernst, *A Not-So-Still Life: a memoir by Jimmy Ernst* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), p. 216.

²⁵ Samantha Kavky, "Authoring the Unconscious: Freudian Structures in the Art of Max Ernst," (PhD. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2001), p. 252.

²⁶ Kavky, p. 245. In establishing Ernst's artistic heritage both Breton and Ernst, in separate essays in *View*, cite a link to "arch sorcerer" [Breton] and "splendid magician" [Ernst] Cornelius Agrippa, a 16th century occultist from Cologne. (p. 250)

lover, Leonora Carrington. The painting, *Portrait of Max Ernst*, depicts the artist in a feathery, fish-tailed costume—part bird, part fish—carrying a lantern as he strides across a frozen landscape (fig. 36). Evan Maurer and Whitney Chadwick also have read this image as Ernst in the guise of a shaman,²⁷ while Warlick notes an affinity to the Tarot card, “The Hermit” which symbolizes isolation and introspection.²⁸ Ernst took advantage of the symbolic possibilities suggested in this portrait and included it in the magazine for widespread viewing, thus promoting himself as a magical figure.

Evan Maurer cites the artist’s fictive autobiography, and suggests that Ernst’s statement that he was “born of an eagle” can be linked to Eliade’s description of shamanism as originating with an eagle.²⁹ Another section from that same life story reads:

Max Ernst died the 1st of August 1914. He resuscitated the 11th of November 1918 as a young man aspiring to become a magician and to find the myth of his time.

Noting that these dates correspond to Ernst’s entry into and dismissal from the German army during World War I, Maurer proposes that this passage marks a “symbolic transformation” for the artist into the personage of a shaman.³⁰ It is impossible to ignore

²⁷ Ibid, p. 251.

²⁸ The Hermit in the Tarot deck shows a white-haired man enveloped in a cloak, who carries a lantern and a staff. Though Ernst is not depicted with the staff, he does have the lantern and is similarly wrapped. Warlick, p. 162. It is also interesting to note that this same analogy is made to the cloaked figure of Beuys holding a flashlight during his performance “I Like America and America Likes Me.”

²⁹ The 1948 autobiography mentioned by Maurer, “Some Data on the Youth of M.E.” is the same text published earlier in *View* (1942). According to Eliade, “We may also note the motif of the giant bird that hatches shamans in the branches of the World Tree; it has wide application in North Asian mythologies, especially shamanic mythology.” See Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 38. Noted by Maurer, p. 567, n. 90, p. 592.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 570.

the similarities between Ernst's "autobiographical" statement of rebirth and one made by Joseph Beuys following World War II.³¹

There is ample scholarship on Ernst's use of bird imagery. Maurer, for one, cites a list of major works with a bird-related theme that were made in the first decade of the artist's career: *Oedipus Rex* (1922), *The Origin of the Pendulum* (1925), *Monument to the Birds* (1927), *After Us, Motherhood* (1927), *The Interior of Sight*, *The Egg* (1929), and selected collages from *Histoire Naturelle* (1925) and *La Femme des 100 Têtes* (1929). This is just a small sample of the artist's habit of identifying with birds as his "totem."³² Ernst went so far as to dress up as a bird for a 1958 party (fig. 37). An Edward Curtis photograph of a female Nootka shaman from Vancouver Island wears a headdress that is remarkably similar to Ernst's slightly more Las Vegas version (fig. 38). Her hair is covered with white eagle down and her head piece contains a number of large serrated feathers that explode upward from a central location.³³ Though there is no evidence that Ernst modeled his bird costume on that of the Nootka shaman, the suggested connection between the eagle, the shaman and showmanship provides yet another link to Joseph Beuys.

In relating Ernst's elemental bond to birds, Kavky goes beyond the usual mention of Ernst's childhood dreams and experiences with birds to connect his avian identification to the German word for bird: *vogel*. To be *vogelfrei* is to live outside proper society, to be an outlaw or criminal (a tendency seen in the similarly Catholic-

³¹ Beuys might have had early exposure to Ernst through a 1951 exhibition in Brühl. Three years later, in 1954, Ernst was awarded the Grand Prix at the Venice Biennale, thus achieving worldwide fame. In 1962, a retrospective of Ernst's work was organized for the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne and was accompanied by an extensive catalogue.

³² Maurer, p. 553, n. 62, quoting Ernst's friend and biographer Patrick Waldberg.

³³ Included in Allen Wardwell, *Tangible Visions: Northwest Coast Indian Shamanism and its Art* (New York: The Monacelli Press & The Corvus Press, 1996), p. 61.

reared artists Schlichter and Beuys). There is also an association to Wandervogel, the hiking society that attracted large numbers of boys to the great outdoors during the period of Ernst's youth. Finally, the term *vögeln* is slang for the sexual act, "screwing."³⁴ These allusions all suggest a desire to separate oneself from the norm and to seek immersion in the natural world and live freely. This layering of references, characteristic of Surrealism, is prominent in Ernst's work.

In the summer of 1943, after a messy and public divorce from Guggenheim, Ernst took his new lover and eventual wife, Dorothea Tanning, to stay on a ranch in Sedona. They returned several years later and built a home with their own hands in which they lived for seven years.³⁵ At one point, Ernst referred to this time as his stay in the "Wilden Westen,"³⁶ and also claimed that the "delicious deserts of Arizona, the ferocious fauna, flora and rocks suit[ed] me."³⁷ The artist fashioned bas-relief masks and Hopi designs on the exterior walls and placed Indian artifacts in and around the house. Just a cursory look reveals the similarities between the design on one brick (fig. 39) and the face on a Masau'u Hopi katchina from the Museum of American Indian, Heye Foundation (fig. 40) or a cornhusk mask from the same collection (fig. 41). Ernst had made related adornments to his home in Saint-Martin d'Ardèche in 1938-39. A few of these (fig. 42) show the round eyes familiar from bird images of earlier years and also evoke masks³⁸, but the majority of his French home's decorations (fig. 43) are much

³⁴ Kavky, pp. 229-232.

³⁵ Tanning and Ernst continued to visit Sedona for several years after they had moved back to Europe.

³⁶ Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: Life and Work*, (London: Thames & Hudson, Inc., 2006), p. 218. This reference is from a letter to Hans Richter from Ernst, undated but listed as probably being in 1949.

³⁷ Spies, p. 200. Ernst wrote this comment in a letter to Joe Bousquet on stationery from the Spur Cross Ranch, which features a small line drawing of a cowboy on a bucking bronco in the right-hand corner.

³⁸ Dr. Simon suggested that the protruding tongue in Fig. 42 could be related to shamanistic masks of the Northwest coast Indians, however Dr. Firestone links the Saint-Martin d'Ardèche decorations to medieval

more figurative and not as reliant on the simplified geometric designs often seen in Native American art.

When Ernst and Tanning moved to Sedona, it was a small town, but one well known to the movie industry. According to one guidebook, more than eighty westerns were shot in this area in the 1940s and 50s alone.³⁹ The majestic buttes of the Munds Mountain wilderness area, Oak Creek Canyon, and Little Horse Park were backdrops for *California* (1945), *Cheyenne* (1946), *Gunfighters* (1947), *Blood on the Moon* (1948), *Copper Canyon* (1949) and many other films. Robert Mitchum, Walter Brennan, Errol Flynn, Jane Wyman, Robert Taylor and other stars lived for short periods of time in both Sedona and Flagstaff, along with directors, assistants and production crews. Local citizens were hired to act as extras on some films and the Sedona Lodge provided catering and a lively gathering spot for evening refreshments.⁴⁰ Although neither Ernst nor Tanning mentions the various comings and goings of the movie industry in their area, it would have been a rather conspicuous, if sporadic, part of the environment.

The artist couple did make friends with a tribe of Hopi Indians on a reservation eighty miles northeast of Sedona and drove there to watch rain dances and snake rituals.⁴¹ Roland Penrose, who visited Ernst and Tanning in Arizona, wrote:

...most impressive of all was the Hopi reservation where from a house-top we joined in the compulsive rhythms of the masked katchina dancers. Max had already made friends with the Hopis and had a splendid collection of some of their most extraordinary katchina dolls, to some of which they attribute such

gargoyles, whose outstretched tongues functioned both to repel demons and channel rain away from the structure.

³⁹ Website for Sedona, Arizona: <http://www.sedonaAZ.gov>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Werner Spies, Ed., *Max Ernst: Life and Work, An Autobiographical Collage* (Cologne: DuMont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, 2005), p. 194. Charles Loloma, a Hopi Indian, became a close friend of Tanning and Ernst and later visited them in Paris. Metken, p. 359. Also mentioned in Tythcott, p. 159.

power that they will not allow them to be seen by the public even in a museum.⁴²

Ernst admired the Indians for tenaciously maintaining their ancient customs and refusing to be corrupted by money.⁴³ This allusion to Indian purity was in keeping with the old European idea of the “noble savage” and allowed the Hopi to stand in contrast to a German understanding of white Americans as greedy and materialistic.

In 1948, filtering visual information from his environment, Ernst produced a series of paintings and sculptures that contained mask-like faces, among them *Capricorn* and *Feast of the Gods* (figs. 44 and 45). *Capricorn* is a sculptural “family portrait,”⁴⁴ in which a horned male figure holding a scepter is seated beside a long-necked, armless mermaid. A small mer-form and a fish complete the scene. The female figure wears a headdress that is related to ones worn by Zuni rain priests and the male figure’s staff is similar to a Hopi emblem of spiritual power and authority.⁴⁵ The title refers to the astrological sign of Capricorn, a goat or sea-goat (half fish, half goat) that watches over the land by day and returns to the sea at night. The calendar period associated with this sign is close to the winter solstice, the beginning of the new year and a celebratory time in the Hopi culture.⁴⁶ The December date also corresponds to Ernst’s first meeting with

⁴² Roland Penrose, *Scrap Book 1900-1981* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), p. 140. Also quoted in Tythcott, p. 159.

⁴³ Maurer, p. 564, quoting John Russell, *Max Ernst* (New York: Abrams, 1967), p. 146.

⁴⁴ Lucy R. Lippard, “The Sculpture,” *Max Ernst: Sculpture and Recent Painting* (New York: Jewish Museum, 1966), p. 44.

⁴⁵ Maurer writes: “The horned mask of the seated figure is clearly related to Kachinas like the large example standing at the left foreground of the photograph of Ernst with his Kachina collection. The headdress of the female form...is also related to Kachinas, specifically to single-horned types such as the Zuni Rain Priest of the North...Kachinas also frequently hold large staffs in their hands, and in the Hopi culture a staff is often the representation of spiritual power and authority.” See Maurer, p. 565. Fig. 28, at the beginning of this chapter, shows the kachina Maurer mentions. It is not in the “left foreground” but rather is located just right of the center, in front of Ernst’s left leg.

⁴⁶ Edwin Earle and Edward Kennard, *Hopi Kachinas* (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1971), p. 5.

Dorothea Tanning near Christmas in 1942.⁴⁷ In addition, Tanning had christened the land on which their Arizona home sat as Capricorn Hill.⁴⁸ In *Capricorn*, Ernst successfully layered references to the nearby Hopis, portraiture, and mythology while offering witty commentary on his relationship with Tanning. Shown as having the powers of shamans and gods, the couple is also the picture of domesticity, complete with pets⁴⁹—an image reminiscent of Nolde’s ethnological groupings.

Feast of Gods is a colorful painting that also is made up of a collection of figures. The face of the central “god” is crowned by a striped headdress, the design of which is echoed in the upper half of his body. The “god” on the right is cloaked in a similar mantle of warm reds, yellows and browns and has a small, stepped head piece from which rays of light appear to emanate. The reference to kachinas is unmistakable in both the simplicity of the rectilinear shapes and the bold, banded and crenellated head gear, which resembles the tabletas that Hopi kachina dancers wear.⁵⁰ This spiritual reference is doubled in the skyward thrust of the headwear, which evokes a mitre—the stiff, peaked cap sometimes worn by Catholic bishops and the pope. The cloaks in which the figures are wrapped bear resemblance to traditional Hopi wedding robes (fig. 46), which form a strong triangular shape from the neck down through the torso. The robes have decorative pom-poms that are evident in Ernst’s painting, where these forms also read as feather or hand shapes. To the left of the central figure and below him are two gods of a seemingly lesser status, one in shades of green, the other in tan and rosy beige. The earth colors of

⁴⁷ Dorothea Tanning, *Between Lives* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), p. 48.

⁴⁸ Metken, p. 359, quoting from Dorothea Tanning, *Birthday*, (Santa: Monica, CA: Lapis Press, 1986), p. 84.

⁴⁹ Maurer quotes Lucy Lippard in labeling the two small figures as Ernst and Tanning’s two dogs, and notes that one of the dogs was actually named “Kachina.” (p. 565)

⁵⁰ Tabletatas are the stepped headdresses worn by certain Kachina dancers and represented in their kachina “dolls.” A variation of a tableta can be seen in Emil Nolde’s painting, *Exotic Figures II* (fig. 11).

their face and robes stand in contrast to their more dramatically accessorized colleagues. Ernst's choice of palette and the geometric construction of this painting quote Indian sources ranging from Pueblo bowls (see fig. 47 for an example from the Museum of the American Indian) to the dynamic patterning of a Plateau parfleche or rawhide bag (fig. 48).

It is highly likely that Ernst borrowed the title for his painting from Bellini's 1512 painting of the same name. Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* went on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in 1942 as part of a widely publicized donation by Joseph Widener. Ernst could have seen the painting when he and Tanning were in Washington in 1946 for their joint show at the Caresse Crosby Gallery or on other visits to the capital. Based on Greco-Roman mythology, Bellini's work relates the story of Vesta, a virgin goddess of the hearth, and Priapus, a woodland and fertility deity. One evening while Vesta sleeps, Priapus attempts to rape her but is thwarted due to the braying of an ass that awakens her. The angry Priapus demands that, henceforth, an ass shall be sacrificed at rituals relating to him. A full coterie of gods and goddesses are present to witness this bawdy, comic scene. If this same tale is suggestively reinterpreted in Ernst's painting, does the artist become the sexually aggressive Priapus and Dorothea the virginal Vesta? What is clear is that Ernst was commenting on the similarities between ritual sacrifices of the ancient Greeks and Romans—the progenitors of western culture—and so-called primitive peoples, a point of emphasis by authors including Frazer, read by Ernst. That he chose a narrative in which the “hero” is an ass displays a particularly deft touch.

The striped design of Ernst's *Feast of Gods* was repeated in a non-figurative painting from the same year, *Blind Swimmer* (fig. 49). This painting, along with a group of others,⁵¹ derived from scientific illustrations from *La Nature* showing experiments with air flow and magnetic lines of force.⁵² Both Charlotte Stokes and Lucy Lippard have noted the erotic nature of the "blind swimmer" series and Ernst's allusion to self-revelation or inner vision.⁵³ It is possible that Ernst revisited this imagery (first used in the mid-1930s) while living in Arizona because of his proximity to Native Americans who sought inner vision through ritualized practices, and because of the visual similarity of the linear motifs in *La Nature* to the Mogollon pottery from the area. Mogollon pottery, characterized by black and white linear designs, ranged from representational to non-representational and was produced by, among other Mogollon branches, the Mimbres (pueblo-dwelling agriculturists who inhabited what is now southwestern New Mexico). The classic period of their pottery dates to 1000-1150 A.D. and it began to come to light in the early twentieth century when ethnographers, such as Jesse Walter Fewkes of the Smithsonian, started collecting, archiving and studying the material. Many anthropologists have asserted that historic and modern Pueblo Indians share artistic iconography and, perhaps, parallel belief systems with the Mimbres. This idea was visually substantiated in a 1949 study by Hopi artist Fred Kabotie, who compared symbols from his culture with that on Mimbres pottery.⁵⁴ Two examples of Mimbres

⁵¹ *Blind Swimmer (The Effect of Touch)*, 1934; *The Blind Swimmer* (1934); *Landscape with Tactile Effects*, 1934-5, *A Beautiful Day*, 1948.

⁵² Charlotte Stokes, "The Scientific Methods of Max Ernst: His Use of Scientific Subjects from *La Nature*," *The Art Bulletin* 62 (September 1980): pp. 462-464.

⁵³ Charlotte Stokes and Lucy Lippard, "The World of Dadamax Ernst," *Art News* 74 (April 1975): 29.

⁵⁴ Tom Steinbach, Sr., Tom Steinbach, Jr., Peter Steinbach, *Mimbres Classic Mysteries: Reconstructing a Lost Culture through its Pottery* (Sante Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2002), pp. ix-x.

black-on-white bowls (figs. 50 and 51), show the graphic power of this work, and demonstrate a visual connection to Ernst's *Blind Swimmer*.

Metken notes that Ernst's collages from 1948-49 often feature a silhouetted image inside an oval or circle, a design that had not previously been evident in his work.⁵⁵ She relates the artist's *Ex Libris* (1949) with the pottery of the Mimbres (fig. 52).

Interestingly, animal representations in Mimbres pottery have been compared to "anthromorphic interpretations that belong to the world of Uncle Remus, Walt Disney, and Bugs Bunny" due to their folky, comical look.⁵⁶ One such example of this can be seen in a bowl featuring two insects (fig. 53). Ernst, who later referenced Disney in a 1969 work, *Mickey's Ascension*, may have noticed this similarity. Regardless, it does seem likely that he borrowed design elements from Mimbres pottery, such as the central white, curvilinear form surrounded by black that one sees in the previous bowl and in works such as *Ovoids 6*, 1949 (fig. 54).

In addition to the influence of ethnographic material, Ernst and Tanning were profoundly affected by the weather, the topography, and their living conditions in Sedona. They borrowed from their surroundings, incorporating desert animals, local petroglyphs, the moon, and the geography into their work.⁵⁷ Among the landscape images Ernst produced during this period were a group of miniature paintings, *Seven Microbes Seen through a Temperament* (Sept Microbes vus à travers un temperament). Using the decalcomania process he had developed earlier with oil paint, in these he substituted diluted gouache to produce tiny abstracted scenes, which by virtue of their

⁵⁵ Metken, p. 358.

⁵⁶ J. J. Brody, *Mimbres Painted Pottery* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), p. 219.

⁵⁷ Examples include: *The Phases of the Night* (1946), *The Inspired Hill* (1950), *Color-raft of Medusa* (1953).

horizontal format and natural forms, suggested landscapes. A selection of these images are dedicated to ‘Ten Thousand Redskins’ (Dix mille peaux rouges) and were complemented by a poem that describes Indians who are one with nature.⁵⁸ One such work from 1949, *Ten Thousand Lucid Redskins Prepare to Make the Rain Laugh (Microbes)* (fig. 55), is populated with a series of small dots on a rich orange-red ground. Patrick Waldberg recalls seeing examples from the *Microbes* series when he visited Ernst in Sedona in 1947, noting that the artist “was amused by the idea that the whole of his exhibition would fit quite easily into a large matchbox.”⁵⁹ Though not quite as small as these, Ernst had made little decalcomania paintings in previous years. Averaging from 6 x 4 inches to 10 x 12 inches, they were completed in 1939, prior to Ernst leaving Europe. It is reasonable to assume that logistics played a role in the choice of portable, inexpensive works in both 1939 and the late 1940s. To represent the vast Arizona landscape in miniature form is an act that seems intentionally irreverent as it undermines the vastness of nature. With these unorthodox little paintings, Ernst commented on his irrelevance to the artworld (due to then-current problems in his career), his inconsequentiality in the greater scheme of things (the cosmos), and the lack of importance of art or man when faced with the immensity of nature. Additionally, he took a timely jab at the Abstract Expressionists, who were concurrently developing large, heroic-scaled paintings.

Kavky notes that the idea of mimesis or imitation is apparent in the landscapes Ernst produced in Arizona and cites the writings of Roger Caillois on animal mimicry as an influence. She argues that Ernst, in playing with figure ground relationships, engaged

⁵⁸ Metken, pp. 359-360.

⁵⁹ Waldberg, p. 384.

in acts of “reciprocal mimicry” in an effort to identify with his environment.⁶⁰ Caillois was a French-born theorist who, with Georges Bataille, assembled the College of Sociology, a group of intellectuals who were intent on shifting the Surrealists’ attention away from the unconscious to a more anthropological focus on the power of ritual and communal living.⁶¹ In 1935 he published the study “Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia” in which he noted that it was a mistake to presume that camouflage was the only explanation for animal mimicry.⁶² He went on to suggest that some organisms copy their surroundings due to a crisis that develops because of a sensed lack of relationship with their environment—a state he called *psychasthenia*. He characterized this disturbance as not feeling as if you really are where you think you are, a terrifying distinction that causes notions of space and identity to collapse, or at least to become porous.⁶³ According to Caillois, the impulse to fit into the environment is not completely based on self-protective concealment, but is, in some cases, a desperate attempt to associate with the surroundings. Kavky may have assigned this sense of anxious displacement to Ernst, thus explaining his simulation of landscape through chance procedures.⁶⁴ However, it seems unlikely that the artist, who was so enamored with the area around his Arizona home, would feel such extreme alienation or that he would need additional motivation to use processes that had served him so well in the past.

⁶⁰ Paper given by Samantha Kavky, “Mimesis and Metamorphosis in the Arizona Landscapes of Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning,” at the *Surrealism and the American West Conference*, October 26-27, 2006, Arizona State University, Tempe. I was not able to get a copy of this presentation, but have pieced together information based on her abstract and my own research and analysis.

⁶¹ Donna Roberts, “The Edge of Surrealism: A Roger Caillois Reader,” *Papers of Surrealism 2* (Summer 2004): 2.

⁶² Dr. Alisa Luxenberg noted that Caillois may have formed negative associations with camouflage following its introduction in World War I.

⁶³ Roger Caillois, *The Edge of Surrealism: A Roger Caillois Reader*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 90.

⁶⁴ Kavky, “Mimesis and Metamorphosis in the Arizona Landscapes of Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning,” unpaginated abstract.

Indian-related motifs and ideas continued to appear in Ernst's work after the couple moved from Sedona to France in 1956. One of the most interesting of these is *Mickey's Ascension*, 1969 (fig. 56). This sculptural collage is made up of a thin wooden cut-out of Mickey Mouse, a kachina, and a painted egg-shaped and beaked face that appears against the upper right background like a moon in the sky.⁶⁵ The kachina stands on a small shelf attached to a dark board while Mickey is on a plank to the left, looking towards the doll but from a slightly elevated position. He floats above the horizon line beneath him, rising above the landscape in an act the artist describes in the title as ascension. In the Bible the elevation of Christ into heaven by his own power, performed in the presence of his disciples on the fortieth day after the resurrection, is narrated by both Mark (16:19) and Luke (24:12). This transformative experience is presaged in John 20:17, when Christ tells Mary Magdalen that this event will take place and instructs her: "Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My brethren, and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God." Taken literally, Ernst (who was raised as a Catholic) depicts Mickey as a Christ-like figure who is shown in the process of joining his spiritual father. The father, in this case, would be Walt Disney, the character's creator. Thus, Disney is given the role of God—Mickey's God, and by extension, "our" God. As he is an artist and animator, breathing life into his characters, the reference is humorously apt. The kachina, which is standing firmly on the ground, faces the viewer without expression. Though it is not clear which kachina spirit this figurine represents, it is possible that the white face evokes Eótoto, the father of the kachinas, who is familiar with all the ceremonies and brings the "gifts of nature" to his

⁶⁵ Formally, *Mickey's Ascension* has many rounded shapes. The drawn Mickey is built out of a series of circles and bisected circles. The moon is an oval and the kachina has a softly rounded head.

people.⁶⁶ If this is the case, Eótoto is placed in competition with the artist/god, (Mickey/Disney/Ernst); one occupying the light of day, the other illuminated by the moon.

Stills from a Disney film were a part of the 1936 exhibition, “Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism” at MoMA, an inclusion that motivated critics to make comparisons between artists in the show and certain cartoon characters. Miró’s *Carnival of Harlequin* was described as being “perky [and] goofy” and parallels were made to Krazy Kat and Mickey Mouse. But most significantly, Ernst was described as someone ““who speaks from...the Mickey Mouse World...where almost anything is more than liable to happen.””⁶⁷ With this comment in mind, the utilization of Mickey Mouse in Ernst’s collage becomes even more meaningful. The artist could now assume the persona of the infamous mouse man, who in 1940 played the Sorcerer’s Apprentice in the Disney movie *Fantasia*.

The Sorcerer’s Apprentice, one component of Disney’s musical film, is based on *Der Zauberlehrling*, a poem by Goethe that Ernst would have known due to its popularity in the German-speaking world. In Disney’s story a magician’s assistant (named Yen Sid, or Disney spelled backward) enlists an enchanted broomstick in his cleaning tasks. Rather than help however, the broom creates a flood of water. Not knowing how to control the magic broom the apprentice splits it in two with an axe. This creates an even bigger problem, as each piece takes up a pail and continues fetching water at double the speed. At the last moment, the sorcerer returns home and saves the day. Goethe ends his

⁶⁶ Frederick J. Dockstader, *The Kachina and the White Man: The Influences of White Culture on the Hopi Kachina Cult* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), p. 17, 120.

⁶⁷ Glenn Wessels, quoted in “Surrealism,” *Art Digest* 9 (15 October 1934): 17, as cited in Keith L. Eggener, “An Amusing Lack of Logic: Surrealism and Popular Entertainment,” *American Art* 7 (Summer 1993): 39.

poem with the sorcerer's statement that powerful spirits should only be called forth by a master magician. This declaration, *Die Geister, die ich rief* ("The spirits that I called"), is often used in Germany to describe a situation in which someone summons help that s/he cannot control.⁶⁸ Ernst has multiple personalities in this work; as a novice shaman in the form of the sorcerer's apprentice, as a hybridized mix of man and mouse, as an entertainer, a god, an artist, and as someone in need of help. Real magic is paired with movie magic, superficiality with depth, and humor with serious intent.

Ernst may also have personified himself in the kachina. We have already seen him acting as a father-like figure to a group of kachina dolls, there are also photographs of the artist in Arizona wearing a kachina-like mask (fig 57), and as an artist he mirrors the maker of the kachina figurine, the dancer himself. The 1948 book, *Max Ernst: Beyond Painting: And other Writings by the Artist and his Friends*, includes a short tribute written by the artist Matta. In it he describes Ernst's affinity to kachinas and goes on to describe his friend's connection to primitive societies:

The validity of Max Ernst's procedures is supported by the fact that the mind works the same way as in dreams. Certainly the mind works this way in primitive cultures. I am sure that a man could die in fire without *feeling* burnt. From the viewpoint of rational history this is unintelligible; to men in primitive societies it is self-evident. In this sense Max Ernst is a primitive man....⁶⁹

Consequently, the kachina would stand in for Ernst as primitive man.

I would like to suggest yet another reference inherent in *Mickey's Ascension*. Ernst may have been making a witty allusion to the French ethnographer Marcel Mauss—M. Mouse—with his use of the cartoon character. Mauss was a very influential

⁶⁸ Tom Dirks, "Review of *Fantasia*," [www.filmsite.org](http://www.filmsite.org/fant2.html) (<http://www.filmsite.org/fant2.html>.)

⁶⁹ Robert Motherwell, editor, *Max Ernst: Beyond Painting and other Writings by the Artist and his Friends* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., 1948), p. 194.

figure in Paris when Ernst lived there in the 1920s and 30s. Mauss's book *The Gift* (1925), thought to be among his most important works, concentrated on his theory of "gift exchange." It explored the religious, legal, economic and mythological aspects of giving, receiving and repaying in different cultures.⁷⁰ In Chapter II of *The Gift* there is a section on "Honour and Credit" which uses the potlatch of the Indians of the Northwest coast of America as an example of gift-exchange. The focus of this discussion is on "the obligation to receive and the obligation to make a return."⁷¹ With this in mind, it may be that Ernst intended his allusion to Mauss as a gift of recognition and honor, or perhaps the lack of "return" that Native Americans had received from white Americans.

Mickey's Ascension, then, is a multi-layered work that embodies primitive ritual and Christianity, evokes the artist in multiple personas (shaman, entertainer, and apprentice in the forms of kachina, Mickey, bird), refers to popular culture, the art world, ethnographic literature, and displays dada and surreal juxtapositions that realign reality, positioning the modern versus the primitive in numerous variations. Even the juxtaposition of the two-dimensional Mickey and the three-dimensional kachina becomes significant in this loaded work.

But *Mickey's Ascension*, produced in 1969, can also be understood as a political statement. Events in the previous year had intensified global opposition to the United States government's aggressive policies at home and abroad, provoking demonstrations against the Vietnam War on every continent. In February 1968 the Associated Press released the now infamous photograph of a Viet Cong guerilla fighter being shot in the

⁷⁰Christopher Winters, "Mauss, Marcel," *International Dictionary of Anthropologists* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), pp. 462-463.

⁷¹ Marcel Mauss, translated by Ian Cunnison, *The Gift* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967), p. 37.

head by Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan. This dramatic image was followed in March with information about the My Lai massacre; in April with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.; and in June with the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. Living in France, Ernst would have not only been aware of these reports, but would have been privy to news about the on-again, off-again peace talks that began in Paris in 1968 and continued for over five years. If *Mickey's Ascension* is read from an anti-war perspective, the seemingly harmless cartoon character becomes a symbol for foolishness. Smiling, friendly, wearing the white gloves of civility, Ernst's Mickey is as clueless as the sorcerer's apprentice and just as capable of mayhem and destruction. His aspiration to rise above all others, however, is ominous, revealing the American appetite for power and position. In this sense then, Mickey's creator, Walt Disney, is an evil God posing in the guise of an entertaining huckster. And the Native American, as represented in the kachina, maintains a quiet reserve, subject to the meddling Mickey but inherently stronger and more grounded.

An allusion to American power is also discernable in Mickey's preoccupation with the moon.⁷² Eyes lifted in the direction of the lunar form that occupies the top right corner in the mixed media work, Mickey anticipates arriving at this higher site. Produced in 1969, *Mickey's Ascension* perhaps also refers to the landing of an American space craft on the moon. On July 21, 1969, the astronaut Neil Armstrong announced to the world, "The Eagle has landed." Given Ernst's connection to the Eagle (of which he was "born") the artist was probably amused by Armstrong's words, yet also mindful that the United States was planting an American flag on new real estate. The establishment of such a

⁷² Dr. Janice Simon noticed this connection and brought it to my attention.

“claim” substantiated the dominance of the United States, provoking Ernst to offer his clever commentary.

Rather than just a far away observer of the exotic who learned through books movies and museum displays, Ernst had the opportunity to experience the Indian Other firsthand. While living outside his native Europe, he became an Other himself, a transplant in a land familiar from childhood stories, yet new and different. But like even his most learned colleagues (such as Wolfgang Paalen), he maintained a practice that was mired in romantic ideas of an idyllic Indian. He chose not to see, or at least not to represent, the Indian of the reservation as anything but pure and spirituality superior. Ernst focused on the magic of the native and the landscape rather than the hardship, appropriating designs, themes and symbols into his work in a manner not all that different from his predecessors. It is ironic that Ernst, who was erudite, sharp-witted and aware of some of the most forward-thinking anthropologists and ethnologists of his time, would be so limited in his understanding of the Native American. It is as if the very privilege of his position prevented deeper insight.

Though the multiple references in Ernst’s work may occasionally hint at a unfavorable position vis-à-vis America (as in *Mickey’s Ascension*), it seems clear that the artist rarely used the Indian Other as a tool for a critique of the United States. Unlike Macke and Schlichter, Ernst did not even directly portray an Indian figure. He summons the Indian in the form of a kachina, or through more abstract means, such as patterns, symbols and details that suggest the Native American source. This distances the material, allowing for a more universal reading. Forms evoke kachina tabletas and Catholic mitres, cornhusk masks and simplified bird heads, scientific illustrations and

Mimbres bowl decorations. The eclecticism of the pre-World War I artists now finds visual expression on the canvas, allowing open-ended interpretation rather than specificity. Operating within these broadened parameters, the message embraces the potential for oppositional readings. Joseph Beuys, who came of age as an artist shortly after Ernst moved to Arizona, wholeheartedly accepted the challenge of such a dichotomous position.

CHAPTER FOUR

DO I LIKE AMERICA? POST-WORLD WAR PERFORMANCE BY JOSEPH BEUYS

From Thursday, May 23rd to Saturday, May 25th, 1974, Joseph Beuys lived and worked in the company of a live coyote.¹ This performance, or *aktion*² (action) as Beuys referred to it, was titled *I Like America and America Likes Me*, and it marked the opening of René Block's gallery on West Broadway in lower Manhattan. Perhaps initially motivated by internationally broadcast events such as the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee by members of the American Indian Movement (A.I.M.),³ Beuys utilized this opportunity to address "the psychological trauma point of the United States energy constellation—the whole American trauma with the Indian, the Red Man."⁴ For the German artist, the coyote was symbolic of the Native American who, like the disreputable animal, had a history of being persecuted and dispossessed.⁵ Filmed by Helmut Wietz and photographed by Caroline Tisdall, Beuys' performance with the coyote was eventually memorialized in a 1979 installation now in the collection of the Dia Center for the Arts, *From Berlin: News from the Coyote*. Beuys' last reference to the coyote is found in the title of a 1984 performance with Nam June Paik that was later released on video by Paik

¹ The performance was originally scheduled to last five days, from Tuesday, May 21 through Saturday, May 25, but was shortened.

² It is important to note that the term "aktion" was also used for any non-military campaign to further Nazi ideals of race, but most often referred to the assembly and deportation of Jews to concentration camps. See Holocaust Glossary (about.com) and numerous other Holocaust sites.

³ In addition to Wounded Knee II (1973), other highly publicized efforts by A.I.M. included the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs office in Washington, D.C. (1972) and the occupation of Alcatraz (1969-1971).

⁴ Beuys in Carin Kuoni, *Joseph Beuys in America: Writings and Interviews with the Artist* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990), p. 2. See also Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1979), p. 228.

⁵ Beuys may have recalled the fact that Karl May's characters repeatedly refer to coyotes in a negative manner. (i.e. "You're a coward," he said. "A mean coward, a coyote, as I told you before. You could have saved them all but you ran like a sneaking cur. I despise you." Karl May, *Winnetou: The Treasure of Nugget Mountain* (Goodyear, Arizona: The Diggory Press, 2007), p. 43.

as *Coyote III*. The following discussion of *I Like America and America Likes Me, From Berlin: News from the Coyote*, and *Coyote III* reveals the artist's own identification with the emblematic coyote, thus clearly linking the "civilized" German with the "primitive" Indian Other. Dichotomies exist throughout this body of work, such as "civilized" and "primitive," "victim" and "victimizer," "farce" and "tragedy," and "communication" and "miscommunication." They are but a few examples of the artist's strategy of embracing opposites, a flexible methodology that is at the heart of his Theory of Sculpture.⁶ This approach allowed him to accomplish several things: to offer critique on both obvious and implied levels, to allow himself a bit of a smokescreen, and to hint at the equality of difference. In addition to looking at Beuys' practice in relationship to the coyote, the ramifications of his self-identification with the Indian Other will be explored in this chapter.

Joseph Beuys began life in the lower Rhineland, in an area in northwest Germany near the Dutch border. He was obliged by the powers of his predominantly Catholic community to become a member of the Hitler Youth.⁷ He volunteered for the Luftwaffe in 1942 at the age of twenty-one, initially training as an aircraft radio operator, but later became a member of a combat bomber unit. On March 16, 1944, his JU87 dive bomber crashed in the Crimea. The pilot died, but Beuys, seriously injured, was found by a

⁶ Within his Theory of Sculpture Beuys listed the terms chaos, undetermined, organic, warm, and expansion in contrast to order, determined, crystalline, cold, and contraction. This oppositional framework could be explored with movement (*Bewegung*), which for him was fundamental in that it set all things in motion. Beuys described movement in the following statement: "The principle of resurrection, transforming the old structure, which dies or stagnates, into a vibrant, life-enhancing and soul—and spirit—promoting form. This is the expanded concept of art." Joseph Beuys quoted in Mark Rosenthal, *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments* (Houston, The Menil Collection, 2004), p. 25. Beuys' also characterized his work as social sculpture, an idea which emphasized a utopian belief that art could be used to help solve real social and cultural problems.

⁷ "Obliged" is the word commonly used to describe Beuys' participation in the Hitler Youth. This implies a lack of choice and is intended (especially when used by historians such as Mark Rosenthal) to alleviate the guilt of such an association. To believe otherwise is to expose the famous artist to accusations which are better left unsaid.

German search party and taken to a military hospital where he fully recovered. It is the germ of this experience that became part of the artist's much-studied myth—his tale of a tribe of Tartars⁸ who found him after the plane wreck and nursed him back to life.⁹

Had it not been for the Tartars I would not be alive today....They covered my body in fat to help it regenerate warmth, and wrapped it in felt as an insulator to keep the warmth in.¹⁰

Retrained after his recovery and stationed on the Western Front, Beuys and his unit were captured by the British and briefly held as prisoners in 1945. By the end of the war he had been awarded multiple medals for his service to the Third Reich, the structure of his face had been permanently altered and he bore a metal plate in his head (both injuries the result of his two plane crashes). The plate would cause him to adopt the practice of wearing what would become a signature felt hat, that together with a multi-pocketed fishing vest, became part of his permanent uniform.

In 1947 Beuys enrolled in the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie from which he graduated in 1951 as a master pupil of Ewald Mataré (who would later oppose Beuys' application to teach at the school).¹¹ For several years he remained in Düsseldorf until a

⁸ It is interesting to note that the Chinese term for the Tartars is "Dada," and though there is no evidence that Beuys was aware of this fact, it would most certainly amuse him.

⁹ Peter Nisbet investigated what he refers to as "the Story" (Beuys' rescue by the Tartars) and reveals that it did not come to light until late in 1968, and then was told with some reluctance and hesitation. He writes: "First, Beuys is clearly at pains to establish that his account is not necessarily factually true, that key experiences can be composed in part of imagined, intuited, subconscious elements—in this case, his experiences of images while unconscious. (It is this clearly articulated position, incidentally, which renders moot most attempts to discredit Beuys by positivist critiques of discrepancies, breaks in logic, and other inadequacies in the Story.) The second, quite remarkable aspect of this account is that nowhere does Beuys claim to have been wrapped in fat and felt." It is Tisdall's version of his story in the Guggenheim exhibition catalogue that introduces the medicinal aspects of the fat and felt. Peter Nisbet, "Crash Course: Remarks on a Beuys Story," in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy* (Sarasota, Florida: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2001), p. 10.

¹⁰ Tisdall, 1979, p. 16.

¹¹ Mataré succeeded in blocking Beuys' appointment for a professorship for three years. After his own appointment to the Academy in 1949 he had refused to teach on the premises because he believed the environment would negatively affect his work. See Matthew Rohan, "New Thoughts on Joseph Beuys', Early Development," *The Dumb Ox* (1979): 42. Mataré also was opposed to the number of remaining faculty members at the Kunstakademie who had been associated with the National Socialist Party. It seems

nervous breakdown in 1956 drove him to a rural retreat. It was 1960 when he returned, and only shortly thereafter when he again applied and was finally selected to become a professor at the Kunstakademie.¹² Among the faculty at the art school at that time was Nam June Paik, a member of the international Fluxus movement. Through Paik, Beuys met the founder of Fluxus, George Maciunas, who in the early 1960s was working on an American base in Weisbaden. Maciunas was described as “the chief” of Fluxus,¹³ a loose-knit group of artists who were engaged in multi-disciplinary explorations of art utilizing film, performance and music as modes of engagement. Beuys was immediately attracted to this social form of art-making, and participated in the first Fluxus festival in Düsseldorf in 1963. Over a two day period in February, Beuys presented *Siberian Symphony* and *Composition for 2 Musicians*. Various titles “performances” and “happenings” by Fluxus influenced artists, Beuys would settle on the term *aktion* for such work in the future.

In December 1964, Beuys, in an event planned to take place simultaneously with a similar performance in New York City by the American sculptor Robert Morris, completed an *aktion* titled, *The Chief*. The title can be understood as an ironic reference to George Maciunas, but also may allude to an Indian Chief (fig. 58). Wrapped head to toe in a blanket of felt, Beuys lay on the floor for nine hours. A dead hare extended from each end of the cylindrical form he made, creating a long diagonal line across the space.

entirely possible that Mataré, despite having been helpful to Beuys as a student, opposed Beuys for the teaching job because of his Nazi past.

¹² Much of the biographical information contained in the previous paragraphs was taken from the most recent chronology available: “Chronology and Selected Exhibition History,” from Mark Rosenthal’s *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments* (Houston and New Haven, CT: The Menil Collection & Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 150-201.

¹³ Artist Tomas Schmit is quoted as saying: “He [Maciunas] was no member, he was the chief.” Klaus Schrenk, *Upheavals, manifestos, manifestations: conceptions in the arts at the beginning of the sixties: Berlin, Düsseldorf, Munich* (Cologne: DuMont, 1984), p. 42.

In effect, the blanket that enveloped his body refers not only to an Indian Chief, but also to the sacred medicine bundles of Native Americans.¹⁴ Containing animal furs, skins, bones and other “charms” or fetishes, these bundles were used by various members of the tribe, but were especially important for shamans.¹⁵

It is clear that Beuys was aware of medicine bundles. He made a drawing in 1962 titled *Shaman's Bundle (Bündel des Schamanen)*, that is now in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna (fig. 59). This reference to shamans is not unique in Beuys' works on paper. As early as 1954 he produced a watercolor titled *In the Shaman's House*, and a drawing show in 1983 at the Victoria and Albert Museum featured a selection of shaman-related images: *Shaman*, 1958; *Trance in the House of the Shaman*, 1961; *Dance of the Shaman*, 1961; *The Shaman's Material Moves*, 1961; *Shaman*, 1965; *Shaman*, 1973; and *Stripes from the House of the Shaman*, 1980. In the catalogue for the exhibition, essayist Anne Seymour discusses Beuys' relationship to shamanism, writing that the artist “has clearly read a good deal about the role of the Shaman and about religious and magic practices in primitive tribes.” She goes on to link his interest to “the Shamanism of the Tartars or other Russian tribes he could have had contact with while flying aeroplanes during the war.”¹⁶ This connection is solidified with a story that Beuys tells of a childhood game in which he played Genghis Khan, the historic commander of the Mongol Empire who led, among others, the Crimean Tartars.

¹⁴ The initial recognition of the similarity between the wrapped Beuys and a Native American medicine bundle came from Dr. Evan Firestone.

¹⁵ Ronald Johnson, *The Art of the Shaman* (Iowa City: The University of Iowa Museum of Art, 1973), p. 9.

¹⁶ Anne Seymour, “The Drawings of Joseph Beuys,” in *Joseph Beuys Drawings* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983), p. 12. That catalogue does not mention this connection, but it worth noting that Anne Seymour is married to Anthony d’Offay, whose gallery represented the work of Joseph Beuys in London. Anthony d’Offay facilitated the exhibition and eventual purchase of a room-sized installation by Beuys entitled *Stripes from the House of Shaman*, 1980, that is part of the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Australia.

Seymour eventually brings a variety of drawings under the shamanistic umbrella, including images of a blacksmith, figures wearing hats, and depictions of stags and shepherds. The specificity that Seymour assigns to Beuys' relationship to Russian shamanism is interesting if one considers the artist's reference to Kandinsky as being an important influence for him.¹⁷ Peg Weiss has written that the objects of primitive cultures that most influenced Kandinsky were "the products of the shamanistic societies of the Lappish and Finno-Ugric North and Greater Siberia." Prefiguring Beuys, Kandinsky identified shamanism as a metaphorical conduit for transformation, locating within it the possibility for an escape from "the 'dark continent' of modern times."¹⁸ Kandinsky's interest in universality, however, motivated him to include a wide variety of references—fairy tales, Christian imagery, art of the Americas, African artifacts, children's artwork, music, and many other cultural and historical objects and ideas. Similarly, Beuys found inspiration in multiple sources. In fact, I would argue that Beuysian shamanism, which perhaps was initiated by whatever he experienced in the Crimea, is actually more general than Seymour suggests. One of Beuys' drawings in the London show, *Shaman*, 1958, depicts a tall, slender, nude man holding a compass-like instrument in each hand (fig. 60). A paddle form crosses his body at a slight angle. His face is striped with lines that show directional movement but also evoke war paint or some other facial decoration. His appearance is distinctly unlike a Russian shaman (see figs. 61 and 62 for a visual comparison), evoking instead a medicine man from a warmer

¹⁷ Rosenthal, p. 25 and n. 28 (p. 126).

¹⁸ Peg Weiss, *Kandinsky and Old Russia: The Artist as Ethnographer and Shaman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. xvi. According to Weiss, p. xvii, Kandinsky created at least two alter-egos, identifying with St. George and the shaman.

climate, such as a Brazilian shaman. Another drawing in the same catalogue is titled *Sequoia*, 1949 (fig. 63). Named after the historic inventor of the Cherokee alphabet, the pencil and watercolor image features two kneeling Indians in front of a teepee in a landscape that includes a boat, a rainbow and a sunburst form, and it marks the earliest published reference to Indians in Beuys' work.¹⁹

It is possible that Beuys formed his idea of shamanism from Mircea Eliade's study *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, which was first published in France in 1951.²⁰ Eliade maintained that the term "shamanism" should not be restricted to the practitioners of the sacred in Siberia and Central Asia, but should cover a collection of phenomena that share a common structure and history.²¹ Eliade also wrote that one of the most common themes in shamanism is ritual death and resurrection, a transfiguration that is often repeated. "The ability to 'die' and come to life again [...] denotes that [the shaman] has surpassed the human condition."²² Further, he is capable of mythic acts, such as communicating with animals.²³ This description of shamanism is directly applicable to Beuys and is acted out in *The Chief*.

Among the other elements included in *The Chief* are a coil of electrical wiring that led to a speaker, two wedge-shaped blocks of margarine (one pressed into the crevice between the floor and the wall and another fixed into a corner), two small fetish-like objects (a tuft of hair and two fingernails), and two copper rods partially wrapped in felt.

¹⁹ The sunburst and boat forms are reminiscent of elements in Kandinsky's work. See, for example, *Red Oval*, 1920, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

²⁰ *Le Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris: Librairie Payot, 1951). Willard Trask's English translation was published by Bollingen in 1964, and again in 1972 and 1974 in association with Princeton University Press.

²¹ Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press and Bollingen, 1927), p. 187.

²² Eliade, p. 102.

²³ Eliade, p. 63.

Experimental electronic music by the Danish composers Erik Andersen and Henning Christiansen was playing on two tape recorders accompanied by amplified animal-like sounds that Beuys made from inside his blanketed shelter. Members of the audience were in the next room where they could watch, listen and wait. Beuys came out of his cocoon around midnight and the *aktion* ended.

He later explained that his experience of being immobilized in a tightly wrapped blanket of felt was “parallel to the old initiation [ritual] of the coffin, a form of mock death.” He went on to talk about the amount of discipline it took to keep from panicking due to the isolation, and the claustrophobia and pain of being in the same swaddled position for so long. Beuys concluded that, “in a way it’s a death, a real action and not an interpretation.”²⁴ That Beuys insisted on referring to his actions as “real” perhaps serves to emphasize his desire that his own rebirth (located in his resurrection by the Tartars), be understood as equally authentic. The symbolic, shamanistic death of *The Chief* may also be seen as an early attempt by the artist to address the demise of the American Indian.

The mimicry of death in *The Chief* also recalls a prominent theme in *The Golden Bough*, James G. Frazer’s highly influential multiple-volume study of myth and religion first published in 1890. Subsequent work on the book produced a slimmer version by 1922, which was translated and published in Germany by 1928 (*Der goldene Zweig*). The impact that Frazer’s work had on early twentieth-century thinking is undeniable. Ludwig Wittgenstein, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Robert Graves, Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade (who learned English so that he could read Frazer in the original language), and many others read and studied *The Golden Bough*. Art historian Stephen Polcari, in his book on the philosophical underpinnings of the American Abstract

²⁴ Beuys in Tisdall, *Beuys* (1979), p. 95.

Expressionists, repeatedly cites Frazer as having been important to this group of artists for ideas regarding birth, death, rebirth and mystical knowledge.²⁵ Similarly, Thomas McEvelley noted the importance of Frazer for performance art in the 1960s and 70s, claiming that many artists found “shamanistic material and primitive initiation rites” relevant to their work.²⁶ According to him, “the works most commonly mentioned as influential are Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*...and Mircea Eliade[’s] *Shamanism*...”²⁷ Among the artists McEvelley discussed are Chris Burden, Carolee Schneemann, Hermann Nitsch, Yves Klein, Linda Montano and Joseph Beuys.

Through a myriad of stories from different cultures and geographical locations, Frazer describes the many groups who practiced a ritual killing of a king-like figure in order to insure the continued salvation of their community. Within this rite the killing may be real or mimed, and the offering is often made in the form of a substitute, a scapegoat. In citing examples of how scapegoats are utilized, Frazer relates a story about the Pomos of California who “celebrate an expulsion of devils every seven years.” The devils, disguised men from the community, create a “terrific spectacle” before they are finally subdued. Frazer writes:

As a conclusion of the whole farce, the men summon courage, the devils are expelled from the assembly-house and with a prodigious row and racket of sham fighting are chased away into the mountains.²⁸

²⁵ Stephen Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 41, among other citations. It is not surprising that an aspiring artist in the 1950s would be inspired by reading the same material as the Abstract Expressionists who were achieving worldwide attention during this decade. But it is also worth noting that Frazer’s study would have been important to Beuys regardless of its currency due to his strong interest in mythology and mysticism.

²⁶ Thomas McEvelley, “Art in the Dark,” *Artforum* 21 (Summer 1983): 64.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71. The paperback version of *The Golden Bough* to which McEvelley refers was published by MacMillan in 1963.

²⁸ James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: The Roots of Religion and Folklore* (reprint, New York: Avenel Books, 1981. Originally published: London: Macmillan, 1890), Volume II, p. 183.

This notion of farce seems applicable to Beuys' *aktionen*. In the case of *The Chief*, his "mock death" is comparable to the theatrical expulsion of the Pomo tribe's mock devils. The ritual behavior suggested in this Frazerian reading of mimed death takes a satirical turn if we understand that Beuys may be ceremonially "killing off" Maciunas in order to disassociate from Fluxus (a rather elaborate art joke that plays on the movement's desire to offer "art-amusement"²⁹), and it gives the artist the chance to comment demonstrably on foolishness itself.

Beuys is not generally acknowledged as a funny man, but a former student of his, Jörg Immendorff, told curator Robert Storr in a 2005 interview that "[Beuys] had an amazing sense of humor" and he was highly "self-ironic...he liked to play." Further, he felt the understanding of Beuys' work "went in the wrong direction" after his death.³⁰ Immendorff's comments find reinforcement in an article by Gerhard Theewen in which he tells one tale after another of the artist's tendency to poke fun at everything and everyone, including himself.³¹ This ironic aspect of Beuys' personality is important to recognize as it serves as the reverse side of the more familiar characterization of him as a serious activist and self-appointed healer.

Beuys' political views prevented him from visiting the United States until American troops were withdrawn from Vietnam. Consequently, despite his growing

²⁹ Rosemary O'Neill, "In the Spirit of Fluxus," *Art Journal* 53 (Spring 1994): 90.

³⁰ Robert Storr, "Of Politics and Painting: A Conversation with Jörg Immendorff," *Art in America* (June-July 2005): 135.

³¹ Gerhard Theewen, "Beuys und der Humor: oder darf ein Künstler (über sich selbst) lachen?," *Kunstforum International*, 120 (1992): 114-132. Theewen mentions, in particular, a text-based work Beuys produced after his 1974 visit to America, entitled "Professor Joseph Beuys: Institut for Cosmetic Surgery; Speciality: Buttocklifting." His desire seems to be that viewers get off their backside and become socially active and engaged. Following his unsuccessful attempt to communicate his ideas during his lecture tour earlier in the year, it is not surprising that he targets an English-speaking audience, not a German one.

fame in Europe, it was January 1974 before he accepted the invitation of New York City art dealer, Ronald Feldman, to travel to the States for a series of public dialogues in New York City, Chicago and Minneapolis. Beuys came to America with certain preconceptions, just as the American art world greeted him with a predetermined understanding that provoked both awe and suspicion. Though put in contact with many individuals and audiences during his well-attended tour, Beuys left with a sense that most had failed to understand his ideas. There was a gap. He commented that Americans were rather naïve or “innocent” of their ways—energetic, optimistic, but also materialistic, and somewhat literal and short-sighted.³² So while he titled his first American performance, *I Like America and America Likes Me*, he knew neither sentiment was wholly true.

The invitation for *I Like America and America Likes Me* is a tonal inversion of the photograph from the poster for the American lecture tour he made several months earlier—a striking head shot (fig. 64). What was once black became white, and what was white became black (fig. 65). Looking more like a negative (the originating source for a photographic print) this image now suggested metaphoric readings that range from the literal to the poetic. Negative, as in the negative press reactions to his conversations with the American art audience; negative as in his own negative reactions to the boorish behavior of some of the people who went to his lectures (one only has to watch the tape of his New York City appearance at the New School Auditorium to get a feeling for the misguided, self-righteous and often embarrassing behavior of the attendees); negative versus positive, a study in contradiction; negative as in denial (denial of liberty, denial of truth). The image also is similar to an x-ray, providing an immediate connection to the

³² Tisdall, p. 95.

ambulance in which he arrived and departed from René Block's New York City gallery, and thus implies examination and healing.³³

The invitation is made even more remarkable by the script used for the title of the performance, *I Like America and America Likes Me*. The chosen font, Fraktur, is synonymous with Germany, and even more particularly with the Reichsmark. It is notable that the Nazi Party banned the Fraktur font in 1941 as being too Jewish, labeling it "Schwabach Jewish script."³⁴ That Beuys chose a quintessentially German type associated with money and with an anti-Semitic ban is illuminating in that the *aktion* announced on the poster was, in part, a commentary on American greed. By using Fraktur, Beuys called attention to both avarice and the racism inherent in stereotyping. Given his intent to address the "American trauma with the Indian," it becomes possible to read this choice of font as a means of equating the Holocaust with the United States government's treatment of Native Americans.

That Beuys connected greed and American capitalism is not surprising, as this was a persistent message of Fascist propaganda. Films like *The Emperor of California* (*Der Kaiser von Kalifornien*), released in Germany in 1936, retold an already popular story of German immigrant, Johann August Sutter (or Suter). Directed by the Nazi filmmaker Luis Trenker, the movie was loosely based on the true story of Sutter's discovery of gold on his property in California. This find led to the Gold Rush of 1848 and eventually resulted in the loss of his business and his land. Offering the "symbolic

³³ Although this visual connection originates with me, it is also mentioned in a newly published essay by Eugen Blume, "Joseph Beuys, I Like America and America Likes Me," in *I Like America* exhib. cat. (Prestel/Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 2006) p. 359.

³⁴ This fact is mentioned in Blume, p. 368, fn 18: In the so-called "Normalschrifterlass" (Declaration of standard type), issued by Adolph Hitler on January 3, 1941, by way of Martin Bormann to all German government offices, Fraktur was replaced by roman type as the "standard type."

ingredients for a critique of unrestrained American capitalism,” as well as providing a way of comparing European cultural values to those of the Americans, the film was hugely popular.³⁵ Beuys, who would have been about fifteen years old when *The Emperor of California* came out, recalled knowing the story of Sutter’s gold.³⁶ The lessons of such films, internalized at an early age, were reinforced in the years following World War II when America led the world as an economic and political power.³⁷

Beuys saw materialism and greed as being at the heart of the United States government’s treatment of their native population and thus called for an intervention—a confrontation that would precipitate healing. With this goal in mind, he began the action *I Like America and America Likes Me* the moment he arrived in New York City. Beuys was met at the airport, wrapped in felt and placed in an ambulance that delivered him to Rene Block’s West Broadway space (a pioneer in what would later become a fashionable gallery district called Soho) (fig. 66). The ambulance was naturally marked with the word EMERGENCY and with a red cross (which was, by then, a well-known symbol for the artist).³⁸ When Beuys reached the gallery, he emerged from the felt and declared himself both transported and transformed. After having certain adjustments made to the space, the performance between the artist and the coyote began.

³⁵ Christopher Frayling, *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone*, (London, New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1981, 1998), p. 5.

³⁶ “The only story I know about California is the Sutter story, the gold of Sacramento.” Joseph Beuys in conversation with Edit deAk and Alan Moore, published in “Some Words with Joseph Beuys,” *Some artists, for example Joseph Beuys* (Riverside: University of California, Riverside, 197[5]), unpaginated.

³⁷ It is also worth noting that Karl May characterized gold negatively, citing it as a substance that caused men to behave foolishly and commit disgraceful acts in its pursuit. In *Winnetou* there is an entire chapter devoted to “The Curse of the Gold.”

³⁸ The cross that is found on many of Beuys’ works has most often been associated with the red cross of emergency help. It is worth noting, however, that a similar cross marked the Stuka that the artist flew. Dr. Janice Simon suggested that the cross also signified the cruciform found in Native American imagery that represents the four directions (east, west, north, south) and/or the four elements (air, water, fire, earth). She also pointed out the redness of the cross in regard to the “Red Man.”

Recalling *The Chief*, in *I Like America* Beuys used his body as both sculptural form and as a gatherer of energy.³⁹ Draped in felt like the proverbial Indian chief in his blanket, the crook of a cane protruded above his head through the cone or tee-pee shape his cloaked form made (fig. 67). This antenna was intended to both seek out and to receive signals from the animal. He followed the coyote with his cane/head tracking the animal's movements. After an extended dance between the two characters, usually lasting between one and a quarter to three hours, Beuys collapsed sideways on the wooden floor. From this momentarily inert position, Beuys later sprang up, simultaneously casting off his felt wrap.⁴⁰ He then struck three notes on the triangle that hung from his waist. A short silence ensued, followed by the taped sounds of a turbine engine from a recorder set outside of the fenced space occupied by Beuys and the coyote. When it ended, Beuys tossed his brown leather gloves to the coyote to play with, neatly restacked the newspapers and then took a break, chatting with a friend in the audience or drinking a glass of Hawaiian Punch.⁴¹ He then retreated to his straw pile to have a quiet cigarette. The coyote usually joined him and they would rest together harmoniously. Then Beuys stood up, retrieved his gloves, cane and flashlight, wrapped himself in felt and the sequence would start again. The two repeated this well over thirty times in the three-day period, the mood and tone of which were reported to be never quite the same.

³⁹ In *The Chief* Beuys wrapped body formed a bridge between two dead hares stretched out on either end, thus creating a connecting force that was akin to a giant battery. In *I Like America* he repeats this idea by projecting his cane from the apex of his standing wrapped figure. Reaching out to the coyote, he attempts to close the connection. Energy, then, is manifested through both the *aktion* and the sculptural configuration.

⁴⁰ Gene Ray suggests that Beuys' use of felt goes beyond the standard reference to his Tartar rescue. By wrapping himself in felt Beuys evoked "the old Christian ascetic tradition of donning a hair shirt to mortify the body and atone for sins." For more information on this and other Holocaust parallels in Beuys' work, see "Joseph Beuys and The After-Auschwitz Sublime," in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, (DAP & The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2001), pp. 55-74.

⁴¹ Knowing Beuys to be an inveterate joker, it may be possible to read his choice of Hawaiian Punch as a veiled allusion to Pearl Harbor and America's entrance in World War II. This, in essence, would have been the first step in his "re-birth."

Several props in this *aktion* are worth examining in detail. The cane that Beuys used as his antenna was a rather plain, wooden cane—a cylindrical rod with a curved hand piece. If one visually extends such an object, stretches the rod and lengthens and exaggerates the curve, it becomes an implement or tool such as a bishop’s crosier, a shepard’s crook or a vaudevillian hook that removes poor performers from the stage. From this one simple prop, one can find potential references to movement, religion, acting, punishment, and adaptation. More directly, Beuys reveals that, as a child, he “behaved like a shepherd; I went around with a staff, a sort of ‘Eurasian staff’ . . . , and I always had an imaginary herd gathered around me. I was really a shepherd who explored everything that happened in the vicinity. I felt very comfortable in this role in which I sought to immediately invent experiences I had had.”⁴²

This remembrance was recorded as an adult, and emphasizes the artist’s self-positioning as a Jesus-like figure, a shepherd guiding his flock, a man who rises from the dead to offer salvation. It also makes direct reference to both playing and acting, which can be read as a sly way of undermining the seriousness of his mythical persona. It is possible to find self-deprecating humor within the term “crook” and “Krummstab” (the German word for a staff which comes from the verbs *krummen* and *biegen*, which both imply bending and curving). A crook earns a living through dishonest methods, he or she effectively bends the rules. It is important to note here that Beuys identified with the gangster John Dillinger. During the lecture series that marked his first trip to the United States, Beuys stopped to pose in front of the Biograph Cinema in Chicago where Dillinger had been shot and killed (fig. 68). The concept of the gangster was

⁴² Gotz Adriani, Windfried Konnertz, Karin Thomas, translated by Patricia Lech. *Joseph Beuys, life and works*. (Woodbury, NY: Barron’s Educational Series, 1979), p. 13.

quintessentially American, an outlaw, not unlike the coyote or the American Indian in the mind of the German artist.

Yet another evocation of the coyote is suggested by the phallic shape of the cane.⁴³ The stiff rod with the rounded end that protrudes from the wrapped figure of Beuys makes a significant, though not indisputable, connection to the Winnebago Trickster cycle studied by Paul Radin. His now classic survey of the trickster in American Indian mythology presents a story in which the coyote must deal with his errant penis. In this tale, the coyote awakens one morning to find that his blanket is missing and that his penis is hard. He realizes moments later that his bed cloth is resting atop his extended penis, which is high in the air. He hauls it in, coiling it into a box which he attaches to his back before he wanders off.⁴⁴ In essence, the phallus is treated as a separate entity, an accouterment that can be carried like the proverbial third leg of a cane. Beuys' cane, then, also represents male-ness and thus emphasizes the idea of dominance (Alpha-dog, Man over animal, White man over Red man). This notion is equally evident in the coyote's response to the stack of fifty *Wall Street Journals* that were delivered to the gallery each day.⁴⁵ Ripping, tearing, clawing, pissing on and marking this symbol of the American economy provided a potent statement (fig. 69).⁴⁶

⁴³ David Levi Strauss describes the cane as "unavoidably phallic" in "American Beuys: *I Like America and America Likes Me*," *Art Criticism* 8 (1993): 6. [This article appeared earlier in *Parkett* 26 (December 1990): 124-136.]

⁴⁴ Paul Radin, *The Trickster: A Study in Native American Mythology*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁵ In addition to his use of the *Wall Street Journal*, Beuys is known to have made a reference to *The New York Times* during this same period. Shortly after or during the performance, *I Like America and America Likes Me*, Beuys produced a drawing on a double-page spread of *The New York Times* Financial section with American Stock Exchange reports on one page and the feature "Career Marketplace" on the other. Written in capital letters across the entire spread in brown paint is the work CAYEUTE. In pencil, Beuys added "I AM MANY" across the center, and below that in longhand, "I am many." Also in pencil along the bottom margin is "I am Joseph Beuys" and in the upper left "wolves" and "phantom wolves." The drawing includes the Popsicle stick that he used to paint CAYEUTE, and the residue of four squares of a chocolate bar. Linear triangles and solid triangles painted in brown are arranged across the middle and

Whether Beuys was aware of Radin's research is not known. However, he had read *The Voice of the Coyote*, J. Frank Dobie's study of the mythic status of the coyote that was known in American Indian lore as a trickster, a contradictory creature and a kind of negative hero.⁴⁷ The artist was quoted in 1979 as saying that "for the Indians, the coyote was one of the most mighty of a whole range of deities. He was an image of transformation, and like the hare and the stag in Eurasian myths, he could change his state from the physical to the spiritual and vice versa at will."⁴⁸ The trickster is something of a shaman, or as Carl Jung described him, "a wounded wonder that is the agent of healing, the sufferer [who] takes away suffering."⁴⁹ Coyote tricksters are portrayed as being capable of stupid, senseless acts and, conversely, as having innate wisdom. Dobie makes the point that, despite the Indian's reverence for the coyote, it never evolved into "an unrelieved sacred cow," remarking that "a sense of humor in the Indian and the coyote would prevent any such absurdity." He writes:

In tribal lore, the coyote assumes three characters. As mythological creator, he is revered. As cunning trickster, often exercising magical power, he is admired. As dupe of all the other animals, the master trickster in reverse, utterly fallen from his original estate, he is mocked. The Indian laughs endlessly at the dupe; he never laughs at the revered being. Coyote is the single name for these opposites in character.⁵⁰

These oppositions are played out in *I Like America and America Likes Me*.

upper area on the left side and center and have been described as "numerous geometrical figures arranged in relationship to the letters as if on a scaffold." This drawing is depicted and described in *Some artists, for example Joseph Beuys*, unpaginated.

⁴⁶ Beuys described the Wall Street Journals as representative of "the tyranny exerted by money and power." Quoted by David Adams in "Joseph Beuys: Pioneer of a Radical Ecology," *Art Journal* 51, 2 (Summer 1992): 32. Originally from Tisdale, *Beuys*, p. 84.

⁴⁷ Blume notes that "Beuys had read thoroughly about the role of the coyote in J. Frank Dobie, *The Voice of the Coyote*, n.p., 1970; the book was in his library at the time of his death." See Blume, p. 368, no. 6.

⁴⁸ Tisdale, 1979, p. 228.

⁴⁹ Carl Jung, "On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure," in Paul Radin, *The Trickster*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 207.

⁵⁰ J. Frank Dobie, *The Voice of the Coyote* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 272.

Mark Rosenthal equates Beuys with the trickster described by Lewis Hyde in his book *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art*—“an inherently amoral transgressor, impersonating people or animals while toying with the audience.” This relatively critical comparison belies a later remark by Rosenthal in which he associates Beuys with John Lennon and Bob Dylan, artists who cared deeply about social causes.⁵¹ The diverse nature of these two comments—applying both amoral and honorable characteristics to the same man—is explained in a third observation that Beuys’ “true self” was hopelessly hidden” in the multiple roles and disguises he assumed.⁵² This inability to categorize Beuys decisively serves to illustrate further the paradox that is central to his practice, and echoes Dobie’s description of coyote as creator/trickster/dupe.

If both the coyote and Beuys can be linked to the mythological trickster with a capacity for transformation and mischief, is it not then also possible to equate Beuys with the coyote in terms of victimization? It cannot be ignored that Beuys arrived at the gallery in a vehicle usually reserved for the sick and injured. This image of Beuys as one who has suffered not only bonds him to Native Americans and the coyote, it also echoes the Jungian definition of a trickster, “the sufferer [who] takes away suffering.” The idea that Beuys identifies with the coyote/trickster is significant. On one level he is the powerless victim and the object of ridicule. On another, he is an empowered mediator.

This duality is apparent in both the cane and the gloves Beuys used in his performance with the coyote. The cane could serve as a weapon should the coyote threaten him in any way, just as the gloves similarly offered protection. Unlike the felt that wraps the artist in a soft, fur-like layer of equality, the gloves run counter to the

⁵¹ Rosenthal, p. 13.

⁵² Rosenthal, p. 24. Lewis Hyde quote from *Trickster Makes This World: Myth and Art* (New York: North Point Press, 1998), p. 73.

artist's stated desire to communicate and to make amends. His need for gloves reveals the vulnerability of the human to the animal, but the way in which Beuys casually tosses them to the coyote after each contact, quickly re-establishes the hierarchy of man over animal, owner over "pet." The gloves become toys for the coyote, distractions from the man while he makes human contact. When Beuys strips away the felt and gloves, and puts down the cane and flashlight he is no longer in costume. He transforms from performer/shaman/trickster to man. The coyote is an abandoned partner, unable to shed his role.

In addition to its associations with ideas of male dominance, Beuys' relationship with the coyote has also been read as maternal. Andrea Duncan, a British theoretician who participated in a critical symposium on Beuys presented by the Tate Gallery Liverpool in 1995, found that the artist revealed a feminist preoccupation with abjection in dealing with the coyote that could be seen as a "prerequisite for nurturing and survival."⁵³ The ritual of cleaning or straightening up the scattered newspapers, and the artist's decision to allow the coyote to have the softer felt bed while he rested on straw suggest a care-taking role—a position of service that stands in contrast to previous allusions to absolute control.

If the coyote is understood to be a stand-in for the maligned American Indian, then the act of caring for him as a part of the healing process makes sense. But it is also possible to see Beuys' self-assigned duties as a form of infantilization of the coyote/Red Man. Or, again, one could impose the roles of owner and pet. The structure of the relationship between Beuys and the coyote recalls the pattern of early twentieth-century

⁵³ David Thistlewood, "Joseph Beuys 'Open Work': Its Resistance to Holistic Critiques," introduction to *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*. (Liverpool University Press and Tate Gallery of Liverpool, 1995), p. 13.

Primitivism, wherein the European maintained a superior position. Thus, despite Beuys' identification with the Indian Other, the Native American as represented by the coyote remains someone who must be feared and/or protected. Like a lion tamer or elephant handler, Beuys' performance with the "wild" coyote serves to entertain the audience, and in this sense, the Indian Other is revisited as an exotic spectacle.

Beuys had worked with animals before, but his primary and most famous animal companion, the hare, was always dead on arrival to the stage. Dead things can be manipulated at will, like a child dragging a stuffed animal around by one ear. The soft, limp body could be arranged in sculptural formations or could be propped in his lap and lectured to—no resistance, no interplay, no real communication. Working with a live animal was something altogether different as Beuys was forced to establish a conditional relationship with the coyote. His success in that task can be measured by the relative comfort each of them appeared to feel in the unnatural setting. True to the reputation of the species, the coyote adapted to his environment and settled into a temporary pact of trust with the man who shared his space. This perhaps becomes the first step in Beuys' goal to lift metaphorically the "trauma," with coexistence as a suggested path to healing. But in reality, the coyote had been displaced from its normal habitat (perhaps not the assumed natural environment since it was a trained, and therefore, domesticated animal) but it was forced to participate in Beuys' drama. It lacked freedom and choice, not unlike Indians relocated to reservations. From this point of view, Beuys is painted as a victimizer and linked to American and German culpability.

Like Beuys, the filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (1935-present) sought revelatory and curative elements in his work. Wanting to provide a space in which

Germans could recall aspects of their past that had been consciously and unconsciously repressed, Syberberg offered his films as much as a form of therapy as entertainment and commentary.⁵⁴ In January 1974, five months prior to Beuys' action *I Like America and America Likes Me*, Syberberg released *Karl May*, part of a trilogy that included a film about Hitler (1977) and another about the Mad King of Bavaria, Ludwig (1972). With kitschy dream sequences and flash-backs, May is revealed to be somewhat of a flake, but Syberberg also suggests "a relationship between the success of May's synthetic mythologies and the rise of Nazism."⁵⁵ In *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory and Film in Postwar Germany*, Eric L. Santner writes:

Both of the filmmakers I have discussed [Edgar Reitz and Syberberg] have taken important steps in this labor of recollecting a cultural identity out of the stranded objects of a poisoned past. Both have recognized that without the intermediate area of play, the symbolic space of ritual and aesthetic experience, there can be no leave-taking and thus no transition toward a more flexible and open (i.e. nonparanoid) cultural identity. Reitz and Syberberg have understood that one does not relinquish patterns of behavior, ideas, or fantasies simply because one is told they are wrong, immoral, or even self-destructive. To relinquish something requires a labor of mourning, and mourning requires a space in which its elegiac procedures can unfold.⁵⁶

That Syberberg is understood as an artist who delves into the past in order to allow healing in the present provides a useful parallel to Beuys' practice, though the filmmaker was clearly more direct in resurrecting German history. The first film in his trilogy is about the famously decadent monarch, Ludwig II. Syberberg depicts Ludwig as a helpless visionary who opposed industrialized progress and modernization and lived in a self-created fantasy world, accompanied by the strains of Wagnerian opera. Ludwig has

⁵⁴ Eric L. Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany*. (Ithica and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 151.

⁵⁵ Frayling, p. 104.

⁵⁶ Santner, p. 151.

futuristic visions of Hitler and of Walt Disney, the latter in the Disney-fication of his castle home, Neuschwanstein.⁵⁷ In an often surreal series of tableaux, Syberberg takes aim at both fascism and consumer capitalism. In *Karl May*, yet another eccentric is presented, this time focusing on the famous German author. The final sequence of the film is described as a transfiguration.

May is laid out behind the Villa Shatterhand on a table of stone before a full-sized tepee; beside him his second wife, Klara, herself dressed as squaw-in-mourning, sits silently; snow blows in through the broken glass roof of this Indian burial site transplanted to a German greenhouse like a rare tropical plant. In the background is a musical citation from Liszt: the *Siegesfanfare* that was used in the Third Reich to accompany radio announcements of German military victories.⁵⁸

Germans, particularly those in intellectual circles, would have been well aware of Syberberg's work. The personal impact of films such as *Karl May* on Beuys is unknown, but the confluence of their ideas is significant. Both sought to pick at the wound, "extracting a tooth to show its state of decay."⁵⁹ Both used symbolic figures to represent nationalistic ideas. Both focused, to one extent or another, on pretense and simulation. Syberberg presented Ludwig, May and Hitler as bizarre personalities, placing them in farcical situations of their own making, the irrationality of which was particularly terrifying in the case of the Nazi leader.

Beuys created his own absurdist drama in *I Like America* by attempting to communicate with a coyote. Intent on healing an American trauma, Beuys made an

⁵⁷ King Ludwig's castle Neuschwanstein is purportedly the basis for Walt Disney's fairy tale castle at Disneyworld.

⁵⁸ Santner, p. 122.

⁵⁹ Rosenthal, p. 68.

inherent connection to a German one, as it is impossible in this context to separate the genocide of the American Indian from the Holocaust. Gerd Gemünden observes that parallels can be drawn between the Indian and the Jew as both being victims of a white oppressor. He also argues that Germans who focus on repressed or marginalized people in a faraway country are utilizing a deflective strategy—avoiding their own guilt.⁶⁰ The logic goes: We were bad, but look, so were they. It is not so much a justification as it is exoneration by moral relativism.

Critic Benjamin Buchloh has written that Beuys' practice is, however, an attempt to pardon Nazi atrocities with work "acted out by a perfidious trickster." In a 1980 article following a large Beuys exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, Buchloh spits and rails against the former Nazi artist. Rather than awakening a sense of responsibility, Buchloh asserts that Beuys offers a "premature [reconciliation] for one of the most cruel and devastating forms of collective political madness that history has known."⁶¹ He saw the work as self-serving, simplistic and worse, unrepentant. Since the 1960s, studies or works referencing German fascism have often been considered suspect by historians and critics. The implication is that this particular focus acts as a quiet form of glorification. Anything that can in any way be understood as sentimental in relation to Hitler, Nazism, German nationalism or the Holocaust is problematic. Anyone knowledgeable about the rise of German Neo-Expressionism in the early 1980s is aware of the major debates that surrounded work by Jörg Immendorff, Anselm Kiefer, and others. These artists were

⁶⁰ Gerd Gemünden, *Framed Visions: Popular Culture, Americanization and the Contemporary German and Austrian Imagination* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 110.

⁶¹ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol: Preliminary Notes for a Critique," *Artforum* (January 1980): p. 38.

blasted for their use of swastikas and other potent icons and symbols (even though their employment was a form of critique).

It was Beuys who informed the work of Immendorff and Kiefer. He was the first to refer to and find value in German myths and legends, and used them to pose questions about postwar German identity. By alluding to a more primitive, pre-industrial German culture, Beuys accomplished two quite different goals. Like August Macke and Emil Nolde, he actively encouraged a connection with nature, a return to a purer state, a rebirth. He also worked within what historian Gordon A. Craig describes as a “‘pervasive cultural pessimism,’ in which fear about Western Capitalism’s rapid advance led to an unrealistic sentimentality” for rural life.⁶²

On the face of it, Beuys’ transaction with the coyote can be seen as another exercise in “unrealistic sentimentality,” and a ridiculous act for which it is impossible to ascertain any level of effectiveness. Or one could see this *aktion* as an attempt to draw attention to a problem, to raise awareness—an act made possible by the artist’s elevated status.⁶³ Yet another way of reading *I Like America and America Likes Me* is as expressive therapy, an attempt by Beuys to affect the recognition of suffering by “performing grief.”⁶⁴ Drama therapy is used to address psychic injury, a trauma the memory represses. This suppressed memory of pain or violence can be stored in the body, and thus be triggered by physical actions that cause recognition or recall. The emotional release gained from this experience allows for a catharsis or healing to take

⁶² Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (New York: Putnam, 1982), pp. 123-24.

⁶³ Art historian Mark Rosenthal compares Beuys to John Lennon and Bob Dylan, artists who cared deeply about social causes. Rosenthal, p. 13.

⁶⁴ Jill Bennett connects this idea of “performing grief” in relationship to Doris Salcedo and Sandra Johnston in “Art, Affect and “Bad Death,”: Strategies for Communicating the Sense Memory of Loss,” *Signs* 28, 1 (Autumn 2002): 333-351.

place. Role-playing and mime are central to enacting a psychodrama, and these characteristic elements can be found in Beuys' performance with the coyote. Acting, whether as art star or healing practitioner, was decidedly a part of Beuys' methodology. This component of his practice is something he readily admitted, stating in a 1979 interview, "I'm part of the whole game myself. Basically all I'm selling is this performer here."⁶⁵

Much has been made of the dichotomy between Beuys the trickster/showman and Beuys the healer/shaman. Both Donald Kuspit and Benjamin Buchloh apply the trickster construct to examining Beuys, but produce different interpretations that are based on contradictory characteristics embodied in the mythological trickster. For Buchloh, Beuys is the deceiver, for Kuspit, he is the enlightened communicator.⁶⁶ This duality has been variously associated with the before and after life of Beuys (Nazi pilot to postwar artist), the division in Germany between the East and West states, and the split loyalties and ruptured psyches linked to this separation. For the purposes of this discussion, it can also be related to the gray nature of the trickster, who is himself, something of a shaman—neither good nor bad, black nor white, wholly serious nor completely comical. In *I Like America and America Likes Me*, Beuys takes aim at the western power structure, but from a position within the elite world of art. The trauma of the noble savage is brought to center stage by a German purportedly bent on righting a wrong. The conceit of this act is telling.

⁶⁵ "Ich bin ja mit in diesem ganzen Drama drin. Und ich verkaufe ja im Grunde auch nur einen Akteur." Joseph Beuys in conversation with Heiner Bastian and Jeannot Simmen, Düsseldorf, August 8, 1979. Both the original conversation in German and an English translation appear in *Joseph Beuys: Zeichnungen, Tekeningen, Drawings* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1979), p. 96 (English), p. 34 (German).

⁶⁶ Donald Kuspit, "Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman," in *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, p. 32.

If, however, one ascribes an ironic component to *I Like America*, it becomes possible to turn Beuysian conceit into self-effacement. He does, after all, link himself to a “negative hero”—the coyote. Rather than the polarizing claims by art historians like Buchloch and Kuspit, it is more than likely that the artist identified with both the shaman and the showman, his altruism tempered with a touch of mischievousness (a trait shared with the trickster). Though this roguish quality stems, in part, from the artist’s personality, the performative aspect evolved from Dada/Fluxus anti-authoritarianism.

Dada sought to thwart logic, reason, authority, and tradition and thus challenge bourgeois values. Dada artists used buffoonery and provocative behavior to shock and disrupt the complacency of their audience. This same anarchic approach was fundamental to the Fluxus artists with whom Beuys worked in the 1960s. It is not surprising that Beuys would reject both the fascist government of his youth and the dominance of American military power in the years following World War II. With this confrontational attitude in mind, I would like to suggest the likelihood that Beuys explored both communication and the possibility of miscommunication in his work. The words that fall on the deaf ears of a dead hare, the attempt to imitate an ancient stag, the cane/transmitter extended to the taciturn coyote; all stand as examples of the failure of dialogue. They are one-sided conversations. Perhaps, when Beuys chose to leave the scene of *I Like America* in the ambulance in which he had arrived—suggesting the healing remained incomplete—he was emphasizing his inability to make real contact.

In 1979, five years after *I Like America and America Likes Me*, Beuys mounted an exhibition called *From Berlin: News from the Coyote* to mark the closing of René Block’s gallery in West Berlin (fig. 70). This installation took place in Ronald Feldman’s

former uptown Manhattan gallery space and coincided with the artist's major exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum. *News from the Coyote* included props from *I Like America*—the staff, the hat Beuys wore during the performance, the blanket, gloves and the triangle.⁶⁷ In a sense, these objects had been “danced,” a term used today by art dealers and collectors to reflect the authenticity of an object's use in a ritual.⁶⁸ The artifacts from the original performance were placed by the artist amidst piles of rubble from the ruins of Block's Berlin gallery that were shipped from Germany to New York.⁶⁹ Miner's lamps and an arc light provided illumination (fig. 71). In describing this installation, later purchased by the DIA Foundation, Lynne Cooke refers to the “theatrical tone” and “stage-set” quality of the work.⁷⁰

If parsed out, there is a fitting symmetry to the fact that the original *aktion*, *I Like America*, occurred in the New York City outpost of the René Block Gallery, and that the reincarnated version contains the remains of the original Block gallery in Berlin. Like the inversion of the original invitation, there exists another reversal, this time of place. It also must be remembered that Beuys performed the early *aktion*, *The Chief*, in Block's Berlin space and that this work was originally intended to be accompanied by a simultaneous happening in New York City by Robert Morris. Again there was the possibility of balance between one thing German and another, American.

⁶⁷ Beuys made a habit of commodifying artifacts from earlier occasions/performances. Gerhard Theewen writes that the artist even included personal items in this archiving process. An example is a collection of items from his 50th birthday party that were later placed in a vitrine and sold to a German collector.

⁶⁸ A “used” object is considered legitimate, as opposed to one that has never been used in a ritualistic fashion (although objects made for sale also have a use value as a commodity).

⁶⁹ Beuys had the plaster removed from the walls at the Rene Block Gallery in Berlin during his final exhibition in that space. It is remnants from this show that were shipped to New York for *News from the Coyote*. This is confirmed in fn59, E. Blume, *I Like America*, p. 369.

⁷⁰ Lynne Cooke, “Joseph Beuys: Drawings after the Codices Madrid of Leonardo da Vinci, and Sculpture,” Essay on Beuys' works in the collection of the Dia Foundation, diacenter.org, 1995-2006.

Beuys' title, *From Berlin: News from the Coyote* implies communication, a friendly update. But what the viewer sees is a deconstructed site that easily recalls the bombed out landscape of postwar Berlin. The debris is lit by emergency lights and the kind of lamps used in the underground sites where excavations take place. The combination clearly evokes both labor and loss. In the mix are artifacts that could be understood as items unearthed in the dig—remnants of a previous time and place. An old film projector sits silently in this installation. It becomes a reference to news footage and to escapist entertainment, to propaganda and to pleasure. The silence of the machine also evokes a disconnection, from a power source and from a particular time and place.⁷¹

News from the Coyote epitomizes Beuys' binary practice. Block's gallery, once a home to art objects, is now a commodified and collectable object itself. A former Nazi bomber pilot references the destruction of American bombs. A current site marks a former one. Presence denotes absence. Differences are equalized (most succinctly revealed in the lock of the artist's hair placed next to a tuft of the coyote's fur). *The New York Times* art critic John Russell noted that, in addition to the rubble, the installation contained sulfur, a mineral that is associated with both life and death.⁷² Extracted from under the ground, the pure, yellow substance is used in fertilizers, gunpowder and matches. A major derivative of sulfur is sulfuric acid, an important industrial raw material that is found in, among many other things, batteries. Early alchemists gave sulfur its own alchemical symbol (a triangle at the top of a cross) and English translations of the Bible commonly referred to sulfur as "brimstone" which calls to mind eternal

⁷¹ The silent movie projector also could be a reference to a multiple Beuys made in 1973 for Rene Block—a stack of film reels identified on an attached label as Ingmar Bergmann's film "The Silence."

⁷² John Russell, "Art: Joseph Beuys at the Feldman Gallery," *The New York Times* (31 October, 1986). The review is for a memorial exhibition for Joseph Beuys, who had died earlier in the year.

damnation for the non-believer.⁷³ And in relationship to Beuys' earlier focus on American greed, it is notable that this mineral shares the same yellow color as gold.⁷⁴ That Beuys would choose such a loaded, multi-layered material is not surprising. With its use he can remind us of the sin of avarice and the explosions, fire and hell of warfare while simultaneously planting the notion of fertilization in the ruins.

Another reading is also hinted at by the presence of the compound of sulfuric dioxide—acid rain. Beuys, a founding member of the Green Party, was ecologically savvy; so one cannot wholly dismiss a potential reference to pollution in his choice of including sulfur in the installation's topography. And perhaps more pointedly for this study, this same metaphorical reference also provides a connection to Iron Eyes Cody, the Indian whose dignified tears brought attention to the anti-pollution advertising campaign launched on American television in 1971.

Caroline Tisdall, a friend, facilitator and historian for Beuys, corroborates the artist's tendency to layer his work with multiple meanings.⁷⁵ In their long relationship, Beuys gifted Tisdall with a number of objects, including *The Sulfur Boots*. The boots are the pair he wore in *I Like America*, one of which he later filled with sulfur. Tisdall refers to this work as a relic, a "stand-in" for Beuys, just as the various items in *News from the Coyote* represent the man, the animal and the previous *aktion*.⁷⁶ The memorialization of his 1974 performance in this way is a classic Beuysian inversion. Loaded with referential meaning, contextualized within and collected by the art world, the news from the coyote

⁷³ "Sulfur." *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁷⁴ This association of the color of sulphur and gold was noted by Dr. Janice Simon.

⁷⁵ Tisdall discusses Beuys' references in *Joseph Beuys* (New York: Guggenheim, 1979), *Joseph Beuys, Coyote* (Munich: Schirmer-Mosel, 1988, c. 1976), and *Joseph Beuys, we go this way* (London: Violette Editions, 1998).

⁷⁶ Caroline Tisdall, "Tate Modern Talk: Bits and Pieces," linked to website: The Social Sculpture Research Unit, the School of Arts & Humanities, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford UK.

seems primarily negative. Yet within this recognition of death and displacement is the possibility of rebirth.

Beuys' coyote makes a final appearance in *Coyote III*, a short video-opera performance by Nam June Paik. Based on *Duette*, a piece performed by Beuys and Paik in Tokyo in 1984, *Coyote III* utilizes a real-time action by Paik (who plays a variety of songs and song fragments on a piano he eventually destroys) and by dancer Simone Forti (who appears to accompany Beuys, occasionally singing or talking). The taped Beuys emits low öös and a second video projection shows a "piano ghost of Paik" that also appears to accompany Beuys. Towards the end of the performance the light goes out and a laser beam cutting across the stage reveals Paik and two other figures smoking cigarettes.⁷⁷

The öö in *Coyote III* refers back to his 1964 aktion *The Chief* and to a public speech the artist made at the Düsseldorf Akademie four years later. At the beginning of the fall term in 1968 Beuys welcomed incoming students with a ten-minute recitation of his now infamous ööö. To come back to this form of "dialogue" twenty years after the initial performance is an act of persistence that borders on the absurd and contributes to the idea that the artist had a desire to emphasize the sometimes abstract nature of communication. It also suggests the priestly language of the artist/shaman, chanting to the yet-to-be initiated students.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Excerpt from ad for *Nam June Paik: Seoul NyMax Performance, 1997* by Stephen Vitiello and Nam June Paik. Electronic Arts Intermix on-line catalogue.

⁷⁸ This idea was suggested by Dr. Janice Simon and is backed up by Beuys himself in the following statement, "...in places like universities, where everyone speaks so rationally, it is necessary for a kind of enchanter to appear." (Tisdall, *Beuys* [1979], p. 23)

This religious reading is strengthened by Beuys' comments from a conversation with Georg Jappe in 1985, in which he refers to *Coyote III* as the "third station of the coyote idea." Beuys continued,

Let's say that in the coyote concert the coyote gradually becomes human. So first the context: Coyote II, the demolition of traditional art and sending the material to America.... Then...the idea that the animal becomes human, but the human being is elevated thereby to a higher level, becoming something better than a human being, or better than the human being today....⁷⁹

By employing the term "station" to describe his Coyote series, Beuys' Catholic upbringing is evoked, perhaps suggesting a need for reflection, penance, or a spiritual journey. Inherent in this description is the idea of ascendance or change—one form evolving into another (which is also characteristic of the shamanistic and trickster experience). The spiritual nature of this possibility is at the core of recent discussions of the original *aktion*, *I Like America*. Eugene Blume's essay in the catalogue that accompanies the exhibition, *I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West*, argues for reading the performance through the work of Rudolf Steiner.⁸⁰ For Blume, the "Coyote Triptych" refers to the "mythical foundation underlying human anthropological development" and man's lost relationship to animals. Blume suggests that Beuys, by becoming a "'man-animal'" in *Coyote III*, has "overcome the separation of man and animal" that came about via man's greed and materialism. The goal of this exploration

⁷⁹ Georg Jappe, "Am Klavier Joseph Beuys," *Kunstm Nachrichten* 21, no. 3 (1985), pp. 72-76. As cited Blume, pp. 368, 370, no. 13, 69.

⁸⁰ Rudolf Steiner (1851-1925) developed the spiritual philosophy 'anthroposophy,' which he defined as 'the consciousness of one's humanity.' His many published works feature his research into the spiritual nature of the human being, the evolution of the world and humanity, and methods of personal development. See Johannes Hemleben, *Rudolf Steiner: An Illustrated Biography* (London: Sophia Books, 2000). Blume writes that Beuys "apparently planned his first trip to America partly on the basis on his reading of texts by Steiner," suggesting that "for example, [Beuys'] meeting with the Women's Liberation organization could have been inspired by Rudolf Steiner's view: 'Anglo-American spiritual life will essentially be achieved for posterity by women.'" He goes on to describe Steiner's ideas about energy and Native Americans, which purportedly influenced Beuys in his views. E. Blume, "Joseph Beuys, I Like America and America Likes Me," pp. 358-370.

would be a more holistic, connected Man of the future,⁸¹ a much desired goal of modernist art.

The Belgian artist, Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976), also connected Beuys to what he perceived as a regressive, modernist belief in the power of Art. Further, he read Beuys' "self-mystification" as a strategy that obscured the artist's actual social position, a flaw which he felt undermined the work.⁸² Broodthaers, himself, never left any doubt in the viewer's mind about the imaginary nature of his role-playing, following a conviction that "fiction allows us to grasp reality while still grasping what fiction conceals."⁸³ Broodthaers is understood as an artist who defined his practice through absence—his hand was rarely seen in the work and his installations did not rely on performance—while Beuys' work is characterized through his presence.

I agree that Beuys' work is very much defined by his presence, and that he indulged in shifts that complicated his message, but I also believe that Broodthaers' observation about fiction is perfectly applicable to Beuys. The irony that marks Broodthaers' practice as postmodern is evident in Beuys' work, despite the German artist's oft recorded sense of earnestness. To clarify this point, it is helpful to compare Beuys to his friend and political ally, the German author Gunter Grass. In 1959 Grass published *The Tin Drum*, a book that would bring him international fame. The narrator and main character is Oskar, who was born a citizen of the German Reich in 1923, and preternaturally wise at the age of three, decides to stop growing. This key moment is captured in a birthday photograph:

It was in this picture that I first arrived at a decision which I have had no reason to alter. It was then that I declared, resolved, and determined that I would never

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Stefan Geimer, "Beuys, Haacke, Broodthaers," in Claudia Mesch, Viola Michely, editors and translators, *Joseph Beuys, The Reader* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007), p. 63.

⁸³ Zwirner, p. 71.

under any circumstances be a politician, much less a grocer, that I would stop right there, remain as I was—and so I did; for many years I not only stayed the same size but clung to the same attire.⁸⁴

In the guise of a child Oskar lives through the rise of Hitler and World War II. The book ends where it begins, in the mental hospital where the thirty-year old Oskar rants about the Black Witch from a childhood rhyme.

Grass, who just recently revealed his wartime participation in a notorious Nazi tank brigade, the Waffen SS, was born in 1927, only six years later than Joseph Beuys. After his release from an American POW camp in 1946, Grass worked as a farm laborer and miner and then studied art in Düsseldorf and Berlin. Both men sought to address the recent past through fictional characters, using a similar mix of irony, parodies of communication, and myth. Grass created Oskar, who drummed and shrieked his resistance. Beuys fashioned himself as a secular priest, and performed rituals of his own making. Just as Oskar's fall provided him with a "plausible ground" for his failure to grow, Beuys' plane wreck supplied the basis for his salvation story. In their chosen uniforms, both Oskar and Beuys indulged in unorthodox forms of communication, substituting noises for words and fantasy for harsh reality.

The unrelieved gravity assigned to Beuys' practice by Broodthaers and subsequent historians completely ignores the artist's sense of playfulness. Perhaps there has been a need on the part of many in the art world to represent Beuys' approach as sincere in order to help rationalize his Nazi past (his work becoming a form of personalized reparation). But while sincerity is a visible component behind what the artist tried to accomplish (in his work as an artist, a teacher and an activist), one must also understand Beuys as a satirist if one is to get the full picture. The "Art Pill," a felt capsule

⁸⁴ Gunter Grass, *The Tin Drum*, English translation, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1962), p. 60.

that Beuys made in 1963, is only one example of a clearly tongue-in-cheek cure for the ills of the world.

In the remedy he offered to American audiences, Beuys attempted to “talk” to a representative Indian, the coyote. The efforts to equalize their roles—through the suggestion that they share the trickster identity, the presentation of relic-like remnants of hair from both man and animal, the moments of coordinated movement—allow a perception of brotherhood. This kinship, however, is often undermined with allusions to the man’s superiority. Additionally, aspects of *Völkerschauen* (novelty-based spectacles) are suggested in the partnership of the man and the beast. The artist orchestrates a performance in which the coyote responds with curiosity to unusual stimuli, and “acts out” on behalf of the man (for instance, when he pisses on the *Wall Street Journal*). This sense of the coyote’s subservience, if applied to the Indian he symbolizes, follows a long-standing pattern of judgment concerning the Primitive Other. Perhaps Beuys was sensitive to this bias and intentionally implied the hierarchy of European over Indian in order to emphasize the problem. Clearly, however, he characterized America’s relationship with the Indian as flawed. For Lutz, Beuys’ focus on American wrongdoing would be seen as a diversionary tactic devised to cover German guilt. But the oppositional nature of the artist’s practice turns deflection into reflection, thus including Beuys in the problem and the solution.

CHAPTER FIVE

FASTEST GUN IN THE AMERICAN WEST: SIGMAR POLKE

On October 11, 1963 a group of young German art students organized what was to become a legendary exhibition at the Berges Furniture Store in Düsseldorf: *Leben mit Pop. Demonstration für den kapitalistischen Realismus* (Life with Pop. Demonstration for Capitalist Realism). Gerhard Richter, Konrad Lueg and Sigmar Polke were all members of the Capitalist Realist group, a name that they invented to reflect the shared heritage of Richter and Polke (who were both born in East Germany and studied realist painting), and the capitalist tendencies of their current West German home.¹ The main title of the show, *Life with Pop*, makes humorous reference to sitting in the living room with dad, living in a consumer society, and recognizing the power of the American father-figure (as represented in the presence of American troops in Germany), in addition to the obvious associations with Pop Art. It is not a stretch to locate numerous meanings in the efforts of these young artists. By placing their work in the context of a furniture store, they made a multi-layered connection to materialism, situated art as a commodity, and took careful aim at American hegemony in the world of politics as well as art. This form of critique, employing wit and references to popular culture, continues to mark the work of Sigmar Polke. Laced with allusions to the counter-culture in which he came of age, Polke's art associates the Indian Other with references to drugs and peaceful intentions. His Indian is part shaman, part pacifist—a construction that clearly evokes Beuys. The following study of Polke's western-themed work, however, reveals his

¹ Although Polke was a part of this group, he did not participate directly in *Life with Pop*. When asked why Polke was not involved in the show, Richter said, "Maybe we'd temporarily fallen out at the time." *Gerhard Richter: The Daily Practice of Painting (Writings and Interviews 1962-1993)* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 253.

distinctive touch, a blend of pastiche, experimentation and criticism. Not as metaphorically inclined as Beuys, the directness of his references are more aggressive and any acknowledgement of guilt less visible.

This tendency is exemplified in an untitled montage (fig. 72) that Polke included in the exhibition catalogue for *Mu Nieltnam Netorrurup*, a show that was on view in two locations in the north German port city of Kiel in 1975.² When inverted, the first and last words in the exhibition's title become "um" (around) and "purpurroten" (purple red). "Nieltnam" is an intentional misspelling of Vietnam that is humorously equated with a published misspelling of Polke's name as "Tolke" (a reproduction of which can be found on the last page of the catalogue) and points to the inherent "mistake" in the United States government's intervention in southeast Asia. Thus, the title reads "Around Vietnam Purple-red" suggesting the bloodiness of the Vietnam War. Polke conveyed his dislike of this war and the American military machine by invoking the spirituality of the Native American. Borrowing an image from a series of photographs he produced that same year, the artist drew a machine gun crossed over a peace pipe in the sky above a pair of Plains Indians.³ The foreground man points with his arrow to this "vision." Polke's use of the peace pipe is intended to evoke a nonviolent Indian and the hallowed nature of smoking the ritual instrument, as well as evoke the smoking of hashish and pot. This particular conception of the peace pipe was emphasized by Karl May who described the "sacred act" of smoking the calumet as a solemn occasion with

² The show appeared at the Kunsthalle zu Kiel and the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein from April 13-July 9, 1975 and featured both Sigmar Polke and Achim Duchow.

³ The figures depicted are identified as "Plains Indians" from "ethnographic photographs" by Paul Schimmel in his essay "Polkography," which appeared in *Photoworks: When Pictures Vanish, Sigmar Polke* (Zurich, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and Scalo, 1995), p.68.

“very serious motives and equally serious consequence.”⁴ The “x” form produced by crossing these implements of war and peace also suggests the United States seal. The eagle, which itself creates an “x” form, holds the laurel branch of peace in its right claw and the arrows of war in the left claw, thus echoing the peace pipe and gun of Polke’s drawing.⁵ That the machine gun has the prominent position in front of the peace pipe implies the dominance of American military power. With this one image, then, Polke positions himself on the side of the Indian Other in opposition to American power.

This stance typifies someone of Polke’s inclinations and background. Born in 1941, Polke spent his first twelve years in the newly formed state of East Germany. In 1953 his family crossed over to West Berlin and then settled in Düsseldorf where, in 1961, the young artist began his studies at the local Kunstakademie. That same year East German forces constructed the Berlin wall. Several days after the city was divided, the Soviet Union announced that it would resume the testing of nuclear weapons and promptly set off ten trial bombs. The cold war and its attending propaganda battles quickly became an active and ever-present aspect of East and West German life.

On June 2, 1967, a demonstrator opposed to the visit of the Shah of Iran to West Berlin was shot. This act and a similar one against a student protester, Rudi Dutschke, heralded the beginning of a long period of student unrest in universities across West Germany. Less than one year later, the Red Army Faction (RAF) was established. The RAF was a radical outgrowth of the student protest movement. Its stated aim was to overthrow western capitalism and incite a Marxist revolution. They argued that violence

⁴ Karl May, “Winnetou,” translated by Michael Shaw (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), p. 122.

⁵ This idea was initially suggested by Dr. Janice Simon, who also proposed a similarity to the “x” in the Confederate flag, which by implication, could suggest a racist component.

against their capitalist targets was justified in the face of America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof were the most visible leaders of this movement, and it is as the Baader-Meinhof Group that they became more popularly known. The RAF was supported by sympathetic intellectuals in West Germany who eventually found more constructive expression in the later Green movement.⁶ These tumultuous times provided the backdrop for Polke's first decade as an adult, situating him in the thick of the 1960s' anti-establishment, anti-war, pro-experimental age.

The 1960s were also characterized by a spate of cowboy and Indian films that were made and released in both East and West Germany. These westerns reinvigorated both Karl May's work and the iconic status of the Native American for audiences in Germany. Harald Reinl, a German director, was immensely successful with a series of movies adapted from the *Winnetou* series. Filmed in Yugoslavia, the first was *The Treasure of Silver Lake (Der Schatz im Silbersee)* and starred the American actor Lex Barker (formerly of Tarzan fame) as the German hero Old Shatterhand. A French actor, Pierre Brice played his Indian sidekick, Winnetou. This movie was followed by *Winnetou the Warrior*, in which Stewart Granger played Old Shatterhand, and many more followed.⁷ The revival of Karl May's Wild West adventures exploded on the screen and attracted huge audiences. These action-packed films were unambiguous: good guys versus bad guys with the good always prevailing.

Reinl's films created a commercial context that made possible the Italian or Spaghetti Westerns of Sergio Leone and others. They also engendered a group of twelve important films made by DEFA (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft), East Germany's

⁶ Adrian Webb, *Germany since 1945*. (London and New York, Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998), p. 298.

only film-producing entity from 1950 to 1989. Taking advantage of some of the same locations, extras and sets used by Reinl, DEFA filmmakers went about trying to cash in on the popularity of the western, but with one major difference. Rather than being escapist fantasies, the *Indianerfilme* (as they came to be known in East Germany) were intended to be educational. Their ideological goal was to critique imperialism, and their sympathy was always with the Indian in his heroic struggle against the white oppressor.⁸ This point of view, then, reverses the traditional portrayal of cowboys as the white-hatted stars of our western adventures.

Historian Gerd Gemünden perceptively remarked on the contradictions in DEFA's attempt to be "politically correct:"

Like most Western views of Third World, Native, aborigine, or tribal cultures, the East German *Indianerfilme* participate in forms of "othering" that involve strategies of domination, appropriation, and stereotyping. If in most Hollywood productions the Indian was a red devil, in the DEFA films the "primitive" invariably becomes the placeholder for the noble savage.⁹

This approach revived and perpetuated the early twentieth-century image of the Indian as pure in spirit, and it also allowed for a measure of self-identification. East Germans recognized the "otherness" of their own lives, in contrast to their West German neighbors.

Karl May's novels, though popular with the public, were not highly regarded by the East German government. His work was seen as bourgeois, and worse, was remembered as having been held in high regard by Hitler. DEFA attempted to avoid any connection to May in their films, but, to some extent, a comparison remained possible as

⁷ Christopher Frayling, *Spaghetti Westerns* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., revised 1998), p. 113.

⁸ Gerd Gemünden, "Between Karl May and Karl Marx: The DEFA *Indianerfilme*," in *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projection* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 2002), p. 244.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 245-46.

a result of the romantic anti-capitalist dichotomy apparent in both efforts: Indians spiritual and good; Americans greedy and materialistic.¹⁰

For many East and West Germans, North American Indians were symbolic of a pre-capitalist society that lived in tune with nature. This vision fit neatly with the politics of environmentalists in West Germany, and just as well with the predominantly agrarian culture of East Germany. In West Germany, however, the Indian also stood as a model for the modern rebel. As Gemunden writes, “‘*Stadtindianer*,’ hut dwellers, and urban guerrillas fought airport extensions, nuclear power plants and other evils of White Man’s society.”¹¹

Indian clubs also experienced a revival in the 1960s, a trend that continues today. These clubs study Indians and Indian lore, gather for huge Karl May festivals and powwows, dress as Indians and collect Indian art and objects of material culture. Katrin Sieg recognizes the influence of Karl May’s westerns on the German choice of the Indian as a “model of heroic manliness and anti-imperialist defiance,” but also cites the Cold War as having complicated this “cross-cultural identification.”¹² Sieg argues that by dressing up as Indians and performing Indian rituals, German participants explore ideas of difference and, therefore, perhaps, learn “to reject learned concepts of Aryan supremacy.”¹³ Another scholar in this field of research, Ward Churchill, does not have such a positive spin on Indian hobbyism. Churchill interprets these club activities as a form of postcolonial racism.¹⁴ In other words, he sees German Indian clubbers as

¹⁰ Gemunden., pp. 247-48.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹² Katrin Sieg, “Indian Impersonation as Historical Surrogation,” in *Germans and Indians*, p. 218.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

attempting to appropriate customs, rituals, and artifacts as if they were their own, assuming power and authority over the authentic Indian.

Authentic Indians did find representation in Germany during this period. Empathizing with the political struggles of Native Americans, German activists helped establish branch offices of A.I.M. (American Indian Movement) in Germany in the early 1970s. A.I.M. was founded in the United States in 1968 to “turn the attention of Indian people toward a renewal of spirituality which would impart the strength of resolve needed to reverse the ruinous policies of the United States, Canada, and other colonialist governments of Central and South America.”¹⁵ Deep spirituality and a belief in the connectedness of all Indian people were cited as being at the heart of their effort.

Philip J. Deloria has explored the nature of American identity in relationship to the native population. His study begins with the Boston Tea Party, a foundational event in December 1773 in which white participants disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians. Citing early historical texts that sought to characterize this costuming as an attempt to cast blame on a third party, Deloria writes that the real reason for the war paint and feathers was the sense of liberation and power that accompanied this rebellious act. The desire to replicate the freedom Indians appeared to have by living outside of “civilized” society had many manifestations over the years—from the boy scout movement to ideas about communal living that surfaced in the 1960s. The politics of the New Left supported the idea of revolution and claimed figures such as Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and Red Cloud as their forefathers. Young people were identified as an exploited class or “tribe” who were being sent off to die in Vietnam. The Weather Underground, a radical

organization that sought to overthrow capitalism and the American government, famously announced “LSD and grass, like the herbs and cactus and mushrooms of the American Indians, will help us make a future world where it will be possible to live in peace.”¹⁶ This statement followed their successful attempt in 1970 to break LSD guru Timothy Leary out of jail and spirit him off to Switzerland. Until 1975, when U.S. troops were completely withdrawn from Vietnam, the Weathermen carried out a campaign of bombings and riots, not unlike Germany’s Red Army Faction.

The late eighteenth-century rebels in Boston chose to identify with Native Americans in order to position themselves as different from their British rulers. Twentieth-century hippies chose to repudiate their Americanness and postulate themselves as victims of United States imperialism. Deloria observes:

Playing Indian replicated the contradictory tensions established by the Revolution. An interior Indianness that signified national identity clashed with an exterior Indianness linked with the armed struggle to control the continent. The only significant point of difference was the inversion that marked modernity: nineteenth-century savages had become authentic twentieth-century victims and critics.¹⁷

Deloria also makes the point that the sixties rebellion rested, in part, on symbol and pastiche. A headband could signify oneness with the Indian or refer to the politics of Che Guevara or Stokely Carmichael,¹⁸ thus blurring the lines between fashion, cultures, political statement and ironic imitation.

The young generation in Germany was equally swayed by these same symbolic ideals. When Carlos Castaneda’s book, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of*

¹⁵ “A Brief History of the American Indian Movement,” Official website of American Indian Movement, www.aimovement.org.

¹⁶ Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 160-61.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Knowledge, was published in 1968, a German translation was quickly made available. The series of dialogues that make up the book were presented as real-life encounters between the author, a student of anthropology, and Don Juan Matus, an Indian shaman from Sonora, Mexico. Don Juan uses peyote and other sacred plants to “access” ancient mysteries. His words of wisdom were appealing to those “dissatisfied with the limitations of the Western worldview.”¹⁹

Utopian ideas of peace and harmony were not invented by the flower children of the counterculture. Reform movements in Germany in the first quarter of the twentieth century favored meditation, vegetarianism and holistic medicine, and emphasized exercise, fresh air, and a "natural life style." Macrobiotic diets like the German-born Dr. Arnold Ehret's "Rational Fasting" (1914) and "Mucus-less Diet" (1922) were well-known regimens in hippie circles in San Francisco and Los Angeles well into the 1960s. LSD, first synthesized in 1938 in Switzerland, was introduced by a German-born colleague of Dr. Timothy Leary, Dr. Ralph Metzner. Their initial research was published in an article in their quarterly magazine "The Psychedelic Review," and was titled: "Hermann Hesse: Poet of the Interior Journey." It was partly as a result of this article that Hesse's work became a “must read” for a new generation of spiritual explorers. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the quintessential icon of the hippie generation, the Volkswagen bus, was engineered just after World War II by German technicians.²⁰ It is not surprising, then, that German artists in the latter half of the twentieth century would embrace their long heritage of *Lebensreform*.

¹⁸ Deloria, p. 168.

¹⁹ Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), jacket flap on 1998 edition.

²⁰ Kennedy, *Children of the Sun*, n.p.

Sigmar Polke was equally charmed by the drug culture of his times and the ritualistic practice of the influential Joseph Beuys. After graduating from the Kunstakademie he went in search of communities whose spiritual leaders used powerful drugs in their sacred rites, a pilgrimage that took him to Afghanistan, Brazil and Pakistan. Upon his return Polke began to experiment with the photographic process. Utilizing images taken during his travels, Polke set up an unconventional photo lab in his farmhouse bathroom and proceeded to investigate ideas of mutation, revision and transformation. Where Beuys had used materials that had the potential to change over time—fat, animals, chalk on a blackboard, which could melt, harden, crack, die, rot, and disappear—Polke initially utilized the silver and chemicals of the photographic process.

Although he learned how to make a professional-quality photographic image, he quickly decided to ignore the rules in favor of speed, effect, and spontaneous creation. He actively encouraged “mistakes,” working with a kind of surrealistically-inflected automatism. In the early 1970s, while visiting a friend in Geneva, he was introduced to LSD, and found that the intensity of the darkroom experience was significantly enhanced through its use. Drugs not only figured in the making of his images, but also served as subject matter. While in Afghanistan, he photographed pot smokers at a bear fight, and in Pakistan he visited opium dens.

In a painting from this period Polke also alludes to drugs. *Alice in Wonderland* (1971) makes an explicit reference to his consumption of hallucinogenic mushrooms (fig. 73). The artist has revealed that he “ate [mushrooms], and...smoked them,” and he directly related this experience to the “magical quality” of Lewis Carroll’s story of

Alice's adventures.²¹ On a support assembled from three differently patterned pieces of fabric (white polka [Polke] dots on a blue background, white dots on a black background, and a green material that depicts boys playing soccer), Polke painted a basketball player and the scene from Carroll's book in which Alice confronts a sometimes obtuse caterpillar that sits perched atop a large mushroom smoking a hookah. This image is a faithful copy of John Tenniel's original illustration that accompanied Chapter V, "Advice from a Caterpillar." The exchange between Alice and the caterpillar in this chapter begins with the question, "Who are you?" followed by Alice's shy reply, "I-I hardly know, sir, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have changed several times since then."²² After a conversation in which Alice expresses her desire to be a different size, the caterpillar instructs her to eat from the mushroom he has just abandoned, and she is immediately transformed upon following his advice. The allusion to an out-of-body experience is clear. Ostensibly written as a fantasy tale for children, Carroll's *Alice* is also an account of displacement and continuous change, as well as an extremely sophisticated political and social critique of Victorian society. The potency of the latter reference can significantly extend the meaning of Polke's painting. Yet he is careful to emphasize an element of playfulness, which is made evident in the games of soccer and basketball that occupy both field and foreground. What is also visible in the choice of these particular activities is a suggestion of nationalism. In the 1970s soccer was still a predominantly European sport enthusiastically played by, among others, the Germans. Basketball, however, was distinctly American. And since the

²¹ Paul Schimmel, "Polkography," in *Sigmar Polke Photoworks: When Pictures Vanish*, (Los Angeles; Zurich, Berlin, New York: Scalo and The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), p. 65.

²² Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, first published in 1866 by Macmillan and Co. of London; (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., Books of Wonder, 1992), p. 60.

basketball player is far larger in scale than the boys playing soccer, he easily overshadows them. Thus, Polke's *Wonderland* includes transformative possibilities, competition, and the suggestion of American domination, a combination reminiscent of Ernst's *Mickey's Ascension* made just two years earlier.

Polke produced an even more direct assessment of America in the same year, *\$ Painting*, 1971 (fig. 74). Mimicking a dollar bill, the painting is edged on top and bottom with a decorative border and a large white oval sits to the right on an olive green ground. Within this shape (which is similar to, but off-center from the spot George Washington occupies on real currency) are a diagrammatic hand and a gesticulating figure. The stick figure, reminiscent of A. R. Penck's drawings,²³ appears to be ranting at the dominant, authoritarian hand on his right. In addition to demanding submission, the hand also evokes the pointing finger of Uncle Sam that attempted to single out recruits for military service on infamous and innumerable war posters. On the left side of the painting, is a gold snake gripping a white circle marked with a dollar sign. The snake recalls the American Revolutionary flag that pictured a rattlesnake and the words "Don't tread on me," a symbol of America's fierce desire for independence from British rule. Small floating orbs (two white, one yellow and one pinkish red) give the artist his signature dots and suggest the seals and circled items on the dollar bill. *\$ Painting*, the title of which explicitly connects money and art, also makes a pointed connection to resistance, aggression, paternalism, and the poison nature of capitalism.

²³ A. R. Penck, though still living in East Germany at this time, was friends with Immendorff and other artists in Düsseldorf. Polke would have known his work and may have been "quoting" him directly. The stick figure was a standard element in his work and can be seen in *Man and Woman* (1968), *Plus/Minus* (1969) and many other paintings and drawings from the 1960s to the present.

A 1972 painting prefigures Polke's later references to the American west. *JK, MACH DASS SCHON, JE\$\$*, is a large painting on felt in which the title is scratched into a cartoon-dialogue bubble in the upper right hand corner (fig. 75). One translation of the message is "I'll take care of that, Jess," perhaps referring to the outlaw, Jesse James. Taking into account the possibility of word play, variations on the text include, "Do it already, Jess," and "Make that beautiful (schön), Jess." The "JK" is mysterious, but given Polke's proclivity for making teasing references to the art world, I would like to suggest the possibility that he was addressing his comment to Joseph Kosuth. Kosuth, whose work had been shown in Düsseldorf in *Prospect 69* (a show, not incidentally, organized by Polke's friend Konrad Lueg-Fischer), was famous for his language-based conceptual work and his re-definition of art as something beyond the physical object. If his remarks are to Kosuth, then they take on meanings that obviously would please the text-based artist as well as slightly offend him. Another possible "JK" is Jannis Kounellis, who was also coming to the international forefront at this point in time. Kounellis, labeled an arte povera artist by Italian curator Germano Celant, worked with humble materials such as felt. Since felt had become a signature medium for Joseph Beuys, it is possible that Polke was alluding to both Kounellis and Beuys by making his painting on felt.

MACH DASS SCHON features two standing male figures, one dressed in what appears to be World War II aviator attire and the other in a more recent military uniform, most probably from the Vietnam War. The bust of a third man occupies the foreground and resembles the American television and film cowboy star, Hopalong Cassidy. Both the hat, with its distinctive central cleft, and a trademark steer-head tie pin confirm the

smiling Cassidy's identity. The Vietnam era soldier carries a machine gun common to that era, and his body is wrapped, bandolier style, with ammunition. Only Cassidy is depicted in something other than black paint, his outline trimmed with small white dots and his facial features distinguished in a pale, dirty yellow-ochre. White and yellow-ochre footprints dominate the bottom edge of the rectangle, but can also be seen on the outer edges of the entire painting, thus marking the once physical presence of the artist. This particular aspect of the work strengthens the interpretation of "JK" as Kosuth as that artist would appreciate the visual pun of bodily absence and presence. The casual nature of the footprints on the work of art are also meaningful, undercutting, as they do, the preciousness of the object while simultaneously recalling Jackson Pollock, whose poured paintings helped situate America as a leading force in the art world.

It is important to return to the "JE\$\$" part of the title. As previously suggested, Jesse James appears to be the obvious connection, especially in conjunction with Hopalong Cassidy, another well-known character of the Wild West. But another reference could be to Jess Collins, a California-based ("Western") collage artist whose work both resembles and predates Polke's paintings. Collins, known in Cher-like singularity as Jess, was trained as a chemist and worked during World War II on the production of plutonium for the Manhattan Project.²⁴ After having a dream in 1949 that prophesized the end of the world, Jess left the scientific community and moved to San Francisco to study art. From that point forward, he made work that appropriated imagery from multiple sources—literary to pop culture—managing to be both charming and naughty in his choices. Polke could have known about Jess's work from books and catalogues (his paintings and collages were included in the important Hayward Gallery

exhibition in 1969, *Pop Art Redefined*), and from a 1970 German tour of R. B. Kitaj's work that included a reference to the influence of Jess and a selection of his works.²⁵

If Polke was addressing Jesse James, his message would appear to be relieving James of the responsibility of defending him, as in "Don't worry, Jesse, I'll take care of that." Or challenging the outlaw, "Just do it already!" If he was talking to Jess, the painter, the admonition to "Make it beautiful" fits, as well as a generational mantle-lifting, "I'll take care of that now." What gets confusing in all of this are the multiple addressees: Kounellis, Kosuth, Jesse James, Jess, and perhaps others. What is not confusing is the dollar sign that constitutes part of JE\$\$S. This allusion is clear, whether directed at an American gunslinger in the guise of bank robber Jesse James, Hollywood star Hopalong Cassidy, a WWII pilot or a US infantry soldier in Vietnam (soldiers of Western imperialism) or at the artists Joseph Kosuth, Jannis Kounellis or even Joseph Beuys, who despite their anti-commodity positioning were busily selling their work worldwide. With this one symbol Polke returned to his earlier commentary on greed and materialism.

In addition to painting, Polke began to experiment with photography in the early 1970s. This focus resulted in, among other images, a 1975 series that featured Native Americans collaged around a giant hallucinogenic mushroom. Various left untitled or parenthetically described as "Fly Agaric," the photos are characterized by the blemishes and flaws of Polke's unconventional darkroom techniques (figs. 76 and 77). They are cloudy and disorienting as befits the mind-altering subject. They also indicate his exploration of spiritual transformation and the possibilities of mystical transcendence. In

²⁴ Michael Duncan, "Maverick Modernist," *Art in America* 82 (November 1994): 94.

²⁵ "R. B. Kitaj: Pictures from an Exhibition" was held at the Kestner Gesellschaft in Hannover in 1970.

these images Polke appropriated ethnographic photographs of Plains Indians that were then placed in various combinations with an oversized, bulbous, psychotropic mushroom. The mushroom, too, was appropriated. It is from *Soma: The Divine Mushroom of Immortality*, by R. Gordon Wasson, originally published in 1968.²⁶ The soma mushroom is also known by the names fly-agaric and Amanitamuscaria.²⁷ Wasson proposed this particular mushroom as the contemporary version of an ancient psychoactive plant that, when ingested, provided the user with a sense of immortality.

Blended and printed one on top of the other, patterned fields slowly reveal the spotted-top fly-agaric or soma mushroom. Images fade in and out. Texture breaks and disrupts the solidity of the figures, and they become translucent, visible but indistinct. One wonders if this is a comment on the fact that Native American cultures vanished as white settlers claimed their land? Or are the visibly layered images meant to suggest semi-consciousness, the wavering reality of a drug experience? That the fly agaric form resembles the mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion certainly heightens the idea of catastrophe. Is this the haze of drug-induced reverie or post-apocalyptic extinction?

Several photographs in this series have been tinted with sunset hues of yellow and red. Pale turquoise can be found in the background, mixed with ghostly whites, yellow stains, sepia, crimson and inky blacks. Orange streams down one print like acid rain, which, given the period and the activity, is possibly an intentional visual pun (fig. 78). Polke played with scale, reminiscent of Alice's many size changes, the psychotropic effects of drugs, and an indigenous understanding of the power of Nature. He allowed

²⁶ Schimmel, pp. 66-68.

²⁷ Peg Weiss writes that Kandinsky repeatedly made references to "the shaman's hallucinatory agent, the red or "fly agaric" mushroom. *Kandinsky and Old Russia: The Artist as Ethnographer and Shaman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 111.

wrinkles and pocks to form on the surface of the work by intentional mishandling of the photographic paper, and cut and pasted images together to create odd and disjunctive landscapes. White clouds float in the background, obscuring details and simultaneously evoking the smoke of a burning substance. One of the more painterly images makes reference to war via a group of armed Indians and the camouflage-like patterns that appear in the overlapping designs.

The previously mentioned catalogue, *Mu Nieltnam Netorrurup* also includes “outtakes” from the *Untitled (Fly Agaric)* series. In one, the artist has drawn on a photograph of an Indian sitting at the base of the mushroom (fig. 79). The graffiti-like penciled additions include faces, a mini-explosion, a crown, some suggestive hairy, phallic shapes and letters that appear to spell out the word “LOVE.” In contrast to this message is the aforementioned photograph of an Indian pointing skyward to a contour line drawing of a machine gun crossed over a peace pipe. Rather than love, this is an image of aggression. To the left of this picture appears a cartoon pertaining to Idi Amin, and photographs of the dictator and a torture victim (fig. 80). Polke clearly emphasized persecution in this arrangement—from oppression of Native Americans (and by extension, U.S. involvement in Vietnam) to Amin’s tyrannical rule in Uganda. On another page of the same catalogue, Polke has included a frame from a comic book that features over-sized mushrooms on the space(y) outpost “Venus Station” (fig. 81). Probably a coincidental find, the giant fungi recalls Alice’s conversation with the enthroned caterpillar, the venerated soma mushrooms from his own work, and “LOVE,” a quintessential message of the 60s generation.

Thirteen years later, Polke was still interested in addressing the plight of the Native American. Invited to participate in the 1988 Carnegie International in Pittsburgh, the artist produced a series of five paintings with a collective title based on an Indian proverb, *The Spirits that Lend Strength are Invisible*.²⁸ Each canvas was coated with a sticky resin into which various materials were embedded. In the first painting, pure tellurium, a chemical bonder used in the outer shell of the first atom bomb,²⁹ was blown onto the surface. The second contains 1kg of meteorite granulate from a 15kg meteor found in 1927 just west of Tocopilla, Chile. The third painting had various layers of nickel incorporated onto its translucent face. Polke might have had a variety of reasons for including nickel, but one directly related to the topic of this study is the Buffalo Nickel—an iconic American coin that conjoins money and the American West where the buffalo roamed until white settlers came along in pursuit of fortune. The flip side of the buffalo nickel featured an Indian modeled on Two Moons, a Cheyenne chief present at the Battle of Little Big Horn.³⁰ The fourth painting contains silver nitrate, a chemical used in photography, and the fifth incorporates silver leaf and a group of Indian arrowheads that still bear the labels from the store in Düsseldorf where the artist bought them.

This last painting in the Carnegie series, *The Spirits that Lend Strength are Invisible V (Otter Creek)* (fig. 82), is the only one that includes a bracketed phrase that is not descriptive of the materials used, though it may suggest locations where they could be found. Otter Creek is a place name associated with different groups of Indians: tribes

²⁸ John Caldwell, "Sigmar Polke," in *Sigmar Polke* (San Francisco Museum of Art, 1990), p. 14.

²⁹ "Tellurium." Oxford English Dictionary (2nd edition).

³⁰ Thomas LaMarre, "Custer's Last Stand," in *Money Talks*, a website produced by the American Numismatic Association.

who lived along the Otter Creek in Vermont; Creek Indians on Otter Creek in the Ocmulgee River valley in Georgia; Comanches in Otter Creek, Oklahoma and the Cherokee in Montana.³¹ In an ironic twist of fate, the current discussion surrounding the Otter Creek Reservation in Montana concerns the possibility of producing diesel fuel from the coal on and near this land with an updated process called Fischer-Tropsch that was originally developed by the Nazis. An article in the *Billings Gazette* quotes Pentagon officials as interested in this development for reasons of national defense: “Fifty percent of the fuel to run the military is coming from countries we’re likely to be fighting, and that is not a very good position to be in.”³² Polke would be positively livid over this turn of events.

Michael Oppitz, an anthropologist who has intermittently collaborated with Lothar Baumgarten, wrote an essay about Polke’s unusual painting materials in the catalogue for the artist’s 1990 exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art.³³ Entitled simply, “Ocher, Gold, Cinnabar and Ink, Turquoise,” Oppitz tells a short story for each color/medium, referencing Himalayan rock drawings, Chinese puns, ancient formulas for creating gold and Tibetan legends. The author claims that alchemy and shamanism are at the heart of Polke’s eclectic mix, with the connected impulse towards transformation. This idea of transformation can be applied to literal change, drug-induced mind alterations, and hoped-for transitions (such as peace over war or gold from iron ore). Shamanism is also mentioned in relationship to Polke’s work by another essayist in the same catalogue, although with a twist. Peter Schjeldahl refers to Polke’s “sarcastic

³¹ Without access to the painting, which is in a private collection in San Francisco, it is impossible to say for certain which area the arrowheads are from.

³² Charles S. Johnson, “Schweitzer pursues coal-to-oil conversion,” *Billings Gazette* (21 May, 2005): 1B.

shamanism.”³⁴ This remark, when linked with an earlier comment about the artist’s “bottomless skepticism,”³⁵ makes it possible to see Polke’s work in a new light. Rather than the mystical, magical overlay provided by Oppitz, Schjeldahl provides a bit of clarifying cynicism while remaining laudatory of the artist’s work. Polke’s process is not being questioned, but his motives are. Rather than supporting the possibility of intervention (spiritual or otherwise), Schjeldahl ascribes a sassy knowingness to Polke’s multi-layered references to magic and alchemy. Like his mentor Beuys, Polke leaves room for doubt and uncertainty.

Suspicious of authority in general, Polke has acknowledged his concern about America’s power more than once, recently telling a reporter that “when I read about America and the West dominating the world, I get angry.”³⁶ In the early 1970s when the “Fly Agaric” series was made, Polke was vehemently against the Vietnam War. For left-leaning Germans like Polke, Vietnam not only went against strongly-held pacifist and humanitarian beliefs, it also provided “the ultimate proof of the moral bankruptcy of the capitalist powers.”³⁷ The U.S. Army was considered the tool of American imperialism. Sentiments ran high against Americans for their historical victims and current Asian targets. Just as in Joseph Beuys’s *aktion, I Like America and America Likes Me*, the Indian in Polke’s work becomes the American Other, a casualty of greed and racism. Television broadcast news of the Mai Lai massacre to world audiences, and evidence of racial inequality in the southern United States also played a role in Polke’s ultimately

³³ See Michael Oppitz, (translated from German by Stewart Spencer) “Ocher, Gold, Cinnabar and Ink,” in John Caldwell, *Sigmar Polke*, (San Francisco Museum of Art, 1990), pp. 26-33.

³⁴ Peter Schjeldahl, “The Daemon and Sigmar Polke,” in John Caldwell, *Sigmar Polke*, (San Francisco Museum of Art, 1990), p. 19.

³⁵ Schjeldahl, p. 17.

³⁶ Sigmar Polke in Martin Gaylord, “A Weird Intelligence,” *Modern Painters* (Winter 2003): 78.

negative view of Americans. For the German artist, the white American male was the “bad guy,” phobic, armed and dangerous.

In a recent body of work, *History of Everything* (2003), Polke looked for what he referred to as “American themes” for the Dallas incarnation of his show. In this effort he may have remembered that Winnetou’s cousin acknowledged vigilantism as an institution in the West, observing that cowboys were forced to make their own law.³⁸ Polke remarked later that the aggressive style used for Texas would not be appropriate for British audiences who would later receive the touring show. He preferred to offer viewers in London a more “cultivated” display. For Dallas, he identified an “unusual law that they have there that every man is entitled to carry a gun,” and described two paintings in the show (figs. 83 and 84) in the following manner:

[In] *Fastest Gun in the West*... a man is shooting at these dummies as targets in the Texan style.... I found this man—The Fastest Gun—in a magazine. Shooting is a sport for him, as it is for this lady in *I Don’t Really Think About Anything Too Much*. She’s also got a body-shaped figure behind her as a target. ...The targets in *Fastest Gun in the West* represent a black man and an Indian, so maybe they don’t seem like human beings to the man who’s firing.³⁹

It is clear from this excerpt that Polke does not think highly of either the white American man or the white American woman he depicts in these works. For him they are the latter-day versions of the lawless white settlers who decimated native populations with a sense of righteousness and purpose. But, oddly enough, it is impossible to tell the race of the two dummy targets to which Polke refers in *Fastest Gun in the West*. The original photographic source has been greatly enlarged to emphasize the pixilation of the

³⁷ Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy*. (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2003), p. 69.

³⁸ Karl May, *Winnetou: The Treasure of Nugget Mountain*, translated and adapted by Marion Ames Taggart (Goodyear, Arizona: Diggory Press, Inc., 2007), p. 56.

³⁹ Sigmar Polke in Gaylord, pp. 82-83.

printing process and therefore, the details are essentially lost. Both dummies are dressed as cowboys, with chaps and hats. Neither hat seems to be the traditional Stetson associated with the Marlboro Man cowboy, but they appear to be the only elements suggestive of difference. One figure sports a sombrero that is more indicative of a Mexican laborer, and the other wears the small-brimmed bowler hat often associated with middle-class men from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth century.⁴⁰ Each has a dark face, but again, there is not enough information provided to make any kind of supposition about race. We are left, then, with the artist's statement that is presumably based on a clearer image which would confirm the racist nature of the shooter's choice of targets. In his selection of this particular source material, Polke legitimizes his sense that America is rife with individuals who single out people of color and difference for unfair punishment and ill treatment.

I Don't Really Think About Anything Too Much depicts a smiling white woman holding a hand gun. She grips the handle and aims the gun off to her right, but not directly at the generic "man-shaped" target behind her. The target shows evidence of use with a number of bullet holes in the central kill zone. The surface of the work is covered with a pattern of squares, each of which contains a smaller, dark square in its center. Patterning has been central to Polke's work since the mid-1960s, and here carries the idea of bland repetition as well as bullet perforations, targets, televisions and even the frames and mats of artwork. The woman presented in this painting is from an archive of images the artist gleaned from a variety of Texas newspapers he requested when he began to

⁴⁰ As Dr. Simon suggested, the bowler hat is most famously associated with Charlie Chaplin, the iconic American character who "refuses to acknowledge defeat." (p. 78 in book listed below) For more on the history and symbolism of the bowler hat, see Fred Miller Robinson, *The Man in the Bowler Hat: His History and Iconography* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

work on the *History of Everything* series. Rather than photographs of violent shootings, Polke primarily chose hunting and sports-related images (for example: arcades, firing ranges, competitive target practice, and ads for Remington ammunition).⁴¹ This selection emphasizes the established nature of gun culture in America, which is embraced as a historical prerogative in the West. For Polke, raised with storybook and film representations of cowboys and outlaws, but grounded in a mentality of peace and nonaggression, guns are problematic. He seems to resolve the dilemma of how to represent such imagery to his audience in Dallas with this dictum in mind: “Guns don’t kill people, people kill people.” Thus it is through the title that the message is carried—*I Don’t Really Think About Anything Too Much*—implying a lack of insight into the ramifications of gun use. It also speaks of the archetypal “dumb American,” unreflective and unrepentant, a message made even more apparent in the woman’s dark glasses and smiling face.

Despite the rather specific allusions in *I Don’t Really Think About Anything Too Much* and *Fastest Gun in the West*, Polke’s work has often been described as enigmatic. Schjeldahl, for example, compares Polke’s art to Lewis Carroll’s Wonderland as “a realm of spiraling perplexities.”⁴² This inscrutability has been linked to his desire to avoid specific dogma, thus isolating himself from the varying ideologies of his youth—Nazism, Communism and Capitalism.⁴³ This same strategy has been attributed to his friend and

⁴¹ Jemima Montagu, “Sigmar Polke: History of Everything,” Tate Modern, 2003, <http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/polke>.

⁴² Schjeldahl, p. 17.

⁴³ Polke was born in 1941 during the Nazi regime. His family was forced to flee from the advancing Russian army in 1945, settling in what was then called Dingelstädt. During the following eight years, he lived in Communist East Germany before his family crossed over to West Berlin in 1953.

colleague, the painter Gerhard Richter.⁴⁴ For Richter, this position is entirely credible, but I would argue that Polke retains the ability to advocate a position even as his work fluctuates between painterly abstraction and multi-referential montage. Although his message is not always clear, Polke's politics surface periodically (as can be seen in the work reviewed in this chapter). The rebellion that marked his early photographs and paintings is maintained with subversive slyness, an approach that links him to Beuys. But the generational and experiential differences between these two artists create a variation in their approach to German guilt. Both point an accusatory finger at the United States and condemn the greed, materialism and racism they see, but only Beuys suggests a parallel complicity with the Americans. Polke, twenty years younger than Beuys, and a small child during World War II, is not as burdened with remorse and shame. He can, therefore, express both more flippancy and more righteous outrage.

Despite the liberal nature of Polke's commentary, he duplicates previous approaches to representing the Indian Other. He chose historic representations of Indians rather than contemporary depictions, resorting to nineteenth-century photographs in the 1975 "Fly Agaric" series and arrowheads in the 1988 *Otter Creek* painting. In addition, he ignores facts in favor of effect, for instance, associating Plains Indians with the soma mushroom (which is not a hallucinatory vehicle used in the American West). Just as Beuys rendered any real Indian voice mute by selecting a coyote to represent Native Americans,⁴⁵ Polke identifies with and advances a romantic image of the Indian

⁴⁴ Gerhard Richter was born in Dresden in 1932. His Uncle Rudi was a Nazi officer who died early in the war. His mentally disabled aunt was "euthanized" at a Nazi camp. As a teen-ager he was subject to the Communist government of East Germany and he was trained in Socialist Realism at the Art Academy in Dresden before he crossed over in 1961. He is known for his strong dislike of ideology.

⁴⁵ Beuys was criticized for not trying to get in touch with Indians during his visits to the United States.

visionary. This Indian, though victimized, was also powerful—existing above and apart from the material world.

CHAPTER SIX

AMERICA, AN INVENTION: LOTHAR BAUMGARTEN

In 1970, as he was finishing his studies at the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie, Lothar Baumgarten made a series of photo-based works. On pictures that look like tropical rainforests but are, in fact, images of Grünkohl (a variety of broccoli), he wrote the names of South American Indian tribes—Tapirapé, Yuracaré, Xikrin, Kayapó. Shortly thereafter he had himself photographed as a shaman and again added text that referred to South America. He titled the work *Makunamia* (fig. 85) after a mythic hero who was fundamental to the preservation of indigenous people, culture and tradition in Brazil.¹ One dictionary of South American mythology cites Makunamia as having created a huge multi-purpose tree that provided food for the whole community,² and another depicts him as the most powerful of a pair of brothers or twins who appear as cultural heroes, tricksters and transformers. This latter source goes on to say that Makunamia's brother/twin is usually either a powerful rival or an insignificant personage such as Mbaecuáa (Our-father-who-knows-everything) who can also take the form of an animal.³ Craig Owens described *Makunamia* as “a clear nod to [Baumgarten's] teacher, Joseph Beuys,”⁴ but it is so much more than that. This one image anticipates the themes of Baumgarten's later work, defines his methodology, and with deft humor, positions him apart from his mentor.

¹ Unidentified Staff Writer, “Brazilian Indians Celebrate Hero Makunaima and Mother Earth,” *Brazil Magazine*, February 14, 2005, unpaginated.

² Hélène Clastres, translated by Jacqueline Grenez Brovender, *The Land-without-evil: Tupi-Guarani Prophetism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), p. 108.

³ Alfred Métraux, “Twin Heroes in South American Mythology,” *The Journal of American Folklore* Vol 59, No. 232 (April-June 1946): 114.

Makunamia is a self-portrait—artist as cultural hero, trickster, transformer, and therefore, a twin to Beuys. However, since Makunamia is known as the more clever and powerful of the twosome, then Baumgarten establishes himself, with tongue perhaps only partially in cheek, as the stronger artist. The additional association of Makunamia with Mbaecuáa, the father figure who knows everything, amplifies the same message. Also embodied in the title is the idea of Makunamia as someone who provided a bountiful tree to his people, a reference that suggests the artist's own name, Tree/Baum and Garden/Garten. In the photograph, Baumgarten is dressed in what appears to be a lab coat (the uniform of a scientist), and faces away from the camera, his head additionally hidden by the box-like mask he wears. The fact that he intentionally obscures his identity suggests his desire to locate himself as a post-modern artist, one for whom the recognition of individual genius, cult of personality and unique style are rejected. If that is his aim, he is simultaneously distinguishing himself from Beuys. And if one compares this photograph of Baumgarten as a shaman to the image of Ernst in a kachina mask (fig. 56), there is also a contrast. Though both are playful, Baumgarten layers his image with social and personal critique, a large part of which can be found in the text. On and around his body are the names of a variety of animals native to South and Central America (pecari/pekari, capybara/capvara, tapir, agouti/aguti, dolphin/tonina, opossum, jaguar, anteater/tamandua, mosquito/moskito, toucan/tukan, anaconda, leaf-cutter ant/blattschneidenmeise, arapaima [fish], and the arara and urubu [birds]). Within this list are allusions to endangered species, sign language, indigenous Brazilians, adaptation,

⁴ Craig Owens, "Improper Names," *Art in America* 74 (October 1986): pp. 126-135, 187. Reprinted in *Beyond Recognition*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992) and *AMERICA Invention*, exhib. cat. (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1993), p. 106.

survival, mythology, infection, and spiritual possession.⁵ Engaging in word play, examining the power of a name, and identifying cultural extinction become the locus of Baumgarten's work from *Makunamia* forward. Moving from the Indians of South America to the Native American population of the United States, he establishes an identity for himself as a historian and social scientist to reclaim a place of privilege for the Primitive Other. This chapter will follow his progress in that effort.

Baumgarten was born in 1944 in Rheinsberg, a city located about fifty miles northwest of Berlin in what would soon become East Germany. His father, an anthropologist, passed on his academic orientation to Baumgarten, who developed an early interest in Structuralism, institutional critique and ethnographic studies. He ultimately chose to work within the discipline of art, initially studying at the State Academy for Visual Arts in Karlsruhe (1968) and then the Art Academy in Düsseldorf (1969–1971). After graduating, Baumgarten began a practice in which he would walk along a “polluted and marshy stretch of the Rhine between Düsseldorf and Cologne” in the early morning hours. As Tacita Dean writes in the exhibition catalogue, *An Aside*, the artist

would photograph the details of the swamp itself: the vegetation and its amphibious life, but also the human rubbish caught and submerged there. He made ephemeral, spontaneous sculptures *in situ* out of materials he would find: weird and ambiguous totemic interventions like a blade of grass wearing a stocking or a pyramid of red pigment, which he would then also photograph. His camera would play with the ambiguity of a snaking old hosepipe in the undergrowth [see image] or the possible scales of an abandoned tyre. He

⁵ The tapir is on the endangered species list; the urubu is a raptor-like bird as well as the name of a form of sign language used by a small community of indigenous Brazilians that has a high percentage of deaf members; the opossum, the arapaima, and the leaf-cutter ants have all adapted various strategies to allow them to survive in their environment (the opossum has bi-furcated sexual organs, the arapaima is a fish with both gills and lungs and can breath in water and air, and the leaf-cutter ants cultivate a fungus on which they live); the jaguar is a mythological creature in South American lore; the mosquito is known to spread disease and infection; besides being a large blue bird found in the Brazilian forest, Arara is the name of a group of Carib people found in Cuba and Brazil who practice spiritual possession (Santeria/voodoo).

recorded the wild sound of this stretch of river and mixed it to such a degree that it became the sound of an imagined elsewhere: the sound, for those of us that have never traveled there, of the Amazonian rainforest.⁶

These daily perambulations evolved into the raw footage for *The Origin of the Night: Amazon Cosmos*. Shot between 1973 and 1977, the ninety-eight minute film was not shown until late 2004. It is loosely based on a Tupi Indian myth that Baumgarten read about in *From Honey to Ashes*, a book in which Claude Lévi-Strauss proposes transglobal similarities in mythological tales. Visually reflecting Lévi-Strauss' idea that primitive societies do not distinguish between words and objects (form and content) as we do in the contemporary world, Baumgarten floats a series of names of native South American plants and animals over shots of the river landscape along the Rhine. Viewers are meant to believe that they are looking at the banks of the Amazon, but this illusion is occasionally shattered by glimpses of a car or plane. That a local environment was used to suggest a foreign place echoes an approach used in the spaghetti westerns so popular in Germany in the 1960s, which substituted European scenery for the landscape of the American West. This strategy of displacement and Baumgarten's focus on the complexity of naming—the imposition of one language over another—will become central elements of his future work.

In 1972, just before Baumgarten began working on *The Origin of the Night*, the German Director Werner Herzog released *Aguirre: der Zorn Gottes (Aguirre, the Wrath of God)*. *Aguirre* focuses on the sixteenth-century story of a Spanish expedition into the mountains of Peru. The conquistador Pizarro orders a group of soldiers to raft down the Amazon in search of the fabled city of gold, El Dorado. In command of this scouting

⁶ Tacita Dean, *An Aside*, exhib. cat. (London: Hayward Gallery, South Bank Centre, 2004), pp. 6, 10.

party are Pedro de Ursua, Fernando de Guzman, and Lope de Aguirre. Aguirre goes increasingly mad as the trip progresses and eventually seizes power. In the end, everyone dies and he is left with rotting corpses and chattering monkeys. *Aguirre* was filmed in the Peruvian rainforest near Puerto Maldonado. There is little dialogue, just scene after scene revealing the futility and insanity of the Spaniards' misguided trip through the jungle. The film was based on the real-life journals of a priest who accompanied Pizarro, Brother Gaspar de Carvajal. The impact of *Aguirre*, in terms of its emphasis on the ill-fated white pursuit of gold against an exotic native backdrop, cannot be underestimated in terms of the focus of this study. However, where Herzog chastises Europeans for their sins of materialism, aggression and racism, Beuys, Polke and Baumgarten criticize Americans.

Although critiques of Herzog's *Aguirre* have called the filmmaker's motives into question—one accusing him of perpetuating Germany's "cultural definition of itself as superior"⁷—others credit him with focusing on failure. Aguirre's inability to adapt to or even understand the Amazon environment is experienced by the viewer as he or she attempts to make sense of the story. Russell Berman asserts that Herzog exploits the infallibility of communication.⁸ Because clear communication depends on fixed meanings and reliable speakers, full comprehension becomes difficult whenever either of these two requirements is called into question. Brother Gaspar de Carvajal, a white European man in a foreign land, is an unreliable narrator—not to be trusted. Thus we move through the jungle with the same uncertainty as Aguirre.

⁷ John E. Davidson, "As Others Put Plays upon the Stage: Aguirre, Neocolonialism and the New German Cinema," *New German Critique* 60 (Fall 1993): 129.

⁸ Russell A. Berman, "The Recipient as Spectator: West German Film and Poetry in the Seventies," *German Quarterly* 55 (November 1982): 499.

Miscommunication, which was established in the chapter on Beuys as being part of his practice, is here aligned with a political position that seeks to undermine the reigning power structure (white, male, European). Herzog's 1974 film *The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser* (originally titled in Germany as *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* (Every Man for Himself and God Against All) is an object lesson in the danger of certitude. This movie focuses on the true story of Kaspar Hauser, a young man who mysteriously appeared in Nuremberg in 1828, barely able to speak or walk. The impulse to assimilate this feral, voiceless man proves to be unwise. Kaspar dies near the end of the film, having been rejected by his environment. Both of these movies by Herzog pit domestication against the wild(erness). The inability to communicate (muteness) is paralleled to language differences that make dialogue impossible (as between the Spaniards and the Indians). Baumgarten was most certainly moved by Herzog's efforts.

In 1973, just as Baumgarten was beginning to work on *The Origin of the Night*, he produced a collaborative work with the German anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker, Michael Oppitz. They made a boxed set of eagle feathers that were each labeled with the name of a North American Indian tribe or nation—Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Chippewyan, etcetera. As its title indicates, *Section 125-25 64-68: Hommage à m.b.*, this work was a response and an homage to an installation by Marcel Broodthaers, *Museum of Modern Art: The Eagle from the Oligocene Epoch to the Present*, which had been on view in Düsseldorf the previous year. The numbers in the title refer to the geographic coordinates for North America. Already, the young artist was locating his work geographically. The Broodthaers installation, so inspirational to Baumgarten, will

be discussed in greater detail in regard to *AMERICA Invention*, the 1993 Guggenheim project that is central to this chapter.

One year later, in 1974, Baumgarten created *Tropenhaus*, a project set in a glass conservatory on the grounds of the Cologne Botanical Garden. In this work the artist added text to the existing labels on the greenhouse's vegetation, providing "a mind-expanding amalgamation of quotes and excerpts from a broad selection of writings and from myths and stories handed down by societies without written language."⁹ He used first-person texts from Lope de Aguirre, Baron Alexander von Humbolt, Sir Walter Raleigh and others, which allowed viewers to "see" the plants in a different context. Rather than tags that revealed just the botanical name of the specimen, the plants were now associated with stories of their first sighting by a European, possible medicinal applications, horticultural information or poetic analogies. Historian Ann Rorimer notes that the artist freed the plants from being understood just through the "dead, European language of Latin."¹⁰

Baumgarten was aware that the conservatory's plants only survived due to the warming effects of a heater and consistent watering from a sprinkler system. Without the efforts of the botanical garden's staff, these transplants from other climates would not be able to exist. Removed from their native soil and kept alive for viewer pleasure and edification, they are exotic Others in the same sense as the indentured Indians who traveled with the Wild West shows and the Völkerschauen. By recontextualizing the plants with extended label information, just as they might be presented in an anthropological museum, they became living artifacts in an institution dedicated to

⁹ Anne Rorimer, "Lothar Baumgarten: The Seen and the Unseen," in *Site-Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn* (London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2000), p. 38.

preservation and protection, a place where order and systemization is imposed.

Tropenhaus marks Baumgarten's first use of an institutional backdrop for his critique of power. One is also reminded of the death scene in Syberberg's film *Karl May* of the same year, where May himself is left unprotected under the broken roof of a conservatory.

In 1978, shortly after *The Origin of the Night* was finished, Baumgarten traveled to South America for the first time. For eighteen months the artist lived with the Yanomami tribe in the Upper Orinoco region of southern Venezuela. The Yanomami are a society of hunter-agriculturalists who inhabit the tropical rainforest of Northern Amazonia, an area that is located on the border between Brazil and Venezuela. Their contact with non-indigenous society has been relatively recent, only developing in the late nineteenth century. When Baumgarten made his initial visit, the Brazilian and Venezuelan governments were just beginning to build roads into the area, and develop colonies, farmsteads, and sawmills. Mineral extraction, in particular gold-mining, had already been ravaging the landscape for several decades. Due to this invasion of their land, the native population had been displaced and disease had depopulated the Yanomami tribe. This process of "civilized progress" is hauntingly similar to the devastation of the Native American population in the nineteenth century. One Yanomami leader, Davi Kopenawa, notes:

The forest-land will only die if it is destroyed by whites. Then, the creeks will disappear, the land will crumble, the trees will dry and the stones of the mountains will shatter under the heat. The xapiripë spirits who live in the mountain ranges and play in the forest will eventually flee. Their fathers, the shamans, will not be able to summon them to protect us. The forest-land will

¹⁰ Rorimer, p. 38.

become dry and empty. The shamans will no longer be able to deter the smoke epidemics and the malefic beings who make us ill. And so everyone will die.¹¹

The xapiripë spirits mentioned by Kopenawa take the form of humanoid miniatures that stand in for both wild and domesticated animals, plants, simple household items and even, white people (napënapëripë), just as the kachina dolls of the North American Zuni and Hopi tribes represent the dancers who call forth a particular spirit. Yanomami shamans can summon these spirits on behalf of others in the community; shielding them from illness, controlling the fury of a storm, and calling for prosperity and fertility, among many other phenomenal acts. To call forth the xapiripë, shamans inhale yãkõana powder. Under the effects of this hallucinogenic substance, they are said to “‘die’...enter[ing] a state of visionary trance during which they ‘summon’ spirits.”¹² To identify themselves, the shamans imitate the choreography and songs of the chosen spirit, who then grants them a power-infused vision. In essence, these spiritual leaders are linked via an intercessory experience to a healing solution. This, of course, was the role Beuys assigned to himself.

Baumgarten extensively documented his experience of living with the Yanomami tribe, producing his first body of anthropological field work. From this point forward his methodology would include observed data as well as bibliographic research. In his 1982 installation for Documenta 7, Baumgarten placed the names of South American tribes on the walls of the Museum Fridericianum in Kassel. These names were painted in a blood red pigment derived from a natural dye that had been historically used by native people in both North and South America. The decorative coloring has been cited as a possible

¹¹ Indigenous People in Brazil, Instituto Socioambiental; socioambiental.org/pib/epienglish/kayapo/kayapo.shtm.

explanation for the appellation “Red Indian” used by white colonists and explorers.¹³

The next year Baumgarten revived his earlier list of North American tribal names and had them installed on the walls of the Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, a small city near Düsseldorf. The practice of naming had become central to his work.

In a highly regarded essay, Craig Owens emphasized the persistence of names in Baumgarten’s work. He observed that the work is “concerned with what Jacques Derrida calls the “anthropological war”—‘the essential confrontation that opens communication between peoples and cultures, even when that communication is not practiced under the banner of colonial or missionary oppression—a war that begins with the battle of proper names.’”¹⁴ According to Owens, it was Christopher Columbus who began this “battle” by claiming territory for Spain and baptizing each of his discoveries with a new name. This pursuit was understood as possessive in intent. Columbus knowingly obliterated the Indian name for a place in favor of his own designation. This he did without guilt or regard, as this action was considered both his right and his duty. A more contemporary reading of his exploits asserts the violence inherent in the act of renaming, as it obscures the existence of a previous culture.

Columbus habitually named the places he found in the New World after their appearance—Beautiful Meadow, Silver Mountain, Round Cape. Owens points out that this is primarily a visualist conception of language, one based on sight rather than communicated information. This renders the Indians as mute, as their original place

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Hal Foster, “The Writing on the Wall,” *AMERICA, Invention* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1993), p. 7.

¹⁴ Owens, *AMERICA, Invention*, p. 102.

names were disregarded. On the importance of Baumgarten's use of Indian names

Owens notes:

When Baumgarten deploys Indian names he is, of course, restoring the memory of something that has been effaced or obliterated. But he is also challenging a continuing European tendency to treat both the South American landscape and its inhabitants primarily as exotic signs; for Baumgarten does not employ names to conjure up a vision, but rather to provide an alternative to the ethnographic project of 'visualizing' the Other.¹⁵

However, when Baumgarten employs photographs, Owens is of a different mind. He insists that "every photograph of the Other is a visual reduction of the Other—both distancing and muting," and criticizes Baumgarten's attempt to justify his photographic material by means of his position as a "participant-observer" as disingenuous. Though recognizing his "honorable intentions," Owens is clearly more supportive of Baumgarten's text-based work that suggests presence through absence.¹⁶

Owens does not mention the rite of passage that sometimes accompanies naming or renaming. Baptism, marriage and, in some cultures, the ritual designation of manhood adds to or changes an individual's name, thus recognizing their evolving relationship to a particular social group. A variation of this practice is noted by both James Fenimore Cooper and Karl May, who awarded their heroes with "Indian" names to indicate their achievement as men of nature, skillful and wise like the best of their native brothers. Cooper's Natty Bumppo is initially christened as "Deerslayer," but is elevated at a later point to "Hawkeye." May's central character began his adventures in the West as the greenhorn, Jack Hildreth, but after felling a man with one blow and proving himself in other ways, he becomes Old Shatterhand and his given name is abandoned. This reversal—the replacement of a European name with an Indian one—is generally used to

¹⁵ Owens, p. 103.

raise the reader's estimation of the individual. Baumgarten was certainly aware of this tendency, as he called himself Makunamia in an early self-portrait in order to assume the powers of his namesake. This instance of renaming can be seen as an example of Baumgarten's identification with the Other, and as such suggests a different way of looking at his practice. As an Other himself, the artist can more freely speak for his fellow tribesman, thus partially explaining the characterization of his role among the Tupi as a "participant." However, I tend to agree with Owens that Baumgarten misleads us with his claim of equality with the Indians.

While he was in South America, Baumgarten contracted malaria. In 1982, after an especially long recuperation from the illness during which he taught himself about the trees in the rainforest, he published *Die Namen der Bäume (Tree Names)*. With a playfulness also found in *Makunamia*, Baumgarten again makes reference in the title to his own Namen (Tree/Garden).¹⁷ The book is an index of 250 species of trees accompanied by a large number of illustrations and photographs. One image shows a parquet floor installed in Düsseldorf in 1913 that was made out of a prized redwood tree native to the northern Amazon region. By citing the presence of this exotic wood in his own backyard Baumgarten suggests both the "colonization" of the Amazon by Europeans and the pillage of native resources. And by referencing his own name the artist hints at culpability—the overlay of a European interpretation upon a collection of South American trees. This implication of self-directed guilt recognizes the destruction of a population in his "own backyard," the Jews of Germany.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁷ The possibility of this pun was suggested by Dr. Evan Firestone.

South America was also the subject for Baumgarten's 1984 exhibition at the Venice Biennale for which he integrated a schematic, text-based map of the Amazon Basin into the existing marble floor of the German Pavilion (fig. 86). In the installation entitled *America*, he lists the names of the seven major rivers of the Amazon-Orinoco system, and includes four symbolic figures that represent a jaguar, eagle, caiman and turtle, all endangered animals native to the Amazon. The Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512) observed similarities between Venice and the country he christened "little Venice" in 1499—Venezuela. In both locations houses were sometimes built on poles to lift them out of the water and boats were often a necessity to travel the rivers and canals that laced each site. Vespucci's associative naming provided Baumgarten a perfect platform from which to situate his critique of colonial aggression and despoiling for the Biennale. In the same way Polke layered cultural references in his paintings and photoworks, Baumgarten merges two different places in one space. The imperiled geography of Venezuela is sited in an art venue in Venice, reminding the audience of its tenuous existence through its presence. In this transposition, Baumgarten claims a small piece of Italian soil for South America. Anne Rorimer has written that, in *America*, Baumgarten "create[s] a dialectic between imported symbol and existing architecture."¹⁸ The tension between two cultures, the native and the conquering, is made overtly apparent with the architectural space representing European society and the overlaid text suggesting a Third World or native population that is either dying or dead. Natives are inferred by place (nature) and architecture becomes the form of 'civilized' man (culture). This construct can be detected in Baumgarten's work as early as 1974 where, in *Tropenhaus*, the conservatory served as the local site for preserving exotic

¹⁸ Rorimer, p. 35.

plants from a foreign culture. I would argue, however, that despite his attention to this juxtaposition between native and civilized/nature and culture, it is the European viewpoint (Baumgarten's aesthetics/Baumgarten's opinion) that remains dominant. The voice of the indigenous Venezeulan is not heard.

This sense of entitlement to speak for the Indian Other has been questioned. In 1985, Baumgarten, now focused on North American Indians, permanently inscribed the walls of the Walker Court in the Art Gallery of Ontario with the names of tribes that originally inhabited eastern Canada. This installation, *Monument to the Native People of Ontario*, was originally made for the exhibition, "The European Iceberg: Creativity in Germany and Italy Today." Eight years later, the Saulteaux Indian artist, Robert Houle, was invited to respond to works in the AGO's collection and he chose to take on Baumgarten with a text-based piece of his own, *Anishnabe Walker Court, Part 2*, 1993 (fig. 87). Houle utilized the same tribal names as Baumgarten, but where the German artist had used upper case lettering that was placed high on the wall, Houle used lower-case letters, placed each name within quotation marks, and situated the text at chest level. In discussing these two installations Jackson Rushing notes that Houle "ironically quotes" the authoritarian Baumgarten, who has positioned his work as a monumental statement.¹⁹

In an equally bold gesture, Baumgarten produced another permanent installation three years later, this one for the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. Originally made for the Carnegie International, the museum's triennial exhibition of contemporary art, *The Tongue of the Cherokee* (1988) embeds the Cherokee alphabet, invented in the early

¹⁹ W. Jackson Rushing, *Native America Art in the Twentieth Century: makers, meanings, histories* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 88-89.

nineteenth century by Sequoyah, into the ceiling of the Hall of Sculpture (fig. 88).²⁰ Located in the Natural History portion of the Carnegie, the space functions as a light-filled thoroughfare between it and the Museum of Art. It was constructed in 1907 to house a collection of plaster casts of antique statuary and is classical in both its architecture and contents. This display of culture and civilization was intended to lift the profile of the industrial city, and it serves as the perfect institutional backdrop for Sequoyah's eighty-five syllable alphabet. As Anne Rorimer writes:

Positioned directly above the reproduction of the Parthenon frieze, *The Tongue of the Cherokee* reflects on its context within an environment that aspires to imitate Classical antiquity and on its location in Pittsburgh, steel capital of the modern world. By thus paying tribute to an important but disregarded figure [Sequoyah] in American history, it calls attention to cultural and historical omission.²¹

The space is also significant in its location between the museums of Natural History and Art, occupying an area that is neither one place nor the other. Baumgarten had used this same strategy in the Art Gallery of Ontario, utilizing a similarly covered interior courtyard for his installation rather than a traditional gallery. By placing his text “outside” the institution, he is commenting on the removal of Indian history from the halls of history and culture.

In place of a commissioned essay in the exhibition catalogue, the curators allowed Baumgarten to include his own text.²² Baumgarten's entry, *The Talking Leaf*, is comprised of a lengthy quotation from a turn-of-the-century account by James Mooney

²⁰ In keeping with Baumgarten's emphasis on resurrecting Native American history and place names, it is important to note that the name “Sequoyah” is recorded with various spellings, including Sequoia (as seen in Beuys' drawing from 1949), Sequoiah, and Sequoya—all of which are said to be Anglicized versions of the original: Sogwali or Sikwâ'yī.

²¹ Rorimer, p. 46.

²² A small note at the beginning of Baumgarten's entry reads: “Because of the close connection between work and text in *The Tongue of the Cherokee*, the museum has chosen to include the artist's text here in

on Sequoyah's efforts to produce a Cherokee alphabet, and additional historical material.

Mooney reported that Sequoyah used

a number of characters that he found in an old English spelling book, picking out capitals, lower-cases, italics, and figures, and placing them right side up or upside down, without any idea of their sound or significance as used in English.²³

Baumgarten follows Mooney's excerpt with information about the Cherokee newspaper, its circulation and its demise, and ends his essay with two paragraphs specific to Sequoyah's biography, citing him as the "only one in history to develop an alphabet or syllabary completely on his own."

To some extent, Baumgarten's use of the Cherokee alphabet provides an indigenous voice, thus breaking the traditionally enforced muteness. The alphabet, however, is displayed as a system of symbols and thus is a tool that cannot be used in that setting, a key to a text not offered. In one sense, the letters inscribed on the Carnegie's ceiling become simply decorative, virtually meaningless in their abstraction, yet they manage to speak volumes about the passing of a civilization. Baumgarten places the letters in varied positions across the glass grid, paralleling Mooney's description of Sequoyah's process of "claiming" English spelling book characters for his own purpose. No longer presented in a fashion English readers would completely recognize, the letters are simultaneously familiar and foreign. The two cultures are thus visually linked, provoking a more personal sense of loss in regard to the importance of Sequoyah and the displacement of the Cherokee nation.

lieu of the commissioned essay." See John Caldwell, Sarah McFadden, Joan Simon, *Carnegie International*, (Pittsburgh: Prestel/The Carnegie Museum of Art, 1988), p. 50.

²³ James Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Bureau of American Ethnology* 19, Part I (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), as quoted in "The Talking Leaf," written by Lothar Baumgarten and translated by Clara Seneca. *Carnegie International*, pp. 50-52.

In 1990, Baumgarten completed a project for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Entitled *Carbon*, the show anticipates the two-part format he used for a later Guggenheim installation and publication. As part of his research for *Carbon*, Baumgarten spent four and a half months in 1989 following rail lines in the American West.²⁴ He traveled with a camera, a dictating recorder and a notebook, eventually amassing several thousand black-and-white and color photographs and numerous audiotapes and journal entries. This data was translated into wall drawings, short stories, typographic displays, a beautiful book and several later exhibitions. Baumgarten wrote a description of this project in 1989 that is worth citing in its entirety:

Carbon: A Demography of “Settling the West”

The subject and raw material of *Carbon* is the aroma of geography, as embodied in the names of the railroad lines covering this country. These names are polyphonic. They talk back to us about the confrontation of two multiple-shaped worlds: that of the continent’s first inhabitants and that of the pioneer migrants to the West. On the one hand the names reflect the movement of a territorial expansion, the natural destination of which was the Pacific Ocean; on the other they testify to an older stratum, that of the Indian populations, their rivers and mountains, fords and trails. The linguistic blend of these names signifies the superimpositions of heterogeneous cultural strands.

The confrontation of two worlds, accelerated by the advance of the rail, was generally not a harmonious one; the local cultures not confined to reservations were, more often than not, exterminated. As the land was gradually cleared of its native people, the westbound settlers claimed it as their own agricultural soil; private entrepreneurs followed suit and built the largest railroad system in the world, employing Chinese immigrants, men of yet a third continent, as their welcome manpower.

Prerequisite to the development of the newly acquired lands, an impressive fabric of tracks and sophisticated bridges was thus woven, built upon the pillars of red expropriation and yellow exploitation. The railroad covered a continent of miraculously diverse landscapes, animals, and plants—some of them changed, cultivated, or destroyed, some preserved as they were before the

²⁴ It is worth noting that Karl May’s character Old Shatterhand was a surveyor for the railroad company and, ostensibly, would have traveled this same territory.

coming of the white man. Encompassing the rail network and its environs, this diversity of peoples, history, and landscape has been the constant companion of the enchanted rail traveler through the years.

For a time, I became a traveler, I sensed what it is like to live in a nation steadily on the move. *Carbon* connotes the confrontations of cultures that have been a part of this movement and development through an artistic grammar that engages the particular geographic and architectural contexts of its site.²⁵

Baumgarten's comments focus on displacement, loss and duality. The idea that a thing or a place can embody oppositional elements is reflected in the title of this project. *Carbon* refers to the fuel of a coal-powered train engine that accounted for the expansion of the American West, and to the Carbon 14 dating process by which the age of a cultural artifact may be determined. With this simple title the artist has suggested both a means of Progress and a marker of the Past.

The original installation of *Carbon* in Los Angeles consisted of a text-based wall "drawing" that spanned two galleries (fig. 89). Like stations along a rail line, the names of sixty-six Indian tribes were listed in geographic order from east to west through the space. The size of each name varied depending on the relative size of each tribe, but each utilized the same font style: Monotype Grotesk. Understanding the importance of word play in Baumgarten's work and the detailed nature of his approach, it becomes impossible to ignore the potential meanings behind this choice. Christopher Knight, the art critic for the *Los Angeles Times* at the time of Baumgarten's installation, notes that the term *monotype* "suggests the collapsing of distinctly different groups into a single species ("the" Indians), while *Grotesk* describes a traditional kind of art in which the forms of

²⁵ Lothar Baumgarten, "Carbon: A Demography of "Settling the West," in *Photography in Contemporary German Art: 1960 to the Present*, (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1992), pp. 62-63.

persons are radically distorted.”²⁶ The font was known in nineteenth-century England as Grottesque (or Grotesk in German), but Baumgarten used a simplified 1926 version that was among the earliest sans serifs cut for hot-metal machine typesetting. Therefore, mechanization and progress are implied. Both of these ideas can be linked to nationalist rhetoric that justified the subordination of the Indian population as America spread westward.

The tribal names in this installation were printed upside down, evoking Sequoyah’s displacement of the English alphabet. This, as Knight points out, slows the reading by temporarily abstracting the names. He goes on to note,

Baumgarten’s process of mapping names is unobtrusive and subversive. In an effort to mark cultural diversity, English, the unifying language of North American conquest, is subtly undone. The repressed fact that virtually no part of the world can claim as many distinctly different native languages as the Western Hemisphere is made startlingly perceptible.²⁷

The “mapping” that was present in Baumgarten’s Venice Biennale project, *America*, is made more visible in *Carbon* and it will be found a few years later in *AMERICA, Invention*. In *Carbon*, the train navigates the land and is the arbiter of change, belching smoke and drawing lines across the mountains and deserts of the West.

To the names on the wall Baumgarten adds simplified rail symbols: the parallel bars of tracks; crosses that mark intersections; and the slightly curved sections of the track that are involved in switching lines or routes. These black and red forms are framed by the white wall and, as an overall ensemble, look remarkably like overscaled Malevich paintings.²⁸ More pointedly perhaps, the composition evokes El Lissitzky’s *Proun Room*

²⁶ Christopher Knight, “*Carbon*, A Moving History of the Old West,” *Los Angeles Times*, (13 April, 1990): F16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. F16.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

of 1923 (fig. 90). In this analogy, PROUN (Project for the Affirmation of the New) serves as a visual equivalent to *Carbon*, Baumgarten's appellation for the railroad, a new form of travel in the nineteenth century that helped displace indigenous culture in the American West.²⁹ In addition to photographs of El Lissitzky's historic installation, Baumgarten might have had the opportunity to see the re-creation of the Proun Room that was a part of the 1976 Venice Biennale. The idea that Lissitzky considered his work a kind of visual language would appeal to the text-reliant Baumgarten as much as the constructivist artist's embrace of "newness" and progress. The red and black forms in Baumgarten's installation also invoke Navaho blankets and decorative designs used on Indian ceramics and textiles.³⁰ A chart of the artist's rail travel completes the installation, offering a rare personal connection to the material at hand. Going beyond a simple telling of the penetration of white society through Indian land, *Carbon* also evokes a more recent history, that of the Holocaust.³¹ In this context, it is impossible not to connect the travel of locomotives moving East to West across the United States with trains moving to and from German concentration camps during World War II.

The artist's book, which was published after the exhibition, was a collaboration between Baumgarten and the Dutch designer, Walter Nikkels. It features one hundred twenty-three matte-finish black-and-white photographs, glossy prints documenting the exhibition, and a series of railroad terms, train names, and rail company logos.

Superimposed text interspersed throughout the book lists plants, animals and humans that

²⁹ This idea was suggested by Dr. Evan Firestone.

³⁰ *Proun Room* used only a black, white and gray color scheme.

³¹ Christopher Knight wrote: "Still, Baumgarten's birth in Germany in 1944 seems an equally important bit of data. For the particular elements deployed in *Carbon* cannot help but recall the three genocidal holocausts of the modern era—one in Hitler's Germany, one in Stalin's Russia, one in 19th Century America."

were present before the advent of the railroad. Tribal names are printed upside down, just as they appeared on the museum walls. A booklet containing short stories (one by former collaborator Michael Oppitz), and a statement by the artist (see above) are contained in a pocket inside the back cover. As in *Tropenhaus*, Baumgarten utilizes texts by early explorers of the new world, and makes allusions to earlier painters such as Karl Bodmer and George Catlin, and photographers of the American West like W. H. Jackson and Edward Curtis.

A 1992 review of the book *Carbon* by *New York Times* art critic John Russell, focused on the death of the American rail system and ignored the Indian references, even remarking that Baumgarten was scheduled for “a large but *unrelated* exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum next month.”³² It is the romantic quality of the material that appealed to Russell—boyhood adventure, manly machines, potent locomotion. His willful neglect of the Indian content further served to subordinate and minimize the Indian Other, which is exactly what the artist was aiming to reverse.

In January 28, 1993, Baumgarten’s project, *AMERICA Invention* opened at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City (fig. 91). Rather than just the focus on the Amazon Basin in *America* for his Venice Biennale installation, this title refers to the whole Western Hemisphere, a fact made obvious in the north/south orientation of the wall text. On the front edge of the balcony facing the interior of the rotunda Baumgarten listed, in roughly geographical order, the names of North American indigenous societies. These begin at the top of the space and spiral down to an equatorial mid-point. The names of southern indigenous societies, printed upside down, climb towards the middle

³² John Russell, “Art View; a Monument to Energies, Human and Inhuman,” *The New York Times* (13 December, 1992).

where they meet their northern counterparts, which are right side up. Words recalling the violence visited upon these societies (abandoned, baptized, classified, decimated)³³ occupied the alcove galleries. In effect, wrote Hal Foster in his description of the show, Baumgarten “turns the Guggenheim into a globe.”³⁴

Foster also points out Baumgarten’s ingenious use of the Guggenheim’s central spiral, evoking the “screw of time” that moves in two directions, advancing into the future while simultaneously returning to the past. Here he notes the modernist inclination towards primitivism as but one example of this oppositional process.³⁵ Current names of places coexist with long-forgotten names, recovered and replaced for this installation alone.

George Melnyk has written that in naming, “we express both the power of the past and the importance of our present activity, of the collective inheritance of a culture and our desire to express ourselves both conventionally and radically.”³⁶ Further, Melnyk comments on the ever-changing nature of truth and the postmodern impulse to expose the falseness of past truths. It is this activity of revealing false constructions of the past that Baumgarten incorporates into his work. The artist uncovers and re-locates Native Americans through their homes and ethnic groups, replacing European designations with the original names. In this act of exchanging the present (current names) for the past (previous names), Baumgarten invents a new present. He rewrites history just as those before him did in previous centuries, but with a markedly different intent. Though he isn’t literally removing names on a map, there is a sense of erasure

³³ This list of words was taken from Hal Foster’s description of the installation in “The Writing on the Wall,” in *AMERICA Invention*, p. 11.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

that corresponds to Derrida's argument that both absence and presence can be suggested in the trace of something erased. Derrida embraced the inherent paradoxes and contradictions found within opposites such as presence and absence, allowing as they do the possibility of multiple meanings and interpretations. Baumgarten's reinvention of America in the Guggenheim rotunda is a reminder that history itself is a man-made construction, subject to the vicissitudes of human nature and the authority of a dominant power.

The anthropologist Robert S. Grumet, an expert on Native American place names in the vicinity of New York City, was asked to write an essay in the exhibition's catalogue. In considering the naming process, he tells the story of the appearance of the Delaware Indian name Manahatin or Manahata on a 1609 map made by Henry Hudson. Rather than Hudson's understanding that Manahatin was the actual name for the island, linguists today agree that it was really the Delaware word for any "island." A Moravian missionary working among the Delawares in the late 1770s had yet another interpretation. He wrote that "the name Manhattan came from the Delaware expression *manahatouh*, 'a place where timber is procured for bows and arrows.'³⁷ That confusion existed between people who spoke entirely different languages was only natural. However, the insistence on the part of visitors that their version of the truth, their appellations, constituted the correct or official version is indicative of presumptions of power and superiority. In his research, Grumet has found that the largest number of Indian place names that have survived to present day are in areas where "peaceful relations prevailed at or around the time Indians left the area," whereas the smallest

³⁶ George Melnyk, *The Poetics of Naming*, (Edmonton, The University of Alberta Press, 2003), p. 1.

³⁷ Robert S. Grumet, "Magical Names," in *AMERICA Invention*, p. 20.

number of existing Indian place names are in locales where the relationships between the Indians and their white neighbors were “consistently poor or openly hostile.”³⁸ He notes:

...names, like Manhattan, Rockaway, Passaic, Hackensack, and Canarsie, remain on greater New York maps. Others like Marechkawick, a Munsee place name for part of downtown Brooklyn, Sapokanickan, the Indian name of the present Greenwich Village, and Wiechquaesgeck, the name of the Dobbs Ferry locale that came to be used as a general term for all Indians living in Westchester County and the Bronx during the seventeenth century...stayed on colonial maps for a time before being replaced by European imports. Most, however, shared the fate of names like Snakapins and Quinnahung, which were inscribed once or twice in European documents and then forgotten.³⁹

By writing these names, both familiar and forgotten, on the walls of a preeminent cultural institution, Baumgarten reminds viewers of another history, a previous time. In doing so, he creates a sense of wonderment and also, guilt. The message: “Think about what is gone. Picture the dislocated, the wronged, the first Americans.” There is also a subliminal call to protect what greed has not yet completely destroyed, the jungles of the Amazon where Baumgarten came of age.

For viewers, the experience of standing amid this swirl of tribal and place names, elicited comments that reflected the importance of the artist’s project, and how good it looked within the unique architecture of the Guggenheim.⁴⁰ Roberta Smith, who reviewed the exhibition during its run in New York City, wrote that the “best thing about this piece is simply the way the giant names spring out from the different planes of the spiral and make you newly aware of its structure while evoking a complex and sorry history.” She went on to say that the artist’s combination of “Conceptual art, understated moral indignation and almost clinically slick super-graphics” is unusually strong in the

³⁸ Grumet, p. 18.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

context of Wright's building.⁴¹ Certainly the design of the museum competes with most of the art that is shown within it, but in this case the dominance of the architecture is appropriate to Baumgarten's message, which is what adds to his success both visually and conceptually.

The American writer James Fenimore Cooper, who so influenced Karl May and entertained generations of Germans, also used the strategy of a lost name to evoke the demise of native inhabitants on American soil. In his adventure story, *The Pioneers* (1823), the white scout Natty Bumppo assumes the role that Old Shatterhand would later play in May's novels. Bumppo's Indian friend was Chingachgook, the last representative of the proud Mohicans. Cooper wrote passionately about the advent of white settlers, presenting them as hypocritical in their Christianity and subject to vice and greed. The death of Chingachgook becomes symbolic of all Indians who are assumed to be doomed to extinction. Clothed as the mighty Indian chief he once was and sitting on the trunk of a fallen oak, Chingachgook expresses his readiness to die, recognizing the end of the world as he knows it. Cooper emphasizes the tragedy of Chingachgook's death by revealing that the stone marking the chief's grave misspells his name, thus erasing his presence.⁴² Although Baumgarten may not have known about Chingachgook, the idea that re-naming (through accident or intention) can lead to loss is everywhere present in his work.

The typeface used for the Guggenheim installation is called Syntax. This sans serif typeface was designed by Hans Eduard Meier and was based on the proportions of a Renaissance roman type. It went into use in 1968 as the last hot-metal typeface from the

⁴⁰ Reagan Upshaw makes this point in her review. *Art in America* 81 (July 1993): 97, as does Roberta Smith. See next footnote.

⁴¹ Roberta Smith, "The New Guggenheim starts to Show its Face," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1993.

D. Stempel foundry in Switzerland. Hot metal typesetting was a method of creating a relief printing surface by injecting a molten metal alloy into a mold. The result was blocks of type that ranged in size from one word to an entire page. This approach achieved a clear, uncompromised print each time it was used and performed better than many of the options that appeared previously in the twentieth century.⁴³ It is significant that Baumgarten chose this font as it brings closure to the cycle of a late nineteenth-century invention that was instituted with the Monotype Grotesk typestyle he utilized in Los Angeles several years earlier.

The exhibition catalogue for *AMERICA Invention*, like the book *Carbon*, was a collaboration between the artist and Walter Nikkels. At the heart of this magazine-style publication is a fifty-eight page photo-based essay that constitutes the second part of Baumgarten's Guggenheim project. It depicts images of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England taken by the artist between 1968 and 1970. The Pitt Rivers Museum was founded in 1884 by Lt.-General Pitt Rivers, an influential figure in the development of archaeology and evolutionary anthropology. The Museum houses ethnographic objects from all over the world, most of which are displayed 'typologically'--grouped by form or purpose rather than by geographical or cultural origin. This layout was developed by Pitt Rivers and is based, in part, on Darwin's theory of evolution. It also reflects the General's recognition of the importance of typological context.⁴⁴ The installation of objects at the Pitt Rivers Museum has never been altered and therefore still retains its

⁴² Geoffrey Rans, *Cooper's Leatherstocking Novels: a secular reading* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 125.

⁴³ www.myfonts.com/fonts/adobe/monotype-grotesk/.

⁴⁴ Mark Bowden, *Pitt Rivers: The life and archeological work of Lieutenant-General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, DCL, FRS, FSA*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 3.

distinct Victorian atmosphere.⁴⁵ The cluttered cases and the original small handwritten labels are all captured in Baumgarten's photographs.

With only a few exceptions, the photographs bleed off the edge and are accompanied by a single word of text on each side of the double-page spread (fig. 92). The words appear on the left and right margins where a reader would place his or her hands to turn the page.⁴⁶ Twice, however, they ride the fold between the two images and once they appear at the bottom and top edges of the page. The first page of the essay features two words in black, lowercase letters in the Vendome fontstyle: "unsettled objects." Within the photo-essay the text is predominantly white, but changes to black for seven pairs. Vendome is a type that was developed in France in 1952, and thus is essentially "contemporaneous with Wright's building" which opened in 1959.⁴⁷ A sample of the pairs provides a sense of the many associations and underlying meanings hidden within:

classified/bewildered	class [societal]/wild
reinvented/generalized	rein [control]/general [pitt rivers]
protected/consumed	pro/con
evaluated/questioned	valu[e] of object/quest for object
negotiated/BLANK PAGE	negotiate/lack of negotiation
decoded/composed	code [of civilized conduct]/pose ⁴⁸
.	

What becomes evident in this embedded text is an additional message of dominance, the hidden nature of which is meant to be seen as particularly insidious. Baumgarten's close attention to word play, evident in his early self-portrait, *Makunamia*, is here central to his project.

⁴⁵ Although the Pitt Rivers Museum was restored recently, it retains its typological form of categorization.

⁴⁶ Michael Govan, "Introduction," in *AMERICA Invention* exhibition catalogue, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Reagan Upshaw, *Art in America* 81 (July 1993): 96-7. Upshaw mistakenly identifies the fontstyle of the exhibition as Vendome, when in reality this typeface belongs exclusively to the exhibition catalogue.

At the time Baumgarten made the Pitt Rivers photographs, he had become aware of Marcel Broodthaers and was clearly influenced by the Belgian artist's practice of playing with the ambiguous nature of words. Broodthaers was a poet, a man of words, who turned to art-making during the last twelve years of his life. In 1968, the year of the student rebellions in Europe, he opened the first manifestation of his *Musée d'Art Moderne* in his Brussels apartment. It was intended as a critical gesture, poking fun at institutions where objects are collected and archived, but it also commented on the power of the museum to re-present and define culture. In the next four years Broodthaers presented versions of his museum in Cologne, Antwerp, Düsseldorf, Middelburg and Kassel, where it was viewed by Joseph Beuys, Sigmar Polke and Lothar Baumgarten, among others. Baumgarten's photographs of ethnographic objects installed in the Pitt River Museum almost certainly took their cue from the *Musée d'Art Moderne*.

The second of two appearances of Broodthaers' museum in Düsseldorf was entitled the *Section des Figures: The Eagle from the Oligocene to the Present* (1972), and contained two hundred and sixty-six representations of eagles in art (not including those on view in a slide presentation) (fig. 93). These objects—paintings, prints, sculptures, photographs, vases, typewriters, comic strips—were borrowed from dealers, private collections and museums (including the Museum of the American Indian in the United States). They were arranged without hierarchy or system by the artist and two associates. Unlike displays in a museum such as Pitt Rivers, there was absolutely no attempt to “type” the objects or order them in chronological or geographic sequence. They were,

⁴⁸ The associations identified in the list of paired words were revealed through my personal analysis of Baumgarten's text.

however, presented in vitrines, on pedestals, and framed in carefully hung groups.⁴⁹ Each item was accompanied by a black plastic label with white incised script that offered a catalogue number and the following sentence in German, French and English: “This is not a work of art.” Broodthaers credited his longtime friend, René Magritte, in the exhibition catalogue, along with Marcel Duchamp, stating later that the phrase was “a formula obtained by the contraction of a concept by Duchamp and an antithetical concept by Magritte.”⁵⁰

Broodthaers also participated in Documenta V (1972), the show that included Beuys, Baumgarten and Polke. It was during this event that he staged the official closing of his museum, presenting two final versions of his *Musée d’Art Moderne*. One area was demarcated with text alerting the viewer to a nonexistent “Cloak room, Cashier and Office.” These markers were accompanied by the notations “fig. 1,” “fig. 2,” etc., and by a painted sign on the outside window that read “Museum/Musée.” It was all text, no objects. In the second section Broodthaers created an overview of *Section des Figures*, referring to it as his *Section Publicité*.

Rainer Borgemeister, a German art historian, writing on Broodthaers, discussed the problems of viewing a large collection of objects: “In Valéry’s view, each of the exhibited works in a museum’s collection implicitly demands the others’ disappearance: ‘What an intrinsic contradiction this assemblage of self-sufficient but mutually exclusive marvels poses, each repelling the other most when they most resemble each other.’”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Broodthaers’ use of vitrines in this presentation was said to be influential on Beuys, who took up this practice in subsequent work.

⁵⁰ Kynaston McShine, *The Museum as Muse, Artists Reflect*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999), p. 64.

⁵¹ Rainer Borgemeister, “Sections des Figures, *The Eagle from the Oligocene to the Present*,” in *Broodthaers, Writings, Interviews, Photographs*, a special issue of *October* edited by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, (Cambridge: MIT Press and October Magazine, Ltd., 1987), p. 143. It is interesting to note that

“Blinded” viewing—disregard through regard—is predicated on the idea of avoiding visual and mental confusion. Focus on one thing at a time or one will never really “see” anything. Both Broodthaers and Baumgarten, however, seem to work to remove blindfolds, to encourage overload, association and disorientation. They suggest multiple truths.

Less lighthearted than Broodthaers, Baumgarten occupies a position that, like the similar attitudes of Polke and Beuys, is premised on rejecting domination and greed and tempering power. His critique extends from the intolerance of his own country’s past to his primary focus: America’s repeated patterns of persecution and abuse of its native populations. While his peers Anselm Kiefer, Jörg Immendorff, and others unapologetically utilized Nazi iconography and references, Baumgarten engages in an equally aggressive war on ignorance, indifference and neglect. His project is one of reclamation—(re)righting historical injustices. Unlike Beuys, who sought to heal old wounds, Baumgarten’s approach is more radical. He is not just looking to heal the surface, he seeks a change of perception.

Baumgarten believes that an artist cannot reflect on his or her own society without distance. He argues that it is easier to find self-definition through difference. And one cannot simply get to know another cultural group through books: “You have to jump into the bushes, almost naked, as I did.”⁵² This same opinion is expressed by Gemünden when he observes that, for German filmmakers like Werner Herzog and Herbert

in this same volume, Michael Oppitz, Baumgarten’s collaborator on several projects, contributed an essay focused on the fetish quality of Magritte’s pipe and Duchamp’s urinal. He posits that Broodthaers intentionally denies this mythical status to the eagles in his faux museum.

⁵² John Russell, “Art View; Lothar Baumgarten’s Discreet Provocations,” *The New York Times* (6 November 1988).

49 Ibid.

Achternbusch, America “became a playground for the imagination and a site where the subject comes to understand itself as an other.”⁵³ However, Baumgarten neither mentions what he has learned about his own culture through his experiences in South and North America nor does he make direct parallels to the Holocaust. This preoccupation with someone else’s transgressions appears to be a kind of deflection. It also reveals a presumption on his part as he does not speak about himself, but speaks for others.

Baumgarten has gone back and forth in his career, creating autobiography and denying it.⁵⁴ The photographs of the Yanomami that he made in the late 1970s documented his presence, just as the images of the American railway system marked his own progression across the West. He records his experiences in film and through diaries, though he claims never to reopen his journals once they are full. Not privy to his inner thoughts, we are left with suggestive fragments and his assurance that “human beings are human beings,”⁵⁵ and mistakes are made. Does this indicate that he excuses what he condemns? Given the consistent nature of his message, it would be hard to believe that he could be so casually dismissive of the acts of those who perpetuate destruction and accelerate the disappearance of indigenous populations.

Like his colleague, Sigmar Polke, and teacher, Joseph Beuys, Baumgarten utilizes the Indian Other as a tool: a signifier for something lost, a partner in spiritual advancement, a target of exploitation and greed. With each of these constructs, these three contemporary artists envision a more perfect world. Baumgarten’s goal is to

⁵³ Gerd Gemünden, *Framed Visions* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 118.

⁵⁴ There is very little information about Baumgarten’s private life and history in the public domain (which explains why I only lightly touch on his personal biography in this chapter). I was able to contact him through Marian Goodman Gallery, but unfortunately, the day he returned my phone call I was not at home. When I attempted to call him back, he did not respond. I have repeatedly emailed and called his gallery, and even tried to reach him through one of his colleagues at the University of Art (UdK) in Berlin where he teaches, but to no avail.

resurrect the forgotten or displaced Indian, and to be, like Makunamia, the cultural hero or savior. But the simple act of assigning himself this role, even in jest, reveals his true position in relation to the Other—he is the stronger, wiser man who must act on behalf of his weaker Indian brother. In fact, he must also act on behalf of his white American brother, proposing revisions to a history that he finds lacking. Despite the accuracy of his observation, we are once again faced with a telling conceit, and the off-setting self-effacement located in Beuys' actions is not as evident. He privileges his own reading even while using someone else's words.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Macke imagined Indians as noble, exotic, men of nature. Nolde sought a connection to a Germanic ideal, a primitive soul embodied in the child and the peasant that found expression in paintings of kachinas. In contrast to these positive allusions to spiritual beings, Schlichter depicted the Savage. Violent and wild, his Indian evoked the mayhem and conflict of the First World War. Max Ernst's Indian was represented through appropriated forms, patterns and symbols, all of which pointed to an understanding of the Native American as intuitively coupled with the great unknown. The Indian in Joseph Beuy's work is primarily located in the coyote, with which he partnered in a 1974 performance in New York City. This Indian was a victim, a charismatic outlaw, and a mythic figure. Sigmar Polke and Lothar Baumgarten's Indian is equally victimized, yet Polke's images also invoke a symbolic voyager who travels to higher planes of existence. Each of these artists presents an archetype that reflects his point of view, a vision influenced by his cultural milieu, yet simplified from the far more complex attitudes and ideas that affect the larger world. For Germans living and working in the twentieth century, this perspective was shaped by the stigma of violence. Historian Michael Geyer asserts that a fundamental aspect of the German experience in the twentieth century is the "unbroken continuity" of death—from the battlefield fatalities in both wars to the mass extermination of the Holocaust.¹ He also describes the differing reactions by the German public following each war. After World War I, crushed by defeat and inflation, there was "a radical depreciation of the individual and his or her ability to construct life deliberately

¹ Michael Geyer, translated by Michael Latham, "The Place of the Second World War in German Memory and History," *New German Critique* 71: Memories of Germany (Spring-Summer 1997): 10-11.

and meaningfully.”² However, memories of the war were not repressed and thus World War I found immediate representation in both word and image, a fact demonstrated in Rudolf Schlichter’s work. But after World War II, there was detachment, guilt and a split between one’s previous life (before) and one’s current life (after).³ According to Geyer, this inability to address the recent past remained a part of the German mindset until the late 1970s, when a “veritable cult of remembering” opened the floodgates.⁴

The separation between the pre-World War II self and the post-World War II self is manifested in Joseph Beuys’ mythic “rebirth,” and presaged in Max Ernst’s similar reincarnation after World War I. Benjamin Buchloh and Rosalind Krauss, in discussing Beuys’ 1979 exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, point to the artist’s falsification of his biography as a form of displacement. Krauss observes that:

[Beuys] presents a way of considering the past without having to consider it as one’s own past, never in relationship to an immediate past or any specific present.⁵

Buchloh agrees, citing Beuys’ practice as ahistorical—unconcerned with and unrelated to the recent history of Germany. No less critical of such a disassociation, Geyer would probably understand Beuys’ actions as being directly connected to the German experience. Even more traditional post-World War II artists, such as the painter Günther Uecker (one of Sigmar Polke’s teachers at the Düsseldorf Art Academy), affiliated himself with the group “Zero,” the name of which was meant to suggest “pure

² Ibid., p. 14.

³ Geyer, pp. 12-19.

⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

⁵ Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Rosalind Krauss, Annette Michelson, “Joseph Beuys at the Guggenheim,” *October* 12 (Spring 1980), p. 13.

possibilities for a new beginning.”⁶ For Germans living in the decades following World War II, starting over was a necessary alternative to living in the immediate past.

In the previous chapters I have attempted to describe how each artist in the study envisioned the Indian Other and what that construction said about him. Additionally, I have addressed how these interpretations reflected Germany’s perception of the United States, revealing opinions that changed from an early admiration for the freedom of the untamed American West to an inclination to be suspicious of the power and materialism of the United States. These artists identified with the Indian in various ways: as an equally brutal warrior; as a kindred spirit in a world synchronized with nature; as a like-minded seeker of universal truths; and most importantly, as a fellow victim of oppression. Yet do these forms of recognition enable a greater understanding of their Indian brother? Is the partnering on equal terms? And if so, how does this parity alter the traditional oppositional relationship found in Primitivism?

In answering these questions, it is important first to stress that the foundation of German information about the American Indian rests, in part, on fabrication. Writers, like Karl May, wove fact and fiction in a still-popular blend. And as historian Joy Kasson notes, even early traveling shows such as Buffalo Bill’s necessarily traded on exoticism and fictionality.⁷ In other words, they played to audience expectations that were grounded in fanciful accounts, rather than appearing as themselves. These performers assumed Indian personas in the same way, for instance, that later Yiddish

⁶ Stephanie D’Alessandro, “History by Degrees: The Place of the Past in Contemporary German Art,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 28:1 *Negotiating History: German Art and the Past* (2002): 69. Author quoted comment from the *Times Literary Supplement*, September 3, 1964, n.p.

⁷ Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), p. 84. As quoted in Eric Ames, “Seeing the Imaginary: On Popular Reception of Wild West Shows in Germany, 1885-1910,” in *I Like America*, p. 221.

actors would play stereotypical Jewish characters.⁸ A similar masquerade is evident in Indian fan clubs which find Germans dressing up as Indians as a form of solidarity with Native American victims of oppression, but also as a celebration of a childhood passion for the noble savage. Gatherings of Karl May enthusiasts and Indian club members have been documented by the photographic team of Andrea Robbins and Max Becher. Their funny, ironic images of fair-haired, pale-skinned, German-speaking “Indians” reinforce the underlying artifice of this form of role-play (figs. 94 and 95). In addition, theme parks and cowboy and Indian movies perpetuate particular readings of both Indians and the West. Rather than authenticity, Germans and many others, have settled for, or perhaps have even preferred, myth and imitation.

Imitation is a form of mimicry. When a member of a German Indian club dons a headdress and performs a slow, rhythmic dance step around a bonfire he is mimicking what is perceived to be Indian behavior. Whether or not the routine is historically accurate is only of partial concern, it is the participation in this faux-ritual that can be marked as significant. Is this performer perpetuating the liberated, back-to-nature play seen in the activities of the Bridge artists, who frolicked in the woods à la Indian? Or is he, like Ernst or Beuys, seeking a transformative experience in his mimeticism?

The idea of transformation, often seen in the form of shamanistic ritual, is apparent in the work of Ernst, Beuys, Polke, and Baumgarten (who seeks collective change). When Ernst dressed as a bird or put on the mask of a kachina dancer, he alluded to the channeling of the spirit world that a mediator, such as a shaman experiences. Delving also into the world of alchemy, Ernst clearly evokes the power of conversion

⁸ Information from a National Public Radio interview on *Fresh Air*, Tuesday, January 2, 2007, with Judy Rosen, a journalist who has assembled the album: *Jewface*.

from one thing to another. Artists from Kandinsky to Yves Klein have explored the idea of transcendence, but none with such extended focus as Joseph Beuys. His persona and stated desire to heal the world, and his dependence on ritual and symbolism, encouraged his identification with shamanism. In this pursuit, he influenced both Sigmar Polke and Lothar Baumgarten. Polke, true to his times, and in keeping with certain shamanic practices, sought a form of transcendence with the help of hallucinogens. This initial inspiration evolved into an interest into the transformative magic of alchemy.

Baumgarten's more anthropological path led from the Yanomami tribe of the Amazon to an academic study of the destruction of Indian civilizations.

David Thistlewood, in an introduction to a critical anthology on Polke, suggests that "ironic commentary on the properties of the 'authorized' avant-garde may well be a chief characteristic of the German alternative."⁹ This view sets post-World War II German artists decidedly in opposition to the perceived hegemony of American art. It also encourages a non-conformity that links them to early twentieth-century Dada, especially German varieties. Artists such as Beuys and Polke sought to subvert Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art and equally, they worked against the Social Realism of Communist East Germany. They borrowed from a wide variety of sources, utilizing scraps and fragments and flirting with an anti-modern sense of incoherence.¹⁰ This effort allowed them to be critical of the consumerism and chauvinism associated with the United States as well as resist the ideologies of the Cold War.

Often contained in German criticism of America is a note of superiority. As Gemünden writes: "For [Germans] America is a country without history and therefore

⁹ David Thistlewood, *Sigmar Polke: Back to Postmodernity* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

without culture.”¹¹ Judging Americans to be unsophisticated, greedy, consumer-driven, power mongers originated with propaganda that began early in the twentieth century. Conservative thinkers feared that the primacy of American music, dance and modes of industrial progress would be their ruin. Two World Wars did nothing to diminish this apprehension, especially in the face of post-war assimilation of American idealism and popular culture. Christian Feest refers to what is known as the “Noble Indian/Ugly American syndrome,” noting that the contemporary heirs of this pervasive idea have mostly inhabited the “left (red) side of the political spectrum.” He writes that the sixties generation tended to replace the traditional stereotype of an Indian warrior with a new image of a peaceful man of nature, adding that “only the old-fashioned peace pipe has survived the change of emphasis.”¹² The symbolic peace pipe is evident in Polke’s anti-war work, marking strong resistance to the United States military’s involvement in Vietnam. American imperialism in Vietnam was linked to an assessment of Germany’s own past and thus was wrapped in issues of national identity, capitalism and guilt.¹³ Whether as a diversion to their own problems or a conscientious act of resistance to American power, artists like Beuys, Polke and Baumgarten located a potent symbol in the American Indian and used it in the service of an idea that privileged their sense of righteousness. Even Max Ernst, in his 1969 collage *Mickey’s Ascension*, utilized the Indian kachina as a contrast to the power of the United States. In this regard, these artists can be said to bear a relationship to a central idea promulgated by Karl May—*Wiedergutmachung*, the restoration of goodness by noble Germans who come forward to

¹¹ Gerd Gemünden, *Framed Visions: Popular Culture, Americanization, and the Contemporary German and Austrian Imagination*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 16.

¹² Christian Feest, *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, (Aachen: Edition Herodot/Rader Verlag, 1987), p. 613.

¹³ Gemünden, pp. 29-31.

help the doomed Indian. May borrowed from Germanic myths for a pattern of folk heroes who battle evil in the name of justice and decency. In this analogy, Baumgarten and Beuys become contemporary versions of the fictional Shatterhand. This probably is not an allusion that would appeal to Baumgarten. Comparing him to May's hero would imply a supremacy over his subject(s) which would not be welcome, but as the Canadian Indian artist Robert Houle noted, it would be appropriate to identify Baumgarten's practice as paternalistic.

The Indian remains a symbol of a preferred way of living (with the exception of Schlichter's warrior), something to be admired and perhaps copied, but not deeply known. When there is collaboration, as between Beuys and the coyote and Baumgarten and the Yanomami Indians, the hierarchical nature of the affiliation becomes obvious. Therefore, the basic tenet of Primitivism, that the Other is defined in opposition to one's own culture, remains true. Despite the sense of shared victimization, these German artists retain a conscious distance that distinguishes them both from the Natives and the Americans—an attitudinal difference marked by self-interest, a privileging of self over all others.

It is tempting to assign this trait to every artist. Additionally (and here I agree with Jack Flam), appropriation is a basic dynamic of all artistic exchange.¹⁴ But within this presumed equalization is a problem noted by Lucy Lippard: Why is it that when other cultures appropriate from Western Modernism, they are called derivative?¹⁵ The obvious answer is that the western culture retains the authority. But when two western powers clash, as was the case with Germany and the United States, only one winner

¹⁴ Jack Flam, Miriam Deutch, editors, *Primitivism and Twentieth Century Art: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), p. 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

emerged. And, as Gemünden expressed in earlier comments about a German sense of superiority, contempt became part of the German response to American domination. Theodor Adorno, in musing about the question “What is German?” writes that “one feels superior to the [USA] because it had produced only refrigerators and automobiles, while Germany produced a culture of spirit [*Geisteskultur*].”¹⁶ He goes on to note the sense of self-satisfaction and disengagement that this condescension can engender, even suggesting that “arrogance towards America is out of place,” yet the original acknowledgement remains. And it finds focus in the practice of Beuys, Polke and Baumgarten.

The cultural critique that was once aimed primarily at Germans in the work of the modernists in this study, is now redirected. The reflecting mirror of Primitivism acts as a refracting surface, altering the course of the original ray of equivalence. This diversion seems a curious product for a post-modern sensibility, which is assumed to be more enlightened and sensitive by virtue of exposure to and acceptance of difference. But instead, this deflection marks a reversal of sorts, a kind of blindness. This metaphorical inability to see oneself clearly, to blame rather than accept, is still premised on an ideal—a fictional model. In this aspect, the German personification of the Indian remains stable throughout the twentieth century. Identifying with the Indian neither seems to impact or change German understanding of the actual Native American, nor does it modify the traditional power relationship between the two. Dressing up like an Indian does not make a German an Indian.

¹⁶ Theodor Adorno, translated by Thomas J. Levin, “On the Question: ‘What is German?,’” *New German Critique* 36, Special Issue on Heimat. (Autumn, 1985): 126.

In closing, it is important to note one aspect of this group of artists that I have not yet addressed—the gendered nature of their interest in the American West and its native population. In *Framed Visions* Gemünden assigns a chapter to the contemporary German filmmaker Monika Treut, in which he discusses her exploration of the “liberating” possibilities of “play” in “gender performance,”¹⁷ a subject also suggested by Katrin Seig in *Ethnic Drag*. This association with role-playing, found in contemporary Indian fan clubs and seen at gatherings such as the Karl May Festival, is central to the childhood activity of “playing Indian.” While Indian princesses are certainly in evidence (see fig. 96 for a young Teresa as Indian squaw complete with yarn braids),¹⁸ playing cowboys and Indians is predominantly in the realm of a boy’s experience. Anthony Rotundo, who wrote a history of American masculinity, notes that war games are central to boyhood. The “casual hostility” and “social sadism” that accompanies physical, aggressive, noisy play finds appropriate expression in all variants of staged warfare, especially in the popular combination of cowboys/settlers and Indians.¹⁹

In the late-nineteenth century there was a “renaissance” of manliness that arose in reaction to civilized society in both Europe and America.²⁰ Victorian ideals were characterized as feminine and domesticity became something against which modern man felt the need to rebel and escape. As a result, numerous secret societies and fraternal organizations came into being. During this same period, the modern Olympic movement was founded, celebrating male athleticism and prowess, and Boy Scout and Wandervogel

¹⁷ Gemünden, p. 188.

¹⁸ When this photograph was taken I had just spent the summer at a YMCA camp where my father was the Arts and Crafts Director. The camp had the tradition of staging an end-of-the-summer Indian pageant in which everyone dressed up as Indians. Therefore, the impetus behind my costume was a boy’s camp ritual.

¹⁹ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: BasicBooks, A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1993), p. 36.

²⁰ David Chapin, “Gender and Indian Masquerade in the Life of Grey Owl,” *American Indian Quarterly* 24 (Winter 2000): 93.

groups were developed in America, Great Britain and Germany. Nietzsche's rejection of degenerate and effete civilization, which had great appeal to the Die Brücke artists in the first decade of the twentieth century, also found expression in nature-oriented *Lebensreform* projects. The new construct of masculine identity was linked to worker's movements, empire building, and nationalism. In the United States, Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine (both of which extended the country's realm of influence) were understood to be aggressive and appropriately domineering.²¹ Within the various manifestations of manly pursuits, white men often appropriated cultural symbols from indigenous people to reinforce the maleness of their endeavors. Indian motifs were considered masculine, rustic,²² and primitive man was idealized as assertively male, and often, as overtly sexual.²³ Hal Foster, for instance, argues that the Die Brücke artists mapped primitivism onto prostitution, thus justifying (even celebrating) the libertine practices of the group and creating a powerful metaphor for human instinct.²⁴

Brian Klopotek notes that "hypermasculinity has been one of the foremost attributes of the Indian world that whites have imagined." He lists the common stereotypes utilized by white writers and filmmakers as: the noble savage, his evil twin (the ignoble savage), the wise old chief, and the cunning warrior. Each of these classic depictions epitomizes a "physically superb" man, "animal-like in his athletic abilities" and at one with nature.²⁵ Even the aging chief is depicted with a broad chest and time-

²¹ David Anthony Tyeme Clark and Joane Nagel, "White Men, Red Masks: Appropriation of "Indian" Manhood in Imagined Wests," in Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, Dee Garceau, *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West* (New York/London: Routledge, 2000), p. 112.

²² Elizabeth Cromley, "Masculine/Indian," *Winterthur Portfolio* 31: Gendered Spaces and Aesthetics (Winter 1994): 265.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

²⁴ Hal Foster, "'Primitive' Scenes," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Autumn 1993), p. 96.

²⁵ Brian Klopotek, "'I Guess Your Warrior Look Doesn't Work Every Time': Challenging Indian Masculinity in the Cinema," in *Across the Great Divide*, p. 251.

tempered limbs, clearly capable of violence even when he sagely advocates against it. These images of manly men have permeated popular imagination.

Marianna Torgovnick cites another popular, hyper-male that first appeared in the early twentieth century and remains visible today, Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan.²⁶ Like the American Indian, Tarzan, is understood as a primitive man who lives in harmony with the wild animals around him. In *Gone Primitive*, Torgovnick develops an argument that attempts to identify a shared trait among ethnographers that is worth mentioning in its possible applicability to artists such as Max Ernst and Lothar Baumgarten. She cites Lukács' notion of "transcendental homelessness" as evident in the desire to seek information on primitive cultures. Within this idea is a secular yearning for the sacred, a desire for individualism partnered with the need for community, and an emphasis on fragmentation that contradicts a longing for totality.²⁷ Jewishness becomes one element of difference or "otherness" that propels investigators like Freud, Lévi-Strauss, and Boas to seek a homeland—"to join with a 'universal' mankind in the primitive."²⁸ Exile or cultural estrangement is also a noted stimulus.

Ethnographic research is most clearly associated with the practices of Ernst and Baumgarten, but the idea of cultural estrangement could also be said to apply to Beuys and Polke. As members of a divided, post-war society, these artists quite naturally privileged an idealized existence, even while aware of man's infallibility. Curiously, Beuys' relationship with the coyote has a certain Tarzan and the Ape(s) quality. Both Beuys and Tarzan wore a familiar "uniform," each "spoke" to animals, and each performed the macho role of savior. Originally packaged as evoking the power to make

²⁶Torgovnick, p. 70.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 188-189.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 187.

“things anew”—“to preserve what is worth preserving and change what deserves to be changed” the Tarzan series used the primitive as a site for social commentary.²⁹

Civilization was contrasted to native and animal kingdoms and found wanting. This parallels Beuys’ use of Little John the coyote to speak of the unjust treatment of America’s indigenous populations by what the dominant society considered progress. Evoking Tarzan in this context, one is also reminded of Lex Barker, who starred as both Tarzan and Shatterhand, perhaps conflating the two heroic figures in the minds of German audiences.

Primitivism as subject matter is not exclusively a male domain. The work of several German women artists has been premised on ethnographic appropriation: Hannah Hoch (who produced a series of photomontages entitled *From an Ethnographic Museum* (1925–9); the filmmaker Monika Treut; and Rosemarie Trockel (whose work from the 1980s includes knitted wool paintings and sculptural forms, some with aboriginal references).³⁰ All three women have been contextualized as feminists. The oppositional possibilities in a comparison of ideas and work by one or more of these women artists with one or more of the artists in this dissertation would be revealing. However, men have made the most of primitivism, generally reflecting a distinctly masculinist perspective.

Each male artist in this study either fondly remembers reading Cooper and May, “playing Indians” and/or has used Native American objects, representations,

²⁹ Torgovnick, p. 45.

³⁰ I located a recent sketch by Trockel that features an Indian teepee. Further research would be required to understand this drawing within her oeuvre. Hannah Höch’s *Mutter* (1930), collages a mask of the Kwakiutl Indians on a photograph of a pregnant woman to create an image of devalued, exhausted maternity. Treut’s *My Father Is Coming* (1991) features a German man’s discovery of America via his cross-dressing daughter.

documentation or analogies in their adult work. Granof and Tartar have leveled accusations of sexual exploitation at Schlichter and his colleagues, emphasizing their particularly aggressive and phallogentric visions of post-WWI Weimar culture. Ernst, whose biography is filled with romantic encounters and multiple marriages, is remembered as something of a “lady-killer,” and Beuys and Baumgarten embody the über-male in their efforts to rescue entire cultures. Only Polke, with his blend of politics and abstraction, seems to avoid a conspicuously masculine identity. Gender for the others appears to be a factor in their choice of metaphor. The tribal brotherhood of the Teutonic past that is cited by Lutz as central to Germany’s special identification with the American Indian is here linked to a form of male bonding.

Torgovnick suggests that the contemporary view of Primitivism is tinged by nostalgia.³¹ I would argue that a bittersweet longing has been a persistent component of the relationship between the German and the Indian.

³¹ Torgovnick, p. 246.

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Fig. 1

George Catlin

The Author painting the Chief Mato-Tope (Four Bears)

at the base of the Rocky Mountains

Color Lithograph, Frontispiece to:

*Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American
Indians, Written During Eight Years' Travel Amongst the Wildest Tribes of Indians in*

North America, 1832-1839

London: Egyptian hall, 1841



Fig. 2
Karl Bodmer
Inkas-Kinne, Siksika Blackfoot Chief (August 1833), n.d.
Watercolor and pencil
43.2 x 30.2 cm (17 x 12 inches)
Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska
Gift of the Enron Art Foundation, 1980

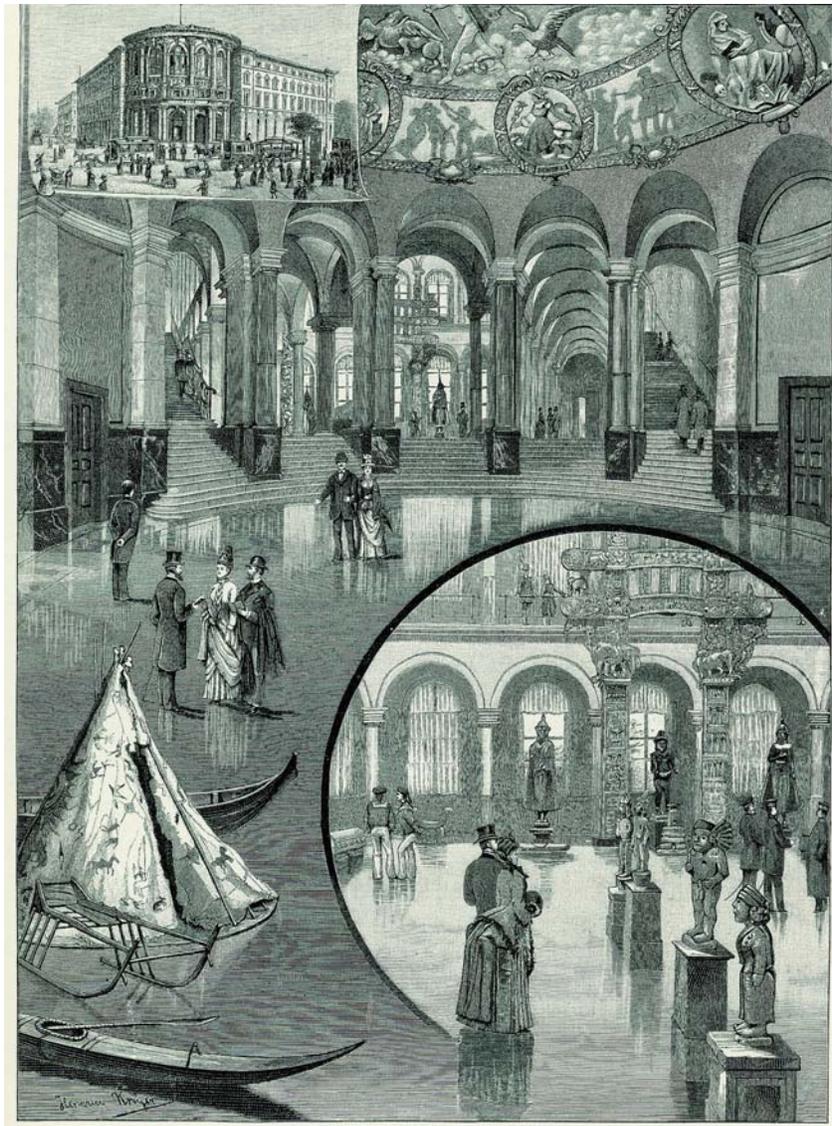


Fig. 3
Hermann Krüger
The Ethnological Museum in Berlin, 1887
Wood engraving
31 x 36.5 cm. (approx. 12 1/3 x 14 1/2 inches)
In "Das Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin,"
Über Land und Meer, vol. 57, 1887
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz

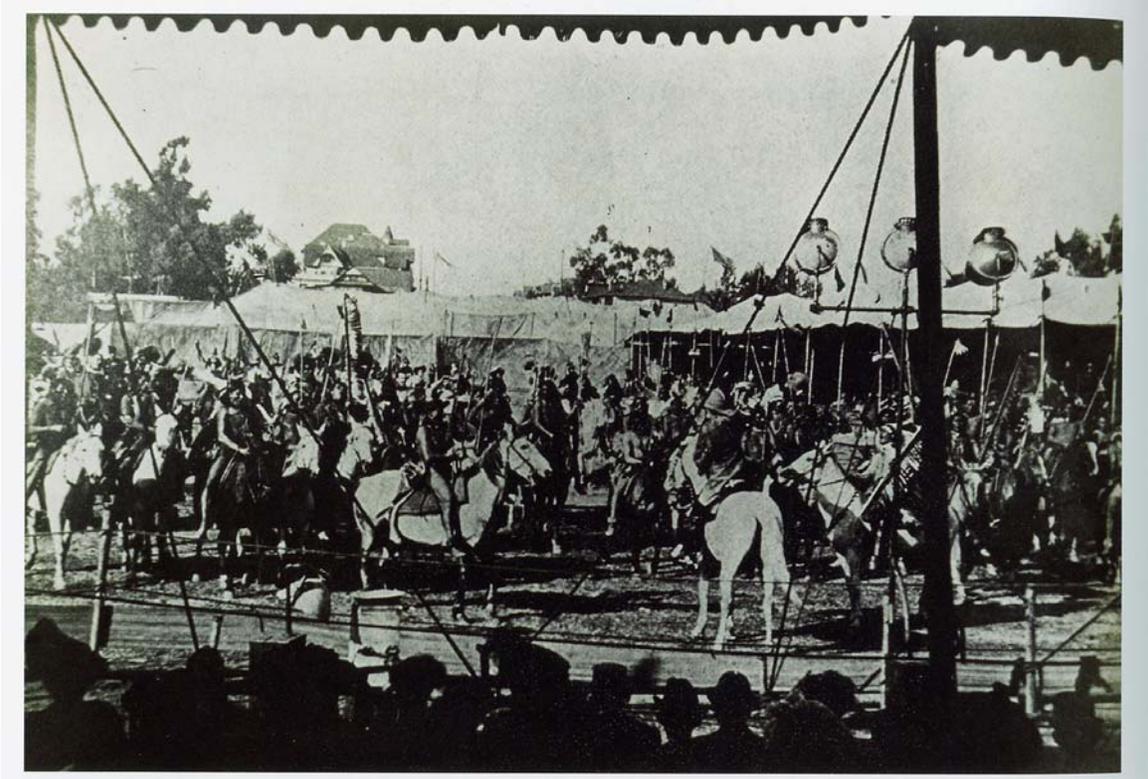


Fig. 4
Anonymous
"Buffalo Bill's Wild West" in Germany, 1890
Photograph
21.6 x 15 cm. (approx. 8.5 x 6 inches)
Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY
Vincent Mercaldo Collection, P.71.231.2



Fig. 5

Poster, *Sioux Indians*, 1910
Carl Hagenbeck's Zoo, Stellingen
Adolph Friedländer Printers, no. 7159
Lithograph on linen
185 x 138 cm. (approx. 73 x 54 inches)
Hagenbeck-Archiv, Hamburg

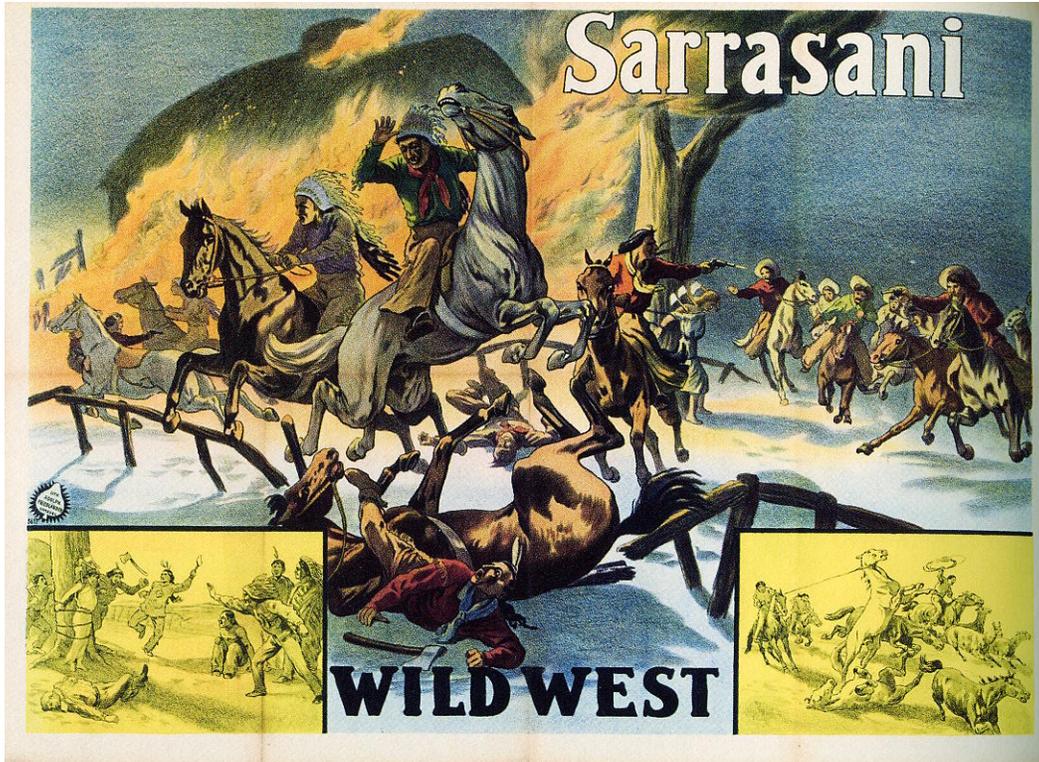


Fig. 6

Poster, *Sarrasani Wild West*, 1912

Adolph Friedländer Printers, no. 5617

Color Lithograph

95.2 x 70.9 cm. (approx. 37 ½ x 28 inches)

Collection Jaap Best, Haarlem



Fig. 7
Nunwarz postcard
Karl May as Old Shatterhand with Winnetou's Silver Rifle, n.d.
Karl May Museum, Radebeul



Fig. 8
Rudolf Schlichter
Wild West, 1916-1918
Watercolor on paper
28.9 x 35.9 cm (approx. 11 1/3 x 14 inches)
Collection Christina and Volker Huber, Offenbach



Fig. 9
August Macke
Indians on Horses, 1911
Oil on panel
44 x 60 cm. (approx. 17 1/3 x 23 1/2 inches)
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich



Fig. 10
Emil Nolde
Exotic Figures I, 1911
Oil on canvas
65.5 x 78 cm. (approx. 26 x 31 inches)
Galerie Otto Stangl, Munich



Fig. 11
Emil Nolde
Exotic Figures II, 1911
Oil on canvas
65.5 x 78 cm. (approx. 26 x 31 inches)
Nolde-Stiftung Seebüll

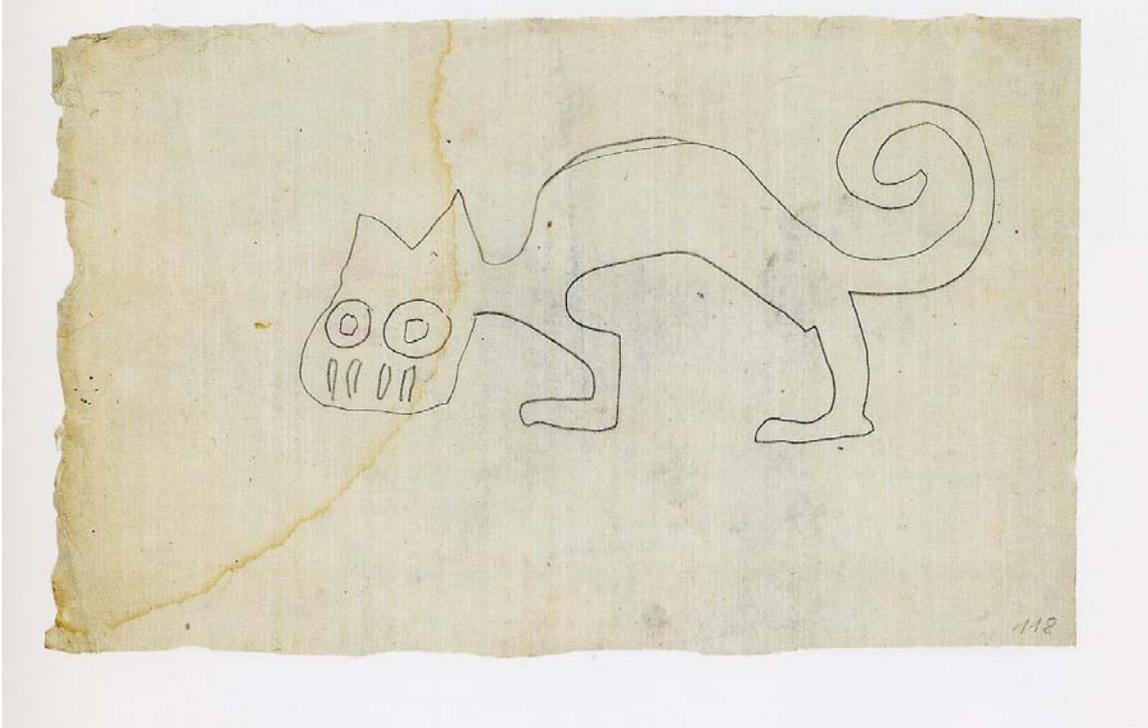


Fig. 12
Emil Nolde
Cat (Katze), 1911
Pencil on paper
18.4 x 29.6 cm. (7 ¼ x 11 ½ inches)
Collectio of the Nolde-Stiftung, Seebüll



Fig. 13
Emil Nolde
Man, Fish, Wife, 1912
Oil on canvas
71.5 x 57.5 cm. (approximately 28 x 22 ½ inches)
Collection of the Nolde-Stiftung, Seebüll

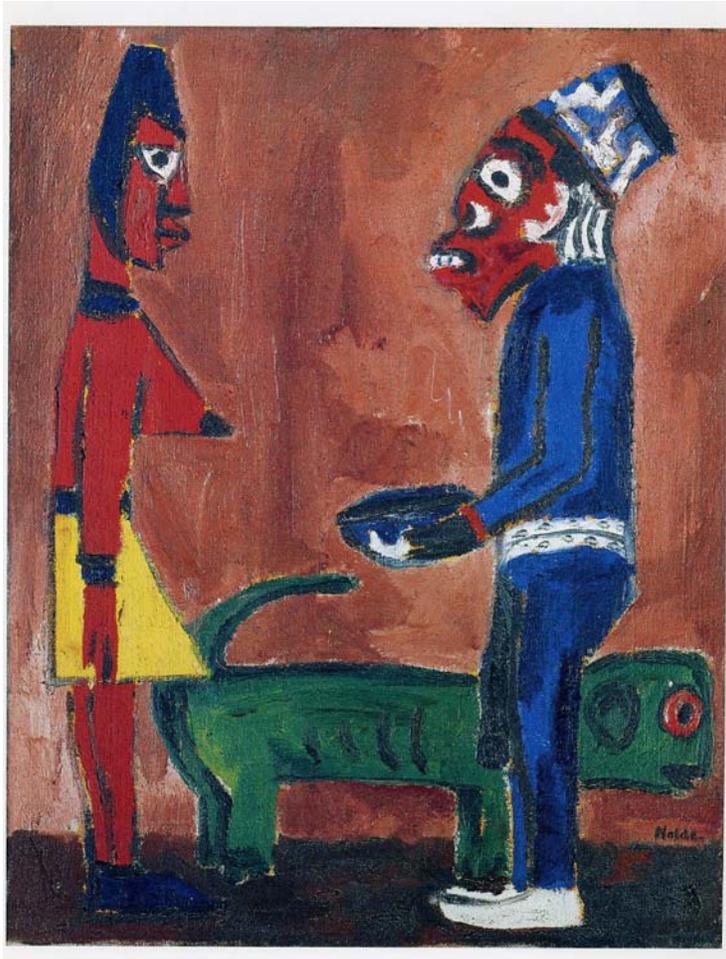


Fig. 14
Emil Nolde
Man, Wife, Cat, 1912
Oil on canvas
67 x 53 cm. (approximately 26 1/3 x 21 inches)
Collection of the Nolde-Stiftung, Seebüll



Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Still Life with Negro Sculpture*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 28 3/4 x 25 3/4"

Fig. 15
Karl Schmidt-Rottluff
Still Life with Negro Sculpture, 1913
Oil on canvas
73 x 65.5 cm. (28 1/4 x 25 1/4 inches)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne

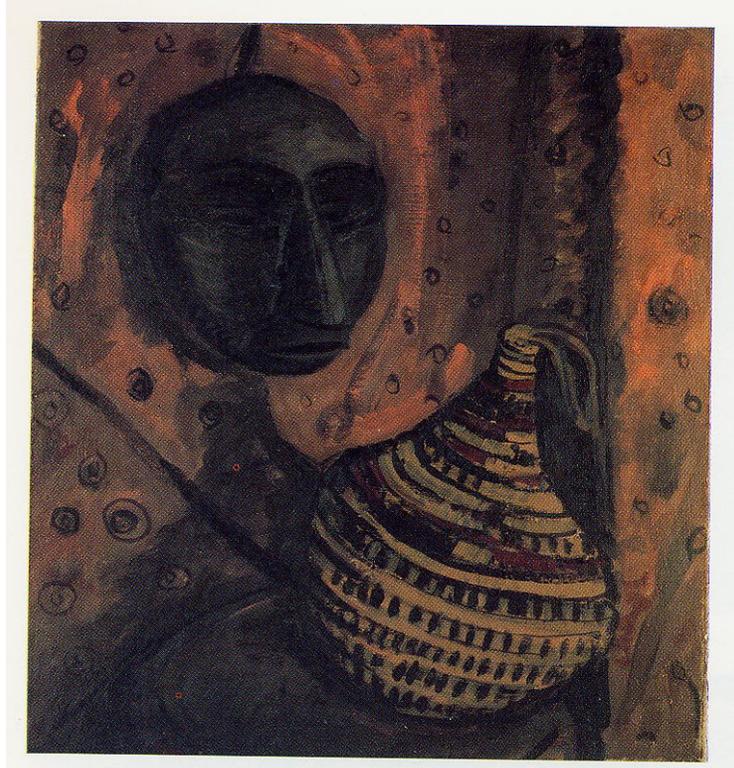


Fig. 16
Erich Heckel
Still Life with Mask, 1912
Oil on canvas
69 x 63 cm. (27 1/8 x 24 3/4 inches)
Saarland-Museum, Saarbrücken

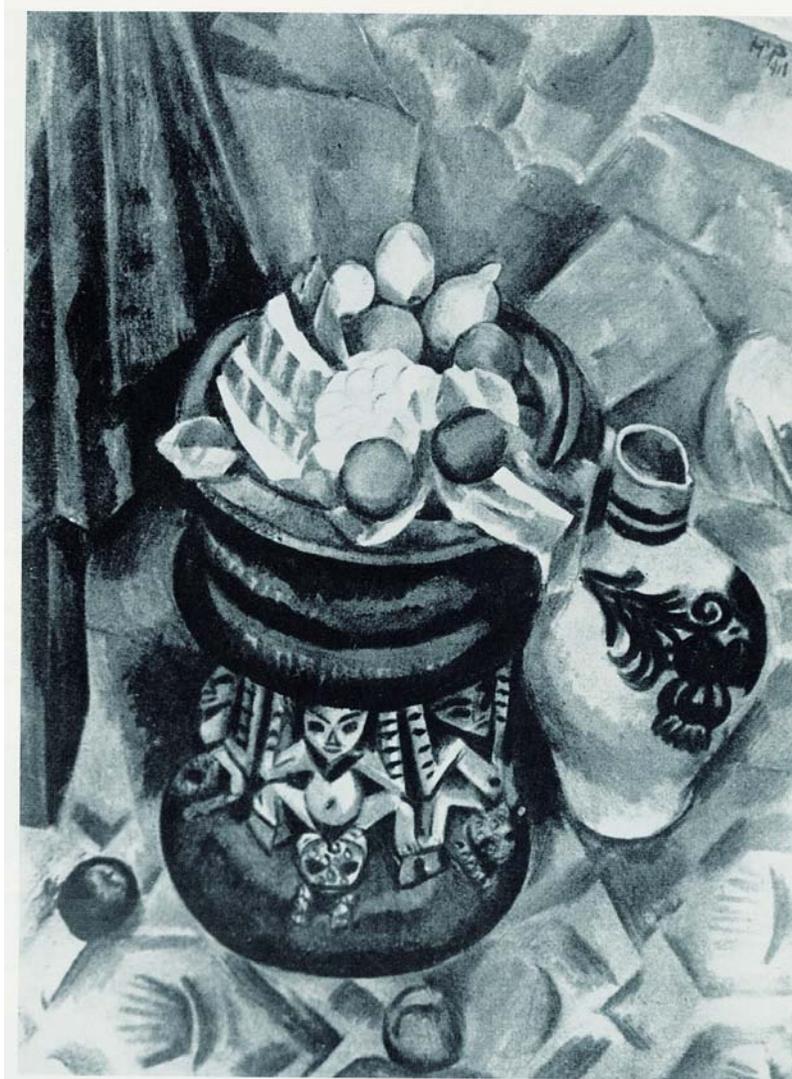


Fig. 17
Max Pechstein
Still Life in Gray, 1913
Oil on canvas
(dimensions unknown)
Formerly collection of Dr. Karl Lilienfeld, Berlin
Current whereabouts unknown

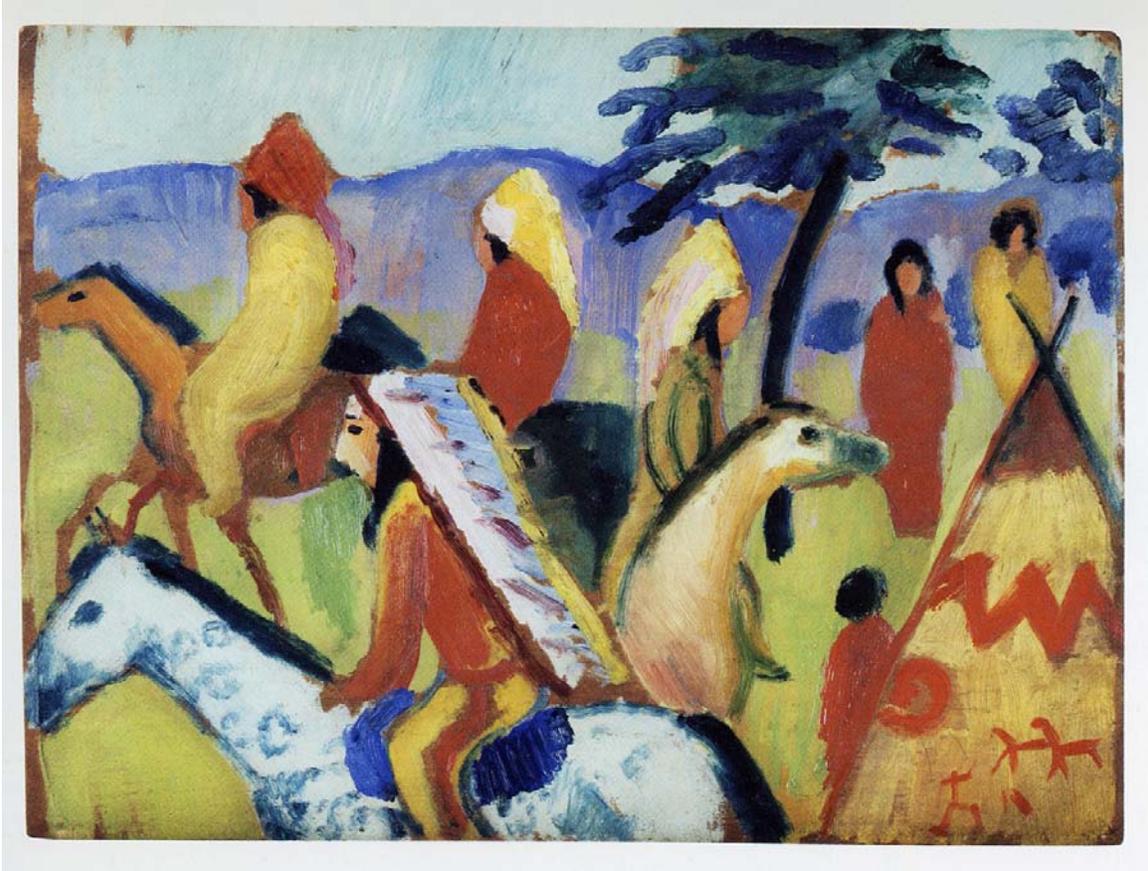


Fig. 18
August Macke
Indians Riding near a Tent, 1911
Oil on panel
26.5 x 35.5 cm. (approx. 10 ½ x 14 inches)
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich

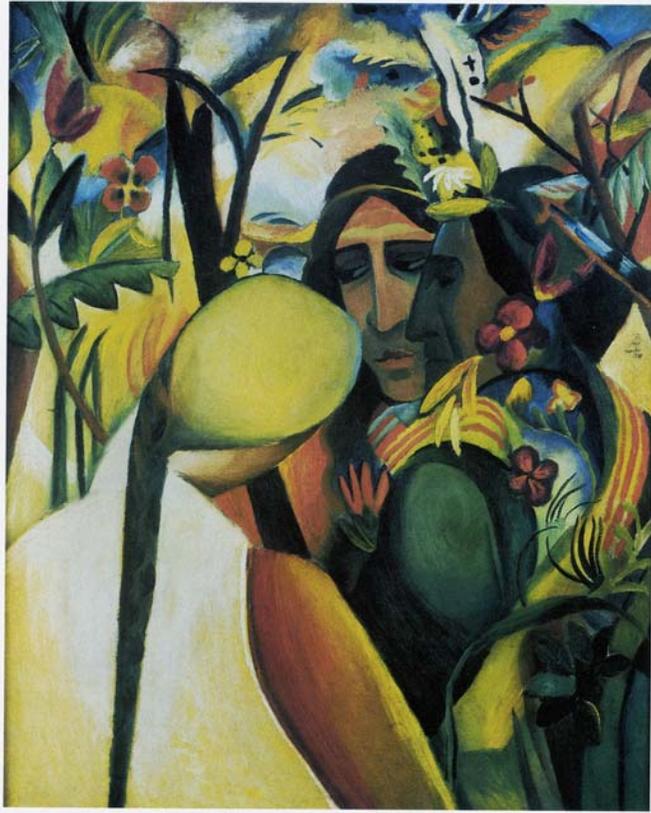


Fig. 19
August Macke
Indians, 1911
Oil on canvas
88 x 70 cm. (approximately 34 ½ x 27 ½ inches)
Private Collection



Fig. 20
Rudolf Schlichter
Black Jack, 1916
Watercolor on paper
41 x 54 cm. (approx. 16 x 21 inches)
Collection of Christina and Volker Huber, Offenbach



Fig. 21
Rudolf Schlichter
Indian Attack, Child Murder, 1916
Watercolor and pencil on paper
19 x 24 cm. (approx. 7 ½ x 9 ½ inches)
Private Collection



Fig. 22
Rudolf Schlichter
Indian Attack, c. 1919
Chalk Drawing
55.5 x 45.6 cm. (approx. 22 x 18 inches)
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung



Fig. 23
Rudolf Schlichter
Wa-ta-wah zu In Menschenhaut Aus Menschenhaut, Um Menschenhaut herum, 1924
Book illustration



Fig. 24
Karl Hubbuch
Lederstrumpf, 1925
Colored pencil on paper
Collection of Miriam Hubbuch, Freiburg, Germany



Fig. 25
Walter Trier
Wild-West-Film, 1921
Color Lithograph
In *Lustige Blätter*, vol. 41
Stadtbibliothek Mainz

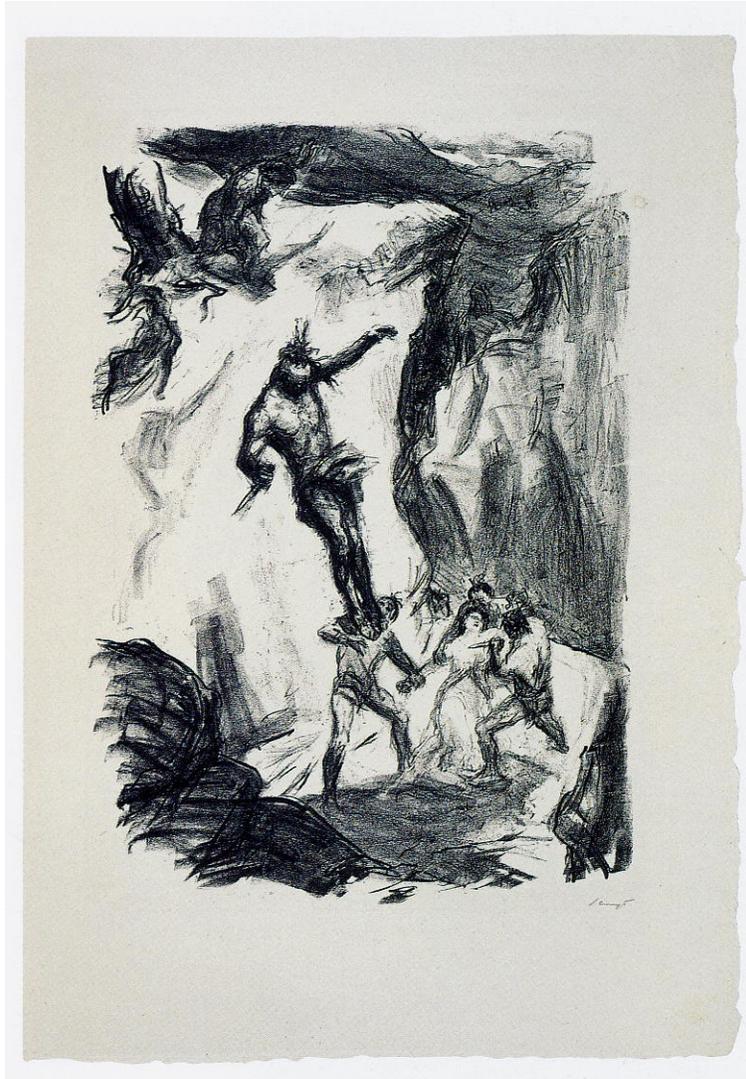


Fig. 26

Max Slevogt

Uncas Jumps Down to Save Cora, 1909

Chalk lithograph

48.5 x 34 cm. (approx. 19 x 13 ½ inches)

From the second tale: *The Last of the Mohicans*, in *Leatherstocking Tales*

James Fenimore Cooper

Verlag Paul Cassirer, Berlin

Städelmuseum, Graphische Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main



Fig. 27
George Grosz
Self Portrait with Eva Peter in the Artist's Studio, 1918
George Grosz Archive, Berlin

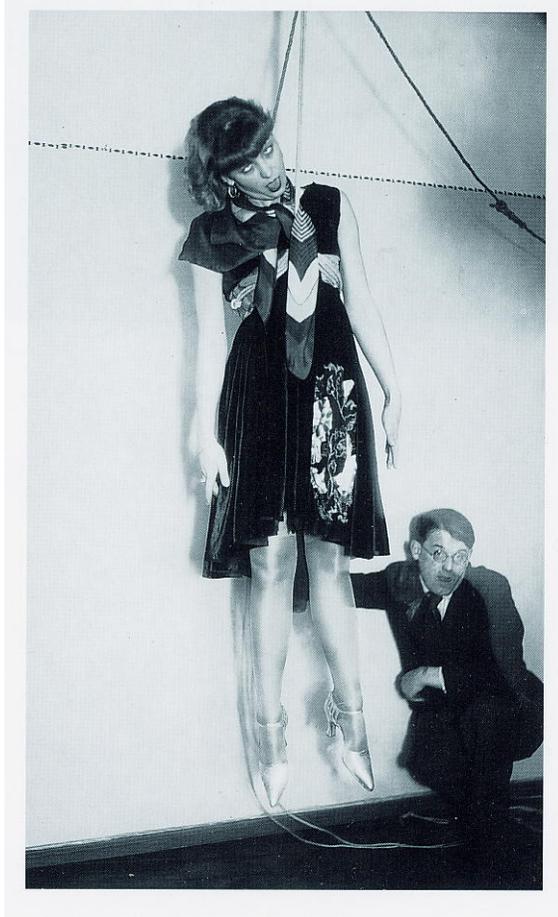


Fig. 28
Speedy and Rudolf Schlichter
Strangulation Sex Experiment in the Studio, 1928
Galerie Alvensleben, Munich



Fig. 29
Max Ernst with his collection of Hopi dolls
New York, 1942
Photograph by James Thrall Soby



Fig. 30
Max Ernst with his collection of Hopi dolls
New York, 1942
Photograph by James Thrall Soby

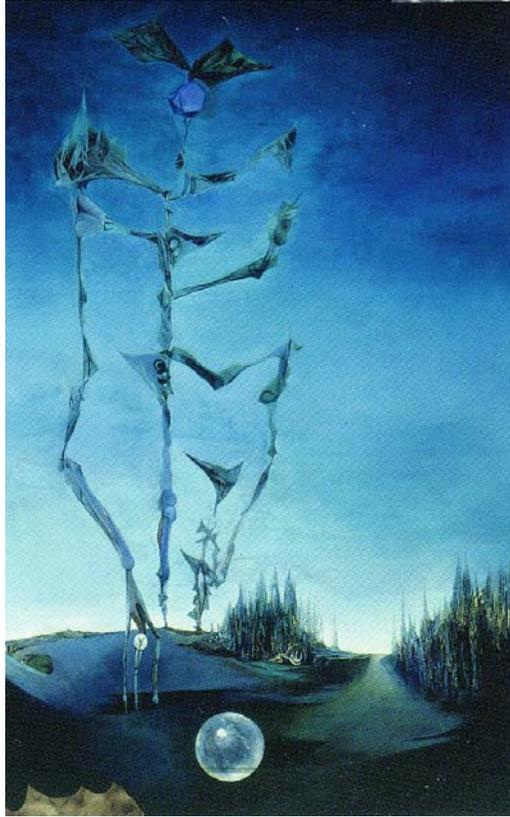


Fig. 31
Wolfgang Paalen
Paysage totémique de mon enfance, 1937
Oil and fumage on canvas
129.5 x 80 cm (51 x 31 ½ inches)
Private Collection



Fig. 32
Wolfgang Paalen
Ardah, 1944
Oil on canvas
Collection of Harold and Gertrud Parker, Tiburon, California

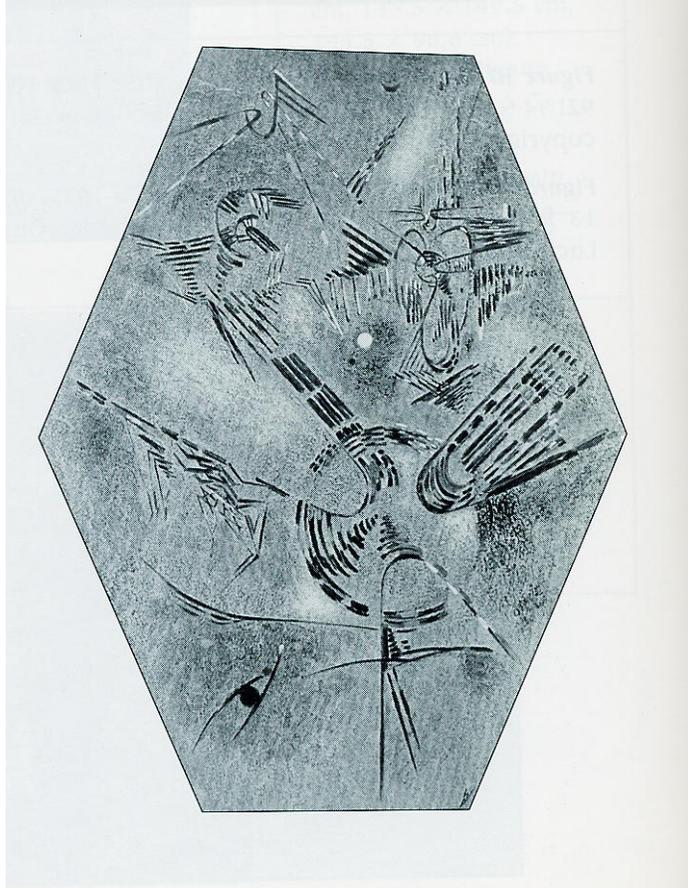


Fig. 33
Wolfgang Paalen
The Sign of DYN, 1944
Oil on canvas
Fundación Wolfgang Y Isabel Paalen, A. C. (México)

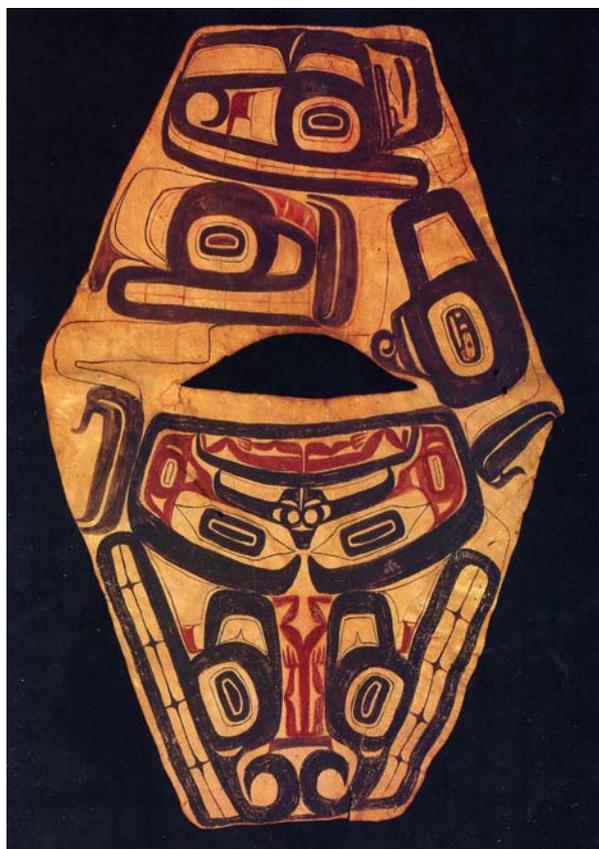


Fig. 34
Tlingit Tunic, c. 1840-60
Animal skin and black and red pigment
Width 57 cm (22 ½ inches)
Private Collection

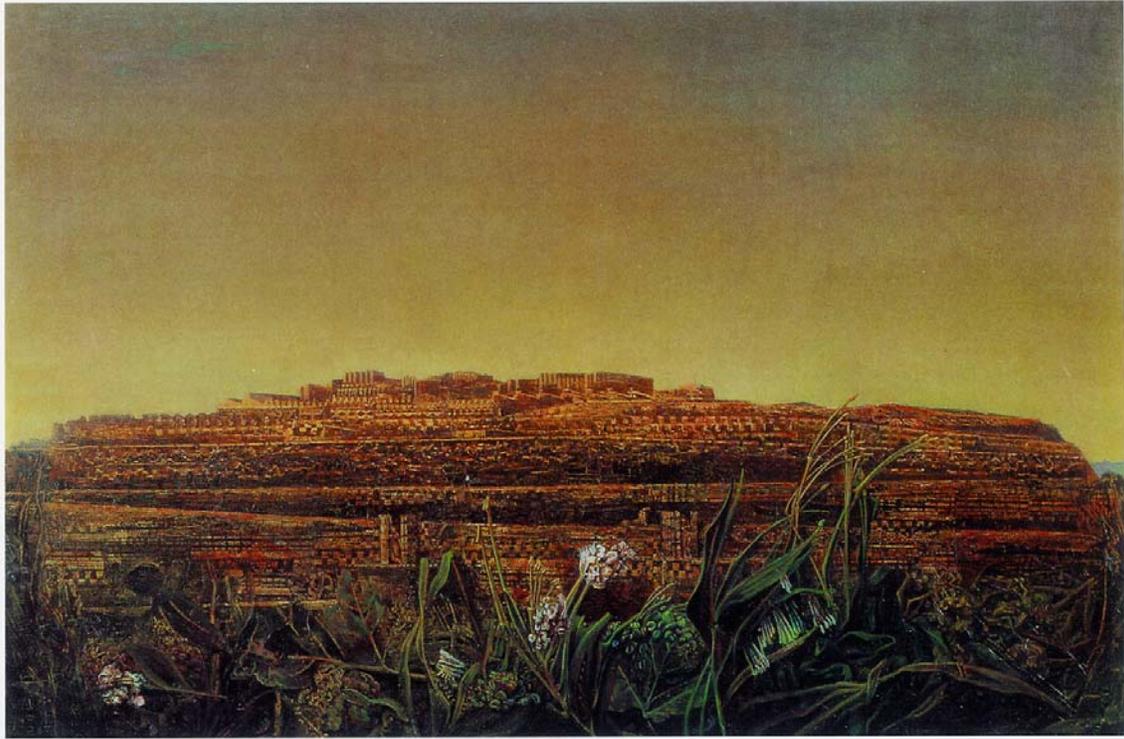


Fig. 35
Max Ernst
The Petrified City, 1936
Oil on canvas
97 x 146 cm. (approximately 38 x 57 ½ inches)
Private Collection, New York

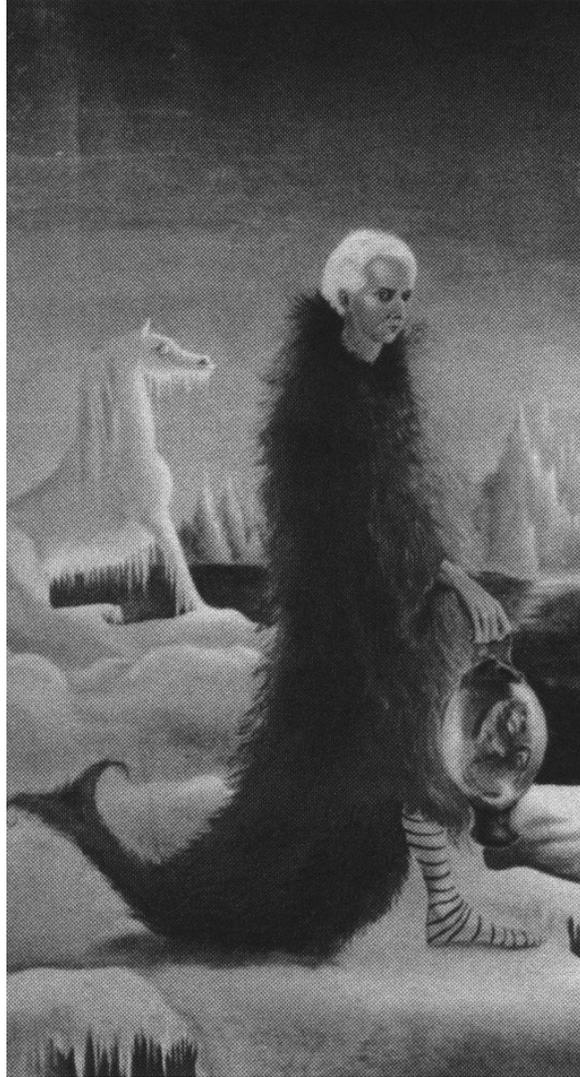


Fig. 36
Leonora Carrington
Portrait of Max Ernst, 1940
Oil on canvas
50.2 x 26.7 cm. (approx. 20 x 11 inches)
Young-Mallin Collection



Fig. 37
Max Ernst in bird costume, 1958
Photograph by John Rewald
Collection Dorothea Tanning, New York



Fig. 38
Edward S. Curtis
Female Nootka Shaman from Clayoquot Sound, Vancouver Island, c. 1914
Black-and-white photograph
30.5 x 61 cm (12 x 24 inches)
Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria



Fig. 39
Brick from Ernst/Tanning home
Sedona, Arizona, 1948
Cement
20.5 x 40 cm. (approx. 8 x 15 ½ inches)
Private Collection



Fig. 40
Masau'u Katchina doll
45.7 cm tall (18 inches)
Hopi Pueblo, Arizona
Museum of the American Indian, Heye Houndation, New York

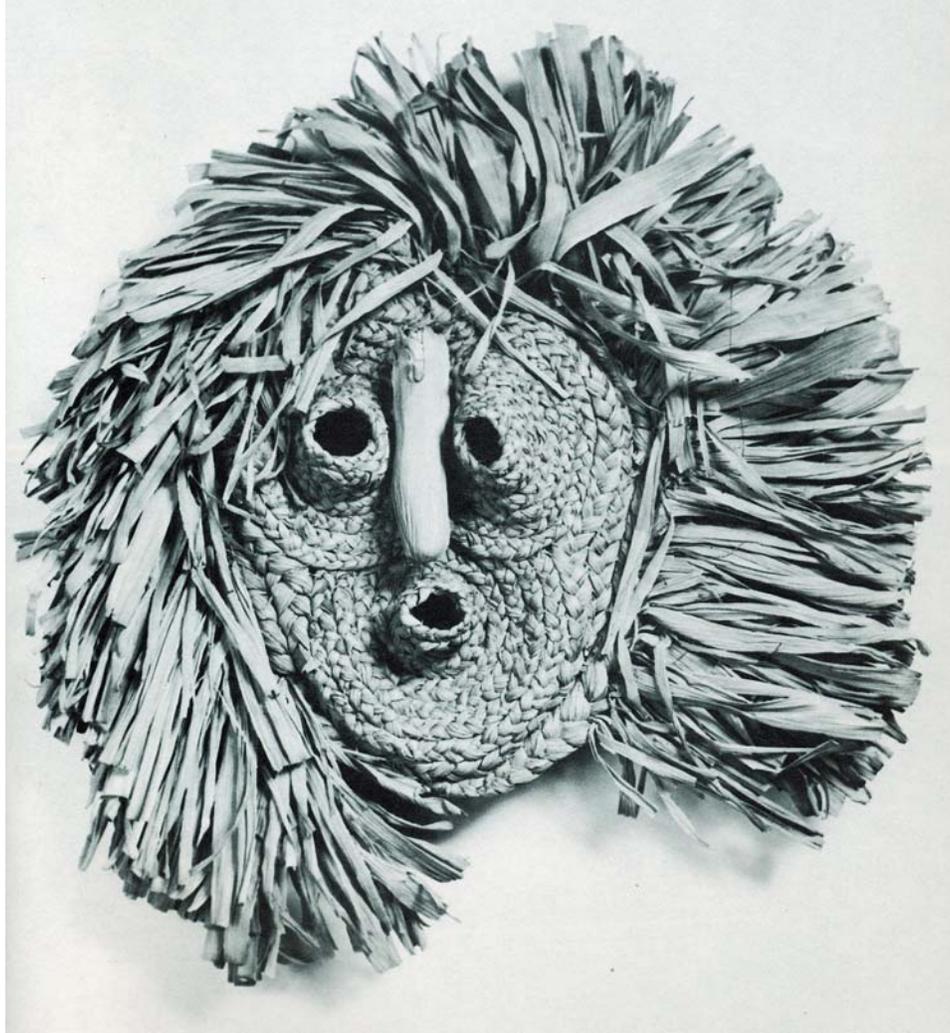


Fig. 41
Cornhusk mask, Seneca Iroquois
Cattaraugus Reservation, New York
Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York



Fig. 42
Decoration on Ernst home
Saint-Martin d'Ardèche, 1938/39
Cement



Fig. 43
Decoration on Ernst home
Saint-Martin d'Ardèche, 1938/39
Oil and plaster

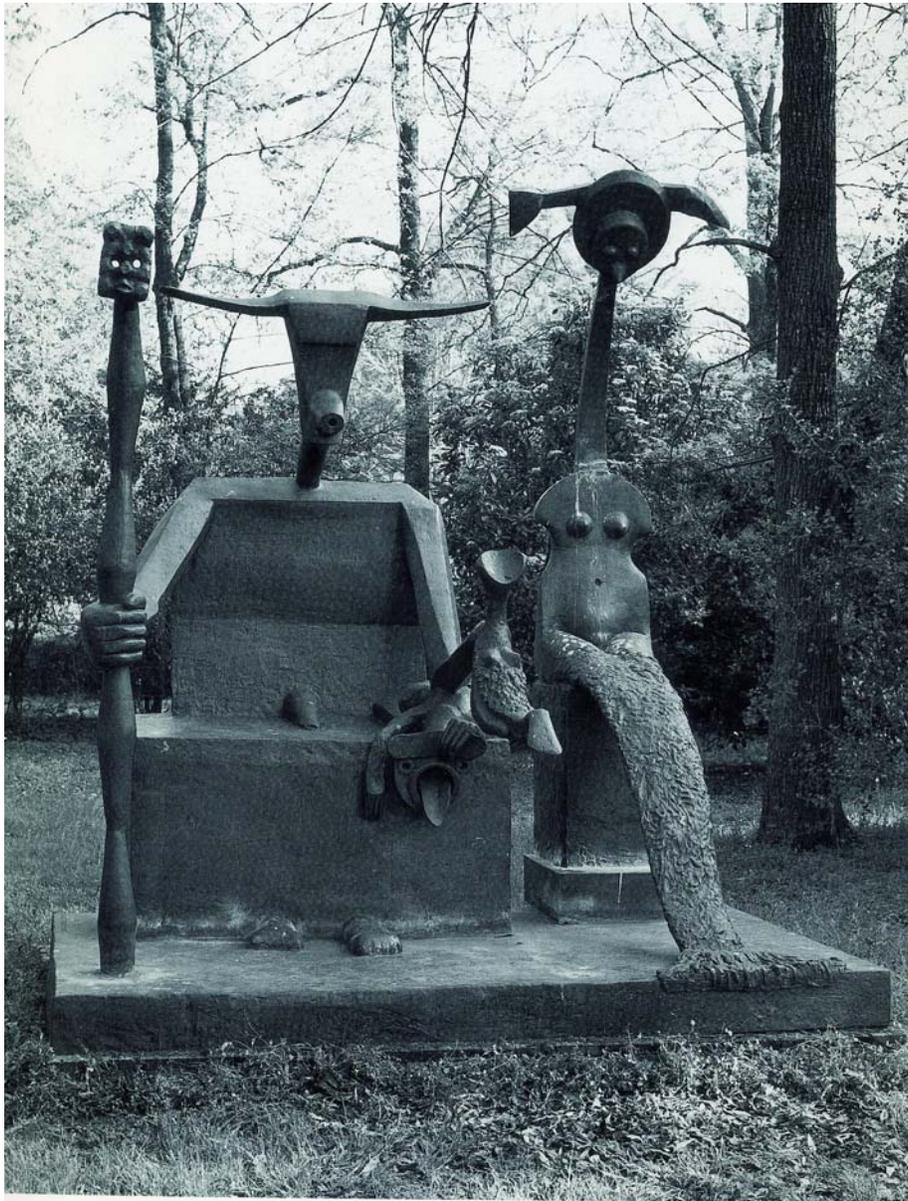


Fig. 44
Max Ernst
Capricorn, 1948
Bronze
240 x 205 x 130 cm. (94 ½ x 80 5/8 x 51 ¼ inches)
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Nationalgalerie, Berlin

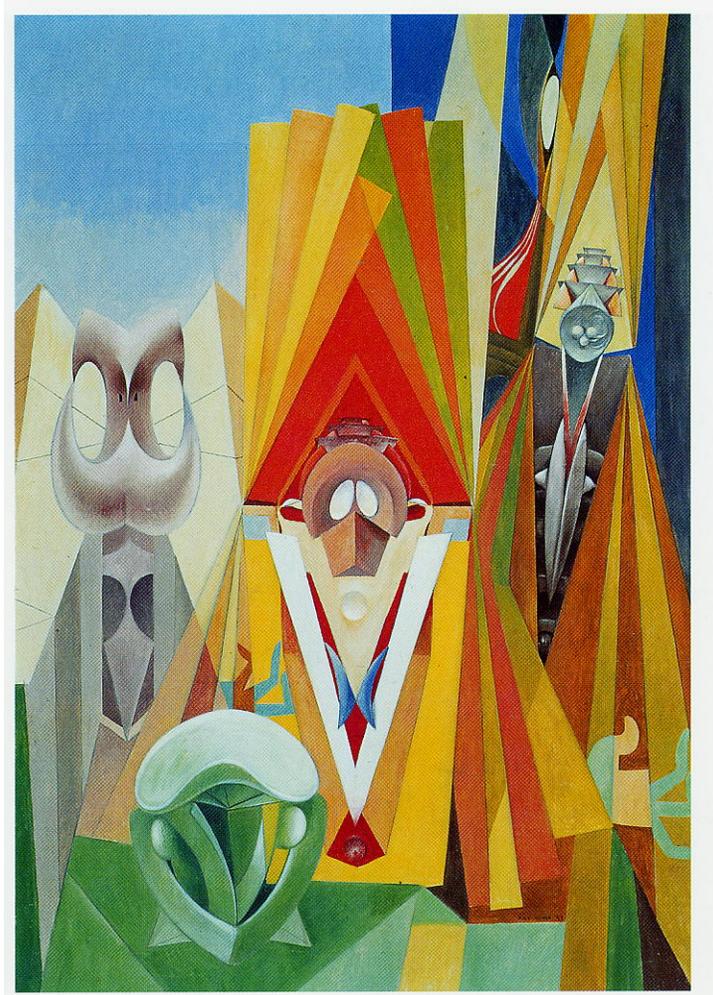


Fig. 45
Max Ernst
Feast of Gods, 1948
Oil on canvas
153 x 107 cm. (approx. 60 x 42 inches)
Museum des 20 Jahrhunderts, Vienna



Wedding robe or *ova*: 59" long, 70" wide (Specimen 1238 CI/255).



Embroidered wedding robe, the *tui.hi*: 43" long, 70" wide (Specimen 277 BL).

Fig. 46
Hopi Wedding Robes

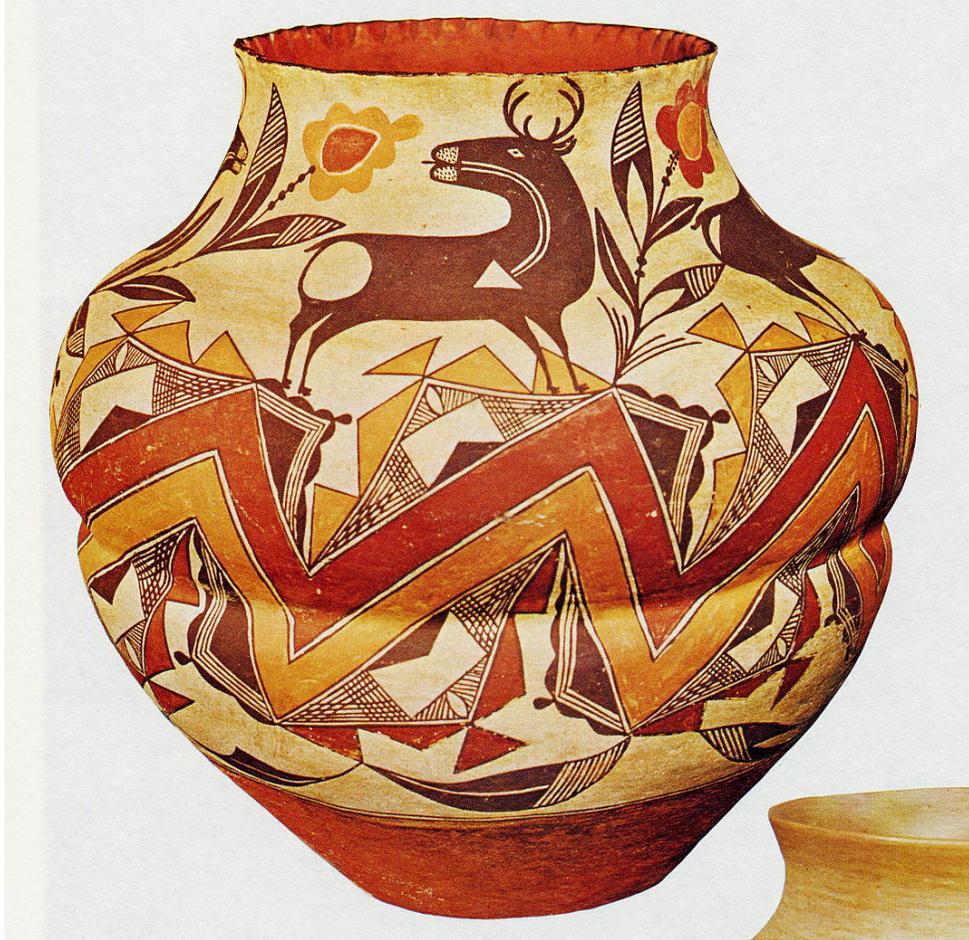


Fig. 47
Polychrome potter bowl with fluted rim, c. 1900
33 cm. tall (13 inches)
Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico
Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

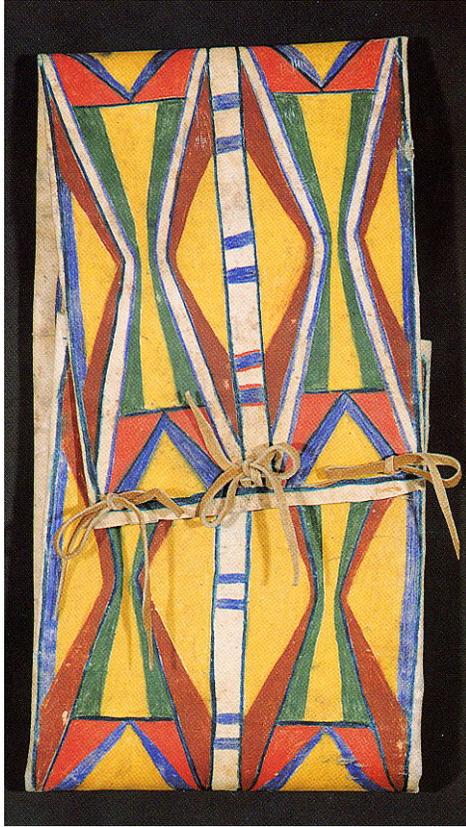


Fig. 48
Parfleche, Plateau
Paint on hide
35.5 x 71.1 cm (14 x 28 inches)
Canfield Gallery, Santa Fe, N.M.

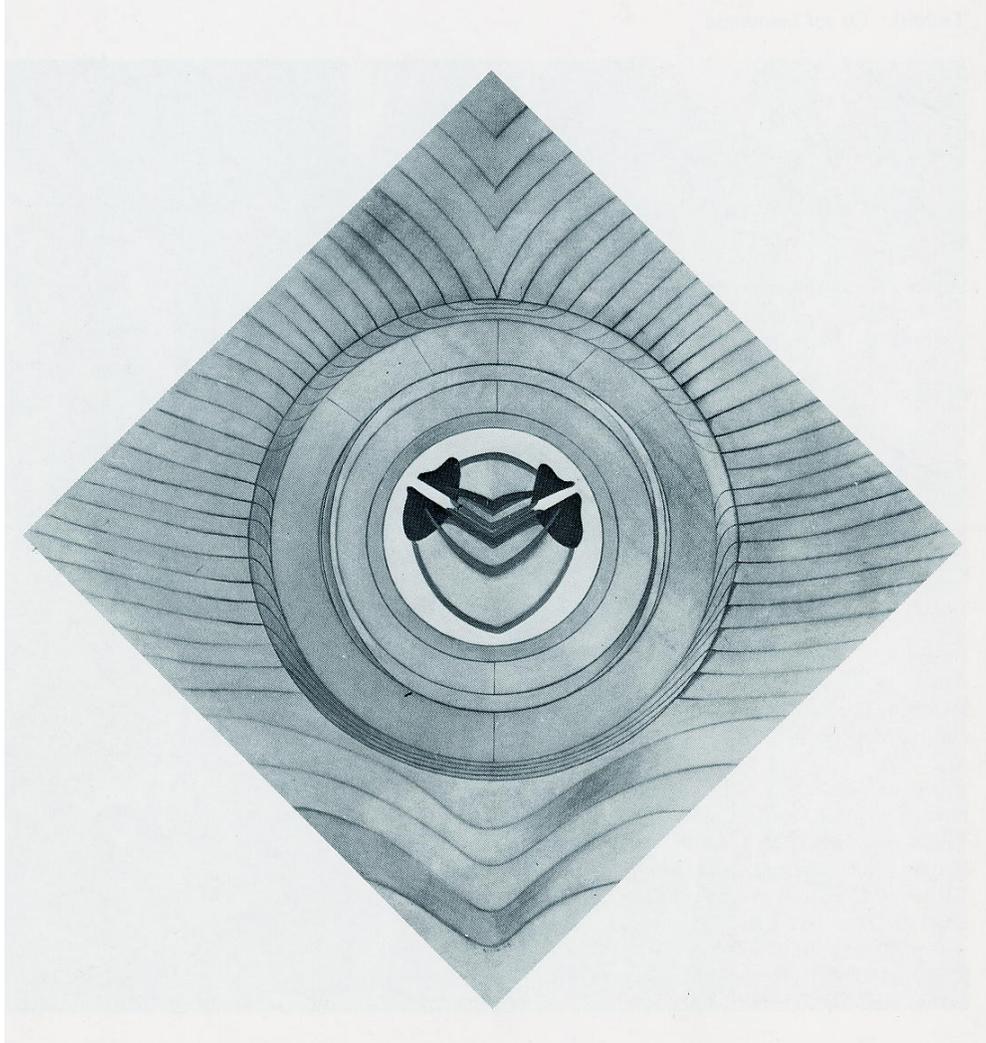


Fig. 49
Max Ernst
Blind Swimmer, 1948
Oil on canvas
102 x 102 cm. (40 3/16 x 40 3/16 inches)
Collection of Dallas Ernst, East Hampton, N.Y.



Fig. 50
Mimbres Black-on-white bowl
4 ½ x 10 ½ inches
Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ



Fig. 51
Mimbres Black-on-white bowl
4 ½ x 11 ¼ inches
University of Colorado Museum, Boulder

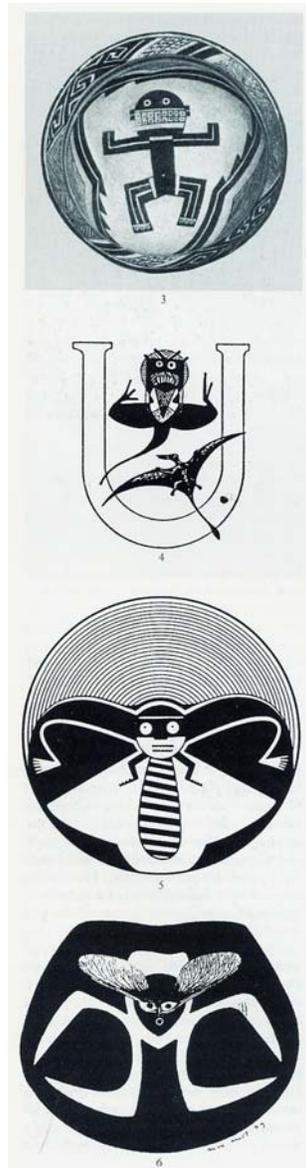


Fig. 52

Listed from Top to Bottom:

1. Figure of Death, Mogollon ceramic dish, 11th/12th century
2. Max Ernst, U initial for Benjamin Péret, *La Brebis galante*, 1949
3. Inside of Mogollon ceramic dish, 11th/12th century
4. Max Ernst, Design for artist's *Ex Libris*, 1949

Images from *Max Ernst: A Retrospective*
 Werner Spies, Prestel, 1991 (p. 360)

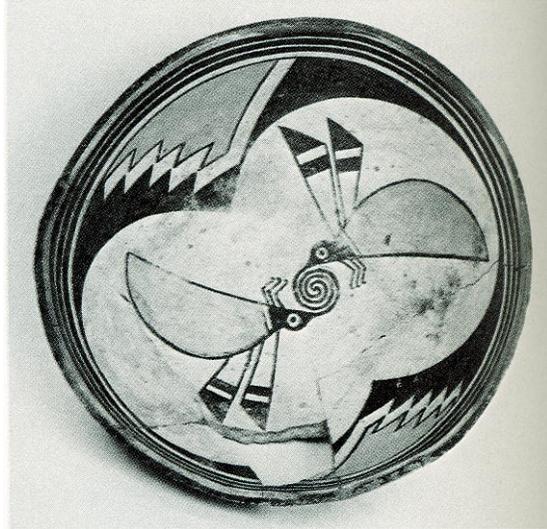


Fig. 53

Mimbres polychrome bowl

Pair of Flying Insects

7.62 cm. tall (3 inches)

Collection of Western New Mexico University Museum, Silver City, N.M.

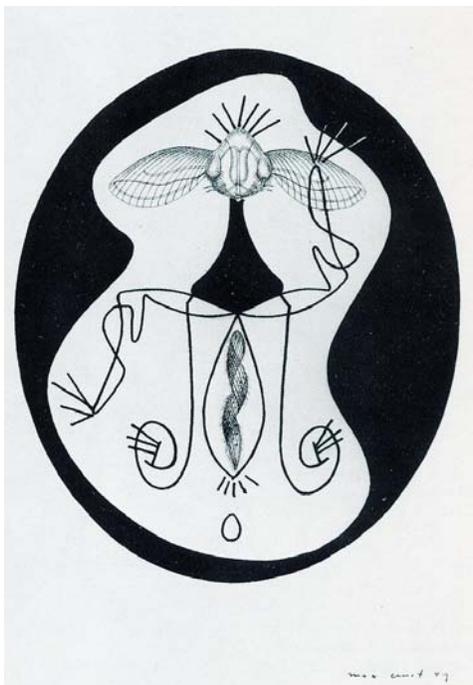


Fig. 54
Max Ernst
Ovoids 6, 1949
Collage and ink on paper
23 x 17.8 cm. (9 1/16 x 7 inches)
Collection of Ernst O. E. Fischer, Krefeld

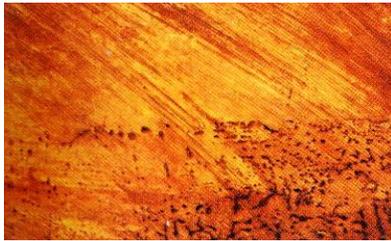


Fig. 55

Max Ernst

Ten Thousand Lucid Redskins Prepare to Make the Rain Laugh (Microbes)
[Dix mille peaux-rouges et lucides s'apprêtent à faire rire la pluie], 1949

Oil or gouache on cardboard

3.2 x 6.4 cm. (approx. 1 ¼ x 2 ½ inches)

De Ménénil Family Collection, Houston, Texas



Fig. 56
Max Ernst
Mickey's Ascension, 1969
Assemblage
42.2 x 50.4 cm (approx. 16 ½ x 20 inches)
Estate of Max Ernst



Fig. 57
Lee Miller and Max Ernst with a mask
Sedona, Arizona, August 1946
Photograph by Lee Miller
Lee Miller Archives, Chiddingly, England



Fig. 58
Joseph Beuys
Gallery view, *The Chief*, 1964
Galerie René Block, Berlin
Photograph by Jürgen Müller-Schneck



Fig. 59
Joseph Beuys
Shaman's Bundle, 1962
Collage, oil on wrapping paper
21 x 59.5 cm (approx. 8 ¼ x 23 ½ inches)
Museum of Modern Art, Ludwig Collection, Vienna



Fig. 60
Joseph Beuys
Shaman, 1958
Pencil on paper
36 x 26.4 cm (14 x 10 ½ inches)
Private Collection



Fig. 61
Masked Buriat shaman
(or Transbaikal Tungus)
With drum, drumstick and horsesticks, n.d.
Photo credit: Toumanoff
Photothèque du Musée de l'Homme, Trocadéro, Paris



Fig. 62
Teleut shamaness with drum, 1930s
Photo credit: N. P. Dyrenkova
Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg



Fig. 63
Joseph Beuys
Sequoia, 1949
Pencil and watercolor on paper
20.8 x 29.9 cm (approx. 8 x 11 ³/₄ inches)
Private Collection

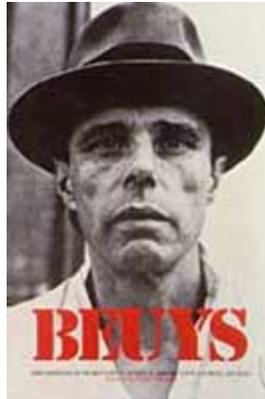


Fig. 64
Poster for Joseph Beuys' American Tour
Winter 1974



Fig. 65
Joseph Beuys
Poster for *I Like America and America Likes Me*, 1974
René Block Gallery Ltd., New York
Offset, 80.5 x 57.1 cm. (approx. 32 x 22 ½ inches)
Photograph by Ute Klophaus
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



Fig. 66
Joseph Beuys
Arriving at René Block Gallery, New York
May 23, 1974
Film stills from Helmut Wietz, *Joseph Beuys: I like America and America Likes Me*,
1974



Fig. 67

Joseph Beuys

I Like America and America Likes Me, 1974

René Block Gallery, New York

Film stills from Helmut Wietz, *Joseph Beuys: I like America and America Likes Me*

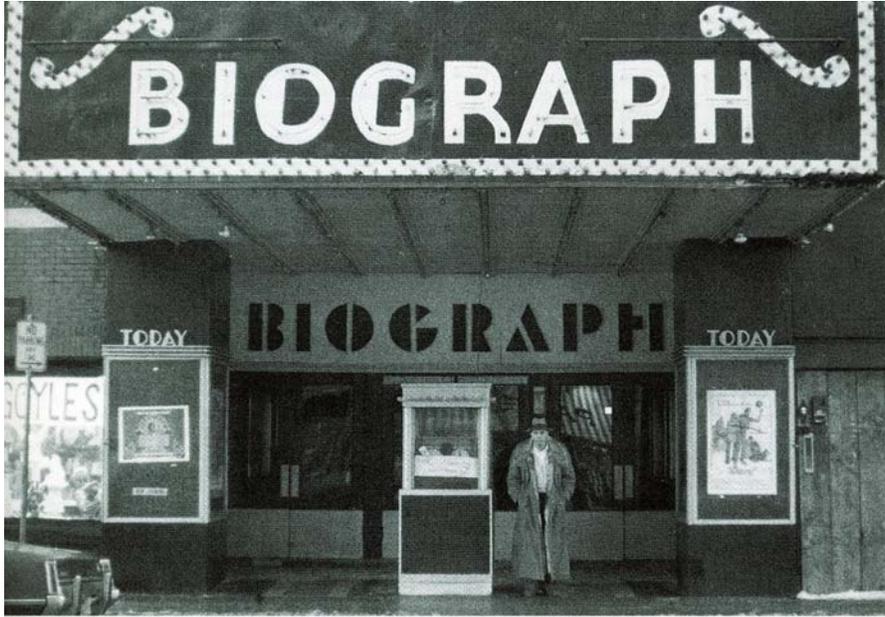


Fig. 68
Joseph Beuys
Dillinger Aktion, January 14, 1974
Chicago
Tate Gallery, London



Fig. 69

Joseph Beuys

I Like America and America Likes Me, 1974

René Block Gallery, New York

Film stills from Helmut Wietz, *Joseph Beuys: I like America and America Likes Me*



Fig. 70
Joseph Beuys
Installation view, *From Berlin: News from the Coyote*
Ronald Feldman Gallery, 1979
Collection of the DIA Art Foundation, New York



Fig. 71
Joseph Beuys
Installation view, *From Berlin: News from the Coyote*
Ronald Feldman Gallery, 1979
Collection of the DIA Art Foundation, New York



Fig. 72
Sigmar Polke
Untitled, 1975
Printed in *Mu Nieltnam Netorrurup*, 1975
Exhibition catalogue
Kiel Kunsthalle & Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein

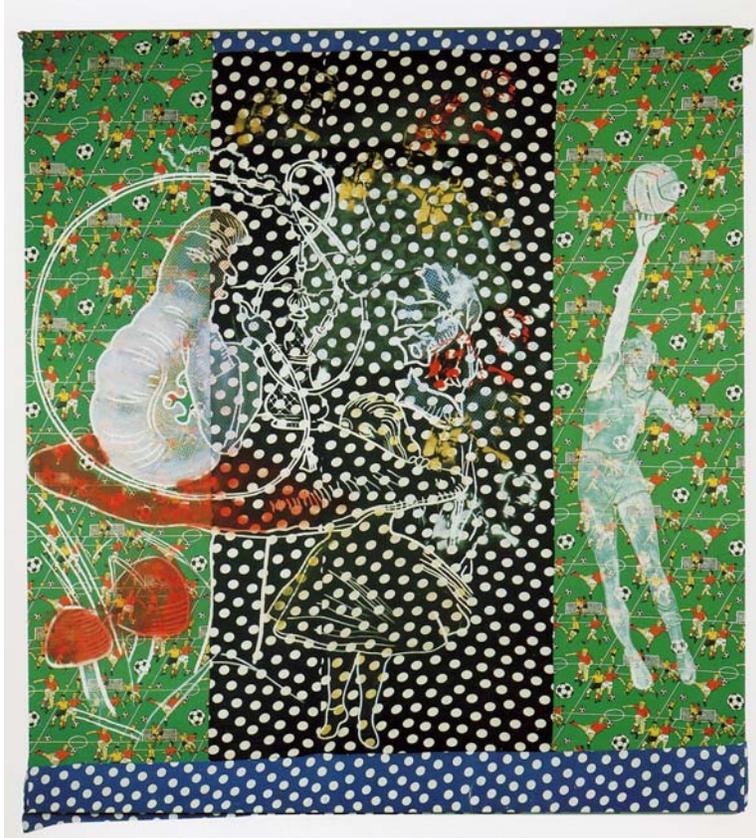


Fig. 73
Sigmar Polke
Alice in Wonderland, 1971
Mixed media on fabric strips
320 x 260 cm. (126 x 102 3/8 inches)
Private collection, Cologne



Fig. 74
Sigmar Polke
\$Painting, 1971
Chalk and dispersion on fabric
120 x 150 cm. (approx. 47 ¼ x 59 inches)
Collection of Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden



Fig. 75
Sigmar Polke
JK, Mach dass Schon, JE\$\$, 1972
Oil on felt
315 x 285 cm. (124 x 112 3/16 inches)
Essl Collection, Klosterneuburg

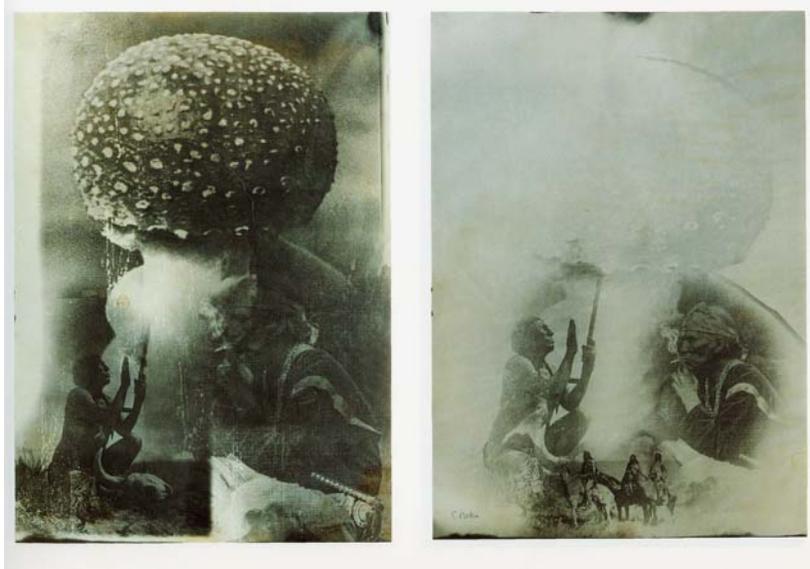


Fig. 76
Sigmar Polke
Untitled (Fly Agaric), 1975
Gelatin-silver print
41.9 x 29.5 cm. (16 1/2 x 11 5/8 inches)
Collection Visser



Fig. 77
Sigmar Polke
Untitled (Fly Agaric), 1975
Gelatin-silver print
41.9 x 29.5 cm. (16 ½ x 11 5/8 inches)
Collection Visser

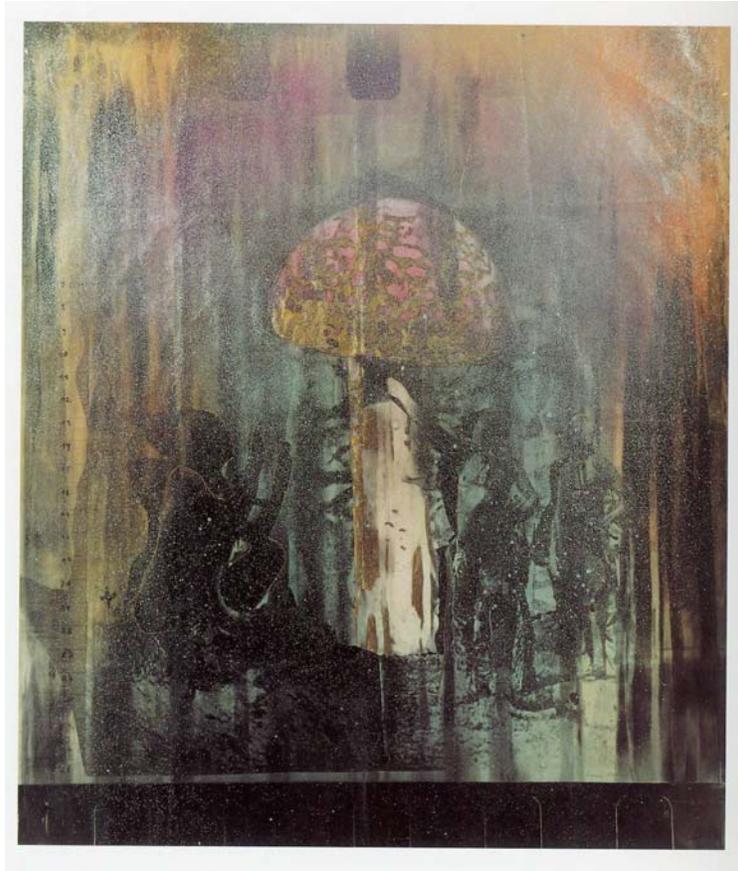


Fig. 78
Sigmar Polke
Untitled, 1975
Gelatin-silver print with paint
96.5 x 82.6 cm. (38 x 32 ½ inches)
Private Collection, London



Fig. 79
Sigmar Polke
Untitled, 1975
Pen on Photograph
Printed in *Mu Nieltnam Netorrurup*, 1975
Exhibition catalogue
Kiel Kunsthalle & Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein

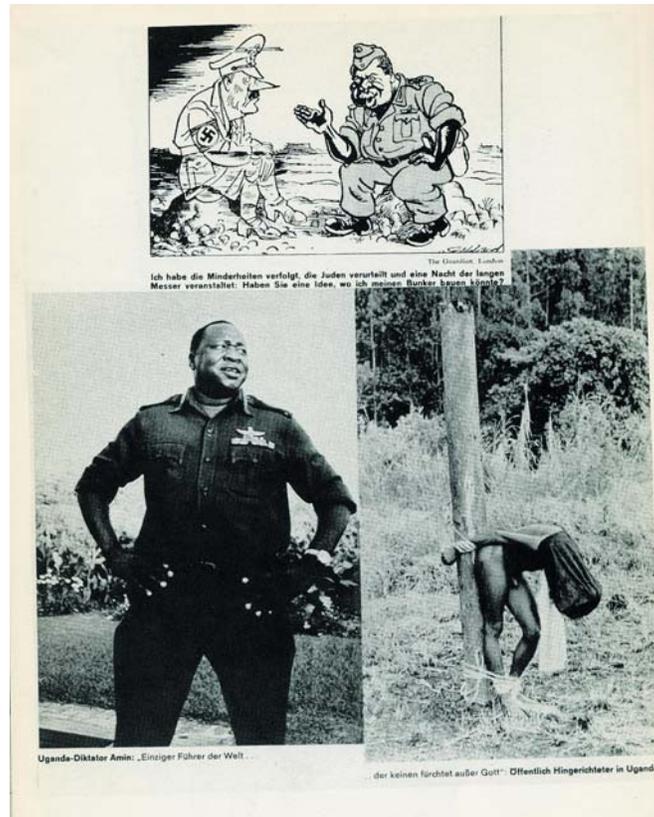


Fig. 80
 Sigmar Polke
 Printed in *Mu Nielnam Netorruprup*, 1975
 Exhibition catalogue
 Kiel Kunsthalle & Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein



Fig. 81
 Sigmar Polke
 Printed in *Mu Nieltnam Netorruprup*, 1975
 Exhibition catalogue
 Kiel Kunsthalle & Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein



Fig. 82

Sigmar Polke

The Spirits that Lend Strength Are Invisible V (Otter Creek), 1988

Silver leaf, Neolithic tools and artificial resin on canvas

300 x 400 cm. (118 1/8 x 157 1/2 inches)

Collection of John and Frances Bowes, San Francisco



Fig. 83
Sigmar Polke
The Fastest Gun in the West, 2003
Artificial resin and acrylic on fabric
500 x 302 cm (118 1/8 x 197 7/8 inches)
Michael Werner Gallery, New York & Cologne



Fig. 84
Sigmar Polke
I Don't Really Think About Anything Too Much, 2003
Screenprint on fabric
296 x 295 cm (116.5 x 116.1 inches)
Michael Werner Gallery, New York & Cologne

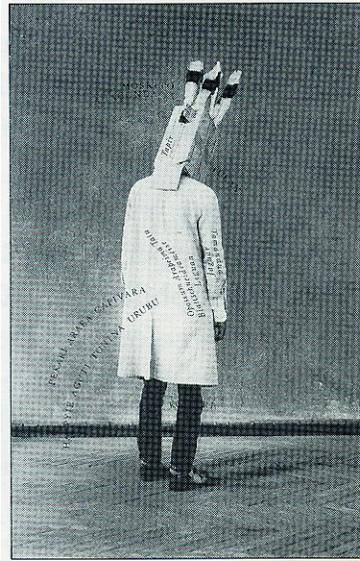


Fig. 85
Lothar Baumgarten
Makunaima, 1972-74
Retouched gelatin-silver print
22 x 30 cm. (8 7/8 x 12 inches)
Private Collection, Munich



Fig. 86

Lothar Baumgarten

Installation view, *America*, 1983/84

Marble floor inlaid with names of the principal rivers of the Amazon Basin, including the name America and four symbolic figures representing Jaguar, Eagle, Caiman and Turtle

West German Pavilion

1984 Venice Biennale

Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

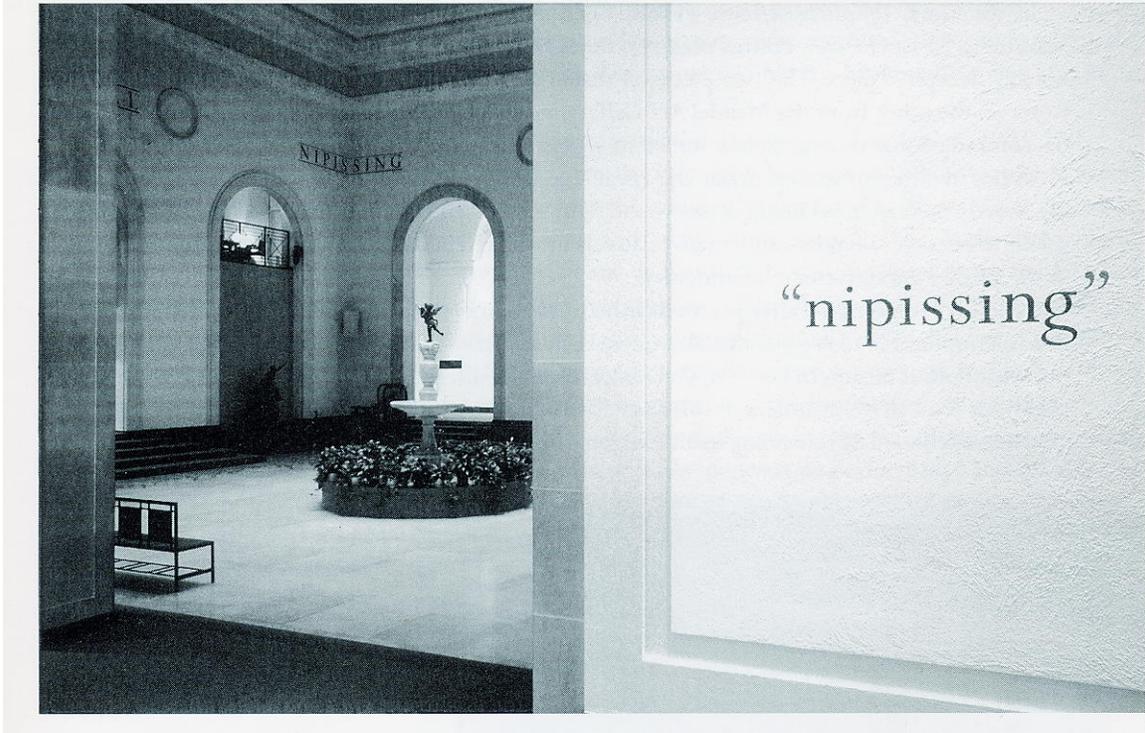


Fig. 87
Robert Houle
Anishnabe Walker Court: Part 2, 1993
Installation at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

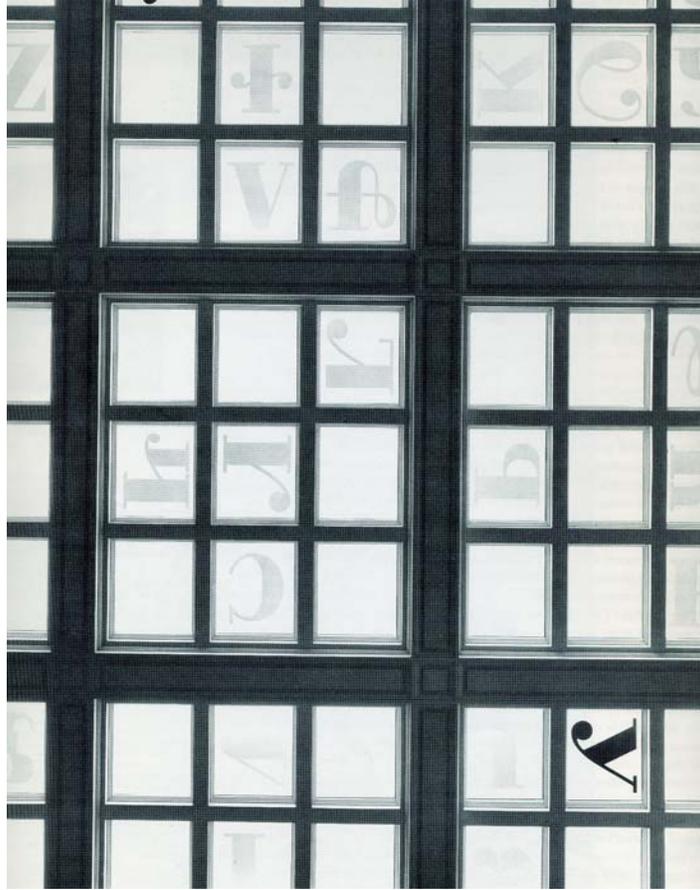


Fig. 88
Lothar Baumgarten
The Tongue of the Cherokee, 1985-88
Cherokee alphabet, Hall of Sculpture
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh
Photograph by Jon and Anne Abbott, New York City



Fig. 89
Lothar Baumgarten
Installation view, *Carbon*, 1987-90
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
Photograph by Douglas Parker



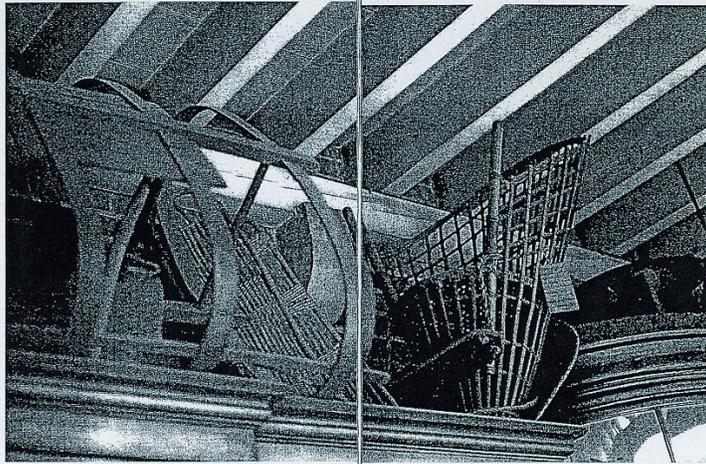
Fig. 90
El Lissitzky
Proun Room
Reconstruction in Berlin, 1923



Lothar Baumgarten, 'AMERICA Invention', installation view, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1993. Photo: David Heald.

Fig. 91
Lothar Baumgarten
AMERICA, Invention, 1993
Installation view, Guggenheim Museum, New York City

reinvented



generalized

Fig. 92

Lothar Baumgarten

Sample pages from photographic essay in the catalogue for *AMERICA, Invention*, 1993

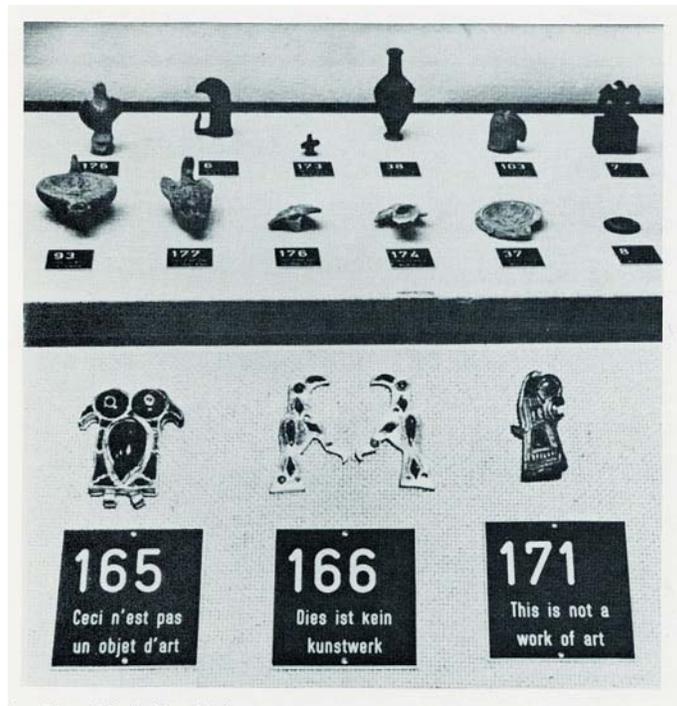


Fig. 93
Marcel Broodthaers
Musée d'Art Modern, Département des Aigles, Section des Figures, 1972
Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf
Photographs by Maria Gilissen



Fig. 94
Andrea Robbins and Max Becher
Cologne Carnival, 1994/95
Chromogenic development print
76.2 x 65.41 cm (30 x 25 ³/₄ inches)
Private Collection



Fig. 95
Andrea Robbins and Max Becher
Karl May Festival, Radebeul, Germany, 1998
Chromogenic print
46.4 x 58 cm. (approx. 18.25 x 22.75 inches)



Fig. 96
Teresa Bramlette in Indian squaw costume, 1958
Photograph by Ed Bramlette