

WALDEMAR ZACHARASIEWICZ and CHRISTIAN FEEST, eds., *Native Americans and First Nations: A Transnational Challenge* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009), 259 pp.

This book revisits indigenous issues through a transnational lens and is a major contribution to this field. It connects the study of colonial history and politics, cultural contacts, and neo/colonial with postcolonial practices of representation across the Atlantic and across North American borders. Borders that we know do not exist for a number of indigenous nations, for example the Blackfeet (Canada) or Blackfoot (United States), as illustrated in Thomas King's wonderful short story "Borders," and the Mohawk at Akwesasne, as highlighted through trafficking across the St. Lawrence in the challenging film *Frozen River* (dir. Courtney Hunt, 2008). The book discusses recent key topics within Indigenous Studies from transnational and transcultural perspectives, such as indigenous knowledges and settler bio- and geopolitics, especially in connection with globalization, migration patterns, and flow of goods, moneys, culture, and intellectual property. This book is thus a timely addition to the scholarly works in indigenous Studies that take up 'transnational challenges.' This book is thus a timely addition to the scholarly works in Indigenous Studies that take up 'transnational challenges,' with a collection of interdisciplinary articles that are the result of a research colloquium at the University of Vienna in 2006. It was organized by Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, himself a longstanding scholar of transnational American and Canadian Studies and Christian Feest, Europe's foremost ethnologist in the field, then director of the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna. In his introduction, Zacharasiewicz gives an overview over the history of Native Studies in Europe as well as the essays by eminent Native Studies scholars and younger colleagues.

Nancy Bunge starts the collection with her essay "The Wheeler Family and the Intimate Middle Ground," in which she uses Richard White's concept of the 'middle ground'—the relationships between Native people and settlers concerning political and economic aspects—and extends this concept to long-lasting intimate relations between these cultures. On the basis of archival documents, she describes the story of the missionary Leonard Wheeler and his family who lived among the Ojibwe in Wisconsin between 1842 and 1866, a cultural contact marked by appreciation and sympathy, respect for resistance to conversion, critique of government politics toward Native people, and gradually changing Eurocentric attitudes of Wheeler and his family. This essay largely remains in a descriptive historiographic mode and therefore wants some more theoretical discussion of the "intimate middle ground" as also a more critical stance towards remaining condescending attitudes and

acts of the Wheelers. In her essay “Going Native: Emily Carr’s Road to Regeneration,” Carmen Birkle outlines cultural contact of a different sort: the travels of the young sickly Victorian artist into the British Columbian ‘wilderness,’ her embracing West Coast Native art, life, and mythology, and her struggle to express her found ‘freedom’ and ‘spirituality,’ artistic identification with Native cultures, and her criticism of Canadian society that she felt to be an outsider of. Carr painted West Coast forests with embedded Native villages and totem poles, wrote an autobiography (*Growing Pains*) and autobiographical short stories (*Klee Wyck*). Birkle couches her comprehensive article in a critical tone with references to Carr’s “going Native” and her “desire for ‘salvation,’” wanting to “record and preserve ancient traditions” (34). While the discussion could have been placed more firmly in the critical discourse about Carr’s romantic infatuation with and, indeed, appropriation of Native cultures, Birkle makes clear that Carr firmly anchored Native culture in Canada’s national self-image and “served an anti-colonial function” (44). Robert Lewis describes the Scottish aristocrat Charles Augustus Murray’s promotional support of George Catlin’s endeavors to finance his many trips into the West and their commercialization of Native cultures through the collection of artifacts, exhibitions, lectures at dinner circles, sale of artifacts, and tableaux acting as ‘savage Indians.’ Whereas Catlin worked effortlessly “to preserve for posterity a comprehensive [...] record of their culture” (49), Murray’s efforts remained a “fascination with the exotic” (59), couched in supremacist notions of cultural hierarchies—all portrayed quite uncritically without reference to cultural studies discourses of the last decades.

Far more enlightening are the three following essays on the representation of Native cultures. In a comparative transnational perspective, Karsten Fitz attempts the grand task of comparing the ideologies behind the representation of Native people in films as well as the audience reception in both East and West Germany (DEFA films, such as *Die Söhne der Großen Bärin*, 1966, and Winnetou films based on Karl May novels, such as *Winnetou I*, 1963) and the United States (*Dances with Wolves* directed by Kevin Costner, 1990), including the first internationally acclaimed Native American film (*Smoke Signals* directed by Chris Eyre, 1998). Fitz convincingly argues that movies about ‘Indians’ served as projection screens for ‘Indianthusiasm’ (a term coined by Hartmut Lutz denoting the romantic enthusiast infatuation with Native people) and *Wiedergutmachungsphantasien* (rejecting the position of the racist perpetrator as a way of collectively imagined restitution for Nazi crimes) in West Germany, and for anti-imperialist ideas and also subversive notions and actions in the former GDR. Similarly, American films like *Dances With Wolves* and *The Last Samurai* aestheticize male romantic fantasies of bravery, ‘going Native,’ and returning to a past of primitive

innocence, thus regenerating white racial superiority, as Fitz quotes Shari Huhndorf, and serving discourses of territorial expansion. Eyre's film, *Smoke Signals*, represents Native culture from an inside decolonial perspective; it casts the story of two men and a lost father as a national allegory that speaks about the traumatic loss of cultural traditions, paternalistic treatment at the hands of U.S. society, and cultural revival. Here, one would have wished a more detailed analysis of at least one respective German film in order to substantiate arguments and to supplement the U.S. examples. Nevertheless, this insightful essay should be followed by more work on the psychological and ideological work of films across the Atlantic. In the same vein, Heinz Tschachler's edifying essay "The Redskin and the Buck: Representations of American Indians on Paper Money" traces the history of this representation from 1690 to 1918 with descriptions of bank notes (supplemented by replicas of the notes) and the meanings of their 'Indian' images, embedded in the historico-political context of the respective eras. The notes converged with changing national interests and politics towards Native people and the need to keep a token image of the 'vanishing American' and to 'de-indianize' the Indian princess. Eric Sandeen also astutely argues in "Mapping the Site of the Sand Creek Massacre" how the power and powerlessness to map a national historic site reproduce colonial relations that have caused the massacre and site of shameful national history in the first place. The endeavors of the National Park Service (based on aerial photographs, archeological work, and narratives of individual soldiers), a farmer family owning part of the area (based on climatic and geographic experiences), and local Native groups (based on oral narratives and spiritual experiences) to locate the massacre site produce three different versions of this history that make this specific territory "a palimpsest of American landscapes" (104). This 'shadowed ground' (Kenneth Foote) will be represented "in a traditional, explicit approach in which the sign offers the text [only one text] and the landscape acts as illustration," foregoing the opportunity of "two different ways of constructing 'history' to be worked out in real space, to honor and simultaneously make tangible the world views of Native peoples" (105-6).

In her rewarding analysis of the poem "L'arbre de la vie" by the Innu poet Rita Mestokosho, Laura Castor focuses on concepts such as the tree of life, nomadic and sedentary existence, Innu knowledge, destruction and dispossession, spirituality, and syncretistic religion. She couches her reading in discussions of Canada's colonial history, self-reflexively looks at neocolonial relations in the academy—her own position as non-indigenous scholar—and stresses the importance and validity of indigenous knowledges, which is also expressed in the poem. Maurizio Gatti provides a survey on indigenous Quebecois literature, including an

enlightening discussion on the choice between indigenous languages or French and the perceived threat to indigenous cultures, languages, and literatures in Quebec. Gatti also touches upon sensitive issues, such as who counts as indigenous writer, and the necessity of indigenous subject matter, rejecting the claims that language choice reflects author's degree of indigenous identity and that indigenous literature must focus on indigenous cultures. Tomson Highway takes a truly different approach to drama in his plays *Rose* and *Ernestine Shuswap Gets her Trout*, which he designed as musical and "string quartet for four women voices." Klára Kolinská tackles the challenge of writing and analyzing Highway's musical theater and gives an enlightening discussion about Highway's merging indigenous and Western forms of music and theater, generating a hybrid and "holistic model of artistic expression" (137); she pays attention to "human language as music" (140), the use of contrapuntal effects, the simultaneous sound of voices, and the blending of musical genres. Michael Schlottner continues the discourse on Native music with his overview article "One Music—Two Worlds? Notes on the Reception of Native North America's Popular Music." While it is rather impossible to categorize the (hybrid) varieties of Native music, the musicians often do not receive due academic interest and recognition from (non-Native) audiences. Schlottner thus comments on issues such as music and orality, imitation of Native music, expected 'Indianness' in Native music, airtime and distribution, non-Native influences during production, and misconceptions guiding the reception of Native music that still generate two audiences.

Two essays focus on the politics of representation of indigenous cultures in museum exhibitions. Ruth B. Phillips compares the revisionist curatorial approaches of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). In concert with their organic and fluid Douglas Cardinal architecture, they abandon the neocolonial taxonomic practices of display that objectify and dehumanize indigenous cultures and move toward "a post-colonial museology powered by the anti-colonial activism of indigenous peoples in informal alliance with academic post-structuralist critics of museum representation" (158). The CMC included an indigenous advisory committee during the creation of the First Peoples Hall, and the NMAI entrusted the curatorial responsibility to an indigenous-dominated directorate and board. Discussing political approaches, exhibition structures, and emphases, Hill finds that NMAI has a more radical approach, refusing the standard rhetorical strategies, and focus on artifacts—an approach that unfortunately disappoints non-indigenous reviewers—while the CMC also disrupts standard anthropological taxonomies. Andrea Zittlau's essay "Native Souvenirs and Shop-Windows: Museum Displays

in an Age of Commodity” finds a striking similarity between the NMAI’s display of a few objects from the large George Gustav Heye collection in its “Windows on Collections” installation and the display of objects in the souvenir shop, blurring the distinction between the quality of the objects and turning all of them into objects of art and (simulated) culture, and into commodities. The same incentive, the ‘collecting bug,’ that drove Heye and others to collect indigenous artifacts and thus to ‘own’ indigenous cultures piece by piece, argues Zittlau, now drives museum and shop visitors (through specific forms of display) to ‘collect’ and ‘buy’ indigenous cultures as souvenirs and tourist art.

Another genuinely transnational and ‘transethnic’ critical piece is Hartmut Lutz’s essay on Chicana and Métis autobiografictions—a pioneering comparative approach to two cultures and literatures “dwelling in the ethnic borderlands of North America” (189). Discussing terminologies, colonial histories and dispossession, languages, religions and mythologies, current demographics, cultural geographies, and the literary histories of Chicano/as in the United States and Métis in Canada, Lutz pinpoints similarities and differences, before analyzing Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street* (1984) and *Caramelo* (2002), Howard Adams’ *Prison of Grass* (1975), and the posthumously published *Howard Adams: Otapawwy!* (2005). He underlines the aesthetic and thematic structures of dialogism and ‘the other side’—Mexico and the United States respectively, which are recurring geopolitical and psychological spaces in the texts. In his essay “The promotion of Indigenous Oral Literatures in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Cosmopolitan or Local Solidarities,” Dominique Legros takes issue with the increasingly pervasive concepts of ‘contemporary’ and ‘radical cosmopolitanism’ and inherent tendencies to homogenize cultural diversity and individuality. These notions, he argues, also influence national and international funding agencies that may neglect local cultural concerns and projects, such as the study and publication of Indigenous Yukon storytelling. Canadian national bodies have a rather unstructured funding policy that puts the cultural knowledge of some indigenous groups at risk: “In the absence of federal national projects, of explicit protective policies and funding, some indigenous areas of Canada are necessarily left out of the picture” (219). Anishinabe author and critic Gerald Vizenor’s contribution “Native Narratives” is an enriching piece of indigenous historiography about indigenous involvement in American and European wars and the so-called ‘Indian wars,’ including the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee massacre. It focuses on the representation of Native ‘warriors’ and ‘rebels’ in American media discourse, self-representation in Native newspapers, historical ironies and, in true Vizenorian manner, Native survivance. Finally, in his article “Indigeneity in Literature and Criticism: Power,

Conflict, Transnational Solidarity, De/Re-Nationalization, Globalization,” Hartwig Isernhagen re-evaluates the concept of ‘Indigeneity’ and theorizes the relationships between indigenous people and such geo-political concepts, categories, tendencies, and forces as land, nation and nationalization, sovereignty, power, globalization, inter- and transnationalism with a variety of examples from North American geo-political history and literature. Transnational indigenous solidarity, argues Isernhagen, can have a general effect of de-nationalization, where “the preservation and privileging of significant difference was and is the ultimate aim” (245).

Not all articles meet the topic of transnationality. Likewise, one would have wished a better thematic arrangement of the essays as well as more editorial strictness in terms of referencing electronic sources (Wikipedia) where relevant printed sources are available, the structured argumentation of some articles, the use of the term “Amerindian” in a Canadian context (even though it seems to be a translation from the French *amérindienne*) as well as typos and standardized quotation marks. Nevertheless, the variety of topics, concerns, approaches, and methods of this very heterogeneous collection bears witness to an equally heterogenic academic landscape, which is opening towards transnational perspectives in order to take account of global neo/colonial phenomena.

Greifswald Kerstin Knopf