

Indianthusiasm: Indigenous Responses. Edited by Hartmut Lutz, Florentine Strzelczyk, and Renae Watchman. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2020. 262 pages. \$29.99 paper; \$20.99 ebook.

My name is Beth Piatote and I'm Nez Perce, enrolled with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. Neither of my grandfathers were native English speakers. My maternal grandfather spoke Niimiipuutimt (Nez Perce) and my paternal grandfather spoke German; both of them learned English in school. I learned to speak German and, later, Nez Perce as an adult. I continue to study and treasure both of these familial languages. As an undergrad, I studied German in East Berlin, a place that no longer exists on the map. My younger brother has lived in Germany since his early twenties when he went on an exchange program to work as a farm laborer. He stayed, built a family, and became a forester with the German forestry service. He has now lived more of his life in Germany than in the United States, and through many visits we've observed and discussed German ideas and practices related to Native Americans.

It's my impression that it would be impossible for anyone to study twentieth-century German culture and history without encountering the world of Karl May and the various forms of *indian* representation that exist in German art, politics, advertising, and self-expression (here I incorporate the book's strategy of emphasizing the constructed nature of Indianness within Indianthusiasm by representing *indian* as lower case and italicized). As a person with Indigenous and German heritage, I have regularly, over more than two decades, encountered and been fascinated by what has been termed "Indianthusiasm" by Hartmut Lutz.

I could say that I'm the ideal reader for the collection, *Indianthusiasm: Indigenous Responses*, but that's really for you to decide.

After reading the collection, it seemed necessary to begin with a personal introduction, following the protocols laid out in this collection of interviews centered on the phenomenon of Indianthusiasm, a German and European fascination with an idealized version of the North American Indian. The editors describe the collection as a set of conversations between Indigenous studies and German studies, but it is likely to attract a wider audience. One of the major contributions of the volume is its demonstration of a methodology rooted in Indigenous protocols. Citing Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Margaret Kovach, the collection aims to "validat(e) Indigenous protocol and methods of knowledge transmission" by foregrounding the relationships of the researchers to the subject: "By locating ourselves within kinship, our family relationships, our backgrounds, we reveal our intent as researchers, our relationship to the project, and our responsibility as researchers" (7), and by presenting oral narratives in written form. The book recognizes the reader as a part of this network by offering brief, first-person introductions of each of the coeditors early in the introduction.

The introduction continues with an elaboration of methods and the various expressions of Indianthusiasm, which Lutz argues has roots in nineteenth-century German desires for unrealized colonial power. According to Lutz and other scholars, at that time Germans embraced surrogate forms of colonization such as the travel narrative, print pamphlets, and print news to imagine “that they would be better, kinder, and more just colonizers than other European nations if they were just granted that opportunity” (14). From these ideological grounds have sprung a number of cultural forms: the circulation of the popular “Winnetou” Western series by Karl May; the post–World War II production of Western films in East Germany, which represented Indians with great sympathy; and the explosion of German hobbyism. Through hobbyism, Germans and other Europeans invent and perform historical Plains Indian identities toward various ends. Their activities may include making regalia, performing dance and music, and gathering in encampments. The hobbyist community has created a strong market for ceremonies, sweat lodges, and “medicine men,” which has flourished with the participation of Native American individuals who are willing to capitalize on the demand for *indian* culture and spirituality. Hobbyism is one of the most visible forms of Indianthusiasm and has been the subject of several well-known documentaries and other critical work, including a conference and collection, *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections*, edited by Colin Calloway, Gerd Gemünden, and Susanne Zantop, in 2002.

Indianthusiasm thus joins a longer genealogy of scholarship (including previous works by Lutz and Watchman) and speaks to studies of related phenomena in American cultural studies, such as Philip Deloria’s *Playing Indian* and Shari Huhndorf’s *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*. In these works, the adoption of (invented) *indian* identities displaces Indigenous people materially and culturally while also compounding dominant power. Indianthusiasm shares these traits but often with a critical triangulation of power relationships. For example, the sympathetic portrayal of Indians in East German films used the Western genre to channel a critique of the West and its power. The embrace of hobbyism has been used as an alternative economy to challenge capitalism.

The bulk of the volume is a series of twelve interviews with Indigenous scholars and artists in Canada who discuss their perspectives on Indianthusiasm. In the interviews, the ambivalence of Indianthusiasm practices is revealed. As Ahmoo Angeconeb, an Anishinaabe artist, notes, “I think it is a great thing that there is an interest in the cultures, the worldview, and sometimes in the religions of these cultures of North America, because I really, really think that we have to save the earth” (42). Angeconeb speaks of the irony of displaying his “pagan” artwork in churches after having experienced missionaries and residential schools aimed to Christianize him and his community. An aspect of Indianthusiasm, he explains, is true spiritual hunger.

The diversity of experiences, given the range of ages in the interviewees, also emerges. There are numerous anecdotes of the interviewees encountering stereotypes, expectations, and desires of their identities. Some of these are positive. As Quentin Pipestem, a Tsuut’ina-Siksika performer, says, “It’s a positive outlook [on] the Native people, as opposed to some places here in America, where it can still be considered

negative to be Native American” (153). Several interviews touched on the overt racism against Turkish immigrants and how it articulated with a romanticization of *indians*. Interviewees generally condemned Indigenous and non-Indigenous “shamans” who charged money for ceremonies, yet expressed mixed opinions on other forms of performance, such as dancing and cultural sharing.

The interviews are published in whole, following a methodology of orality and respect for the story that each person chooses to tell. Drawing on Margaret Kovach (2009), the coeditors write that they decided “to follow our conversation partners into other stories they wanted to share with us, honoring oral tradition, where stories can never be decontextualized from the teller, where stories are agents to give insights into phenomena” (11). This method of presenting information must be coupled with a method of receiving it, what Jeannette Armstrong describes as “deep listening” (51). The process of gathering information to make decisions involves listening to each person’s whole story, without judgment. “You should listen to all the data, and allow that to accumulate, then you will form a new assumption, and a new understanding therefore” (50). In presenting the interviews, the editors have retained pauses, jokes, moments of laughter—details that help the reader understand the mood and meaning of the speaker’s story. *Indianthusiasm* is a fascinating addition to an ongoing conversation about representations of the *indian* in Europe—but more than that, it is a bold assertion of an Indigenous methodology that centers storytelling, context, and a dynamic relationship among the storyteller, the reader, and the topic.

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