

CHAPTER 3

Winnetou's Grandchildren: Indian Identification, Ethnic Expertise, White Embodiment

In the early 1990s, Indian activist and writer Ward Churchill traveled through Germany on a lecture tour and was astonished to find there large numbers of people attending his lectures in Native American garb who, he discovered, consider themselves to be Indians:¹ “These ‘Indians of Europe,’” Churchill observed,

were uniformly quite candid as to why they felt this way. Bluntly put—and the majority were precisely this harsh in their own articulations—they absolutely *hate* the idea of being Europeans, especially Germans. Abundant mention was made of their collective revulsion to the European heritage of colonization and genocide, particularly the ravages of nazism. Some went deeper, addressing what they felt to be the intrinsically unacceptable character of European civilization's relationship to the natural order in its entirety. Their response, as a group, was to try and disassociate themselves from what it was/is they object to by announcing their personal identities in terms as diametrically opposed to it as they could conceive. “Becoming” American Indians in their own minds apparently fulfilled this deep-seated need in the most gratifying fashion. (1992, 224)

1. A word on terminology: I will use the term *Indian* throughout this chapter, not only because the word *Indianer* has incomparably more currency in German than *amerikanische Ureinwohner* as the equivalent of *Native American*, a term that grew out of the Native American movement in the 1960s and is little used among Indians today. To my mind, *Indian*, that famous misnomer, stresses the fictional nature of the personae performed in the Indian clubs, but also underscores the weight of the patterns of perception shaped by the literary imagination of writers like Gerstäcker, May, Steuben, and others.

He goes on to ridicule this “weekend warrior” endeavor, scolds hobbyists for replacing political activism with cultural escapism, and concludes that, in fact, their leisure activity allows them more effectively to fulfill the social roles they symbolically reject. The heated arguments between Churchill’s group and the hobbyists that he describes typify the struggle for cultural authority and ownership that ensues every time contemporary Indians face the power of metaphorical Indianness: while the Germans underscore their distance from a European history of colonization, Churchill interprets hobbyism as its postcolonial continuation by cultural and spiritual means. While hobbyists are quick to cite a long history of German-Indian contact as the foundation of Germans’ interest in and knowledge about Native American cultures, Churchill’s insistence on the ideological function of contemporary Germans’ identification with Indians seems justified. I hope to show, however, that hobbyist styles are more disparate than he allows, and should not be collapsed into a single meaning.²

Similar to Philip Deloria, who underscores the changing meanings of the Indian in the American imagination in the course of the twentieth century, I perceive great differences between German hobbyists’ attitudes toward Native Americans. These differences are generational, underscoring the changes in hobbyism over time; they are regional, pointing to a number of local performance traditions with which hobbyism has shared space; and they are ideological, in the sense that the antimodernism Churchill stresses in his description challenges Nazi racism and imperialism in some instances, while in others it is directed against social features specific to socialism, democracy, and capitalism. Even within the small sample of hobbyists on whose testimony this chapter is based, these differences resulted in very different views of their practice and interpretations of its social and political meanings. Some (primarily within the younger

2. Unfortunately, Churchill does not speculate about the motivations of other Western and Eastern European hobbyists. Indian clubs exist in many European countries that quite obviously have a different relationship to fascism and where the kinds of enacted historical revisionism I discuss in this article would play no part in practitioners’ identification with Native Americans. In his keynote address at the conference *Deutsche und Indianer—Indianer und Deutsche: Cultural Encounters over Three Centuries*, which took place at Dartmouth College, May 1999, Christian Feest pointed to the preoccupation with Indians on the part of Europeans from Portugal to the Ukraine, challenging many Germans’ cherished assumption of a privileged affinity between Germans and Indians and embedding it in a larger European context of fantasizing about the New World and its Noble Savages during and since colonial times. Although I have no firsthand evidence of this, I would speculate that the motivations of many hobbyists in other European countries are informed by the generally antimodern, “green,” and pacifist impulses that also characterize the practice of younger German hobbyists. An excellent discussion of the changing meanings of “playing Indian” across the generations in North America can be found in Deloria; some of his suppositions, I believe, also pertain to the European context.

generation) identify with American Indians as a way of practicing an alternative, “green” lifestyle marked by ecological awareness and a rejection of the trappings of consumer culture and the class distinctions it fosters. By contrast, others (who first took up hobbyism in the postwar years) appear to have been impelled by a sense of victimization, national defeat, and emasculation—feelings they were able to symbolically redress through the ritual of ethnic masquerade. While Germans’ choice of the Indian as a model of heroic manliness and anti-imperialist defiance was probably due to the popularity of Karl May’s Wild West novels, such cross-cultural identification was complicated by the Cold War. Some of the West German men, who joined or founded hobbyist clubs after the war, who shaped these clubs’ direction and now occupy leadership positions within the national umbrella organizations, felt that they, like Indians, were oppressed by white Americans—but they also met Native Americans, who served as soldiers in the occupying forces and attended hobbyist meetings in U.S. army uniforms. In order to research Native American history, they had to learn English, enter army base stores to purchase hobbyist periodicals like *American Indian Hobbyist*, and visit libraries maintained by the American forces. Hobbyists in the German Democratic Republic (who called themselves “Indianists”) were encouraged by the socialist state to develop an understanding of and solidarity with Indians as emblems of anti-imperialist oppression and resistance; as Birgit Turski shows, however, some East German Indianists perceived themselves as antisocialist resisters instead, rejecting Communism as a form of alien domination. Did hobbyism in East and West Germany fit within the ideological identifications and enmities set up by the Cold War, or did it subvert them? Is all German hobbyism fueled by antifascism, as Ward Churchill suggests? And if so, does Indian impersonation correlate with progressive, antiracist endeavors in general, expressing solidarity with all oppressed, as Yolanda Broyles Gonzales maintains in one of the few extant scholarly essays about hobbyism? Or does the merely symbolic rejection of “European civilization,” as opposed to activist opposition, in fact bolster the very ideological structures hobbyists lament, as Churchill contends? Finally, can hobbyism be a model for imagining the sharing of power and authority by Germans and Native Americans? Is the hobbyists’ revision of biological concepts of “race” (based on impermeable and unbridgeable boundaries between people) in favor of what I call “ethnic competence” (based on knowledge and performance) a welcome step toward overcoming racism? Or does the transformation of Native American identities into cultural roles that can be donned by white Europeans continue the history of cultural theft and ethnic chauvinism?

In placing this chapter as a sequel to my reading of the Karl May fes-

tival, I want to draw attention to the ways in which people creatively interact with mass-cultural texts. Although most hobbyists confess to first conceiving their passion for Indians by reading Karl May, this contact did not constitute an unambiguous colonization of their minds, but occasioned a great variety of performances that eschew the notion of passive consumer of dominant discourses. Answering the incitement to perform issued at such venues as the Karl May festival, they offer correctives to these mass-produced fantasies, crafting for themselves positions of competence and authority that encompass the roles of spectator, actor, author, and critic, which are kept separate in traditional theater. They insist emphatically on doing more than act out stock parts in prefabricated scripts, but describe the formation of their personae as a process of self-creation and individuation, evolving from masquerade to mimesis. The narratives of their practice, on which this chapter is based, thus offer important insights into the ways in which individuals insert themselves into discourses of nationality, race/ethnicity, and gender.

Because my attention, as a theater scholar, was trained on the way in which specific cultural venues, genres, and styles shaped Germans' imagined and actual interaction with other ethnic subjects, my research about hobbyist clubs was initially determined by the performance genres that, I speculated, had given rise to it, namely the circus, the *Völkerschau* (ethnic show), the carnival, and the Karl May theatricals. After I had already met the hobbyists in Bad Segeberg (the site of the largest Karl May festival in western Germany), I therefore sought out clubs in Cologne, which had been featured in a book of photographs entitled *Kölner Stämme* (Cologne tribes) as avid participants in the carnival, a custom prevalent in the Catholic regions of Germany. In addition, I was curious whether Yolanda Broyles Gonzales's thesis about hobbyism as a way of coping with modernization processes and the loss of local, rural, oral traditions would also be confirmed by urban hobbyists; since I usually stay in Berlin when I visit Germany, I contacted two groups, one in the western and the other in the eastern part of the formerly divided city. In the summers of 1998 and 1999 I conducted interviews with members of four different Indian clubs in Germany: the Interessengruppe der Plains Indianer in Bad Segeberg,³ the

3. The English translation of their name is Plains Indians Interest Group. I conducted a group interview with them in Bad Segeberg on April 23, 1998; members present were Ekkehard Bartsch, Ingeborg Bartsch, Ingrid Bartsch, and Conni Scharborski. The interest group leases grounds that are used, especially in the summer, to build and live in teepees and "go Indian" for a weekend. They spend most of their club time in costume and occupy themselves with maintaining and repairing costumes, sewing, embroidering, and painting pieces of clothing, jewelry, and other accessories or artifacts. In addition, they engage in group activities like cooking and chatting together. They seemed to be a very sociable group with long-term,

Präriefreunde Köln,⁴ the Interessengruppe Nordamerikanische Völkerkunde from West Berlin,⁵ and Indianer heute from East Berlin.⁶ In addition, I draw on Birgit Turski's study *Die Indianistikgruppen der DDR* (The Indianist groups of the GDR), a sociological study written by a practi-

close-knit friendships. There are slightly more women than men in the membership. The bulk of the club (around twenty-five to thirty people) consists of members in their twenties and thirties, but many children and adolescents participate as well. Reduced membership fees for members under sixteen years of age makes this an affordable pastime. One method of recruitment seems to consist of children bringing friends along for the weekends.

4. Trans. Friends of the Prairie. I interviewed Wolfgang Wettstein and Harro Hesse on their club grounds (on the outskirts of Cologne) on April 26, 1998. Their wives and grandchildren were present as well, but did not participate much in the interview. The Friends of the Prairie hold a long-term lease on the club grounds on the Cologne outskirts, where they meet during the weekends. They occupy themselves mostly with the maintenance of the grounds and spend little time in teepees or in Indian costume. In order to immerse himself in Indian life, Wolfgang "Larry" Wettstein attends camps organized by other clubs. The club, which has about thirty-five members, was founded in 1951 and is one of the most established Indian clubs, evidenced by the fact that it has hosted four national councils. Wettstein and his wife Patricia are also officers of the Western Association. The club grounds have several log cabins on them, one of which flies the flag of the Hudson Bay Trading Company. The last time teepees were built, Wettstein and his friend Harro Hesse reflected, was during an open day for Cologne schoolchildren.

5. Trans. North American Ethnology Interest Group. I spoke with Kurt Dietrich "Ted" Asten in his West Berlin apartment on May 6, 1998. We were joined later by his wife, who accompanies him to the annual councils but is not an Indian hobbyist. The interest group has a fairly academic orientation, an adult membership of eleven, and no club grounds. Members consist of experts from such far-flung regions as Tallin (France), Kettenes and Plombiere (Belgium), Dresden, and Offerath, a small town outside of Cologne. They hold double affiliation with both the Western Association and the Indianist Union, making Asten the only interviewee who had attended both East and West German summer camps and could compare the different styles of hobbyism practiced there. The club meets only three times a year, at the council, the week, and at an annual club meeting, which not even all members attend. Asten publishes and distributes a newsletter that contains translations of scholarly articles originally published in English, as well as pieces of original research and commentary.

6. Trans. Indians Today. I met Dieter Kubat and Steffi Rühmann for an interview on July 18, 1998. The conversation took place in their apartment in Berlin. I also conducted a follow-up interview with them on May 24, 1999. Indians Today was established in 1973 and is run by Dieter Kubat and his partner Steffi Rühmann out of their East Berlin apartment. Their organization is an anomaly in the context of this study, since its members' rejection of impersonation, focus on contemporary Indians and their political struggle, and efforts at repatriation of artifacts lead them to see themselves as anti-Indianists. However, their interest in Indian material culture (Kubat's apartment resembles an ethnological museum), their close, long-term contacts with American Indian Movement (AIM) activists, and their educational activities in the GDR would still qualify them as "object hobbyists" according to Deloria's categories. The American scholar distinguishes "object hobbyism" from "people hobbyism" (135).

tioner,⁷ and Broyles Gonzales's essay "Cheyennes in the Black Forest: A Social Drama," which is based on twelve years of participant-observation of one club in the Black Forest region in southwestern Germany. In the following discussion, I will first outline in greater detail the generational, regional, and ideological differences among practitioners, before proceeding to assess the social meanings of hobbyism in the crucible of the Cold War. Finally, I will consider its political consequences for intercultural relations, both between Native Americans and Germans, and between Germans and other ethnic minorities.

In the course of my research, I discovered that the differences resulting from regional performance traditions were less significant than those created by age and by political leanings. My sample is too small to be representative of even the main variants of hobbyism—for instance, I was unable to interview any of the so-called *Öko-Indianer* (eco-Indians), for whom hobbyism is an integral part of ecological activism, or any of the East German groups affiliated with the Indianistikbund (see below). Several of the people who shared their experiences, memories, and insights with me happened to be men between fifty and sixty years of age; hence my focus on the postwar years, when these particular men first became interested in Indians. During our meetings, I encouraged them to tell me about their fascination with Native American culture in their own words, describe the orientation and composition of their club, and speculate about the reasons for Germans' love of Indians in general. I was fortunate in that three of my interlocutors acted as lay club historians and had collated thick volumes of photographs, commentary, correspondence, newsletters, and other records of their clubs and of others. They had composed detailed and opinionated amateur histories of hobbyism. My work consists of a close reading of the stories they told me, which meant listening to both what they said and what they kept silent about; sometimes I

7. The book is based on her thesis in cultural sciences at the University of Leipzig. As a scholarly work, even with an opening chapter that promises a "personal narrative" of the author's experience as founder and leader of an Indianist youth club, the book does not include the kind of biographical detail offered by my interlocutors and provides few insights into the members' motivations. The club Turski headed was called Jugendclub für Indianistik "Pedro Bissonette" (Youth Club for Indianism "Pedro Bissonette") in Cottbus. It changed its orientation from a text-based study of Indian cultures to an increased emphasis on re-creating Indian lifeways at the camps, a shift that Turski describes as typical of Indianist clubs in the GDR. From 1980 to 1989 her group also published the newsletter *Wampum*, which was in high demand among Indianists in the GDR. The club was sponsored by the local zoo, which took over the costs of caring for the club's growing number of horses. While Turski notes that other groups perceived their lack of affiliation as freedom from control—and sometimes inappropriate expectations—by the sponsoring agencies, her study focuses on the host of problems created by the uncertain legal status of many Indianist groups.

call attention to contradictions and disagreements between speakers, and sometimes I elaborate on what they say by placing their remarks in historical context. Although it is important to me to faithfully convey speakers' intentions and the flavor of their statements, on occasion reproducing lengthy passages, I also want to distance myself from their views rather than subordinate myself to them. I am not a hobbyist delivering an insider's account, but a scholar, who has to balance her respect for these individuals with her commitment to a critical analysis of their controversial practice. I am as dedicated to revealing what Germans find appealing in hobbyism as I am to clarifying why many aspects of it are painful and objectionable to Native Americans. Although many clubs have documented their own development, a comprehensive, historical overview of this subculture remains to be written. I hope that this project, despite its limitations, can help readers understand through specific examples how cultural "exchange" in a context defined by unequal power and authority can potentially renegotiate social hierarchies—or why it fails to do so.

Institutional Genealogies, Personal Biographies: "Origins"

Hobbyists trace the birth of Indian clubs from the spirit of Karl May through three narratives of origin. These three narratives track the process by which the carnival, the circus (including the Wild West shows by Buffalo Bill, Billy Jenkins, and a train of successors), and the ethnic show created widespread interest in and fascination with Indians,⁸ and produced groups of amateur and specialist performers for whom casual interest or professional training increasingly turned into a serious commitment, even a lifestyle.⁹ While some clubs had existed before 1920, club foundings rose steeply after World War II.¹⁰ The largest cluster of clubs can be found in the southern or southwestern states of North-Rhine-Westfalia and Baden-Württemberg, and in East Germany in the cities of Dresden (twelve clubs) and Leipzig (six clubs), locations associated with the carnival, the *Völkerschau*, and Karl May respectively.¹¹ Despite the perception of shared

8. Asten stated that the first Indian clubs in Leipzig and Dresden were founded in direct response to the ethnic shows in Leipzig that Hagenbeck had organized.

9. Wettstein, for instance, told me that his entire apartment is a museum, in which he exhibits his collection of self-made and Indian-made artifacts. See also the brief article on his club in *Kölner Stämme*, 65–69.

10. In 1968, Curt-Dietrich Asten, one of my interlocutors, had written his thesis in social work about German Indian clubs. Unfortunately, there are no extant copies. In it, he had included a timeline about club foundings, as well as another chart which divided clubs by state.

11. Turski counted fifty clubs in 1991, a slight decline from the forty-seven East German clubs Asten had on his list in 1998.

roots, hobbyism developed quite differently in East and West Germany. Today, two umbrella organizations exist, one in each part of the formerly divided Germany: the Westernbund (Western Association) in the old Federal Republic and the Indianistikbund (Indianist Union) in the erstwhile German Democratic Republic. In 1998, the Western Association had a membership of 156 clubs, while 53 clubs were affiliated with the Indianist Union. The main difference between the Western Association and the Indianist Union is the exclusive focus on Indian cultures in the latter, whereas the former comprises a wide range of identifications with anything western—including scouts, mountainmen, military (both Union and Confederate soldiers), and cowboys.¹²

Another reason why there is so little overlap between the two organizations may be the fiercely competitive atmosphere prevailing at the annual meetings. While the emphasis is on the affirmation of shared interests, the members I interviewed are also intensely critical of the many errors in accuracy they perceive among their fellow practitioners. The Bad Segeberg group criticized the tyranny of authenticity prevailing at the annual meeting, because it upholds class hierarchies along with ethnic divisions.¹³ Several interviewees commented on the fact that GDR hobby-

12. As the association's name indicates, East German Indian clubs are devoted exclusively to Indian culture; Turski as well as some West German hobbyists interpret the shrinking and splitting of clubs since reunification in the context of the changing leisure culture in the new states, specifically the fact that the white frontier characters listed above had been unavailable for performative identification under socialism, whereas Indian culture, fostered by the GDR Kulturbund, enjoyed the status of an oppressed people and fit well within the anti-American agenda of the socialist state. Turski notes that those western fans interested in emulating cowboys failed to legitimate their interest vis-à-vis state agencies, by portraying cowboys as "the poorest sector of the rural proletariat" (27). Moreover, increasing identification with the political plight of Native Americans led younger Indianists to vilify cowboys as the imperialist racial enemy, making it even more difficult for cowboy-hobbyists to pursue their interest.

13. Inge Bartsch offered a materialist critique of authenticity as fetish, which highlighted its racist, class-specific, and imperialist dimensions and effects: "There are clubs where the members are 250 percent correct, they are better than the Indians themselves. I am always worried that if you identify too much with the whole thing, then as a white person you go, 'I can do this better than anyone else.' And when the Indians were here, the Winnebago . . . were looking around and walked through the museum, and one Herr Marken had these terrific sheaths for the guns and they said, well, that's better than what any Indian could make. And that made a horrible impression on me, this attitude of being better-than-thou. That's something we don't want *at all!* That's the biggest problem, and the more I learn about the whole background, the humbler I become. They [Indians] make everything out of plastic, synthetic material. And if I take hairpipes, for instance [an elongated type of bead], for one dollar I get one genuine hairpipe in this size, but for the same money I get twenty made of plastic. And because [the Indians] are . . . well, let's say, not well off, they live quite near the poverty line, of course they take the ones made of plastic. For them it's a symbolic value, it doesn't matter if it's genuine or synthetic. Here, they look at you askance if you don't have

ists were disadvantaged because they had fewer resources and less access to purveyors of authentic materials.¹⁴ Both umbrella organizations hold annual meetings of seven to fourteen days, when individuals, clubs, and associations immerse themselves in the western/Indian experience, dress up, and participate in a diverse program of activities for children and adults, which includes singing, dancing, storytelling, and handicrafts. More ethnologically oriented clubs use the annual meetings to offer slide presentations or display and discuss their collections of artifacts. The first Indian Council took place in West Germany in 1951. In the mid-1980s, the Western Association purchased grounds in the Westerwald forest near Koblenz that were large enough to accommodate all attendees (two to three thousand) and provide storage space for their 250 to 350 teepees between meetings. In contrast, the location of the annual meeting changed from year to year in the former East Germany and continues to do so today. In sum, western hobbyism emphasizes private ownership and fosters a highly commercialized culture that creates competitive conditions few East German Indianists can or want to meet. Perhaps for these reasons, the East-West separation continues to hold. At their meetings, the German clubs are joined by practitioners from almost every other European country. Apart from these summer meetings, there are numerous western or Indian camps organized throughout the year by individual or regional associations, where members have the opportunity to live in teepees, dress in authentic costumes, and participate in a host of activities.

The narrative of West and East German hobbyism's evolution from "low" entertainment to quasi-scientific endeavor is repeated on the individual level by the practitioner's development from enthusiast to expert. The teleological narrative of each hobbyist career constructs a development from superficial fascination to scholarly earnestness, and from playful mimicking to creative, respectful, and historically correct emulation. Curt-Dietrich Asten, a West Berlin hobbyist, maintains that many, if not all, of the old clubs were founded and shaped by circus artistes, including the Cowboy Club Old Texas (established in 1950), which he first joined.

the real thing, right? And the Indians who come here and would like to participate, in their polyester shirts, they, too, would prefer to have cotton outfits, or leather. But that's hard to get and incredibly expensive. And the dealers tend to be white people. The whites buy and the whites sell. Sometimes I feel that the European clubs, including the ones from France, Spain, and Holland, that they buy up everything over there. Right? And that the one who has the money, he gets it. So the Indians are left with the rest, and then they are looked at askance. I regret that deeply."

14. Patrizia Wettstein, who is an officer in the Western Association, calls hobbyism an "expensive pastime," even though few participants would buy a complete outfit, whose cost she estimates around five thousand deutsche marks. Rather, participants are expected to buy the materials and sew their own basic costume of moccasins, shirt, and leggings.

Members of that club had worked in the Billy Jenkins circus show in the 1920s, pointing to a large degree of historical and personal continuity between circus artistes and Indian-western clubs. Asten's separation from that club and founding of what he self-consciously called an ethnologically oriented interest group in 1964, signaled an important turn in his hobbyist career. Likewise, the Bad Segeberg group's evolution from extras to experts, and one Cologne hobbyist's transformation from carnivalistic Winnetou fan to Lakota emulator exemplify rhetorical strategies of demonstrating expertise, seriousness, and mimetic competence.¹⁵

All four (groups of) individuals that I interviewed repeatedly used the term *serious* to underscore their ethnological aspirations and expertise. Seriousness has a range of connotations concerning the hobbyists' self-characterization: it signals respect for Native Americans, as opposed to the "foolery" of carnival Indians, artistes, or Karl May fans. Moreover, seriousness connotes scholarly accuracy, as opposed to the casual, often faulty reproductions of many hobbyists. It means hard work, as opposed to the laziness of those who would buy their gear rather than make it with their own hands. Finally, "seriousness" indicates a commitment to "substance" rather than surface, an important though difficult distinction given the preoccupation with the material culture of the Indians. For most hobbyists, seriousness has both an aspirational function, illuminating the long, unremitting effort, the exertion, and the obstacles overcome in their striving for expertise; and a differentiating function in setting the serious expert apart from the majority of "casual" Indian hobbyists.¹⁶ Even when an expert has, in his own view, reached the pinnacles of expertdom, he is still caught in a nerve-racking battle against the ignorance and indifference of his own brethren, who give in all too easily to the temptations of relaxation, laziness, and commercialization. The continued necessity of distinguishing "serious" mimesis from inauthentic masquerade constitutes a central dimension of the hobbyists' struggle for expertise.

These narratives of evolution oppose low-cultural forms of entertainment and science, commerce and a disinterested pursuit of ethnological truth, and measure progress by the hobbyists' distance from the former in favor of the latter. A brief look at the historical ethnic show, however, reveals that these oppositional pairs are actually deeply enmeshed; more-

15. Wettstein and Asten in particular spent extraordinary effort and time demonstrating their ethnological knowledge, explaining particular techniques and describing artifacts during the interviews. They also engaged in repeated list-making, enumerating names of tribes, regions, Indian individuals, artifacts, and raw materials. These lists suggested boundless, exhaustive knowledge.

16. Asten and Wettstein both displayed great exasperation at the unwillingness of the great majority of hobbyists to get better at what they do, at their contentment to play without deepening their knowledge, their resistance to criticism and self-improvement, and their resentment toward the experts.

over, the genre allows me to restore what I want to call the economics of enchantment, namely the material conditions of intercultural collaboration.¹⁷ Ethnic shows provided the first large-scale face-to-face contacts between Germans and Indians between the 1870s and the 1920s. While explorers and conquerors, beginning with Columbus, had brought back natives from the regions they discovered, who were then displayed at European courts, ethnic shows became a profitable business for large audiences during the nineteenth century. Many Germans in the later nineteenth and the early twentieth century had read literary, ethnological, or journalistic depictions of the American West, but few had the means to go there as tourists. The ethnic shows advertised their offerings as the equivalent of a journey to faraway locales, inviting visitors to enjoy all the pleasures of traveling to foreign lands without the trouble and expense of the trip. The main organizers of ethnic shows in Germany were Carl Hagenbeck, who owned the Hamburg zoo, and the circus director Sarrasani, a P. T. Barnum-like character. In addition, Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show with its equestrian displays had toured Germany twice—as well as other European countries—with great popular success.¹⁸ A show could comprise as few as three and as many as one hundred people; recruiters were also responsible for collecting and bringing along costumes and artifacts, which afterward were often donated to museums. After Hagenbeck built the zoological garden in Hamburg-Stellingen (where it is still located), notable among European zoos because of its early attempt to recreate the natural environments of wild animals, the spaciousness of the locale allowed for large shows. Its most important components were cultural, military, and equestrian displays, the Wild West plot of attack, retreat, and revenge, and primitive family life. Hilke Thode-Arora's study of Hagenbeck's ethnic shows underscores their popular as well as critical success, as evidenced by the number of visitors, the profit made by the organizers, and the positive, frequent reviews of shows in newspapers.¹⁹ Although colonialism provided the historical context for this form of

17. For a detailed analysis of the ethnic show, consult Benninghoff-Luehl, Goldmann, Haberland, Rothfels, and Staehelin. See also the dissertations by Sierra Bruckner and Eric Ames.

18. See Blackstone for a detailed description, history, and analysis of the Buffalo Bill show, which also includes an account of the European tours. For the European reception of the show, see Fiorentino, Conrad, and Bolz.

19. Thode-Arora notes that she found only a single critic who objected to the idea of exhibiting people in a zoo. The profound fascination Germans felt for the ethnic show participants was at least partly erotic, resulting in fervent love affairs and romances that typically accompanied stationary as well as traveling shows and that were regularly reported in the press (see Jacobsen's unpublished memoirs, quoted in Thode-Arora, 117). Kubat's and Rühmann's memories of GDR Indianists' first encounter with American Indian delegates in 1973 echoed that phenomenon.

entertainment, Thode-Arora maintains that relatively few of the ethnic shows exhibited people from the German colonies; after 1901, moreover, the public display of colonial subjects was proscribed by law.

By far the most successful of these shows was the Sioux show, which Hagenbeck brought to Hamburg in 1910. Forty-two Oglala Sioux and ten cowboys were hired, and during their six-month stay they drew 1.1 million visitors to the zoo, the largest number ever achieved by an ethnic show. The participants, recruited from the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, lived in teepees fenced off and surrounded by rostrums, so that visitors could walk around what was arranged to look like an Indian village and sit down to watch the performances offered at regular intervals during an eight-hour workday. One reporter described the show, documenting one spectatorial response to strolling through the parklike grounds and being suddenly immersed in a strange, yet uncannily familiar scene:

a piercing, shrill, gurgling sound, like the call of an owl, swooped down on us from the air, and upon gazing up, visitors saw the figure of an Indian warrior in full gear atop a large rock. The picturesque silhouette was sharply outlined against the red evening sky, but the Indian scout vanished as quickly as he had appeared. A rumbling noise arose, the stomping and whinnying of horses, gun shots, seemingly inarticulate calls, an unfamiliar mélange of sounds. And standing on the top of the bridge, where the view of the park is unencumbered, visitors were suddenly enveloped by magic. (Thode-Arora, 9)

The show that unfolded alternated between scenes displaying Indian culture (artifacts, architecture, music, dancing) and others dramatizing the epic battle between white settlers and red warriors in the Wild West. The visitor is transported into a world of childhood dreams and fictions: “Enchanted, the palefaces stride past the tents, and old childhood dreams are buoyed up in their souls. . . . Nothing breaks the spell that simulates a different reality” (Thode-Arora, 10). The narrative’s vacillation between present and past tense, between being enveloped by the drama and standing outside watching others watching, are the hallmarks of fantasy: a colonial fantasy, which turns obsessively on the themes of pursuit and capture, savagery and domestication. The “palefaces” are drawn into a timeless world in which the cyclical pattern of ambush and revenge has repeated “a thousand times in reality”—or was it onstage, in books, and at the movies? This spectator experienced a sophisticatedly choreographed performance as an authentic depiction of frontier life. In 1910, this passage shows,

impresarios and performers had perfected the combination of outdoor *mise-en-scène* 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. It had taken a whole generation of actors, directors, and impresarios, but also ethnologists, historians, linguists, and physical anthropologists to engineer such a close fit. Hagenbeck laid great emphasis on ethnological correctness and regularly cooperated with ethnologists (unlike shows by Sarrasani and other ethnic show impresarios). Scientists at the ethnological museum in Hamburg had a standing invitation to new shows, prominent medical scientists like Rudolf Virchow frequently used ethnic show participants as subjects for building an anthropometric database, and linguists likewise used participants for the collection of data supporting racial categorization. The ethnographic artifacts that Hagenbeck’s recruiters collected to supplement the human exhibits were often donated to German museums. In short, the development of ethnology and anthropology as academic disciplines was closely entwined with the history of the ethnic show in Germany, creating the scientific foundation to the “reality” portrayed in the shows. Conversely, amateur impersonators adopted the scientific methodologies and ethnographic techniques as the basis for their performance practice.

While scholars of the ethnic show tend to favor Hagenbeck’s “scientific” enterprise over Sarrasani’s crude commercialism, such distinctions are difficult to maintain in practice. For instance, Hagenbeck’s Sioux troupe, who were professional ethnic show performers, also worked for Buffalo Bill’s show and, after that show went bankrupt, were hired by the Sarrasani circus. World War I put an end to hiring Indians or other non-Europeans for Wild West shows, which prompted Sarrasani to hire German artistes, who performed their numbers in Indian drag (Thode-Arora, 29). Indians were not hired again for ethnic shows until 1926, leaving them without much-needed income. Even though some Sioux were again recruited in the late 1920s, the break in employment opportunities had resulted in a generation of native performers lacking in professional expertise at “playing Indian.” One recruiter’s comments are particularly revealing as to the pressures bearing on the Native Americans’ performance of authenticity:

Of course, Mr. Miller had to bring the props that, according to Karl May, are essential for a real Indian, which are feathers, beaded embroidery, leather leggings, tomahawks, bow and arrows, teepees, campfires. Because our original redskins had no clue about all of that,

they were just as harmless and unromantic as any other American. When they finally get here, they have names like Mr. Smith or Brown or Miller in their passports, and we have to start by giving them real Indian names. The one that looked the oldest was made chief and called “White Eagle” or “Big Snake” or “Black Horse.” He had to be at least eighty years old, and his eightieth or ninetieth birthday was solemnly celebrated in every town on our tour. They soon got used to their teepees, small pointy tents, which we struck up in the backyard. But it was not so easy to teach them Indian behavior. The men had to be instructed in the use of bow and arrows, the squaws in making embroidery with beads, and the children had to be dissuaded from playing with our cars instead of participating in primitive family life. The director and the clown Magrini had them practice warrior dances, comportment at the martyr pole, and ambush on a stage-coach. The clown usually ended up being taken for the realest Indian in the Wild West pantomime. (August Heinrich Kober, quoted in Thode-Arora, 29–30)

The economics of Wild West enchantment are thrown into sharp relief in this passage, which underlines the hierarchical power relations structuring a “collaborative” theatrical ensemble, and highlights Germans’ ownership of props, identities (names, biographies), and scripts. The insistence on Magrini’s expertise and pedagogical role prefigure stock tropes of contemporary hobbyism, but locate them in the context of commerce and entertainment. Moreover, the reference to Karl May unabashedly reveals racial “realness” as a set of calculated codes and conventions. The passage raises the question why impresarios hired Native Americans at all if Germans could outdo them in Wild West artistry. Perhaps it was only the racial notion of an authenticity located in the body that could assign commodity value to the Sioux. The suppression of that anatomy-oriented notion of race after the war also paved the way for the disappearance of the “real” Indian from the scene of performance. The passage illustrates native performers’ loss of cultural authority and their demotion to understudy, foreshadowing drag as a performance technique that, by making Native Americans obsolete, would cut the costs of travel, training, and supervision, and raise quality. After this brief historical excursus, let me now return to Magrini’s progeny and note the ways in which hobbyist practice remains structured by the predication of cultural authority on economic privilege, but also attend to the manner in which hobbyists have come to terms with such privilege and, sometimes, endeavored to critique and decenter white authority, expertise, and authenticity.



Curt-Dietrich “Ted” Asten with Venora and Gordon Big Plume, June 1992.

Mimesis, Masquerade, and Mastery in the Contact Zone

Hobbyists’ insistence on the “truthfulness” of their performance, their claim to mimesis, predictably creates crises of authority in the encounter with real Indians. John Paskievich’s documentary *If Only I Were an Indian* (1995), which records a visit by a trio of Native Americans to a Czechoslovakian hobbyist camp, superbly dramatizes the hopes and anxieties that attend especially the hobbyists’ first encounter with the living objects of their admiration. Whereas that particular group was enormously relieved that they apparently passed muster in the eyes of their guests, some of my interlocutors’ encounter stories revealed an abiding ambivalence, since facing the “originals” would logically require hobbyists to demur to the subordinate status of imitators—something that conflicted with their sense of expertise and mastery. All hobbyists I interviewed narrated stories of encounter as epiphanies, moments when they gained sudden, deep insights into their own identity and role and their relationship to Indians, which prompted them to revise or modify their representational practice. Out of a particular view of German-Indian history, narrators

constructed quasi-familial relationships between the two peoples, epitomized by the trope of interracial adoption, which would literally insert German sons into Indian families and tribes. As I will argue, the harmonizing intent of the filial metaphor in some cases cloaks a deep ambiguity in the adopted sons' relationship to their Indian fathers, whose position they want to both emulate and usurp.

The hobbyists I interviewed were acutely aware of the oppression, persecution, and near-genocide of indigenous North Americans. The Cologne group and the hobbyist from West Berlin especially stressed that Native Americans' forced relocation to reservations, the loss of their possessions, and the separation of children from their families all contributed to a situation in which Indians were cut off from their home, their material culture, and linguistic-oral traditions. Yet in their stories, these hobbyists depicted Germans as bystanders, arbitrators, and avengers of white aggression, rather than its perpetrators—much like Karl May's *Old Shatterhand*.²⁰ They regarded the activity of nineteenth-century travelers and collectors such as the Prince Maximilian zu Wied as fortunate, because due to the vicissitudes of Indian history, these collections now provide some of the most complete, accurate, and well-preserved links to the past from which Indians have been cut off. While hobbyists respond to the Indians' loss with sympathy and regret, their construction of the history of German-Indian relations illuminates the rhetorical functions of competence/expertise in relation to cultural authority. The interruption of a history that could no longer be passed down through family and bloodlines created, to their minds, a sort of "equal opportunity" for Indians and German hobbyists, both of whom had to (re)learn Indian culture. Wolfgang Wettstein, a practitioner from Cologne, claims that "the Indian does not have the answers to the hobbyist's questions. Because the Indian doesn't write down things." In short, Indians are not necessarily experts. In view of this lacuna, the Germans' vast collections of Indian artifacts and their dedication to re-creating the past constitute a repository of historical memory. Several accounts stress the admiration of real Indians when first confronted with the Germans' expertise. Wettstein describes the moment when a Blackfoot Indian from Canada first participated in a German council:

He was astonished. Sure, he's an Indian, and suddenly he sees his culture, which for him is over and done with. It's mostly lost. It's history.

20. Asten remarked that German settlers were probably as hostile or friendly with Indians as other whites, but like Wettstein, he did not comment on the circumstances under which the sizable German "collections" were amassed or entertain the possibility of returning these collections to Indians, as Kubat demands.

And there he could see it all again just the way he himself—he's over seventy—the way he himself had remembered it in part, or at least how his parents and grandparents had told him about it, buffalo hunts, and so on, and so on, and so on. Sure, we don't hunt buffalo, that's true, but we all live in teepees, and he walked into a teepee and was astonished. Today in the USA, if you go to a powwow you can walk into a teepee, but it's not furnished the way it was 150 years back. But that's what we try to do.

Scenes like this, in which Indians are supposedly awed by German recreations of their own past, are important in establishing the Germans' expertise, as well as conferring on them a valid function *for* the Indians. The Blackfoot Indian can only remember "in part," his past is lost, and suddenly it is brought to life again "just the way" it had been, now wrested from oblivion. The German reenactments provide the missing link in an interrupted history, literally restoring the experience of the grandfathers, whose knowledge had been lost to the Anglicized, bereft Indian child. The hobbyists cast themselves as ethnographers, salvagers of a culture the Indians had thought they had lost and which the Germans now generously share with them. To this gift they can only respond with admiration and gratitude. Although I would not impute such motives to all hobbyists, I want to point out that such a reconfiguration of cultural access can potentially reassign the roles of model and copy, teacher and student, amateur and expert in a way that privileges the knowledgeable and generous German hobbyist over the dispossessed (and ignorant) Indian.

The following anecdote Asten related about his encounter with a Blackfoot performer illustrates how the trope of the knowledgeable German safe-keeper can mask the struggle for authority between Indians and Germans, even though authority is no longer based on race but on expertise. While nonwhites are not viewed as racially inferior, they may nevertheless lack the ability to represent their own culture. Asten had a heated public argument with a Blackfoot Indian at a powwow, whose narration of his history provoked the German's scorn. When Asten told the Native American that the Blackfoot elders (whose names he listed) would turn in their graves and kick him out of the tribe if they could hear his story, his counterpart exploded and told him in no uncertain terms that no white man would tell him what his own history was: Asten only shook his head in exasperation at the Indian's "racism." The German hobbyist views of Indian history, which I noted above, explain how in this particular encounter a German could perceive himself as having special access to Indian culture. In this instance, the evacuation of an organic notion of race, usually regarded as an ideologically progressive move, undermines

Indian cultural authority and ownership. Asten's accusation of racism against the furious Indian is interesting for the contrasting notions of cultural authority and ownership it reveals: one (which he attributes to the Indian) based on entitlement by blood, the other one on familiarity, effort, and expertise.²¹ For a man born in 1933, whom the nomenclature of the Nazi race laws labeled a "half-Jew," it is not surprising that he would object to bloodline-definitions of race, and his concept of ethnic competence might indeed be interpreted as a welcome alternative to biological racism. Asten bolstered his own authority by asserting that "many Indians don't know their own history any longer." The condescending tone of his story suggests that ethnic competence does not preclude cultural arrogance.

Asten described his sense of profound affinity with Indians as a religious or spiritual affirmation of a mutual bond. Significantly, he articulated this feeling after I had asked him about his Jewish background and family history of ostracization and punishment, which, he surmised, "might have opened a door in my soul to the Indian." Asten's father, and his father's side of the family, were all killed in the Nazi concentration camps of Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen. This childhood experience was compounded with the memory of the horror of "Operation Gomorrha," when Hamburg was attacked by Allied bombers from July 23 to August 3, 1943. Asten was ten years old at the time.²² He asserted a mystical, cross-cultural kinship based on his general "openness" to the Indians, as well as their special openness to him. To be called "brother" by one Indian, and one he scarcely knew, was, to his mind, equally significant as a formal adoption, or even superior to a formal and hence external rite of acceptance.²³ The sacredness of that connection led him to question the

21. On the issue of race, Asten performed dialectical somersaults, however, and it would be impossible to construct a cohesive, noncontradictory stance in this matter. On the one hand, he claimed that there were incontrovertible "racial characteristics" such as the cruelty of Asian peoples; on the other, recent European, German, and even Berlin history showed him that under the thin veneer of civilization there lurked a savage beast in all of humanity.

22. One can only speculate if his lifelong mistrust of and contempt for "really existing" German culture and institutions, combined with his strong commitment to an abstract ideal of German nationality, is in some way related to his sense of having been doubly punished, as a Jew by the Germans and as a German by the Allies.

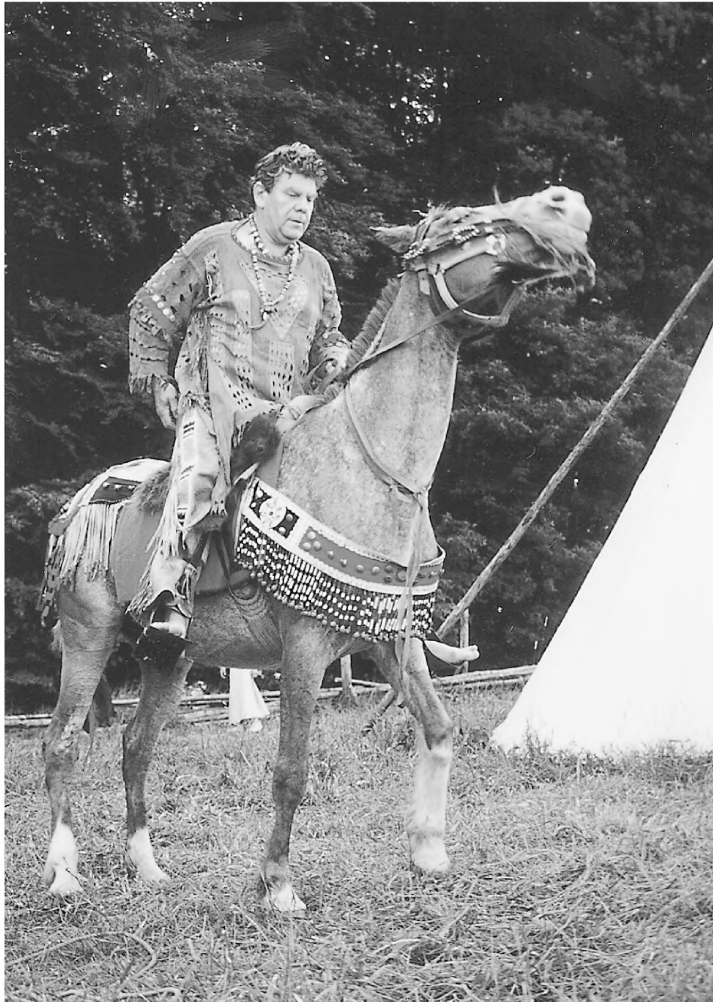
23. In answer to my question about the phenomenon of adoption, he told the story of meeting the son of an Indian woman who was dying of cancer and in whose healing ceremony he participated, "one of the most sacred ceremonies the Blackfoot still perform." It might seem odd that he, a stranger to this family, was invited to this ceremony in which allegedly only close friends are asked to take part, but his point was precisely that he was intuitively recognized as kin even though he had just met the family. In the course of the day, he helped the son repair his car, which had broken down on the way to the sacred sweat-lodge, and

masquerade-character of Indian club culture as caught up in externals, so that he considered giving up Indian dress altogether. He resolved this crisis by integrating his sense of inner kinship as a category of differentiation in the hobbyist hierarchy, affording him a sense of mastery within it, rather than opposing his practice to hobbyism per se. As his standoff with the Blackfoot Indian illustrates, however, his self-representation as the Indians' "brother" appears less able to insure Indian authority and cultural ownership against appropriation—on the contrary, he rejects such efforts as racist.

The ritual of white hobbyists' adoption into Indian families and tribes makes literal the trope of familial insertion by which Germans insinuate themselves into Indian history and traditions. Moreover, these adopted sons (I heard of only one female adoptee) potentially take up an oedipal relationship to their new families. Such a filial position accounts for the vacillation between respect and servitude on the one hand, and authority and mastery on the other. Adoption ceremonies are initiated either by a family or by a tribe, are celebrated with elaborate rites, and confer on the adoptee visiting and residency rights on a reservation. Among the interviewees, Wettstein was the only one who had been adopted by a Blackfoot family. Wettstein, who often used the term *originalgetreu* (authentic) in his description of the hobby, nevertheless developed a complex notion of *emulation* that allowed him to conceptualize the relationship between himself and Indians as one exceeding copying and imitating, striving instead for creative autonomy and artistic maturity. Clearly, he and his group see themselves as artists in their own right, inspired by rather than duplicating another people's art. This notion of emulation, which allows both for cultural distance, difference, and respect and for expertise and mastery across cultural lines, goes right to the heart of the problem of appropriation. Wettstein himself delivered an eloquent analysis of this problem and phrased it at the same time as a collective epiphany. His narration of that epiphany came at the end of the interview, after I had asked him if I could use a photograph of him in a rare, antique bear mask:

(*Groans.*) It could be that Indians object—not that they haven't seen it [my bear mask] before, I've shown it to them. In the beginning, when we first came in contact with Indians and showed them pictures from Germany, they had very different reactions. They were very suspicious and objected right away. They said, "Look, what kind of

when the Indian laughingly praised Asten for getting the car going again although he (the Indian) was a mechanic, Asten replied that "somebody else had had a hand in this," pointing heavenward.



Wolfgang Wettstein, 1992

teepee decoration is this? That's the teepee decoration of my grandfather. That's the teepee decoration of my uncle. How can you copy that, you don't have the right. Who gave you the right?" . . . In the meantime we've completely rethought that. For instance, let's take my teepee. I used a design that doesn't exist in Indian society. It's inspired by Blackfoot design, but otherwise it's an ornament that I designed. I've never seen a picture or anything else where I could say: "I copied that." I made my own teepee decoration, right?—the way

the Indians did it, through dreams, through visions and so on. In the meantime, more of our hobbyists go and say, wait a minute, either you ask an Indian, "May I?" or they don't use it anymore, because they realize it has a significance, a religious, mythical significance: "I may not use that because he hasn't given me the right, it's not my property." That's what happened. In the old days, the first years, one saw the book—copied it. That's idiotic, if you think about it, it's idiotic. We had to go through this learning process.

The slippage between the refusal to cross the boundary marked by religion and myth on the one hand, and the reference to the spiritual process (dream, vision quest) that precedes the hobbyist's creative practice on the other, indicates a deep-seated ambiguity between emulation and usurpation. The passage is remarkable because it articulates rather than represses this slippage, spelling out the crucial distinction between expertise as a thorough, rigorous, and scrupulous emulation of Indian material culture and a notion of identification based on inner, spiritual sameness. Apparently, Wettstein's recognition of Indian spirituality as an inalienable, untranslatable cultural good that should not be appropriated enabled him to shift his entire perception of his hobby. By referring to specific designs belonging to Indian grandfathers and uncles, he questions the trope of familial commonality and articulates a materialist critique that clearly denounces cultural copying as theft. This is indeed an important insight. It throws into sharp relief the commonalities as well as the differences of Indian and hobbyist and establishes a conceptual and pragmatic boundary against appropriation while conceding the possibility of achieving mastery at certain crafts. In short, it combines (albeit unstably) the notion of authority with that of distance and respect. What emerges is a "middle ground," in which hobbyists are no longer "simply" German whites, nor Blackfoot, but something else: friends of the prairie.

Contacts with real Indians, while often inspiring awe and romantic admiration, create a predicament for hobbyists, who must reconcile their claims to authenticity and mastery with a practice perceived as imitative. While some resolve this dilemma by constructing hierarchical intercultural relations modeled on the patriarchal family, others strive for collaboration, aiming to disperse talent, expertise, and authority across ethnic lines. The fantasy of the German safe-keeper of the Indian past inverts the Platonic taxonomy of original and copy, teacher and student, in order to grant Germans authority, but also subverts it through such notions as emulation. In the context of postwar efforts to change racial ideologies and interactions, some hobbyists' revision of ethnic or cultural identity in terms of competence rather than biology might still be seen as an impor-

tant corrective to what Nazi teachers had taught them when they were young boys. Still, the question persists whether a hobbyist who identifies with Indians necessarily feels her- or himself to be in solidarity with other marginalized groups as well, specifically Germany's resident minorities. In other words, are there any political, moral, or social imperatives that grow out of hobbyism?

Counteracting Modernity

To most hobbyists, Indians embody an intact social order in harmony with nature—an essentially antimodern fantasy. Yolanda Broyles Gonzales's study of the Black Forest Cheyenne, a hobbyist club in southern Germany, argues that Indian impersonation allowed club members to express fear of modernization, grief over geographical and social displacement, and mourning of lost indigenous traditions, but also to validate and celebrate a past marked by rural artisan lifeways and a primarily oral culture. What interests me here is her conclusion that club members translate their feeling of alienation into a felt commonality with other groups who "share" their "underdog position" such as "so-called 'Gastarbeiter' (foreign workers) or the Sinti, or so-called 'gypsies'" (74–75). Likewise, the organization *Indianer heute*, whose focus on endangered peoples is not limited to indigenous populations in faraway places, actively supports the struggles of Vietnamese asylum seekers or of the Sinti and Roma in Germany. Yet they were the only group in my sample whose practice translated into a more generally applicable ethos of solidarity with marginalized people, including ethnic minorities living in Germany. Given that hobbyists often imagine German-Indian relations as unique and exceptional, I doubted whether the stance of either Broyles Gonzales's hobbyists, or of *Indianer heute*, was exemplary of hobbyism overall. To begin with, I found that "modernity" means very different things to different groups and individuals: while for some, the opposition to modernity entails a quest for nonalienated, communal lifeways approximating an alternative "green" philosophy, others associate modernity with the democratic erosion of social hierarchies and contrast it with the stability of a patriarchal order in which women, foreigners, and ethnic minorities still "knew their place." Many GDR Indianists identified modernity with the "technoscientific" socialist state that regimented their practice, and later, around reunification, with the unsettling modernization processes launched by Western capitalism's eastward expansion. How does hobbyists' understanding of modernity shape their antimodern surrogations, and what are the political consequences of such views?

The Plains Indians Interest Group in Bad Segeberg articulated their critique of modernity as a felt distance to commodity culture, which alienates humans from nature and creates artificial social hierarchies. Their hobby entails a temporary renunciation of civilization's amenities (which Turski also notes in her analysis of East German groups, particularly younger ones). When I raised this topic, the otherwise rather quiet interview partners in the group, the nineteen-year-old Ingrid Bartsch and Conny Schamborski, sixty-three, suddenly jumped into the discussion. The older woman explained: "When we go to our grounds for the weekend, the moment we get there, we are no longer . . ." Ingrid interjected, "We have no telephone, no television, no radio, just like the Indians." Schamborski nodded and Inge Bartsch, Ingrid's mother, concluded: "One leaves everything behind and is outside, in nature, for the weekend." They stressed their admiration for the Indians as people who do not buy ready-made objects but make what they need from the natural resources around them, without producing a lot of waste or creating inessential items. With this view, they approximate a "green" perspective on Indians as environmentally conscious people, although they distance themselves from what they perceive as the "public hullabaloo" created by groups such as Greenpeace or the Green party: "We prefer to withdraw into the private sphere." All club members experienced the club grounds as an extended private sphere offering a refuge from the anxieties, hierarchies, and rivalries that mark "civilized" human interaction. They praised the camaraderie in the club, the sense of neighborliness, support, and respect epitomized in the collective preparation and consumption of meals, to which everyone contributed according to her or his abilities and received according to her or his needs. Their vision of community and its utopian potential for whites and Indians crystallized in the story of a backyard barbecue. It illustrates Inge Bartsch's insights into the imperialist history framing and constraining intercultural relations:

Once when Gordon Byrd and his people [from the Winnebago tribe] came the first time, we invited them over. We had a regular barbecue party, set up everything, and put things on the grill. Then I said, "Just go ahead and help yourself."²⁴ And [Byrd] looked at me and [I reiterated], "Yes, you are our guest, please go ahead." And then he and his companion went to a table and helped themselves. Then the other guests, the three daughters and the son-in-law and the girlfriend, all sat with them, and only then did we fill our plates. And we struck up

24. This and the next quoted passage were in English.

a conversation, I was translating the whole time, was always running around everywhere. The evening before we had told the neighbors, we'll have a group of Indian guests, we'll have music, we'll have drums, not tapes, and we'll sing. And I said, please will you bring your drum. And we had said to the neighbors we'll be a bit noisy, I hope you won't be disturbed. And after we were done eating, they sang for us. And the later the evening, the more they got in the mood. And then they showed us a lot of things no white person had ever seen before. And I thought that was great, and afterward, Gordon Byrd said to me, he's never been to a white group that sat at the same table and ate with him with such unself-conscious ease. He thanked us for that. And I was very shaken, to be honest; that gave me a lot to think about for quite a while.

Even as the sharing of food evokes the multicultural food fair, that arch cliché of capitalist pluralism, the significance of the party for Bartsch resides not in the food consumed, but in the manner that its serving creates hospitality and sociability. What she appreciates is the suspension of racial, class, and cultural hierarchies in collective activities (eating, chatting, singing, drumming) as a way of creating new levels of familiarity and intimacy. Notice also the way in which her role as translator and mediator affords her an expert position in this group, which is not interpreted in terms of hierarchy and differentiation, but in terms of a special commitment to the group, to the process of communication, and to sociability. Moreover, the mutual appreciation created by that evening is not reserved to the party of revelers but was claimed to extend to the neighbors, who first tolerated and later joined in the celebration. One might object that this anecdote evokes the cliché of multiculturalism as a smorgasboard of cultural differences; the question it raises is whether such utopian communing in the privacy of the backyard or the campgrounds can be seen as a rehearsal for social transformation, or whether the segregation of the private sphere from the social divisions in the public realm upholds the very hierarchies the hobbyists privately subvert.

Asten's view of the perils of modernity is almost diametrically opposed to the antimodernism of the Bad Segeberg "Plains Indians." Whereas they associate "civilization" with the erection of artificial boundaries of class, ability, and ethnicity, he objects precisely to the blurring of the division between natives and foreigners, men and women, competent and incompetent that he sees as characteristic of modern democracy. He articulates his antimodernism as a fear of foreign domination and social alienation:

Germany, or the territory where the German-speaking peoples lived, has for centuries been the battlefield of many, many . . . let's call them foreign rulers. There were the English, there were the Swedes, there were the Russians, there were the French, there were the Italians, there was the pope, and so on, and so on, and so on. And over and over again he [the German] had to obey foreign rule. Over and over again he was put under the yoke. But somewhere in these stories about the Indians, there was a hint of freedom, there was a hint of pride, of indestructible pride and self-confidence. No German was conscious of that while he read [the Wild West novels]. And then [the Indians] were the last ones who tried to the end to defend their lives, their culture, everything that made them special, although they had never been a nation, had never been a state, against the evil immigrants . . . who defended themselves against all of that, but in the end were vanquished, had to adapt, and still persist! Isn't that exactly the same as what has happened in Germany ever since the first occupation by the Romans?! Or the Slavs, or whoever else ravaged this country?

He portrays Germans as the victims not only of outside invaders, but also of their own rulers, whose machinations threaten to extinguish German culture—just like white invaders destroyed Indian cultures. In contrast to the alienated, self-destructive, and emasculated Germans of today, historical Indian society, Asten claims, was healthy (if somewhat brutal),²⁵ without *Randgruppen* (marginal groups) or the kind of gender crisis typical of a degenerate civilization. Impersonating Indians, then, appears as a form of surrogated German patriotism. The hobbyist who identifies with the Indian warrior gains a temporary respite from and compensation for the “wrongness” of things as they presently are in Germany.²⁶ Although

25. On the topic of “marginal social groups” he related, for instance, the Indian practice of leaving the old and infirm behind in the wilderness, so that they either faced a slow death, killed themselves, or had a close relative kill them. This was tough but necessary “because the survival of the group came before that of the individual,” and it epitomized a healthy society in his view.

26. Richard Dyer points to a similar dynamic in reference to American musclemen war-movies, e.g. Sylvester Stallone's *Rambo* cycle, which illustrate the compensatory fantasies of disaffected, white working-class masculinity. Asten's elaborations on the western similarly stress the combination of white men's disaffection after a lost war and the fantasmatic identification with a hero who is ennobled by his suffering and whose extermination has already become myth. Asten's perception of Germany's continual invasion, however, constructs a narrative of victimization over two millennia. It not only conflates Allied occupation forces with so-called guest workers (recruited by West German companies), as well as political refugees, but also elides Germany's invasion and colonization of other European (and non-European) countries. See also Poiger on postwar masculinity and the western in West and East Germany.

Asten's narrative of German victimization spanned two millennia, he interpreted current conditions within this frame as well, reserving special criticism for Turkish residents' refusal to forswear their Islamic faith as the prerequisite for assimilation into German society. As a German who feels dejected in the face of foreign "domination" and abandoned by his own government, Asten's identification with Indians serves to ennoble his sense of defeat and isolation by fantasizing himself as the last warrior of his race. Moreover, Asten connects the fear of *Überfremdung* (lit. "saturation with foreigners") with that of classic *Entfremdung* (alienation):

I think the pride of the Indians, whether actually true or idealized by the novels (and hence even more effective because it works subliminally) resonates with something in the reader, against the hegemony that threatens to break me, whether that is my country or my life, if that's so instrumentalized that I have to work at the assembly line and have to perform the same gesture all day long. Or I am an important guy in the company and things fall apart the minute I'm sick, but nobody thanks me! I'm not promoted and I won't get more money—I'm always the little guy, and the one up there in the big office who does nothing, really, he gets ten thousand marks a month more. . . . So that deep down I say: these [Indians] are still real men! And when I get into my loincloth with only my stone ax in my hand and a feather in my hair, then I'm a real man too!

Getting into drag helps him to recover his masculinity: the fantasy of getting into a loincloth, gripping a stone ax, and adorning himself with a feather allows him symbolic mastery over modernity's perils. Asten's image of the lonely warrior reveals the Indian as a kind of idealized (Ger)man, allowing him to act out what Germans could be if only they stood up to the tyranny of foreigners and incompetents. His extended lamentation about Turkish residents, asylum seekers, and other foreigners demonstrates that the perception of victimization, which elsewhere or earlier might have produced the solidarity with other oppressed groups (as Broyles Gonzales contends), can also fuel white rage and xenophobia as an increasingly acceptable public sentiment and political discourse in the mid-1990s.²⁷

27. The state elections in Sachsen-Anhalt on April 26, 1998, resulted in a 13 percent instant success for the right-wing extremist Deutsche Volks Union (German People's Union), a party that had campaigned for a restriction of immigration and that had blamed social problems such as high unemployment, shortages of affordable housing, and high crime rates on foreigners.

Asten furthermore contrasts an “intact” social order, in which “everyone knows their place and is honored for their natural role,” with a confusing blurring of gender roles today. The fact that men have not honored women in their role as mothers and rebuilders of the nation has caused women to “run around like men” in a misguided effort toward liberation. Conversely, men are so effeminized that “you walk down the street and see someone from behind, you think, man, what a sexy woman, then he turns around and has a long beard!” The specter of inversion, with its attendant threat of homosexual seduction, appears in its traditional role as a figure of degeneracy and decline. Even as hobbyism requires its practitioners to transgress and reassemble German gender codes in their emulation of Indian masculinity—all men sew and embroider their own costumes, for example—Asten conceptualizes the variability of culturally specific (historical and fictional) gender systems as a decline from “natural” to degenerate.²⁸ Nor does men’s proficiency in traditionally female skills result in egalitarian gender relations in the German clubs. In Asten’s estimation, most women hobbyists join clubs to oblige their husbands or partners and were, until fairly recently, rarely if ever elected into leadership positions in the West German clubs.²⁹

The Indian woman belongs in the teepee and does the domestic work.
 . . . If I want to portray the Indian around 1850 with historical accuracy, then the woman who lives in my teepee would have to make sure

28. As the composition of the photographs in the coffee-table book *Kölner Stämme* (Cologne tribes) shows, the “natural” order conspicuously resembles nineteenth-century bourgeois patriarchy. Here a wigged warrior gazes sternly into the camera, one hand grabbing his spear, the other placed possessively on the shoulder of his wife, seated beside or kneeling in front of him, eyes demurely lowered to the ground or resting fondly on the child cradled in her lap. Group portraits are arranged to spell out the social hierarchy with a precise articulation of gender and generational status. The composition typically describes a pyramid topped by the alpha male, posture rigid and erect, surrounded by his men, his family, or his tribe. To me, the ideological intent of amplifying the sense of “healthy” and “natural” tribal life by blocking it through the iconography of the family seemed so exaggerated, however, that the effect was a comic defamiliarization of the patriarchal gender system caricatured in stone-age dress, a kind of Flintstones effect. I saw these photographs not as representations of ethnological truth, but as choreographies of transvestic desire. I should add, however, that Wettstein and Hesse, who are portrayed in this book, responded much differently: they were proud at seeing themselves depicted with respect and dignity, and treasured the photographs.

29. Although Turski provides no information about the gender of the membership in East German clubs, her reference to “groups in which women and children participate but are not allowed to vote in membership meetings” indicates that gender indeed determined membership status and rights. Thus the thirty-five groups that participated in a census had 544 “full members” out of 776 participants (Turski, 31).

that there is food . . . in the pot at all times. That this is no longer possible today is a different matter.

Can the roles of emancipated (German) woman and Indian woman be reconciled? “Not at all,” Asten maintained. Yet the modern gender order of self-confident female breadwinners also prevails in his household, and he appeared eminently comfortable with being a househusband. While his hobby allows him to express nostalgia for the days when men were warriors and women the nurturers of the people as well as obedient servants, he seemed to welcome the benefits of having a working wife who is also a critical interlocutor and appeared untroubled by performing domestic tasks. While the views he expressed in reference to his hobby would suggest the demeanor of a blustering patriarch, the divergence between his Indian fantasy and his social role points to the compensatory, stabilizing function of hobbyist reenactments. To be sure, Asten provided the most puzzling instance of a man whose patriarchal symbolic practice, while seemingly opposed to democratic principles, did not prevent him from welcoming its everyday benefits. Nor did it cause this highly articulate man to experience the divergence between the symbolic and the social in his own life as a contradiction—women’s changing social status is simply “a different matter.” Yet are we to conclude from Asten’s case, to phrase it pointedly, that patriarchal fantasies make men fit for feminism? Perhaps even that, analogously, racist reenactments prepare whites for multiculturalism? The GDR, where Indianism was couched in the explicitly political terms of international solidarity, offers a privileged example for further examining the connection of symbolic and social practices in hobbyism.

The official language Indianists used to legitimate themselves in the eyes of the socialist state appealed to the GDR state because it seemed to share its anti-imperialist vision, its international solidarity with the oppressed, and its adversarial stance toward the United States. These rhetorical appeals are exemplified by the statement of purpose adopted in the early 1980s by individual clubs in order to ensure municipal toleration and support. Local bureaucrats sometimes mistrusted Indian clubs, possibly because of their American (class enemy) orientation, and subjected them to *Unbedenklichkeitsprüfungen* (tests of ideological correctness). The Indianists’ official statement promised to connect groups’ interest in Native American history with “contemporary Indians’ fight for their human rights. Thus they contribute to the intensification of the humanist idea of friendship between peoples, and hence to the keeping of lasting peace on earth” (quoted in Turski, 75). Their professed dedication to the “creation and development of well-rounded socialist personalities” rested



Curt-Dietrich "Ted" Asten with Johannes Hüttner, week at Seddinsee, August 1997.

on the integration of past and present, culture and politics, the symbolic and the social (Turski, 75).

The document drew on a socialist tradition of reinterpreting the Indians' plight as the epitome of Communist, anti-imperialist struggle. The popular and highly readable novels by Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich, an East Berlin classical scholar and amateur ethnologist who had self-consciously created a socialist tradition of Indian literature, span adventure fiction designed as a sophisticated, suspenseful, and ethnologically sound alternative to Karl May, as well as stories about contemporary Indian life and struggles on the reservations. These novels, which had prompted Steffi Rühmann's fascination for Indians, occasionally make the connection between the "red man" and the "red revolution" explicit and are generally guided by an anticapitalist, anti-imperialist impulse.³⁰ Likewise, the popular Indian movies produced by the DEFA film production company appropriated the western genre for an anti-imperialist critique.³¹ In addition, Christian Heermann, who discusses the long ostracization of Karl May in the GDR, calls attention to a number of comic strips that caricatured inter-German relations in the Cold War in the guise of Indian and American characters.³² The socialist appropriation of the Indian as political icon, a tradition dating even to the immediate postwar years, may explain why the socialist state proved fairly tolerant toward Indianist clubs.

Turski's book demonstrates how the antimodern critique split into an

30. Please see especially the two pentalogies *Die Söhne der großen Bärin* (The sons of the Great Bear Mother), which traces the flight of a Lakota Sioux tribe across the Canadian border, and *Das Blut des Adlers* (The blood of the eagle), which is set on contemporary reservations. *The Sons of the Great Bear Mother* was successfully marketed to adolescents in West Germany as well.

31. Although Turski mentions the founding of an Indian club in Leningrad in response to these extraordinary socialist westerns made between 1966 and 1985, she does not speculate about their impact among East German Indianists.

32. In one of these comics, which were published by the socialist youth organization FDJ (Freie Deutsche Jugend) and therefore had a large readership, two tribal leaders that resemble Adenauer and Ulbricht (the West German chancellor and the East German head of state) meet for a "chief palaver," in which they decide to set all intertribal differences aside and join forces. They are overheard by a spy named Old Schweißfuß (Old Sweatfoot, a stab at Old Shatterhand), who sneaks off to write a letter to the Great White Hunter McKäse (McCheese, alluding to McCarthy) to prevent this peace accord. The witty allusion to the red hunts of Senator McCarthy, the accusation that it is the political interest of the class enemy in Washington that keeps the two German states apart, and the ridiculing of Karl May as an imperialist writer in cahoots with the prevailing powers are here assembled in a short, one-page strip that was fully intelligible within the political rhetoric of the Cold War. See Heermann 1995.

official discourse about Indianism, and a covert, in-group discourse about it. In contrast to the manifest content of the Indianists' statement of purpose, the main portion of her study denies the consonance of the (Cold War–inspired) socialist mission and Indianist self-definition, instead casting the socialist bureaucracy itself as the feature of modern life that Indianists opposed in a form of cultural resistance. Turski describes one incident around the time of reunification that illustrates a change in the symbols practitioners used to signal their relationship to dominant ideology, a change that nonetheless illustrates an underlying continuity regarding the Indianists' antimodernist stance. She relates how in the past the emissaries to the annual chiefs' meeting³³ would appear wearing Indian jewelry and a Stetson hat, a piece of clothing that, in her view, signaled their commonality and "expressed a certain playful opposition to everyday life around them," namely the socialist state's habitual denigration and suppression of all things American (63–64). However, in March 1990, at the first chiefs' meeting after the opening of the Berlin Wall only one member appeared in a Stetson hat, whereas others, especially young people, appeared wearing Palestinian scarves. "Without prior agreement, this sign [of opposition] changed as soon as social transformations caused the Stetson hat to lose its propensity for provocation, while the Palestinian headdress came from a different social context, was not specific to the hobby, and did not symbolize their commonality" (64). Turski hints that the GDR youths' symbolic identification with an ethnic minority struggling for recognition, autonomy, and statehood reflected their own situation as citizens of a vanishing state. Her interpretation of the Palestinian scarf suggests that the Indianists' self-perception as persecuted yet defiant is the common denominator of their practice before and after the fall of the Wall, despite a change in props and despite the fact that their dramatization of the GDR as a colonized state presupposes an identification they had previously rejected. It appears that the unofficial practice of GDR Indianism did not correspond to the ideological prescription of a "red brotherhood" uniting Indians and socialists, despite the official mandate of political solidarity. On the contrary, Indianists viewed the state's politi-

33. Annual meetings in clubs affiliated with the Indianist Union were hosted in rotation by individual clubs. With rising membership and attendance, this caused growing logistical problems: one had to find grounds large enough to accommodate all, and, under a system of centralist planning, it was not easy to provide sufficient food for the hundreds of people attending sites in remote rural areas. This required an extra planning session called the *Chief-Treffen* (chiefs' meeting) attended by emissaries of all member clubs. This body also discussed the structure, status, and purpose of the clubs and drafted the statement of purpose adopted by individual clubs (see discussion below).

cization of social relations as a symptom of the modernity they rejected in their practice.

Turski relates a second incident, however, that exemplifies a more problematic continuity of self-minoritizing images before and during reunification. The author explains that for a long time, a small group of Indianists had secretly sympathized with the Confederate states, and suggests that this had been due to the “mystique of rebelliousness that had been falsely woven around the southern states in the USA” (65). The socialist state’s official condemnation of the slaveholding states possibly exacerbated the romantic appeal of the confederacy to GDR citizens but had, in any case, led to the strict prohibition of displaying Confederate flags, uniforms, and similar items during the camps, which would have caused problems with the bureaucracy. At the first summer meeting after reunification, the lifting of these prohibitions led to an open display of Confederate flags and costumes on the part of some young Indianists, who explained that to them, “the Confederate flag was a sign of rebellion, it was the flag of a state that had been vanquished but not forgotten, just like the GDR flag, which could also no longer be flown” (66). Their display infuriated many other participants, especially when some young warriors dragged a Union Jack through the mud and heaped horse manure on it. Their pranks provoked quarrels and hostile discussions throughout the camp. The American Civil War provided an arena for the dramatization of the tensions that erupted among East Germans and precipitated the splitting and reconfiguration of many Indian clubs in the new German states. Although the theater of war was historically displaced, the identification with or against the United States as icon of the West was also at the heart of the sudden adjustment to capitalist values that East Germans confronted in 1990. Turski’s telling emphasizes the marginal status of the confederacy fans and attempts to challenge the depiction of East Germans as racist and susceptible to right-wing extremism in the West German media.

Dieter Kubat and Steffi Rühmann from *Indianer heute* severely criticized GDR Indianists like Turski for their self-representation as cultural resisters, a stance that wants to have it both ways. *Indianer heute* refutes the claim that Indianists “resisted” state socialism and is angered by present-day Indianists’ capitalizing on a GDR “mystique.” In their eyes, the decentering of white authority in German-Indian relations has pragmatic consequences: they have long advocated the repatriation of Native American artifacts, in addition to supporting Native American institutions and causes materially and politically. They maintain close relationships with the leaders of the American Indian Movement, protest the U.S. government’s punitive actions against them, and host Native American delegates

traveling in Europe.³⁴ Their involvement in repatriation efforts has prompted them to understand colonialism not only as the literal appropriation of non-European resources and artifacts, but also as a set of representational codes shaping, for instance, the way museums display “exotic” objects for spectators’ visual consumption. They deem the exhibition of Native American artifacts particularly offensive because of the sacred significance of many of these objects. Hence, in order to call attention to the alignment of visual consumption with colonial possession, they suggest a museum pedagogy in which the placement of scrims would impede or partially block sight, signaling to museum visitors the need to question Germans’ visual and material access to artifacts. Those artifacts not yet returned to their rightful owners would thus be put “under erasure,” marking a history of theft and a commitment to restitution. They view Native American spirituality as the cultural good most in need of protection; although their American visitors had on occasion invited Kubat and Rühmann to join them in traditional Native American rituals, their search for community and spiritual fulfillment did not confine them in the past, nor did it preclude their tenacious struggle with state bureaucrats in the GDR or the reunified Germany.

I find it significant that *Indianer heute* does not take up an antimodernist stance and resists the nostalgic reenactment of a “golden age” prior to white people’s domination of the North American continent. Their focus on the present and dedication to practical intervention along with, but not confined to, symbolic redress refuses two central elements of hobbyism. On the one hand, they reject white people’s romantic identification with the victims of white aggression, which leaves the equation of whiteness with domination itself intact. On the other, their refusal to separate symbolic and political practice stems from the recognition that primitivist rituals stabilize, rather than transform, modern society. Can *Indianer heute* be called “hobbyists” at all? Their focus on the material culture of indigenous populations would warrant the label of “object hobbyism,” according to Philip Deloria, in contrast to the “people hobbyism” practiced in the other groups discussed here. *Indianer heute* does not uphold the symbolic opposition of oppressive European modernity versus wholesome non-European primitivism that prevents Europeans from exploring remedies to alienation from within modern societies while also continuing

34. In the 1980s, many tribes sent emissaries to enlist European support and publicity for their grievances against the U.S. government; to many of them, hobbyists appeared as logical allies, until they realized the subculture’s limited political clout. As one delegate, Russell Barsh, told me in a conversation at Dartmouth on May 14, 1999, Native Americans realized in the 1990s that the UN would offer a more appropriate forum for appeal, and consequently shifted their efforts in that direction.

to exclude non-Europeans from the benefits of modernity. In my estimation, they offer a promising prospect of connecting an intense, lifelong engagement for ethnic minorities, indigenous cultures, and spiritual wholeness with the endeavor to transform European whiteness in a practice that is both symbolic *and* explicitly political.

Let me raise one final question regarding the utopia of intercultural exchange and the problem of white mastery in hobbyist performance, namely the question of reversibility. The dream of a “level playing field,” where people of all social and ethnic provenances can create an infinite number of cultural roles, and where performance is assessed purely in terms of artistic talent and skill, is a seductive one. I found indications, however, that what I earlier named *universal performability* (chap. 1), the prerogative of the unmarked white actor, shows up the limit of that fantasy. Asten mentioned a performer on German television who is well known for his yodeling, a folk style of singing in Austria and Bavaria:

A while ago I saw a Japanese boy on TV, dressed in lederhosen, a *Hüatla* [Bavarian hat], and then he started to yodel! I was laughing so hard I keeled over, tears were rolling down my face, my stomach was aching! But one thing I said to my wife: what a yodeler! Until I found out that he’s the son of a Japanese woman and a German (*laughs*) who was born in Bavaria (*laughs harder*). He can’t even speak Japanese! (*Doubles over with laughter, can hardly speak*) But a guy like that, he stands up there in Seppl pants, in short pants, knee socks up to here, like an old Bavarian. I fell over. I said, this is not possible, this can’t be true! Then my wife says, real cold, “Well, and you play Indian!” Yes, I said, where you’re right, you’re right. . . . But he was a damn good yodeler.

Asten’s hilarity mirrors the fear of exposure and ridicule that haunts all impersonators and becomes especially acute in stories of encounter; hobbyists’ insistence on seriousness as expertise and affect serves to transform laughter (and potential ridicule) into admiration, awe, and gratitude. Expertise is something Asten willingly grants the Japanese-looking yodeler as well, but concedes it as though faced with a paradox. The marked disjunction of Asian features and yodeling in one performing body evidently undermines mimesis, while the reverse goes unremarked. The refusal of reversibility, which Asten’s wife notices, reveals the racial inscription of mimesis. Even though the boy is German by birth and upbringing, Asten views him as a comic impostor. Would he have been even more ludicrous had he been born and raised in Japan? His vocal proficiency cannot certify his mimetic competence, “belied” by his appear-

ance as foreign. The yodeler is an expert, but he is apparently not serious. He is ridiculous, but Bavarian customs are not.

The desire to be other than white and German, for short periods of time, is an acceptable expression of the variability of whiteness, of a race of subjects “without properties,” whose beauty, as Goethe had remarked in 1810, resides in their neutrality of hue and whose surface “least inclines to any particular and positive colour” (*Farbenlehre*, quoted in Dyer, 70). This lack of specificity and particularity enables whites to take up the position of the unmarked, universally human and to represent mankind. This position is denied any other race, accounting for the irreversibility of cross-racial mimesis that emerges so strongly in the anecdote above. The boy's yodeling cannot stretch the narrow limits of German identity through a competent reproduction of its folk forms; more likely, it is interpreted as either a fraudulent appropriation of foreign cultural property, or as a sad, self-hating attempt at feigning whiteness.

In my discussion, I have emphasized the historical specificity of hobbyism in order to assess its social meanings and political implications. My emphasis on the historical and biographical determinants of hobbyist styles questions practitioners' assertions of transhistorical, mystical bonds between Indians and Germans. I underscore instead the uniqueness of hobbyists' response to the end of the Third Reich, postwar reconstruction, the Allied occupation, and the division of Germany into a socialist and a capitalist state. To two of the older men in my sample, who recalled the terror of Allied bombing raids, Indian impersonation seems to have provided the symbolic means to cope with their sense of national humiliation, shame, and emasculation, producing in one case an identification with antidemocratic overtones. The recuperation of a warrior-like masculinity through Indian drag, too, appears reactionary when compared to official discourses, which encouraged a demilitarized, paternal masculinity during the reconstruction period (Moeller 1998). Yet hobbyism should by no means be equated with submerged fascist tendencies in general. Even the acting out of bellicose, patriarchal fantasies does not automatically translate into a misogynist social practice. Moreover, the notion of “ethnic competence” appears progressive when compared to the racial ideologies to which these practitioners were exposed in Nazi schools. One might even see hobbyism as a popular, theatrical equivalent to antiracist anthropological insights into the social construction of ethnicity. Although fascist ideologies of race and Germany's defeat and reeducation by Allied forces form the crucible of meaning in which many postwar hobbyists forged their practice (and which continues to impel some of its aspects, as Ward Churchill found in the early 1990s), Nazism should not be seen as the only

or the chief determining force against which hobbyists define themselves. German hobbyism predates the Third Reich, although, unfortunately, the motives and customs of earlier practitioners can no longer be ascertained because they are no longer alive to offer accounts of their activity. Nor should modernity be equated with late capitalism: in East Germany, Indinists created a refuge from the bureaucratic reach of the socialist state, resisting its command to politicize intercultural relations. A small minority developed a critique of real existing socialism but embraced Communist appeals to international solidarity with the oppressed. For many among the younger generation of hobbyists East and West, hobbyism offers a zone outside and opposed to capitalist commodity culture and the materialist mentality with which some grew up, but which others see as imposed by the Western victors of the Cold War. To some, such an exploration of a nonalienated, simple life is also connected with the search for spiritual fulfillment left unsatisfied by organized Christian religions or political ideologies.

Further research is needed to ascertain whether some of the features I have discussed here also apply to other hobbyist communities in Europe. John Paskievich's documentary and Christian Feest's comparative research on representations of Indians in other European literatures indicate that the myth of the noble savage, which continues to inspire romanticized views of Indians today, is shared across European cultures. The yearning for a nonalienated, pre- or antimodern world hobbyists express appears to be eminently adaptable to local conditions, whether they are Communist or post-Communist, urban-capitalist or rural. In addition, future scholarship might take its cue from the documentary *Das Pow-wow* by Native American anthropologist Marta Carlson,³⁵ who, like the performance artist Guillermo Gomez-Peña with his "counteranthropology," turns the anthropological gaze around to investigate those who have historically held the power to describe, catalog, and interpret their "exotic" subjects.³⁶ The dialogue that Carlson initiates from behind the camera stages the anxiety around referentiality that continues to haunt hobbyists in every encounter with "real Indians," requiring them to negotiate their desire for recognition as kindred spirits and their fear of being exposed as imitators, or worse, as modern-day cultural colonizers.

35. Her documentary makes an important contribution to a comparative analysis of East and West German hobbyism, limited in my discussion by my inability to contact East German "people hobbyists."

36. His counteranthropology is exemplified by the play *Border 2000: The New World Order* (1998) and his book *The New World Border* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1996). Please also see his interactive work in cyberspace <<http://www.telefonica.es/fat/egomez.html#paper2>>.