

Representing the Indian, Imagining the *Volksgemeinschaft*: Indianthusiasm and Nazi Propaganda in German Print Media

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The German fascination with Native Americans has been a tradition of several centuries, beginning with the first reports about the New World and its peoples. The main features of German Indian imagery have evolved since the early nineteenth century and have evoked the phenomenon of mass euphoria for Indians in the late 1800s, a euphoria which lasted for more than one hundred years. This fascination has been a source of curiosity for both Native peoples and scholars. Placing it in the context of German perceptions of American history and culture, scholarship determined that the German euphoria for ‘all things Indian’ is not so much about Native peoples, but that it illustrates the quest for a sense of self among nineteenth-century Germans. Thus, the term “German Indianthusiasm”, coined by Hartmut Lutz, denotes the German comparison of contemporary Native Americans with ancient Germanic tribes, the idealization and stereotyping of both groups, and the eventual self-portrayal of Germans as the direct descendants of these ancient European indigenous peoples (Lutz 2002: 169). In essence, looking at ‘the Indian’¹ helped Germans to portray themselves as the Indians of Europe, to construe an ancient tribal/national tradition, and to denounce ancient and current ‘others’, be they external rivals of the emerging and industrializing German nation state, or internal others, such as the Jews. The dichotomizing of the German/Indian self against these external and internal others developed basic motifs and fixed patterns which outlasted several centuries and a number of different political regimes, but it incorporated new imagery and new cultural practices over time and was adjusted to reflect the respective contemporary political, social, and cultural issues in Germany.

This essay will discuss the Nazi regime’s propagandistic appropriation of Indianthusiasm. It will argue that the development of nationalism in nineteenth-century Germany and its increasingly aggressive stance laid the groundwork for national socialist propaganda, and that Indianthusiasm accompanied both. If Indian imagery served to develop a German national identity, it naturally had to be a useful device for the Nazis to convey national pride to the populace. The Nazis’ perception

of Native Americans and the representation of Indian imagery in Nazi-controlled media cashed in on older traditions of German Indianthusiasm which interwove Romantic notions, cultural despair, and conservative nationalism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Says Lutz: "From today's perspective, Indianthusiasm appears as part of an antimodernist, essentially anti-Enlightenment ideologeme, created in a cultural context that constructed ethnicity as blood based, that is interested in escapist folk traditions, and favors genetic-essentialist approaches toward nation-building" (2002: 179). Based on these traditions of interrelated nationalism, exoticism, and racial theory, the Nazis pragmatically utilized popular tropes of Indian imagery to promote racial purity, segregation and cultural integrity by exploiting anti-American notions and by portraying Germans as the Indians of Europe. While the notion of racists and Aryan supremacists promoting a non-white people seems to be an oxymoron, Indianthusiasm lent itself perfectly to national socialist ideology: if Indians were portrayed as *Naturvölker*,² that is, as peoples who appeared to be attuned to the 'natural' order of the universe, have a close relationship with their natural environment, and closely resemble the original state of humankind, the Nazis could seemingly prove by drawing parallels to these peoples that their understanding of Social Darwinism and their own ideology was the political application of natural law. In a 1936 article in the journal *Naturschutz*, Hans Schemm, founder of the NS Teachers' Association (NSLB), was given credit for his statement that National Socialism equaled applied biology (Schwenkel 1936: 10). *Naturvölker* were thus useful role models for an ideology that justified its concepts and policies with reference to natural law. In addition, the reference to American frontier history served the Nazis to conveniently exploit popular exoticism and promote traditional anti-American tendencies among the populace. The identification of Germans with Indians implied that Germans were descendants of a *Naturvolk*, that National Socialism was thus a logical, quasi 'natural' political regime for the German people, and that Germans and Indians shared not only a tribal history, but also the same enemies.

Fellow Tribesmen, Common Enemies

In the following, a few selected aspects of German identity construction will be discussed in more detail to illustrate the development of two major motifs of Indi-

enthusiasm which can be found even in today's expressions of the German euphoria for Native topics. These observations will be followed by examples of Indian imagery in dichotomies of self and other. Finally, a number of texts published during the Nazi era will be analyzed to demonstrate the continuation of the tradition across political regimes and to detail the pragmatic applications of Indian imagery in the German media during the 1930s and in World War II.

The Nazis built their ideology on conservative nationalist traditions, but also on the discourses and cultural practices of social movements, such as the *Lebensreform* and the Youth movement around 1900. Popular Indian enthusiasm provided them with a welcome opportunity to portray racial purity as a guaranty to preserve cultural integrity. It intertwined biological and environmental determinism, historicity, and mystical naturalism with their ideology. The German conservative nationalists of the nineteenth century had portrayed Germans as the tradition-conscious descendants of ancient Germanic tribes and had called for a stronger identification with these tribal Germanic roots. They had looked for unifying narratives, for a creation myth that could transcend the religious diversity, class struggles, and dynastic rivalries among the German mini-states. Since the Germans had no Wilhelm Tell or Joanne of Arc to whom they could refer, nationalist intellectuals reached far back into the past and re-discovered the Germanic tribes as sources of Germanness. They eventually focused on Arminius (Hermann), the Cherusci leader, whose forces defeated three Roman legions at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in A.D. 9 and "liberated a 'Germany' that did not even exist" (Lutz 2002: 172). The tradition of glorifying Arminius extends from Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523) to Adolf Hitler, who repeatedly called Arminius Germany's great "first unifier" (Picker 2003: 334, 436, 693, 711). Nationalist intellectuals also attempted to establish the *Song of the Nibelungs*, an epic medieval saga about heroes in Burgundy and Saxony, and about the dragon-slayer Siegfried, as a national epos. Among other attempts to relate to ancient Germans, the discussion of Publius Cornelius Tacitus' treatise *Germania* (A.D. 98) proved to be among the most popular and long-lasting. Nineteenth-century Germans increasingly became enthusiastic for what nationalists and Romantics portrayed as the German origins. This euphoria for the ancient Germanic tribes later claimed a continuous line of historical reference points, apparently proving that contemporary Germans could see their close relatives in these old Germanic tribes.

Both tribal and contemporary Germans allegedly shared with Native Americans a number of inherent national character traits and faced similar external threats to their cultural integrity. These shared traits and perceived threats were expressed by tropes such as the noble savage, the fierce warrior, or the holistic protector of nature. All of these tropes can be found in both German Indianthusiast fiction and media and in intellectual and fictional depictions of ancient and contemporary Germans. I have termed this notion of shared cultural and mental idiosyncrasies the *fellow tribesmen* motif, and the correlated notion of shared historical experiences of foreign oppression the *common enemy* motif in my dissertation.³ Nationalist claims to a shared German-Indian self via positive character traits automatically denied those traits to the other. Such simplistic attributions identified Germans and their tribal ancestors as loyal, honest, and fierce (among other traits), and thus merged the noble and the brutal savage into one character that could serve as a Romantic national symbol. This symbol closely resembled the image of the Indian in Germany: personified by the allegorical figure of *der deutsche Michel* (sometimes termed “Gullible Fritz” in English), and in contrast to the Americans’ Uncle Sam, the German forest farmer was noble, credulous, and thus easy to be cheated, yet he could be a horrific foe if provoked or wronged (Hobsbawm 1983: 276). For conservative German self-perception, especially in the early twentieth century, the somewhat primitive and unpolished, defiant barbaric tribesman was, therefore, a very positive image. The Nazis eventually promoted this idea of the brutal noble savage, vividly expressed in the many memoirs of German World War I veterans. Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) appealed not only to Nazis when he described the German soldier as the proverbial Hun: “We appeared like the war god himself, such as the German at times appears throughout history, with this irresistible Germanic furor. They hate us over there, and there is but one measure against that, if you do not want to be contemptible: to be terrible” (Jünger 1929: 146; my translation). The attribution of barbaric features and primitive drives as positive Germanic traits comes to the fore even more clearly when Jünger describes the furor of one of his semi-fictional characters: “There is still a lot of animal in him [...] when the sine curve of life swings back to the red line of the primitive, the mask comes off. Naked as ever, he breaks loose, the primeval man, the caveman in all his uncontrollable drives” (quoted in Theweleit 1979: 29-30; my translation). One must agree with Theweleit when he adds that these statements are perfect expressions of cultural

pessimism. They do, indeed, portray German violence as an inherent national trait and they also hint at an affinity of those Germans in furor to similarly warlike Indians. On other occasions, however, the image of the barbaric brutal savage was repressed, as in this cartoon:



Figure 1: A 1931 cartoon depicting Hitler as a cruel barbarian. The original caption from *Ulk* magazine reads: “The chief of the savage headhunters after the Battle of Leipzig – in full warrior regalia.”

In a collection titled *Hitler in Cartoons of the World*, Hitler disciple and personal adviser on American affairs Ernst “Putzi” Hanfstaengl (1887-1975) used cartoons which ridiculed Hitler to defame the Nazis’ opponents (Hanfstaengl 1933). This volume functions in a pattern similar to the infamous exhibition “Degenerate Art”: the anti-Hitler cartoons are reprinted on one page, and the opposite page is used for Nazi commentary that refutes the cartoon’s original meaning and defames its creator. Originally published in 1931 in *Ulk*, a humorist liberal magazine, this cartoon por-

trays Hitler as a cruel barbarian featuring typical details of Indian imagery: a North American Plains tipi, feathers, tattoos, a round shield and a spear. Hitler had publicly announced during a trial at the Leipzig Reich Court in 1930 that, after the national socialist takeover of power, "heads would roll" (Herzog 2006: 120-121). Hanfstaengl refutes the portrayal of Hitler as a cruel barbarian by pointing out that after 30 January 1933, anti-fascists were not summarily beheaded, but had merely "rolled" into concentration camps instead, which supposedly proved the legality of the Nazis' repressive attempts to restore order in an unstable political situation (Hanfstaengl 1933: 33). The Nazis' self-portrayal shied away from the barbarian image in this particular instant because such symbolism would not have served the purpose.

Indian imagery, especially historical comparison to the settlement and colonization of the Americas, provided ammunition for the German self-perception as a people in peril. This common enemy motif employed the perception of Native Americans as victims of invasion, colonization, atrocities, and forced cultural assimilation, to refer to German(ic) history as a long line of similarly perilous experiences. Because of the grand sweep from ancient Germania to early twentieth-century Germany, the list of supposed enemies, oppressors, and exploiters of the German people was long, diverse, and often matched that of Native Americans. These enemies symbolized contemporary political or cultural problems, but also historical events, as the situation dictated. In all these perceived threats, a tribal indigenous people was faced with incursions by an expanding settler state, with invasions of vastly superior numbers, or with the threat of technological inferiority, or cultural assimilation and eventual degeneration and deterioration in the face of an alien intruder. The French represented not only the traditional arch enemy across the Rhine but, as a Romance people, also stood for ancient Rome and even for the replacement of ancient pagan beliefs in the wake of the Christian mission. The British empire was perceived as a rival in the race to colonial greatness and industrialization – but was denounced for its colonial practices – and the United States, although admired for its technological achievements, was both feared and held in contempt because of the Americans' supposed lack of culture and the trends of Americanization in Europe that appeared to many Germans as a form of cultural imperialism.

Culture versus Civilization: German/Indian anti-Western Dichotomies

In the context of these perceptions of the German-Indian tribal self and the 'Western' other, German conservative nationalists employed dichotomies to distinguish self and other, resulting in an increasingly hostile attitude in representations of the other. The notion of Germans as Indians in the struggle for cultural integrity and against an alien civilization becomes more apparent in many of the recollections of World War I and the German civil war analyzed by Klaus Theweleit. In more than one instance, German soldiers or Free Corps volunteers address other Germans as "fellow tribesmen", a reference also frequently used by Adolf Hitler (Theweleit 1977: 413). It can be seen as an implicit expression of the common enemy motif, but it also works in the understanding of Germans as descendants of ancient Germanic tribes which were finally united under Nazi rule (Domarus 1988, 1: 71-72). Conservative nationalists increasingly expressed the imagined attributes of inherent tribal German character in these dichotomies, which were reflected in philosophy and academia as well, and which employed both the fellow tribesmen and the common enemy motifs. The dichotomy of *community* versus *society* portrayed Germans as descendants of a tribal people who had retained their roots – that is, their culture – in concepts of clan, ancestor cults, and sacred territory, while 'society' often came to represent the negative effects of modernity: reckless individualism, secularization, or social upheaval and the demise of traditional values. Although Ferdinand Toennies warned against a political appropriation of his sociological classic *Community and Society*, first published in 1887, its concept was widely read as an anti-modernist justification for the resistance of the tribal German self against the liberal, chaotic, and devious Western other (Toennies 1935: xlvii). Toennies never explicitly compared Germans to Native Americans, but in his terminology, Indian imagery had an ominous absent presence, and his language evoked the popular images of council fires, wise elders, and noble warriors.

Along similar lines, the dichotomy of *culture* versus *civilization* pointed to a sense of alienation from the 'West' among many Germans. Although many philosophers and observers of Native peoples seemed to distinguish between nature and culture, natural science (along with growing ideological scientific racism), exoti-

cism, and cultural pessimism in Germany worked to identify nature with culture and portray both in a fundamental opposition to civilization. Indians, as *Naturvölker*, as well as the formerly tribal Germans who understood their own culture as deeply rooted in a close relationship with nature, were thus perceived as embedded in the natural order. Modernization, urbanization, industrialization, along with the trappings of material culture, alienation, social strife, and environmental destruction, however, were seen as the results of civilization. Civilization supposedly bred degeneration and the destruction of culture. In order to preserve its cultural integrity, a people needed not only to preserve its traditions and natural environment, but it had also to be xenophobic and wary of foreign cultural influence. This argument lent itself perfectly to the common enemy motif and was directed against both the 'West,' against communism, and against Jews.

Adolf Hitler addressed this dichotomy in his second book in 1928, which remained in the manuscript stadium during his lifetime and was published as a commented edition in the 1960s: "One cannot convey culture, which is a general expression of a particular people's life, to any other people with completely different mental predispositions. This would, at best, be possible in a so-called international civilization which, however, relates to culture like Jazz music to a Beethoven symphony" (Institut für Zeitgeschichte 1961: 66; my translation). Understanding culture as the inherent idiosyncrasies and talents of a people, many conservative nationalists perceived the internationalization of markets and ideas during the late nineteenth century as threats to their national and cultural integrity. At this point, it might be added that the simplistic notion of community as mutual aid in opposition to society as reckless individualism served the Nazis to promote their concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and the Nazi state's protection thereof. The *Volksgemeinschaft*, or 'community of the people', practiced German culture – supposedly naturally, as a quasi organic form of group organization – against the artificial and coercive *Gemeinschaft* of the communists. More importantly, it was distinguished from what was seen as the Western law of the jungle in which individuals perished under the pressure of the market because the state did not protect them and because civilization endangered their sense of community and belonging.

These readings of politics and social contract as the negotiation of exclusively confrontative interests confirm the notion of "typical German inwardness", that is, the alleged German aversion to politics, which Thomas Mann addressed in his 1918

Reflections of an Unpolitical Man. Claims to inwardness permeate the dichotomy of culture versus civilization which Mann employs to differentiate between *Geist*, meaning *das deutsche Wesen* ('the essence of Germanness'), and politics. Mann saw himself as a product of the "brutal", "dark", and "male" nineteenth century (Mann 1918: xxiii, xxv) and yet underwent a transformation of mind during the 1920s that eventually made him reject the culmination of German nationalism into National Socialism. He stated in 1918, affected by the catastrophic experience of World War I, that democracy was not only a phenomenon alien to German mentality, but a direct threat to the German soul, and further exemplified the nineteenth-century tradition of dichotomizing culture and civilization:

"The difference between Geist and politics includes the difference between culture and civilization, between soul and society, between freedom and franchise, between arts and literature; and Germanness, that is culture, soul, freedom, and arts; and not civilization, society, franchise, and literature" (Mann 1918: xxxiii).

History, adds Mann, would reveal one day that World War I was an assault of international civilization on German culture, resulting in a rebellious stance and a defiant German survival instinct. Although Mann, as Toennies before him, did not mention Native Americans, imagery of noble savages and parochial indigeneity can be easily gleaned from these statements; the language used here was familiar to readers who were accustomed to encounter similar imagery in countless dime novels and Wild West shows. Germany had become one of the leading industrial powers before World War I, but it was this imagery that expressed essential anti-modern beliefs and the conservative nationalist rejection of rationalism and liberalism.

From the Trail of Tears to Versailles: Historical Parallels in Nationalist German Indian Imagery

Based on these intellectual and political developments, the Nazis claimed that a people's inherent and inheritable character traits, which they called *Rassenseele* ('racial soul'), produced a particular unique culture. Racial ideology denied the possibility of cultural exchange and transfer between peoples. Therefore, any attempt at such transfer would imperil the integrity of the culture that was to be confronted with another people's cultural practices. When nineteenth-century conservative

Germans and their Nazi descendants interpreted 'international civilization' as an attack on their cultural integrity, the notion of a people in peril becomes evident. In this sense, Germans could, indeed, see themselves as victims of cultural imperialism and even of attempted genocide, and thus as sharing the same historical experience with Native Americans.

The Nazis employed these parallelisms for their anti-American propaganda campaigns whenever feasible. An important parallel was the focus on the breach of trust Germans had apparently experienced when they believed that they ended World War I under the terms of President Wilson's Fourteen Points and were then faced with the "dictate of Versailles" (cf. Gassert 1997: 34-46, 87, 262-66). Hitler referred to treaty-making and -breaking on the frontier in his speeches. At one time, he even compared the German delegation in Versailles to Indians who were forced to give up their homeland under duress. During the so-called Roosevelt-Hitler duel (Roosevelt's 14 April 1939 telegram to Hitler and Hitler's answer during a speech on 28 April), Hitler remarked that Germans had not been treated as honorable warriors who had withstood the whole world for almost four years. Instead, they had been "treated more dishonorably than could have been the case with the Sioux chiefs" (Domarus 1988, 4: 1171; my translation).

However, the Versailles trope was not a Nazi invention. Its widespread application in the 1920s and early 1930s demonstrates the longevity of Indian imagery, but also its flexibility to enable politicians of different leanings to employ an Indian parallel to express a current issue in German politics and society. As early as in 1925, the German magazine *Die Woche* published a feature about the current state of Indian reservations. It echoes the typical notions of filth and degeneration and laid the blame on American treachery and on the Americans' attempt to force their culture on the Indians, regardless of their interests and talents. The author draws a direct parallel to recent German history when he refers to the peace negotiations at Versailles. His allusions to American outrage over atrocities committed by 'barbaric' Indians (while avoiding any thought of atrocities committed against Native people), and to the question of whether or not Indians actually need the land they occupy (whether they are considered worthy of keeping it), are obvious:

"Granted, the whole world got worked up over alleged German atrocities during the Great War; granted, the Allied enemies decided that the cultured nation of Germany was not worthy to keep her colonies, but no-

body thought about the Indians and about the manner they were treated throughout the centuries of American history. And, if someone did think about that, he will have smiled to himself and kept quiet because America, the big brother with his purse full of dollars, had been sitting on the conference table up in Versailles and would have been terribly miffed about such an allusion.” (Proskauer 1925: 358; my translation)

Other texts likened the German land cessions after Versailles to the Indian Removal policy of the 1830s and to the Trail of Tears. The following quote was taken from one of the very popular novels on Tecumseh, written under the pseudonym of Fritz Steuben in the 1930s:

“[The Americans] proceeded in the traditional fashion to insult and denounce the exploited, the abused, and the murdered, to falsely blame them for atrocities, only to go on exterminating them more than ever, and we have no reason to side with the murderers against those who were a hundred times better than their white destroyers. We Germans in particular have the least reason to do so, because we have experienced this kind of making history the hard way, and all too bitterly.” (Steuben 1938: 37; my translation)

Steuben (Erhard Wittek) was the foremost writer of Indian novels during the 1930s, and his books were promoted by the Nazis’ official white lists for children’s books. His own experience as a refugee from the newly founded Polish republic in 1919 is often likened to the fate of Indians who are forced from their homes by greedy settlers. While he did not do so *expressis verbis*, his recurring references to the parallels between Versailles and Indian treaties are clear enough (Kaminski 1993: 110-111). Similarly, many texts of the 1930s used the *Dolchstoßlegende*, the myth about the stab in the back of the undefeated front in November 1918, for a comparison with the killing of Native American leaders, such as Pontiac or Sitting Bull, by their own people: in a 1925 feature about the Lakota, the author explains the incident during which Sitting Bull was killed as a “skirmish with the border police”, while the Lakota as such had been “undefeated in the field” during the wars of the late 1870s. After their leader had been killed, they were “treated in a way that is the plight of those who beg for peace” (Koch-Wawra 1926: 1366; my translation). These statements not only allow for parallels to the *Dolchstoßlegende*, they also

provide the ground for the Nazis' use of Indian warrior imagery in their depictions of glorious last stands and stubborn persistence against all odds.

Two articles on literary theory from the mid-1930s further exemplify this notion of a German-Indian community of fate in the face of Western aggression. They illustrate how the reference to culture and indigeneity portrayed Germans and Indians as soul-mates in their struggle. In the first, the author argues that Native American resistance to the pressure of Western expansion had caused particular empathy among the German youth around 1900. This empathy apparently was the reason why 'Germanic' writers produced especially valuable Indian literature and why this literature echoed so strongly among a mainly Germanic audience: "The literary character of the Red Man became [...] a secret device to manifest the fundamental protest of the Germanic attitude towards life in the imagination of our youth, at a time when Western-Romance notions of state and society were on the march throughout Europe" (von Werder 1938: 482; my translation).

The second article, entitled "The Eternal Indian and Us", claims that German writers such as Karl May did not have to invent the eternal Indian, because concepts and criteria for an understanding of Indians were intrinsic features of German culture: "The geographical proximity, the early Medieval history, and the historicizing myth indicate powerful bonds and interconnections between the European and the American North. It seems that fraternal powers are weaving between the great peoples on the fringes of the Atlantic" (Muck 1936: 312). This author even elevates the postulated spiritual kinship to a homo-erotic level when he proclaims masculinity as a uniting feature of Germanness and Indianness, praising "[...] this fraternal Äeros, driving equally rigorous, equally Nordic, warriors into the male joy of heroic journeys, of autotelic struggles [...] further into the steppes and forests of their Red brother continent" (Muck 1936: 312; my translation). In the Great War, the author adds, the generation of the German Youth movement experienced the reawakening of the eternal Indian in themselves and lived it out in the trenches of France and Belgium. They shared this reawakening with their own children in the Hitler Youth during the 1930s. In these examples, the imagined peoplehood's traditional exclusion of the menacing other comes to light as much as the ideological identification of German and Indian features as 'equally Nordic'.

In conclusion, it can be said that the German image of Indians informed the development of German national identity. Conservative nationalism profited from

the resulting construct of indigenous Germans who cherished the Natives on the other side of the Pond, and National Socialism appropriated this notion of kinship for its own racial ideology. Although the Nazis promoted Aryan superiority, their utilization of Indian imagery is not a contradiction: Indian imagery was a useful device to promote militarism, racial segregation, and sacrifice. In the end, political expediency called for a continuation and even exploitation of Indian imagery under the Nazi regime, since 'Indians' had been popular before 1933 and since most tropes had existed before then. Utilizing these tropes was simply convenient for the Nazis; it helped tie the populace closer to their rule. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Indian imagery has reflected transformations in German perceptions of self and other, particularly of U.S. society, of its struggles and debates. The analysis of these images is much more revealing about German society than about the interracial conflicts in the Americas. While imagined Indians began to fascinate Germans as noble and unspoiled savages during the Romantic era, Wilhelmine imagery portrayed them as wrathful defenders of their homeland, and the Nazis eventually utilized them as race-conscious and xenophobic protectors of nature and cultural integrity. Nowadays, popular perception tends to employ the image of the eco-saint, or of the holistic guru. German Indianthusiasm, if it remains a phenomenon of popular culture during the twenty-first century despite the growing pace of media hypes, will most likely continue to be a mirror of German desires and anxieties, and it will reflect the German perceptions of America.

Notes

¹ Scholars, activists, and the media in English-speaking countries have been debating about the correct terminology to denote indigenous peoples in America without having come to a satisfying agreement yet. All versions, be they *Indian*, *American Indian*, *Native American*, or *American aboriginal* have flaws either in their inclusiveness, their distinctiveness, or in political sensitivity and even sensibility. Being aware of the inconclusive nature of this debate, I will follow Robert Berkhofer's approach and speak of *Indians* when the German or American image is meant, and of *Native Americans* when the actual people(s) in the USA are discussed (Berkhofer 1979: xvii).

² The intricacies of translation inhibit the use of the closest English equivalent, “primitive people,” in this case. Johann Gottfried Herder coined the term *Naturvolk* to avoid “savages”, to distinguish the term from *Kulturvolk*, and to emphasize the close relationship of such peoples to their natural environment as much as to the “natural state of man”. German ethnology and anthropology have used it with varying connotations over time, all of which implied some degree of inferiority. They have yet to agree on a better term although the equivalents *indigenes Volk/indigenous people* currently seem to be very common. For that reason, I prefer *Naturvolk* to avoid the English “primitive” and to invoke the understanding of Germans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of the term, which incorporates inferiority as much as the close relationship to nature (cf. *Wörterbuch der Völkerkunde*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Naturvölker”).

³ This essay discusses selected aspects and provides a summary of my larger dissertation project, which will be published by Berghahn Books, New York, under the title *‘Fellow Tribesmen’: The German Image of Indians, the Emergence of National Identity, and Nazi Ideology in German Periodicals*, in 2013.

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