Transnational Performances of Native American and African American Cultures at the German–American Institute Regensburg

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ABSTRACT: In this article I analyze two events the former German–American Institute Regensburg hosted as performances. By examining the exhibition "Native American Traditions" and a week-long series of events titled "The Status of the African American in the Development of American Culture," I contend that transnational cultural performances can both engage with stereotypical and appropriated knowledge about cultures while also leading to a problematization and diversification of the intricacies of the struggles the members of these groups go through in other situations.

KEYWORDS: transnational; cultural performance; German–American Institute; Regensburg

Introduction

People in German-speaking countries have been exposed to appropriated and racist images of Native Americans since at least the latter half of the nineteenth century. One main vehicle of these images is the now infamous 'Winnetou.' The protagonist of several books by Karl May and their cinematic adaptations, Winnetou is the manifestation of an uninformed writer's romanticized thoughts of what Native Americans and Native American cultures should be. The result of which were characters with fictional Pan-Indian identities that blurred together aspects of different Native American tribes with figments of May's imagination. In 2022, the German publisher Ravensburger decided to withdraw two new books starring this protagonist amid accusations of cultural appropriation and racism. This led to a widespread outcry among some discourse communities in Germany who claimed that political correctness was erasing one of their childhood heroes from existence (Connolly). Among such communities, a consensus emerged of disregarding the agency of Indigenous Peoples, thus paving the way for the perpetuation of depictions such as Winnetou.[1] The most audible outcry from these discourse communities was arguably an open letter written by the Karl-May-Gesellschaft and the Karl-May-Stiftung published as a petition.[2] In the letter these two organizations brought forth four statements which aimed at rehabilitating May and Winnetou. The petition expressed the view that May depicted Indigenous people with the best intentions, maintaining along these lines that canceling Winnetou only serves to exacerbate rather than heal the wounds this character may have torn into the emotions of others. As of May 2023, over fifteen thousand people have signed

[1] See for example: Bassewitz; Glas et al.; Herz; Schupelius.

[2] https://www.petitionen.com/ist_winnetou_erledigt_ein_offener_brief_von_karl-may-gesellschaft_und_karl-may-stiftung.

this petition, many of whom have also given reasons for their signature. Petitioners' reasons ranged from a personal connection to Winnetou, positive childhood memories, and praise of May's person. Beyond that, however, some comments include right-wing extremist views that call anyone who is critical of May's writing left-wing fascists, even going so far as to explicitly link criticism of Winnetou to the Nazi book burnings.[3] This illustrates how Ravensburger's decision to prioritize respect for Native Americans was criticized by many Germans and served as a gateway topic for right-wing extremists. Regardless of reception, the media coverage of this issue also raised public awareness to efforts of Native Americans to make their voices heard as they fight against ongoing misrepresentations of their cultures and other manifold injustices Indigenous people are experiencing and have always experienced at the hands of German, American, and other societies and governments around the world.[4]

Much in the same way, reports on the Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 led to a heightened awareness of systemic racism both in the US and Germany. The public reception of it and its media coverage, however, was different in Germany. A study conducted by the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) has shown that while some of the right-leaning national newspapers in Germany published articles that were rather neutral, the overall public opinion of the protests and consequently the fight against (systemic) racism was very positive (Ajayi et al. 12). How is it that two seemingly closely related transnational topics were received so differently by the German public? If opinions and knowledge about cultural groups outside the artificial borders of nation states that differ from an imagined homogenous Self such as outlined above are stored in what scholars have termed collective memory and renegotiated in transnational spaces, one way of exploring these epistemologies is by closely examining how they are performed in spatially and temporally isolated performances. In this article, I follow this course of research and explore why and how certain knowledge was created of and about Native American and African American cultures in transnational settings in the past.

In order to do so I analyze two transnational Native American and African American cultural performances at the former German–American Institute Regensburg during the 1960s: a 1961 art exhibition entitled "Native American Traditions" and a cultural week from 1965 called "The Status of the African American in the Development of American Culture," which was comprised of an array of different events such as panel discussions and concerts. By means of this evidence, I prove that knowledge produced through transnational cultural performances can on the one hand enhance stereotypical, appropriated, and racist notions

[3] See signature #106 (Karl-May-Gesellschaft). A user who goes by the name of Dr. Friedhelm Pedde calls it "cancel-culture" and the canceling of Winnetou the "left-wing fascist" version of the "Nazi book burnings." This is an especially ruthless accusation as the Winnetou books were widely accepted by the Nazis (Lutz 30). Many other signers' comments follow the same line of argumentation.

[4] See for example: https://narf.org/, https://www.naaog.de/.

of cultures and on the other hand can lead to a problematized, heightened awareness of the intricacies of and struggles cultural groups experience.

The German–American Institute Regensburg

The German–American Institute (GAI) Regensburg first opened its doors to the public in 1955 when the funding for its predecessor, the *Amerikahaus* Regensburg was cut by the US government and a binationally funded solution was arranged to ensure the continuity of an American cultural institute in Regensburg (USIS and City of Regensburg). The GAI continued to be an important part of the Regensburg cultural landscape, hosting events such as exhibitions, lectures, or staging plays, up until 2000 when it was closed for good. Throughout its years of operation, the GAI went through various changes to its funding, location, and organizational structure, the most important of which happened in 1965 when it became the first GAI in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to operate under a German director. While this change in leadership sets the GAI Regensburg apart from its contemporaries, the original transformation from *Amerikahaus* to GAI was mirrored in other German cities. Reinhild Kreis conclusively shows that these GAIs, as well as their predecessor institutes, were soft powers which were designed by the US government to foster a positive image of the United States among West Germans, and sought to avoid the perception of propaganda (Kreis 11). On the one hand, this meant that the GAIs and their success were closely monitored by means of surveys and the likes through the US government by the United States Information Agency (USIA), whose executive branch in Germany was the United States Information Service (USIS) in Bonn (Kreis 34). On the other hand, the USIS also controlled the programs of the GAIs through Country Plans, effectively giving the directors strict guidelines; restricting for example, what topics their GAIs were permitted to cover. The USIS therefore provided the institutes with pre-selected materials for their exhibitions or made suggestions for speakers the GAIs could hire (Kreis 68-82).[5]

The establishment of the GAI also marked the genesis of a transnational contact zone, as defined by Marie Louise Pratt, within Regensburg. Pratt describes contact zones as "social space[s] where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (584). All of these defining features are true for the GAI. The supposedly stable and monolithic German and American cultures met within the institute itself or at its events, the epistemological outcome of which was transnationally constructed knowledge whose origin cannot with certainty be retraced to either one of them. Pratt's definition, which is conceptually very fruitful, relies on a stable notion of

[5] While there were around 30 *Amerikahäuser* during the US reorientation policy, their numbers started dwindling as the shift to German–American Institutes happened. The numbers of these GAIs also plummeted as the US government decided to shift their soft-power focus towards different parts of the world (Kreis 29). As of June 2023, only a handful of them still exist albeit organizationally and structurally different to the institutes in the timeframe considered in this paper.

culture. This article seeks to expand on this notion and to broaden the scope of Pratt's contact zone as I see culture as a fluid performative concept which does not correspond to the borders of a nation state. Most importantly, Germany and the US house a variety of different cultures, all of which remain in a continuous negotiation and are reified and changed in performance.

The field of Performance Studies offers an advantageous means of making the processes of transnational knowledge formation legible, the benefits of which have chiefly been pointed out by Birgit Bauridl and Pia Wiegmink. They have developed a model of analysis which connects the examination of processes in the transnational contact zone with Performance Studies. Their model of inquiry sees cultural performances as "site-specific, corporeal events and practices that constitute spatially and temporally confined encounters and physical, immediate spaces of transnational experience," the study of which "requires a distinct methodological perspective" (Bauridl and Wiegmink 161). As they point out, this methodological perspective must be rooted in Performance Studies. The most recent contribution to this methodological and theoretical framework, a book titled *American Cultures as Transnational Performance*, highlights the advantages of using the concepts of commons, skills, and traces (Horn et al. 1-19). Richard Schechner argues that a performance is based on what he terms the performance quadrilogue, which is the principal tool of inquiry for this paper. This concept states that a performance is made up of (1) sourcers who provide the (2) producers of the performance with source material. The (3) performers then perform the performance which is perceived by the (4) partakers (Schechner 60). These four cornerstones as well as the performances as such shape my analyses.

In the case of the GAI Regensburg, the sourcers are the USIA and the USIS who provided the GAI with specific instructions as to what its cultural events should be like, as well as which source material(s) to use. The producers involved are the GAI directors as well as their German employees, which in the two case studies presented here primarily means GAI directors Sophie Bernard and Osborne T. Smallwood, along with the exhibition specialist Hubertus Reese. The performers involved in the two events were mainly speakers hired by the institute such as Smallwood himself. Both producers and performers also connect to the concept of "skills" that Horn et al. highlight as it is their acquired and rehearsed set of skills that is instrumental to the outcome of the performance and thus the transnational knowledge formed through these cultural performances (11).

The concepts of commons and traces are represented through the analysis of partakers. Commons according to Horn et al. showcases the shared experience of partakers in witnessing a performance (6). In line with Diana Taylor's research, they also point out that the partakers, that is to say the audience of a performance, are not only spectators, but "spect-actors" who actively shape the shared experience. Along these lines, spectators actively contribute to the outcome of the performance and are of great importance to the question of knowledge production in transnational settings this paper seeks to uncover (Horn et al. 7). Traces of performances according to Horn et al. represent relics or remnants

of performances, which "often constitute the sole point of access to a particular performance" (14). This is also the case for the performances examined here where local newspaper articles serve as the only glimpse into the GAI's events. Both the communal aspect of performance as well as its traces are approached in this paper through local newspaper articles about the performances in question. This methodological decision showcases how the field of inquiry of this article is closely linked to concepts of collective memory, as journalism can be of great importance in the renegotiation and reconfiguration of memories in a society (Erll 154).

Concepts of collective memory are of great importance for this article as they construct a hermeneutic space where the transnational knowledge produced by the cultural performances is stored. Thereby, two dimensions of collective memory which Roediger and Abel have outlined are most important for the analysis presented here. The first of which sees collective memory as a "body of common knowledge, sometimes referred to as semantic memory" (Roediger and Abel 359). In this article, common knowledge about the two supposedly uniform Indigenous and African American cultures which the two cultural events sought to perform, as well as their status in opposition to a supposed homogenous German or American culture is representative of this dimension. The analysis of local journalism of the two events sheds light on the dynamic and fluid nature of the construction of collective memory whereby the "past is continually being reshaped in memory" and the "different interpretations of the past and about who owns history and memory" (Roediger and Abel 361). For the purpose of this analysis and in adherence with Horn et al.'s conceptual framing of traces, I utilize local newspapers to account for this reshaping of the past. Newspapers as a space for ongoing diachronic discourse is expedient both in investigating the cultural events at hand, but also in connection to our contemporary moment. Then and now, perceptions of the struggles of African Americans and Indigenous people are shaped by the written press.

These theoretical and methodological presuppositions dictate the source material examined in this paper. As previously mentioned, newspaper articles are the main source for tapping into public discourses in Regensburg. The two major local newspapers in Regensburg at the time of inquiry were the *Mittelbayerische Zeitung (MZ)* and the *Tagesanzeiger (TZ)*. As Andreas Jobst presents in his dissertation, these two newspapers differed in their intended readership. While the former clearly addresses a center-left readership, the editor-in-chief of the latter one openly stated that his newspaper was to be built on conservative Christian values and thus spoke to a center-right leaning readership (Jobst 250-251). Despite the fact that analyzing articles from these two newspapers shows that they both reported on events the GAI hosted and the institute itself very favorably, it nonetheless opens the field of inquiry concerning traces and commons to a broader scope of public thought that ranges from one end of the political spectrum to the other.

While these newspaper articles offer invaluable traces of the two cultural events of the GAI, like pictures, there is additional material which allows this paper to access these past

performances. Research in the *Stadtarchiv Regensburg* and the Regensburg *Bilddokumentation* provided photographs of the two events as well as an accompanying booklet for each of them. Such material serves to further retrace both performances and performers and offer a point of access for the examination of sourcers and producers, as the booklets were provided by the USIS and the photographs show not only the performers, but also producers at work. The analysis of producers and sourcers of the two performances additionally draws heavily on Reinhild Kreis' research into the USIS/USIA Country Plans and opens up the intentions behind the two events of the GAI in conjunction with the guidelines the US government had set for them.

Native American and African American Cultures at the GAI

Native American Traditions in Regensburg[6]

As Kreis states, the GAIs frequently hosted cultural events surrounding Native Americans and Native American cultures, as Germans, according to the USIS, found these events to be very interesting due to their romanticized image of a supposed monolithic Indigenous American culture (Kreis 235). Therefore, these events were mostly limited to such portrayals as tourist attractions or Indigenous handiwork (Kreis 235). Consequently, performances of Native American cultures were instrumentalized to shape the positive image of the GAIs and the German public's opinion of the institutes.[7] A shift towards the discussion of the ongoing political and social struggles of Native Americans within the GAIs only began to happen in the 1970s (Kreis 235). This corresponds with what Lutz et al. examine under the term of "Indianthusiasm" (Lutz 38). 'Indianthusiasm' describes exactly what I hinted at in my introduction, namely, the German appropriation of Native American cultures whose traces can be found in German history as early as the eighteenth century. In post-war 1960s Germany, narratives like those of Winnetou, which at that point had been adapted for the big screen, also served as imagined realities where Germans could rid themselves of their roles as being the driving force behind genocides, as that role was taken on by White Americans in the imagined Wild West (Lutz 31).

Lutz's monograph contains a collection of interviews which "[…] return the colonial gaze and illuminate how Indigenous artists and intellectuals view [the] German fascination […]" with Indigenous American cultures (Lutz 17). Cultural events featuring no active Indigenous actor, such as those at the GAI, certainly authenticate the call of Transnational Native American Studies' to set the focus on Indigenous active agency (Huang et al.). This article nonetheless

[6] The analysis of this event is in part based on my unpublished final state exam thesis which forms the basis for my ongoing dissertation project.

[7] While this article acknowledges the fluidity and instability of culture, it nonetheless must, at times, resort to expressions such as the "German public" to establish its analytic basis or to reiterate the policies of governments. My ongoing research into this topic, however, has already produced evidence that in relation to the GAI, Regensburg cultural identity is at times labeled as German, Bavarian, or European which once again highlights the performative dimension of culture.

contributes to this line of research as it maps a stage where "transnationality and indigeneity intersect and become mutually illuminating" (Huang et al. 5). The following analysis of the exhibition "Native American Traditions-Artistic Handiwork and New Paintings" (USIS 1961)[8] shows that transnational cultural performances can enhance, and shape appropriated and stereotypical knowledge about Native American cultures.

From February 6-18, 1961, people could visit the exhibition "Native American Traditions-Artistic Handiwork and New Paintings" in the rooms of the GAI Regensburg, having at that time already reached its final location, in the *Thon Dittmer Palais* Regensburg. The GAI's program leaflet for February 1961 announces that this exhibition would show "original paintings and items made by contemporary Indians[9] which are examples of the entanglement of Indian traditions and Western influences" (DAI 1961). This exhibition came with an accompanying booklet provided by the USIS. It states that the source material for the exhibition was provided by the University of Oklahoma and that this exhibition was first shown to the public following an initiative by the Austrian-American Society (USIS 1961 2). These acknowledgements of major contributions included in the preface to the exhibition only include either White American or European academics. While the subject matter of this cultural performance, the exhibition, is of Indigenous origin, its sourcers are not.

The same is true for the producers of this cultural performance. A newspaper article published in the *Tagesanzeiger* titled "From War Dance to Indian Girl's Dress" contains a photograph showing one of the GAI's employees, Hubertus Reese, arranging the exhibits. He is kneeling on the floor holding in his hands what is identified by a caption as either a Native American headdress, blanket, or wicker bowl. In this way, the article makes the physically intangible appropriation of Native American cultures quite literal as a German employee takes exhibits of Native American origin and arranges them appropriately for a supposedly predominantly German audience. Unfortunately, other photographs of this exhibition do not exist, but the accompanying booklet gives detailed information about the exhibits.

This booklet contains a preface, an introduction to the exhibition, a description of the displayed works of art, and some prints of paintings. The section giving background information on the artwork is divided into two subsections, one treating the displayed paintings and the other being dedicated to the exhibited handiwork. The former section is broken down into the parts "Old Motives," "Scenes from Native American Day-to-Day lives," "Native American Society," "Hunting and War," "Costumes for Different Dances," and "Ceremonies and Ceremonial Dancers" (USIS 1961 9-19).

Setting Native American cultures within the context of "Westerners" experiencing Indigeneity, the preface begins its elaborations by stating that the interest in studying Indigenous cultures of the Americas started with reports by explorers who first reached the

[8] In the following, if not indicated otherwise, all translations of German texts and phrases are my own.

[9] The original German text uses the outdated term "Indianer" for Native Americans which this paper does not condone.

New World (USIS 1961 5). This interest, according to the booklet, then led to scientific examinations of Native American "tools" and to "romanticized narratives." Juxtaposing this first wave of enthusiasm for Native Americans with the social reality of the US in the twentieth century, the preface states that "many Indians even, whole tribes" have "adapted themselves to the civilization of the White Man." Whereas some of them started to live and work like the "White Man," some Native Americans live within the confines of reservations which were also designed by European people (5). In outlining this development, the authors of the preface make the assessment that members of this latter group of Native Americans are either "incomprehensibly rich" or live in "miserable conditions." From these Indigenous people, the USIS in cooperation with the University of Oklahoma took the exhibited pieces of art in order to provide the "European with a glimpse into the Indian ways of expression" (5). In looking at the exhibits, the preface claims, people who have formed an image of Native American culture based on "Wild-West-Stories," will have to rearrange their knowledge, since only the Native Americans of the Great Plains were "warring." Native Americans living in the south of the US are described as having been "a peaceful farming people," whereas others "made a living from fishing" or survived on the "wild fruit of the woods."

The introduction, following the preface, gives the audience a more detailed overview of the origin of the portrayed artwork (USIS 1961 6). It does so in stating that the exhibition contains paintings hailing from three regions within the USA, representing art created by different Native American tribes. These tribes include the Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, Sioux, Cheyenne-Arapaho, and Creek. As the booklet states, the contributions of the different members of the respective tribes all display vastly different motifs and realities of Native American lives and cultures. The fact that there is not one Indigenous American Culture, but many cultures dating back to far before the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, becomes obvious.

The educational background of the artists behind the displayed pieces is as diverse as their motifs. While many of these artisans attended colleges in the US, most of them did not receive their education from "actual art schools" but participated in "art classes of the Indian kind." Some, the introduction claims, did not go through any kind of art school and have developed their artistic prowess through their own "artistic experiences and traditions." While one part of them has upheld the "ties with their own tribe in their reservation," another "now leads a regular American life without renouncing the special heritage of their people." As the booklet states, they deeply care for this special heritage of their tribes. According to the authors of the introduction, Native American Art was first exhibited in the USA in 1917, sparking a wave of interest for it. On the basis of this first exhibition in the Waldorf Astoria, the first Native American artistic community formed, and many other pieces of Indigenous art were subsequently displayed for the eyes of the US public. "Native American Art," the introduction concludes, has thus become a "stable yet small part of North American art exhibitions."

While the exhibits are of Indigenous origin, they were selected by both White American and European scholars which takes away the agency of publishing art from the creators of said art. The fact that the exhibition was first shown by the Austrian-American Society and only later was portrayed in a location in Germany demonstrates transnational dialogue that extends beyond just the FRG and the USA. Moreover, Native American cultures in this exhibition are always explicitly linked to an imagined "Western" culture Germany and the US supposedly belong to as the booklet emphasizes the fact that all artists represented are in some way connected to the 'West.' One can argue that this way of describing Indigenous art was an attempt at making it more accessible to the presumed 'Western' audience of the exhibition. The appropriation of the Indigenous source material is literalized by the picture provided in the newspaper article. At the same time the booklet mentions settler-colonial violence and claims that many Native Americans live in "miserable conditions." It furthermore provides enlightening insight into different Native American cultures without merging them into one romanticized imagined community, as the booklet proceeds to acknowledge that perceptions about Native American cultures based on "Wild West" stories are deficient and will need to be amended by the audience. These are all aspects the local newspapers, at least in part, did not adopt.

The exhibition was commented on in two different newspaper articles. One of which is a rather short piece in the *Mittelbayerische Zeitung* titled "Indian Traditions." The other article, "From War Dance to Indian Girl's Dress," which was already mentioned above, was published two days prior to the opening of the exhibition in the *Tagesanzeiger*. I will concentrate on the latter article, which took up an entire page of the local newspaper, because it provides the most fruitful content for my analysis. The article consists of a body of text which is framed by two paintings taken from the exhibition and centered around the photograph of Reese. The painting atop the text is captioned, "Corn dancer, a painting by Ramon Sanchez, a late painter of the Indian school of Santa Fé." Its counterpart on the bottom of the article is subtitled, "An unfamiliar sight in this country: an Indian wolf dancer by wah-Pah-Nah-Yah alias Dick West, born in Oklahoma." The caption of the picture around which the text is centered, reads, "Working on the exhibition […] Hubertus Reese working on something unconventional […] Indian headdress, Navajo-blankets, Paiute wicker bowls…, things like these are exotic, even for the GAI."

While the body of the text mainly summarizes the information given in the preface and introduction of the accompanying booklet, some specific aspects of the exhibition are also commented on and emphasized. For example, in the lead paragraph printed in bold preceding the actual article, the author states that "people who want to expand their knowledge about the Indians," which they acquired from reading "Karl May or Cooper," should visit the exhibition. This link to previous German knowledge of Native American culture is enhanced when the author claims that while the displayed paintings may appear "rather unfamiliar" to an "average European," some of the exhibited handiwork is at least by name familiar to those who have read Karl May. The author puts further emphasis on the

fact that women of the Arapaho tribe used to wear purses which "many of today's women might not have expected." Staying within the chauvinistic rhetoric, which confines women to the realms of fashion and raising children, the author marks the display of dresses, which "the Kiowa-girls wore" as well as a Sioux "crib blanket" and a "turquoise ring," as being especially interesting for women. After copying the artists' background from the booklet and stating how 'Americanized' these Indigenous artists have become, the author concludes his preview with a Karl May quote: "And so we smoke the Kalumet of peace with all Red and White brothers in East and West and South and North!" Inspired by this quotation, the author claims that the "Indian tribes of America have long stopped fighting each other" and that the world should see them as an example of how to live together in peace. By mentioning these different tribes, the author at least hints at the existence of different cultural groups, which he subsumes under the term "Indian." This distinction, however, is not present throughout most of the newspaper articles detailing the event.

North America, through the presence of different Native American nations, has itself always been transnational. This is a fact to which the scholars of Native American studies working within the frame of transnationality often make reference to (Huang 1). The material provided by the USIS in the exhibition in Regensburg, albeit only in relation to art, makes a clear distinction between different nations and their locations of origin as can be seen in the introduction of the booklet. Hence, the traces of the performance contain transnationally created knowledge which is deficient in complexity. Whereas the booklet through its description of the local origins of the paintings displayed in the exhibition tries to diversify the outlook on Native American cultures, the preview of it completely undermines this endeavor. The information as to the different realities of living within the multitude of tribes as given in the introduction to the exhibition are merged by the author of the article into an unspecified, orientalized Other. While the author names the different tribes in referring to the displayed artwork and thus acknowledges their existence, the explanation of the exhibition lacks the necessary information as to the fact that Native Americans do not just form one complete whole, but have intricate differences in their belonging to different nations.

In stating that the arrangement of the Native American handiwork is "exotic," even by the standards of the GAI, a statement about American culture is made. The author makes the assertion that even for American standards, in contrast to German ones, these objects seem uncommon. This effectively places the US and Germany into one continuity in opposition to a common Other. American culture therefore is 'europeanized' through this enactment. The fact that the review's author chooses to outline the educational background of the artists exactly in the way the booklet does, sets a further emphasis on what an impact this Euro-American culture has had on Native Americans. The exhibition which, through the information that came with the booklet presented a rather diversified picture of the Native American nations within the geographical region of the US, was undermined by Germans reading it differently.

The exhibition "Native American Traditions" in the GAI Regensburg proves that transnational cultural performances can lead to stereotypical, appropriated, and racist notions of culture. While the source material set out to paint a quite nuanced and critical outlook on the struggles of Native American cultures in the USA, the traces of the performance in local newspaper reports show that what remained for the collective memory(ies) of the exhibition was a quite reductive and stereotypical view of Native American cultures. This is reminiscent of how the German public reacted to the withdrawal of the two Winnetou publications that I mentioned in the introduction to this paper.

African American Culture Week in Regensburg

The second cultural performance to be analyzed here is a cultural week in Regensburg from 1965 called "The Status of the African American in the Development of American Culture." According to its accompanying booklet, this event encompassed a keynote lecture, an exhibition, the screening of a movie, a concert, a poetry reading as well as a panel discussion. For the sake of brevity, this paper focuses on the first and last of these performances, as they prove to be most insightful for the topic at hand. What is striking about all these performances within the context of the culture week is that they all were wholly or in part performed by African Americans. The question of agency in this case contrasts sharply with that in the first cultural event of this essay, as African American scholars and artists were present and could make their own voices heard. Osborne T. Smallwood, the director of the GAI in 1965 was African American and had taught at Howard University, a Historically Black University (HBCU). Nonetheless this event was also subject to strict guidelines set forth by the USIS. The examination of the two events of this culture week shows that transnational cultural performances can—contrary to the first analysis presented here—lead to a problematized, heightened awareness of the intricacies of and struggles cultural groups experience.

As Kreis points out, events like the African American culture week in Regensburg were mainly used to thwart criticism of the US government and the population in their reactions to the Civil Rights movement (219). President Johnson's government wanted to portray the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement as a process initiated and controlled by the US government (234). Along these lines, the African American struggle for equal rights was intended to be portrayed by the GAIs as an orderly process. Hence groups fighting for equal rights other than those surrounding Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., such as the Black Power movement or Nation of Islam, were not to be mentioned or referred to in events the institutes hosted (235).

Katharina Gerund outlines German interaction with African Americans and German knowledge of the African American struggle for civil rights in her monograph, *Transatlantic Cultural Exchange: African American Women's Art and Activism in West Germany*. As Gerund states, "many Germans had already encountered African American culture[s] and African Americans in person and in the media" and that "[n]otions of blackness, African

Americanness, and Americanness had been established in the collective imaginary […]" in the twentieth century long before the occupation of Germany after the Second World War (Gerund 51-52). She explains the meaningful impact the experiences abroad following the Second World War had on African American soldiers and their self-conception (Gerund 54-70). Gerund states that there was a "cultural transfer" of the Black Power movement through German mass media and "publications of core texts of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements […]" in the 1960s and 1970s in Germany (Gerund 107). Gerund draws on Moritz Eges' research and outlines that this cultural transfer resulted in "Afro-Americanophilia," which entailed solidarity for groups like the Black Panthers and the Black Power movement mainly among left-wing activists in Germany (Gerund 107-123). Knowledge and to some extent solidarity with African American civil rights groups apart from King's movement was existent in Germany at the time of the culture week in Regensburg. As such, the aspects of African American agency the US government wanted to keep silent were already present as tacit knowledge in the German audience visiting the performances of the cultural week.

The skill aspect of a performance as delineated by Horn et al. is especially important when it comes to the performers of the events of the cultural week. As Kreis states, Osborn T. Smallwood, the GAI's director at that time, in the eyes of the USIA, must have been an "especially credible" speaker, as he was both African American and skillfully trained as exemplified by his employment at Howard University (Kreis 221-2). This assessment proves to be true in the USIA "Country Assessment Report" where Smallwood's lectures that he had given on African American topics all over Germany were received very positively by the public (Kreis 222). Both Regensburg newspapers agreed and portrayed him in a very positive light. One newspaper article comments that Smallwood "is black, very amiable and very intelligent" (la). Despite all these positive aspects of Smallwood, Kreis claims that "information conveyed by a government employee could never be as convincing as non-official presentations" (Kreis 222). Therefore it is no surprise that the African American speakers and artists performing during the cultural week were, in many of the cases, not visibly employed by the US government, but rather showed special skills and expertise in their field of study or occupation.

The role expertise played in the GAI's performances is clearly showcased in the first cultural performance of the week, the keynote lecture, which was the opening to the exhibition on May 17, 1965, in the auditorium of the GAI. The keynote speaker was Prof. Dr. Margaret Just Butcher who, according to an article in the *MZ,* was "currently employed as Fulbright professor in Casablanca" and, just as Smallwood, "had taught at Howard University" and had written one of the most important books on African Americans (er). This article also mentions that, once again, Hubertus Reese oversaw setting up the exhibition. The accompanying booklet to the exhibition, newspaper articles including pictures, as well as photographs kept in the archives of the Regensburg *Bilddokumentation,* allow a glimpse into this cultural performance.

The accompanying booklet contains a preface by then-mayor of Regensburg Rudolf Schlichtinger, stressing the importance of the cultural week for the "mutual understanding," and cooperation of Germany and the US, followed by an introduction by Smallwood which gives a brief overview of African American history up to the 1960s (DAI 1965 3-4). Following these two texts, the booklet provides dates and times for the different performances during the cultural week, including pictures of performers and blurbs for the performances. One whole page is dedicated to the introduction of the exhibition. It states that the exhibition uses "photography and descriptive texts" to display the "historical influence of African Americans on American culture" (DAI 1965 16). The exhibition is separated into five different epochs, starting with the Revolutionary War, and ending with the status of African Americans in American society in 1965 (DAI 1965 16). These epochs, according to the booklet, are mirrored through the characterizations of African Americans who were instrumental to the advancement of "this minority," whereby the exhibition highlights both "the achievements of individuals and their importance for the whole" African American community (DAI 1965 16). The text explains that the exhibition portrays African Americans from all walks of life, ranging from "revolutionaries" to "dancers" (DAI 1965 16). In a concluding paragraph, the booklet states that the "struggle for equal rights" is also portrayed in the exhibition, which entails the "abolition of slavery by Congress in 1865," as well as "President Johnson's inauguration in 1965" (DAI 1965 16). The text claims that the "revolutionary year of 1963 probably initiated the last step in solving" the struggle for equal rights for African Americans in the US (DAI 1965 16).

The archival pictures reveal that the exhibition consisted of poster walls which were arranged in cross-shaped patterns (er Konsul, er Leistung, rs). They also show that on these poster walls one can see the faces of famous African Americans like Martin Luther King, or James Baldwin, next to descriptive texts. It seems as if each of the poster wall-crosses deals with one specific aspect of the exhibition, such as music, literature, or politics. Contrary to what the booklet states, these poster walls not only show African Americans, but also White Americans such as Abraham Lincoln. While some contain more text and seem to give detailed historical descriptions about the abolition of slavery, others only briefly introduce the person depicted next to the text. As there are at least five newspaper articles commenting on the exhibition and its keynote lecture, an all-encompassing discourse analysis of them such as the one for the first cultural event discussed is not possible here. Instead, I interpret and call attention to key aspects of the local press' reporting on this cultural performance.

One striking similarity between the culture week and the "Native American Traditions" exhibition is that in both cases, newspaper articles highlight the presence of Hubertus Reese. One of the newspaper articles about the culture week portrays Hubertus Reese in front of the poster walls receiving a poster from Smallwood (er Leistung). The picture's caption reads: "the graphic designer Hubertus Reese designed the exhibition." Thus, the material

provided by the USIS went through the hands of the African American director and was then literally appropriated for the predominantly German audience by a White graphics designer.

All the newspaper articles published on the exhibition primarily echo what the booklet states about it and stress the great quality of the art display. The newspaper pieces give an overview of the different eras of African American struggles for equal rights in the US and mention various people that are presented on the poster walls. Not surprisingly, many of them emphasize Martin Luther King, Jr.'s importance in the Civil Rights movement and the method of "nonviolent resistance" (er Leistung). African American activists like Malcom X are, as per guidelines of the USIS, wholly absent in the exhibition as well as in all but one of the newspaper articles.

While the newspaper articles all give a quite favorable review of the exhibition, one of them also utters a powerful piece of criticism. This article claims in its lead paragraph that the exhibition's display of the "social status of African Americans today" is the "weakest point of the otherwise flawlessly concise and informative exhibition" as it "only shows the assets of the balance, introduces the successful African Americans, but conceals how many more [successful, important, albeit less well-known African Americans] should be" included in it (er Leistung). While the author acknowledges the quality of the exhibit and the narratives it constructs and tells, they also uncover what the USIS wanted to conceal. The fact that the exhibition, in line with the guidelines of the USIS, only focuses on famous African Americans whom the GAIs could use for their own narrative of the US government being the main instigator and carrier of the Civil Rights movement and in turn the appropriation of African American cultures at the hand of a predominantly White American government is exposed by this article. It establishes a canvas in the German discourse on African American cultures that needs to be filled and marks the collective memory(ies) of this cultural performance and of the portrayal of the social status of African Americans in 1965 at the hands of the GAI as flawed. Consequently, the knowledge created about African American cultures is problematized and becomes open to further discussion and dialogue.

A similar process can be extrapolated for the panel discussion during the cultural week. As the booklet states, the discussion entitled, "The Integration of African Americans in President Johnson's Great Society," was held on May 19, 1965, at the GAI (DAI 1965 10). Among its panelists were two African Americans, namely Elaine Baker, a singer, and Echols Durrel, a music critic, both of whom were working in Munich at that time. The two White American panelists were Edward J. Joyce, Public Affairs Officer of the American Consulate General in Munich, as well as Wilson Pittmann, lecturer at the Munich campus of the University of Maryland. The panel was hosted by Dr. Hans Heigert, a journalist employed by the *Bayerisches Fernsehen* (DAI 1965 10).

The panel discussion was reported on by both local newspapers, one of which includes a remarkable utterance by one of the 'spect-actors.' A picture printed in this newspaper article commenting on the panel discussion shows the four panelists and its host sitting on a stage

in front of the audience (fg). This article also gives an overview of the discussion. The author states that those in the audience who had expected "[…] clashing views were disappointed. All the panelists agreed that racial problems cannot be solved merely by passing laws," thereby referring to the 1964 Civil Rights Act (fg, Kreis 220). It would take "the goodwill of more generations," and "a better education for African Americans" to solve the problems of racism and racial segregation (fg). Given that this discussion clearly diverged from USIS guidelines, the problematization gets even more thought-provoking. The article also explicitly recalls an audience question which inquires whether "the Ku-Klux-Klan or Black Muslims," referring to the Nation of Islam, "are a danger to the USA" (fg). According to the author, Joyce, a government employee and White panelist, denied the question and the article concludes that everyone seemed to be "of the opinion that the majority of the White population would contribute to the Great Society" (fg). The member of the audience asking the question and the author both manage to undermine the USIS's strategy of not mentioning groups fighting for African American rights other than King's. The person asking the question indeed becomes a "spect-actor" as they add an important complexity to the public discourse in connecting the panel discussion to aspects counter to the stringent guidelines of the USIS.

Another aspect which has yet to be mentioned is the terminology USIS and the Regensburg newspapers used to reference African Americans. As Kreis points out, material provided by the USIS and the American government in general continued to use the term "Negro"[10] far longer than other media (Kreis 224). The terms African American or Black were not to be used by them as this would have been too close a link to what the American government saw as more radical groups than those it could utilize for its own publicity (Kreis 224). While the two newspapers in Regensburg in many cases used the term "Neger" in reference to African Americans, they also used the terminology which was prohibited by the USIS in its own material. The Regensburg newspapers alternated between this word and terms such as "colored" or "black" (er Leistung, er Konsul, fg, la, rs). This shows a certain divergence from USIS source material and a discursive undermining of the American governments' strategy of not replicating appropriate terminology coined by African American groups fighting for equal rights. The discursive inventory of the collective dictionary in Regensburg was expanded which subsequently must have led to a heightened awareness of the fact that using the German N–word is degrading. Knowledge created by other African American rights groups tacitly entered the Regensburg public discourse and led to a view on the African American struggle for equal rights which broadened the scope beyond what the US government had originally planned for with the inclusion of this culture week in the GAI's program.

[10] As is the case with the term "Indian," I distance myself from using this outdated and degrading term. At the same time, I feel it's necessary to include it here, as it would otherwise distort the examination of the discursive practice at the time of the culture week.

Conclusion

My analysis of the exhibition "Native American Traditions" and the African American culture week at the German–American Institute Regensburg as transnational performances show that knowledge produced through them ranges from stereotypical perpetuated notions about Native Americans to broadened horizons about the African American struggle for equal rights. Through the lens of Performance Studies I made these processes of knowledge formation legible along the lines of their sourcers, producers, performers, and partakers, and taking into consideration the aspects of skills, commons, and traces. This article conclusively shows how knowledge and opinions such as those portrayed in the introduction are perpetuated and recreated in transnational contact zones. Despite acknowledging that cultures are the outcome of and are themselves performances, this essay uses a relatively stable and monolithic concept of what German culture is. The newspaper articles this paper draws on juxtapose Native American, African American, and (White) American culture with different concepts of what the Self's culture is. Hence, culture's fluidity is evident by its inconsistent nomenclature when referring to the Self as Bavarian, German, European or even an imagined cultural union of White American and European culture. Another interesting line of inquiry would be to examine what transnational cultural performances do to or for the cultures of the partakers or in other terms, their spect-actors. Such inquiries could entail the examination of how the Self's cultural self-identification is affected by different topics or whether there was a diachronic change in the frequency of terming Regensburg's culture. Further research could also set its eyes on how Regensburg strengthened its own collective identity through the presence of the GAI and how Regensburg regionally took over the role the US played internationally.

Following the claims of this essay, collective memory certainly can be profoundly impacted by cultural events such as the ones analyzed here with Winnetou and the BLM movement, this process continues today. Though causality cannot be provided by this paper, the congruency in the positive and problematized outlook on the African American struggle for equal rights as well as the predominantly stereotypical and unproblematized outlook on Native American cultures and Indigenous rights with the ones outlined in the introduction is striking. One cannot help but wonder if some of the people who have spoken out against the canceling of *Winnetou* may have visited performances like these in their youth or whether some of the people interviewed by the BLM survey had read newspaper articles like the one criticizing the culture week.

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