

James Mackay and David Stirrup, eds. *Tribal Fantasies: Native Americans in the European Imaginary, 1900-2010.*

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REFERENCES

Studies in European Culture and History. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. 274.
ISBN: 978-1-137-28881-3.

- 1 This is not a work of Indigenous history. Rather, it an important collection of essays about the recent history of European ideas about –and cultural practices purporting to relate to– the Indigenous peoples of North America. Anyone who works on cultural appropriation, the imaginary Indian, or the symbolic relationship between Indigenous peoples and globalization will find much to work with here.
- 2 Although they are not presented in this order, there are some obvious clusters among the essays. Four of the contributions focus on European nationhoods, ethnic identities, and social formations as refracted through ideas about Native Americans. Literary scholar Jessica Dougherty-McMichael provides a close reading of a fascinating primary source: *Rotha Mór an tSaoil* by Micí Mac Gabhann, an Irishman who traveled the American and Canadian wests, encountering Blackfeet and Tagish men and women and creating a narrative that wrestles with Mac Gabhann’s status as both colonized and colonizer, while also combining elements of American captivity narratives and Irish fairy abduction stories. If being Irish could be worked out through stories about Indians, Marek Paryz shows how the same was true for postwar Poland, where adventure novels set in the American West, with their valiant but doomed Indians, spoke to Polish experiences of failed uprisings against German and Soviet imperialisms. Peter Thompson, meanwhile, illustrates the ways in which the German philosopher Ernst Bloch drew on the fictional, American West-set tales of Karl May in order to resuscitate adventure and desire among

the Left as a response to rising fascism. David Stirrup and Pádraig Kirwan pick up the thread of the intersection between fascism and the fascination in their study of right-wing, xenophobic neofascist movements in Britain Europe that use the discourses of aboriginality, including the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as fodder for their own nativist, antiglobalist, and profoundly racist efforts. Together, these essays illustrate the ways in which debates over European nationhood, even among countries who had no imperial presence in North America, have made easy and multivalent use of Indian imagery.

- 3 The multivalence continues with two essays that look at the intersection of European sexualities with ideas about and representations of Indigenous Americans. In a chapter that draws in no small part on his own experience among Europe's gay male world, Max Carocci works his way back from loinclothed go-go boys and Indian warrior beefcake to the early modern era, with its images of Indigenous nakedness, created a loose but intriguing genealogy for one minor aspect of European gay sexual iconography. "European gay men," Carocci notes, "do not operate in a vacuum" (118). Nor do the makers of porn, as James Mackay shows us in his provocative analysis of European-produced hardcore pornography that traffics in Indian imagery. Both of these essays should be added to the growing literature on queer Indigenous studies, "red erotica," and the relationship between imperial gazes and violence against Indigenous bodies.
- 4 A third and last cluster of chapters focuses on the engagement of children and youth with imaginary Indians. Sebastian F. Braun examines French *bandes dessinées* (graphic novels) such as *Yakari*, *Asterix*, and *Lucky Luke*, which manage to emphasize ethnographic detail while also somehow completely getting wrong the reality of Indigenous North Americans. Christina Welch, meanwhile, takes on Lego, the Smurfs, and other beloved European toys for their stereotypical images of American Indians while also noting rightly that the literature on images such as these overwhelmingly privileges adult experiences over those of children. Lastly, Graham St. John describes the "psytrance" culture of raves and other events in which young Europeans draw from a marketplace of religious imagery, including Indigenous traditions, in search of an "authentic spirituality" that is both recreation and re-creation. There is something quite sobering about these essays, which show how persistent and widespread stereotypical imagery and cultural appropriation are, even among Europe's youngest people.
- 5 The essays in the volume are bookended by pieces from Indigenous scholars. The first is an excerpt from *Shrouds of White Earth* by the renowned Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor; unfortunately, it is rather opaque and only loosely connected to the volume's contents, even as his Indians-vs.-indians framework is an important influence on the book. *Tribal Fantasies* ends, however, with an especially cogent essay by Diné/Tsalagi literary scholar Renae Watchman that both summarizes and critiques each essay but raises important new questions about what it means when real Indigenous people engage with Powwow Princesses and other decontextualized stereotypes, putting them to their own uses. It is here that the volume becomes something like Indigenous history.
- 6 In his introduction, Stirrup asks, "So what does it mean for European peoples to endorse, embrace, perform, celebrate, and fetishize Indianness in these ways? And why does it matter, so far from source?" (12). My only critique of this otherwise quite engaging volume is this "so far from source" argument –the assumption that Native Americans do not directly participate in the networks of image production, information sharing, and activism that exist in Europe. In an increasingly globalized world, Indigenous people are

no longer “far away” from metropolitan centres such as Paris or Manchester and in the world of social media, the notion that there is no one to confront these images seems something of an overstatement. This small quibble aside, scholars of appropriation, globalization, and European desire will find much to mine and debate here, and virtually any of the chapters would make excellent course readings, especially in tandem with other critical Indigenist scholarship.

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